Chapter-I
INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The development of any country mostly depends upon the expansion and dissemination of education in society. Progress of a society is possible only when its citizens are educated, dynamic, resourceful, enterprising, responsible and so forth. Without such citizens, development of a country can hardly be achieved in any field. Education is a factor which is pivotal to national progress and upliftment as education helps in moulding able, responsible and competent citizens apart from contributing in personality development of the individuals by inculcating certain values. It is one of the most important factors for the achievement of rapid economic development and technological progress.

In the development of a country like India, primary education helps in creating the base while higher education is important for providing the cutting edge. Recently education has been recognized as a fundamental right for every citizen of India. The ‘Right to Education Act’ was passed on April 1, 2010 by an Act of the Parliament and it was included in the Constitution of India. Moreover, the Eleventh Plan lays the highest priority on education for achieving rapid and inclusive growth. It presents a comprehensive strategy for strengthening the education sector covering all segments of the education pyramid. Education was a state subject of Article 63, 64, 65 and 66 of the Constitution but the constitutional Amendment of 1976 placed it under the Concurrent list.

Among the educational institutions, the universities have become the chief agencies of higher education across the world. The world’s first universities were established in India thousands of years ago. The nine ancient universities were Kanchi, Kannuj, Kashi (7th century BC), Mithila (Videha), Nadia, Nalanda, Taxila, Valabhi and Vikramshila. The basic features of these universities were (a) free education (b) autonomous nature (c) students from foreign countries like Burma, Ceylon, China, Korea and Tibet.

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The Indian University system is an offshoot of the famous Wood’s Despatch of 1854. Woods Despatch of 1854 recommended establishing three universities in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras on the basis of the model of London University. As a result, the three provincial universities came up in 1857. These Universities were basically affiliating, examining and regulating bodies at the beginning like London University which did not have teaching departments at that time. But some changes in the university came about in 1858. The universities were engaged in preparing syllabus and conducting examinations and colleges affiliated to it imparted teaching. Except in Indian sub-continent viz. India, Pakistan and Bangladesh there is no affiliating colleges in the world because of the problems of delivering quality education.  

The Universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras started with the faculties of arts, law, medicine and engineering. Subsequently several Acts were passed and its outcome was the establishment of Punjab University at Lahore in 1882 and Allahabad University in 1887. These universities were also examining and affiliating bodies. Only after Indian Universities Act 1904, the universities were entrusted with the task of teaching along with the right to conduct examinations.

In India, Higher education refers to a level of education that is imparted after +2 stages i.e. at collegiate and university level. It is based on (10+2+3) system of education recommended by National Policy of Education (NPE), 1986. It is provided at colleges, universities, community colleges, liberal arts colleges, institutes of technology and certain other collegiate institutions such as vocational schools, trade schools and career colleges that award academic degrees or professional certifications. The faculty of higher education includes: Arts, Science, Commerce, Engineering, Medicine, Agriculture, Veterinary, Law etc. Various educational experts, committees and commissions in India in the recent past felt the importance of higher education as an instrument of social change and progress. The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 has underlined the importance of higher education as a crucial factor for survival.

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because of its potentiality to contribute towards National development through dissemination of specialised knowledge and skills. By providing specialised knowledge it prepares the manpower for various areas like production, planning, management and technological development.

The first Prime Minister of India, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, in his convocation address to Allahabad University in 1947 summed up the role and objectives of the university as “A university stands for humanism, for tolerance, for reason, for adventure of ideas and search for truth. It stands for onward march of human race towards even higher objectives. If the universities discharge their duties adequately then it is well with the nation and the people. ³

International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) Handbook defines higher education as more specialised study normally undertaken after successful completion of a good basic education lastly for at least eleven years. Higher education is important as it contributes to the human capital development. A study conducted by the World Bank (1994) in 192 countries discovered that physical capital and natural wealth accounts for only 16% and 20% respectively of the total wealth, whereas human capital accounts for the rest, that is 84%.⁴ At present, there are 13 million youths who are enrolled in the field of higher education as compared to 0.23 million youths in 1947 in India. It has made India the third largest system of higher education in the world. But the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in India is not up to the mark. According to the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005 from UNESCO, India’s GER is 12% whereas the countries like Thailand and Malaysia it is 37% and 26% respectively. It has placed India at the bottom with 24th rank in the developing and developed countries list in the world.⁵ India needs massive expansion of opportunities for higher education to 1500 universities nationwide in order to improve its GER of India at least to 15% by 2015(National Knowledge Commission). Moreover, by the end of the 12th Five Year Plan, it is expected to achieve the GER of higher education either to 23.5% or 27%.

