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# EDUCATION IN

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# NORTH-EAST

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# INDIA

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NIKUNJA BEHARI BISWAS

In the hill areas, western missionaries, proselytization being their main objective, have been the pioneers of progress in the field of education. This book encompasses the entire domain of education in North-Eastern India with special reference to Arunachal Pradesh. It is generally agreed that education takes place in a specific socio-cultural context. But more often than not, our sensitivity to and the lack of knowledge regarding the role of tribal culture lead to unsound educational policies. Accordingly the book examines the development of education in the region. The work is comprehensive one to acquaint the readers within a brief span not only with the modern period education but also of the ancient times in the region. It is hoped that book would be useful for researchers, teachers and planners.

**Dr. Nikunja Behari Biswas** is a Reader in the Department of Education, Assam University, Silchar. Dr. Biswas had earlier worked in Arunachal University, Itanagar. He has contributed numerous articles.

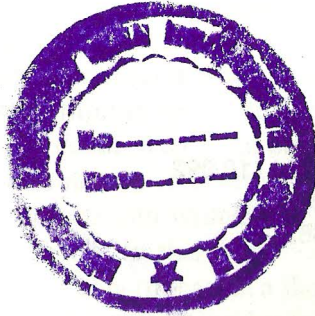
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# Education in North-East India

*(With special reference to Arunachal Pradesh)*

**N B Biswas**



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## FOREWORD

The formal or institutional education has a colonial origin in most parts of North East India, in the sense that the educational institutions started in this region during the British colonial rule. In the two valleys of Assam—the Brahmaputra and the Barak, and in the plains of Tripura and Manipur, the tols and moktabs or similar traditional institutions imparted learning to a very small section of the population in pre-colonial period. In these areas also the mass education made a beginning in the colonial period, although the British educational policy in India had a very limited objective of creating a lettered manpower to serve administration in the subordinate cadres. In the hill areas, the pioneers of progress in the field of education were, however, the western missionaries who, along with reading and writing, emphasised training in useful art and crafts. The proselytisation was, no doubt, their main objective. Nevertheless, the most significant contribution of these missionaries was that they converted the tribal dialects into written languages and prepared the primers for the schools. In this background, the progress of education in the hill areas of north-east in a short period since 19th century must be considered as spectacular by any standard. The development was more rapid in the post-independence period. There are now about five hundred colleges, including a few for legal, medical, technical, and teacher education, and nine Universities for the general education and two agricultural Universities. Needless to say that the primary, secondary and higher secondary schools are proportionate to the number of institutions for higher education. The

literacy rate in the region is also comparable with national average. Mizoram has attained the glory of the second highest literacy rate in the country, although the first high school in Aizawl was established only in 1944. Arunachal Pradesh the land of rising sun or where sun rises first in India, was the latest among the seven sister states of North East India to be ruled by the British. The beginning of modern education in Arunachal was virtually after India's independence. The Towang monastery had been imparting education since ancient time, but it was by and large limited to theosophical learning. The western missionaries entered the field in British time, but the progress till 1947 was not very significant. However, in fifty years since independence the state has reached the highest stage of education with at least seven degree colleges, one University and a regional institute of science and technology. The state government is the main agency for promotion of education in Arunachal Pradesh, but the socio-cultural organisations like the Ramakrishna Mission and the Dony-Polo Mission are also doing excellent works in the state. A Ramakrishna Mission School in Purushattamnagar is now one of the best schools in our country. Similarly, the schools managed by the Dony-Polo Mission in Pasighat and other places are rooted in the culture of the Arunachalis. It must be appreciated that despite geographical isolation and infrastructural and economic backwardness, education is one area in which the north-eastern region of India could make rapid strides towards progress in the post-independence period.

The development of education is an important area of research interest of our scholars. Besides reconstructing a complete profile of educational history, it is important to understand the extent to which education has been able to integrate the culture of the people into the contents and philosophy of learning and the nature of impact that education has been able to make on the socio-economic and cultural advance of the people. My colleague, Dr N B Biswas has made a serious attempt in this direction in his EDUCATION IN NORTH EASTERN INDIA. A Reader in Education, Assam University, Silchar, Dr Biswas had earlier worked in Arunachal University. He utilised his stay in Arunachal in studying the role of

education in the development of the people of Arunachal Pradesh in anthropological and historical perspectives. Therefore, his present study deals with the development of education in north-eastern region of India with special reference to Arunachal Pradesh. It covers a broad range of themes in education, and it is based on both primary and secondary data, including the personal experience of the author in the field. I am sure that the book will be appreciated by those for whom it is written. Nevertheless, there is no last word in research and a pioneering work is always improved upon between the editions. My colleague will welcome academic comments and suggestions for the next edition.

**J B Bhattacharjee**  
Vice-Chancellor  
Assam University

## PREFACE

The present book-the first of its kind-encompasses the entire domain of education in North-Eastern Indian with special reference to Arunachal Pradesh. This volume is an outcome of my long reserarch experience and intimate contact with the tribal people inhabiting different parts of the region. Educators generally agree that education takes place in a specific socio-cultural context. But we are not always clear and precise about the myriad of ways in which cultural factors influence the process of schooling, teaching and learning. More often than not, our sensitivity to and the lack of knowledge regarding the role of tribal culture in education lead to unsound educational policies, ineffective educational practices, and unfair assessment of learners. Accordingly, the primary purpose of this book is to examine education and the development of the people of the state of Arunachal in anthropological and historical perspectives.

The work in a most comprehensive way wants to acquaint the readers within a brief span not only with the Modern Period of education in North East and Arunachal Pradesh but also of the ancient time the type of education which was practiced in the region. The book is the result of indepth study of various sources. Primary data were procured through field study with the help of set of structured tools. A vast variety of secondary sources particularly anthropological and historical research studies conducted by renowned anthropologist and historians like Verriar Elwin, L.N. Chakraborty, H.K Barpujari, J. B. Bhattacharjee, S.N. Sarma and also the sources such as central and state government documents,

non-governmental publications, census reports, etc., proved useful for the analysis of the educational system in a national perspective. So far Arunachal is concerned nothing was known definitely about the conditions prevailing in the area prior to 18th century. We have practically no material written or unwritten, relating to education of this area other than some oral literature. Many writes from outside and within, have written books, pamphlets and articles on Arunachal and writings have been printed and published from time to time. But it is a matter of regret that none of the publications highlights any stage of education in Arunachal Pradesh such as what it was and how the present formal system of education came up.

