At present, India is facing an acute food scarcity and it is causing anxiety to everybody. The late sixties, however, brought a significant change with spectacular increases of production in the country where new varieties of wheat and rice supported by price rise acted as powerful incentive to the producers. As a result, import of food grain declined to some extent during the period. But since 1970-71, the production of food grain suffered a setback due to various unfavourable conditions, and in the following year, the food situation still worsened necessitating imports to the tune of 3 million tonnes.

The problem is aggravated by a rapid and truly disquieting increase in the population. It is higher than ever before in the history of India and calls for magnitude of food production and job availability beyond our powers of imagination. The population explosion now taking place, is the result, above all, of the successful fight against diseases and the reduction of infant mortality and advancement in the science of geriatrics. Family planning which is gaining ground and which is decisive in the long run will have but little short run effect on the magnitude of the problem. The economics in our country is thus faced with the twin task of providing the growing population with food and work and satisfying the increasing demand for higher standard of living. India is still lacking in intensive research programmes and the assessment of the productive value of soils and the utilization on scientific basis.
It is gratifying to note that in 1955, all India Soil Survey Scheme was started by Indian Agricultural Research Institute for reconnaissance of Soil Survey leading to classification, correlation and mapping of soils on a uniform basis. But little progress has so far been made. Individual workers in different fields of soil science have, however, contributed substantively to the progress of agricultural prosperity, yet it is very much inadequate considering the vast size of the country. Land Surveys are also necessary to ascertain the extent and location of waste lands suitable for cultivation as well as areas affected by soil erosion. Data on land use are also needed for effective land improvement measures.

So with this idea in mind I have ventured to undertake this case study of productivity rating and classification of lands. I do not hesitate to stress that my endeavour in this field e.g. on the study of productivity of soils will be a distinctive addition to those of my predecessors.

This study of land classification and productivity is confined to a small area of about 400 sq. km. in the district of Murshidabad, West Bengal. It is purely a rural agrarian region with good alluvial soils. Rice is the most distinctive and most important crop of the region having over 95% of the total area under it. The other subsidiary crops are wheat, gram, pulses and potatoes which grow in winter. Double cropping is limited and dependent on the availability of irrigation water in the dry season.

In Chapter-I, a brief discussion on the importance of land resources, and the significance of classification has been made. Chapter II explains the proposition and briefly describes geographical environments of the
area studied. A short sketch of sampling techniques and methodology followed are dealt with in Chapter III. In Chapter IV, a review of the previous work of this kind has been briefly incorporated. Chapters V, VI and VII involve the discussion on the physico-chemical properties of soil and other external influences which have been investigated in the field and studied in the laboratory. On the basis of the study, index values of different factors influencing production at different sampling sites have been calculated after G. Azzi (1956) and R. E. Storie (1933). These indices are then statistically correlated with the yield data for determining if any influence on production can be traced. In Chapter VIII an approach has been made in regard to land classification for comprehensive land use planning. Residual mapping of the area based on (1) Storie's indices and (2) indices worked out by the author appears in Chapter IX. In the concluding Chapter X, a summary of the entire work and suggestions which might lead to an improved land use are given.

The entire approach is a quantitative one relating to land classification based on productivity indices and may be considered for other regions involving comprehensive land classification and planning.