INTRODUCTION
Chapter-I
Introduction

"The 'novel' as a literary phenomenon is new to India. Epics, lyrics, dramas, short stories and fables have their respectable ancestries, going back by several centuries, but it is only during a period of little more than a century that the novel - the long sustained piece of prose fiction - has occurred and taken root in India." (Iyengar 314)

The title of the thesis is 'English Novels in the North-East of India - A Critical Analysis'. To analyse the NE English novels there are many topics to discuss. But in order to make the chapters of the thesis interlinked, the various struggles of the people of the NE region which are expressed in the selected novels are mainly discussed here. Such struggles and other aspects are categorized as different chapters as, Historical Background, Extremism and Violence, The Role and Impact of Nature in the NE struggles and Extremism, Women and Extremism, and Literary Techniques, Characterization and Language.

The title - 'English Novels in the North-East of India - A Critical Analysis' is mainly chosen for my ardent desire to do some work for my own region. I got the opportunity to do the research formerly in the North-East of India Studies, and later on I was transferred to the English Department. So the titles of the chapters are changed according to the advice of some respected Professors of English department with the
approval of my honourable guide. I describe and analyse various issues by citing the extracts from the original sources and some from other relevant sources.

When we say about the North-East of India we mainly talk about the ‘seven sisters’ states viz. Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Manipur. These states have a geographically and historically shared background. The whole region was under the British rule along with the whole country before independence. When India became independent there were only three states-Tripura and Nagaland were princely states and Assam, the vast land was directly under the British rule. After independence of the country the whole region became seven separate states at different times. Nagaland became a separate state in 1963, Meghalaya in 1972; Mizoram was declared as a state in 1987 and Arunachal Pradesh also declared as a state of the country in the same year, 1987. Nagaland faced the invasion of the Japanese troops during the World War II in 1944 as they wanted to disrupt the forces of Allied party, but they had to retreat.

The various cultures, natural beauty and the simple way of life of the people, rare animal like rhinoceros agricultural productions like rice, tea, etc are sources of attraction to the outsiders. This region is rich in fossil fuels. The mighty rivers the Brahmaputra and the Barak make the soil fertile. The region being the foothill of the Himalaya enjoys moderate climate and the hills provide various natural resources along with their pristine beauty. However this region is a backward region even at the passing of 70 years after the independence. The road condition, communication system, unemployment problem, flood problem and many other problems lead the youths of the region to the path of revolt. So this region is recently known for various extremist groups for their violent activities.
The factual NE region becomes more attractive in the fiction. It's culture, history, tradition all will attract people while reading the English novels. While reading the novels readers will perceive that they are in a different region where there is the temple of Ma Kamakhya as mentioned in *Rebirth* and in *Sons of Brahma*, or they are visualising the battles with the British, or War with the Japanese in Nagaland as described in the novels like *A Naga Village Remembered*, *Mary*, and in *The Grasshopper's Run*, or they are visiting the Monastery of Twang as described in *Khanduma's Curse*, or we are visualising in fear the secret killing in Assam as described in *The House with a Thousand Stories*. The novels themselves will remind us whether we are reading a novel at the setting of Assam or at the setting of Shillong or Dimapur or Kohima. There are some identical words or description. The description of Assamese marriage in *The Collector's Wife* or in *Rebirth*, or sailing through the mighty Brahmaputra river in *A Monsoon of Music* or in *Sons of Brahma* make us realise that we are reading a novel of NE region of India. There are local words or even short sentences in the novels from Assamese language, or dialects from Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya or from Nagaland. Thus the names of the characters also will remind us that we are reading a story of our own region. As literature is a mirror of the society so in the novels also we find the various aspects of the region.

The present study covers the earlier novels originally written in English from the region. This study shows how literature of a remote region unfolds its various challenges, struggles through indigenous culture, folklore and other regional characteristics. At the same time these novels have explicated universal appeal as a form of art because the basic human feelings like love, fear, sufferings, happiness etc are the same everywhere in the earth.
Although the beginning of the English novel in the North-East India is not very old yet we find some remarkable novels in the last fifteen years. Many talented and promising writers occupy the erstwhile vacant place with their recent novels. The NE English novels are written in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Meghalaya till now. The English novels written in Assam are more in numbers in comparison to other states of NE. However some Assamese authors write on the plot of Nagaland or Meghalaya. Till date no novel is originally written in English in Manipur, Tripura and Mizoram.

