CHAPTER – 3

Institutions of Higher Education (HEIs) and its Libraries

3.1 What is Higher Education?

Education has become one of the largest activities in the world and the place of the trained and skilled and educated person has become central to national, social and economic development. Education should aim at transmitting to the new generation the lessons of the accumulated experiences of the past for further progress in the present and the future. Higher education kindles and strengthens social awareness. As a consequence people learn to rise above narrow prejudices, with this belief in equality and quality, they learn to value and protect the social and democratic right. The growth of higher education has been without doubt one of the most remarkable in today's globalised world.

The importance of higher education has increased with the advancement of human civilization. A value based society and value oriented ideas can be originated only when a person or persons receive higher education. The higher stage of human personality can also be developed by means of higher education. Realizing the importance of Higher education, Jawaharlal Nehru once said, "A university stands for humanism, for tolerance, for reason, for progress, for adventure of ideas and the research for truth. It stands for the onward march of the human race towards ever higher objectives. If the universities discharge their duties adequately, then it is well with the nation and the people." (Man Mohan Singh, 2007) Universities and colleges are institutions of higher education, which play a pivotal role for socio-cultural and economic development of nation.

3.2 Functions of Higher Education:

(a) educate highly qualified graduates and responsible citizens able to meet the needs of all sectors of human activity, by offering relevant qualifications, including professional training, which combine high-level knowledge and skills, using courses and content continually tailored to the present and future needs of society;

(b) provide opportunities for higher learning and for learning throughout life, giving to learners an optimal range of choice and a flexibility of entry and exit points within the system, as well as an opportunity for individual development and social mobility in order to educate for citizenship and for active participation in society, with a worldwide vision, for endogenous capacity-building, and for the consolidation of human rights, sustainable development, democracy and peace, in a context of justice;

(c) advance, create and disseminate knowledge through research and provide, as part of its service to the community, relevant expertise to assist societies in cultural, social and economic development, promoting and developing scientific and technological research as well as research in the social sciences, the humanities and the creative arts;

(d) help understand, interpret, preserve, enhance, promote and disseminate national and regional, international and historic cultures, in a context of cultural pluralism and diversity;

(e) help protect and enhance societal values by training young people in the values which form the basis of democratic citizenship and by providing critical and detached perspectives to assist in the discussion of strategic options and the reinforcement of humanistic perspectives;

(f) contribute to the development and improvement of education at all levels, including through the training of teachers.

3.3 New challenges for higher education:

To remain tuned to the changes in society, HEIs need to face a number of difficult problems, in order to:

➢ Increase the yearly output of graduates. This requires increasing the input, without loss (and, if possible, with a gain) of productivity, measured in terms of the average number of years spent by students until graduation.

➢ Adapt programmes, curricula and contents to the foreseeable needs of society, avoiding future unemployment of graduates;

➢ Adjust learning strategies to mass (rather than élite) education;

➢ Keep abreast of technological, methodological, social and cultural changes and innovations;
➢ Adopt large-spectrum, rather than specialised curricula in first-level degree Programmes;

➢ Consider trans-disciplinary subjects as much as disciplinary ones in curriculum development;

➢ Introduce more emphasis on curricular flexibility (credit mechanisms);

➢ Consider information and communication technologies and foreign languages as compulsory subjects, whatever the programme;

➢ Develop students' capacity for self-learning.

Moreover, universities should intervene more visibly in the fields of continuing education and training, in teacher training and in training of trainers, so as to use their full potential in the support of the educative and training systems. On the other hand, they will have to face the fact of the emergence of nonconventional ways of teaching and learning, implying a new approach to pedagogy and didactic.

3.4 The potential and the challenge of technology in higher education:

With the introduction of new information and communication technologies (ICT) there has been a dramatic change in the way knowledge is developed, acquired and delivered. It is also important to note that the new technologies offer opportunities to innovate on course content and teaching methods and to widen access to higher learning. However, it should be borne in mind that new information technology does not reduce the need for teachers but changes their role in relation to the learning process and that the continuous dialogue that converts information into knowledge and understanding becomes fundamental. HEIs should lead in drawing on the advantages and potential of new information and communication technologies, ensuring quality and maintaining high standards for education practices and outcomes in a spirit of openness, equity and international co-operation by:

(a) engaging in networks, technology transfer, capacity-building, developing teaching materials and sharing experience of their application in teaching, training and research, making knowledge accessible to all;

