5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

This thesis ‘An Enquiry into Rural-Urban Migration to Guwahati: Relevance of the Harris-Todaro model’ examines the phenomenon of rural-urban migration into Guwahati city. It seeks to test the adequacy of the Harris-Todaro Migration Model, with the central idea that rural-urban migration will take place so long as expected urban wage exceeds rural wage, in explaining rural-urban migration into Guwahati. Through the study an attempt has been made to focus on the migration profile of Assam in general and Guwahati in particular, in terms of a number of dimensions. Besides, the study has also analysed various socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the rural-urban migrants. A number of interesting findings have been derived from this study, which are summarised below.

5.1.1 Migration profile of Assam and Guwahati city

In this section, the magnitude of migration along with other dimensions are analysed on the basis of census data of 1991 and 2001.

5.1.1 (a) Magnitude of migration

The decadal growth rate of migrants in Assam and Guwahati, in the period 1991 to 2001, is estimated at 25% and 36.78% respectively which reflects the growing migration within the state as well as into the city.

Out of the three different types of internal migration, intra-district migration has dominated internal migration in Assam. The decadal growth of this form of migration was estimated at 54.63 percent leading to an increasing in its percentage share in the total migration from 60.88% in 1991 to 74.94% in 2001(an increase of 14.06 %).
In Guwahati city, among the three types of internal migration, inter-district migration dominated with a 51.7% (in 1991) of the total migration flows. However the share of this form of migration has declined steadily to 43 percent in 2001, though it still maintains a lead over the other forms of internal migration. Conversely, intra-district migration into Guwahati has been increasing at a rapid rate with its percentage share in the total migrants going up from 14.6% in 1991 to 35.9 in 2001.

So far as inter-state migration into Assam is concerned, out of total inter-state migrants in 2001, 31.3 percent were from Bihar, which dominates as the state of origin over other states of India. However, a negative decadal growth rate is observed (-25percent) in case of migration from Bihar to the state, a trend which is also observes for most of the non-north eastern states.

Like falling inter-state migration into Assam, the migrants to Guwahati from other parts of the country have been steadily declining in the period 1991-2001. Such a decline has been recorded despite the fact that the total number of migrants to Guwahati have been increasing at a steady rate. As in the case of Assam, census data for Guwahati indicate that the maximum number of migrants into the city comes from Bihar followed by West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab.

Confining the analysis within the north east, there are significant numbers of migrants moving from Tripura and Meghalaya into Assam. However, migration from the other north eastern states has found to be relatively less significant.

A similar trend is found in Guwahati where migrants from the north-eastern states into the city is dominated overwhelmingly by migrants came from Meghalaya and Tripura. The number of migrants from the north-eastern states
to the city has been increasing over the period 1991-2001, reflecting the pull factors like education and livelihood opportunities in the place of destination and the push factors in the form of law & order problem and underdevelopment in the places of origin.

In comparison to 1991, there is an absolute decline of migrant population from outside Assam in 2001. A probable reason behind that could be that contracting job opportunities and increasing competition from the local unemployed may act as a disinvestment to potential immigrants. Besides, there lower enumeration of immigrants may be a result of mortality among the existing migrants or wrong information deliberately provided by this category of migrants.

As expected the majority of the migrants are from Bangladesh (increasing from 83.6% in 1991 to 87.7% in 2001), followed by Nepal, Pakistan, Bhutan and Myanmar. Similar trend is observed in Guwahati, where most of the immigrants are from Bangladesh (more than 70 percent of the total immigrants).

5.1.1 (b) Pattern of migration
The rural to rural migration flow dominates all migration levels in Assam. This flow of migration is most prominent at the intra-district level constituting an overwhelming 82.4 percent of the total migrants while the corresponding percentages are 59.7 percent and 35.7 percent at the inter-district and inter-state respectively.