In the NE India the English literary field like the story, poetry and articles etc. are not as new as novels. Poetry and drama have deep long root in this area. Novels are written much latter time. However from medieval time to present age, Ram Saraswati, Srimanta Sankarveva, Jyoti Prasad Agarawala, Bishnu Prasad Rabha to Dr Maheswar Neog, Dr.Banikanta Kakati, to many present writers, scholars contribute to the field of literature in various forms in this region. All the Sahitya Academy winner books of literature, other popular books of literature, magazine, little magazine, journal, literary organizations all have been contributing to the store of literature of this region which have been remaining as inspiration to the writers of this region.

The translation of famous novels from Assamese literature like some of the novels of Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya, Dr.Mamani Roysom Goswami, Homen Borgohain, Nirupama Borgohain, Lummer Dai, Yeshe Dorjee Thongchi, Dr.Dhruba Jyoti Borah etc. and from other languages in to English pave the writing of English novels in this region.
Some of the respected professors of colleges and universities of this region contribute to the English literary field by writing reviews, articles in the newspapers and magazines which are helpful to the students of literature. In the field of writing literature in English in present time Temsula Ao, Parishmita Deb Kynpham Singh Nongkynrih, etc. contribute a lot.

Moreover, the spread of English education and the availability of different books from other states of India and abroad, and the various political, social incidents like the Struggle of Independence, Asom Andolan, emergence of various insurgents groups in different states in this region, corruption of the govt. and other officials, increase of population, illegal migration from Bangladesh, dearth of job, natural calamities like flood drought etc. make the writers instigate to write literary things. Although creativity is an individual effort and depends on the ability of the writers and opportunity they get or create, yet the influence of all the other aspects cannot be ignored.

However, the writing of English novels in the NE region emerges very late in comparison to other states of the country. In India, the first novel was written in English in 1864. It was Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's novel, Rajmohan's Wife which was the real beginning of novel in English. In the North-East India the real beginning of novel in English came to light in the last decade of the twentieth century. Mitra Phukan's novel, The Collector's Wife (1995) is the first novel for the grown-up or general readers. Arup Kumar Dutta has been writing novels from 1980s for young people. He has written 17 novels for young children till date. His forte is adventure and mystery novels for which he has won many awards. He receives Life Time Achievement Award from the Association of Writers and Illustrators for Children (AWIC), New Delhi in 2013 in recognition of the contribution of children’s book. The prestigious New York
publication titled - *1001 Children’s Books You must read Before You Grow Up*, edited by Julia Eccleshare, has *The Kaziranga Trail* along with Anita Desai’s *Village by the Sea* as the only Indian entities. However his novels are excluded in the study as they are children novels. He was awarded Padmashree award for his novels this year. (2018)

Presently many novelists write novels in English from the NE region. It is seen that English novels and other writes-up in English from the North-East are now increasing day by day. Tilottoma Misra writes the cause of it in the introduction of her anthology, *The Oxford Anthology of Writings from North-East India* (Fiction):

"A variety of reasons may be cited for this phenomenon. Many of them have had the privilege of being educated in English-medium schools and they are more capable of handling that language rather than their mother tongues. This new band of writers writing in English is bound to grow in number because most of the hill- states of the region have adopted English as the official language, thus ensuring that it would be the first language of the new generation of literates and it would be used to the best advantage both in the professional as well as in the academic arena."*#* (Mishra xiii)

Although the beginning of the English novel in the North-East India is not very old yet we find some remarkable novels in the last fifteen years. Many talented and promising writers occupy the erstwhile vacant place with their recent novels. The novelists of the NE region are popular writers. Some of them write regularly in the newspapers of Assam, and in the national newspapers. Some of them write in the
regional languages also. They are not only novelists; they are also short story writers, poets, columnists etc. A brief introduction of the novelists is given below.

Mitra Phukan is one of the most prominent literacy voices in English from North-East India. She contributes regularly to prominent English dailies in Assam. She is also a vocalist, music critic, translator and columnist. She is the author of four novels written in English. They are *The Collector’s Wife*, *A Monsoon of Music*, *The Terrorist Camp*, and *Mamani’s Adventure*. Her *Mamani’s Adventure* is a novella for children. In this novella, the writer presents the elephant-human struggle in a nice way apt for the children. Her works, including her short stories, have been translated into several languages.

Dhruba Hazarika is a famous novelist who writes novels in English. In 1996 he received the Katha Award for Creative Writing in English. His *A Bowstring Winter* is a high standard novel. The background of the novel is Shillong. He has written another novel - *Sons of Brahma* recently. He is also a famous short story writer. His short story book *Luck* is written in English.

