CHAPTER I

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Setting and the Position of English in the East Khasi Hills

Meghalaya, as in many other states in India, is characterized as a multicultural and multiethnic landscape where many linguistic communities coexist. The Khasi, Jaintia and Garo hills unite the State, and its people are the dominant inhabitants of the land with a shared uniqueness in language, culture, custom, tradition and lifestyle.

Meghalaya has seven districts - East Khasi Hills, West Khasi Hills, Ri-Bhoi and Jaintia Hills, East Garo Hills, South Garo Hills, and the West Garo Hills.

The East Khasi Hills, carved out of the Khasi Hills, covers an area of 2,820 square kilometres. According to the 2001 census the district has a population of 660,923. The headquarter of this district is located in Shillong.

As per the Census of India, the literacy rate in the State was 26.92 per cent in 1961, 29.49 per cent in 1971, 42.05 per cent in 1981, 49.10 per cent in 1991 and 63.31 per cent in 2001. In the East Khasi Hills alone, the percentage of literacy is 76.1 per cent in 2001.¹

The State capital, Shillong is popularly recognized as the educational centre of the State for its elite schools and colleges particularly for its emphasis on English and its ability to provide quality education in the medium of the English language. The first College in Shillong was established in the year 1934 by the Christian Brothers, a society of Catholic Brothers from Ireland. Later on, a number of educational institutions of repute were established in the State capital.

A central university in the region, the North Eastern Hill University (NEHU) is recognized for its immense contribution to the development of professional, technical and vocational education among the tribal and non-tribal population in the State.

Similarly, the English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), formerly the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (CIEFL), with its regional centre in Shillong is a central university of repute in the field of English literature and language education.

The English language, as is seen, occupies an important position in the life and education of the indigenous people as it strives to create a broader understanding of the multilingual, multicultural and multiethnic presence in the State, therefore strengthening the bond of communication between the people of the Hills.

The current trend of living among the indigenous and non-indigenous people of the city is marked by an increased demand in the fluency of English not only in the school and college campuses but also out into other active and social domains of interests. Influences and inspiration in the development of the language is made possible with the wide accessibility, availability and readability of the mass media in the form of newspapers and magazines in the English medium and also through television and cable networks featuring news, sports and entertainment and a plethora of other forms of communication through the new age Internet.

The English language is clearly alive in every domain of activity and it will stay to enrich our knowledge, broaden our skills and experience. True enough, English provides us with opportunities to explore our interests in any social, cultural, economic, political and academic spheres.

English today, is a global language which has encompassed the entire domain of our day-to-day life. Its significance cannot be measured because it has overwhelmingly influenced every aspect of a conscious-minded person be it in the home or work environment, or in establishing intrapersonal and interpersonal relationship.

The preponderance of English is evident as it serves as an official State language and as the medium of instruction in the schools and school examination. The educational curriculum in the State of Meghalaya gave due importance to the teaching of English right from the primary school level up to the high school level (matriculation) and beyond. However, this move to include English in the formal system of education is not set without any problems.

Before the State Government’s final Cabinet approval of the Education Policy for Meghalaya in January 2009, the Draft State Education Policy was framed.
The Draft State Education Policy which "subscribes to the formulations on the development of languages spelt out in the National Policy on Education 1968" stated that "the results of the Secondary School and Higher Secondary School Leaving Certificate Examinations show that the students of the State, especially those from the rural areas are weak in English. However, as this language has become the accepted medium of international interactions in all spheres of human activity, especially in Science, Technology and Information Technology, the State must strengthen the study of this language". (p.15)

The official State Education Policy for Meghalaya also gave an equivalent report for strengthening the study of English particularly in the area of the Development of Languages (chap: 14). It confirmed that "an understanding of and command over English language is a most important factor for access to Higher Education, employment possibilities and upward mobility". (p.32)

The policy further mentioned that in order to reinforce educational development, the State will need to reduce the number of untrained Secondary and Higher Secondary school teachers as the current percentage of trained teachers is 30 per cent as of year 2007. (p.31)

On this account, the State needs to make a continuing effort to impart training to elementary, secondary and higher secondary school teachers. This would take the form of both preservice and in-service training, so as to provide quality education and to reduce the dropout rate.

This reinforcement in the form of formal teacher preparation would invariably check the development and status of the English language as all teachers, rural and urban, will be taught and trained in the medium of English across the curriculum and irrespective of the subject specialization they select.

These implications of English teaching and learning, therefore, are paramount to the development of the individual learner and the State as a whole.
1.2 The Background of Education in the State

The introduction of formal education in Meghalaya started with the arrival of Thomas Jones of the Welsh Mission in 1841. The mission was strengthened under the leadership of Rev. William Lewis who came in 1843. Education spread all over Khasi and Jaintia Hills.

It was William Carey who first translated the Bible into Bengali and then taught the Bible to the Khasi through the Bengali translation. Thomas Jones who gave the Khasi language its script and written form then translated the Bible to Khasi language. This marked the first education of the Khasi people in the State.

In the Garo Hills, the Garo Alphabet using the Roman script was developed in the year 1902 by American Baptist Missionaries whose centre of educational operation was placed upon the Garo Baptist Convention which maintained the schools in the Garo Hills.

Finding a positive response from the Khasis towards English language, the missionaries set up schools, colleges and hospitals to cater to the needs of the local people. The Missionaries indeed helped English language education to take deep roots in these hills. Thereafter, for nearly a century there were only primary and Middle Schools with a few High Schools in what is now Meghalaya. The first College was established in the year 1934 in Shillong by the Christian Brothers, a society of Catholic Brothers from Ireland.

Historically, English played a significant role in the creation of Meghalaya. In fact the very reason for creation of Meghalaya can be directly traced back to the attempt of the then Assam Government to introduce Assamese instead of English, as the official language of the state.

English served as the basis for all developmental processes that have been taken place. Government policy, rules and regulations, law courts and all transactions within the framework of the Government are done in English language.

After Independence, the education was under the State of Assam as the area comprising the present Meghalaya was part of Assam.

There was no specific policy and the formal system of Education followed was what was prevalent in the then State of Assam of which Meghalaya previously formed a part. In fact the lack of emphasis on Education is clearly reflected in the literacy percentage of the area, which now constitutes the State of Meghalaya.
As per the Census of India, the literacy rate in the State was 26.92 per cent in 1961, 29.49 per cent in 1971, 42.05 per cent in 1981, 49.10 per cent in 1991 and 63.31 per cent in 2001. It is only after the attainment of Statehood that Education began to receive its due attention as reflected in the quantum jump in literacy percentage from 1971 onwards.

The administration of education in the area was looked after by the Assistant Inspector of Schools posted at Shillong. The Assistant Inspector of Schools was assisted by two Inspecting officers in his functions relating to supervision of schools.

The Education Department of Meghalaya emerged out of the parent Education Department of the Government of Assam.

The Government of Meghalaya set up an Education Commission in 1977. The Commission studied various problems of education in the State. One of the problems was to review the Curriculum. The Commission was of the view that the existing syllabus was not in tune with the needs and aspirations of the individual, nor was it effective in meeting the problems of the society. It thus recommended the revision of the Curriculum.

With the passage of time and the official introduction of the State Educational Policy in January 2009, the organizational structure of the educational system is in the process of a pragmatic paradigm shift. This shift takes the form of focussing attention on the learners and concomitantly uplifting and overhauling the nature and quality of the teachers through formal teacher training.
1.3 English Language Teaching: Its Significance

English education in India was received as a legacy from the British at the time of independence in 1947. As a result, English had consolidated its position in the school and university education.

In Agnihotri and Khanna's "Problematizing English in India" Krishnawamy and Sriraman (1994) effectively argued that 'post-independence India witnessed a continuation of colonial policies with regard to English and as a result it has become even more deeply entrenched in Indian society'.

"English in India is a global language in a multilingual country". Today, English is a "symbol of people's aspirations for quality education and a fuller participation in national and international life. Its colonial origins now forgotten or irrelevant, its initial role in independent India, tailored to higher education (as a "library language", a window on the world"), now felt to be insufficiently inclusive socially and linguistically, the current status of English stems from its overwhelming presence on the world stage and the reflection of this in the national arena. It is predicted that by 2010, a surge in English-language learning will include a third of the world's people (Graddol 1977). The opening up of the Indian economy in the 1990s has coincided with an explosion in the demand for English in our schools because English is perceived to open up opportunities (Das 2005).2

English continues to function as a language of wider communication (national and international): a reference language or library language that is a language that gives us access to the current work in the fields of science and technology, business and commerce, aviation and satellites: a language of upward socio-economic mobility and development: a language of all India services, workshops, seminars and conferences: a language of legal and banking systems and as the associate medium of instruction.

It has been widely accepted that English promotes intellectual and cultural awareness of the contemporary world we live in and provides the information content necessary for the modernization of our country and also of our languages.

The role of English in bringing national unity and integration cannot be ignored. It is an important promoter of social and geographical mobility for ordinary

people. Be it higher education, administration, the judiciary, journalism or multinational companies, a high level proficiency of English will significantly improve one’s chances for easy entry and quick professional growth. English is also viewed as the language of opportunity, employment, science, technology, and electronics and so on.

Prof. Ravinder Gargesh of the Department of Linguistics, University of Delhi, in his article ‘English Language in School Education and Print Media’ (2002) illustrated that ‘the beginning of English Language Education (ELE) in India is largely associated with Lord Macaulay’s Minute of 1835 that resulted in the English Education Act (1835). This replaced the prevailing system of education and made English the language of the government, education and socio-economic advancement. The next stage came with Wood’s despatch of 1854, which not only accepted the dominant role of English but also recognized the role of Indian languages for mass education. To quote from Wood’s Despatch (1854) “It is indispensable that masters should possess knowledge of English in order to acquire and of the vernaculars as readily to convey, useful knowledge to their pupils”.