Higher education in India has been expanding satisfactorily in the recent past and it has emerged as one of the largest education system in the world. However, despite its expansion, the country has not yet succeeded in achieving quality education required to meet the demands of the changing scenario. Hence, it is the need of the hour to take measures to improve the scenario of higher education and to ensure that all sections of the society becomes a part of knowledge thrust. It is because development of a country will be sustainable only when it does not leave behind any section of society and in which the benefits of education are reflected in all spheres. The educational planners and policy makers all over the country ought to engage themselves in finding ways and means of achieving high standard of education.

Higher education in India is coordinated by the agencies like University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), Medical Council of India (MCI), Central Council of Indian Medicine (CCIM), Central Council of Homeopathy (CCH), Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Indian Nursing Council (INC), Dental Council of India (DCI), Pharmacy Council of India (PCI), Bar Council of India (BCI), Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and National Council for teacher Education (NCTE).

North-Eastern states comprise eight states viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. The Central Government has formed some committees for the socio-economic development of this region and as a result, North Eastern Council (NEC) in 1971, North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd. (NEDFi) in 1995 and Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) in 2001 were formed. Moreover, for the development of academic activities of the North-Eastern Region, a Forum of Vice-Chancellors was formed in 2008.

Higher education in the North-Eastern states was started with the establishment of Cotton College at Guwahati in 1901 under the initiatives of Sir Henry J.S. Cotton, the then Chief Commissioner of Assam. In the beginning the progress of higher education was very slow. In 1924 St. Edmunds College was set up in Shillong. It was followed by the establishment of Jagannath Barooah
College (JB College) at Jorhat, Lady Keane College, Shillong in 1934, Guru Charan College, Silchar in 1935 and St. Mary’s College, Shillong in 1937. In the post-Independence period there was phenomenal growth of higher education in the North-Eastern region of India. The people of the region strongly demanded the establishment of more colleges in their respective areas. Before Independence, there was no university in the North-Eastern region of India. The first person to suggest the establishment of a university in Assam was Lt. Col. P.R.T. Gardon, the Commissioner of Assam as early as in 1916. The Gauhati University was the first university of the region which was established in 1948 under the Assam Act XVI of 1947. Its jurisdiction covered the entire North-East India except Tripura, which was affiliated to Calcutta University.

North-Eastern States have a total of 42 universities and degree awarding institutions, out of which 10 are central universities, 4 state universities, 17 private universities, and one deemed university, one Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), 8 National Institute of Technology and Indian Institute of Management (IIM).

Regarding the enrolment of college students in the North-Eastern Region (NER), enrolment is satisfactory which is higher than the national average. In the national level enrolment is 86.88% whereas in the NER it is 92.92%. But in NER the enrolment in the university departments was 7.71% against 13.12% at the national level. In the NER there are 43 Educationally Backward Districts during 11th plan period where the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is below the national average. The 12th five year plan, proposed to establish model degree colleges in these educationally backward districts.

1.0.1 Profile of Assam

Assam, one of the premier states of North-East India, is the anglicized version of ‘Axom’. Geographically, Assam is surrounded by Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh on the North, Nagaland and Manipur on the East, Meghalaya

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and Mizoram on the South and Bangladesh, Tripura and West Bengal on the West. At present, it has 27 administrative districts.

**Fig. 1.1 Location map of the study area**

Assam covers an area of 78,438.08 sq. k.m., supporting a population of 31,169,272 (Census, 2011) of which 1,59,54,927 are males and 1,52,14,345 are females. It is located between 24° 13’ and 28° North latitudes and 89° 46’E to 96° 4’ East longitude. According to 2011 census the literacy rate of Assam is 73.18% out of which 78.81% are male literates and 67.27% are female literates.