Jahnavi Baruah is an Assamese author based in Bangalore. Her first novel *Rebirth* was shortlisted for the Man Asian Literary Prize 2011 and also was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Book Prize 2012. Her novel portrays the lives and events of both the people of Assam and Bangalore. In *Rebirth* her grip is in Assam. Jahnavi Baruah is also a short story writer. *Next Door* (2008) is her collection of story book.

Mamang Dai is an Arunachalee author. She has written *Stupid Cupid* which is an interesting novel. She has also written *Legends of Pensam* a book of legends. She has been bestowed with the prestigious Padma Shri Award in recognition of her remarkable
contributions in the field of Literature and Education. She has also received the state's first annual Verrier Elwin Award, in 2003 for her book *Arunachal Pradesh - The Hidden Land*. Recently she is awarded Sahitya Academy award for her novel, *The Black Hill* (2004).

Siddhartha Deb is a famous novelist of the NE region. He was born in north-eastern India and he moved to New York on a literature fellowship in 1998. He is from Meghalaya. His first novel, *The Point of Return* was a New York Times Notable Book of the year. His second novel is *Surface*.

Easterine Kire Iralu is a famous novelist who writes novels in English. She is a writer of Nagaland. Her- *A Naga Village Remembered*, *Life on Hold* and *Bitter Wormwood* are very interesting novels where we find the description of the Naga social life and the various moments of the Naga struggle which she portrays artistically. She has also written *When the River Sleeps* (2014), *A Terrible Matriarchy*, (2007). *When the River Sleeps* has brought to her The Hindu Prize for fiction in 2006. She is also a poet and a short story writer.

Siddhartha Sarma is a Delhi-based journalist from Guwahati, Assam. He is an investigative journalist. *The Grasshopper's Run* is his first novel. The book has won Vodafone-Crossword Award and the Bal Sahitya Puraskar.

L.W.Bapu is a novelist of Arunachal Pradesh. *Khandumas Curse Lovers and Witches in the Eastern Himalayas* is his first novel. Along with a tragic love story, in the novel we find about the culture and tradion of Monpa tribe of AP.

The novels are selected for the chapters of the study randomly not chronologically. It is done so to ensemble the topics of the chapters. However they
belong to the period of 1995 to 2014 and the study is stick to the original English novels written by the NE writers. I have to complete my thesis within a fixed duration so I choose the seventeen novels for the convenience of my study and left a few which I mentioned in the conclusion.

The novels which I choose are given below in the list -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Novels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>Mitra Phukan</td>
<td>1.<em>The Collector's Wife</em> (1995),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.<em>A Monsoon of Music</em> (2011),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>Dhruba Hazarika</td>
<td>3.<em>A Bowstring Winter</em> (2006),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>Jahnavi Barua</td>
<td>5.<em>Rebirth</em> (2010),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>Siddartha Sarma</td>
<td>6.<em>The Grasshopper's Run</em> (2009),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>Aruni Kashyap</td>
<td>7.&quot;<em>The House with a Thousand Stories</em>&quot; (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arunachal Pradesh</td>
<td>Mamang Dai</td>
<td>8.<em>Stupid Cupid</em> (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>Anjum Hasan</td>
<td>10.<em>Lunatic in My Head</em> (2007),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>Siddartha Dev</td>
<td>11.<em>Surface</em> (1998),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagaland</td>
<td>Easterine Iralu</td>
<td>12.<em>A Naga Village Remembered</em> (2003),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagaland</td>
<td>Easterine Kire</td>
<td>14.<em>Bitter Wormwood</em> (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagaland</td>
<td>Easterine Kire</td>
<td>15.<em>Life on Hold</em> (2011)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mitra Phukan's *The Collector's Wife* is published in 2005 and it is the first English novel for grown up readers published from this region. *The Collector's Wife* is one of the first generation novels in English written by Mitra Phukan. The background of the novel is the Assam student’s agitation of the 1970s and 1980s. The novel is important is all the topics discussed in the study. Mitra Phukan's *A Monsoon of Music* is about four musicians. This novel does not relate to the first topic i.e. Insurgency and Violence. But it is related to the other topics-Ecology, Gender and Literary techniques.

*A Bowstring Winter* is written by Dhruba Hazarika. It is about bond of friendship. John Dkhar is the protagonist of the novel. The novel is set against the lush landscape of Shillong. In the *A Bowstring Winter* we find the inside of the characters rather than outward happenings. The inner world is more powerful and it shadows the contemporary event to some extents. Outward happenings are the result of the inner impulse and turmoil happening inside the characters. They don’t cover any big issues of the society. Blind loyalty towards friend is the motivation of all works of Kharkhongar. John Dhakar also became the same like Kharkhongar. However he recollected all the happening and felt sad for his present condition.