Prof. Gargesh expressed that English Language Education (ELE) in India as inherited gave little voice to teachers in matters of text selection, preparation of course materials and in evaluation. The focus of teaching was invariably on reading comprehension and on a critical appreciation of the work of some classical authors that, ended by reproducing the ideas of the author in the final examinations. Translation was frequently used as a tool of language teaching. In addition, grammar and the memorization of paradigms and vocabulary building constituted the backbone of language teaching.

All this more or less filtered down into the ELE in post independent India. English retains its prestige even today for now it is perceived as a window on the world that provides access to scientific and technical knowledge in addition to being the main language of education, research and the written media.

English in the English language teaching (ELT) scene in India was “traditionally taught by the grammar-translation method. In the late 1950s, structurally graded syllabi were introduced as a major innovation into the state systems for teaching English (Prabhu 1987:10). The idea was that the teaching of language could be systematized by planning its inputs just as the teaching of a subject such as arithmetic or physics could be (the structural approach was sometimes implemented as
the direct method, with an insistence on monolingual English classrooms). By the late 1970s, however, the behavioural-psychological and philosophical foundations of the structural method had yielded to the cognitive claims of Chomsky for language as a mental organ".3

There was dissatisfaction within the English-teaching profession with the structural method, as it was not giving the learners language that was usable in real situations, in spite of an ability to make correct sentences in classroom situations. It was observed that the structural approach as practised in the classroom led to a 'fragmentation and trivialization' of thought by breaking up language in two ways: into structures, and into skills. The form-focused teaching of language aggravated the gap between the learner's linguistic age and mental age to the point where the mind could no longer be engaged. Moreover, the planned and systematized presentation of language inputs was later shown to be out of step with learners' internal learning sequences.

The emphasis thus shifted to teaching language use in meaningful contexts. British linguists argued that something more than grammatical competence was involved in language use; the term "communicative competence" was introduced to signify this extra dimension. The attempt to achieve communicative competence assumes the availability of a grammatical competence to build on.

Though the communicative method is known for introducing variety and learner involvement into classrooms where both the teachers and learners share their confidence in the knowledge of the language as acquired through exposure, for the majority of the learners however, the issue is not so much communicative competence as the acquisition of a basic or fundamental competence in the language (Prabhu 1987:13). Input-rich theoretical methodologies (such as the Whole Language, the Task-based, and the comprehensible input and balanced approaches) aim at exposure to the language in meaning-focused situations so as to trigger the formation of a language system by the mind.

Though Hindi and other Indian languages within their respective states are now widely in use, yet it is English that is favoured by all India institutional systems such as trade, commerce and defence. Its international functions are of course well recognized.

3 National Focus Group on English. Position Paper (2005) ELT in India(p.1)
The Central Advisory Board of Education proposed the “three language formula” in the education system in 1957. It was adopted by the conference of State Chief Ministers in 1961 and reiterated by the Kothari Education Commission in 1966. Under this formula:

The first language to be studied must be the mother tongue or the regional language.

The second language in Hindi speaking states will be some other Modern Indian Language (MIL) or English and in non-Hindi speaking states it will be Hindi or English.

The third language in Hindi speaking states will be English or a Modern Indian Language (MIL) not studied as a second language and in non-Hindi speaking states English or a Modern Indian Language (MIL) not studied as a second language.

While the teaching of the first language is to commence from class I, the teaching of second language is recommended from class III or at a convenient stage depending on the resources of the state (Education Commission 1964-66). The transfer of policy within the government and variations in regional state policies and flexibility of introduction of second language at a suitable age, however, does not present an overall uniform picture.

N.D.R Chandra in ‘Glocalisation of English in the Cyber Age: A Cultural-Linguistic Perspective’ interestingly notes that the linguistic center of English moved from England to elsewhere in the last twenty years and this has given rise to several varieties of English which Braj Kacharu calls ‘World Englishes’.

Pit Corder (1973:27) reflects that ‘the objective of teaching a language is to enable the learner to behave in such a way that he can participate in some degree and for certain purposes as a member of a community other than his own. The degree to which any particular learner may wish to participate will vary. He may seek only to read technical literature, or he may wish to preach the gospel in a foreign country. These varying degrees of participation require different levels of skill in language performance.’

R.K Singh in Teaching of English: A Plea for Practical Attitude, wrote that ‘learning another language makes one bigger, gives one a wider vision, makes one aware of the subtleties that we don’t get in one language’.

One justification for the teaching and learning of other languages is in the words of Savignon (1987:19) ‘the development of a sensitivity, not only to the
process of language acquisition and use, but above all, to the understanding and interpretation of human differences, essentially to the mature evaluation of one's own language and culture'.

It is to be acknowledged that English is a neutral language of communication. It can be taught in addition to the mother tongue as a means of widening the cultural and intellectual horizons of the students.

George Steiner (as quoted in R.Grefen 1985:26) says, "to know another language well, to penetrate the reflexes of awareness and the judgment in its idiom, to experience in personal immediacy the transparencies or opaqueness which link or divide it from one's native speech - to do these things is, quite literally, to harvest a second self. It is to open a second window on the landscape of being'.

An updated career guide book in English language teaching (ELT) stated that by the year 2050 it is estimated that half the world's population will be competent users of English. This learning frenzy will not take place because of some love of the language, but due to the realization that people will be left behind in work and social situations unless they can communicate with the rest of the world.

In native English speaking countries, the demand for learning English is high: for example, in the UK, there are hundreds of English Language Teaching (ELT) schools that gain most of their students intake from overseas visitors combining lessons with travel - from young learners visiting with a school for a week to professionals learning business English for their job development. Similarly, in the USA, teaching people to speak English accounts for almost half of all adult education.

Perhaps more than any other discipline, the English language teaching tradition has been practiced in various adaptations, in language classrooms all round the world for centuries.
1.4 The Methods of Teaching English

In an attempt to reveal the importance of the selection and implementation of the optimal methods and techniques for language teaching and learning, a brief mention of them is highlighted below.

Sharma in her book *Teaching of English Language* (2008, p.83) states that the meaning of method as described in the Chamber's Dictionary, as a "mode or rule of accomplishing an end: orderly procedure... manner of performance". Method directly deals with a teacher's manner of performance and the mode he adopts in accomplishing his task and hence, is a means to an end.

*The Classical Method*

The history of language teaching goes that in the Western world back in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, foreign language learning was associated with the learning of Latin and Greek, both supposed to promote their speakers intellectuality. This was called the Classical method. At the time, it was of vital importance to focus on grammatical rules, syntactic structures, along with rote memorization of vocabulary and translation of literary texts. There was no provision for the oral use of the languages under study. After all, both Latin and Greek were not being taught for oral communication but for the sake of their speakers becoming scholarly. Late in the nineteenth century, the Classical method came to be known as the Grammar-Translation method, which offered very little beyond an insight into the grammatical rules attending the process of translating from the second to the native language.

The Grammar-Translation method is widely recognized to be one of the most popular models of language teaching. With retrospection, however, its contribution to language learning has been unfortunately limited, since it has shifted focus from the real language to a fragmented part of nouns, adjectives, and prepositions doing nothing to enhance the student's communicative ability in the foreign language.

*The Direct Method*

The Direct method subsequently came about in the later part of the nineteenth century. Its approach to language learning centred on learning the target language. The basic tenets of this method were that
a. classroom instruction was conducted in the target language
b. there was an inductive approach to grammar
c. only everyday vocabulary was taught
d. concrete vocabulary was taught through pictures and objects, while abstract vocabulary was taught by association of ideas.

The Direct method enjoyed great popularity at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century but it was difficult to use, mainly because of the constraints of budget, time, and classroom size. After a period of decline, this method has been revived, leading to an emergence of the Audio-lingual method.

*The Audio-lingual Method*

With the outbreak of World War II, the need for Americans to become orally proficient in the languages of their allies and enemies alike became urgent. To this end, some of the tenets of the direct method were appropriated to form and support this new method, the “Army method”, which came to be known in the 1950s as the Audio-lingual method.

The Audio-lingual method was based on linguistic and psychological theory. Conditioning and habit-formation models of learning put forward by the Behaviouristic psychologists were combined with the pattern practices of the Audio-lingual method. The following points sum up the characteristics of the method:

a. dependence on mimicry and memorization of set phrases
b. teaching structural patterns by means of repetitive drills
c. no grammatical explanation
d. learning vocabulary in context
e. use of tapes and visual aids
f. focus on pronunciation
g. immediate reinforcement of correct responses.

The Audio-lingual method however fell short of promoting communicative ability as it paid undue attention to memorization and drilling, while downgrading the role of context and world knowledge in language learning. After all, it was discovered that language was not acquired through a process of habit formation and errors were not necessarily bad or harmful.
The Designer Methods of the 1970s

Another revolution in linguistics drew the attention of linguists and language teachers to Chomsky's deep structure of language, while psychologists took account of the affective and interpersonal nature of learning. As a result, new methods were proposed, which attempted to capitalize on the importance of psychological factors in language learning. David Nunan, (1989:97) referred to these methods as "designer" methods, on the grounds that they took a "one-size-fits-all" approach. These "designer" methods include:

Suggestopedia

This method promised great results if the students used their brain power and inner capacities. Lozanov (1979) believed that learners are capable of learning much more than they think. Drawing upon Soviet psychological research on yoga and extrasensory perception, Lozanov came up with a method for learning that used relaxation as a means of retaining new knowledge and material. It stands to reason that music played a pivotal role in his method. Lozanov and his followers tried to present vocabulary, reading, role-plays and drama with classical music in the background and students sitting in comfortable seats. In this way students become "suggestible".

