Acknowledgements

This work is the result of the active assistance, involvement and good wishes of a large number of people. Due to constraint of space, it will not be possible for me to name each and every one of them individually. However, I would like to take this opportunity to offer my sincere thanks and gratitude to all concerned for the cooperation and assistance I have received from them in the course of the present research.

I am greatly indebted, in the first place, to the members of the Singpho community in Assam and especially to the inhabitants of Ketetong Village of Margherita subdivision under Tinsukia district for their whole-hearted assistance in conducting this research. The enthusiasm and the eagerness on the part of the members of the community, especially in Ketetong Village, has been the backbone of this research. In this regard, I must take the name of respected Awadi (Late) Angfew Ningkhee who so generously allowed me to stay in his home for long the long period of time during the course of this research and for my projects on language documentation and preservation and for treating me as his son. I am also grateful to his wife Kanduri Ningkhee who has blessed me with a motherly treatment during all my time in this place. His son Rajib Ningkhee and daughter-in-law Panlong Ompop have played a crucial role in helping me with technical aspects like conducting surveys and meeting with leaders of the community. I must thank Slg. Manje La who is currently the Chairman of the Singpho, Sema, Tangsa, Taiphake, Tai Turung, Tai Alton, Tai Khamyang and Tai Khamti community development council set up by the Government of Assam, for his continuous guidance and support in helping me to understand the situation regarding the Singpho orthography. He is also the main editor of all the Singpho reading materials which are now available for the use of children of the community. He has taken painstaking efforts to go through all such reading materials and edit them and besides participating in all
the workshops and training events. In addition, I would also like to thank all the members of the Singpho Multilingual Education Programme Committee for their whole-hearted cooperation in taking this programme forward. Sincere thanks also go to Slg. Bhupeswar Ningda, Slg. Gojen Ompop, Slg. Santinath Gudung, Slg. Lohit Ompop, Slgjan Jalat Kiyang, Slgjan Nanglum Tungyang, Amiya Ningda, Pabitra Ningda, Rajesh Singpho, Dumai Singpho, Durlov Ompop and many others. I must also thank all the members of the Singpho Ginra Development and Welfare Organisation for helping with the participation of the Singpho youths in the workshops and other events of the programme. Sincere thanks are also due to the caretaker and all the staff of Singpho Eco Lodge for their role as generous hosts on multiple occasions when the workshops were being held in that wonderful lodge.

I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Jyotiprakash Tamulli for giving me his time and guidance throughout the preparation of the thesis. Apart from being the formal guide in this research, he has always tried to connect me with proper network of people from whom I could learn more. I must say that this has really helped me to put things together and learn valuable lessons from some of the best practitioners in the relevant fields. Therefore I take this opportunity to acknowledge his good wishes, guidance and assistance in accomplishing this research.

I sincerely acknowledge my sincere gratefulness to Dr. Stephen Morey who has been a great teacher and a source of inspiration in my research as well as in my life. He is the first person who actually introduced me to the Singpho community in Assam. Through him, I have learnt a lot about empirical research in the field of language documentation and description, and I am sure I still have a lot to learn from him in the future. He supported my work (in both language documentation and literacy development) in all possible ways. Hence, I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to him.
My sincere gratitude goes to all the members of Summer Institute of Linguistics International (SIL) who generously provided me different training opportunities in the field of mother tongue literacy development. In particular, I am indebted to Mrs. Jessie Glover who has been a great motivator and teacher in the field of literacy development. I learnt a lot about different ways of dealing with complex issues relating to community-based literacy development from Mrs. Glover. Apart from Jessie, I must thank Bee Lian who facilitated the first mobilisation workshop in 2006 and helped in giving a clear direction to the programme. I would also like to thank Denis Malone and Susan Malone for giving me the first lessons on community-based literacy development through Multilingual Education. I sincerely thank both Diane Dekker and Dr. Bob Litteral for going through some of my chapters and for providing me with their valuable comments. I have learnt a lot from their insightful comments.

I sincerely acknowledge the unstinted support of my parents and other family members which went a long way in helping me to accomplish this task. Last, but not the least, my wife Pranjana Kalita Nath deserves a great deal of thanks for her inherently positive attitude which helped me to get over moments of frustration in the course of this research, and to look ahead with a spirit of optimism. Besides, her insightful comments and observations have been of much help to me in picking up missing links in the research.