Dhruba Hazarika's next novel, *Sons of Brahma* presents the insurgent group's activity of Assam. He names the group as the Revolutionary Army. Here we find revenge and violence and other issues including insurgency. We find a pen portrait of the mighty river of Brahmaputra, the world famous sanctuary of Kaziranga along with the main story of the novel.

*Rebith* is Jahnavi Baruah's first novel. In the novel we find about the psyche of a woman. We also find a good description of Assam *Andolan* and various descriptions of
Assam as a part of the story of the novel. This novel is used here for violence, gender and other issues. The following is the short introduction of the novel:

"Rebith is the story of Kaberi, a young woman coming to grips with an uncertain marriage. It is also an intimate portrait of the passionate bond between a mother and her unborn child. Moving between Bangalore and Guwahati the novel weaves together Kaberi's inner and outer worlds as she negotiates the treacherous waters of betral and loss—an unfaithful husband, a troubled relationship with her parents and the death of a childhood friend."* (Baruah back cover)

In the novel we find the description of two places - Assam and Bangalore. Guwahati is described when Kaberi came from Bangalore to her mother's house in Guwahati when her father was expired. We can look Guwahati at a glance through the description of Kaberi. She describes Deepar beel, Sukleswar Mandir, Guwahati High Court etc. There is the mention of the Nabagrah on the Chitrachal Hill in Guwahati. There is a few short descriptions of natural beauty of Assam in the novel. From the top of Kamakhya Hill the river appears beautiful and Kaberi liked it. Kaberi liked her own state Assam. She liked to listen to Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's song. Dr. Hazarika, was the legendary musician of Assam. We get a glance of some places of Bangalore as a garden near her flat, a protected wildlife reserve at the outskirts of Mysore like Kaziranga etc. But we get more about Assam and Assamese people in the novel than Bangalore, or people of Bangalore. There is the mention of the river of Kabini in the novel. The Kabini is a small river unlike the mighty Brahmaputra.
The novel *Rebirth* is written in a nostalgic way. We find most of the time the narrator reminds the past. Although we find the present moment in between the events yet we find that the description of past events filled the novel's larger part.

In the novel *Rebirth* we find some elements of feminism although in explicitly we do not find such elements here. But from the behaviour and silent protest and indifference attitude on the part of the heroine we come to know that she is not happy although she is not panic about her future.

The story of the novel *The Grasshopper's Run* by Siddhartha Sarma is an interesting at the background of World War II. It is a story of the call and duty of friendship beyond death obligations of filial loyalty and clan brotherhood. It is a historical novel. Here we take a few instances to show how forestry was abundance at that time and did it help in war as well as shelter.

It is a young adult novel. Except the hero all others are grown-up, elderly people. Although the hero is a teen his activity is not that of a teen here. Here he took revenge of his friend's death by participating in a secret war against the Japanese. It is set in the background of the Second World War and is set in Assam and Nagaland. It shows the friendship between Nagaland Assamese boy. It won the 2009 Vodafone crossword book award in children's literature category.

The novel is set Nagaland. In the historical novel we find the people of three India, Japan and England. The plot is revenge or prestige war which is a reflection of the World War II. The hero of the novel is Gojen Rajkhowa, an Assamese boy. *The Grasshopper's Run* is a Naga legend which the Ao Naga boy Uti heard from his mother. The actual war was between the British and the Japanese. India supported the
British in the hope of getting independence. But the particular war was between the Ao Naga and their group with the Japanese. The cause is Uti, the grandson of Ao Naga's chief was killed by a Japanese General named Morry. Uti was Gajen's friend so he was also a companion of the Ao Naga's revenge fighting group.

In the novel we come to know something about the Ao Naga's society. The Ao Naga follows the order of their Chief. They do not refuse to follow the order. In the meeting about the pre-plan of attacking the Japanese the Ao Chief said about Uti, his grandson that they killed him mercilessly.

Easterine Kire Iralu wrote her first novel *A Naga Village Remembered* in 2003. In this novel she describes the battle between British forces and one Naga hamlet. We find how bravely the villagers fought against the British. This novel is also used here mainly in the topic of Ecology.

