

## PREFACE

Woman's contribution which forms an integral part of any economy is often underestimated and discriminated in different forms in many respects. Many a time the contribution of women is either not given due attention or marginalized while formulating socio-economic development plans. Being characterized by tradition of sex discrimination and social stratification, the Indian women also occupy a place subordinate to men in many occasions, though they contribute lot in agriculture and allied activities either as cultivators or agricultural labourers. The situation in this respect in Assam in general and Barpeta District of Assam in particular is also no less true. Though female cultivators and agricultural labourers form the largest part of female main workers, their work force participation rate is low and their level of living is also very poor. In this work an effort is made to access the role of female cultivators and agricultural labourers in agriculture and allied activities and to present the various dimensions of their socio-economic conditions of Assam in general and Barpeta District in particular. With a logical research framework and based on secondary and primary data, the main six analytical chapters of this work are devoted to the analysis of socio-economic background of rural women of Assam, nature of economic activities of rural women of Assam, role of rural women in agriculture and allied activities, composition of income and consumption and economic conditions of female cultivators and agricultural labourers. The final chapter synthesizes the whole work along with an appraisal of the contemporary position of women population in Assam and a few suggestions for their quality improvement.

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