We have come to the end of our study. We have shown how with the rapid growth of urbanisation and industrialisation, the problem of dehumanisation of city centres, especially in developing countries has taken an alarming shape. It is generally observed that in a growing city centre, the worst sufferer is the poor section of people, who under compelling circumstances cannot lead a life better than the beasts of burden. The poor are not merely deprived of the basic material necessities but are poor in the enjoyment of a total way of life. While the concept of poverty necessarily signifies material deprivation in comparison to the average standard of living of any particular community or society. Guwahati, the capital city of Assam ranks as one of the fastest growing and the costliest city in the country. Like any other city, Greater Guwahati also possesses disgraceful slums and scattered settlements with all those typical problems of the urban poor people.

We have found out that poverty varies inversely as the per capita income at micro-level. It was observed in 1960 (NCAER estimates) that the bottom 20 per cent of the urban population of India had only 4 per cent of the aggregate income. Actually the poor class of working population with limited knowledge, skills and capital resources are engaged in economic activities where levels of income are usually very low though most of them work very hard.
Unemployment as well as underemployment are recognised aspects of the problem of poverty. In urban areas of developing countries, casual workers, both skilled and unskilled, and the educated middle class workers are adding to the underemployed population with the growth in urban population. The poor of the country are more underemployed than unemployed and the worst poverty afflicts the large classes of the self-employed in an economy where self-employment is the rule.

One major component of the process of urbanisation is the rural-urban migration stream, and this is also greatly responsible for the growth of urban poverty. It is observed that the factors that induce rural urban migration are overwhelmingly economic although non-economic factors are also observed to a certain extent in certain instances as in our field survey, 97.59 per cent migrant workers migrated due to economic reasons. Since most of these people happen to be illiterate or with low level of education and semi-skilled or unskilled, their employment perspectives are confined to low wage employment structure only.

Illiteracy and ignorance is a complicated social problem that stands behind almost all the miseries of the poor section of people in urban areas. We found out during the course of our field observation that employment potentiality in case of illiterates and persons of lower educational level was very limited while most of them remained unemployed in various types of works and most of them were being engaged in self-employment. These people find themselves deprived of different types of incentives because of their ignorance about these matters.
Vices like gambling, alcoholism and drug-addiction, smoking etc., and some expensive social and religious practices like marriage ceremony, rituals on birth and death etc. happen to be either the causative factors of poverty or the factors to create more deteriorating economic conditions of the low income group people especially the slum and pavement dwellers.

Another complex socio-economic problem is the beggar problem that needs the special attention of the social workers and planners. The need is to eradicate urban poverty and also some other related problems such as pollution of city atmosphere, vices like prostitution, theft, robbery etc.

The growth of population whether in an individual family of low income group or in the community as a whole can become very burdensome on the society. This problem can be approached from various angles, e.g., from economic front to some other non-economic fronts like health and hygiene, education, accommodation etc. And the worst sufferers in these regards are always the poor section of people in a society.

Thus along with the problem of population growth, the problem of housing, accommodation, especially to the poor remains a very serious problem to the town planners and social workers. Very often the situation with regard to facilities like water supply, sanitation and drainage and lighting in the hutment areas and tenements is observed to be more critical than the problem of housing itself.
Due to these persisting problems, e.g., problems of providing accommodation including sanitation and lighting facilities etc., illiteracy and ignorance, i.e., low level of education and skill, population growth etc., we find a poor quality of human capital among the urban poor section of people. As such, incidences of high infant mortality, child mortality, maternal mortality and morbidity are most presumably observed in slum and pavement dwellings of urban areas.

Such socio-economic conditions are taken by the sociologists as a major cause of crime and delinquency. It can be observed that economic miseries have a greater influence on crime in an actively developing urban area than in a stabilized rural area. Slum culture in urban area is conducive to some criminal and delinquent behaviour, especially vices like alcoholism, drug-addiction, gambling, prostitution, burglary, robbery, looting and even murder, etc.

Another significant socio-economic problem in our study is the problem of child-labour, which is mostly the product of poverty and unequal development. Death of parents or earning member of the family, unemployment and underemployment, big family with low income, illiteracy of parents etc. are the main causative factors of child labour. In a developing country like India, child-labour has been justified on the economic ground. The problem is how to do away with it altogether. So removal of poverty is of emergent necessity if we are to eradicate the problem of child-labour itself.