*Life on Hold* is an interesting novella by Easterine Iralu. The setting of this novel is in Nagaland during the troubled years of the independence movement. Here it is mainly used for Insurgency and Violence. A brief description of the novel is given below-

"The hard-edged, relentless, stubborn Roko is as tantalizing to his girlfriend, Nime, as Naga nationalism is to many Nagas. Women like Nime, have to put life on hold for men like Roko, as Vituo does his because of his father's wayward life, and as Nagas do theirs for the dream of an independent nation."* (Kire back cover)
*Life on Hold* is a social novel. This novel is about Naga society. For many decades the Naga people have been striving for a separate country. Here we find a love story against the backdrop of the Naga struggle by the underground. It is a novel of about love and how the extremism shatters of the love of many youths of Nagaland is expressed through Nime and Roko's love story.

*Bitter Wormwood* is a famous novel of Easterine Kire. It's setting is in Kohima. The story is based on an accident. A young man has been gunned down in cold blood. The latest casualty in the conflict that has scarred the landscape and brutalized the people of Nagaland in 2007 is described in the novel. This novel is mainly used here for Insurgency and Violence.

*Mary* is written by Easterine Kire is a historical novel against the backdrop of Japanese invasion to Kohima. We find the struggle of Mary, a Naga girl at the time of Japanese invasion. Here we find her life's predicament as she had to marry three times as her first lover who was a British soldier died in the war and from his side she had a daughter; her second husband who was also a European, had to transfer because of war. At last she became a nurse and thus led a life of responsible mother of three daughters. This novel is taken here for the struggle with the Japanese, violence, gender and other issues.

*Stupid Cupid* s written by Mamang Dai is a novel about love. Adna opens a guest house in a small bungalow in a quiet lane in Delhi, where an unlikely assortment of couples and loners come together for an afternoon, a day and sometimes for months. It is used in the study because of gender and other issues discussed in the study.
Khandumas Curse Lovers and Witches in the Eastern Himalayas is another novel from Arunachal Pradesh by L.W. Bapu. This novel is a love story of Passang and Yonton. In this novel we find the social life of Monpa people of Arunachal Pradesh. Along with the social life of the people we can visualise the pen picture of the natural beauty of Tawang and other nearby areas of Arunachal Pradesh. This novel is also used here mainly in the topic of ecology along with other issues.

Anjum Hasan’s Lunatic in My Head is her famous novel. This novel is written in the background of Shillong. We find the description of various people of Shillong. The main character is a lecturer named Fridaus Ansari, who is a Muslim girl of Shillong who has fallen in love with a Manipuri young man. The following extract gives a glimpse of the novel:

“Eight –year- old Sophie Das has just realised she is adopted, but there is also the baby kicking inside her mother’s stomach whom she’s dying to meet. IAS aspirant Aman Moondy is planning a first –of –its kind Happening and praying the lovely Concordella will come. College lecturer Fridaus Ansari is going to finish her thesis, have a hard talk with her boyfriend, and then get the hell out.”* (Hasan Back cover)

This novel is written in the setting of the multilingual society of Shillong, Meghalaya. This novel adds to the conflict as well as gender aspects, which are other discussed aspects apart from insurgency issue discussed in the study.

Surface is written by Siddartha Dev is a very well written novel. It is ultimately disappointing novel set in Northeast India that has had a history of insurgent violence
that is both political but often border's on politics as justification for what amounts to organized criminal activity. The story centre's on Amrit, a disaffected reporter for the Sentinel in Calcutta. This novel is used here for Insurgency and Violence and other issues discussed in the study.

The House with a Thousand Stories, by Aruni Kashyap is a novel written at the time of the insurgent group, ULFA active in Assam. Here we find love stories also. It is used here mainly because of the insurgent issue.

What are the categories of the NE English novels? Do they belong to the same category? No, they do not belong to different categories of novels. When we study the novels we try to find in which category they belong to. The kinds or the categories of novels are picaresque novel, novel of character or psychological novel, epistolary novel, realistic novel, social novel, historical novel, memoir-novel, sentimental novel, fashionable novel, mystery novel, campus novel etc.

While we discussed the NE English novels we see that the novels belong to the following kinds: realistic novel, historical novel, psychological novel, social novel and political novel. Now let us see the kinds of the novel in which the NE novels belong.

In most of the novels the contemporary situation of the society is expressed. As it is said that literature is the mirror of the society so we find the reflection of the contemporary events especially in The Collector's Wife, Rebirth, Bitter Wormwood etc we get contemporary social events. For example the famous Assam Andolan is seen in Rebirth; the insurgency problem of Assam is seen in the The Collector's Wife; the Naga insurgency problem is seen in the novels of Easterine Kire; the insurgency problem of Manipur is seen in the novel Surface so such novels can be said as socio-political
novels. *Rebirth* is also a novel of reflection. Most of the novels of NE are written on insurgent issue. Novels are discussed in the chapters not according to their categories but according to the topic titles chosen for discussion.

