CHAPTER-I
INTRODUCTION
1.1 Background of North-Eastern Region of India

The North Eastern Region (NER) of India is located in the eastern corner of the Indian Union. It comprises eight states viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. Sikkim is later added to the earlier group of Seven Sister states. Formerly these states (without Sikkim) were known as “Seven Sisters”. Although they belong to the unique geographical location, which makes them difficult to access, the people of these states are very much different from one another in terms of culture, tradition, religion and socio-economic conditions.

The NER of India lies between 21°.57’N–29°.30’N latitude and 89°.46’E–97°.30’E longitude. This region bounded by four foreign countries viz, (i) Bhutan on the North West (ii) China, on the north and north-east (iii) Myanmar (Burma) on the east and South-east and (iv) Bangladesh on the south and west, remains isolated geographically from the rest of the country and its influence.¹

The North East Region of India has three distinct regions: Assam Valley, Purvanchal and Meghalaya – Mikir region. The Assam valley or the Brahmaputra Valley (25°44’–27°55’N and 89°41’–90°02’ E) is a well-demarcated physical unit. It is about 720 km in length and 80 km in breadth. It covers an area of about 56,274 sq. km. The Purvanchal Region (21°57’–28°23’N and 91°13’–97°25’E) covers an area of about 94,800 km. Its maximum length is about 755 km. The Meghalaya Mikir region (25°05’–26°41’N and 89°47’–93°36’E) comprises the Garo hills, Jaintia hills and the outlying Mikhir Hills.

The NER having an area of 250,83 sq. km, is larger than that of United Kingdom (UK) having an area of 244,108 sq. km sharing 7.75 percent of the

country’s total geographical area of 3,287,259 sq. km and it has a population of 38,857,769 sharing 3.79 percent of the country’s population of 1,027,015,247 as per 2001 provisional census. Nature has bestowed upon the NER a pleasant climate throughout the year; it is a land endowed with rich flora and fauna, and abundance of natural and mineral resources, but it is poorly developed amidst the plenty in comparison with rest of the country. It shares one-sixth (16.7%) of nation’s forest products. The area has about two-fifths (40%) of the country’s natural oil, and stores some (30%) of Indian hydel power potential, but still it remains backward. For better understanding a brief account of each of the states is given below:

1.1.1 Arunachal Pradesh

Arunachal Pradesh is the north eastern most Indian territory. It is bounded by Bhutan to west, Tibet and China to north and north-east, Burma to the east and Assam to south. Arunachal Pradesh derived from Sanskrit words mean “the land of rising sun” as the ray of the sun touches down first at the soil of this state in the country”. It is between 26°28’ and 29°31’N latitude and 91°31’E and 97°30’E longitude. It has an area of 83,743 sq. km. Its capital is Itanagar. The state has been divided into 13 districts. According to the census report of 2001, it has a population 1,097,968 of which 579,941 are males and 518,027 are females, and its literacy rate is 54.30 percent in the break-up of 63.80 percent males and 43.50 percent females.

In 1914, this area was named “North East Frontier Tract”. Again it was renamed as “North East Frontier Agency (NEFA). The Union Territory of

---

Arunachal Pradesh was formed on January 20, 1972. It became a full-fledged state on February 20, 1987.

1.1.2 Assam

The word “Assam” is derived from the Sanskrit word “Asom” meaning “peerless” judged by her exquisite natural beauty, cultural richness and human resources.4 It has an area of 78,438 sq. km. and its capital is Dispur. The Barak and the Brahmaputra valleys are the two important physical regions. The state is dominated by the Bharmhaputra River. In ancient time Assam was known as Kamarupa. The state has been divided into 23 districts. According to the 2001 census report the state has 26,655,528 population of which 13,777,037 are males and 12,878,491 are females and its literacy rate is 63.30 percent of which 71.30 percent are males and 54.60 per cent are females.

1.1.3 Manipur

Manipur is one of the hilly states of India. It is surrounded by Myanmar (Burma) on the east, Mizoram on the south, Assam on the west and Nagaland on the north. The state has an area of 8,628 sq. miles and has a population of 2,166,788 according to 2001 census report. About two-thirds of the people are the Meiteis and the rest are Nagas and Kukis. The Meiteis occupy the Manipur valley and are largely Vaishnavite Hindus.5 The State has 9 districts and its literacy rate is 70.50 percent of which 80.30 percent are males and 60.50 percent are females. Other details of the state will be discussed in Chapter-IV.

---

1.1.4 Meghalaya

Meghalaya with Shillong as its capital has an area of 8666 sq. miles. It has 7 districts. The word “Meghalaya” in Sanskrit means “Abode of Clouds”. The state was inaugurated as an autonomous state on April 2, 1970 and it was declared a state of the Indian Union on January 21, 1972. Meghalaya is the homeland of three ancient Indian hill communities – the Khasis, the Jaintias and the Garos. It has a population of 2,318,822 of which 1,176,087 are males and 1,142,735 are females and its literacy rate is 62.60 percent of which 65.40 percent are males and 59.60 percent are females according to 2001 census report.

