ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The present study would not have taken a final shape without the persistence and affectionate guidance of my supervisor, Professor Dr. Nikhil Krishna De, Department of Geography, The University of Burdwan. I remain indebted for his inspiring words, encouragement, and counsel at each step of the study.

I am also grateful to Dr. Prithwish Nag, Surveyor General of India, for his kind support. Thanks are also due to Mr. Gopi Nath Saha, Director, National Atlas & Thematic Mapping Organisation, Govt. of India. Without their help, it would not have been possible for me to complete this research.

I remain indebted to all the teachers of the Department of Geography, The University of Burdwan, including Professor Dr. N. Prasad and Professor Dr. C. Mitra for their assistance.

My words of thankfulness are also due to Dr. Anis Chattopadhyay, Assistant Professor (SG), Post-Graduate Department of Geography, Chandernagore Govt. College for his suggestions in the preparation of this thesis.

Thanks are also due to Mr. A. K. Malik, Joint Director; Dr. T. K. Basu, Deputy Director; Dr. R. Prasad, Deputy Director; Dr. A. K. Dasgupta, Deputy Director; Shri. S. K. Biswas, Ex. Deputy Director; Shri. A. K. Chowdury, Sr. Administrative Officer; Dr. (Mrs.) S. Bhadury, Research Officer; Smt. Aloka Basu, Scientific Officer; Shri. Sujit Kumar Banerjee, Ex. Research Assistant; Dr. R. S. Pandey, Research Assistant; Dr. (Mrs.) Mousumi Majumder, Research Assistant; Dr. C. M. Rao, Research Assistant; Shri. G. Ghosal, Sr. Geographical Assistant; Shri. Pinaki Mukhopadhyya, Jr. Geographical Assistant; Shri. Subhankar Bhattacharya, Jr. Geographical Assistant; Shri. Madan Naskar, Jr. Geographical Assistant; Shri. Tushar Banerjee, Stenographer; Shri. Sumit Chakraborty, Field Assistant and Shri. Shibnath Das, Field Assistant for their valuable guidance, suggestions, help and inspiration for the fulfillment of the study. All belongs to National Atlas and Thematic mapping Organisation, Government of India. Thanks are also due to Shri. Chinmay Bhadury of Tea Association of India and Shri. Sujit Kumar Ghosh, Amateur Athletic Association, West Bengal.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to my wife Smt. Rakhi Debnath for her spontaneous support to my research work. I acknowledge all the sacrifices undergone by my other family members during my involvement with the present work. The inspiration provided by Enakshi, my daughter, acted as catalyst in my efforts.

I further acknowledge the cooperation extended by the tribal people and the Church authorities of Malda. They have helped me in every possible way during the period of my fieldwork with them.

Dated, Burdwan
24th December, 2003

(Gopal Chandra Debnath)