ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I express my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Ashesh Kumar Das, Department of Ecology and Environmental Science for his valuable guidance and constant encouragement throughout the course of this study and for going through the manuscript. I shall always remain obliged to him for his generosity and help.

I extend my profound gratitude to the faculty of the Department Prof. B. K. Dutta, Prof. A. Gupta, Dr. D.C. Ray, Dr. S.C. Garkoti, Dr. (Mrs.) J. Rout and Dr. (Mrs.) S. Gupta for their encouragement. I am also grateful to all the non teaching staff of the Department for their help and inspiration. Departmental facilities provided by the Department of Ecology and Environmental Science are gratefully acknowledged.

I am thankful to Dr. D.K. Hore, Scientist-in-charge, NBPGR, North-East Unit, for useful discussion, Dr. S.S. Malik, Head, Exploration Division, NBPGR, New Delhi, for providing the IC Numbers for homegarden tree species and rice germplasm, Dr. J. M. Julka, Emeritus Scientist, CSIR, Solan, India for helping in the identification of the earthworm species. I am also thankful to the Tea Research Association, Silcoorie, for providing meteorological data of the period of my study.

I would like to concede my appreciation and thanks to Mr. Ranabijoy Gope, Mr. Kulendra Chandra Das, Mr. Pulak Das and Miss Monoshree Paul Research Scholars of the Department who have extended their cooperation in the course of my research work.

I also thank Jyotin Bagdi for aiding me in my field work as field assistant. My special thanks are also due to the villagers of Dargakona for their kind help and coordination during the period of my field study.
It would have been impossible to complete the study without the support of my parents. I am indebted to my mother for her continuous support and encouragement.

The funding offered by the United Nations University through Prof. K.G. Saxena, Coordinator, School of Environmental Sciences, JNU, New Delhi, India in the form of short term fellowship is thankfully acknowledged

(Tapasi Das)