Feminism is not a big issue in the novels. However we find about feminism in some novels. In the novels, *The Collector's Wife, Rebirth, Lunatic in My Head* and *Bitter Wormwood* we find the empowerment women of the issue among other issues.

In all the novels we find about the natural environment or forest for which this region is famous. The dependence of people on forest is mainly seen in Easterine Kire's novels. In other writers' novels also we find such glimpses. In L.W.Bapu's *Khanduma's Curse* also we find about forest greatly.

This research has great significance. In the college and university syllabus Indian Writing in English literature also has included along with the European, American and Common Wealth English literature. Regional literature also has got importance now-a day. Regional literature also has got importance now-a day. It is also developing. In this regard literature from the NE region especially written in English is also emerging recently. This is encouraging and admiring endeavour. Our coming generation will be able to know about the culture of this region through such literature. In the novels written in English from this region we get the glimpse of the culture of the people of this region along with their problems. Some of the novels written in English have got some award also. Some selective literary texts of this region written in English may be included in the syllabus of Anglo-Indian literature in the schools, colleges and in the universities of this region in the coming future.
While studying the novels many issues, many big or smaller aspects come to our notice. They are the socio-cultural life of NE, history of NE, link among the states, backward conditions of the states, education problem, and teaching of English Literature in Assam, extremism, violence, and problem of ecology, gender issues and literary techniques of the novels. To justify the title of the thesis, I briefly describe a few other aspects - like history, culture, relation of the NE states, and to make it more compact and focused I concentrate on three aspects-mainly Insurgency and Violence, Ecology and Gender along with literary techniques and devices used in the novels in the main chapters of the novel. NE English novels express many diverse aspects of NE with their stories. Although the focal points of the study are extremism, violence, problem of ecology, gender issues and literary techniques of the novels, yet some other aspects are also mentioned along with the threading link i.e insurgency and the backwardness of the states.

The novelists are very talented writers in NE regions. Some of them are now staying outside of their homeland. Yet they are writing on their homeland and some of them are in their home states. They are native writers of the concerned states. In this research only the original novels written in English by the N.E. writers are discussed and the translated novels are not included. The novels which I have chosen for my research are the famous and earlier novels of the writers. Some novels are children novels. Some others are for readers in general.

I have a few questions in my mind at the time of beginning of my study. They are:

What are the things the novels try to present?
Are the novels able to focus the various issues of NE?

How different are they from the other novels written outside North-Eastern States?

What are distinguished features of the novels written by the writers of the NE?

I take descriptive, analytical method for writing this thesis. My first concern was to categorise the novels according to the topic and the focus point. For that I search the elements for my purpose in the novels. After getting the required elements I write them systematically to focus the title of the chapters and sub-topics. While doing so I try to find some reason of my own for example the causes of insurgency in the North-East, then I take help from the main novels and some critical books in support of my logic. When I describe certain point I describe it by gathering relevant elements together from all the novels, when the writer describes or hints it along with the story he/she may or may not have the same intention as I categorise. For example when the author writes about the insurgent camp in a forest he/she may not think about the ecology or the gender issue. So while I describe from the same my angle may be different from the authors.

I analyse the various aspects of the novels. I have analysed the novels by analysing the theme, characterization, narrative point of view, turning point, writing style etc. I describe and analyse various issues by citing the extracts from the original sources and some from other relevant sources. In this regard I take help of the books of literary theory and criticism.

The NE states are unique in many ways. The ethnic cultures and life close to nature are its specialities. Even after 70 years of the independence of our country the
region still remains in the backward stage. For the reason this area often remains in turmoil because of the emergence of various underground organisations. Yet the new generation authors write novels on various issues and to describe the social life with its beauty and problems. Still these novels do not get due reward and cannot draw the attention of the critics and scholars. This thesis is a humble attempt in this regard.

The objective of this research is to bring to light the English novels of this region. It will be an encouragement for the new writers. North-East region of India is not lagging behind in the field of literature. Here we see the abundance of regional literature written in native languages. But the number of English novels is not very much. So it is hoped that this research will be a source of encouragement for the concerned writers and the up-coming writers of English written from this region.

The main focus of the thesis is on extremism and its related issues.