In order to make the beginning in this process the present volume has been composed. The information of the book is empirical and provided with scientific methodology. The book begins with an interactive analysis of education and development in North East which is followed by a review of the major historical description of the development of education starting from monastic education which has come down to the area of Tawang from China and Tibet and the evolution of formal education in the state of Arunachal. Third chapter of the book presents a decade-wise development of school education (pre-primary, primary, secondary, higher secondary education) which is followed by a trend analysis. The remaining five chapters deal with Higher Education, Teacher Education, Adult and Non-formal, Vocational and Technical Education, Women Education and Educational Management. The last chapter presents the brief review of Panchayatiraj and Educational development in the region. The most vital function of education under planning is not merely imparting knowledge or skills, but developing attitudes and generating a "Climate of growth" and so educational researchers and training have assumed an importance and urgency inadequately appreciated.

Thus I hope this book will enable the students, researchers, teachers and planners to realise the gravity of the problems and prospects of education and the real needs of the region and of our tribal brethren in Arunachal for formulation and implementation

of education policy in the state. This book will be a great help to the students of education (Undergraduate, Postgraduate and at the research level) in North Eastern India in general and Arunachal in particular.

Efforts have been made to cover the various aspects of education in this book, suggestions for its improvement are, however, welcome.

I owe a great deal to my colleagues in Arunachal University and Assam University, Education Experts, Officers, Teachers and Librarians of various institutions in North Eastern India, who extended their full co-operation and help during various stages of my research including finalisation of the book.

I would like to express my gratefulness and sincere gratitude to Prof J B Bhattacharjee, Vice Chancellor, Assam University for writing the foreword of the book.

Assam University, Silchar

**N B Biswas**

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# I

## DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION

### *An Overview*

#### **Introduction**

(The North-Eastern region of the country comprises the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. All these units, excepting the two former princely states of Manipur and Tripura, constituted the erstwhile composite State of Assam. North-Eastern India has been historically subject to the penetration by the people of Mongolian origin and culture in the same way as the north-western passes of the Himalayas had provided for the entry of the Aryans. According to an account by a Naga social scientist : Successive hordes of people of Mongolian races from China and other parts of South-east Asia had passed to the arid mountains and fertile valleys which by the process of time came to be known as Burma, Meiteiland (Manipur), Kamrup (Assam), Tipperah, Bhutan, Sikkim... . Probably many of the earlier migrants passed on into Bengal and merged with the Dravidians and Aryans who were already there from the west and south. In course of time the two races mixed together through marriage, culture, exchange of ideas and values, the outcome of which was a new breed of people.

These Mongolian migrants, the Naga author goes on to say, afterwards known by different names, such as, Kirata, Cine, Koch,

Hajong, Dalo, Garo, Khasi, Mikir, Dimael, Arlung, Chintya, Moran, Kachari, Tipperah, Laling, Rabha, Mech, Lushai, Lakher, Pawi, Arakanese, Poi, Chakma, Kuki, Naga, Meitei, Adi (Abhor), Apatani, Mishmi (Mishing), Turung, Khamyan, etc., settled in the valleys (Brahmaputra, Surma, Manipur) as well as the mountains and the hills which rise from the plains of the Bay of Bengal near Chittagong, Cachar and Assam on one side and from Burma on the other.

However, all these tribes were not homogeneous, but a medley of different races, divided into numerous tribes, sub-tribes and clans under the Mongolian race, different in origin, distinct in language, diverse in physique, character, culture and society, depending upon the peripheral geographical locality. They were often, as we find them today, at loggerheads with one another and with outsiders as well, for which all of them had severely suffered in many ways. The most important of them is a certain lack of cohesion among the people of these origins, arising from the extreme heterogeneity of ethnic composition, further strengthened by the isolation of the different communities, in the north east, imposed by the difficult mountainous terrains.

The region covered 2,55,083 Square Kilometre which form only about 7.95% of the total area of India. There are 3,15,47,314 population in the region which constitute 3.5% of the total population of India. The region is sparsely populated with a density of population far below 100 per square kilometre with the exception of Assam and Tripura each of which has about the same density as the National figure of 273 per Sq. Km. The North - East states are predominantly inhabited by a large number of schedule tribes having different dialects/languages and cultural pattern. There are about ninety nine tribes in the region consists of 81,42,624 population and form 12.02% of the total tribal population in India ( 1991 ). Most of the states in the region are having more than 70% tribal population except Assam and Tripura.

The people of the region are having more than 60 dialects. The North-Eastern region is marked by under development, inaccessibility, isolation, low population density, and dispersed population, largely hilly and difficult terrain, low levels of

States	Area	Population	No. of tribes & sub tribes	Density	% of Total Population aged 0-6	Literacy Rate			SC/ST Population	No. of Districts 1991	No. of Villages 1984
						Total	Male	Fem.			
ARUNACHAL PRADESH ✓	83743 Sqkm.	864558 M-465004 F-399554	22 110	10	21.12	41.59	51.45	29.69	11	3257	
ASSAM	78438 "	22414322 M-111657989 F-10756333	23	286	19.73	52.89	61.87	43.03	23	21995	
MANIPUR	22327 "	1837149 M-938359 F-897890	7 22	82	16.69	59.89	71.63	47.60	8	2035	
MEGHALAYA	22429 "	1774778 M-907687 F-867091	3	79	22.18	49.10	53.12	44.85	5	4902	
MIZORAM	21081 "	689756 M-358978 F-330778	6	33	18.60	82.27	85.61	78.60	3	721	
NAGALAND	16579 "	1209546 M-641282 F-568264	17	73	17.15	61.67	67.62	54.75	7	1112	
TRIPURA	10486 "	2757205 M-1417930 F-1339275	19 17	262	18.03	60.44	70.58	49.65	3	856	
INDIA	255083 "	31547314 M-16387229 F-15160085	97	124	21.80				60	34878	

urbanisation, high cost of living and developing infrastructure and insurgency movements in certain parts. These distinctive features have implications for educational development as well. Although there are marked intra-regional differences, the region as a whole is far behind any other parts of the country in respect of several indicators of development including education.