1.1.5 Mizoram

The word “Mizo” is a genuine term which stands for several tribes, sub-tribes and classes living in and around Mizoram including Myanmar. The term “Mizo” is derived from the words “Mi” meaning “Man” and “zo” denoting for “Highlanders”. Thus “Mizo” means “Highlanders or people living in the Hills”.

Mizoram lies between 21°92' south of latitude. It has an area of 8134 sq. miles with 722 kms of international boundary. It is bounded by Bangladesh on the West and Myanmar on the East and South, Manipur and Assam border on the North and Tripura on the South-West. Formerly, it was part of Assam as a district until 1972. It became Union Territory in 1972 and attained statehood in 1987 with Aizwal as the capital of the state. It has 8 districts. According to 2001 census report the state has 888,573 populations of which 459,109 are males and 429,464 are females and its literacy rate is 88.80 percent of which 90.70 percent are males and 86.70 percent are females. Mizoram has the highest literacy rate in NER and has the second highest in India.

---

1.1.6 **Nagaland**

It is believed that Naga has a connection with the Burmese and it is famous for the tradition of making holes in the ear for decoration.\(^7\)

The former Naga Hills District of Assam became Nagaland, the sixteenth states of India on December 1, 1963. It is bordered by Burma on the east, Assam on the west, Arunachal Pradesh on the south east. The state has an area of 16,488 sq. miles. Its capital is Kohima. The state has 7 districts. There are 14 distinct tribes inhabiting in this state. According to the census report of 2001, it has a population of 1,990,036 of which 1,047,141 are males and 942,895 are females with the literacy rate of 66.60 percent of which 71.20 percent and 61.50 percent are males and females.

1.1.7 **Sikkim**

Sikkim is the 22\(^{nd}\) state of the Indian Union, and is a small mountain state in the eastern Himalayas. It is bounded by Tibet on the north, Nepal on the west, Bhutan on the east, on the south by Darjeeling and West Bengal. It has an area of 7,096 sq. km. Its capital is Gangtok. The state has 4 districts. Sikkim became a state of the Indian Union under the constitution (38 amendments) Act 1975 which came into force with retrospective effect from 26\(^{th}\) April, 1975, when the amended bill was originally passed by both Houses of the Parliament. According to the census report of 2001, the population of this state is 540,851 of which 288,484 and 252,367 are males and females respectively. The literacy rate of the state is 68.80 percent of which 76.00 and 60.40 percents are males and females.

\(^7\) Simaray, R.R. *Origin and Culture of Naga*. New Delhi, 1985, p. 41
1.1.8 Tripura

Literally the word “Tripura” means a land of three cities. It is said that a mythical king called “Tripa” named his kingdom after his name. Its capital is Agartala. The state has an area of 4,116 sq. miles. Three sides of this state are surrounded by 520 miles frontier with Bangladesh. The eastern border of 180 miles has a connection with Mizoram and Assam. About half the area is covered by hills and the remaining area is covered by forests.

Tripura is the second smallest state in India. It became a Union Territory on 1st November, 1957 and elevated to the status of a full-fledged state on January 21, 1972. According to census 2001 the population of this state is 3,199,203 of which 1,642,225 are males and 1,556,978 are females with a literacy rate of 73.20 percent of which 81.00 percent are male and 64.90 are females.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the people of this region. Nearly 90 percent of the people depend upon agriculture. Means of communication to NER of India are not well developed and as such have a great regional imbalance. Difficulties in the transport and communication are considered to be major hindrances to rapid economic development of the region. Except Assam, all the states of the region do not have the advantage of travelling by train to their respective capitals. Within this region itself the development of roads and railways had been hindered by the existence of numerous ranges of hills, rivers and streams, which change their course frequently.

According to the 2001 census the states have a different picture in terms of literacy. These statistics are shown in Table 1.1. The states exhibit a higher

---

8 Tiwari, R.P. Problems of Education in NE India. Ludhiana: Prakash Brothers Educational Publishers, 1988, p.2
growth rate of population as compared with the national average while for the literacy level except for Arunachal Pradesh, the rest have a higher literacy rate. The highest level of educational attainment is exhibited in Mizoram which is also second highest of the country – next only to Kerala. Otherwise also except for Arunachal Pradesh more than 60 percent of the population are literate, the figure much higher than the national average.