The Silent Way

The Silent Way rested on cognitive rather than affective arguments, and was characterized by a problem-solving approach to learning. Gattegno (1972) held that it is in learners best interests to develop independence and autonomy and cooperate with each other in solving language problems. The teacher is supposed to be silent and disassociate himself of the tendency to explain everything to the students. The Silent way however came in for an onslaught of criticism. More specifically, it was considered very harsh, as the teacher was distant and, in general lines, the classroom environment was not conducive to learning.

Strategies -based Instruction

The work of O’Malley and Chamot (1990), and others before and after them, emphasized on the importance of style awareness and strategy development in ensuring mastery of foreign language. In this light, many textbooks and entire syllabi offered guidelines on constructing strategy-building activities.
Communicative Language Teaching

The need for communication has been relentless, leading to the emergence of the Communicative Language teaching. Having defined and redefined the construct of communicative competence; having explored the vast array of functions of language that learners are supposed to be able to accomplish; and having probed the nature of styles and non-verbal communication, teachers and researchers are now better equipped to teach (about) communication through actual communication, not merely theorizing about it. Communicative Language teaching is not a method; it is an approach, which transcends the boundaries of concrete methods and, concomitantly, techniques. It is a theoretical position about the nature of language and language learning and teaching. Communicative language teaching is task based. The role of the teacher in communicative activities is that of a facilitator. He is the manager of the classroom and is the one who creates situations that are likely to promote communication. The following encompasses the basic premises of this approach:

a. focus on all of the components of communicative competence, not only grammatical or linguistic competence. Engaging learners in the pragmatic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes.
b. Viewing fluency and accuracy as complementary principles underpinning communicative techniques.
c. Using the language in unrehearsed contexts.

The Lexical Method

As an alternative to grammar-based approaches, another current approach to second language teaching which has received renewed interest is called the lexical approach. In fact many of the fundamental principles advanced by the proponents of the Communicative approach have been developed in the lexical approach. It was Michael Lewis (1993) who coined the term lexical approach.

The lexical approach focuses on developing learners' proficiency with lexis, or words and word combinations. It is based on the idea that an important part of language acquisition is the ability to comprehend and produce lexical phrases as unanalyzed wholes, or "chunks," and that these chunks become the raw data by which learners perceive patterns of language traditionally thought of as grammar (Lewis, 1993, p. 95).
In the lexical approach, lexis in its various types is thought to play a central role in language teaching and learning. According to Lewis (1993), lexis is the basis of language. Most often lexis is misunderstood in language teaching because of the assumption that grammar is the basis of language and that mastery of the grammatical system is a prerequisite for effective communication. The key principle of a lexical approach therefore, is that "language consists of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar." One of the central organizing principles of any meaning-centred syllabus should be lexis.

Nattinger (1980, p. 341) suggests that teaching should be based on the idea that language production is the piecing together of ready-made units appropriate for a particular situation. The comprehension of such units is dependent on knowing the patterns to predict in different situations. Instruction, therefore, should centre on these patterns and the ways they can be pieced together, along with the ways they vary and the situations in which they occur. The activities employed to develop learners' knowledge of lexical chains include the following:

a. Intensive and extensive listening and reading in the target language.
b. First and second language comparisons and translation— carried out chunk-for-chunk, rather than word-for-word— aimed at raising language awareness.
c. Repetition and recycling of activities, such as summarizing a text orally one day and again a few days later to keep words and expressions that have been learned active.
d. Guessing the meaning of vocabulary items from context.
e. Noticing and recording language patterns and collocations.
f. Working with dictionaries and other reference tools.
g. Working with language corpora created by the teacher for use in the classroom or accessible on the Internet (such as the British National Corpus [http://thetis.bl.uk/BNCbib/] or COBUILD Bank of English [http://titania.cobuild.collins.co.uk/]) to research word partnerships, preposition usage, style, and so on.

From all this, it is to be noted that the conventional approaches to teaching have been often attacked severely and the current knowledge explosion has made it imperative that our education system must produce individuals ready to change, capable of initiating and expounding new ideas suitable to the world.
1.5 Teacher Education

The quality of a nation depends upon the quality of its citizens. The quality of its citizens depends upon the quality of their education. The quality of their education depends upon the quality of their teachers. (American Commission on Teacher Education)

The teacher as a role model undoubtedly occupies an important place in the realm of education and it is this belief that makes it necessary for every teacher to achieve quality in every aspect of pedagogical interaction and commitment. Of all the factors which influenced the quality of education and its contribution to national development, the quality, competence and character of teachers is undoubtedly the most significant.

Teacher Education refers to the total educative process which contributes to the preparation of a person for the teaching job in formal and non-formal educational situations. The educative process includes the programme of courses and other experiences offered by Teacher colleges or schools and universities for the purpose of preparing persons for teaching and other educational services and for contributing to their growth in the competence of such services.

Teacher education has to do a whole range of different jobs:

- To enable teachers to develop the potential of their pupils;
- To serve as role models;
- To help transform education and through it society;
- To encourage self confidence and creativity.

At the same time, many educators often hope that student teachers will develop appropriate, and where necessary changed, attitudes to their job. In order to meet these hopes, teacher education is likely to include four elements:

- improving the general educational background of the trainee teachers;
- increasing their knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are to teach;
- pedagogy and understanding of children and learning; and
- the development of practical skills and competences.
The importance of Teacher education in any culture can never be over emphasized. Educational leaders have stated that the training of teachers today is the leverage to make things move. If the educational world is to progress, it cannot do so unless the teachers can take effective leadership.

Education of teachers not only facilitates improvement of school education by preparing competent, committed and professionally well qualified teachers who can meet the demand of the system, but also functions as a bridge between schooling and higher education. It has to meet twin demands: (a) challenges of the education system including higher education, and (b) the ever-changing demands of the social system.

The role of teacher education as a process of nation building is universally recognized. Its objective is man-making and producing enlightened citizens. But teacher education in India, because of its history and also due to various factors beyond its control, has by and large been confined to school education only.

The continued development, diversification and progression of Education have made it the most powerful instrument for growth and prosperity of a nation. Every country develops its own system of education to express and promote its unique socio-cultural identity and also to meet the challenges of time. The National Policy of Education (NPE) 1986 subsequently revised in 1992 gave new direction to Indian education.

India has one of the largest systems of teacher education in the world. Besides the university departments of education and their affiliated colleges, government and government aided institutions; private and self-financing colleges and open universities like IGNOU are also engaged in teacher education.

Though most teacher education programmes are nearly identical yet their standard varies across institutions and universities. In certain areas, the supply of teachers far exceeds the demand while in others there is an acute shortage as qualified teachers which results in the appointment of under-qualified and unqualified persons.

After independence the nation witnessed an improvement in the educational system as greater attention was paid to education and teacher education. The first step in this direction was the setting up of the University Education
The Indian Education Commission (1882) approved introduction of separate teacher education programmes for elementary and secondary teachers. Training colleges affiliated to universities were opened and these colleges conducted programmes called the Licentiate in Teaching, which later gained the status of a degree, called the B.Ed.

The Secondary Education Commission (1953) which was appointed to examine the conditions of school education made specific suggestions about the preparation of teachers. Among its chief recommendations were:

(a) two-year training programme for under graduates; (b) one year training for graduates; (c) affiliation of graduate training colleges to universities; (d) training for organizing curricular activities; (e) organization of refresher courses; (f) providing residential facilities; (g) emphasis on research; and (h) exchange of teachers from teachers of colleges to schools and vice-versa.

Ahmed, Feroz and Suresh Gagr, 2007: Teacher Education in Forty Years of Kothari Commission Reforms and Reflections
Many of the recommendations were accepted and implemented. The Committee on Higher Education for Rural Areas (1954) and that on Women's Education (1959) also made valuable suggestions for teacher education in their respective areas; but they did not attract national attention because of their limited scope.

The Review Committee on Education (1960) with its major recommendations about post-graduate studies in education and research, education of administrators and qualifications of teacher educators, were accepted and implemented. Teacher education was looked after by the Centre, the States, the universities, and public and private enterprises. It was fraught with problems as it was not examined in totality and the availability of teacher resources also posed a problem. Further, teacher education was not accorded adequate importance in the agenda of education.

The Education Commission (1964-66) in its comprehensive report for establishing a uniform national structure of education covering all stages and aspects of education emphasized the necessity of professional preparation of teachers for qualitative improvement of education. Recognizing teacher education as a distinct academic discipline of higher studies different from pedagogy, it suggested establishing schools of education in certain universities, starting of extension programmes, increasing the duration of training of teachers, opening of comprehensive colleges, exchange of teacher educators, and revision and revitalization of courses of study.

The Commission further recommended that Teacher education be removed from isolation and laid stress on the importance of practice teaching and in-service education. It recommended allocation of more funds for teacher preparation, better salaries and improved service conditions for teachers and their educators to attract competent people to the profession. By and large, it was the first comprehensive and meaningful report on education in general and teacher education in particular. It is worth mentioning that the Centre and the State governments implemented various recommendations of the Commission which resulted in significant improvement in the professional education of teachers. Subsequently the attempts to bring about qualitative changes in teacher education continued. Based on
the recommendations of the Commission, the National Policy on Education (1968) was formulated. The working of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) was also reviewed. The NCERT and its Regional Colleges of Education were expected to play a greater role in the education of teachers.

The non-statutory National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) was set up in 1974 by a resolution of the Government of India and was located in NCERT. It brought out its curriculum framework in 1978. The statutory NCTE established by an Act of Parliament in 1993 further came out with a Curriculum Framework (1998) to provide guidelines in respect of the content and methodology of teacher education. As a result of this, the courses of teacher education were revised by many universities and state governments.

At this time, the National Commission on Teachers (1983) studied in depth the problems of teacher education and the status of teachers in society. Its main recommendations were directed at enhancing the period of training, changing in selection procedure of teachers, making the pedagogy of teacher education meaningful leading to enrichment of the theory courses and practical work. It suggested changes in the structure of the M.Ed programme. On the grounds of these suggestions, another curriculum framework was issued in 1988 but it could not catch national attention because the work on NPE (1986) had already started, which opened new vistas in teacher education.

