AN EPILOGUE

In view of the social, institutional, economic and infrastructural constraints prevailing in the Barak Valley region, the employment potential of women has not been adequately utilized by the society as it is evident from the overall labour participation rates of women throughout the region. It is observed that female employment in the region has a variant ecological and cultural matrix. This may happen due to the operation of several factors both at the individual as well as social level which determine the nature and pattern of division of labour in society.

The population density in the Barak Valley region is found to be higher than the Brahmaputra Valley or all India. At the beginning of the 20th century, the sex ratio of Assam was found to be decidedly adverse but it has improved significantly. The sex ratio in Barak Valley is found to be significantly high as compound to Assam or the country as a whole. Significantly, the sex ratio in Assam has improved when the sex ratio for the country as a whole has been declining which is, no doubt, an extremely positive demographic development. However the women work force participation in Assam is much lower (208 per 1000 persons) than the all India rate (257 per 1000 persons) and the Barak Valley region is lagging much behind (140 per 1000 persons). This revealed the grim state of unemployment scenario prevailing in the region in case of both rural and urban areas. Though women contribute significantly to household incomes, however, officially these women workers are not recognized as the definition of the worker adopted by the census does not include the seasonal agricultural labour in the category of the worker. The marginal nature of female labour, however, responsible for lowering the overall wage rates for women and for the providence of their uncongenial working conditions. Moreover it was observed that participation of the
farm women in different social institutions and organization was very poor.

The suggestions based on the study for undertaking steps in this direction have already been outlined. However, accelerated growth rate of the agricultural sector of the region requires equal participation by both male and female labour without which no sustainable growth can be achieved. At the same time utilisation of potential women worker and transfer of disguised male unemployed from agriculture to other allied sector needs immediate attention. Thus it is imperative that farm women should be encouraged and motivated to participate in various organizations for which women's organization like Self Help Groups should be promoted in the region. The micro finance institution also should be revamped. Further research on diversification of agricultural and innovation of women friendly technologies in this sector should be given priority in the development agenda for the Barak Valley region.