North East India represents the fusion of two great traditions Indic culture and Mongoloid culture. The Region comprises of seven states known as the Seven Sisters namely Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Mizoram it is also connected to the Himalayan state of Sikkim and to the Darjeeling Hills of the West Bengal. It also connects India to various countries like Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Myanmar and Tibet. Formation of these states began during the British Colonial Period. At this time it was ruled as a part of Bengal Province. The state of Assam came into existence in 1874. After the independence in 1947, the North Eastern region comprised of Assam, and the princely states of Manipur and Tripura. Later Nagaland in 1963 and Meghalaya in 1972, Arunachal Pradesh in 1975 and Mizoram in 1987 were formed. Manipur and Tripura were Union Territories of India between 1956 and 1972 after which they attained fully-fledged statehood.

This region is abode of various tribes enriching these states with various cultural diversities. There are about 220 languages spoken in these states, belonging mainly to three language families, namely Indo- Aryan, Sino- Tibetan and Austric. The Indo Aryan is represented mainly by Asamiya and Bangla, Austro Asiatic is represented mainly by Khasi and the Sino- Tibetan family of languages by the Tibeto- Burman. The area is enriched with bio-diversity. It is also known for its unique culture, handicrafts, martial arts, and scenic beauty. Each state has its own unique features, distinct geographical details and various tribal communities with different rituals and culture. Margaret Ch. Zama (author) says,

The Great variety of people of the North East survived through the centuries because they were one with ecology, and developed their
own indigenous knowledge systems to sustain both themselves and
the environment that accommodate them.¹

Places of Historical importance include Ita Fort, Temple of Kamakhya, Powa-Mecca,
The Ruin Royal Palace etc. People visit North East India because of the beautiful
landscape and pleasant weather. Its Geographical features also make it unique as it
is divided into the hills and plains. Tribal population living in these region share their
unique culture and tradition. T. Raatan(Director of Public Libraries, Itanagar) writes in
his book:

The Region has a high concentration of tribal population. Each tribe
has its own distinct tradition of art, culture, dance, music and life
styles. The numerous fairs and festivals celebrated by these
communities and their friendly nature are irresistible attractions for
the visitors.²

Although North East India is unique in its culture and traditions, different tribes
have their own oral literature consisting of songs, and fables. But there is also a dark
feature of this land where people since ages are witnessing conflicts and various
issues related to their homeland. The troubled political climate, the beautiful
landscape and the confluence of various ethnic groups perhaps have given rise to a
body of writing that is completely different. The bent towards education and growth is

making these people aware and helping them in bringing out their troubles through Literature. Ishaan Tharoor (co-editor of Time World) writes:

the seven states of the Indian North East, a vast rugged
appendage off the Indian mainland suspended between China,

Bhutan, Burma and Bangladesh are among the country’s most
impoverished and least developed and are still beset by myriad

ethnic insurgencies.³

Many of today’s conflicts have their origins in the way the subcontinent was partitioned, international borders were reorganized and the region consequently became landlocked. Since its formation, the region has been standing witness to almost all varieties of conflict - including interethnic conflicts, conflict over natural resources, the native-migrant conflicts and border conflicts between the states of the region so and so forth - substantially overlapping into each other.

Although a hotbed of conflict, it is ironic that studies in conflicts specifically focused on the region really took off only since the late 1980s. It was during this period that we could see the growing convergence between Northeast Studies and Conflict Studies. Literature on peace and conflict resolution consists predominantly of (a) memoirs, biographies and autobiographies of the ex-army generals, police officers, activists, ex-insurgents etc; (b) journalistic writings with detailed chronicling of the events, incidents and organizations involved in insurgencies and movements; (c) scholarly and policy-oriented writings by researchers, advisors and consultants;

(d) reports, vision documents etc of the government, the voluntary organizations and other multilateral agencies and last but not the least (e) the literary works mostly in the regional languages. Early writings on ethnicity and identity-based conflicts were written by such scholars as Apurba Baruah, Manorama Sharma, Gail Omvedt, Udayon Mishra, Tilottama Mishra etc.

The problem of Insurgency in North East India is a major problem faced by people of this region. The Assam Agitation (1979-1985) was a popular movement against immigrants. The movement, led by All Assam Students Union (AASU) and the ‘All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad’ (AAGSP), developed a program of protests and demonstration to compel the government to identify and expel illegal immigrants. This issue too became a major issue for the writers to bring forth the truth and justice. The violence and hatred spread by these militant groups is recorded by various writers in their books.

Talking about the current political situations we can say that in Assam there is rule of Congress Party and in the rest all other states, there are regional parties on authoritative seats. There have been various disputes and protests over formation of new states and demand for a separate land have been put forward. We can easily trace a poor record of violence and protest due to these issues. Recently, there is a demand for the formation of a new state by the people of Bodos tribe naming it as Bodoland. Already several states have been carved out of Assam disturbing the peace of these states and increasing corruption day by day. Due to these issues and disputes other problems like poverty, illiteracy and unemployment are also growing up. This greed to have power and land is spoiling the culture and society of this region.
Women and their sufferings due to orthodox beliefs and practices are also clearly shown by the writers like Mitra Phukan, Siddhartha Deb and Indira Goswami. Practices like polygamy; and issues like exploitation of women are also parts of the literature from this region.