(b) creating new learning environments, ranging from distance education facilities to complete virtual HEIs and systems, capable of bridging distances and developing high-quality systems of education, thus serving social and economic advancement and democratization as well as other relevant priorities of society, while ensuring that these virtual education facilities, based on regional, continental or global networks, function in a way that respects cultural and social identities;
(c) noting that, in making full use of information and communication technology (ICT) for educational purposes, particular attention should be paid to removing the grave inequalities which exist among and also within the countries of the world with regard to access to new information and communication technologies and to the production of the corresponding resources;

(d) adapting ICT to national, regional and local needs and securing technical, educational, management and institutional systems to sustain it;

(e) facilitating, through international co-operation, the identification of the objectives and interests of all countries, particularly the developing countries, equitable access and the strengthening of infrastructures in this field and the dissemination of such technology throughout society;

(f) closely following the evolution of the 'knowledge society' in order to ensure high quality and equitable regulations for access to prevail;

(g) taking the new possibilities created by the use of ICTs into account, while realizing that it is, above all, institutions of higher education that are using ICTs in order to modernize their work, and not ICTs transforming institutions of higher education from real to virtual institutions (UNESCO, 1998).

3.5 The Higher Education System in India:

India has one of the largest higher education systems in the world. In fact it is the third largest in the world in student numbers, after China and the United States. India has been a major seat of learning for thousands of years, dating back to ancient seats of learning like Nalanda and Takshila. If we look back at the development of higher education in India we find that the growth rate of educational institutions in India was slow before independence in 1947, but has accelerated after independence. As on 2010 according to the University Grants Commission (UGC) website (http://www.ugc.ac.in/inside/ugc_reco g_college.html) there are 259 State Universities in India. Besides, there are 42 important universities called Central Universities, which are maintained by the Union Government. The Central Government, recently in 2010 has declared the establishment of 14 World Class Universities throughout India including one in Guwahati, Assam. In addition to these, Higher Education in India comprises 96 deemed universities, 19 NITs (new NITs in every states), 7 IITs (6 new IITs more); 5 IISERs, 1 IISc (probably more coming up); 3 IIITs, 1 IIITM and IITDM, 136 research institutes. Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) website (http://www.education.nic.in/secondary.htm) accessed on 26.01.2008 gives a list of 39 Institutions of National Importance. Along with 16,885 colleges that provide education in all disciplines. The number of teachers is nearly half a million, with about one hundred thousand students enrolled in higher education.
### Table 3.1
Growth of Higher Education in India*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>2005-06</th>
<th>Increase (%)</th>
<th>NE India (2005-06)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNIVERSITYS</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>1248</td>
<td>14(4.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CENTRAL</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEEMED</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.009%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLLEGES</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>18,064</td>
<td>2480.5</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEACHERS</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>4,88,003</td>
<td>78,819(16.1%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENROLMENT</td>
<td>1,00,000</td>
<td>1,10,28,020</td>
<td>3,58,841(3.2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data from UGC Annual Report 2005-06 (UGC Website accessed on 25.05.2011).

All levels of education in India, from primary to higher education, are overseen by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Higher Education (India) and Department of School Education and Literacy, and heavily subsidized by the Indian government, though there is a move to make higher education partially self-financing. Higher education in India has evolved in distinct and divergent streams with each stream monitored by an apex body, indirectly controlled by the Ministry of Human Resource Development. Most universities are administered by the States which are called State Universities.

HEIs in the country, especially the universities, have been producing the required quality manpower as per demands made in the social system. Since India's independence in 1947, the higher education system has grown enormously. It has expanded in an unprecedented manner not experienced by any other nation in the world in recent times. The advent of ICT products like computer and Internet have further made it possible to spread higher education even in remote corners of the country (Singh, 2005).

### 3.6 Higher Education Institutions of North East (NE) India:

The North Eastern part of India comprising of the eight states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim (the last to be included in the region) and Tripura, constitutes a land surface of 262,230 square kilometres where a population of 38.9 million belonging to different ethnic and cultural groups inhabits. Topographically the region is a mixture of hills and plains. While Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim are almost entirely hilly, about four fifths of Assam is plain. Manipur and Tripura have both plain areas and hilly tracts. The hills account for about 70 per cent area and accommodate about 30 per cent of population of the region and the plains constituting the remaining 30 per cent of area hold about 70 per
cent of its population. Wide variation in altitude coupled with abundance of rainfall has given rise to wide variations in climatic conditions within the region which in turn has endowed the region with rich bio-diversity. The richness of bio-diversity of the region is almost matched by its ethnic diversity. The region is a meeting place of large number of races, creeds, cultures and languages.

