Our state, West Bengal, has a long heritage of handicrafts and cottage industry. But the artisans of these industries suffer from acute financial problems. Hence, their issues, I considered, needed investigation. Since my childhood I have been observing poverty of the artisans of the conch-shell industry of my locality and I discussed their problems with my research mentor, Dr. G. C. Sinha, Professor of Commerce and former Dean and Head of the Department of Commerce, University of Calcutta. The idea of carrying out this investigation, in fact, developed from this lively discussion. The author expresses his profound gratitude to Professor Sinha for his constant encouragement, prolonged and sustained guidance for the completion of this work.

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