The National Policy of Education (NPE) recognised continuity and inseparability of pre-service and in-service teacher education and recommended permanent educational mechanisms for this purpose. As a consequence DIETs, CTEs and IASEs were established in the country. NPE (1986) was followed by a Programme of Action (1986) which provided details about the needed transformation of policy into action. Its emphasis was on the enrichment of both pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes, computer education and new as well as alternative models of teacher preparation. It is noteworthy that directions given in NPE (1986) and recommendations of the Programme of Action were largely implemented with encouraging results.

As a statutory body responsible for the coordination and maintenance of standards in teacher education, NCTE issued a Curriculum Framework for Quality
Teacher Education in 1998. A comprehensive document that deals with almost all aspects of teacher education including its context, concerns and also the social philosophy of teacher education in Indian society. It contemplates a synthesis between unity and diversity, freedom and compulsion, social planning and individual initiative. Its salient features were:

- increased duration and multiple models of teacher education;
- updating of theoretical and practical components of teacher education by giving new orientation and adding new inputs to the existing programmes;
- emphasis on developing professionalism, commitment, competencies and performance skills;
- optimal utilisation of the potentialities of community, university and information and communication technology for preparation of teachers;
- making provisions for preparing of teachers for the neglected sections of society, and
- suggesting alternative educational programmes for teachers of gifted children, teachers of senior secondary schools and specialised programme of education for teacher educators.

Some of these recommendations were implemented but all of them could not be put into practice due to various reasons.

In the meanwhile, many major changes in the policy of Indian state were effected. New developments in science and technology at national and international levels with far reaching educational and cultural consequences, challenges of post modernity, consumerism and post-industrial society brought about by pressures of liberalisation, privatization, globalization, information and communication technology and market forces and even maladies like HIV/AIDS had to be faced. Consequently, the nature, objectives, contents and pedagogy of subjects at the school stage were also transformed. The situation demands changes in teacher education as well.
Teachers are now expected to educate students about ‘learning to learn’, ‘learning to do’, ‘learning to live together’, and ‘learning to be’.

The agenda before the NCTE is thus twofold: to remove the existing deficiencies of teacher education and to meet the demand of new challenges before it. The Council is therefore committed to achieve both, by highlighting the following functions of teacher education institutions. (TEIs)

- To provide qualified faculty, adequate infrastructure and learning resources, including print material, off-line IT material and computers as per prevalent NCTE norms for quality transaction of its teacher education programmes;

- To provide and use all necessary inputs for promoting the development of competent and committed professional to students, faculty and other staff;

- To create resources for institutional planning with mid-term appraisal for quality improvement of the teacher education institutions;

- To function as the nodal agency for networking community and its schools with the teacher education institutions and use their resources for improving and enriching its teacher education programme(s);

- To promote and strengthen action research and faculty research projects;

- To organise on-campus and off-campus professional development activities and programmes for faculty, faculty of sister TEIs and school teachers in networked schools; and

- To make its teacher education programmes more school based, vibrant and collaborative between schools and teacher education institutions.

Teacher education programmes are essentially institution-based. Their students need to be exposed more and more to the realities of school and community. Internship, practice of teaching, practical activities and supplementary educational activities need to be better planned and organized more systematically. The curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation of teacher education programmes need to be
made more objective as well as comprehensive. Despite improvement of service conditions, the profession is yet to attract the best talent.

During the last few decades teacher education curriculum have come under severe criticism and their weaknesses have been highlighted. Some educationists feel that they do not fully address the needs of contemporary Indian schools and society and they do not prepare teachers who can impart quality education in schools. The principals of some public schools hold the view that there is hardly any difference between the performance of trained and untrained teachers because of outdated teacher education curriculum. These charges may appear to be exaggerated but some of them force us to rethink about the curriculum and their transaction.

Professionalism requires knowledge, authority, skills, commitment, competency, mission, ability to provide the exclusive expert service and adherence to a professional ethical code. In the present curriculum, a large number of activities - theoretical and practical, have to be carried out and diligently practised by prospective teachers for enhancing their professional competencies and commitments.

Academic and professional skills are not independent of each other. Teacher education curriculum need to integrate and blend them into a composite whole. The revamping of teacher education curricula needs to focus on a visible shift from information-based to experience-based and from the traditional instruction domination to newer constructiveness orientation. To this effect, training is a prerequisite to good teaching. All other things being equal, a teacher who is trained can teach better than one who is untrained. Learning and teaching are seen as an interpersonal relationship between teacher and learner.

It can be assumed that untrained teachers also have the capability and knack to do well in classroom settings but obviously a trained teacher has good classroom management skills and observation. Learner and learning situations also determine the kind of teaching methods and techniques that teachers can follow.

Pre-service teacher education provides training to candidates before they join the school for teaching profession. Trainees acquire knowledge and skills about the theory and practice of teaching. On the basis of the trainees' competence and
professional preparation to work as a teacher, a certificate, degree or diploma is granted by concerned educational authorities or Teacher-training institutions.

In-service teacher education provides training to teachers who are already in service, trained or untrained for the improvement of their professional competence. The course enhances the knowledge and skills of a teacher for following his/her profession in a more efficient manner, even after already obtaining a degree, certificate, or diploma in teaching. It provides an opportunity for the teacher to improve upon professional skills continuously and continually through short-term courses, seminars, workshops, extension services and activities from time to time.

As school education expanded rapidly in the post-independence period, Teacher Education also expanded during this period in response to meeting the requirement of teachers for new schools. The 6th All India Educational Survey carried out by the National Council of Teacher has revealed that in 1993 there were about 900,000 schools and about 4.6 million teachers in the country. As of now about 2000 teacher education institutions are engaged in preparation of teachers for different school stages.

Schooling system in India comprises of pre-school, elementary, secondary and senior secondary stages. The elementary stage is split into primary and the upper-primary stages. Teacher education courses, therefore, are matched with the requirements of teaching-learning for the concerned stage and mode of schooling.

Face-to-face teacher education programmes could not always meet the growing demand of teachers. This situation at times was met by some universities in offering teacher education courses using distance mode. The B.Ed programme of the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) is an example of this.

The Parliament of India through an Act set up in 1995 the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) and gave it statutory powers for framing regulations and norms for maintaining standards of teacher education in the country. As the NCTE has been given a broad mandate with legal powers for improving the quality of teacher education and preventing commercialisation its functions have had direct bearing on teacher certification.
In India, the goals of Teacher Education pursue the National goals of development set for the country

a. To develop education so as to increase productivity
b. To achieve social and National integration
c. To accelerate the process of modernization
d. To cultivate social, moral and spiritual values
e. To make education a powerful instrument of social, economic and cultural transformation necessary for the realization of National goals.

It is imperative that Educational policies and programmes in India are determined by the National goals. It is imperative further that the Teacher has to assume greater responsibility so as to help achieve the goal of National development. Thus, the success in carrying out the educational reforms and acceptance of the new role by the Teacher depends on the quality of the teacher, which in turn, depends on the quality of Teacher Education.
1.6 The Policy Context of Teacher Education

The professional preparation of teachers has been recognised to be crucial for the qualitative improvement of education since the 1960s (Kothari Commission, 1964-66), but very few concrete steps have been taken in the last three decades to operationalize this. The Commission in particular emphasised on the need for teacher education to be "...brought into the mainstream of the academic life of the Universities on the one hand and of school life and educational developments on the other."

A matter of concern that the Draft Curriculum Framework reported is 'that teacher education institutes continue to exist as insular organizations even within the University system where many are located. Recognizing 'quality' as the essence of a programme of teacher education, the Commission recommended the introduction of "integrated courses of general and professional education in Universities...with greater scope for self-study and discussion...and a comprehensive programme of internship."

The Chattopadhyaya Committee Report of the National Commission on teachers (1983-85), envisioned the New Teacher as one who communicates to pupils "...the importance of and the feeling for national integrity and unity; the need for a scientific attitude; a commitment to excellence in standards of work and action and a concern for society." The Commission observed that "...what obtains in the majority of our Teaching Colleges and Training Institutes is woefully inadequate..."

Pointing to the need to view the teacher as central to the process of change in school education, the Chattopadhyaya Commission noted that "if school teachers are expected to bring about a revolution in their approach to teaching... that same revolution must precede and find a place in the Colleges of Education."

If teacher education is to be made relevant to the roles and responsibilities of the New Teacher, the minimum length of training for a Secondary teacher should be five years following the completion of class XII." Reiterating the need "...to enable general and professional education to be pursued concurrently", the Commission recommends that "...to begin with we may have an integrated four-year programme which should be developed carefully... it may also be possible for some of the existing colleges of Science and Arts to introduce an Education Department along
with their other programmes allowing for a section of their students to opt for teacher education.” The Chattopadhyaya Commission recommended a four-year integrated course for the secondary teacher as well as the elementary teacher.

The National Policy of Education (NPE 1986/92) recognised that “... the teachers should have the freedom to innovate, to devise appropriate methods of communication and activities relevant to the needs of and capabilities of and the concerns of the community.” This community constitutes of learners and indeed, it is the learners who are the central focus in any learning environment and for learning to materialise, the teachers’ responsibility is of utmost priority.

The policy further states that “… teacher education is a continuous process, and its pre-service and in-service components are inseparable. As the first step, the system of teacher education will be overhauled.”

The Acharya Ramamurti Committee (1990) in its review of the NPE 1986 observed that an internship model for teacher training should be adopted because”... the internship model is firmly based on the primary value of actual field experience in a realistic situation, on the development of teaching skills by practice over a period of time.”

