ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am approaching the milestone on a long journey, which has been challenging. I have been fortunate to travel with best of companions. The making of this thesis was possible due to a selfless dedication of a number of individuals and organizations, without which it would not have been a reality. I am greatly indebted to them.

I wish to record my gratitude and indebtedness to my supervisors Prof. Madhab C. Bora and Dr. Parimal B. Barua for their guidance, encouragement, moral support and affection. Their invaluable and meticulous supervision, at each and every phase of work inspired me in innumerable ways. I am grateful to them.

I also acknowledge the help and encouragement received from Prof. T.K. Bhattacharjee, Mr. Rupam Baruah, Dr. T. Nath during my research work.

I am greatly indebted to the Managerial Staff, employees and labourers of many Tea Gardens in Upper Assam region who participated willingly in the questionnaire survey, and provided vital information that forms the backbone of this work.

I specially thank Mr. S. Baruah, Maijan Tea Estate; Dr. J. Baruah, Nokhroi Tea Estate; Mr. Ashoke Tandon, Lepetkatta Tea Estate; Mr. U. Bhattacharjee, Moran Tea Estate; Mr. B. Bora, Deohal Tea Estate; Mr. P. P. Sharma, Asstt. Secretary, ABITA; Mr. M. N. Gogoi, Toklai Experimental Station; Mr. P. Baruah & Mr. R. Dutta, Kakojan Tea Estate; Mr. J. Baruah, Cinamara Tea Estate; Mr. Yadav, Mr. N. Baruah, Dhelakhat Tea Estate; Mr. S. Khosla, Hatikhuli Tea Estate; Mr. N. Bhowal, Chabua Tea Estate, all the managerial staff of Borsapori Tea Estate and Cinnamara Tea Estate.

The research would not have been possible without the support of my UG students who helped me a lot in data collection from various Tea Gardens.

I lovingly remember the support offered by my wife Sangeeta and my daughter Parkee.
I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my parents, but for whose love, blessings, inspiration and constant support this work would never have been completed.

My thanks are due to numerous other individuals (not listed here) whose blessings, support and good wishes have been my constant source of inspiration.

Plabon Kakoti