As institution of credit, commercial banks play a very important role in the economic set-up of our country. Over the years, the Government of India, in close collaboration with the RBI, saw to it that commercial banks discharge this role effectively and judiciously. As a step in this direction Government of India, nationalised 20 major Indian Scheduled commercial banks in two phases, with the object 'to control the heights of the economy and to meet progressively and serve better the needs of development of the economy in conformity with national policy and objectives.'

The nationalisation resulted in an impressive all-round development of banking activities in the entire country. There are conspicuous indication of a shift from "whole sale banking" to "retail banking" or "mass banking". Now banks can be called "development agent" or "change agent" on account of various social, economic, industrial and cultural obligations. Hence, there was an overall increase in the number of branch offices and in the mobilisation of deposits and dispensation of bank credit. It was therefore felt necessary to assess the impact of bank nationalisation in Assam from the point of view of the above criteria.

Since nationalisation, there has been both qualitative and quantitative expansion of commercial banks in the country. In case of Assam, the expansion of commercial banking may primarily be termed as quantitative rather than
qualitative. Nationalisation was primarily intended to effectively decentralise credit, with the result that the priority sectors such as agriculture, small scale industry, export, self-employed etc, would be provided with liberal banking facilities and that banking services be extended to hitherto unbanked areas.

An attempt has been made through the present study to assess the impact of bank nationalisation in Assam in terms of expansion of bank offices, deposit mobilisation, expansion of credit to various sectors like agriculture, small scale industries etc.

This study has been divided into ten chapters. Chapter I deals with early history of commercial banking in Assam and its development during post-nationalisation period. Chapter II deals with the process of nationalisation and the directives issued by the Government of India as well as by the Reserve Bank of India for expansion of banking facilities in post-nationalisation period.

The detail analysis on branch expansion, deposit mobilisation, deployment of credit and credit to priority sector have been discussed in the Chapters III, IV, V and VI respectively.

Commercial banks functioning in Assam and their deployment of credit in agricultural and small scale industrial sector of Assam have been discussed in Chapter VII and VIII.
respectively. Chapter IX deals with the performance evaluation of commercial banks functioning in Assam in terms of customer service and credit-deposit ratio. Summary of the findings and recommendations are incorporated in Chapter X.

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