Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my guides Dr. H. P. Deka Boruah, Scientist, North East Institute of Science and Technology (CSIR), Jorhat, Assam and Dr. Manab Deka, Professor, Department of Biological Science, Gauhati University, Guwahati, Assam for their invaluable suggestions, constructive comments, guidance and advice throughout the study and during the research and writing up of the thesis; without whom, this would not have been possible.

I am also grateful to Dr. P.G. Rao, Director, North East Institute of Science and Technology (CSIR), Jorhat, Assam for giving me the opportunity to carry out my PhD work in the esteemed institution.

I am thankful to Dr. T. S. Barman, HOD, Tocklai Research Association, Tocklai, Jorhat, Assam for providing the tea leaf samples for the preliminary analysis, tea cutting for nursery experiments and facilitating my trip to South Bank of Brahmaputra for tea leaf and soil sample collection.

I am thankful to Dr. T. C. Borah, HOD, Biotechnology division, North East Institute of Science and Technology (CSIR), Jorhat and Dr. B. K. Gogoi, former HOD, Biotechnology Division, NEIST who have been inspirational to the author.

I would express my gratitude to Dr. Nileema Saikia, Scientist, North East Institute of Science and Technology (CSIR), Jorhat and Dr. Dileep Kumar B. S, Scientist, NEIST, Jorhat for their kind guidance and support.

My sincere gratitude to all the staffs of Soil Microbiology division, Biotechnology division, Material Science Division, Analytical Chemistry division, Bioinformatics Centre and Library, North East Institute of Science and Technology (CSIR), for their kindness and assistance in providing every service whenever I needed.

I am grateful to the Department of Biotechnology, GoI, New Delhi for the financial support.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all my colleagues from soil microbiology division, NEIST, Jorhat for all sorts of technical support.

Last but not the least; I thank my parents and my husband for their moral support and assistance.

(IPSITA DUARAH)