Acknowledgement

I feel privileged to express my hearty gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Binod Chandra Sharma, Asst. Professor and Head, Postgraduate Department of Botany, Darjeeling Government College, Darjeeling and my co-supervisor Dr. Aniruddha Saha, Associate Professor, Department of Botany, University of North Bengal for their constant support, keen personal interest, dynamic supervision, immense cooperation, priceless guidance, unfailing patience, constructive ideas and thoughtful criticism throughout the investigation, without whom it would have not been possible for me to complete my research work.

I sincerely thank Professor Lalita Rai Ahmed, the Principal, Darjeeling Govt. College for providing infrastructure facilities for the work. I thank Dr. Projiwal Chandra Lama, Asst. Professor of Botany, Darjeeling Govt. College for his support. My sincere thanks goes to authorities of The University of North Bengal for granting me permission for research works which enabled me to complete my study within stipulated time. I also extend my sincere words of thanks to Dr. Dorjay Lama, Associate Professor, St. Joseph's College, Darjeeling for his encouragement and valuable suggestions. I would also like to extend my sincere words of admiration and appreciation to Professor A.P. Das, Professor P.K. Sarkar, Professor B.N. Chakraborty, Professor U. Chakraborty, Dr. A. Sen, Dr. S.C. Roy and Shri P. Mandal for their presence in the University of North Bengal as my moral support. I thank to the Assistant Manager of Singla Tea Estate for providing the soil samples of tea garden as per my need and to Sri Sundas, Deputy Director of Agriculture (Administrative), Darjeeling for providing climatic data. I would also like to acknowledge my humble gratitude to the members of IMTECH, Chandigarh, India for identification of my isolates. Thanks are due to my colleagues Ms. Bimala Rai, Ms. Sujata Kalikotay, Dr. Ranju Tamang, Ms. Sabina Pradhan, Ms. Basundhara Tamang, Ms. Yashwini Gurung, Ms. Leena Subba, Mr. Pranith Thapa, Mr. Ranjeet Bhandari, Mr. Sawant Pradhan, Mr. Bikram Saha, who supported me directly or indirectly throughout my research work. I am also thankful and grateful to all the non-teaching staff of PG Department of Botany, Darjeeling Govt. College.

I express my hearty thanks and exorbitant gratitude to my generous and affectionate parents for their unconditional support and love.

I extend my profound thanks to my parents in law and the family members for their constant support and prayer.

Special thanks to my beloved daughter Anugrah for her innocent unceasing prayers.

Last but not the least, I would like to express my gratitude to my beloved husband Mr. Aswan Mukhia, for his unconditional support, understanding, encouragement, patience and his constant prayers.

Above all I thank Almighty God for his abundant blessings, without whom I would have not been able to accomplish my research.

Rashi Subba