## Education and Development

Education interacts and is interdependent with the process of development. Social structures, policies and goals exert their influence on the education sector, as on other sectors, while the education sector influences economic and social development by inducing change in technology through the systematic application of scientific and other knowledge, in skill and specialized knowledge for specialized tasks as a consequence of their division and differentiation, and in values and attitude to provide the necessary incentives for increasing productive efficiency. The net change in growth is the result of the modern education, assisted by changes in values and attitudes. For various reasons, it has become an accepted practice to relate development of society to the quality and quantity of education it imparts. Thus, it has become impossible to talk of development without bringing in the subject of education. What should be understood by the word education? Following Robert F. Hutchins, we shall take it "to be deliberate, organized attempt to help people to become intelligent". The link between education and development then becomes obvious. An intelligent man no doubt will be more effective in any profession than an unintelligent one. Since education is essentially a process of qualitative change through the development of the innate capacity of an individual. Attendance at school and the learning-teaching process are means to this end. The desired social and economic changes are the objectives of planned educational system. Thus any socio-economic and cultural changes and progress are the result of the goal-oriented educational planning. While it is agreed upon by the scholars that education is one of the important factors of social change. So, its impact on the development is inevitable. North East India is not exception to this.

Education brings about substantial changes in the socio-economic and cultural life of the people in the State. During the British period there was no developmental infrastructure for North Eastern India. This area was rather allowed to remain isolated from the main stream of Indian life as a matter of policy.

With the emergence of rapid rate of change in the developing and developed countries as a result of new inventions and discoveries in the field of science and technology, the educationists have similarly raised their interest in the study of development. The study of development is at present a common practice among the social scientist like sociologist, anthropologist, economists, educationists, etc. Many a writings can be made available for a detailed discussion on the basic concept of development, but it is beyond the purview of this brief section. Therefore, here an attempt has been made to clarify the operational definition of the concept of development. According to Belshaw, development represents an increase in the capacities of a society to organize for its own objectives, and to carry out its programme more efficiently. He has also examined the impact of education on the society, which to him is both a goal and means. Education in a particular direction may help in the society's estimation of its own performance, and education also creates and channels incentives, personal objectives and occupational skills in the total socio-economic system.

*emphatic* [Schumacher has gone a little ahead by saying "Development does not start with goods, it starts with people and their education, organization and discipline". He also said that "Without these three, all resources remain latent, untapped and potential". His views are found more befitting and convincing when we analyses the ultimate outcome of the above three primary factors as emphasized by Schumacher. Every country or society, not matter how devastated, which had a high level of education, organization and discipline brings tremendous development. Education does not jump, it is a gradual process of great subtlety. Organization does not jump; it must circumstance and much the same goes for the discipline, the society like North East cannot be assessed simply through material gains, as material achievement cannot come alone for which definitely

people are to become conscious, interested and they are to organize their society and develop suitable educational network in order to establish a permanent set up for the development activities.

### **Role of Education in Development**

The idea that education, at every level, is the key to the abolition of poverty, is described as so revolutionary that if social scientists had more self-confidence they would call it a discovery. The research study concludes that the less developed a society, the smaller the influence of home background on achievement and the greater the effect of school variables. Schooling provides not only basic education, but under the best of circumstances it aids a child to explore the world and to express ideas, ask questions and puzzle out answers. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 26, 1948), schooling is a human right. School education, seeks to prepare the child to live not only in his immediate world but to live in the world beyond his daily experience and thus it provides broader national as well as international view points. This then serve as a mechanism for learning a second culture, or acculturation, which almost invariably means the process of learning a modern culture including science, technology and a world view. On the other hand, there is an internationally held consensus that a common "schooling" experience for a specified period of time is essential for the betterment of mankind individually as well as collectively.

School education develop the basic innate abilities of a person to live a full personal life both as an individual and as a member of a family, and an economically productive life as a worker, and a socially useful life as citizen. The origin of the system of school education which is prevalent today in India can be traced to the beginning of the nineteenth century when the Government of the day had surveys made of the then prevalent systems of the education with a view to reorganizing education to suit the needs of the time. Thus, it reveals that India inherit the British system of school education. The society like North East cannot be developed by adopting the system prevailing in the developed society. In the tribal society the concept of development is inclusive of economic

development but differ from it in the sense that it emphasises the development of the totality of the society. On considering the above operational conception of school education, the development of education in North East India has been analysed. For historical reason that region that now constitutes North East India was loosely administered with a little or no accent of educational development. After India's independence the entire area has been brought under the development programmes by the Government.

### **Education in North-Eastern India Through The Ages**

The historical and constitutional documents of North East India reveals that the entire region was with Assam except Manipur and Tripura. There is ample evidence to believe that the region was associated with the country during the Pre-historic period. Thus, looking through the history of the region one can see that the ancient and medieval time the indigenous system of education prevalent in Assam (region) on the one hand and the rest of India on the other hand was similar but not exactly the same. There is no doubt that the pan-Indian system of education in ancient India was mainly Indo-Aryan, sanskrit-oriented. There is no evidence on record whether the non-Aryan indigenous people, who had been living in India prior to the advent of the Aryans, possessed any system of education. Presumably formal education except the hereditary professional learning, was first introduced by the Aryans who migrated to Pragjyotisha or Kamarupa about the beginning of the Christian era. That any organised indigenous system of education could not be expected in ancient Assam. Historians refer from the Umachal rock inscription of Surendravarman or Mahendravarman that the Indo-Aryans penetrated into North-Eastern India prior to the fifth century A.D. It can be inferred that, the Aryans brought with them the system of education prevalent amongst them. Indo-Aryan learning or more precisely the vedic learning must have been cultivated by a section of Aryanised people of this country even before the fifth century A.D. Nothing is known of the non-Aryan or indigenous system of education if any existed at all. With the advent of the Aryans in Kamarupa, the historians opine that the early rulers of Kamarupa became Aryanised with some high status.