As in the rest of India the growth of Higher education in North East India picked up only after independence. There are 14 universities in North East India. Out of these 10 are Central Universities and 3 State Universities and 1 Deemed University. In numbers, Assam alone has 5 universities followed by Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh with 2 universities and rest of the states have one university each. According to UGC website North east states have 338 UGC registered colleges. Assam has 212 colleges followed by Manipur (50), Tripura (16), Meghalaya (18), Mizoram (18), Nagaland (14), Arunachal Pradesh (7) and Sikkim (3). In addition there are 3 institutions of national importance in N.E. India, i.e. 1 IIT and 1 NIT in Assam, and 1 IIM in Shillong, Meghalaya. There are also several technical colleges like Engineering Colleges, Medical Colleges, and Colleges for Teachers etc. North-Eastern region is located geographically away from the main stream of the country. No state in the north-east has a sufficiently strong library which can meet the requirement of its readers. In the recent past, the Central Government has started financing the universities of the north-east which indirectly benefits the libraries of these universities. The libraries which are of the Central Universities are in a more privileged position than those of the state universities. The institutions of national importance like IITs, NITs and IIMs have well equipped libraries. Of late due to NAAC evaluation the colleges of North East India are making some efforts to modernize their libraries. One of the options is to initiate automation in these libraries with information technology and networking backed by a proper human resource development (HRD) in these libraries.

3.7 Changing role of library in higher education:

The importance of the libraries in HEIs is immense. As aptly commented by Dr. Radhakrishnan Commission of UGC that "library is the heart of all university's work, directly so, as regards its research work, and indirectly as regards its educational work, which derives its life from research work. Scientific research needs a library as well as its laboratories, while for humanistic research the library is both library and laboratory in one" (Patel & Kumar, 2003, p. 51). So the transmission and progress of knowledge through teaching and research is not possible without the existence of adequately stocked libraries.

In the context of the rapid changes in the higher education sector, there has been a continuous concern about the role and status of the academic library. Many authors have pointed out that academic libraries will have to change and the roles and responsibilities of librarians need reconceptualization. For example, Osburn highlights the need for change in research libraries because of the changing patterns of scholarship in America, the emerging dominance of the sciences in the university's hierarchy of disciplines and the demands of government funding agencies for relevant research. He emphasized that research
libraries needed to be more responsive to the new academic agenda and more service-oriented model of collection development was needed (Virkus, 2004).

During the last decade the discussion about change in academic libraries focuses most frequently on the ICT developments, the implications of information in digital format, new learning and teaching concepts, new economic models and legal frameworks. Many authors discuss expectations for the academic library in today's information age, an array of new functions and partnerships for library staff that flow from changes in society and HE, the implications that these changes within the library will have for all parts of the academy and what will the changes mean for students, faculty, academic administrators, technical staff, and library staff themselves. Several authors believe that these changes could catapult the library into a central role within the teaching/learning enterprise if appropriate adaptations are made; if not, they could further remove the library from the institutional centre (Virkus, 2004).

According to Brophy, at the start of the 21st century, academic libraries explore service developments to support a series of new scenarios (Virkus, 2004):

- new publication and scholarly communication scenarios;
- more intensive use and delivering of digital resources;
- serving increasingly heterogeneous student population;
- continuing high demand from students for traditional resources;
- new modes of study, including ICT-based and distance learning, with which libraries have had little involvement in the past;
- ever-reducing levels of resources, particularly in staffing, leading to enormous pressures on individual staff and a severe challenge to management.

The new student-centred paradigm and new learning and teaching approaches have created the need for a reconceptualization of the roles and responsibilities of librarians in learning and teaching processes. There is a growing literature that discusses bibliographic instruction, user education, and more recently, information literacy. However, the topic is mainly discussed among librarians and information professionals and is hardly explicitly and extensively recognized in other circles.

New roles for librarians in the learning and teaching context are discussed by many authors, including:

- partnering with discipline faculty and other specialists for delivery of information and instruction;
- designing instructional programs for information access;
- teaching students and faculty how to access information, whatever its format or location, and how to evaluate what they find;
- serving as consultants on information resources, issues, and problems;
- developing and implementing information policy;
- creating information access tools;
- selecting, organizing, and preserving information in all formats;
- serving as leaders and facilitators in introducing information technologies and ensuring their effective use (Virkus, 2004).
It is believed that the library staff's changing role will benefit students, faculty, university administrators and librarians. Students will acquire better information skills, stronger critical thinking skills, greater confidence, and the ability to transfer what they have learned to their post-graduate lives. Faculty will get opportunities to learn new information access, management, and evaluation skills which support better their research and teaching. Administrators will begin to view the benefit of new collaboration initiatives and new organizational relationships. Librarians will be called upon to think differently about their assignments in both the library and the broader academic community, they will develop closer relationships with discipline faculty and with technical staff assigned to other campus units, familiarizing themselves with each group's goals, culture, and curriculum.

