PREFACE

Human Development has emerged as very important area of study since the publication of first Human Development Report by UNDP in 1990. After many decades of development, we are rediscovering the fact that people are both the means and end of economic development. Often this simple truth gets obscured and "human beings" are conveniently forgotten. The basic purpose of development is to enlarge peoples choices which actually included in the study of human development.

While economic growth focuses exclusively on expansion of only one choice income, Human Development embraces the enlargement of all human choices-whether economic, social, cultural and political. The introduction of "ethical" consideration has been the hallmark of this approach. Human Development Index (HDI) is a tool used to measure the non-income dimension of the quality of life (along with income).

In course of my work in the UGC major research project entitled "Status of Human Development in North Eastern States"as Research Fellow, I found that research work relating to Human Development in North East in general and Assam in particular is very scanty.

After so many years of developmental experience, the people of this state, with their own characteristic problems are still engaged in a bitter struggle for survival. What has escaped the attention of the planners and policy makers is that economic development with undue attention to Human Development will result in concentration of
benefits of economic development in a few limited hands. This will result in emergence of the feeling of deprivation, negligence and alienation among the people.

The turmoil in the state is more a outcome of low level living rather than low level of economic development, a disturbing feature which needs to be arrested immediately. All these vital, but neglected issues call for examining the real development problems of the state, which is deeply associated with the study of Human Development. This prompt me in undertaking the present study, which I hope will be useful for researchers, academicians, planners and policy makers in the state.

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