Consequently ancient Assam turned into an indo-Aryan language speaking zone along with their Vedic system of education. Literary sources reveals that the ancient system of education and curriculum as prescribed by the dharma-sutras were also followed in Kamarupa. Instructions were imparted, generally through two fold process. Under the *gurukula* system from the *upanayana* or initiation till the ceremony of *Samavartana* the pupil studied at the house of his teacher and carried on his academic life according to the code of conduct prescribed by the *dharama sutras*. The other agency of transmitting education was the hereditary system where in some used to receive education from their fathers. There was another agency, which has been called *parishad in dharmasastra* continued in western Assam particularly in Kamarupa, till the early decades of 20th century. The duration of study was not less than twelve years to attain mastery. During ancient time holidays were also maintained and the list was prepared in accordance with the auspicious and inauspicious days. There had been no teaching learning on inauspicious days.

The curriculum which was practiced during those days include the Vedas and the ancillary branches, philosophy, etc. as that of the other parts of the country. In addition to that Tantric was practiced in Assam. Kamarupa was recognised as one of the important centres of Tantric learning in Eastern India is adequate proof of the existence of the Tantric education in ancient Assam. But existence of an open system of schooling like other branches of knowledge could not be expected in the case of Tantric system because it was considered as secret affair between the guide and the disciple. Literature (Sanskrit) was popular subject. In addition to that Ayurveda, Jyotisha, Astrology, Art and Craft, Art of dancing both classical and folk, architects, etc. were included in the curriculum. The writing materials in Assam was bark of aguru trees (*Acqilaria agolacha* ) because palm and birch trees were rarely grow in Assam. With the introduction of the script the process of educating pupils became much easier. Bhaskaravarman, the then King of Kamarupa maintain schools or *pathasalas* for spread of education. The Buddhistic education also came down to Assam from Nalanda like that of the

emergence of Aryan language script in Assam. The available literature reveals that Buddhistic education which is known as monastic education was in vogue in the North Eastern India. Arunachal Pradesh, particularly Tawang Monastery is the example of the same. In the state of Tripura lot of evidences are available so far Buddhism is concerned, even recent discovery reveals the fact that (in Bengal the bordering area of Eastern India and Assam) the Buddhist monasteries are available. So, the existence of monastic education in North Eastern India can not be ruled out.

Formal or institutional education is different branches of learning was generally imparted in *tols*, *catuspathis* and *pathsalas* by gurus or *adhyapakas* in medieval Assam. Education in crafts and arts were either transmitted on hereditary lines or acquired through the medium of professional guilds or Khels, members of which usually settled in the same locality but it had no formal curriculum. The formal education imparted in *tols* and *pathsalas* was not widespread as to cover all section of the population. It was mainly confined to the upper strata of the society. There is no evidence on record that the students belong to other castes were debarred from admission to schools, but their number was extremely limited. Education of women was also there as it is revealed from medieval *carit puthis* or biographical works.

*Gurukul* system was followed in Assam. No tuition fee was charged. Students used to sit on the ground over which mats of Kusa grass or reeds were usually spread. All the prescriptions of *Dharmasastras* were not followed in toto by pupils of the medieval period. Monitorial system of teaching was in vogue during the period. Such students were called *oja-chatra*. Of course, the people of Assam used to go outside Assam for higher learning. Traditional indigenous knowledge in Art and Craft, Science of medicine, treatment of diseases, architecture were taught and practiced generally on hereditary line. The *satra* institution and its village wing *namghar* served as media of mass education. During late medieval period the *Vaisnavite* *satras* were patronised by Kings for maintaining schools for teaching boys of the disciples and devotees of the *Vaisnavite* system. The monastic, semi-monastic, *tols* etc. were maintained.

Sanskrit language, literature, grammar and lexicon, *Smriti*, *dharamasastra*, *Vedanta*, *Mimamsa*, *Nyaya*, Astrology, Astronomy, Arithmetic, etc. were taught in Assam. Music, dance and musical instruments and various schools of art, architecture designs were learned and practiced by the people. The education was patronised and maintained by the Kings as well as by the voluntary effort of the people. It is reported that some writings were incised in stone slabs and others in copper plates so as to make them permanent. But the usual material on which writing was done was *sachipat*, i.e. bark of agara tree (*Aquilaria agallocha*). As palm trees do not grow in Assam, palm leaves were not used. Tulapat or country made paper made by pressing cotton pulp was also for writing or copying manuscripts, but such manuscripts are less durable than those written on *sachipat*.<sup>1</sup>

Thus it is evident that the education which was prevailing in Ancient and medieval Assam was indigenous and as well as of the rest of the regions of the country. In the hilly regions of the region of north-east, informal education took place mostly through interaction between children and parents in the family and work place in case of the young. As children grew into adolescence they were attached to local dormitories where they received much of the education and training needed in adult life. These dormitories have been powerful institutions with sanction from the local community and served an important educational function as agencies to impart education for the intellectual and emotional development of youth in the community. They remained active till the advent of the Missionaries into the Region when of beginning was made in the introduction of modern formal system of education in the whole Region (Saika, 1973).

The work of the various Christian Missionaries in the North-Eastern Region is well documented and is known. Among the first Missionary groups to arrive in the region were the American Baptist Mission, the Dutch Baptists, other Presbyterian groups and the Roman Catholics. They came to the interior parts of the region where the people worshipped the forces of nature as Gods and where the hold of superstition was supreme. In many places where the

initial groups of Missionaries went they had to face hostility from the local people, and it took them a long time to gain access to the Region and receive acceptability of the people. There followed a period of fruitful interaction between the Missionary groups and the people of the North East Region for the benefit of both. Formal schools were set up in Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and in other hilly terrains of the Region. The dialects of the different tribes in the Region were systematically developed into languages like the Khasi, Garo, Bodo, Mizo and the like. The first printing press and the first newspaper in the Region were started by the Missionaries. Alongwith these developments the Christian faith also found its way into the Region. It is the major religion in the Hill States of the Region to-day and is a powerful force of binding people together. Among the non-Christian missionary groups who worked for the educational upliftment of the Region may be made of the Ramakrishna Mission and Vivekananda Society. Both these groups have been actively working among the various tribes of Arunachal Pradesh.