The Yashpal Committee Report (1993) on Learning without Burden noted “... inadequate programmes of teacher preparation lead to unsatisfactory quality of learning in schools. The content of the programme should be restructured to ensure its relevance to the changing needs of school education. The emphasis in these programmes should be on enabling the trainees to acquire the ability for self-learning and independent thinking.”

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 gave a presentation of a fresh vision and a new discourse on key contemporary educational issues. The Review of the Curriculum for Teacher education looks at defining the path to empower individual teachers who can then empower learners. The critical link that binds the curriculum and the teaching-learning environment together is the teacher.

The professional need to review the teacher education curriculum also emerges from the long ossification of a national education system that continues to view teachers as “dispensers of information” and children as “passive recipients” of an
"education" that is sought to be "delivered" in four-walled classrooms with little or no scope for critical thinking and understanding.\textsuperscript{5}

\textsuperscript{5} Curriculum Framework For Teacher Education. 2006.
1.7 Historical Development Of Teacher Education In The North East

Teacher Education in North East India began to develop in the twentieth century. Prior to this there was no University and no training college.

In Assam, a department of education was set up in 1905. There were only three training colleges in 1917 in Bengal affiliated to Calcutta University and there were a few Normal schools for the training of teachers. The graduated teachers were deputed to these training colleges.

During the period from 1942-45, the number of teachers at the primary, middle and secondary level increased but the number of trained teachers diminished. The government could not extend the facility for the training of Primary school teachers. But it sanctioned the opening of six training centres, three in Assam valley, two in Sylhet district (then in Assam), and one in Khasi and Jaintia Hills district.

Training for lower grade teachers was given in government Normal Schools at Silchar, Jorhat and the training classes at Nowgong, Tezpur, Guwahati, North Sylhet and Lungleh.

For the teachers of High schools, St. Mary's College and St. Edmund's college provided training (B.T).

The B.T. department of St. Edmund's college, Shillong was under the Calcutta University. The B.T Department of St. Mary's College was exclusively for girls.

The State Government started the Post Graduate Training College at Jorhat in 1957 with the provision for B.T course as well as a teachers Diploma course for undergraduate teachers of Secondary schools.

The Guwahati University established on 26 January, 1948, set up a BT department in 1944. The B.T department of St. Edmund's college at Shillong was discontinued, but St. Mary's was permitted by the Guwahati University to continue the part-time B.T classes for women teachers. The university started the Post graduation courses (M.A. in Education) for higher studies. Its duration was two years.

Two more training colleges, Teacher training College Silchar (1960) and PGT College, Shillong (1964) were set up by the efforts of the local people and
were affiliated to the Guwahati University. All these colleges offered only the B.T course.

In 1965, Dibrugarh University was established in Assam and the university opened a B.T department and a post graduation course in Education.

North Eastern Hill University (NEHU) was set up in 1973. NEHU conducted a B.T examination in 1973. The PGT College and the B.T department of St. Mary’s College came under the jurisdiction and control of NEHU. Later on, the Nagaland College of Education at Kohima and Mizoram institute of Education, Aizawl were established by their respective State governments and they began to impart training to the graduate teachers under NEHU.

In the Khasi Hills, Teacher Education first started during the time of the Christian missionaries. The first training school known as the Normal School for teachers training opened in 1867 at Cherra under Hugh Roberts as Principal.

In Meghalaya, there are only two Teachers training Colleges under the jurisdiction and control of NEHU: PGT College and St. Mary’s College of Teacher Education, Shillong.

PGT (1964) conducted classes in the local Jail Road Boy’s High School in the evening. Later on, it shifted campus in 1973.

There are 8 Primary Teachers Training Institute in Meghalaya

1. Basic Training Centre at Shillong
2. Basic Training Centre at Thadlaskein in Jowai.
3. Basic Training Centre at Tura
4. Basic Training Centre at Resubelpura (East Garo Hills)
5. Government Guru Training Centre at Tura
6. Cherra Training Centre, Cherrapunjee
7. Junior Teacher Training Institute at Marbisu
8. St. Mary’s Mazzarelo Training Centre, Jowai.
1.8 Profile of the Teacher Training Colleges in the East Khasi Hills.

St. Mary’s College of Teacher Education

St. Mary’s College of Teacher Education, initially St. Mary’s B.T. College is a Catholic Institution established in 1937 to meet the need for a women’s Teacher Training College in the North East. It was successively affiliated to the Calcutta University in April 1937, Guwahati University 1948 and the North-Eastern Hill University in 1973. It is recognized by the National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE), New Delhi.

A private college, St. Mary’s College of Teacher Education (SMCTE) has had the distinction of being a pioneer institution of teacher training for women, besides being a premier educational institution of the region.

The primary aim of this college is to impart value-based quality teacher education so as to enable the future teachers to use their knowledge and skills for the development of society.

The College places high priority on the training of teachers from rural areas. It admits a small number of male students serving in remote areas for the uplift of the backward sections in the country.

The College places special emphasis on the continual professional growth of the teacher educators for which opportunities are regularly provided.

Co-curricular activities and enrichment programmes form an integral part of teacher education of SMCTE providing an all-round professional formation of future teachers.

The achievements of the students have been outstanding. Every year students secure positions among the first ten. On many occasions the students achieve hundred percent pass and top the list of successful candidates in the final B.Ed. examinations.

St. Mary’s College of Teacher Education has produced numerous trained and committed teachers who serve in various educational institutions at all levels. Others also have made their mark in other walks of life.

The College has the added advantage of a Higher Secondary School as its sister Institution where teacher trainees carry out practice teaching. Other schools in Shillong and its vicinity are also available for the training of the students.
In 2006 the College was accredited by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) Bangalore, at B++ level and an institutional score of 81 per cent, the first teacher training college in the North East to be accredited.

In the seventieth year of its existence, St. Mary's College of Teacher Education, still stands vibrant and strong, continuing its service of preparing teachers in the 21st century.

The vision of St. Mary's College of Teacher Education is to produce teachers of excellence who will raise the overall standard of school education.

The college's mission is to:
1. Provide innovative and value-based quality education in understanding the teaching learning process.
2. Enrich the students with knowledge and skills of teaching and enable them to become competent to face the challenges to globalization.
3. Involve the students in socially relevant extension programmes.
4. Organize co-curricular activities to make student-teachers aware of the needs and problems of modern society.
5. Equip the student-teachers with the knowledge and skills of counseling and career guidance.
6. Promote interaction among the students hailing from different cultural backgrounds with a view to fostering emotional national integration.
7. Develop in the students a commitment to their vocation as teachers.

College Of Teacher Education -Post Graduate Training College

The Post Graduate Training College, Shillong was established in 1963 during the centenary year of Swami Vivekananda. It is one of the first Teacher Training institutions in Shillong, besides St. Edmunds which was under the University of Calcutta. In the year 1986, the Government of Meghalaya brought the college under the Deficit grant-in-aid system. At present, it is recognized by the National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE).

The College of Teacher Education (PGT) aims to:

i. Provide quality teacher education programmes for both pre-service and in-service teachers at the secondary level.
ii. Conduct short term in-service training programmes for teachers who do not get the opportunity to undergo training.

iii. Keep abreast of the latest innovations in the field of teacher education and impart the knowledge to all those who are in need.

The college is run by a Principal who is well qualified and efficient. She is assisted by a team of seventeen dedicated teachers—seven of whom are full time and the rest are on a part time basis. All the teachers fulfill the UGC requirements. The college also has a group of non-teaching staff who ensure the smooth functioning of the institution.

The course duration of the B.Ed programme is one-year. The College adheres to the direction given by the NCTE, thus, every academic year the student intake is 100. However, about 45% of the seats are reserved for teachers deputed by the State Education Department, Government of Meghalaya.

The College follows the prescribed course of North Eastern Hill University (NEHU) which is liable to periodic changes as per University instructions. Both the practical and theoretical aspects are important components.

The practical courses include:

i. Micro-teaching

ii. Practice Teaching

iii. Preparation of Teaching Aids

iv. Preparation of Unit Plan, Resource Plan

v. Setting of question papers

vi. Administration of simple psychological tests

vii. Ground work on educational statistics

viii. Performing simple experiments in the laboratory (for Science students only)

ix. Undertaking a project work on any of the topics related to the field of education

x. Work experience.
Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) Regional Centre, Shillong

The IGNOU Regional Centre Shillong was established in the year 1988 initially having the jurisdiction of the entire North East Region of the country. It was known as the North East Regional Centre of the IGNOU, as it is catered to the Seven Sister State of North East. In March 1996 the Guwahati Regional Centre of the University was set up to look after the student services in the State of Assam, Arunachal and Sikkim. The Regional Centre Shillong was then entrusted to supervise the five states i.e Meghalaya, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland and Tripura. From the year 2001, under the prestigious North East Educational Development Project (NEEDP), IGNOU Regional Centres was established in the entire seven sister states including Sikkim. Thus IGNOU Regional Centre Shillong was left with supervising the student support activities in the state of Meghalaya only.

IGNOU is a Central University established by an Act of Parliament in 1985 (Act No. 50 of 1985). IGNOU Degrees, Diplomas, and Certificates are recognized by all the members of the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) and are at par with Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates of all Indian Universities, Deemed Universities, and Institutions vide UGC Circular No. F.1-52/2000(CPP-II) dated 5th May, 2004, AIU Circular No. EV/II (449)/94/76915-177115 dated January 14, 1994 & AICFTE Circular No. AICTE/Academic/MOU-DEC/2005 dated May 13, 2005.

The Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) Programme of IGNOU aims at developing the understanding and competencies required by practicing teachers for the effective teaching-learning process at the secondary stage. The programme also provides opportunities of sharing experiences gained by practicing teachers. It enables in-service teachers to select and organise learning experiences according to the requirement of learners. In addition, it develops knowledge and understanding of essential areas required by teachers in the emerging socio-cultural, political and technological context in general, and education system in particular.

