The present work on “Medico-Ethnobotany of Darrang district, Assam” is divided into seven chapters.

CHAPTER-I: The use of plants and animals as source of medicine and food is as old as humanity. Herbals occupied a distinct place in our life from the earliest period to today and evidence of rational mastery over these and environment is decipherable in each period. Initially, these formed the bulk of empiric knowledge indigenous to different parts of the world. Later a considerable part of this empiric knowledge on healing properties of plants was formulated, documented and eventually passed into organised systems of traditional medicine.

Organised traditional medicine must have its roots in folkmedicine or ethnomedicine, but incorporates several well-organised, distinct system of diagnosis and cure. Plants with medicinal properties not only enjoyed the highest reputation in the indigenous systems of medicines all over the world but the creative endeavour of investigators engaged in the search for chemotherapeutic agents from plants has also generously equiped modern medicine with a wide range of curative agents. Behind all these, there is a firm imprint of ethno-medico-botanical and ethnoiatrical knowledge and there lies the importance and relevance of medico-ethnobotanical studies.

CHAPTER-II: Darrang district of Assam with an area of 3481 sq. km. situated on the north bank of the river Brahmaputra lies between 26°12′—26°57′N latitude and 91°42′—92°22′E longitude.

The district has a population of 12,98,860 and predominantly rural with 95.08 per cent of the total population. The population of the district consists of the Indo-Aryans including both Hindus and Muslims, and Indo-Mongoloid groups, supplemented later on by the Aryo-Dravidian migrants of East Bengal and Aryo-Mongolian migrants from Nepal. The tribal population accounts for 17.3 per cent of the total population of the district. The Bodos, the Kacharis, the Rabhas and the Garos are the important indigenous tribal. These tribals together with tea-garden labours and Nepali grazirs form the sizable population of the district.

Physiography, soil, climate and vegetation of the district are briefly dealt with.
CHAPTER-III: The aim of the present study is to record the herbal medicines practised by different ethnic groups and also by the rural population of Darrang district of Assam. As evident from literature and also stated by Kirtikar & Basu (1916) that there was no work treating the indigenous drugs of Assam, Orissa and Bihar, the present study was taken up with the aim to fill the gap in our knowledge on ethnomedicine of Assam in general.

The present work is based on carefully planned intensive survey and field studies conducted during 1996-2000 in villages and/or rural areas inhabited by different ethnic groups in the district. The general procedure for gathering the data comprised of either interviewing the informants and subsequent verification of information or by witnessing the actual uses. Voucher specimens were collected for all the plants concerned and were properly determined in the herbarium of Botanical Survey of India, Shillong. These specimens were preserved according to the conventional herbarium techniques and were deposited in the herbarium of the Botany Department, Gauhati University for future reference.

The data were scrutinised with all earlier important publications in order to bring out the significant findings.

CHAPTER-IV: Deals with main content of the thesis i.e. ethnomedicinal uses recorded during the study.

The informations are provided under each species arranged in alphabetical order.

This account on ethnomedicine includes medicinal uses of 338 species of plants. This 338 species includes 275 species of dicot, 59 species of monocot, 3 species of pteridophytes and 1 species of fungi.

CHAPTER-V: Deals with botanical aspect of plants used in ethnomedicines of Darrang district.

The plants have been arranged in alphabetical order according to their scientific names. On botanical side the accepted names valid in current literature for the plants along with important synonym(s) and families. This is followed by local name(s). Distribution of the plants in India have been provided from literature and their occurrence have been provided from observation during field work.

CHAPTER-VI: Significant contribution to ethnomedicine of Darrang district with salient findings of this study is discussed.

The species recorded for ethnomedicinal uses in Darrang district include 822
prescriptions and of which as far as the use in a particular ailment is concerned, 145 prescriptions seems to be either little known or unknown in literature.

The study also revealed that out of total 338 species 25 species are little known for their use in medicine.

CHAPTER-VII : is the summary.