The impact of Missionary efforts on the overall educational development can be seen if one looks at the literacy scene in the different states of the North East Region. Thus the Lushai Hills (the present Mizoram) where the Missionaries started educational work in about 1890 could surpass the All India literacy percentage of about 16 as early as 1931 (Ralte, 1990). The average literacy percentage for the whole of the North East Region minus Arunachal Pradesh was comparable to All India percentage at the time of Independence. The Census figures of 1981 and 1991 indicate that with the exception of Arunachal and Meghalaya all the other states in the North - East Region have continued to maintain the earlier image of advancement in the percentage of literacy as compared to the national average. Mizoram in particular has continued to occupy a place of pride (81.23% of literacy in 1991) next only to Kerala (90.39% in 1991) literacy camp of India (Sachadeva, 1992). The impact of favourable literacy position of the region is not only limited to school education stage alone, but is also visible at the higher stages of education. A recent analysis (Raza and Aggarwal, 1991) of National Sample Survey, reveals that regions with more than 800 persons per

one lakh population enrolling are included in all the states in the North East Region with exception of Arunachal Pradesh with the lowest enrolment of 61 persons per one lakh population. In this respect six out of seven states in the region enjoy a status similar to the metropolitan cities of Delhi, Calcutta, Madras and Chandigarh and the West coast region of India.

### Primary Education

Universalisation of elementary education, which is a national priority, has three essential ingredients : universal enrolment, minimal drop-outs and enhanced learning achievement not below the Minimum Level of Learning (MLL). In matters of enrolment at primary stage, the states in the region, by and large, are above the national average but in the matter of drop-outs and learning achievement there is a marked disparity between the region and the rest of the country.

The gross-enrolment ratio (GER), as per 6th All India Educational Survey conducted by the NCERT (as on 30th September, 1993) for Class I-V, varies between 92.88 (Assam) to 152.13 (Mizoram) against the national average of 95.32. The GER for class VI-VIII varies between 49.87 (Nagaland) to 76.89 (Manipur) as against the national average of 58.96. The enrolment pattern, though behind the universalization target, is better than the national average in most parts of the region. The situation in respect of drop-outs is however, quite alarming. The following table shows the drop-out rates in 1991-92.

<i>State</i>	<i>Class I - V</i>	<i>I - VIII</i>	<i>I - X</i>
Arunachal Pradesh	59.5	74.9	80.0
Assam	37.8	73.3	78.8
Manipur	67.5	68.5	77.1
Meghalaya	26.7	63.4	85.9
Mizoram	54.8	72.5	70.3
Nagaland	33.2	53.2	70.0
Tripura	62.6	68.7	84.3
India	42.8	57.5	70.3

The drop-out situation in the region is much worse than the rest of the country. Drop-out rates for girls are very high although in terms of average female literacy, the position is better than many other parts of the country.

In matters of learning achievement, the existing situation is a cause for concern. The extremely poor standards for primary education are reflected in secondary and higher education stages as well.

In respect of teachers training, the region is astoundingly deficient. In 1992-93, percentage of untrained teachers varied between 16 (Mizoram) to 67 ( Manipur ) against the national average of 11 for primary level; 20 (Tripura) to 72 (Assam) middle level; 52 (Mizoram) to 70 (Nagaland) against the national average of 10 for High School level. In terms of numbers, over a lakh teachers in the region are untrained.

The percentage increase in enrolment during 1986-93 as reflected by 6th All India Educational Survey figures in various States in the region is as follows :

Sl. No.	State	Percentage increase in enrolment in Class					
		Class Total	I - V Girls	VI - VIII Total	VI - VIII Girls	IX - X Total	IX - X Girls
1.	Arunachal Pradesh	42.52	53.28	85.80	97.23	81.05	123.85
2.	Assam	11.56	16.46	27.14	37.86	38.21	54.40
3.	Manipur	50.40	53.27	53.19	64.57	37.82	51.08
4.	Meghalaya	10.58	10.92	14.14	13.00	00.72	1.95
5.	Mizoram	12.15	11.60	40.81	39.51	36.62	46.32
6.	Nagaland	4.20	5.64	51.48	66.66	53.86	85.42
7.	Tripura	13.96	16.95	11.16	17.90	39.38	44.34
	INDIA	13.08	19.37	24.63	39.19	33.63	53.33

It is apparent that increase in enrolment in percentage term in most of the states in the region is more than the All-India increase. This would require more resources for expansion of the Schools, increase in the number of teachers, more equipments/books/labs/libraries, etc.

Vocational and technical education could make a viable dent into the problem of educated unemployed in the region but the infrastructural support is grossly inadequate. The institutions for higher education are also inadequate in view of the vast terrain and growing aspirations for higher education although the number of unemployed with higher education is also growing.

For achieving the goal of universalization of elementary education in the North East Region on-going centrally sponsored school improvement related programmes will need special dispensation.

### ***Operation Blackboard***

So far, the OB programme has been implemented in 5 out of 7 States. The areas of concern in its effective implementation are:

Under utilisation of funds (e.g. in Meghalaya only 18% of the funds have been spent) substantial number of vacant teachers posts (e.g. in Manipur 278 posts are vacant out of 338 sanctioned) slow pace of construction of school buildings (e.g. 4079 out of 18224 targeted are yet to be constructed in Assam ).

### **Secondary Education**

The stage of secondary education and more so of higher secondary education is a terminal stage for some and a transition stage for others. In both the situations this stage turns out to be the most important for the future of an individual. In fact, the grades obtained at this stage more often than not become the crucial deciding factor about whether an individual is going to continue his studies in future or enter the world of work. A detailed description of this stage is therefore warranted from academic, social, and economic considerations. There are about 3607 secondary and 530 Higher Secondary schools in North East.

It is reported in Survey that only 5.87% of the habitations in Arunachal Pradesh, covering 17.38% of the population, were served by secondary sections within eight kilometers. The corresponding percentages according to the survey are 15.72 and 30.61, respectively.

There are only two habitations in the State which are predominantly inhabited by the Scheduled Caste population. While neither has a secondary section within it, both the habitations have the facilities within eight kilometers.

Out of 3,237 habitations in the State, 2,974 (91.88%) are predominantly inhabited by the Scheduled Tribe population. Of these, only 411 (13.82%), covering 23.52% of the population, have access to secondary sections within eight kilometers.

