PREFACE

Among the different minerals affecting erythropoiesis, iron play the most important role, as it forms an integral part of the haemoglobin molecule. Iron metabolism is intimately related with the metabolism of other minerals like copper, cobalt, nickel, zinc, calcium and with other dietary constituents such as protein, ascorbic acid and other vitamins. All these factors directly or indirectly influence the process of erythropoiesis. Moreover, there is much alteration in certain haematological parameters during pregnancy and the magnitude of these changes are largely dependent on the nutrient supply. Further, a possible correlation between socio-economic factors and the incidence of iron deficiency anaemia in expectant mothers are well recognised. Thus in these contexts it has been thought worth-while to study the nutrient intake as well as the level of certain blood constituents of pregnant and non-pregnant women belonging to different socio-economic and age groups.

In chapter I of this thesis, a critical review of existing knowledge about the changes of some serum minerals and allied erythropoietic constituents of blood during pregnancy has been presented. Subsequent chapters deal with the author's findings on the present investigations.