CHAPTER – 10

CONCLUSION
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The genus *Aquilaria* (Thymelaeaceae) is well known for the production of highly valued agarwood (agar). There are several species of this genus and the present study concerned with the domestication and conservation of *Aquilaria malaccensis* as this species is found in Barak Valley of Assam. The species is a NTFP. The natural (wild) sources of this species are declining rapidly day by day and becoming endangered and vulnerable due to constant uncontrolled harvesting and felling of the trees from the forests.

The present study reveals that the local people of the study sites showed interest in domesticating the agar seedlings in their homegardens. This could be because of the people’s awareness towards this species as a commercial species. Also frequent field visits for monitoring the species has also generated some interests among the farmers to conserve this species in their homegardens. This was also revealed during the distribution of agar seedlings when a few farmers were eager to take more seedlings as their homegardens were larger in size. Considering the status of Agar in the IUCN Red List as vulnerable, this initiative of increasing population of agar through domestication by small holder farmers is perhaps the best way to conserve this threatened species. This is also indicated by the inverse ‘J’-shaped girth class distribution of agar trees in homegardens and forest gardens of the villages of the study sites. Some of the farmers in the study villages, who had already domesticated and conserved the species knowing its commercial importance were helpful in disseminating this knowledge to others which helped in further domestication when seedlings were distributed to the villagers during 2009 and 2010. In this context, it is pertinent to mention that homegardens and forest gardens are the sites for domestication of threatened species and such a process needs strengthening through farmers’ participation and encouragement.

Consequently, there is need for conservation of the species through domestication to relieve pressure on the harvest of natural population. Efforts to domesticate agarwood depend upon knowledge related to various aspects of the species. So, the local communities are being involved in domestication programme who have
some proper knowledge about the domestication of the species and by distributing seedlings to the local people of the study sites to enhance the process of domestication in their homegardens. *Aquilaria* seeds supply from the wild is limited for planting and research programme. So, vegetative propagation through seedling nursery and distribution of seedlings promote their conservation and sustaining the production of agarwood. It is therefore very much essential to undertake an applied scientific research to determine the amenability of *Aquilaria malaccensis* to vegetative propagation and techniques to optimize its success.