In contrast, there has been a significant rise in the percentage of rural to urban migrants over the decade of 1991 and 2001 at all the three levels of migration. Over the same decade, at the intra-district level, its share had gone up from 6.2 percent to 8.1 percent, whereas at the inter-district and inter-state
level, the gain has been from 15.9 percent to 22.3 percent and 27.5 percent to 34.9 percent respectively. This increasing share of rural-urban migration at all the levels of internal migration is the result of growing urbanization process, expanding demand for labour in urban areas and increasing income differentials between rural and urban sectors. On the other hand, a relatively modest growth is exhibited in case of both urban to rural and urban to urban flow of migrations in Assam.

The dominant migration stream into Guwahati is the rural to urban flow, which has been growing at an overwhelming decadal rate of 45 percent for the period 1991-2001. On the contrary, the magnitude of urban to urban flow has been declining both in relative as well as in absolute terms in the same period.

The unprecedented increase in the rural-urban flow of migrants is not confined only in Guwahati but it extends to other important cities of Assam, as well. These rural-urban flows have fuelled the growth of these cities (in a smaller scale) as it had done in the case of Guwahati. However, Guwahati attracts the maximum number of migrants, both from the country and within the state, as compared to other towns and cities of Assam. This reflects Guwahati’s status as the biggest city in the north-east and also the most important trading hub in the region.

5.1.1 (c) Sex selectivity of migrants
Female migrants dominate short distance migration in both intra-district and inter-district flow. However, at the inter-state level, male migrants outnumbered females.
5.1.1 (d) Reasons for migration

Seeking better livelihood is the most significant reason for migration among males (especially in inter-distinct and inter-state flow). In contrast, marriage appears to be the dominant factor inducing migration among females at all the three flows, which is followed by associational migration with the moving family. In fact, associational migration with the migrating family is a very important reason for migration both for males and females.

Like Assam, for Guwahati city also, ‘employment’ and ‘business’ are the principal reasons for migration in case of male migrants, while, as usual, ‘marriage’ and ‘family moved’ are the dominating factors inducing migration among the female migrants. The same conclusions can be drawn for the major towns of Assam like Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Jorhat and Silchar. This significant number of migrants moving into Guwahati while seeking opportunities in employment and business is a proof of the fact that Guwahati is the most important ‘business hub’ in the entire north eastern region in India where considerable livelihood opportunities are generating.

5.1.2 The Harris-Todaro model and its relevance to Guwahati city

To test the basic Harris-Todaro model, three sub-models (Model-A, Model-B and Model-C) are constructed on the basis of three different wage categories (i.e. upto Rs.6000 per month, Rs.6001- Rs.15000 and Rs.15001 and above) of a sample migrants from Guwahati.
Linear regression analysis is undertaken to identify and estimate the relationship between the migration ratio and differential in urban expected wage rate and rural wage.

For Model-A, the $F$-value is found to be insignificant implying that the model does not efficiently predict the dependant variable. Besides, the $t$-value is found to be insignificant implying that the null hypothesis stating that rural-urban migration into Guwahati is not induced by expected urban- rural wage differentials is true.

Similarly, Model-B and Model-C are found to be insignificant implying that the null hypothesis stating that rural-urban migration into Guwahati is not induced by expected urban- rural wage differentials is true.

Hence, the study has arrived at the conclusion that the Harris-Todaro model is inadequate to explain rural-urban migration into Guwahati as differential in expected urban wage and rural wage rate is found to be an insignificant factor affecting the rural-urban migration rate into the city.

As the Harris-Todaro model fails to explain the phenomenon of rural-urban migration in Guwahati, the study has adopted an alternative model to explore other factors that could significantly influence this phenomenon. Different socio-economic and demographic factors considered in this model includes density of population of the place of origin, literacy rate of the place of origin, percentage of agricultural labourers to agricultural workers of the place of origin, distance from the place of origin to the place of destination, and per capita gross district domestic product of the place of origin.

A multiple linear regression analysis is undertaken for the alternative model where the $backward stepwise method$ is used to find out the outcomes.
The final model in the *backward stepwise method* defines the migration ratio in terms of only two significant independent variables i.e. per capita gross domestic product and density of population. The model reveals a coefficient of determination of 0.592 implying that 59 percent of the variation in migration ratio can be accounted for by these two significant independent variables.

