

## **Preface**

*During the past three decades the agriculture sector of West Bengal has undergone wide-ranging changes in terms of ownership of land, cropping pattern, cultivation practices, productivity and intensity of cultivation. The present study aims to identify the changing agricultural pattern in Koch Bihar district, West Bengal. Koch Bihar is the north-eastern district of West Bengal. Before the 28<sup>th</sup> August, 1949, Koch Bihar was an Indian State ruled by the feudatory prince under British Government. By an agreement dated 28<sup>th</sup> August, 1949, Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan of Koch Bihar ceded his territory to the Dominion Government of India. The transfer of administration to the government of India was made on the 12<sup>th</sup> September, 1949. Eventually, Koch Bihar was transferred and merged with the Province of West Bengal on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1950. From that date Koch Bihar is being administered as a district of West Bengal.*

*The agriculture of the district was mainly characterised by traditional farming methods and crops. However, the changes of agricultural scenario in the district started during the early eighties. Through this thesis an attempt has been made to analyse the changing pattern of agriculture, level of productivity, problems of agricultural development in the district and recommended strategies for further development of this sector which will be significant to the farming community of a backward district of West Bengal Koch Bihar. The period of study has been considered from 1980-81 to 2004-05 i.e. for a period of 25 years.*

*The thesis is structured in to eight chapters. The **first chapter** deals with the scope, hypotheses, objectives, methodology, sources of data of the present study. The **second chapter** incorporates the physical and cultural background of the study area, the Koch Bihar district. This actually takes in to account the variability and similarity of geology, relief, drainage characteristics, climatic variables like rainfall and temperature, soils, natural vegetation within the district. It also discusses the growth of population and occupational pattern in the district at block level and also gives an insight in the existing scenario of road, railway transport system, power situation, size of land holding of the district. The **chapter three** discusses the perspective nature of general and agricultural land use pattern at block level. The study of cropping pattern*

*and its spatio-temporal change in the district is carried on to identify the shifting pattern of agriculture.*

*The **chapter four** discusses the intensity of cropping pattern and spatio-temporal change of cropping intensity during the study period of 25 years. For this analysis several models have been employed. The **chapter five** deals with the analysis use agricultural inputs and their impact on agriculture in the district. It is observed that role of modern inputs like fertilizers, irrigation facilities, agricultural implements like tractors, threshers, spray machines along with adequate supply of timely credit facilities are essential for boosting the agriculture in the district. The **chapter six** deals with the concept of agricultural productivity. The growth trend of principal crops of the district of production and productivity has been analysed. The **chapter seven** discusses with identification agricultural regions in the district. For this crop ranking regions, crop combinations and crop diversification patterns have been identified. The **chapter eight** gives an account of the major problems associated with development of agriculture and necessary recommendations for the corrective measures to be taken for the development of agriculture followed by overall conclusions considering the essential lessons from the preceding chapters.*

*I expect that this endeavour to analyse the agricultural purview of the Koch Bihar district will be an appropriate and useful to the agricultural researchers and policy makers for overall realistic development of this sector.*

*Ranjan Roy*