The B.Ed. programme works on two assumptions. First, is that the quality and efficiency of education, to a large extent, depend upon the quality of the teachers. The need for a systematic teacher education programme is essential for qualitative improvement in education and this was stressed by various commissions and committees. Teachers and teacher-educators also realise that they can no longer
depend on 'born teachers'. There is a new body of knowledge, innovations in instructional designs and latest communication technology available today. In view of this and also to meet the country's future needs of not only trained but successful teachers, the need was felt to design effective teacher education programmes.

The second assumption is that essential skills and competencies can be developed through distant mode of education. This can be provided with proper planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This assumption is based on the fact that distance learners are highly motivated and they intend to learn new concepts and acquire various skills. The programme takes into its assumption that a candidate has decided to join the programme as a step in the direction of improvement of his performance as a professional.

The Objectives of the B.Ed Programme is meant to systematise and give a method and structure to the teachers' experiences. Specifically, this programme aims at enhancing the professional competencies and skills of the teachers working in elementary, secondary and senior secondary schools. The programme leads the teachers' to develop

- Competence to teach the subject(s) of specialisation on the basis of the accepted principles of learning and teaching;
- Skills, understanding, interests and attitudes which would enable the teacher to foster all-round growth and development of their students;
- Skills in identifying, selecting, innovating and organizing learning experiences for teaching school subjects;
- Understanding of psychological principles of growth and development, individual differences and cognitive, psychomotor and attitudinal learning;
- Skills in guiding students in order to enable them to solve their personal as well as academic problems;
- Understanding of the role of home, school and community in shaping the personality of the child, and help to develop an amicable home-school relationship for mutual benefit;
- Understanding of the role of school in changing society; and
- Ability to undertake investigatory projects and action research to improve the school system.
The major programme components are as follows:

For a thorough understanding of the various theories of education, there are five compulsory core courses included in this programme, three in the first year and two in the second year. These are Curriculum and Instruction, Psychology of Learning and Development, Educational Evaluation, Education and Society; and Teacher and School

- Content-based Methodology of Teaching School Subject(s): This component deals with the methodology of teaching school subjects such as Science, Mathematics, English, Social Studies and Hindi. Out of the courses offered, a student teacher can opt two teaching subjects which she has studied or has been teaching.

- Special Course: This component deals with a thorough study of any one important aspect of school education which includes Educational Technology, Computer in Education, Guidance and Counselling and Distance Education. A student teacher can opt any one course from the four alternatives offered.

- Practice teaching and other Practical Work.: This component deals with the development of skills and competencies required by an effective teacher. A student teacher will get ample opportunity to apply in practice, the knowledge gained in theory.

Mentoring of theory courses entails attending Academic counselling sessions. Out of 4 credits of each Theory courses, 1 credit is allotted to practical assignments. Although the attendance of all counselling sessions is desirable, the counselling sessions allotted for practical assignments are to be compulsorily attended.

All counselling sessions of the IGNOU B.Ed Programme are held in College of Teacher Education (PGT) which is the designated programme centre and conducted by academic counsellors or teacher educators specifically identified for the purpose.

The eligibility of the programme includes in-service teachers with:

i. A bachelor or higher degree from a recognized university, and
Two years full time regular teaching experience on temporary/permanent basis as Primary/Graduate/Post Graduate Teachers in primary, secondary/higher/senior secondary school recognized by the central or a state government or a union territory are eligible to take admission.

Admissions are done Regional Centre-wise on the basis of the score obtained in the Entrance-Test conducted all over India. The Programme is of 2 years duration but students may take up to 4 years to complete. The Programme is offered through English and Hindi medium.

The English and Foreign Languages University

The English and Foreign Languages University has been created by the Indian Parliament with a view to build upon the achievements of the former CIEFL, and to significantly expand its activities on the national and global stage. While the CIEFL, a Deemed University, was primarily a teacher-training Institute, the mandate of the new university, according to the Act, is to advance and disseminate “instructional, research and extension facilities in the teaching of English and Foreign Languages and Literature in India” as well as “to take appropriate measures for interdisciplinary studies and research in Literary and Cultural Studies, and to develop critical intercultural understanding of civilizations.” The task of the English and Foreign Languages University will thus be to play a leading role in creating socially and economically relevant knowledge related to communication in the broad sense, and shares this expertise for the good of the Indian people as well as other people in the developing world. The University, in other words, is committed to the principles of inclusive growth and cosmopolitan advance.

The English and Foreign Languages University, Shillong Campus

The North East Campus of the English and Foreign Languages University in Shillong was established in November, 1973 to cater to the needs of North-East India.

The Centre has initiated teaching and training programmes, workshops, seminars, discussion groups and extension lectures intended to strengthen the teaching
of English and foreign languages in North-Eastern region. The Centre has trained more than 3000 persons in English language teaching and in foreign languages.

It offers courses in English, foreign languages such as French and German, Post-Graduate Diploma in the Teaching of English (PGDTE), Diploma in Mass Communication and M.A. in English, M.Phil and PhD in English language Education and English Literature. A five-year integrated B.A programme has also started.

Apart from a rich library and access to the resources of the EFL University in Hyderabad, the facilities available at the Centre include a highly qualified and committed faculty, hostel accommodation, provision for extracurricular activities and a stimulating academic programme in an idyllic setting.

Although there are ten universities in North East (in addition to NEHU with its three campuses) EFL University is the only organization which has the expertise developed over three decades to train teachers of English and foreign languages and also provide facilities for the learning of foreign languages. The strategic geographic location of the Centre, the idyllic setting, ethnographical factors and the primacy of English in the region for educational and career opportunities make the EFL University North East Campus an ideal academic destination.

The Centre has a state-of-the-art language laboratory and a multimedia centre to keep up with the pace of developments in communications and educational technology. It also plans to bring the latest ideas and information about teaching methods and materials and work as a centre for Informatics. Further the centre proposes to have a Women's Studies Research and Resource Centre in view of the unique status of women among the tribal communities of the region. The proposed Multimedia Centre and Women's Studies Research and Resource Centre will be part of the permanent complex of the North East Campus of EFL University.
1.9. The English Course Component of the Teacher Training Colleges under study

This section of the chapter specifically focuses on the English syllabus of the pre-service and in-service teacher-education colleges. Since the main interest of the study is to look at the Methodology of Teaching English which is one of the Method subjects, a detailed outline of the course content will be discussed. The study will therefore not include a discussion on the theory courses which constitute the core courses, optional courses and additional special courses.

St Mary's College of Teacher Education (SMCTE) and College of Teacher Education (PGT) offer B.Ed programmes which is under the jurisdiction of NEHU.

The following points are the Course Objectives of the English paper as specified in the Revised B.Ed Syllabus which was approved in the 68th meeting of the Academic Council held in 2002:

1. To understand the nature and characteristics of English Language
2. To be able to master the skills of a Language.
3. To be able to apply the different approaches for teaching English Language.
4. To be able to evaluate students performance in English Language.

The Course Contents has three units. They are

Unit I

Content of English

a) Elements of Phonetics- The sounds of English, Stress, Rhythm, Intonation, Phonetic Transcription, use of pronouncing dictionary.
b) Written English – Principles of Paragraph construction, varieties of written English – Narrative, Descriptive and Expository Paragraphs, Official and Personal Letters, Reports etc.
c) Revision of selected areas of English Grammar (based on the English syllabus of Secondary schools).
d) Study of the teaching items prescribed for classes IV – X.
e) Study of a few selected poems suitable for High School Classes.
Unit II

_Concept and Background_

a) The role of English in the present day educational context in India
b) The aims and principles of teaching English in Indian Schools
c) Learning the Mother Tongue and Learning another Tongue
d) Appropriate stage for beginning to teach English as a Second language
e) Problems of learning/teaching English as a Second language
f) Methods of Teaching English – Translation method, Direct Method and Dr. West’s Method
g) The Structural Approach and its application in the classroom
h) Situational teaching
i) Language errors, their causes and sources.

Unit III

_Techniques_

b) The teaching of Reading skills- Loud reading and Silent reading, Speech reading and Comprehension, obstacles to efficient reading, Intensive reading vs. Extensive reading, teaching the Prose text and teaching the Supplementary Readers.
c) The teaching if Writing Skills- Controlled and Free Composition, teaching the Mechanics of Writing, Handwriting Correction work.
d). Aims of teaching Poetry-its aims and techniques in a Second Language course.
e) Audio –Visual aids in Language Teaching – illustrations in books, the blackboard and how to use it; use of easily available and inexpensive materials as classroom aids.
f) Lesson Planning – Identifying the objectives of a lesson, describing the techniques of presentation, materials for practising the newly learnt Vocabulary, Structures, etc. providing for Testing and Remedial teaching, preparation of lesson plans and unit plans.
g) Evaluation- new directions in Evaluation. Continuous and Comprehensive evaluation in English Language teaching (ELT), review of existing tests
examination patterns; qualities of a good test in English; construction of Objective Based tests items in English unit tests.

The field based experience includes:

1. Classroom Teaching: Each Trainee is required to give twenty supervised lessons in English teaching specialization, five of which may be practised in stimulated situation under the supervision of the College teachers.
   
   Records of these lessons given are to be maintained. Whenever possible, students may be placed in a school for a block period of 3-4 weeks to work as internee-teachers so that in addition to practice teaching they take part in other activities of the school. All lessons are to be supervised by the College subject teacher/college teachers or by the class teachers.