The F-value of 7.987 at 1 percent significant level endorses the efficiency of the final model. Besides, Model-4 reveals only density of population and per capita gross district domestic product to be significant factors affecting the migration ratio at 1 percent and 5 percent respectively, with corresponding B-values of 0.001 and 0.0001. Hence, we reject the implicit null hypothesis of the model that density of population and per capita gross district domestic product do not individually affect the migration ratio and alternately accept the contention that these two predictors independently do have an impact on the migration ratio of Guwahati.

### 5.1.3 Impact of migration: Demographic and Socio-Economic analysis of migrants

(i) A linear regression analysis is undertaken to show the relationship between search for livelihood and *rural-urban* migration. Based on Census data for major cities of Assam in 2001, it can be shown that migration induced by a search for better livelihood in the urban areas makes a significant impact on the total volume of migration. The correlation between total number of migrants and the number of migrants in *search of livelihood* is highly positive at 0.998, which is significant at 1 percent. The coefficient of determination is estimated at 0.995, which implies that 99.5% of the variation in migration into urban centers can be accounted by in-migrants induced by livelihood opportunities. The *F* value is estimated at 1054, which is significant at
1percent implying that there is less than 0.1 % probability that such a large F ratio will emerge by chance alone and thus the regression model overall predicts total migration efficiently. The $t$ value is estimated at 32.467 at 1percent significant level, indicating that migration induced by a search for better livelihood makes a significant impact on the total volume of migration. Finally, $b_1$ representing the gradient of the regression line is estimated at 3.169, implying that 1000 persons migrating into urban centers for livelihood will induce an overall increase in migrants by 3169.

(ii) Again, another linear regression analysis is undertaken to show the relationship between total employment and the informal sector employment. Correlation between total employment and employment generated by the informal sector is highly positive at 0.992, significant at 1percent level indicating a genuine relationship between the total employment available in Guwahati city and employment generated by the informal sector. The coefficient of determination is estimated at 0.983, which implies that informal sector employment accounts for 98.3 % of the variation in the total employment of the city. $F$ value is estimated at 533.719 with 1percent significant level. The $t$ value is estimated at 23.102 with the corresponding 1percent significant level implying that total employment induced by informal sector employment makes a significant impact on the total volume of employment in the city. $b_1$ representing the gradient of the regression line is estimated at 1.121, implying that employment of 1000 created in the informal sector will generate additional employment opportunities to the extent of 1121.

(iii) Out of the total migrant respondents, as many as 85.9 percent were male while 14.1 are female. Most of the female respondents were found to join in the informal service sector as beautician in beauty parlour, as worker in building construction sites, as part-time worker in household, as street vendor
and few were seen as house-wives but seeking for employment. Apart from that very few are engaged in government and private jobs.

(iv) Age is a significant factor in migration and the study revealed that 86.50 percent of the migrants were in their most productive period (i.e. age group of 15-45 years).

(v) The married status of the majority of the migrants (65%) implies that migration of this nature will induce a significant volume of associational migration.

(vi) Majority of the sample migrants in the city belong to the general category (56.9%) followed by schedule tribe of 6.6 percent, schedule caste of 17.5 percent and other backward community of 19.1 percent.

(vii) Regarding religion of the migrant respondents, 76.18 percent of the migrants were Hindu while 23.6 percent were Muslim and only 0.22 percent was Christian. It was found in the study that most of the male Muslim migrants were unskilled labourers engaged in construction activities, as vendors and also as tailors and drivers in the service sector while females were engaged in construction activities and as part-time worker in households.

(viii) So far as community of the respondents is concerned, the study revealed that 55.7 percent of the total sample migrants belong to Assamese community while Non-Assamese community consists of 44.3 percent of the total migrant sample. The Non-Assamese community in the city mainly comprises of the Bengali (24.1%) and Bihari (11.7%) community.
(ix) The study indicates that in most cases the principal bread-earner was a male member (96% of the total sample migrants) while the supplementary bread-earner was generally a female member, reflecting the patriarchal society of the migrants.