Table 1.1
Distribution of population size, decadal growth rate, density and literacy rate of North Eastern states

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Density</th>
<th>Literacy Rate (%)</th>
<th>Decadal Growth Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arunachal Pradesh</td>
<td>1,097,968</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>54..30</td>
<td>26.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>26,655,528</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>63..30</td>
<td>18.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipur*</td>
<td>2,166,788</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>70.50</td>
<td>30.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>2,318,822</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>62.60</td>
<td>29.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mizoram</td>
<td>888,573</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>88.80</td>
<td>29.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagaland</td>
<td>1,990,036</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>66..60</td>
<td>64.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikkim</td>
<td>540,851</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>68.80</td>
<td>32.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>3,199,203</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>73.20</td>
<td>15.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Registrar General of India, 2001 Census
*Excluding 3 sub-divisions

The NER of India has unbalanced distribution of educational infrastructure. This is especially true when going up to the higher level of study in terms of degree colleges and universities. There are only 5 (five) Universities of general education in Assam, 2 in Manipur and one each in Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura. The entire region has only 12 (twelve) universities.
Educationally, the NER of India is still backward as compared to other region of India. In the developed countries the literacy rate has touched almost cent percent. As the national policy is set to reach the level that the developed countries have achieved, a wholehearted effort should be kept to achieve cent percent literacy level. In order to achieve this level of literacy not only the reading, writing and computing but also the quality of education and equity in respect of educational opportunities across all sections of the people have to be ensured. The question in regard to providing education to the mass does not limit merely to simply reading, writing and computing rather it should also take care of the quality of education and providing equal opportunity for access to carry out if only conventional system is supposed to rely upon. Given the conventional system of education it is not possible to everybody to pursue higher education despite willingness and motivation to do so. It is difficult to impart higher education to all who are willing and motivated to continue. For meeting this practical inadequacy of conventional system there arises the existence of alternative system of education so as to give the facilities for higher education. Distance Education is one of the best alternatives to impart higher education which was first introduced in the UK in 1969 under the name of United Kingdom Open University (UKOU). As such, Distance Education system was first introduced in the United Kingdom in 1969 by means of establishing a full-fledged Open University. This very idea spread not only in other countries but also in India including NER. So, here we need to know the origin of Distance Education.

1.2 The Origin of Distance Education

Distance education is a term that has only gradually become accepted internationally. A kind of formal recognition occurred in 1982 when the International Council for Correspondence Education (ICCE) in its 12th World
conference held at Vancouver, changed its name into the International Council for Distance Education (ICDE).\textsuperscript{10} So, the basic origin of distance education is correspondence education.

When organised distance education first occurred is not undisputedly clear. The earliest mention so far known of what could be distance education has been found in "The Boston Gazette" of 20 March, 1728, in which Caleb Phillipps, Teacher of the New Method of Shorthand advertises that "any persons in the country desirous to learn this Art, may by having the several lessons sent weekly to them, be as perfectly unstructured as those that live in Boston."\textsuperscript{11} We have seen at least to be entitled to give Caleb Phillipps claim (by proxy) to be a pioneer in the field of distance education the benefit of the doubt.\textsuperscript{12}

The general belief, however, has been that the modern history of correspondence instruction began in 1840 with the introduction of Issac Pitman's Shorthand course for distance students through a penny post in the United Kingdom.\textsuperscript{13}

In the last decade of 19\textsuperscript{th} Century it became more systematic in the United Kingdom. Some of the better colleges which introduced examination oriented course were: Skerry's (1880), Foulks Wyach (1884), and International Correspondence College (1894). In the 20\textsuperscript{th} Century several changes have occurred in distance education. It is also said that Swedish system of correspondence course opened a new chapter in systematizing the correspondence instruction when Hermodes was founded in Malmo in 1896.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{10} ICDE Minutes 1982, p. 30 as quoted by Borje Holmberg, Growth and Structure of Distance Education. London: Croom Helm, 1986, p.1.
\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.6-7
\textsuperscript{13} Sahoo, P.K. \textit{Higher Education at a Distance}. New Delhi: Sanchar publishing House, 1993. p. 2.
\textsuperscript{14} Sahoo, P.K. \textit{Ibid.}. 
The inspiration to emulate the concept of distance education has come from Britain where an Open University has already been established which was originally called the "University of the Air". The full initiative is taken by the Harold Wilson for developing the concept of university of the Air which ultimately developed into an Open University in Britain. Therefore, the government of Britain invited an Advisory Committee to consider the educational function and content of a university of the Air on 8th September, 1983. The members of the committee were:

1. Miss Jennie Lee, M.P. (Chairman), Joint Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Education and Science.

2. Professor K.J. Alexander, Professor of Economics, University of Strathclyde.

3. Lord Annam, Provost, King’s College, Cambridge.

4. Dr. E.W. Braivlt, Deputy Education Officer, Inner London Education Authority.

5. Dr. Brynmor Jones, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hull.

6. Mr. D.J.G. Holroyde, Director, University of Leeds Television Centre.

7. Mr. Peter Laslitt, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.

8. Mr. N.I. Mackenzie, Lecturer in Sociology, University of Sussex.

9. Mr. A.D.C. Peterson, Director, Department of Education, University of Oxford.

10. Dr. O.G. Pickard, Principal, Ealing Technical College.

11. Professor F. Lle Wellyn-Jones, Principal, University College of Swan Sea.

12. Mr. J. Serpham, Retired Controller of Educational Broadcasting, British Broadcasting Corporation.

13. Professor J. Welshire, Professor of Adult Education, University of Nottingham.

---

15 *A University of the Air*, Presented by the Secretary of States for Education and Science, London., 1966, p.4
So, Distance Education provided by Open University was conceived in 1963, the idea finally blossomed into a University in Britain when it received the Royal Charter on July 23, 1969 (as United Kingdom Open University) with the ambition that it would provide a genuine equality of educational opportunities to millions of people in the world. This is the first full-fledged Open University in the world.

