CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS
5.1 **MAJOR FINDINGS:**

The analysis of data and its interpretation made in chapter 4, lead to the following major findings:

1. Higher education, in Barak Valley, is predominantly accessible to urban residents and the rural residents continue to suffer from disadvantage in this respect.

2. There is a predominance of males over females in college attendance in general. However while in the urban areas there seems to be almost equal access to both the sexes, in the rural areas the females are grossly under represented.

3. The courses such as Engineering and Technology, Computer Science, Medicine, BCA, Law, Social Work etc. with greater potential for employment in key sectors of modern Indian industry, are dominated by urban males and the rural males and females both have very limited access to such courses.
4. Hindus have several times greater access to higher education as compared to the Muslims despite the fact that the latter constitute about 46% of the population of this region. However, other religious communities especially the Christians seem to be represented in the same proportion to in which they exist in the society. Not only do the Hindus have disproportionately greater access to higher education in general, but they also dominate the courses with greater employment potential. Among the Muslims only the elite sections seem to have access to higher education but even they have restricted access to courses with greater employment potential.

5. Among the various categories of General, OBC, SC and ST, General category families have greater access to higher education especially to the courses with greater employment potential while the other categories especially the SC’s and ST’s have, whatever little access, to the liberal arts courses only.

6. The scene of higher education is dominated by the persons whose fathers are highly educated. In this regard it may be mentioned that the children of fathers with less than a high school education have very few chances of getting higher education. Even the mothers of the college going students are also highly educated. Education of parents brightens the chances of daughters’ higher
education even more than those of the sons. Again, the higher the educational attainments of parents greater are the chances of children joining the courses with greater employment potential like professional courses of Engineering and Technology, Medicine, BCA, Computer Science, Laws, Social Work etc. Though there are few students on the rolls of colleges whose parents may not be highly educated, but there is at least one member each in their families who has at least a high school education and the chances of attending a college are brightened especially of attending professional courses, if some member in the family is a graduate, not necessarily one of the parents.

7. Facilities of higher education are almost completely accessible to the children of fathers in non-manual occupations. Even mothers of participants, if employed outside home, are employed in only non-manual occupations or otherwise mothers are busy only in looking after their homes. In case, mother or father is not employed in non-manual occupation, at least one member of the family of each college going student is employed in a non-manual occupation. The children of families with no member employed in non-manual occupations have very few chance of going to college and still fewer chances of going in for courses with greater employment potential.
8. Higher education is found be accessible to the children of families with high per capita income and despite the provision of highly subsidised higher education system and the provision of freeships, financial assistances, etc children from the poor families are not able to avail the opportunities especially those from the weaker sections of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes etc. Again, whatever small fraction of students that come from poor sections of the society they are not enrolled in the courses that have high employment potential and have to be content with liberal arts courses.

9. A vast majority of the college going students have had their secondary schooling in private schools and very few of them came from the poorly managed government run schools. Again, howsoever small number of students from government run schools are in colleges are mainly in liberal arts streams leaving the courses with employment potential for graduates of private secondary schools, who essentially come from the highly educated non-manual workers’ families.

10. The presumption that higher education is accessible only to the meritorious secondary school graduates is also belied by the fact that the majority of the students in the colleges in Barak Valley had obtained lower than 60% marks in the higher secondary school examination,
although on an average students in professional courses like Engineering and Medicine had higher percentage of marks than others. Again the male college goers had a better score in the Higher secondary school examination than their female counterparts.

11. Majority of the college students aspired to obtain postgraduate degrees in their subjects of study, some did not want to continue beyond the first degree while a very small proportion aspired to continue till a research qualification.

12. Occupational aspiration of the college students indicate that business, employed professional work, school teaching and clerical work are the most preferred occupations among the young people and very few of them seem to be inclined to take up responsibilities of superior administration and independent professional work.

