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As a border state and as a gate-way to the six states of the North-East Region, the development of transport and communication in Assam is vital for economic growth of the region and security of the country. This will assist exploitation of natural resources of the region.

It is noticed that in most of the developed countries of the world, water transport has developed, simultaneously with the rail and road transport. It is due to the fact that water transport satisfies most of the requirements of a good transport system. But in Assam with the advent of the rail and road transport this branch of transport remained neglected. Lately, the Government of India appreciated the importance of the development of water transport for accelerating economic development. Government of India had also appointed several committees to study the suitability of water transport in the country. But, all these reports contain very little about the water transport with particular reference to Assam. So this research project has been undertaken under the title "Prospects and Problems of Inland Navigation in Assam", to study the water transport with particular reference to Assam.

The project was started with collection of data in January, 1985, under the supervision of Prof. Dr. F.C. Goswami, I.F.C.I., Chair Professor, Gauhati University.
It must be mention here that the data on transport economy, particularly that of water transport are not easily available. I had to visit a number of places and to meet many persons who are familiar with water transport. In connection with the investigation for this research project, I received assistance and suggestions from a number of persons connected with water transport in Assam. I express my gratitude to all of them.

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