Ultimately, these technologies — individually and in convergence — will enable both institutions and individual users to think differently about libraries and information management. Libraries will be able to become less institution-centric and to reshape themselves as specialized components of multi-institution service providers, sharing resources and staff in collaborative environments. And users will be able to gain effectiveness and efficiency in teaching, learning, scholarship, and research through improved information discovery, access, management, and creation.

3.8 Higher Education institution libraries of India:

From ancient time Indian has been an important centre of higher education in the world. The famous Universities of ancient India like Nalanda, Takshila had magnificent libraries. Thus from ancient to this modern time, libraries of HEI in India have been actively involved in the task of supporting the research and teaching activities. These libraries provide congenial environment for reading books, newspapers and journals etc. for the students, researchers, faculty and staff. On the functions of the university library, Kothari Commission said, "University library brings books, students and scholars together under conditions which encourage reading for pleasure, self-discovery, personal growth and shaping of intellectual curiosity". Over the years these libraries are slowly and steadily adopting technology to improve their services and also to compensate the problems arise out of numerous factors like lack of funds, cost of materials and manpower (Taher, 1994).

3.9 Higher Education Institution Libraries in North East India:

North East India comprises of eight States viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. There are various HEI libraries spread across the North East. In Arunachal Pradesh Jawaharlal Nehru College was the first HEI set up in 1967. For quite some time (till 1978) this College remained the only institution of higher learning in the state. The Jawaharlal Nehru College Library is one of the richest and well-
equipped libraries in the North-Eastern Region with over 37,000 volumes. The North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and Technology (NERIST), was established in 1984. The Central Library, with a collection of over 41,000 books. The central library of NERIST consists of documents in the field of applied science i.e. Agriculture Engineering, Civil Engineering, Computer Science & Engineering, Electronics & Communication Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Forestry. The Central Library, with a collection of over 44,297 books and 193 periodicals, subscribes to 49 international, 144 national journals including informative popular magazines. Rajiv Gandhi University Library was established along with the University in 1984. The university library is functioning in a separate permanent two-storied building in the RGU campus. The Rajiv Gandhi University Library is an academic library designed to support the information needs of faculty, students, staff and researchers. The RGU Library specializes in the field of social science and humanities focuses primarily on Anthropology, Tribal Studies, Botany, Commerce, Computer Science Education, English, Geography, Hindi, History, Political Science and Zoology. The library's collections consist of some 39,400 books and 200 periodicals covering all aspects of Social Science, Humanities, Environmental Science and Life Science. The library has a reading room with a 14 newspapers, 97 journals, encyclopedias, dictionaries, yearbooks, etc. The RGU Library at present has 19 computers and using LIBSYS software for library automation.

Assam has a rich tradition of education and library movement since the days of the Ahom kingdom. It is home to a number of HEIs, which span across various subjects and streams and are spread across all parts of the state. Whether it is a small town or a large city of Assam, they all have arts & social science, law, engineering, medical, commerce or journalism and mass communication colleges to cater to the needs of higher education. Several HEI libraries with good infrastructure as well as huge collection are present in the State like Krishna Kanta Handique Library of Gauhati University, Central Library of IIT Guwahati and Cotton College Library etc. It has the highest concentration of HEI libraries in the entire NE India. Many of these HEI libraries are however not in good conditions as found in several studies as Barman (2007), Barua (2008), Singh (2008), Sarmah (2008), Sinha, Chakraborty & Bhattachatjee (2007) etc.

Mizoram University was established on 2nd July 2001. The university library has 60,718 number of books and about 270 current journals. However, there is lack of information sources about the HEI libraries in Mizoram.

There is one central university, Nagaland University and 30 affiliated colleges under it. The Nagaland University came into being in 1996 and is operating in three well defined campuses, i.e., Kohima, Lumami and Medziphema. Most of these affiliated colleges are under deficit and ad-hoc system. Though the colleges in Nagaland seems to be coping up with the changing educational patterns, it is very unfortunate to say that there is no proper library infrastructure attached with the colleges for catering to the needs of the students and teachers. The conditions of most of the college libraries in Nagaland are very discouraging and unsatisfactory. There is a lack of awareness among the Head
of the institutions themselves on the very importance of library in modern educational system in this age of competition where students and teachers need to access to latest source of information. Most of the colleges have established libraries with little disorganized collection but most of these libraries do not have qualified librarians, headed by non-professional and with no proper staffing structure the libraries lacks in providing prompt and efficient services to the users (Lendina & Ngullie, 2006).