2. Practical Work: The items of practical work are placed under the following two categories;

   I. The items below carry no marks, but every student is expected to complete them.

   a) Operation of Audio - Visual Equipment - All available equipment in the Institution.
   b) Preparation of unit plans (supervised group work) (2 Plans)
   c) Observation of lessons taught by good teachers in each method subject (With observation lesson record maintained)
   d) Observation of demonstration lessons in each method subject (observation record maintained) (10 Lessons)
   e) Construction of test items, unit test and examination question paper in each method subject with records maintained. (Group Work)
   f) Participation in Co-curricular Activities organized by the College.
   g) Work experience.
II. Items that carry marks in the examination

   a) Preparing and use of five teaching aids in English as a method subject
   b) Administration of Psychological tests, scoring and interpretation.
   c) Case study/Action Research/Other Approved Project.
   d) Educational Statistics.

   An exhibition of the work is usually held on days specified in order to exhibit the work of the whole group and to enable the teachers and pupils of the Teacher training institutions to view the work of the trainees.

   For the evaluation in classroom Practical Teaching each candidate is expected to prepare two lessons plans on English as a method subject. At least one lesson will be observed by the Board of Examiners appointed by the University. This is assessed for a maximum of 160 Marks. The observation of lessons and lesson plans is internally assessed by the Institution for a maximum of 40 Marks. The observation record is assessed internally.

   During teaching days, five to six hours of instruction per day is required of which three to four hours per day may be devoted to theoretical instruction, the rest to practical work.

   The one - year duration programme is activity-packed. Besides academics, co-curricular activities form an integral part of the course of study, since the College strives to foster and ensure integrated knowledge. A week is always allotted each year for physical, literary, aesthetic, cultural and socio-cultural and community related activities to suit the needs and choices of the students.

   In addition, Extension Services Cell of the College organizes seminars, lectures, talks from time to time where eminent scholars belonging to different fields are invited. The course therefore aims at widening the horizon and enlarging the vision of teachers and students.
Post Graduate Diploma in the Teaching of English (PGDTE)

The EFL University, Shillong offers a one-year comprehensive PGDTE course which is divided into two semesters (August to June) the components of which is included in the curricular profile.

In the first semester, a participant will be required to take six courses and do Practice Teaching. In the second semester he/she has to take four courses and work on a Project (practical work assignment).

The PGDTE course conducted by CIEFL has the following components in the first semester course:

1. Introduction to Linguistics
2. Grammar and Written English
3. Phonetics and Spoken English
4. Methods of Teaching English
5. Interpretation of Literature and Criticism

In the second semester a participant will be required to take four courses, choosing at least two from either group A or group B and the other two from any other groups, A, B or C.

Group A

1. General and English Linguistics
2. The Phonetics of English
3. Error Analysis and Contrastive Analysis
4. The Teaching of Grammar
5. The Use of English
6. Introductory Transformational Grammar of English
7. Introductory Sociolinguistics

Group B

1. Principles of Language Teaching
2. Experimental teaching
3. Teaching Education for ELT
4. Designing New Type Courses
The courses offered for the PGDTE programme by CIEFL facilitate a deeper discourse in English Language Teaching.

The English teaching methodology of the B.Ed programme of NEHU and the overall curriculum provides a comprehensive combination of both theory and practice within a time period of one year. The training is rigorous and demands a great amount of focus on the learning and application of the core skills in teaching to enable student-teachers to face the realities of the classroom.

Likewise, the post graduate diploma course in the teaching of English (PGDTE) programme in EFLU provides a curriculum that is specifically oriented to the teaching of English and the application of theory in practice teaching.

The B.Ed programme of IGNOU, though delivered through distance learning mode has an English syllabus that is tailored to the professional needs and improvement of in-service teachers, incorporating both theory and practice within a time-period of two years.
B.Ed Programme IGNOU

As mentioned in the B.Ed Programme Guide, January 2002, School of Education, IGNOU, a major goal of teacher education is to develop the skills and competencies of teaching subject-specific content in the classroom. The content-based methodology courses aim at development of teaching skills in a particular subject in a systematic manner. These courses also provide ideas on unit planning, lesson planning, content organization, and use of audio-visual aids and appropriate evaluation devices.

For the Teaching of English, there are four blocks. Each block is further divided into specific units. The following areas give a detailed outline of the English course component.

Block 1: Instructional Planning in the Teaching of English

Unit 1 - Nature, Need and Objectives
Unit 2 - Who are the Learners of Language?
Unit 3 - Approaches, Methods and Techniques in English Language Teaching (ELT)
Unit 4 - Daily Lesson Plans: Strategies for Classroom Transaction.

Block 2: Listening Comprehension and Speaking

Unit 5 - Teaching Listening I
Unit 6 - Teaching Listening II
Unit 7 - Developing Speaking/Oral Skills
Unit 8 - Speaking Activities
Unit 9 - Testing Listening Ability and Listening Comprehension
Unit 10 - Testing Speaking Skills

Block 3: Reading Comprehension

Unit 11 - The Reading Process
Unit 12 - Developing Reading Skills
Unit 13 - Reading Comprehension I
Unit 14 - Reading Comprehension II
Unit 15 - Teaching Vocabulary

Block 4: Teaching Writing and Grammar

Unit 16 - The Writing Process
Unit 17 - Different Types of Writing
The main purpose of the programme is to cover the backlog of a large number of untrained teachers working in primary/elementary schools of North-Eastern states and Sikkim and provide them minimum training required in the essential areas of teaching and learning. The need was felt after taking into account the damage that can be done to the cause and quality of education by the untrained teachers.

It was thought that through two years full-fledged teacher training programme it may not be possible to train large number of untrained teachers in a short period. Therefore, the need of short course, which is comprehensive with an appropriate practical component, could help these untrained teachers who are working for many years to develop basic skills and competencies important for teaching and learning process.

The programme, however, is not equivalent to any regular teacher training programme available in the country. This does not qualify the teachers for appointment outside these states. However, as agreed by the state governments concerned and recognized by the NCTE, teachers who undergo this special package of teacher education programme may be declared as trained in their respective states.

The School of Education, IGNOU was assigned the responsibility of designing and developing this programme through distance mode. An attempt has been made to prepare a package of courses that comprises blocks and units to cover the main topics essential for primary school teachers to know. Apart from this a comprehensive practical component has also been included in the package. The complete details of the programme are given as under:

**Programme Objectives**

The following four broad objectives have been envisaged in the programme:

i. to develop knowledge and understanding in the primary school curriculum.

ii. to develop skills in transacting the prescribed curriculum effectively.
iii. to acquaint the participants on factor affecting child development, individual differences in the classroom, learning and motivation process etc.

iv. to appreciate the role of teacher in the socio-cultural and political context of the country in general and in the primary education system in particular.

In specific terms, the programme is linked to five aspects of teaching-learning process:

i. knowledge base (school curriculum)

ii. understanding of child development process

iii. strategies and skills to transact the curriculum

iv. awareness of the socio-cultural context in which the teacher functions, and;

v. developing a sense of commitment in teachers towards educating children.

The B.Ed. Programme through distance education is different from that in full time / formal programmes. Here the teaching – learning takes place through self – instructional (print) material and audio and video programmes which can be watched at the programme centres allotted to a participant. Counseling sessions and practical work/activities are also organized to facilitate the teaching-learning process.
A Study of the English Teaching Course in the Teacher Training Colleges.

The English syllabus of the B.Ed programme of NEHU provides a comprehensive combination of both theory and practice within a time period of one year. The training is rigorous and demands a great amount of focus on the learning and application of the core skills in teaching to enable student-teachers to face the realities and challenges of the classroom.

Likewise, the diploma course in the teaching of English in EFLU provides a syllabus that is specifically oriented to the teaching of English and the application of knowledge and skills in practice teaching within a period of one year.

The B.Ed programme of IGNOU, though delivered through the distance learning mode has an English syllabus that is tailored to the professional needs and improvement of in-service teachers, incorporating both theory and practice within a time-period of two years.

The B.Ed programme of PGT and St. Mary’s College of Teacher Education has four core papers which include Teacher in Emerging Society, Development of Learning and Teaching- Learning process, Development of Educational System in India with Special Reference to the North Eastern Region; and Secondary Education and the Teacher. Along with these core papers, the B.Ed regular candidates are expected to take two method papers.

For a teacher-trainee, who takes up the teaching of English as a subject specialization, English is not the only focus in the B.Ed course. English can be part of any two method papers in which the other specialization can be History, Health and Physical Education, Social Studies, Life Science, Physical Science, Geography, and so on.

A teacher-trainee who therefore aspires to enter the English teaching profession has to take up another method paper which has no association to the paper of methodology of teaching English.
With two method papers in hand, a teacher-trainee can select any one of the two method subjects for the final practice teaching which forms a major component of the teacher education course. In other words, one method paper serves as a backup to the other.

Within a period of only one year, the B.Ed programme anticipates its trainees to complete a whole chunk in such a short time. It becomes questionable when one reason out as to why a trainee who is trained in the teaching of English is also trained in the teaching of History or any other subject not related to the teaching of English. The focus, therefore, on helping and improving the teacher-trainees in the skill of English language teaching is insufficiently adequate and it leaves the trainees unprepared and even diffident to face the challenges of the English language classroom.

In identifying the problems of teacher training in the state of Meghalaya Bamon (2002) expressed that “one can be a little sceptical about the course outline”. She felt that the programme “tries to attempt too much in too short a time, and the emphasis is on generalities rather than on specific requirements in real situations, and virtually no consideration is given to the development and cultivation of specific teaching skills suited to the teacher trainees’ personality, background and teaching styles”. Similarly the author remarked without hesitation that the nature of the programme will “make the trained teachers emerge from the course less trained and even more baffled and confused”. (p.25)

The rationale for this critical statement has emerged because of the way the English course syllabus has been structured and implemented without any considerations to the time factor and the trainees themselves.

The course content outlined for English as opined by Bamon (2002) is impressive yet it reveals a confusion of aims and the absence of a clearly defined training programme.

With so much to learn, the trainees are over worked and they will likely opt for selective study in order to obtain a degree and a certificate in teaching. Bamon strongly remarked that the teacher trainees are trained under the ‘Gradgrindian’
tradition of facts and figures, and they will be the ones responsible for the semi-literate graduates and post graduates who will not be able to comprehend simple compound sentences.