Thus from our study on urban poverty from different perspectives we can come to the conclusion, supporting our hypothesis that urban poverty is the cause and effect of several related socio-economic problems.
So far as the sociological aspects of the problem of urban poverty are concerned we have to get entangled in a chain of related problems. And as far as our observation is concerned we are prone to lay emphasis on the fact that we require a better quality of human capital for the entire nation. Here it may be noted that a real egalitarian structure of society would have minimised all these problems. To lessen the degree of inequality of income as far as possible, skilled as well as trained workers are needed. Employment oriented schemes should be encouraged and the Government should offer more and more incentives to such schemes and also to various self-employment programmes.

The over-flow of rural urban migration stream must be checked in order to eradicate the problem of urban poverty. For that purpose, appropriate steps should be taken to remove under-employment conditions in rural areas by creating an atmosphere of employment incentives. From this stand-point, we would like to add that at this stage of development, we need much more cottage industries, village based small and medium scale industries than are existing at present. Actually if we can put a check to this rural urban migration, stream, the rapid rate of growth of population among the low income group people in the urban areas will correspondingly decrease. At the same time, Family Planning Programmes with attractive incentives must reach successfully each and every slum and pavement family in order to check population growth.
If population growth could be checked to a certain extent, it will be easier by far to plan for housing accommodation or at least for improving the existing sub-human conditions of living of the urban poor. These people need to be inducted in areas of promotion of health and hygiene and they deserve to be provided with low cost housing facilities. And vigorous steps should be taken to educate the poor section of people about the incentives, loans etc. to earn a better living.

Regarding the level of education, it is urged that the scheme of Universal Primary Education should be properly implemented. Adequate steps should be taken to remove the defects of the existing problems in this regard. At the same time, implementation of Adult Education Programmes is also urgently needed if we are to get a good quality of human capital from the younger generation. Education should be able to enable people to earn at least the minimum necessities to lead a decent living. Then only the mass of the people will become interested in formal education. The main point is that there should be a proper balance among these three things, viz., necessity, labour and earning. That will help in solving many problems.

People should be discouraged socially against the expenses in social practices like marriage ceremony, rituals on birth, death etc. Anti-dowry campaigns should be more vigorously publicised and severe legal action should be taken against any offence regarding this matter which will relieve almost all the poor families having female children. In this regard, the upper class people should put restraints in their unnecessary extravagance so that other people can be induced to resort to simple ceremonies. Comparatively well off section of people may be induced to set examples in this regard.
Campaigns for prohibition against alcoholism, drug-addiction etc., sponsored by Government organizations and some other social-welfare organizations should reach all people in the slums, hutment and pavement dwellings of different urban areas of the country. This might help in improving the economic and physical condition of the urban poor people.

It is very frequently observed that different welfare organizations and institutions can never fulfill their aims and objectives due to one reason or the other. Here, from our field experiences, we would like to suggest that Vagrant Homes, Lepers' Homes etc. should be provided with facilities to rehabilitate the vagrants of the respective localities. It is often felt that the majority of the beggar section of the people do not want to do hard and laborious work; they would rather wander lazily throughout the city-streets. Planners and social workers should take proper step, taking notice of this peculiar weakness of the needy people.

It may not be possible to wholly ban child-labour in a welfare state like India in the near future also as it has its roots in the economic conditions. But planners and social reformers ought to remember the principles embodied in the U.N. Pronouncements on the subject. At the same time


The child shall not be admitted to employment before an appropriate minimum age, he shall in no case be caused or permitted to engage in any occupation or employment which would prejudice his health or education or interfere with his physical, mental or moral development.
practical implementation of the programme of free and compulsory education for the children is urgently needed. Our National policy also states that no child under 14 years shall be permitted to be engaged in any haphazard occupation or be made to undertake heavy work. Another important matter to be taken note of is the National Policy that children shall be given priority for protection and relief in terms of distress and natural calamity.

Lastly, we would like to add that in Greater Guwahati, i.e., our field area, one will not come across the typical big slum pockets like those of the million plus cities. But considering, the rapid rate of growth of the city there is every possibility of growth of such slums within the next decade, if things are not planned from now on by the powers that be. It is readily recognised that "Prevention is better than Cure". Much depends on a well-planned city with necessary facilities for the urban poor as well. Let the benefits of development cover all sections of people on an equitable basis.

3. Ibid., objective (Xii), p. 46.