PREFACE

Co-operation has been deeply embedded in the social fabric and ethos of human civilisation since the ancient times. In India, co-operation has been lauded at various fora as a harbinger of socio-economic transformation of rural masses. Though the country has made much headway in the field of co-operation in different sectors of her economy, it has been observed that the progress of the movement has not been uniform throughout the country. Some developed states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala and Tamilnadu achieved remarkable progress in co-operation, while others, more particularly, the states in Eastern and North-Eastern region remained far behind.

Given the importance of the growth of productive sectors in the process of economic transformation of a region and also, given the centrality of the role of entrepreneurs in the process, it has been viewed by scholars that co-operative entrepreneurship through its emphasis on collective sharing of risks and collectivisation of efforts can offer a viable route for entrepreneurial break-through in backward regions.

It was this specific backdrop and the growing realisation of the importance of co-operative entrepreneurship in the development of economically depressed regions that in fact prompted me to undertake this study.

I wish to record my deep sense of gratitude to my guide Dr. Apurbananda Mazumdar, Reader, Department of Commerce, Assam University, Silchar for his untiring support, inspiration and guidance. Indeed, but for his constant support and personal involvement this thesis would not have seen the light of the day.

I also extend my thanks to the faculty members in the Department of Commerce, Assam University, particularly Prof. D.K. Pandiya and Dr. N.B. Dey for their suggestions at various stages of the project. I was also amply benefited by the suggestions and comments of Prof. S.S. Khanka, Department of Business Administration, Tezpur University and Dr. P. Nayak and Dr. K. Sengupta of the Department of Economics, Assam University. I am thankful to all of them.

For the purpose of developing a theoretical and conceptual framework of the study, a detailed survey of literature had to be made. For this, visits to a good number of co-operative institutions, academic centres and libraries were arranged. I gratefully acknowledge the help extended to me by the authorities and the staff of the ‘AMUL’ Dairy in Anand, the ‘SUMUL’ Dairy in Boroda, the ‘MEHSENA’ Dairy in Ahmedabad, the
National Dairy Development Board in Anand, the Institute of Rural Management in Anand, the National Co-operative Union of India in New Delhi, the Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of Co-operative Management in Pune, the International Co-operative Alliance in New Delhi, the National Social Science Documentation Centre in New Delhi, the Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship in Guwahati, the Institute of Co-operative Management in Guwahati and also the libraries of the Delhi University, the Gauhati University, and the Assam University, Silchar.

My sincere thanks are due to Dr. Verghese Kurien, Chairman of the National Dairy Development Board, Anand, Dr. Katar Singh, Director of the Institute of Rural Management, Anand, Dr. Ranjit Sinha, Director (P & A) of the Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi and Dr. R. Thambi, Executive Director of the National Centre for Co-operative Education, New Delhi for extending to me their co-operation and guidance in course of pursuing this project.

Thanks are also due to the University Grants Commission authorities for extending financial assistance to me under the scheme of Minor Research Project grants, which enabled me to meet major part of the expenditure.

My special thanks would go to Mr. Sonjoy Kumar Paul of Pal Printers, Ambicapatty, for printing the thesis with special care and attention.

Last but not the least, I record my sincere thanks and appreciation for my wife Mrs. Barnali Dey who extended constant support in pursuing the study and relieved me from the family obligations during the period of research.

While utmost care was taken towards maintaining accuracy, it goes without saying that I fully shoulder the responsibilities of any inadvertent error that might have crept in.

Dated, Silchar  
the 19th June 2003.  

(Chandan Dey)