In Assam, the percentage of the habitations served by secondary sections within eight kilometers is 92.83 including 6.11% that have the facilities within the habitations themselves. The corresponding figures in respect of population are 94.88% and 10.67% respectively. It may be mentioned here that these percentages are slightly higher than those in the Fourth Survey.

The State has 1,395 (4.39%) habitations predominantly inhabited by the scheduled caste population. It is observed that slightly more than 90% of them, covering 92.28% of the population, have the facilities for secondary education within eight kilometers.

The State has 6,075 (19.10%) habitations predominantly inhabited by the Scheduled Tribe population. Of these, 4,927 (81.10%) habitations, covering 87.21% of the population, are served by secondary sections within eight kilometers.

It is observed that the percentage of the habitations in Manipur served by secondary sections within eight kilometers is 53.67, which includes 8.19% of the habitations having these facilities within themselves. In terms of population, the corresponding percentages are 73.77 and 20.33, respectively. At the time of the Fourth Survey, the percentage of the habitations served within eight kilometers was 51.13, including 6.87% which had the facilities with themselves. These habitations covered 74.59% and 21.41% of the population, respectively.

There are only 39 (1.49%) habitations predominantly inhabited by the Scheduled Caste population. Of these, 36 (92.31%) habitations covering 95.59% of the population, have the facilities for secondary education within eight kilometers. The percentage

of the population, served within the habitations themselves is 31.66.

More than half of the habitations in the State are predominantly inhabited by the Scheduled Tribe population. Of these, 35.17% catering to 45.92% of the population have access to secondary sections within eight kilometers. Further, slightly more than 19% of the population is served within the habitations themselves.

All the 5,337 habitations in the State of Meghalaya are predominantly inhabited by the Scheduled Tribe population. A significant increase in the facilities for schooling at the secondary stage has been noticed in the period between the Fourth and the Fifth Survey. According to the Fifth survey, 54.79% of the habitations, covering 61.31% of the population, have the facilities for secondary educations within eight kilometers. The corresponding figures at the time of the Fourth Survey were 43.66% and 51.94% respectively. Further, the percentage of the population served within the habitations now is 11.08 as against 5.92 in 1978.

There are 616 habitations with a population of 4,29,372 in Mizoram. All of them are predominantly inhabited by the Scheduled Tribe population. The percentage of the population served by secondary sections within eight kilometers is 67.76 as against 63.32 at the time of the Fourth Survey. It is interesting to note that 58.12% of the total population in rural areas has these facilities within the habitations themselves.

In Nagaland all the 997 habitations are predominantly inhabited by the Scheduled Tribe population. Of these, 27.58% covering 43.09% of the rural population have access to secondary sections within eight kilometers. The corresponding percentages at the time of the Fourth Survey were 31.24 and 44.39, respectively. Further, 14.31% of the rural population is served by secondary sections within the habitations themselves.

At the time of the Fourth Survey, 58.37% of the habitations in Tripura, covering 75.44% of the population, had the facilities for secondary education within eight kilometers. These percentages have considerably increased during the period 1978 - 86. According to

the Fifth Survey figures, the percentage of the habitations served within eight kilometers is 83.37 and their population is 93.62% of the total population in rural areas in the State.

There are 779 (12.37%) habitations predominantly inhabited by the Scheduled Caste population. Almost all (97.56%) of them are served by secondary sections within a distance of eight kilometers.

A majority (62.95%) of the total number of habitation in the State are predominantly inhabited by the Scheduled Tribe population. Nearly three-fourths of them, covering 82.99% of the population, have the facilities for secondary education within eight kilometers.

### **Non Formal Education (NFE)**

The Non-Formal Education ( NFE ) programme is being implemented by only 3 states in the region viz., Assam, Manipur and Mizoram. There are only 12 voluntary agencies in Assam, 2 in Manipur and nine in Mizoram. In Assam, very old NFE material is being used which need thorough revision. The NFE primers in Manipur are not based on minimum levels of learning ( MLLs ). There is no NFE teaching-learning material in Mizoram. The NFE feedback reporting from the states is also inadequate.

The focus of the centrally sponsored NFE scheme is on the ten educationally backward states. However, it has been extended to cover urban slums, hilly tribal and desert areas and areas with concentration of working children. Although Arunachal Pradesh is an educationally backward state, yet it has not opted to avail the central assistance under NFE.

The NFE methodology has potential to play a crucial role in achieving the goal of UEE. The North East states may consider this system as a suitable educational intervention for those children in the age group 6-14 who are unable to participate in the Formal Education system due to certain constraints. The NCERT has provided resource support for development of curricula and instructional material and training of personnel.

Extension of District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) in all the North East states, is focussed on District Planning and location specific interventions for Primary education development. The criteria for selection of the Districts under DPEP are :

- Educationally backward Districts with a female literacy rate below the national average ( 39.2% as per 1991 Census )
- Districts where Total Literacy Campaigns ( TLCs ) have been successful leading to enhanced demand for Elementary education.

District-wise position based on the above criteria for the North East states is as follows.

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Name of the State</i>	<i>Total No. of Districts</i>	<i>Districts with female literacy rate below the national average</i>
1.	Arunachal Pradesh	11	11
2.	Assam	20	4
3.	Manipur	8	3
4.	Meghalaya	5	2
5.	Mizoram	3	1
6.	Nagaland	7	1
7.	Tripura	3	1

Although in terms of average female literacy the position is better in the North East states than many other parts of the country but drop-out rates for girls at primary stage of schooling are very high and need to be addressed.

At present only 8 districts of Assam are covered under the DPEP in the North East region. The DPEP may be extended to other seven states of the region through domestic resources.

### **Vocational Education**

The scheme of Vocational Education has not been effectively utilised by the States in the North East and in some States it is yet to take off. Out of the sanctioned vocational sections only Assam, Manipur and Mizoram have operationalised the scheme. The other States are yet to operationalise the scheme. Management structures at State, SCERT and district levels have been created only in the

States of Assam and Manipur. However, a very few posts are filled. At school level also some posts of part-time and full-time teachers are filled in Assam, Manipur and Mizoram. District surveys have partly been conducted in Assam and Mizoram only.

The North East States have recommended that :

- Establishment of a Regional vocational Training Centre to coordinate the research and training component of vocationalisation of education be centrally-funded. The Training Centre may be established as an integral part of NERIST at Itanagar.