Summing up, these findings show that the higher education in Barak Valley is accessible to the children of families of general category urban families employed in non-manual occupation. Hindus among these groups have greater access than Muslims and males have greater access than females especially in rural areas. Besides, the families of the college students have a tradition of obtaining comparatively higher levels of education
and have, on an average, higher incomes that enables them to bear the cost of higher education of their children. Moreover, such families being the urban or urbanized middle class families place a high premium on higher education of their children which in turn helps them to ensure the middle class occupational status for the former, as it gives them an edge in the employment market against those whose parents cannot afford to keep their children in the school system longer. This ultimately also leads to the phenomenon called inflation of education which results in the lowering of the standards of education, especially the so called higher education.

5.2 IMPLICATIONS:

The major implication of the findings reported above is that the access to higher education continues to be inequitous. This situation results in serious consequences for both the individuals and the nation as a whole. The young people from the weaker sections without higher education have no chance of entering remunerative jobs and as such no chance of getting integrated into what is called knowledge society into which India aims of developing. Similarly, the pool of talent that these young people in the weaker sections may have, remains untapped to the detriment of the process of National Development. A society where such a large population does not have access to higher education cannot expect to transform itself into modern,
democratic, republic with the socialistic pattern of society, the
goal of Indian society envisaged in the Preamble to the
Constitution of India.

Therefore, it is imperative that the access to higher education,
especially to the courses with greater employment potential and
important for the strategic development of the nation as a
whole, be widened to include the hitherto excluded sections of
the society viz. Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBC's
women and the rural and urban poor. This requires
establishment for quality colleges, especially for the professional
and technical and the ones with greater potential for
employment, in the backward region which are generally
inhabited by these weaker sections. Again, enrolment in the
elite institution be increased to accommodate larger numbers of
young men and women from these sections. Besides, it is
necessary to provide more hostel rooms, book grants,
scholarships, freeships, travel grants and even pocket money in
increasingly larger amounts to increasingly larger numbers from
the weaker sections.

To make such an equitous system of higher education
economically viable, besides government funding of the
institutions of higher education self financing differential fee
structure may also be introduced, so that the well off sections of
the society pay for their children's education as they can afford
to pay. This will help provide better facilities for the weaker sections at the state expenses. Even private institutions be asked to accommodate a certain proportion of students from weaker sections without charging them fees and to provide other facilities. Even the state could bear the expenses of meritorious students from weaker sections taking admission in private colleges of good quality.

Lastly, it must be remembered that success in college depends on the quality of secondary school education also. It is therefore essential to improve the quality of schools in which children from weaker sections study and also support students from these sections in the private schools of good quality. Then, again to make the outcome of higher education equitous, it is important to increase employment opportunities for young people from weaker sections in key sectors of Industry.

However, it must be remembered that if education, especially higher education has to be used as a mechanism of social engineering, only widening the access even to good quality higher education is not going to help. As Boudon has proposed elimination of economic inequality through ensuring the placement in appropriate occupations is necessary. This can be done as suggested by Jencks only through the establishment of political control (state control) over economic institutions that shape our society or in other words through socialistic political-
Without such a control higher education may only serve a dysfunction of strengthening inegalitarian tendencies in the society.

5.3 **SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH:**

Like any other piece of research, the present one suffers from certain limitations. As has been pointed out in chapter 3 in the section on delimitation that the time and resources at the disposal of the investigator being limited the study could not cover a larger geographical area and was restricted to the three districts of Karimganj, Hailakandi and Cachar together called Barak Valley, in southern Assam. Due to this limitation the results may not be applicable to the entire country as the geographical locations and cultural differences and the stages of economic development of a region may be shaping not only the opportunity structure but even how people will avail themselves of the available opportunities. It is therefore suggested that several samples from different regions of each Indian state may be examined to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of the processes and structures of inequality in access to education at different levels and the relationship of these inequalities with the other social and economic institutions such as occupational structure and policies of recruitment only.
In this direction, there is also need to make comparative studies based on regions, groups, categories, etc. in regard to access to higher education. In this study simple descriptive technique of comparing proportions of different subgroups on the various parameters has been employed to arrive at the conclusions reported. To understand the processes of inequality in access to higher education more comprehensively the extent of effect of each determining variable could not be delineated. It is therefore suggested that some studies using the techniques of path analysis may be made so that the relative weights of each determinant of access to higher education could be assessed.