(x) Regarding the size of the migrant families, most of the migrant families are mid-sized (45.01%) consisting of 4 to 6 members. Small sized families are nuclear in nature whereas there is significant number of joint family structure among large sized families.

(xi) It is evident from the study that the vast majority of migrants (94%) sent their children to school. It was also observed that most of the unskilled migrants send their children to study, sometimes even at private English medium school.

(xii) The study clearly indicates the fact that adequate and effective health care facilities as well as a better access to nutrition in Guwahati have significantly improved the quality of life of the migrants. The study shows that there was no incidence of infant mortality for 81.76 percent of the relevant migrant households. Again with respect to maternal mortality, 83.95 percent of the total migrant households have been enumerated without any mortality at child birth.

(xiii) So far as educational attainment of the migrants is concerned, the sample of migrant labours reveal that most of the migrants into Guwahati had been exposed to some form of schooling or the other. From the sample, it is seen that 89.9 percent migrant out of total sample were literates while 86.8 percent have formal educational qualification. Most of the unskilled labour migrants, who have migrated from interior rural places of Assam to the city in search of better livelihood, fall into the category of ‘illiterate’ and ‘literate without formal schooling’. The percentage of migrants with technical
qualification is negligible and constitutes only 1.2 percent out of total sample migrants.

(xiv) It is also evident from the study that most of the migrants (92.43%) in the city are in the age-group of 16 to 35 years, which is the most productive age group of a population.

(xv) The study shows that inter-district migrants (60.5%) dominate inter-state (22.4%) and intra-district (17.1%) migrants.

(xvi) The flow pattern of migration into Guwahati clearly reveals that most of the migrants (98.7%) were found to be part of the rural to urban flow while only 1.3 percent constituted part of the urban to urban flow endorsing the importance of rural to urban migration.

(xvii) The study revealed that most of the migrants (64%) reported their duration of residence to between 2 to 6 years while 28.9 percent reported their duration of stay as 7 to 10 years. Only 7.1 percent had newly arrived with less than one year duration of stay in the city.

(xviii) For male migrants seeking better economic opportunity (84.5%) is the primary reason for migrating to the city whereas for female migrants marriage and family moved (12.7%) are the two most important factors inducing them to migrate.

(xix) Regarding the occupational engagement of the migrants at their place of origin, most of the migrants (89.7%) were engaged in the informal sector (mainly in the agricultural activities) while only 5.7 percent were employed in the formal sector. In the sample, 69.9 percent of the migrants were wage labourers while 25.5 percent were self-employed. The study also reveals that
as the sample migrant labours moved into Guwahati, the unemployment rate in the group fell by 1.31 percent. Besides, there was a marked shift in employment in the group from the informal sector to the private formal sector. Guwahati provides numerous opportunities for entrepreneurial activities, which are in many instances, accessed by members of the migrant labour force leading to an enhancement in their occupational status from wage-earners to self-employed.

(xx) So far as access of training of the migrants are concerned, out of total sample migrants, 15.9 percent migrants having access to training facilities and out of that only 9.9 percent migrants have accessed formal training from specialized institutions. Thus the sample reveals that only a small number of migrants have access to training facilities which are desperately needed to improve their skills and efficiency at the work place.

(xxi) The sample of migrants in the labour force reveals that 29.85 percent of the migrants have to work without a single break in the week. This group includes mainly self-employed and low paid daily wage earner labourers. However the majority in that group (60.95%) work for the conventional _six days a week_, which do not constitute exploitation, in that sense. However the rest of the migrant workers (9.2 %) work for 5 days a week or less, which can be interpreted as instances of underemployment forced upon them due to insufficient work.

(xxii) The sample migrants are segregated into three income groups, i.e. upto Rs.6000 (unskilled), Rs. 6001- Rs.15000 (semi-skilled) and Rs.15001 and above (skilled). Most of the sample migrants (54.60%) were found in the second category, i.e. semi-skilled. The sample reveals that a significant 37.46 percent of the migrants in Guwahati have to sustain themselves at the base wage-rate or even lower, with monthly income upto Rs.6000. This is in line
with the generally accepted perception that most migrants are illiterate and unskilled and hence are compelled to work at low skilled jobs at the minimum wage-rate. However the majority of the migrants (54.6%) enjoy income in the range Rs. 6001-15000, which is over and above the base-rate.