Library Movement in Manipur came into existence in the early 1900s. As a result of this movement, there was the emergence of libraries and came to the actual stage of growth and development of Library. Most of the colleges in Manipur were established in late seventies and early eighties. Majority of the colleges (i.e. 9 out of 24) in Manipur were found to be established during 1970-1980's. Again, it is observed that some of the libraries also established during 1960-1970 and 1980-90. 1) MU Library, Canchipur, Imphal; 2) RIMS (Regional Institute of Medical Science) Library, Imphal; 3) CAU (Central Agricultural University) Library, Iroisemba; 4) Polytechnic Library, Takyelpat, Imphal; 5) MIT (Manipur Institute of Technology), Takyelpat, Imphal; 6) ITI (Industrial Training Institute), Takyelpat, and 7) LMS (Lairenmayum Sheibyashachi Singh) Law College Library, Imphal. Studies done by Devi and Devi (2006), Devi and Singh (2006), Devi and Singh (2007) etc. shows that although modernization of the HEI libraries in Manipur has been initiated in some institutions but the majority of the staff is not able to handle the computer and training is thus very much necessary.

Meghalaya has a rich tradition of higher learning particularly enriched by the contribution of the Christian Missionaries. The first college in fact was established in Shillong only in 1924 by the Christian Brothers of Ireland. Today it has many prominent institutions of higher learning like North Eastern Hill University (NEHU) which is a Central University, The North Eastern Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health & Medical Science (NEIGRIMS), the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), National Institute of Fashion Design (NIFT), Indian Institute of Hotel Management, Central Institute of English & Foreign Languages (CIEFL). NEHU has one of the best libraries in the entire North East. It was in fact among the first University library to initiate automation in 1988 in India. Most of the colleges in Meghalaya have well developed library system with good collection of text and reference books based on the respective subjects being offered in the undergraduate courses. Besides maintaining a manual catalogue, some of the libraries have initiated computerizing (Thabah & Sumer, 2006).

Sikkim, a very small hilly state in the Eastern Himalayas, consisted of four districts, is the 22nd State of India came into existence with effect from 26th April, 1975. Sikkim has 6 colleges including the deficit and non-deficit, along with 1 Medical College, 2 Technical Colleges, 2 B.Ed. Colleges and 2 Central Universities and 1 Private University. A study conducted by Kalita, Majumder and Deka (2010) shows that majority of the libraries of HEI in Sikkim is not automated, exception being the Sikkim Manipal University, the College of Agricultural Engineering and Post Harvest Technology (CAEPHT), and the
Harkamaya College of Education. These have fully automated libraries, but status of HRD in these libraries is not known.

The history of Higher Education in the State of Tripura started with establishment of Maharaja Bir Bikram College in 1947. Today there are 15 general Degree colleges as well as other institutions of higher learning like law college (1), engineering college(1), and polytechnic college (1). A new chapter in Higher Education in Tripura began with the setting up of the Tripura University in 1985 (now a Central University). There is however no available literature describing the status and manpower developments of HEIs libraries in Tripura.

3.10 Changes in Libraries of Higher Education Institutions:

As Singh & Kaur (2009) and others notes that Information and communication technology (ICT) has made a deep impact on libraries of HEIs. With the applications of Information Technology the scenario of libraries has changed drastically, the libraries are providing online access to their users. For all the library activities such as ordering, classification, cataloguing and reference and information services, computer application is increasingly being used. Even the book has changed its shape in this technological era. This trend of computerization is not going to end and by the year 2020 but it is expected that library automation will be done for most of the library services and information will be provided through the IT. The scientists will be able to locate library holdings through their own-networked desktop in their lab or department. The traditional reference service will take the place of modern reference service such as guiding the users how to make use of OPAC, to search through CDROM Databases, Internet Search Engines and other digital resources. In subsequent chapters we shall these in details.

Higher education is and will remain as the driving force of the civilized world. Taking consideration of its importance every nation of this world is trying their best to invest as much as possible in higher education. Thus the number of Higher Education Institutions is multiplying very fast including in our own country India. At the same time the field of Higher Education is undergoing rapid changes and developments during recent years. Libraries being the nerve centres of teaching and research within the higher education institutions are also undergoing radical transformations. Ranganathan was one of the earliest who glimpsed into the future role of academic libraries. In 1931, Ranganathan speculated that library services might be offered using other than print-based sources: “Who knows that a day may come when the dissemination of knowledge, which is the vital function of libraries, will be realized even by means other than those of the printed book? (Ranganathan, 1988)” The next Chapter discusses this very important aspect of library automation and its development India and particularly in the libraries of institutions of North East India.