Assam’s literacy rate i.e. 73.18% (Census 2011) is below the national level (74.04%). But the literacy rate of Assam in the initial stage of independence was better than the all India rate. In 1951, the literacy rate of Assam was 18.53% against 18.33% at the national rate. Literacy rate of Assam was above the national level till 1970, but after this it could not maintain its status.\(^7\)

\(^7\) Azimal Hoque. “Education and Human Development in Assam.” *Assam Tribune* 10 July 2013. p.6
Assam is known for its rich cultural heritage and picturesque beauty and natural panorama. It is famous for the rare one horned rhinoceros, silks such as *paat* and *muga* which rank amongst the finest in the world and the *Khamakhya* temple where thousands of devotees come to worship the goddess Khamakhya every year.

1.0.2 Divisions of Assam

The State of Assam is divided into two parts viz. the Upper and Lower Assam. The division was done on the basis of the flow of the Brahmaputra River as it flows from high land to low land. The river flows from east to west, the eastern part of Assam lying on the high land is known as Upper Assam while the western part lying on the low land areas is known as Lower Assam. Upper Assam covers mainly 7 (seven) districts *viz.* Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Sibsagar, Jorhat, Golaghat, Lakhimpur and Dhemaji. It also has three extended districts *viz.* Sonitpur, Karbi Anglong and Nagaon. The Upper Assam region is the most productive region in the state which is rich in natural resources like coal, oil and natural gas as well as tea plantations.

1.0.3 Profile of Upper Assam

The profiles of various districts of Upper Assam are described below:

1. **Dibrugarh**: Dibrugarh is situated in the eastern part of Assam. This district is bounded by Dhemaji and Lakhimpur in the north, Sibsagar and Aruanchal Pradesh in the south, Tinsukia in the east and Sibsagar in the west. Dibrugarh town is the district headquarters situated on the bank of Brahmaputra. The NH-37 is the major road running through the district. The area has Air Force Field at Chabua at a distance of about 25 km from Dibrugarh town. Dibrugarh district covers an area of 3381.00 sq km. It has 9 towns, 1348 number of villages, 7 CD Blocks, 93 Gaon Panchayats and 7 revenue circles (Census 2011). This area has the major industries like oil and tea. The headquarters of the Oil India Limited is located at Duliajan at a distance of about 50 km from Dibrugarh town. The Fertiliser
Corporation of India and Assam Petro-Chemicals Limited at Namrup and the Assam Gas Corporation at Duliajan, NEPCO near Duliajan are some of the other major industries in the district.

According to Census 2011, it has a population of 13,27,748. The literacy rate of this district is 76.22% of which 82.59% are males and 69.52% are females. Dibrugarh district has 1302 government/provincialised Lower Primary schools and 362 Lower Primary Schools run by tea gardens and local bodies, 343 upper primaries and 57 upper primaries with high schools, 177 high schools, 40 higher secondary schools and 2 junior colleges (Census 2011). The pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) is 28.8% at lower primary level and in the upper primary level PTR is 23.0%.

2. **Tinsukia:** The name ‘Tinsukia’ originated from the triangular shaped pond popularly known as ‘Tinikunia Pukhuri’. A rail line was constructed near this pond in the year 1884 which was named as Tinsukia. From that time onwards it is known as Tinsukia.

   The area of the district covers 3790.00 sq km. It has 3 subdivisions, 13 towns, 1168 villages, 7 CD blocks, 86 Gaon Panchayats and 4 revenue circles. According to Census 2011, its population is 13,16,948. Its literacy rate is 70.92% out of which 77.89% are male and 63.54% are females.

   Tinsukia district has 989 government/provincialised Lower Primary Schools and 122 tea garden/local bodies’ lower primary schools, 224 upper primary schools and 38 upper primaries with high school, 154 high schools, 43 higher secondary and 14 junior colleges (Census 2011). The pupil-teacher ratio at Lower Primary level is 38.3% and at Upper Primary level it is 31.1%.

   The famous Stillwell Road is connected to this district and Dibru Saikhowa National Park is situated in the district.

3. **Sivasagar:** Sivasagar was the capital of Ahom Kingdom from 1699 to 1788. This area is famous for historical monuments such as Shivasagar
Bor Pukhari, Sivadol, Vishnudol, Devidol, Rang Ghar, Kareng Ghar and Talatal Ghar built during the Ahom regime.