(xxiii) In the family budget, the priority allocation was made for food where more than half (57.09 %) of the sample migrant workers were observed to spend 40 to 60 percent of their total income on consumption of food.

(xxiv) So far as type of dwellings of the sample migrants is concerned, more than half of the total sample migrants (55.3%) live in pucca houses while 44.7 percent resides in kutcha houses. Again, the pattern of ownership of accommodation of the migrants indicates that only 15 percent out of total sample migrants dwell in houses which they own whereas the majority 85 percent live in rented house. Hence, it is evident that owning a house remains the biggest aspiration for the migrants in Guwahati.

(xxv) Regarding the accessibility of basic amenities like electricity and safe drinking water facilities, majority of the migrants (97.26%) in Guwahati enjoyed access to electricity while most of the sample migrants (76.5%) were suffering due to inadequate drinking water facilities.

(xxvi) So far as the accessibility of other basic amenities are concerned, majority of the sample migrants (68.7%) had reported to having access to good transport facility, indicating the availability of adequate transport communication in the city.

(xxvii) The health care facility in the city is highly modernized but at the same time private healthcare facilities are expensive too. In the study, 66 percent of the sample migrants had stated the access to healthcare facilities to
be moderate while 19.1 percent and 14.9 percent had stated it to be poor and good respectively. In spite of the presence of government hospitals and primary healthcare centres in Guwahati, access to medical facilities in the city for the poor and the vulnerable section of the sample migrants, is a cause for great concern in a scenario of spiraling health bills.

(xxviii) The study perceived a significant intervention of the government sponsored child immunization programme on the sample migrant where 92.76 percent migrants reported access this facility for their child out of which 83.88 percent availed this facility regularly.

(xxix) Access to adequate sanitation improves the basic level of hygiene of the migrants and their families. The study reveals that 76.51 percent of the sample migrants have access to good sanitation facility while 23.49 percent suffer due to poor sanitation.

( xxx) Access to various consumer durables is another indicator of the standard of living. In the study, mobile phones is revealed to be the most essential consumer durable, with a large number of sample migrants (79.8%) using them for easy business and social communication. Besides, consumer durable such as T.V and refrigerators are also becoming an important part of the consumption basket of durable goods of the migrants.

( xxxi) Regarding the ownership of conveyance, the study shows that more than half of the migrants (67.84%) do not have their own conveyance. Although this may be the result of adequate transport facility in the city, however, there were some respondents who revealed that their inadequate income prevents them from purchasing their personal means of conveyance. Besides, the migrants who do have their personal conveyance mostly restrict
themselves to bicycles and two wheelers implying that their purchasing power is rather limited.

(xxxii) The study also revealed that most of the migrants (73.7%) do not possess non-movable assets such as land, house etc. as such assets are very difficult to acquire specially in a metropolitan city like Guwahati. Among the few migrants who do own non-movable assets, their property is confined to mostly work-place, indicating that they would strengthen their means of livelihood over the luxury of private residence, when they have an opportunity to do so.

(xxxiii) In the study, it was found that most of the sample migrants (72.3%) have invested some portion of their income in financial institutions in the formal sector. However, some of the low income earners among the sample migrants (17.2%) were observed to have invested in various informal financial instruments and organizations exposing themselves to unnecessary risks.

5.2 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

In most developing countries, development activities are focused in the big towns and cities. The rapid expansion of trade & commerce along with industrial development has resulted in the concentration of employment opportunities and socio-economic infra-structures in these urban centres. Given the relative underdevelopment of the rural areas in India which manifests into low wages and under employment, the existing disparity serves as an inducement for rural-urban migration.

Although this research study fails in its attempt to explain rural-urban migration on the basis of The Harris-Todaro model, however, it establishes a significant relationship between migration rate in Guwahati and the density of
population and per capita gross domestic product at the place of origin. On the basis of the results, we can conclude that a greater population density acts as a push factor in the rural areas inducing migration into Guwahati. On the other hand, per capita gross district domestic product in rural areas has been established to have a positive impact on Guwahati’s in-migration rate. This may be interpreted as people belonging to relatively higher income zones having a greater propensity to migrate because of their relatively higher education and skills which is reflected in the higher gross district domestic product.