There is no wonder that many countries have practiced distance education in one type or the other. Good examples of such countries are: Spain, The Netherlands, France, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Japan, China, The USSR, Venezuela, Costa Rica etc. There is no one meaning of the term “Distance Education”. It is known by a variety of local currency (and Distance Education in the International currency). Following terms are often used simultaneously depending upon the situation of particular country. Continuing education, correspondence education, corresponding teaching, external degree programme, external studies, external system, Extramural system Home study, Independent learning, Independent study, Life long education, Non-formal education, open school, open university out of school education, postal courses, teach yourself programme, Tele University, University of the Air, University without Walls. Thus, Fred Tevons calls it as “A bewildering nomenclature.”

Here some countries are given along with their term use instead of Distance Education as Eternal System in Australia, off campus study in North America, Home study in Europe, Education a Distancia in Spanish speaking

18 Koul, B.N., Bakshish Singh, M.M. Ansari (eds.). Studies in Distance Education. Delhi: Association of Indian Universities, IGNOU, 1988, p. 11.
countries, Tele Ensignment in France, Extra Mural in New Zealand, in Germany it is described as Fern Sudium var Fernunterricht.

1.3 Concept and Needs of Distance Education

To the term formal, non-formal and informal education, the term Distance Education has been added. It is provided by the Open University. The concept of Distance Education has emerged as a result of man's search for an education, which could be provided to a person at their doorstep. "Necessity is the mother of invention" – From this Indian context, in the past, there was never thought of education from a distance, because teachers were available to teach those who wanted to learn. In those days every individual is not getting educational opportunities equally because of the caste system. There were four castes, i.e. Brahman, Kshetriya, Baisya and Sudra. Only the children born in the family of Brahmin and Kshetriya were permitted to get education. One example can be mentioned here from the great epic Mahabharata that Eklavya wants to learn archery under the Guru Dronacharya. But the Guru has refused to take him as a student because he was neither a Brahmin nor a Kshetriya. However, Eklavya was highly motivated to learn, so he built a figure in the image of Dronacharya and started practising archery under its feet. So distance education has come out for the modern Eklavya who could not get higher education for many reasons.

With the dawn of the 21st century, the situation, life style, living standards are quite different from earlier. Life was very simple in earlier but now it is so complex and competitive. Now, every country has realised the necessity of educating its people equally. Every man and woman wants to develop his/her life style and living standard. According to the development of society into higher and more complex situation the requirement of knowledge of an individual to live and function in the society increases. To make a suitable person in this changing
society every individual requires to improve or change his/her knowledge, skill, attitudes etc. So the need for higher education is well expressed in the report on the Open University submitted to the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1969) of the United Kingdom. It says.\footnote{The Open University: \textit{Report of the Planning Committee to the Secretary of State for Education and Science}. London: Her Majesty Stationary Office, 1969.}

It is ... unjust to the individual and unwise for the society to deny the greatest of its citizens. For long regarded as the privilege of the few, the opportunity to engage in higher education is at least becoming widely accepted as a basic individual right. Moreover, education in general and higher education in particular is, at one and the same time, a necessary condition of a modern technological society and defence against its abuse.

In such a situation, every body has realised that formal system of education or conventional system of education as has been prevailing till today was not sufficient enough to meet the demands of the aspirants of this modern society.

Thus, the rational behind the emergence of Distance Education lies in the inadequacies of the conventional/formal system of education. Because in the conventional education system education is an activity to be performed when a person is young, it has to be pursued on a full-time basis, teaching is carried out by a teacher on a full time basis which takes place in the class room and the student has to go there.

If all these or some of them are not fulfilled there can be no education according to the prevailing system. Against the backdrop of the conventional system of education, distance education places the objective of bringing higher
education to those who have no access to it, helps those who wish to improve their educational qualification without having required to join a course as full-time students, and those who are interested in pursuing advanced studies on the subjects of their choice. Thus, it provides educational opportunity to those who for one reason or another cannot go to the conventional institution. Thus, they would now like to have a chance to study.

Hence, it provides an alternative opportunity to study. So, it is known as second chance of education. In distance education the student learns on his own way, therefore, it is treated as privatisation of education. It can meet some of the felt needs of the changing society. Thus distance education has realised to fulfil the leisure of the conventional education such that education should be made relevant to needs, requirement and demands of the learners as well as of the country in which they live. Distance Education is being called upon to meet some of the felt need in several countries all over the world. The nature of the need varies from country to country. Depending upon the stage of its development, but the need for DE is being recognized both in developed and developing countries. It would be a misnomer to say that distance education is contradictory to the conventional education system but is supplementary or complementary to conventional education system.

