

## PREFACE

The process of urbanisation is an interesting, yet complex phenomenon. While technological sophistications and employment opportunities progress, a new set of cultural and social interactions are initiated. Job seekers from rural areas and migrants from smaller peri urban areas and neighbourhood areas approach the urban metropolis looking for a new future. In this process, while acknowledging attachments to their origin, the migrants struggle to adapt to the changed environment. This has happened largely in Kolkata, the capital of the state of West Bengal. This city has long been a pre-eminent seat of culture as well as a commercial and industrial center attracting huge multi ethnic population from all parts of India. These pockets of slum population being highly volatile, the challenge for providing such slum dwellers with minimal and decent reproductive and child health care in such a milieu indeed becomes a significant challenge to policy makers, planners and implementers. It is against this background that the present study has been taken up to look at reproductive and child health behaviour of multi-ethnic population of the urban slums in the Kolkata metropolitan area. The objective is to ascertain the influence of social and cultural attributes in such health seeking behaviour and also to ascertain whether health programmes have changed the influence of such social attributes overtime.

In this context this is to acknowledge with thanks the guidance and advice received from my research guide Professor RK Bhadra. I would also like to thank the faculty, the staff and other researchers of the Sociology Department of the North Bengal University for their support to this work. I acknowledge with gratitude the support that I had received from my colleagues and friends in Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority, the World Bank, the Department of International Development and the World Health Organization. I would like to record my appreciation towards the residents of the slums where this study was conducted. I am extremely grateful to my spouse, Shri D.K Chakraborty, for his untiring support and patience while I worked for my assignment. I would also thank Shri Abhijit Roy for assisting me in finalizing the document in its typewriting.