However, contrary to the findings of this research, which rejects the Harris-Todaro model in the context of rural-urban migration into Guwahati, most literature on rural-urban migration endorses the model which explains rural-urban migration in terms of expected urban-rural wage differentials. There is also unanimity in migration literature on the fact that the concentration of socio-economic infrastructure in urban centres, greater livelihood opportunities and access to modern amenities acts as a major inducement for people in rural areas to migrate to cities.

The unfettered flow of rural migrants imposes tremendous pressure on existing infrastructures of the towns and cities creating undesirable fallout in the form of unemployment, congestion, slums & squalor, environmental degradation and spiralling crime rate. Economic plans by focusing their allocation in urban centres contributes to the problem by aggravating the urban-rural disparity which accelerates the rural to urban flow of migrants.

Guwahati is the engine of growth for the entire north eastern region, however its uncontrollable expansion is generating unmanageable problems resulting in a significant decline in the quality of life of the population. Due to unfettered migration, the city has become overcrowded leading to
unimaginable congestion. This has imposed tremendous pressure on all basic infrastructures leading to immense discomfort and misery for its residents. With the increase of population in city, the per capita investment requirements in the infrastructure and overheads are also increasing at a rapid pace. Under the circumstances, there is a growing realisation that the future growth of the city must be rationally planned and unchecked in-migration regulated if it is to be protected from the inevitable decline and decay. It is imperative that the ad-hoc policies related to urbanization and migration need to be replaced by a consistent, logical and a systematic strategy which can be sustained over a long period of time. In this context, some suggestions/recommendations have been put forward:

Rural-urban migration into Guwahati is due to a number of push factors operating in rural areas and pull factors emanating from Guwahati. A comprehensive policy to regulate this form of migration must address relevant factors both at the place of origin and at the place of destination.

➢ Inadequate livelihood opportunity in rural areas is one of the most important factors inducing the upwardly mobile rural population to migrate to Guwahati. Hence any policy that seeks to retain the most productive segment of the rural population must address this issue.

Considering the fact that agriculture and allied activities play the dominant role in a rural sector, both in terms of income generation as well as employment, it becomes imperative that the initial focus should fall on it.

- The traditionally low agricultural productivity should be raised by promoting adoption of modern agricultural practices through well thought out extension services and adequate provisions.
Consolidation of land holdings should be promoted and the use of better inputs should be facilitating with the provision of easy and adequate credit.

Such activities should be made more profitable with the provision of improved transport and communication, adequate cold storage facilities and efficient marketing infrastructure.

Given the limited scope of agriculture in generating income and employment, growth in this sector must be supplemented by thriving allied activities like horticulture, sericulture, dairy farming, animal husbandry, pisciculture etc. In achieving this, government extension interventions and availability of credit has an equally important role. In recent years Non Government Organization (NGO) also had made significant contribution towards this end, which needs to be encouraged.

Again, there is huge potential for agro-based industries to flourish in the rural sector as they are operationally complementary to the primary sector. In this context, a comprehensive entrepreneurship development programme could efficiently identify potential entrepreneurs, trained them and finance their projects. This could be a way forward to generate a thriving and self-sustaining manufacturing sector which is ideal for rural areas as they require substantially lower capital, less advanced technology and are highly labour intensive.

Besides livelihood, absence of basic amenities is also another reason for migration among the rural population. Creation of adequate infrastructure on health and education would serve as a strong inducement to the rural population to remain back as these two amenities are considered to be essential in the modern world. Besides, availability of safe drinking water,
sufficient electricity, improved transport and communication etc. enhances the quality of life and acts as a strong disincentive to migrate.