The population of Sivasagar district is 11, 50,253. The literacy rate of this district is 81.36% out of which 86.75% are male and 75.69% are female. It covers an area of 2668.00 sq km. It has 3 sub-divisions, 7 towns, 875 villages, 9 CD Blocks, 118 Gaon Panchayats and 6 revenue circles (Census 2011). It has 1760 government/provincialised lower primary schools, 406 Upper Primaries and 123 Upper Primaries with high schools, 255 high schools, 72 higher secondary schools and 14 junior colleges.

4. **Jorhat**: Jorhat is one of the major districts of Upper Assam. Jorhat was the last capital of Ahom kingdom. The world heritage site Majuli is situated in this district. Jorhat is the only city in Upper Assam to have Inter State Bus Terminus (ISBT) which provides connectivity to all the major cities of North-East. This area is well connected by road, rail and air connectivity. Rowriah Airport is the air station situated in Jorhat. According to census 2011, Jorhat district covers an area of 2851.00 sq. km. It has 3 sub-divisions, 11 towns, 848 villages, 8 CD Blocks, 110 Gaon Panchayats and 6 revenue circles. Its total population is 1091295. The literacy rate of Jorhat district is 83.42% (male 88.38% and female 78.22%).

The district has 1631 government/provincialised and 6 tea garden/local bodies Lower Primary Schools. Moreover, it has 476 Upper Primary and 92 Upper Primary with high school, 295 high schools and 50 higher secondary and 12 junior colleges. The pupil-teacher ratio at Lower Primary school is 24.9% and 17.0% at Upper Primary level.

5. **Golaghat**: The name Golaghat ('Gola' which means shop and 'Ghat' meaning the landing point of river ferry) originated from the shops established by the 'Marwari' businessmen during mid part of 20th century AD on the bank of river Dhansiri near present Golaghat town. The population of Golaghat district is 10, 58,674. The literacy rate of this district is 78.31% out of which 84.20% are male and 72.18% are female
(Census 2011). It covers an area of 3502.00 sq. km. with 3 sub-division, 7 towns, 1125 numbers of villages, 8 CD Blocks, 102 Gaon Panchayats and 6 revenue circles (Census 2011)

It has 1093 government/provincialised, 1 tea garden/local bodies LP schools. Moreover, it has 411 Upper Primaries and 53 Upper Primaries with high schools, 199 high schools, 40 higher secondary and 2 junior colleges. The Pupil-teacher Ratio at LP level is 34.1% and at UP level it is 22.3%.

6. Lakhimpur: The name ‘Lakhimpur’ is believed to have originated from the word ‘Lakshmi’, the goddess of prosperity. The district is mainly dependent upon agriculture and paddy. Paddy is regarded locally as ‘Lakhimi’. The word ‘pur’ means ‘full’. Lakhimpur therefore means full of paddy or the place where paddies are grown abundantly. The district covers an area of 2277.00 sq km. It has 2 sub-division, 4 towns, 1184 numbers of villages, 9 CD Blocks, 81 Gaon Panchayats and 7 revenue circles. Its population is 10,40,644. Literacy rate of this district is 78.39% of which 84.66% are male and 71.91% are female. The district has 1505 Government/provincialised and 11 tea garden/local bodies lower primary schools. Moreover, it has 744 Upper Primaries and 133 Upper Primaries with High School, 378 high schools, 64 higher secondary schools and 25 junior colleges (Census 2011).

7. Dhemaji: This district covers an area of 3237.00 sq. km and it has 2 sub-division, 4 towns, 1319 numbers of villages, 5 CD Blocks, 65 Gaon Panchayats and 6 revenue circles (Census 2011). The literacy rate of this district is 69.07% (male 75.66% and female 62.13%). Total population of this district is 6, 88,077. It has 1136 Government/provincialised Lower Primary schools, 458 Upper Primaries and 33 Upper Primaries with high school, 238 high schools, 56 higher secondary schools, and 28 numbers of junior colleges.
1.0.4 Higher Education in Assam

In Assam, Higher Education means education after +2 stages and includes graduates, post-graduates and researchers. It follows the mandate of National Policy on Education 1986. In Assam, the State Government has been quite alive to the requirements, improvement and the expansion of education.