- Suitable measures be taken to facilitate ultimate self-employment of vocational education passed-outs by establishing necessary linkages with financial institutions and imparting vocational education in limited location and area-specific streams.

### ***Steps for Development of Vocational Education***

The North Eastern Council has observed that a common institution like the North-Eastern Regional Institute of Vocational Education (NERIVE) can be set up in a phased manner by active involvement of all the States in region provided following could be ensured:

- Adequate number of teachers in vocational education at plus-two stage are available for training by the Institute.

- Whether these trained teachers would get adequate facility for development of vocational education after joining their parent departments. Whether the State will be able to bear the recurring expenditure in connection with running of the institute.

The NCERT has planned to operationalize its Regional Institute of Education for the North-East in 1995. One of the Division of the Institute will be Vocational Education. The main function of this Division will be identification survey of need-based vocational programmes, development of course curriculum including textual material and teacher training. It will assist the State in the region in starting vocational streams in senior secondary schools and with the vocationalisation of the secondary education.

Based on the experiences gained in the implementation of Vocational Education Programme and as several States/UTs are not able to meet their liabilities, particularly on salary, Govt. of India has decided to provide 100% funds for created posts (about 50%) at different levels. This should enable the State Govts. in the region to create management structure at all level and also make available other infrastructural and academic facilities for smooth implementation of the programme.

### **Adult Education**

Literacy figures for the states in the region and for the country as a whole in 1991 are as follows :

State	% of literacy
Arunachal Pradesh	41.59
Assam	52.89
Manipur	59.89
Meghalaya	49.10
Mizoram	82.27
Nagaland	61.65
Tripura	60.44
India	52.21

Although many states may have higher literacy percentage than the national average the need for strengthening adult education efforts is obvious. TLC campaigns have been sanctioned in seven districts of Assam and in all the three districts of Tripura. These need to be taken up in all other states as well. Since it is difficult to launch TLC in the rural areas as the colleges are located in limited urban centres, the centre based approach for AE should be allowed to continue in the region.

### **Promotion of Hindi**

A working group on the North East had recommended that :

“The group unanimously felt that in order to accelerate the process of national integration and to promote gradual voluntary acceptance of the official language of the Union, large allocation

should be made for the schemes relating to appointment of Hindi teachers and promotion of Hindi”.

The Department of Education has the following two schemes for the development of Hindi :

1. Appointment and training of Hindi teachers in non-Hindi speaking states/UTs.

2. Scheme of financial assistance to voluntary organizations for promotion of Hindi.

Under the scheme (1) above, 100% financial assistance is provided for salary of Hindi teachers appointed with the prior approval of the Government of India for one plan only and for strengthening / establishment of Hindi Teachers Training Colleges. Although 140 Hindi teachers have been promoted during VIIIth Plan, the demand for appointment of more Hindi teachers are not being made due to inadequate Budget allocation.

Under scheme (2) above, 37 agencies were funded with an amount of 90.46 lakhs during 1994-95.

The inadequacy of funds should not be allowed to come in the way of development of Hindi in the region.

### **Higher Education**

All the seven States of North-East, except Mizoram have either State or Central Universities. There is one Central University in the region namely North-Eastern Hill University at Shillong. During 1994 three Central Universities namely Assam, Tezpur and Nagaland were notified. The Acts of parliament setting up the Assam and Nagaland Universities, which had been lying unimplemented since 1989, have been finally given effect in 1994. The total number of colleges imparting higher education in this region are 327 out of which 191 colleges are recognized by UGC under Section 2(f) of UGC Act to receive grant from the Commission. The applications of only 3 more colleges for seeking recognition under Section 2(f) of UGC Act are currently pending with the Commission, whereas, 133 colleges have not yet applied for recognition. Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) also has one of its Regional

Centres at Shillong to cater to the need of this region in respect of Distance Education. IGNOU is offering its programmes in the region since 1988 and is able to attract approximately 3000 students in a year.

Surveys on enrolment pattern at the tertiary level shows that majority of the students enrolled into undergraduate and post-graduate courses in the North Eastern region are in Arts stream. The dependence on Arts education at the tertiary level has created both shortages and surplus of different categories of manpower. Therefore, there is a need to develop science and professional courses in the universities.

### *Recommendations*

The North East States have Recommended that:

1. Need-based centrally funded programme to enable expansion of existing colleges.
2. More UGC funded colleges under relaxed norms to enable students to secure higher education outside urban centres.
3. Establishing UGC facilities in the North East Region for enabling college teachers to undergo prescribed professional advancement programmes.
4. Setting up of the North Eastern Region Centre of the UGC on priority to enable UGC to concentrate attention on the educational inadequacies of the region. The UGC Regional Centre has virtually established in Guwahati.

### *Steps Taken*

Following steps have been taken by the Government for the promotion of higher education in this region:

1. Government has conveyed approval, in principle, for establishment of a Post-Graduate Centre of the North Eastern Hill University at Tura. To begin with, it has been decided to introduce PG Course in Economics and Mathematics in that Centre. The Centre would be further developed during the 9th plan.

2. The question of establishment of a Central University in Mizoram is under consideration. The tentative view of the Government is, subject to the approval of the Planning Commission, that earmarked outlays in the State Plan may be provided for establishment of a State University in Mizoram.

3. The University Grants Commission's branch office for the North Eastern Region at Guwahati is likely to become functional soon.

4. Pending application of 3 Colleges seeking recognition under Section 2(f) of UGC Act will be decided on merits by July 31, 1995. Special Arrangements will also be made for UGHC nominees to visit the 133 colleges of North-East region who have not applied for recognition under Section 2(f), with a view to getting their application filled up and submitted to the UGC for a decision by the Commission of merits and this task shall be completed in a time-bound manner. Efforts will be made to complete the entire process by December 31, 1995.

### **Technical Education**

To cater for technical manpower requirements of the North Eastern States under the Joint Venture of Centre and States, Regional Engineering College ( REC ) at Silchar in Assam was established more than a decade ago. At Silchar, students of the seven sister states are admitted on the Centralised Entrance Examination conducted by the Directorate of Technical Education, Government of Assam. Seats in other 16 RECs are also provided to the students who qualify from North East States, based upon the population.