The teacher training programme teaches the trainees the techniques of lesson planning. Lesson plans are prepared by trainees for a systematic and organized lesson outline in the practice teaching class. These lesson plans comprise of twenty lessons per method paper. So a total of forty lesson plans are made by B.Ed trainees. In the paper of Methodology of Teaching English, out of the twenty lessons, five lesson plans deal with micro-teaching (one for each skill). These include questioning, stimulus variation, reinforcement, explaining; and illustrating with examples. The other lessons are prepared for prose, grammar and poetry.

It has been observed that lesson plans are based on the State's Meghalaya Board of School Education (MBOSE) English textbooks of classes VI, VII, VIII, IX and X. A few trainees use ICSE and CBSE textbooks (which are nationally recognized) during practice teaching. What is evident is that the lessons that are designed are based on the existing English syllabus of MBOSE which again keeps on being overhauled and revamped.

During the final practice teaching the MBOSE texts are mainly used and hence the teacher trainees take their teaching skills tests in selected schools which are under the jurisdiction of MBOSE.

This points out to the possibility that for lesson plans, the trainees are not completely furnished with other English text materials designed for schools that are under the jurisdiction of various boards of education like ICSE, ISC and CBSE. In this context, there is a feeling that the trainees are only equipped with teaching the English course outline of the MBOSE and not of the other boards of school education. This leaves the trainees to handle the English course all on their own once they complete training and begin their teaching profession.

During the Practice Teaching session, trainees go to selected schools for the supervisor's evaluation. The duration of the practice teaching generally depends on the class hours the respective school gives to the trainee.
The final day of the practice teaching is the final evaluation by the concerned teacher trainers and teacher educators. For the final practice teaching, teacher-trainees preferably opt to teach classes 7-9. The choice of the textbooks used is usually dependent at the teachers or supervisors decision.

The final practice teaching goes on for a period of three days for all the trainees to complete their teaching. It is always supervised by three or more experts who evaluate and appraise the trainees' performance in the teaching session.

It is observed that during the final practice teaching, the teacher-trainees are generally conscious of their teaching performance particularly because they are closely observed and evaluated. Under these circumstances it is often noted that the teacher-trainees tend to be over confident and enthusiastic or even become diffident than they normally are.

Teaching aids or models are made for the papers which are method subjects. The use of teaching aids is optional and not obligatory, though a lot of effort and emphasis is seen on making and designing the teaching models.

The weekly time period of the English class is fixed to at least 45-50 minutes per class. If there is more teacher and student class interaction, it would better the position of the trainees.

In St. Mary's College of Teacher Education a total of 17-18 classes were conducted for Phonetics. At the time of the data collection, the investigator noted that in SMCTE an English teacher was appointed on a part time basis to teach Remedial English to the teacher trainees of the college. It was found that even the trainees who had English as their method paper attended classes in Remedial English.

It may be noted here that Phonetics apart from other components, which is believed to promote effective communication skills in English is not satisfactorily emphasized in the B.Ed regular as well as the distance training programme in IGNOU. As such the English teacher trainees and trained English teachers are not completely equipped and well versed in the subject. In fact, even the English teacher trainers do not have the competence to teach the subject for the mere fact that they are themselves often products of the same teacher-education college.
The programme therefore becomes repetitive and mundane and it fails to give adequate attention on improving the spoken English skills of the trainees. Without a competent and qualified trainer at hand, particularly a phonetics teacher, it would become difficult for the trainees to learn the intricacies of the sounds of English pronunciation, stress and intonation skills, which is considered to aid in effective English communication.

Sharma (2008) in an article about the aims and objectives of teaching English, lamented on the common situation when a B.A., B.Ed teacher teaching at the primary level does not have knowledge of phonetics. The author asserted that “when teachers themselves do not speak correct English, how can it be expected that the students’ foundation of speaking English will be effective and correct”.

It is therefore suggested that an English teacher should have the knowledge and skills of phonetics.

The PGDTE syllabus of EFLU is a complete syllabus that is specifically targeted towards teaching English. Like the regular pre-service B.Ed syllabus, it serves to meet the professional needs of the teacher-trainees within a period of a year. Since its focus is only on the teaching of English as a language and as a subject that is to be taught in different settings, it occupies a more profound place in the professional field of the English teacher.

The syllabus is up-to-date and caters to the current needs of the English teacher. Practice teaching also forms an important aspect of the course. What is lacking in the syllabus is the emphasis on the skills of micro-teaching. It may be noted that the techniques of micro-teaching skills is presently included in the B.Ed course offered in EFLU but not in the post-graduate diploma course. It would benefit the trainees if this teaching technique is incorporated in the PGDTE programme.

The English syllabus of the in-service B.Ed programme of IGNOU is one in which most trainees rely on, specifically because the teaching materials provide rich theoretical and practical input and they are complete. In fact, it has been observed that regular pre-service teacher trainers as well as the teacher trainees frequently use the IGNOU materials as references for their work and assignments.
Since the teacher training programme is on a distance mode, the only factor that is lacking in this syllabus is the absence of a real trainer, guide and motivator.

The overall English course outline of the teacher training programme of the universities of NEHU, EFLU and IGNOU have been clearly defined with all the components essentially grounded in a sound theoretical and practical organization. But all is not well with the entire structure of the English curriculum. It is fraught with innumerable problems in meeting the trainees' professional development.
1.11 The Classroom Setting

The classroom setting generally has a heterogeneous group of teacher-trainees with varied linguistic, cultural and geographical backgrounds.

The classroom setting can therefore see a challenging learning atmosphere where trainees come together to achieve a specific goal, i.e. to be able to teach.

The class population includes trainees who are generally graduates or post-graduates with or without prior teaching experience. The teacher training centres in PGT College, SMCTE College and IGNOU take fresh student teachers as well as deputed teachers from various schools in and around the State. In EFLU, only postgraduate students with a Masters in English or Linguistics are eligible for the diploma course in teaching English. Deputed school teachers from schools in the rural areas also form part of the trainee-population.

It has been observed that due to the diverse background of the trainees in the teacher-training establishments, the trainers are often faced with challenges in meeting the needs of their student teachers. Hence, occasions arise when the trainers are unable to satisfy their student’s immediate needs and also solve their problems. The overall classroom environment is seen to be teacher-centred rather than trainee-centred, where the trainees are dependent on the teacher as well as on the guidelines of the syllabus prescribed. The trainees’ concerns regarding the materials and contents in the syllabus are often unheeded and unanswered. So there is little room for the teacher-trainees’ innovation except perhaps in the creation of attractive models and colourful charts which regularly takes place at the close of the training programme.

The class atmosphere is therefore still conservative and traditional in its teacher-learner outlook which is again predominantly dictatorial and authoritarian.
1.12 The English Teacher's Reflections

On the basis of an informal interview and interaction with trained English teachers as well as the trainees currently undergoing training, the following information and observations were elicited.

It was found that students in Meghalaya are weak in reading, and the teachers are concerned only with completing the content of the syllabus at the expense of proper drilling and grounding in the grammar and comprehension of the language which is highly overlooked.

In teaching a particular poem, the English teachers felt that language is ignored as there is no improvement in language communication (the poem is not used as a tool to boost the students use of English). Learning a poem is more about summarizing to obtain good marks. The overall communication of the students is therefore invariably weak. There is hardly any room for the students to make critical analysis or comments or even to explore and tap into their creativity through the learning of a poem. Every student is expected to express the poem in a language which is compatible to the teachers' understanding of the poem. Nothing beyond the teachers expected answers or responses are acceptable.

If teaching English involves initial knowledge of the rules of the language followed by an in-depth learning of literature, it would better the position of the students; if students are expected to write or know about an English poet it becomes redundant as this is done at the expense of learning the correct use of English in written and spoken communication.

The English teachers felt that learning English and poetry in particular allows no room for creativity because teachers do not motivate or facilitate it in the classroom. Moreover, the students are not encouraged to develop any interpretative skills. The need of the hour is for the English teachers to 'change their mindset', to 'unlearn what they learned' in order to address the current challenges of teaching English.

As communication is needed for survival, teaching English (since it is a second language) with the implementation of the right strategies is important.
Remedial English was taught in SMCTE, though it is not part of the curriculum. Remedial English was introduced because the college saw the need to help students who are especially weak in English. It may be noted that Remedial English does not form a part of the B.Ed syllabus of PGT College and IGNOU.

A large group of students come from the rural and remote areas of the State of Meghalaya to seek admissions to private and public academic institutions in the city, because their thirst for knowledge and job opportunities is set on the same platform with students from urban school settings. It is clear that their language proficiency is not at par with urban students but their determination puts them at a level where they can rise up and meet the challenges of English language communication.

The problem of English language communication does exist even with students coming from English medium schools whether urban or rural schools. This tells us about the lack of trained English teachers who fail to meet and cater to students’ language needs and problems.

A lot of creativity and motivation is involved in the language classroom and teachers are to employ these skills as part of the language learning experience. Moreover, a shift in focus is needed, from teaching prose, poetry to teaching effective communication skills and communicative activities. Most students at the college level today, suffer from a lack of effective communication skills, perhaps because of the poor grounding they received from school. They are expected to know all, yet they lack basic communication skills, all due to the rote-learning which they get by in their examination time. As long as they write according to the book, they will obviously pass well…but this focus on rote-learning needs a positive change to realistic learning that is challenging and task-based. This reflects the current English teaching scenario and its quality and condition.

At the training level teachers ought to do away with rote-learning as this kills the spirit of learning. Teacher trainees are often over laden with heavy assignments that out of obligation and duty to finish their work on time, they indulge in plagiarism and fail to be practical in their attempt to get good scores.
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