In Assam, the following types of Universities and degree awarding institutions are available.

**Table 1.1 Category-wise Universities and Institutes of National Importance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Universities</th>
<th>Name of the University</th>
<th>Year of Establishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Universities (2)</td>
<td>Assam University, Silchar</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tezpur University, Tezpur</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Universities (6)</td>
<td>Gauhati University, Guwahati</td>
<td>1948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh</td>
<td>1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat</td>
<td>1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University, Guwahati</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bodoland University</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women University</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Universities (2)</td>
<td>Assam Don Bosco University, Azara, Guwahati</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assam Down Town University, Guwahati</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutes of National Importance (2)</td>
<td>Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Institute of Technology, Silchar</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Economic Survey of Assam (2010-2011)

From the table 1.1.1 it is clear that a total of 460 higher educational institutions are available in Assam. Out of these 17 are university and research institute, 368 are general colleges, 75 are professional colleges. It is significant from the table 1.1.1 that general colleges are more in number as compared to professional colleges.

In Assam, higher educational institutions offer courses leading to degrees, diplomas and certificates. Enrolment in arts is higher than other courses in the state of Assam. The figure 1.2 reveals the enrolment in various courses of higher educational institutions of Assam.
Table 1.1.1 Number of Higher Educational institutions in Assam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational institutions</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Number of institutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University and Research Institute</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research Institute</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleges for general education</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provincialised</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-provincialised</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleges for professional education</td>
<td>Agriculture and Forestry</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technology and Engineering College</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Management Institution</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Veterinary</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medical College</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ANM/GNM training college</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>460</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistical Handbook Assam, 2012

Fig. 1.2 Enrolment in Higher Educational courses of Assam (2011-2012)

Source: Directorate of Technical Education and Directorate of Higher Education, Assam, Statistical Handbook of Assam, 2012
1.0.5 Higher Education in Upper Assam

Upper Assam has tremendous contribution in spreading higher education in Assam and other parts of the region. The history of higher education in Assam witnesses the initiatives undertaken by the British for establishing higher educational institutions which has been contributing a lot in spreading the overall socio-economic and political lives of the people of Upper Assam in particular and other parts of the country and abroad. In Upper Assam people are highly concerned about education as a result, a number of higher educational institutions have come up both in respect to general and professional education. There are a total of 148 colleges available in Upper Assam at present, out of which 117 are general degree colleges and 31 are professional in nature.

1.0.6 Literacy Rate in the seven districts of Upper Assam: Upper Assam covers mainly seven districts viz. Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Sivasagar, Jorhat, Golaghat, Lakhimpur and Dhemaji. The literacy rates of these seven districts are given below:

Fig. 1.3 District-wise Literacy Rate of the Seven Districts of Upper Assam


The above figure shows that Jorhat district has the highest literacy rate with 83.42% (Census 2011). It is followed by Sibsagar district with 81.36%,
Lakhimpur with 78.39%, Dibrugarh with 76.22% and Tinsukia with 70.92%. The lowest literacy rate (69.07%) was found in Dhemaji district.

1.0.7 Type of colleges: In Upper Assam, these two types of colleges are available.

- **General colleges:** It refers to those colleges which offer courses like BA, BCom and BSc classes.
- **Professional colleges:** It offers professional courses like BEd, Engineering, Law, MBBS, MD etc.

1.0.8 Nature of colleges: The colleges of Upper Assam are varied in nature. These are as follows:

- **Government Colleges:** In this type of colleges government is responsible for its management and administration.
- **Provincialised colleges:** These colleges are not government colleges. Such colleges which are registered under 2(f) and 12(b) of UGC and they receive funds for their development of the colleges from the UGC and receive salary from the State Government. Majority of the colleges of Upper Assam are provincialised in nature.
- **Non-provincialised:** These colleges receive *lump sum* grant as financial assistance from the state government.
- **Private:** Private colleges do not receive any financial assistance from the government. These are managed by private bodies.