North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and Technology (NERIST), Nirjul, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh is currently conducting 19 courses at different levels namely 6 at certificates, 6 at diploma and 7 at degree levels with intake of 30 students of each level. According to the admission policy of the institute, 90% of the seats are meant for students residing in the North-East Region. Each State is represented on the Board of Management of this institute.

Government of India has established an IIT at Guwahati in Assam in 1994. The admission process for the IIT has started through the JEE 1995-96 session. Besides ( these technical education institutions), there are three other Engineering Colleges and twenty five diploma level institutions in the North Eastern States. There are 16 Community Polytechnics in North East Region for the states : Assam (8), Manipur (2), Meghalaya (1), Mizoram (1), Nagaland (1), Tripura (1). There is no Polytechnic in Arunachal Pradesh. During the years 1993-94 to 1994-95, 3 Polytechnics in the North Eastern Region including Sikkim have been covered under the scheme of Community Polytechnics. AICTE has approved the establishment of community Polytechnic in Imphal during 1995-96.

Assam State has been covered under the World Bank Scheme of Technician Education in its second phase i.e. during January 1992. An allocation of Rs. 300 million has been made for this State under the scheme.

Besides the seats allocated in RECs and reservation in NERIST students of North East Region states seats in Engineering and Diploma level courses are also allocated by Government of India. The Government of India allocates seats from one State/UT to the other State/UT in the field of Engineering/Technology in areas of which are either not available or State/UT is lacking in facilities in these areas. Under this scheme special consideration is given to the North Eastern States. Nearly 50% seats of the total available are allocated to these States.

The total number of seats in RECs including REC Silchar for students from the North-East States is 151

### *Recommendations*

The North East States have Recommended that:

1. One more Regional Engineering College be established in the North East Region to cater for the technical manpower requirements of the North East States whose development is handicapped for want of technical personnel,

2. To bridge the gap, till such time as the additional Regional Engineering College is established, the quota of engineering seats allotted to hilly States of the North East Region be adequately increased.

### **Teacher Education**

In respect of teachers education, the region is astounding deficient. In 1992-93, percentage of untrained teachers varied between 16 (Mizoram) to 67 (Tripura) against the national average of 11 for primary level ; 20 (Tripura) to 72 (Assam) middle level; 52 (Mizoram) to 70 (Nagaland) against the national average of 10 for High School level. In terms of numbers, over a lakh teachers in the region are untrained.

The percentage of trained primary teachers in the North East region varies from 34 (Tripura) to 67 (Assam). In the case of upper primary teachers, it ranges from 26 (Nagaland) to 75 (Mizoram).

The North East region has over 90000 untrained teachers. However, the region has only 22 elementary training institutes for conducting preservice training programmes. 38 out of 61 districts in region have been sanctioned the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs). While DIETs have been sanctioned in all the districts of Assam and Meghalaya, only 1 out of 11 districts in Arunachal Pradesh have been sanctioned DIETs. Only one fifth of the total posts in DIETs (170 out of 881 sanctioned) have been filled up. Given the criticality of providing a sound institutional base for sustained teachers training, both preservice and in-service, speedy operationalisation of sanctioned institutions may be done.

No much emphasis has been given for the growth of secondary education before independence in North Eastern region. It was only after 1826 the modern system of Teacher Education started in North East For teachers of secondary schools, St. Edmund's and St. Mary's Colleges at Shillong were providing training (B.T. course). These institutions continued to run on aided basis. The course in teaching organised by St. Edmund's was discontinued when the department of teacher's training (B.T) was started in 1949 by the University of Guwahati. St. Mary's College at Shillong used to admit lady teachers

joining the college on their own. Rapid growth of secondary teacher education in North Eastern Region has been observed during the last decade. Now there are 63 colleges for secondary teacher education in the North Eastern Region.

The growth of secondary teacher education in pre-independence period was very limited. In the post-independence period the growth has been noticed satisfactorily. The State Governments followed a progressive policy for the development of education always shifting emphasis from quantitative to qualitative improvement. The implementation of different schemes under the five year plans contributed greatly to the promotion and development of education at various stages in the North East. In the recent past there has been a rapid increase in number of training institutions. But the inadequate and ineffective supply of trained teachers is still a problem engaging the attention of the academicians and of the authorities of the states.

A qualitative teaching-learning situation is expected to promote the societal environment as well as to meet the national goal. The effective and qualitative aspect of teaching-learning depends upon the competent teachers. In this connection, the role of secondary teacher education colleges are distinguished.

### ***SCERTs***

So far only Mizoram has been granted central assistance for strengthening of SCERT. Financial assistance for upgradation of SCERTs was provided during 1995-96 to Assam and Nagaland.

### ***Regional Institute of Education (RIE)***

The NCERT had set up a Regional Institute of Education (RIE) to provide academic and technical resource support to state and district level institutions in the North East region to tackle specific educational needs of the states in the region.

### ***Institute of Advanced Study in Education (IASE)***

For further augmentation of the resource base for the North East region in the field of School Education including elementary and secondary stages, it established an Institute of Advanced

Studies in Education (IASE) at the North - East Hill University. This institution in coordination with RIE ( NCERT), IGNOU and CIIL Regional office take up pre-service post-graduate level teacher education programmes.

[ The North Eastern Region has made great stride with regard to quantitative expansion of education at all stages. While the trend in this direction should continue, efforts are also be made to improve the quality of education. And to develop education on the lines which take note of its present deficiencies and also take care to the emerging needs of the region.

The political division of the parent State of Assam into several states has given the Regional Units an opportunity to develop on lines best suited to their geniuses and needs. This is a step towards democratic decentralization giving real power to the people to shape their own destinies within a Federal setup.

The parent State of Assam received special attention during the various plan periods to set up facilities for professional studies within its territory, since these were common facilities, the State of Assam has been accommodating students from the various North Eastern States into its institutions. Efforts have also been made to reserve some seats for students from the Hill States in various professional courses located in different parts of the country.

These are at best temporary measures and can not meet the ever increasing demand for professional studies of students from the Region. One of the urgent needs of the Region is to increase the need to identify newer areas of study and research for which facilities will have to be developed in the Region itself. These are challenges for the planners and administrators of the Region and they need to be taken seriously if the Region has to develop in an all-round manner.]

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