Religious dogmas and rituals emerging out of it like animal sacrifices, head hunting also became a cause for these writers to raise their voice against it. Writers like Indira Goswami are famous for their active participation in introducing this isolated region to the rest of the India and drawing attention of Government towards these states who are suffering since ages.

Thus Literature emerging from this region talks about various issues prevalent in these states which until recent years had remained under-represented. Manas Pritam Borah in his book on Literature from North East India writes:

…motifs like violence, insurgency, activities of underground organizations, identity politics and people’s responses towards those activities along with an assortment to cultural traits have produced the body of literatures within the ambit of a multicultural panorama."^4

Writers from these states have talked about these states very effectively in their works bringing out the social facts. There works are like the mirror to the North Eastern Society, bringing changes for the welfare.

Mamoni Raisom Goswami more famously known as Indira Goswami is a celebrated name in the Modern Assamese literature. She was born into a Brahmin family in Guwahati, Assam. She was a great poet, editor, scholar, professor and writer. She wrote numerous Novels, Short Stories and Poems. She has written fifteen novels and has published three collections of short stories. Her novels and short stories have been translated into various languages in India.

Goswami’s concern for the society is clearly revealed in her works, she writes not just to state the social facts but with zeal to bring change. Her novel *The Moth Eaten Howdah of the Tusker*, published in 1988, brings out various social issues like the caste system and the position of women in the society and her sufferings as a widow.

In her other novel *The Man from Chinnamasta*, we see some other issues which come up and act as poison for the society and its people. This novel was published in 2005. In this we see how Indira Goswami speaks against thousand years old rituals of animal sacrifice prominent in Pre Independent Kamrup district of Assam. The story revolves around the old kamakhya temple where numerous priests used to participate in the practices like animal sacrifices, and supported it. They even believed in the practice of human sacrifice. She also focuses on the picture of women which was prominent at that time.

Consequently, we can say that Goswami presents a realistic picture of her society where she brings out the facts and follies prevailing since ages. She not only simply states these problems but has tried to strongly appeal for bringing changes. Her efforts to stop the social evils have brought a revolution on the younger generations. She without any fear speaks against the social flaws. In both her novels
we see how she supports the oppressed classes, brings out the image of women, their status and sufferings in the society and openly raises her voice against the issues like animal slaughter and other ills of society are also effectively revealed by her.

Siddhartha Deb born in 1970 is an Indian English writer who was born in Meghalaya and grew up in a small town in the north-eastern region of India, a border region near Tibet, China, Burma, and Bangladesh. He was educated in India and also at Columbia University, USA. Deb began his career in journalism as a Sports Journalist in Calcutta in 1994, before moving to Delhi to continue regular Journalism until 1998. He worked as a journalist in Calcutta and Delhi and has written for Lingua Franca, the London Review of Books, New Statesman, the Times Literary Supplement and the Boston Globe. He went to the United States in 1998 on a literature fellowship and now lives in New York.

Deb’s novels are like a mirror to the contemporary society, as he explores the issues related to the life and society. His vision as a writer is not limited to the external conflicts and happenings, but he also focuses on the internal crisis and sufferings which a person acquires through his surroundings and his reactions to it which again intensify and bring new issues. His keen observation and writings of native land include facts related to politics, social norms and economic destitute and its impact on the life of a common man. Along with the contemporary conditions, Deb also brings out the historical facts related to politics and society and its impact on people at the present context of time.

His debut Novel The Point of Return was published in 2002 was selected as New York Times “Notable Book”. The novel is Deb’s apparently partly autobiographical
and delves into the world of official corruption and ethnic violence in India’s remote northeast. The social facts revealed in the novel are through the character Babu and his father Dr. Dam. As the novel is partially autobiographical, we can see that Babu is projected as Deb himself and Mr. Dam his father. The setting is an unnamed town which is presumably based on Shillong, where Deb grew up. The first section of the novel, “Arrival,” which accounts for half the novel’s total length, is written in reverse chronological order, starting in 1987 and finishing in 1979.

The novel aptly brings out the sufferings of these people in the land in which they lived their entire life from the very childhood. They were homeless even after serving the country for years. These ethnic clashes resulted in the issues like the conversion of mass population into Christianity and adaptation of other religions by tribal people which later on further developed the feeling of insecurity among them.

Deb’s other novel, *An Outline of the Republic or Surface*, was published in 2005. The novel focuses on the various social issues prevalent in North East Indian states. The insecure environment of these states, problem of insurgency and other issues like ethnic clashes, drug use and highest rate of illiteracy are clearly revealed by the writer. Throughout the novel Deb avoids naming the region of which he talks about. In the whole novel it is referred to ‘region’. Deb in his novel shows us the true picture of these regions by discussing the contemporary conditions and situations. These sensitive areas and the problems suffered by the local people, migrants and tribes are shown by the writer.