1.4 Definition of Distance Education

The term Distance Education was not known by the public till the twentieth century, although its existence from the postal service became popular. The present form of distance education started from the west. It has been defined as:

A method of teaching in which the teacher bears the responsibility of imparting knowledge and skill to student, who does not received
instruction orally, but who studies in a place and at a distance determined by his individual circumstances.\textsuperscript{20}

Some of the definitions of Distance education are given as follows. Ochoa uses the following definition of education at distance:

A system based on the selective use of instructional media—both traditional and innovative—that promotes the self-teaching—learning process to achieve specific educational objectives, with a potentiality greater geographic coverage than the traditional face to face system of education.\textsuperscript{21}

Wedmeyer has used the terms ‘Open Learning’ ‘Distance Education’ and ‘Independent Study’ in his works, but favours the last term consistently. He defines independent study as:

Independent study consists of various forms of teaching-learning arrangements in which teachers and learners carry out their essential tasks and responsibilities apart from one another, communicating in a variety of ways. Its purposes are to free on-campus or internal learners from inappropriate class placing or patterns, lot provide off-campus or external learners with the opportunity to continue learning in their own environments, and developing in all learners the capacity to carry on self directed learning, the ultimate maturity required of the educated person.\textsuperscript{22}

Dohman of Germany defines distance education as:

A systematically organised form of self study in which student counselling, the presentation of learning material and securing and supervising of student’s success is carried out by a team of teachers,

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{20} Erdoes, Renee, F, \textit{Establishing an Institute of Teaching by Correspondence}. Rome: The UNESCO Press, 1975, p...
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid, p. 38
\textsuperscript{22} IGNOU Study Material: \textit{Growth and Philosophy of Distance Education}, p.13.
\end{flushleft}
each of whom has responsibilities. It is made possible at a distance by means of media which can cover long distances.  

Peters defines distance-education as:

A method of imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes which is rationalised by the application of division of labour and organisational principles as well as by the extensive use of technical media, specially for the purpose reproducing high quality teaching material which makes it possible to instruct great numbers of students at the same time wherever they live. It is an industrialised form of teaching and learning.  

According to Borje Holmberg, distance education is (most quoted and widely accepted definition):

The various forms of study all levels which are not under the continuous and immediate supervision of tutors present with their students in lecture rooms or on the same premises, but which, nevertheless, benefit from the planning, guidance and tuition of a tutorial organization.  

1.5 Characteristics of Distance Education

Distance education has been described as a form of education in which teacher and learner are separated from one another. On the basis of this Desmond Keegan finds that distance education has the following important characteristics:

a) The quasi-permanent separation of teacher and learner throughout the length of the learning process; this distinguishes it from conventional face to face education.

---

23 Ibid. p.13.
24 Ibid. p.13
b) The influence of an educational organization both in planning and preparation of learning materials and in the provision of student support services; these distinguish it from private study and teach yourself programmes.

c) The use of technical media, print, audio, video or computer to unite teachers and learners and carry the content of the course.

d) The provisions of two-way communication so that the student may benefit from or even initiate a dialogue; this distinguishes it from other uses of technology in education.

e) The quasi-permanent absence of a learning group throughout the length of the learning process so that people are usually taught as individuals and not in groups, with the possibility of occasional meetings for both didactic and socialisation purposes.

In short, distance education is a system of education where there are a few occasions of face to face instruction between the teacher and student but they are linked through the advancement of communication technology. Besides the printed materials through broadcasting ways (radio, television) and non-broadcasting (computers, video discs, telephone etc.) channels of communication network offer an excellent opportunity of creating educational network. This in sum constitutes the multi-media approach. Hence, in the process of distance education, the modern media of communication play a very important role. In distance education the success of a student is based on the motivation of the student because distance learner is characterised by individualization or privatisation. So every distance learner is to work on his own, guided by individual tutoring.

1.6 Objectives of Distance Education

The University Grants Commission gives the main objectives of distance education in the scheme of Distance Education 1993. They are.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{27} University Grants Commission, \textit{Scheme of Distance Education}. New Delhi, 1993.
a) to provide a system of student-centred self-paced learning;

b) to provide a flexible, diversified and open system of education;

c) to develop by providing wider access to higher education to person of all ages and sex particularly to working persons and to economically or otherwise handicapped and persons residing in remote areas;

d) to provide means of upgradation of skills and qualifications; and

e) to develop education as a life long activity so that the individual can refresh his knowledge in an existing discipline or to acquire knowledge in new areas.

Distance Education is mainly based on the supply of study materials sent by the centre for self study of the learner. It is supported and supplemented by the facilities of library, study centres, radio/TV programmes, audio-visual aids etc. The programme of distance education is effective and meaningful as regular colleges and universities. To make it effective and meaningful all possible efforts have been made for not to consider it a second grade system of education. It provides education at different levels in different subjects.