1.0.9 Affiliation: At present, almost all the colleges of Upper Assam are affiliated to Dibrugarh University which was established in the year 1965. Before the establishment of this university all the colleges of Assam were affiliated to Gauhati University established in 1948. Prior to this, a few colleges were there in the area and these colleges were affiliated to Calcutta University.
1.2 Need and Justification of the Study

Higher education is important for socio-economic advancement of the country, as it satisfies the manpower needs. In today’s fast changing socio-economic fabric, higher education system should be exposed to greater pressure for expansion. It is the duty of higher education to accumulate, to consolidate and to disseminate novel information in the other levels of education system. The goals and the objectives of higher education are to promote, disseminate and generate knowledge, as well as to promote humanism and reasoning. It should change the values and attitudes of the students, creating in them an urge or necessary motivation for social change. Therefore, it is very much important to study the system of higher education.

By pointing out the importance of higher education, International Commission on Higher Education for 21st century in the World’s Conference on higher education of 1998, organized by the UNESCO stated that the mission of higher education is to educate, to train and to undertake research. Higher education is undergoing rapid changes and has experienced innovative developments during the second half of the 20th century.

Although higher education has been developing in India, the present scenario of higher education in North-East India is not so encouraging. In this regard North-Eastern states are lagging behind in comparison with some other states of the country. In North-Eastern states, higher education is confined only to 6.39% of total population.

Under such circumstances, we have to reconsider the case of higher education in North-Eastern Region. The present study is designed to study higher education in Upper Assam, which is one of the most important divisions of Assam. Higher education in Upper Assam includes the development, enrolment, administration, financing and evaluation etc. in the colleges and universities of the area. In Upper Assam, there are enough human resources. But due to the lack of systematic plans and programmes in the area, it has not developed up to the level expected. There is lack of research done in the field of education and elaborate study of higher education is not carried out so far. In addition, outdated curriculum, traditional method of teaching, lack of interest etc. has worsened the
situation. Therefore, it is expected that the study of higher education in Upper Assam will have a positive impact and lead to the smooth functioning of the higher educational institutions. The outcome of the present study is expected towards making the higher education more relevant in the present day context. The fruitfulness of this study is also expected on the ground that analysis and suggestions relating to the higher education will help the policy framers to focus on the socio-cultural, economic and all round development of the society by making higher education more effective and bringing about social stability within the society.

Hence, it has become an urgent need of time to study Higher Education in Upper Assam.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Based on the need and justification of the study the statement of the problem can be stated as follows:

“A Study of Higher Education in Upper Assam”.

1.4 Operational Definition of the Key Terms Used

Higher education: It refers to education after + 2 stages i.e. collegiate and university level. The stage of higher education covers undergraduate, graduate, post graduate and research level. It comprises all types of education imparted after the +2 stages: general, professional, technical and teacher education.

Upper Assam: Upper Assam is one of the major divisions of Assam. It covers seven (7) districts namely- Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Sivasagar, Jorhat, Golaghat, Lakhimpur and Dhemaji and three extended districts viz. Sonitpur, Karbi Anglong and Nagaon.

1.5 Delimitation

The study is delimited to the colleges of the seven districts of Upper Assam which are affiliated under Dibrugarh University and two universities viz. (1) Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh and (2) Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat.
1.6 Objectives of the Study

The proposed study intends to achieve the following objectives:

1. To trace the origin and development of higher education in Upper Assam.
2. To study the enrolment pattern of college and university students.
3. To study the system of management and administration of higher educational institutions in Upper Assam.
4. To find out the system of examination in Upper Assam.
5. To find out the problems faced by the students and teachers of the higher educational institutions in Upper Assam.
6. To study the research and extension activities at the university level.
7. To suggest measures for improvement of higher education in Upper Assam.

1.7 Research questions

On the basis of above objectives, the following research questions can be raised by the investigator:

1. What is the origin and development of higher education in Upper Assam?
2. What is the trend of students’ enrolment pattern in the system of higher education in Upper Assam?
3. What is the system of management and administration of higher educational institutions in Upper Assam?
4. What is the present system of examination at the higher educational institutions in Upper Assam?
5. What problems do the students and teachers face in the higher educational institutions of Upper Assam?
6. What can be done for the improvement of higher education in Upper Assam?