I owe a great debt of gratitude to Dr. C.M. Abraham, Professor and Head of the Department of Sociology, Bharathiar University, under whose inspiring guidance the present work has been completed. I sincerely thank Dr. M. Lakshmana Singh, Reader, Department of Sociology, Bharathiar University for his timely help.

The author wishes to express gratitude to Dr. S. Mukerji, Professor, Dr. T.K. Roy, Reader, Mr. U.P. Sinha, Reader, International Institute for Population Studies, Bombay and Dr. S. Parasuraman, Lecturer, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay for their comments and suggestions. It is impossible to forget the assistance provided by Capt. A.J. Ignatius and Mr. Ramakrishnan, Revenue Divisional Officer, Gudalur, Nilgiris district. The untiring and kind help of Miss. Abraham, M/s. Randeria, Sathe and Rao, Library staff, International Institute for Population Studies, Bombay, is greatly acknowledged.

I would like to thank the Librarian and all other Library staff of Bharathiar University for their help. I am thankful to M/s. Govindarajulu, C. Raju, Research scholars, Bharathiar University. I am indebted to all the Kota people for their cooperation.

Lastly, I thank the University Grants Commission for the award of a Fellowship.

D. VARADHARAJAN