1.7 Network System of Distance Education

Distance Education (DE) is an innovative and flexible system for imparting education to varied target groups at different levels. Most of the DE system provides educational courses through the network of regional centres and study centres. They are functioning in the control of the headquarters. In such a situation, the headquarters maintain a balance between centralization and decentralization. In the conventional system of education, the teacher teaches the student but in the DE system it is taught by the institution. The courses are designed, written, prepared and distributed by the institutions. In such kind of activities there is a high degree of centralization and it, however, needs to be decentralised in providing student support services. It is
conducted by establishing regional centre and study centre. The enrolment of student, counselling session, personal contact programme, term end examination (TEE) submission of assignment are done in the Regional centre and study centre. In this situation it gains the significance in the DE system. They take care of local environmental factors like minimising the physical distance between the students and institutions. It promotes the DE system in all respects and easier dissemination of information about the system to a wider target area. They even provide local feedback to the headquarters regarding various activities carried out by the DE system both administration and academic. Therefore interaction between the regional centre, study centre and headquarters forms a very important nexus in the whole network of the DE system.

1.8 Types of Distance Education

DE is provided into two levels – one is at school level and another one is at higher education level and they are provided by the Open School and Open University respectively. Distance Education at higher education level is again broadly divided into two models:28 Mixed or hybrid institutions and autonomous institutions. In this mixed model the DE programme is run by the conventional institutions/university. The external programmes run by Australian Universities and correspondence courses in India are the best examples of this mixed or hybrid institutions. The second organisational type of DE i.e., autonomous model is run by establishing a full-fledged open university. The United Kingdom Open University (UKOU) of Britain and Indira Gandi National Open University (IGNOU) of India are the best examples of this model.

28 Kegan, D. and Rumble, G. Distance Teaching at University level. In Rumble, G and Harry, K. (Eds.) Distance Teaching University. London: Croom Helm, 1986, p. 28.
1.9 Differences between Distance Education and Conventional Education System

In conventional education system, there is a prescribed curriculum; textbook, prefixed timetable, session, admission and examination rules have to be followed. The student has to sit in a group under a fixed timetable and they are taught something according to the prescribed studies. Teachers are not free to make any change in the already prescribed rules and routines. In this system of education students are taught experiences of other. The education given from primary to the University stage is generally known as conventional education system. It is elitist, rigid, conservative and expensive. The conventional system of education has the following four characteristics.\(^\text{29}\)

(a) Teachers – full-time teachers to teach.
(b) Students – Full-time learners to learn.
(c) Place – classrooms where alone learning can take place and,
(d) Interaction – Face to face interaction between the teacher and the taught.

All the above essential attributes are necessary for imparting education to the student through conventional system of education.

On the other hand, Distance Education is characterised by a non-conformist and non-traditional innovative type of education. The nature of learning of this system of education is vastly different from those that govern the traditional system of education. It does not exist in vacuum. In fact, it is an outcome of certain historical, social compulsion and technological breakthrough. It is a system, which is firmly related to social and cultural environments. The

\(^{29}\) Koul, B.N., Bakshish Singh, M.M. Ansari, Studies in Distance Education. New Delhi: AIU, IGNOU. 1988, p. 17.
most important development in this regard is the advancements made in the field of electronic mass media.

It does not operate through the traditional conventions which are essentially restrictive in nature – admission restriction, attendance restriction in class lecture, restriction on the student for examination, on the period of time to be devoted to a course, restriction on subject combination for a particular degree, restriction on the modes of didactic communication and the didactic tasks etc. In this system, restrictions on learning are fewer than those in conventional education.

In this system of education, face-to-face teaching is minimal. So distance education is represented by distance teaching plus distance learning.\textsuperscript{30} Here, Print media is the most common medium of instruction. Not only print media but other mass media, like Television, Radio, Computers, Audio-cassette, Video Cassette, Discs, Film strips etc., are also used. Thus, it is treated as multimedia approach. This system of education has two distinct characteristics – academic and industrial. The academic represents the development and preparation of course materials, whereas industrial refers to production and distribution of educational material.\textsuperscript{31} This educational or study material of the course is prepared by the team of experts. All the course materials or study materials are supplied to every student through post in accordance with their course. In this system, the teacher has little responsibility about the education of the student. Only on the counselling days the student could meet with his/her concern counsellors and discuss the problems. So, main responsibility is borne by the students themselves. The motivation of student is highly important. Therefore, the success of a student depends on the motivation of student himself or herself.

\textsuperscript{30} Koul, B.N., Bakshish Singh, & M.M. Ansari. \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{31} Koul, B.N., Bakshish Singh, & M.M. Ansari. \textit{Ibid.}, p. 14
1.10 **Objectives of the Present Study**

The present study has the following objectives in view:

a] To study the introduction of the Distance Education in the North Eastern Region of India.

b] To compare the cost of imparting education between the distance education system and the conventional system.

c] To assess the level of drop-out and retention of the distance mode of learning.

d] To examine whether the distance education is more democratic than conventional system of education.

e] To determine the role of multi-media approach in disseminating distance education programmes.

