This study, submitted for the Degree of Doctor of philosophy in Folklore under the Gauhati University is the result of an urge of academic interest evolved in my mind since a long time back. Folklore, which centres round the study of heritages of people, has now-a-days been regarded as one of the important academic disciplines. It has been rightly said of Folklore that it is "a message from the people or for the people". The aims and objectives of this relatively new discipline has stimulated in me a deep fascination for it. Once I am provided with the opportunity, I have involved myself earnestly with this work. The present study is an outcome of such involvement of mine.

There is paramount viability of scholarly folkloristic observations on the literary works of some great personalities of Assamese literature. This folklore history of Assam is very interesting for its multi-ethnical composition and for the abundance of materials. Some pioneering works are already done on the treatment of folk elements in some great literateurs of Assam, like
Ram-Saraswati of early period and Lakshminath Bezbaroa of modern era. But much remains to be done about Rajanikanta Bordoloi, who like all his contemporaries inducted the elements of folk-life in his works which expresses his esteem to the traditional aspects of Assam. That is why the study is attempted to interpret the elements of folklore in the works of this celebrated author.

I am aware of the shortcomings that may have crept in my work. Furthermore, the evaluation of folk-elements in Rajanikanta Bordoloi seems to be an arduous task as it is a novel angle of projection on the author. However recognition of it will be a cherished treasure for me.

It is my sincere duty to express gratitude to Dr. B. Datta, Head of the Department of Folklore Research and Dean, Faculty of Arts, Gauhati University, who initiated in me the love and regards for this discipline when I was a student of M. Phil Class and even later.

I have reasons to be deeply grateful to Dr. N.C. Sarma, Reader, Department of Folklore Research, Gauhati University for his help, advice and inspiration.
This thesis is prepared under the guidance of Dr. P.C. Das, now Director Students Welfare and at one time my own teacher in M.Phil class in Folklore. Dr. Das has helped me considerably by procuring books, journals, photographs etc. But for his untiring guidance it would not have been possible for me to give this present shape to the study. I am, in fact, running out of words to express my gratitude to him.

I have used some English renderings of Bihu songs and others from the works done by Dr. Praphulladatta Goswami, Professor Emeritus, Gauhati University. I am indebted to him. I am also indebted to late P.C. Borua, whose English renderings of proverbs have been quoted from his pioneering work *Assamese Proverbs*.

Different authors have used different spellings in the surname of Rajanikanta. We have retained the spelling used by *Asam Sahitya Sabha*.

It is my pleasant duty to acknowledge the assistance which I have received from my colleagues namely Prof. K.S. Deka, Prof. N. Das, Prof. H.K. Haloi and many others. I am also acknowledgeable to Mr. A.K. Sarma, Sri S. Das, Mr. P. Huzuri and N. Ahmed for taking painstaking efforts
in completing the manual works of the work. My wife Jinu Deka helped me by sparing me from the hazards of domestic anxieties — I am thankful to her.

In conclusion I offer my gratefulness to all informants who responded to my request and others who either directly or indirectly helped me in the effort.

Date: 29.12.93

Umesh Chandra Deka