- A large chunk of the rural migrants are made up of landless labourers who are forced to migrate under distress due to the abject poverty that prevails among them. The state has assumed the moral responsibility of providing work for them so that a minimum of income is generated to sustain themselves and their family. Programmes like NREP, RLEGP, JRY, PMRY, EAS, MGNREGA have played a critical role in fighting rural poverty, although more efficient implementation, greater accountability and minimization of leakages could substantially increase their efficacy. Under ideal conditions, the citizens of a country should not be displaced due to distress arising out of poverty. An expanded, more efficient and accountable poverty alleviation programme could go a long way towards achieving that.

Migration to large cities is often an inevitable consequence of unequal development and the existence of geographical dualism. Thus, despite all effort it is virtually impossible to contain rural-urban migration although it can be regulated to a certain extent. Under the circumstances, managing the flood of in-migrants within the context of the perspective plan of the city appears to be a more viable alternative over any steps to completely prevent the inflow.

- One of the most visible impacts of rampant migration into Guwahati city is the increasing congestion in accessing almost all basic amenities. Such a phenomenon is reflected in rising cost of accommodation, drinking water scarcity, frequent power cuts, traffic jams, proliferation of slums and squalor, increasing crime rates etc. Under the circumstances, it becomes imperative for the city planners to adopt a multi-pronged strategy to address the problem.
The short term strategy for addressing the many ills of unfettered growth of the city can be by formulating and implementing focused programmes of slum development and urban renewal as part of the master plan of the city. In this regard, various policies like the slum development policy, urban housing policy, pollution control measures, etc. undertaken by the Government, are focused towards improvement and rehabilitation of the urban poor and homeless rather than pushing for eviction, clearance and redevelopment. In a move aimed at checking proliferation of slums, the Central Government has recently launched an ambitious low-cost housing scheme ‘Rajiv Awas Yojana’ (RAY) to facilitate affordable housing for slum dwellers conferring property rights to them whereby they can enjoy access to decent shelter, basic amenities and dignified life. These are positive developments which have the potential to make a difference to the life of the urban poor which are mired in poverty and despair.

On a more specific level, development of adequate and efficient sanitary infrastructure is essential to combat squalor and sickness in low-income localities in the city where to most of the migrants heads. The Government should co-ordinate all urban sanitation programs while encouraging public participation including participation of non-governmental voluntary organizations for implementing and supervising urban sanitation programs. Besides, special allocation should be made to establish primary health centers providing various family welfare and child development services and supplies in areas inhabited by the vulnerable section of the society where incidence of infant mortality, maternal mortality and the overall morbidity and mortality are the highest.

A very viable long-term solution for combating the ills of urban congestion is to promote the establishment of satellite township which
can take the form of a self-supporting sub-city planned within the natural ambit of the parent city. Such a strategy is intended to stop urban sprawl by providing an alternate mini central business district (generally with independent municipal authority) with high-speed mass-transit facilities between the major city and its satellites. Satellite township has the merit of being self-contained and limited in size while being in the vicinity of a large town or city, which enables them to house and employ those who would otherwise create a demand for expansion of the parent city.

➢ Most of the migrants in Guwahati make a livelihood in the informal sector. All employees in this sector are exploited with poor wage and a complete absence of any form of social security. Under those conditions, most migrants are forced to survive at the subsistence level living in constant fear of the uncertainty associated with their daily income or unexpected misfortunes in the form of illness, accident and death of the bread-earner. Given the circumstances, it is imperative that the vulnerable segment of the citizens should be brought within the ambit of the social security net. Besides, the informal sector, which encompasses them, should be brought within the purview of state regulation so that employing units adhere to basic human rights which are due to the hapless migrants. This is especially relevant for female migrants engaged as domestic servants, who are made to work at poor wage over extended hours under abominable working conditions.

Although the explosive growth of Guwahati city, mostly fuelled by rural-urban migration, has resulted in massive problems threatening to plunge the city into a path of decay, however, acknowledging the problems and making a conscious effort to address them can go a long way in converting the challenges into opportunities. To do this, initially recognition must be given to the contribution, of the informal sector and the migrants who work in them, to the overall development of Guwahati. This will enable the city planners to frame an all comprehensive plan for the development of the city, which will include all stake holders making it consistent and sustainable.