In this research five topics are mainly taken for analysis. They are - *Historical Background, Extremism and Violence, The Role and Impact of Nature in NE Struggles, Extremism, Women and Extremism and Literary Techniques, Characterization and Language*. They are the topics which are found and mostly remain as the content of the English novels of North East. Though there are many topics to discuss and analysis regarding the English novels of the North East, yet in order to make the study compact and connected only the above five topics are mainly taken. When we see the titles of the five topics apparently we do not see the connection among them, they seem to be five separate topics. But while we go through them we see the connection among them. The topics are connected in the following ways:

They are from the same novels.
They express the various aspects of the same region, i.e. the North East region.

Prior to Extremism is also a period when NE people had to struggle. At that time they fought with the British and the Japanese. Similarly after the independence the insurgents fight with the state and the centre.

Connection of extremism with nature and women is shown in the study. It is because the impact of extremism is seen throughout the region in every sphere.

Although the literary techniques, characterization and language are life deviation from the main topic i.e. insurgency yet these are the vehicles through which the tenors are expressed. So they are integral parts of the novels; without them the discussed topics will be merely social political or historical but not literary. So the discussion about them is not irrelevant.

In the historical background the events prior to extremism are discussed. Prior to extremism means here that it is the period earlier to the independence of our country. It is because in NE region, especially in Nagaland the first underground group was formed immediately after independence. But in Assam's context, prior to extremism was the famous Assam Andolan of 1980's. In Nagaland, prior to independence there were many eventful years of world concerned. Naga people's struggle with the British is clearly elaborated in A Naga Village Remembered written by Easterine Kire. Mary is Kire's another novel where we find Japanese invasion during World War-II. The Grasshopper's Run authored by Siddarth Sarma, is a novel prior to extremism where we find Naga people's struggle with the Japanese. In Rebirth by Jahnabi Baruah, we see how the Assamese people fought during the famous 'Asom Andolan' for their rights against the exploitation of the centre regarding oil and other resources. In Khanduma's
Curse we find the pre-independence time of Arunachal Pradesh which is also connected with present time. The novel is relating to nature, imaginary world along with some cultural aspects of the state.

NE English novelists write and publish the novel after 1995 after the publication of The Collector's Wife, except Arup Kumar Dutta's children novels. But they are chosen as the topics before independence or after independence or before the emergence of the extremist groups or after them. So here novels are selected topic wise in chapters, not by the date of publication.

The Chapter - III is entitled as Extrmism and Violence because in this chapter the rise of extremist groups, the cause of their emergence and the violence related to them and the impact of such underground groups as shown in the novels are analysed. In six novels mainly we find the description and activities of the extremist groups. In six novels we find extremism of NE region. They are - Mitra Phukan' The Collector's Wife (1995), Siddartha Dev's Surface (2005), Easterine Kire's Bitter Wormwood (2011) and Life on Hold (2011), and Aruni Kashayp's The House with a Thousand Stories (2013), Dhruba Hazarika's Sons of Brahma (2014). This is the most common topic of all the seventeen novels discussed in the thesis. So this topic is emphasised here as main topic of discussion. Regarding the Japanese invasion we find in two novels - Mary and The Grasshoppers' Run and regarding the British rule we find only in one novel i.e. A Naga Village Remembered.

When we discuss the various struggles of NE people as the struggle with the British, Japanese, and even with the Central Government by the extremist groups in different chapters then why do we make another chapter, Chapter-IV, entitled as The
Role and Impact of Nature in NE Struggles, Extremism? Is there any need for a chapter of nature in this study? Is this irrelevant? The answers are that it is relevant to make a separate chapter for the role of nature in the different struggles or social life of NE people. It is because while reading the novels one will mark the role of nature in almost every novel. Although the focus is given in the analysis of various struggles including extremism, yet nature also gets importance in the English novels of NE as this region was once known for its greenery and beautiful natural surroundings. The glory of natural beauty still cannot be totally ignored. To make the study connected the role and impact of nature in the different struggles or social life of NE people is shown. The purpose here is not to focus on nature but to focus on the various struggles of NE people where nature fortified the people, nurture the people and while doing so she herself was destroyed by war or other struggles.

The Chapter - V is entitled as Extremism and Women. Most of the NE novelists are women novelist. So we find issues related to women in the novels. It is included here as a connected chapter to the main chapter i.e Extremism and violence. Here feminism is briefly discussed and the latter part of chapter is linked to the second and the third chapter. Here how the women participated in various struggles before independence or before the emergence of extremism and how they are treated during the extremists' prevalent period and their participation in the ultra groups -all are briefly discussed. In the novel, Mary the heroine Mary had to suffer along with others in Japanese invasion, Rukmini had to lose her husband and friend in the hands of the extremist group in The Collector's Wife, Mose, the hero of the novel, Bitter Wormwood found his beloved in the underground camp. So in this chapter we discussed such
matters which are related to the main topic which can be regarded as another extended chapter of the main chapter.