1.11 **Hypothesis of the Present Study**

The following hypotheses will be tested on the basis of the present study:

a] Distance education in NER of India is at the stage of development in comparison with other states of India.

b] The cost of education through the distance education is less than the cost of education in the conventional system.

c] The percentage of the dropouts is very high in distance education.

d] Distance education ensures equality of opportunity in the field of education as such it is democratisation of education.

e] The success of distance education depends on the utilisation of multi-media approach.
The primary purpose of research is to discover principles that had universal application. But to study a whole population in order to arrive at generalisation would be impracticable if not impossible. However, the study of a population of large size would require huge resources of skilled manpower, class hour, and a lot of money. Hence a sampling was required.\textsuperscript{32}

A sample is a small proportion of a population selected for observation for analysis. By observing the characteristics of the sample one could make certain inferences about the characteristics of the population from which it was drawn.\textsuperscript{33}

The present study will also adopt samples from the study of population of distance learners and other stakeholders such as counsellors and coordinators of the distance learning study centres. The tools are observation, personal interview and mailed questionnaire schedules. The sample is chosen randomly according to the convenience of researcher since all the eight north-eastern states are to be covered, though special reference to Manipur becomes the focal point.

1.12 Population and Samples

At the outset it is worth mentioning that in India the distance education for higher education is provided by three agencies namely, (i) National Open University, (ii) State Open University, and (iii) Correspondence Course through Directorate of Distance Education by the conventional universities/institutions. Earlier in the NER distance education was conducted by RCE of teachers’ education. This is the initial stage of distance education in the NER. But now IGNOU has established a Regional Centre in each state of NER and many study centres. This reference is important for making the research design and sampling

\textsuperscript{33} Best, John. \textit{Ibid.}, p. 9
procedure. However, the present study gives focuses on the functioning of IGNOU since it has taken over the onus of the distance education.

The researcher selected at least two study centres from each state except Manipur for convenience of the study since it will not be possible to go to each and every study centre of all the eight states. But Manipur being the special reference area and the researcher being a local person, all the study centres of the state are included except one.

For the study, the researcher has taken 205 samples from different personnel who involved themselves in distance education in IGNOU for the session 2002-2003. Out of which 205 samples 150 have been taken from the students, 40 from the counsellors and 15 samples are from the coordinators from the states of the NER excluding Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh. For these two states, the researcher contacted through correspondence by post.

For Manipur being the state of special reference, the researcher has done survey more intensively; therefore, more number of samples are taken. In the case of counsellors, 23 samples are taken from the entire NER and 17 are from Manipur. Among the coordinators, there are 9 coordinators in Manipur and out of these 8 have been included for study. And for the student 70 students have been taken up from the different study centres of Manipur. In all categories of respondents both male and female are included. Apart from interview of coordinators of study centres and the Regional Director of Imphal Regional Centre of IGNOU, the Assistant Regional Director if IGNOU, Regional Centre, Shillong; Principal of Kanan Devi Memorial College of Education, Imphal, and former Coordinator of Institute of Vocational Guidance and Continuing Education, Manipur at Churachandpur are also contacted. The Kanan Devi Memorial College of Education conducted correspondence course
under Himachal Pradesh University while Churachandpur Centre conducted B.Ed. course under Madurai Kamraj University. Now they cease to continue.

1.13 **Methodology**

The Methodology of approach applied to the present study is descriptive method. It is supplemented by the historical records and documents of relevant information, and in order to make it more analytical, scientific research tools and instruments in the form of questionnaire and interviews are utilised to meet the objectives. For this simple arithmetic and statistics are used.

1.14 **Scope of the Study**

The scope of the present study is to describe and analyse the development of distance education in the NER of India particularly in Manipur. Accordingly, primary emphasis is laid on the areas of higher education provided by open universities but at the same time there is some reference made to the development of open schools system in NER. The study focuses on the quantitative analysis of DE and examines how far it is effective, useful, and on the method of imparting education, problems faced by Coordinators, Counsellors and students as well. The study covers from the initial stage of correspondence course for B.Ed. programme by the RCE in NER till the present stage of distance education provided by IGNOU.

1.15 **Research Tools**

The researcher develops certain research tools in the form of questionnaire schedules, interview schedules and information schedules in order to make a thorough, comprehensive and analytical study. Separate questionnaire schedules are prepared for students, counsellors and coordinators who work in the
IGNOU. Different questionnaire schedules are standardized after having pre-tested by administering to the respective respondents meant for the purpose.

In all the questionnaire schedules for different categories included the basic background information name and address, sex, name of the study centre to which they belong, besides the pertinent questions related to the objectives and the hypotheses set for the study. The questionnaire schedules for students, counsellors, and coordinators are given in the appendix A, B and C respectively.

1.16 Methods of Data Collection

Various tools and techniques are employed for the study to explore, describe and analyse the data in depth. The relevant data are collected through both mailed questionnaire schedules and the personal interviews with respondents with the help of interview schedules. In all the interviews maximum efforts are put into make the respondents answer all the questions freely and frankly. Some questions are based on Yes/No type of response, some are having pre-coded options while a few are open ended. In other words, the questionnaires are designed as semi structure.

The data was collected in two ways. Firstly, the researcher collects the data personally through personal interview in Manipur, Assam and Meghalaya. Secondly, the researcher sent the questionnaires to Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura. Unfortunately despite the best efforts the researchers failed to get responses from the last two states.

