The idea of doing research on some peripheral villages of the city of Gauhati crept into my mind while I was preparing a field report in my previous year post-graduate course under the Gauhati University. For the sake of convenience, I opted for the village Garigaon adjacent to the University campus as the object of my study. Working among the simple-minded villagers who offered me wholehearted co-operation and bestowed on me their sincere affection, gave me much pleasure and infused a keen desire to select this village for my doctoral dissertation. When I actually started my research project in the year 1976, I selected two other peripheral villages — Hatigaon and Sijubari with a view to make a comparative in-depth study of the socio-economic conditions of these villages with a particular reference to their pace and degree of urbanisation.

For the theoretical background of the work, both extensive and intensive use has been made of many of the available books and journals dealing with socio-economic conditions of the village, rural dynamics and the process of urbanisation. A list of such books and journals consulted by the authoress has been appended at the end of the thesis.

Basic data regarding geographical features of the villages and their area, population, households, historical monuments were collected from different sources — settlement records, census reports, village headmen and the leading
residents of the villages.

The main data for the thesis were collected by the present authoress from the villages by means of sample survey. For a comprehensive socio-economic study of the peripheral villages of the Gauhati city including the process of urbanisation, three villages have been selected — Garigaon in the west, Hatigaon and Sijubari in the south of Gauhati. Household was the sampling unit in the survey design. Approximately two-thirds of the total number of households of the villages were selected as sample units on the basis of both stratified and systematic sampling in the case of the bi-religious villages of Garigaon and Hatigaon and on the basis of only systematic sampling in the case of the mono-religious village of Sijubari. In Garigaon and Hatigaon, sample units were drawn from the two main religious strata — Hindus and Muslims in proportion to their numbers. The total number of households selected was 741 in Garigaon, 50 each in Hatigaon and Sijubari. Information on multifarious aspects pertaining to the households or to the individual earners or non-earners were collected from the heads of the sample households by direct personal interview. The period of the survey was from approximately October, 1977 to February, 1980. Various phases of the survey — preparation of survey design, sampling, collection, processing and tabulation of data were completed within this period.
The work of collecting data proved to be very arduous and painstaking. I had to face many difficulties in my fieldwork for my limitations as a lady. However, my tasks were made easier by the voluntary assistance I received from a number of educated young men of the villages I surveyed.

Besides collection of data by interview method, I tried to maintain a close contact with the villagers during the entire period of my research work. I tried to use every opportunity to study the village life from close quarters by attending the religious and socio-cultural festivals of the villages and also by in-depth interviews of the prominent residents of the villages.