Mitra Phukan is a renowned Assamese writer who besides writing in her native language also writes in English. She is also a columnist, translator and a classical vocalist. She is the president of North East Writers’ Forum,
and one of the chief editors of its literary journal the NEW Frontiers. She has written several books for children, and won the UNICEF-CBT award for children's writing for her book *Mamoni’s Adventure* (1986). She also writes regularly in *The Assam Tribune*. Her works include *The Mamoni’s Adventure* (1986), *The Collector’s Wife* (2005), *Terrorist Camp Adventure* (2003) and *A Monsoon of Music* (2012). Her works have been translated into several languages. She is also the North East correspondent of the Chennai-based journal of the performing arts, *Shruti*.

In the novel we see a harsh picture of corruption, hatred and violence along with the prejudice against women disturbing the lives of various people. These aspects gave birth to various evils and disturbed the life of the people who were a part of such society. Although Phukan ends the novel with a pessimistic note but still she instills a hope in the minds of the readers. She presents a true picture of the society where social customs and norms all troubled a woman. An empty relationship in the land of corruption and violence too is briefly presented by the writer. Thus she unfolds various social evils which were prevailing and disturbing the lives of people in the North Eastern States.

In her another novel *The Monsoon of the Music* we see that Phukan does not show us much violence and corruption like she has shown in her previous novel *The Collector’s Wife*. The novel reveals the world of music which is unknown to the common mass.

Although the novel is based on music, but the writer also brings up various contemporary social issues of the North Eastern States. The Image of Women of this region, distorted relationships, theme of disillusionment are all a part of the novel. Protagonist of the novel Nomita Sharma is a 26 years old young girl who learns
Classical Music. In the novel we see that the image of a woman which as acceptable to the society was of a conservative, gentle and simple individual.

Her novels are like a mirror to the society, revealing the beauty as well as the dark picture which is present in the culture of North Eastern States as well as the Indian society in general.

She brings out various dimensions related to the social facts. Her novels, stories and characters reveal these aspects successfully. Her characters are realistic and their portrayal is very effective. The realistic picture of society is clearly brought out by the writer.

After this journey to these states of North Eastern region of India, we can deduce some interesting facts about this beautiful land. It is that existing part of the country, which was always there with its unique culture, rituals, and scenic beauty, but was left unnoticed.

The seven wonderful states or the so called ‘Seven Sisters’ are located on the eastern most region of India. It is the most ethnically and linguistically diverse region of India. It has higher number of tribal population which makes it distinct from rest of the country. There are numerous tribal races and each has its different culture and practices. People of this land also make it unique through the diversity of culture, language, religion, festivals and rituals. Various tribes like Bodo, Assamese, Nagas, Adi, Khasi, Akas etc. follow different beliefs and practices.

Although these states are a mark of beauty and have rich biodiversity but their sufferings too are immense. They bear the harsh impacts of ethnic clashes, poverty, climatic disturbances, dogmatic religious practices, and orthodox social
traditions due to lack of education and awareness. Clashes among tribal groups among themselves for land and agitation against the people set in these states from other countries like Bangladesh, keep affecting the peace of this land. Problem of insurgent groups, violence and insecurity of life to the people in these areas is also very prominent. Crisis and troubles in these states have affected the life of almost entire region. No wonder, people here are trying to bring up the issues through some sources or other. Literature too is doing its great job of bringing these issues in light.

A comparative study of these writers show that there are some similarities and differences which comes out through their novels.

The three writers Indira Goswami, Siddhartha Deb and Mitra Phukan, who were taken to be analyzed in this study belong to different states of this region and they bring out facts related to the society, politics and economy.

There is difference between their style of projection of these issues but all write focusing upon the North East region. They have focused on the problems related to the life of people here and the various prevalent social evils.. After a study of these writers, we can say that the facts related to the society are effectively revealed by them. All have unveiled new aspects and dimensions Although their perspectives differ. The issues they discuss may vary but the roots of these problems are same as they all are talking about one native land. We may say that they stand on the same ground but pick up different issues prevailing around them and present them in their own individual style.

We can analyze these writers on the basis of their style and the issues discussed by them revealing the social truth.
We can deduce that the society or people in these states are not leading a very happy or secure life. They are troubled due to the various factors which have totally disturbed their lives like problem of insurgency, easy migration of people from other countries like Bangladesh, China, ethnic clashes etc. They are suffering more because these states are neglected by both the government authorities as well as social reformers.

Although they have regional political parties from which they expect security and help, but they too wish to expand their paws and gain power and exploit the wealth. These people are troubled and their society is totally distorted due to these issues disturbing their lives and stopping their progress and growth. The three writers bring up these social issues effectively in their novels; they do not give the readers a piece of entertainment, but force them to ponder on this dark picture of life in this region.

These writers who themselves belong to these states, must have experienced and witnessed the same situations which they have effectively revealed in their works. They open a windowpane for us to peep into the harsh truths which are prevalent in the society. These facts which were till now unknown to the rest of the world.