Questionnaire schedules for students were distributed to 200 students of the NE states. Out of these 200 schedules 150 were responded to and 18 incomplete and 32 not responded to. Out of 150 respondents 70 were from...
Manipur and 80 were from rest of other NE states. In the case of questionnaire schedule for students the researcher had to explain the questionnaire at the time of collecting information. Therefore, it took a lot of time to complete a schedule.

As for the counsellors 70 questionnaire schedules were distributed and administered to for different study centres in NER. Out of 70 schedules distributed only 40 counsellors responded to completely and 17 sent incomplete schedules and 13 did not respond at all. Out of 40 respondents 23 were from Manipur and 17 were from other states.

The numbers of questionnaire schedules sent to Coordinators all over the NER was 30. Out of 30 questionnaire schedules 15 Coordinators responded and 9 of them sent incomplete schedules and six did not respond. Out of 15 respondents 8 were from Manipur and the rest were from other NE states.

The investigator had also collected statistical data, information, documents, literatures from various government departments like Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Directorate of Education (Schools and University), Manipur University Library, IGNOU Study Centres located at Manipur University and Imphal Regional Centre.

The investigator ventured to collect materials by visiting other university libraries outside the state like library of IGNOU study centre located in North Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Shillong, Regional Centre Library, Shillong; JNU Library and IGNOU Headquarters at New Delhi.

The researcher also collected information from the government college of Manipur, Manipur University about expenditure of Bachelor degree, Master’s
Degree etc. for producing cost comparison of distance education and conventional education. The information, data, document and literature collected from various sources from inside and outside the state have been well processed and analysed critically.

1.16.1 Difficulties faced in Survey

While collecting the data the researcher faced three major problems viz. (a) heavy expenditure and enormous time for travelling to different study centres in and out of Manipur, (b) insensitivity of the respondents and (c) sense of insecurity and inconvenience of being a female researcher. The researcher contacted all the respondents when they came to the study centres. It required repeated follow-ups since the study centres remain operated only on Sundays and holidays.

Despite repeated follow-ups of more than five times, in most cases, a few respondents did not comply at all. Since all the counselling was conducted only in weekends if the respondents did not respond even after the fifth visit it meant that the researcher had to stay at a place for more than one month. This was a general problem experienced in all the NER states. Another problem was meeting the student respondents since attending the counselling was/is not compulsory.

1.16.2 Method of Analysis and Presentation

The data thus collected are tabulated and frequencies are distributed for all the relevant information for different levels separately. Percent are also calculated and presented graphically wherever appropriate.
1.17 **Significance of the Study**

The present study makes an attempt to explore the development of distance education of NER with respect to their aspiration, availability of facilities, utilisation of these facilities and more importantly the problems they face.

Education evidently remained as an instrument of socio-cultural development, economic prosperity and cultural change. Society changes rapidly. According to the changes in the society, the educational system needs changes from time to time. Therefore, education should be based on the needs and requirement of the society. This shows that education and society are closely inter-related. With the development of science and technology, many changes have occurred not only in the socio-cultural but also in the field of education. So the educational structure of India including NER has changed rapidly after Independence. Since 1947, various committees have come up with their recommendations and new visions, suiting the fast changing socio-economy structure of the country.

Soon after the adoption of the Indian Constitution (on January 26, 1950), first five year plan (1951-56) getting launched. As part of it, programmes to investigate, develop and improve in the teaching-learning process were taken up. This happened continuously in all latter Five Year Plan also. Educational planners have realized the limitation of traditional classroom based higher education. This limitation paves the way for alternative system of education i.e. via Distance Education in our country. The first emphasis is laid on distance education in the form of correspondence courses in the Third Five Year Plan. So, in India first distance education was taken up in the University of Delhi in 1962. After that in 1982 Andhra Pradesh Open University (APOU) was established at state level and in 1985 IGNOU established at National level. After the inception of IGNOU this
very ideas spread not only in different regions of India but also in the NER of India. Now the NER of India has eight regional centres one each in every state in which one Regional Director in-charge has been appointed in each regional centre for running the centres smoothly. IGNOU is trying its level best for achieving the objective and target of equality in educational opportunity for every willing and motivated student.

Now it is necessary to evaluate the programme of DE development in the NER of India and along with this we need to investigate the objective of imparting education to all the learners equally. Not only this we need to study how many courses are provided in each study centre of the NER, utilisation of facilities, availability of facilities, etc cost effective and problems.

There has been no research work and investigation conducted in this field until today. Thus, the researcher selected the most interesting and virgin topic but challenging task for study critically the development of distance education in NER of India with special reference to Manipur, in the hope that the study will generate interest among the young scholars and other enlightened person interested in knowing about the development of DE in NER of India and will motivate them to further studies on this system.

In discussing the development of distance education in the NER emphasis has been made to the development of distance education in India because the way of development of DE in the NER is closely linked up with the national scenario as a whole. Hence the development of distance education in India will be discussed in the next chapter so as to highlight the development of DE in the NER of India with reference to Manipur.