Some of the novels where we do not find extremism or where we find day to day struggles and happiness are analysed in fourth, fifth and sixth chapters because they are somewhere related to nature and gender issues and they are also included in the literary techniques chapter. In this category we find some novels. They are- Dhruba Hazarika's *A Bowstring Winter* (2006), Anjum Hasan's *Lunatic in My Head* (2007), Mamang Dai's *Stupid Cupid* (2009) and Mitra Phukan's *A Monsson of Music* (2011). Other issues from all the novels apart from extremism is also briefly mentioned in these chapters.

In the *Literary Techniques, Characterization and Language used in the novels* i.e the Chapter-VI, the various literary techniques and devices used in the novels are briefly discussed. There may be more such techniques and devices in the novels. All are not discussed or mentioned here only a few examples of such techniques and devices are given. This chapter may seem to be a deviation from the main topic of the study but actually it is not an excluded topic and it is included under the title of the thesis and also being novels these techniques and devices are integral parts of the novels. These are the vehicles through which we find the tenors i.e the issues of NE. In the use of local names of people and places and their mother tongues like local dialects and language we find a true description of NE picture. While delineating the characters also we see the NE social life and its people are authentically represented. All literary techniques, language and characterization make the study enrich as they are the techniques or devices which provide us the form and taste in literature.
There is no critical book or thesis on this topic so far. Though there is no critical book or thesis yet there are a few book reviews which are published in the internet and newspapers. But these are very short in length.

However, I get some secondary sources of reference for supporting my points of the topics from the original novels in some other books and articles. I want to mention such books and articles here.

I take some help from the various non-fiction books, articles written on NE region. Some of such books and articles are- Kishalay Bhattacharjee's Che in Paona Bazaar; H.N. Das's article, Insurgency and Administrative Reforms in North East India Administrative Reforms & Economic Development; Verrier Elwin's article A Pilgrimage to Tawang, in Rumination; Arun Kumar M.C. and others' (ed.), The Tribes of Meghalaya; R. Zaman's, Gender Issues in Forestry in Forest Resources-In Hill Districts of Assam -Constraints for Development; E. Bijoy kumar Singh's, Globalisation and its Employment Implications for The North-East, in Globalisation and North-East India; Mangattuthazhe Tom's; Is Peace achievable in North-East India, Ranu Baruwa's, (ed), Discover North East, Tourist; Pushpanjoli Deori's, Environmental History of Naga Hills, Chapter-II, Achla Sonkar & Shrubhra Rajput's; English, A Colonial Language Its Impact and Impression on North Eastern States in Understanding North-East India Cultural Diversities; B.N. Talukdar's Language Problem in the North-East Region; Srabani Kar Purkayastha's "The Life and Culture of Meghalaya and Its Integration with the North-East", in "Communal Harmony among Tribal and Non-Tribal Communities of North East India; Pankaj Nath and Ranjit Taku's, Ethnic Issues, Political Movement And Insurgency in North East India ,in Ethnic Conflict and Identity Crisis in North East India; A Nshoga's. Traditional Naga Village System and Its Transformation ; Manuj
Phukan's *Students' Politics in Assam*, in *Nationalism and Regionalism in North East India*; Pankaj Kumar Sarmah, and Jahnabai Debi's, *Ethnic Identity, Political Disorder And Insurgency in North East India: With Special Reference to Naga Movement*, in *Ethnic Conflict and Identity Crisis in North East India*.


Along with these I take help of the English literary theory books, criticism, History of English Literature books .Some such books are - M.H. Abrahams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham's *A Handbook of Literary Terms*; J.A. Cuddon's *Dictionary of Literary Terms & Literary Theory*; E.M. Foster's, *Aspects of Novels*; Leela Gandhi's

About the publication details of the books are given in the bibliography.

These books and articles help to show some aspects clearly which sometimes I find only as hints in the novels. Such references also help to elaborate the points I mention in the study.

To easy forward the study I mainly had to depend on the original source i.e. the novels. Although there are no critical books on these novels I take help of critical books which are about Indian novel written in English. I have taken help of the critical books
on NE socio-culture, history etc and English literary and theory books. To some extent I take help from the other secondary sources i.e. the internet, newspaper and journals.
Works Cited


