CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1. An Overview:

The North-Eastern Region (NER) is one of the foremost regions of India, where a fusion of races and synthesis of culture has taken place leading to the evolution of the characteristics of a composite people and culture which in spite of its regional peculiarities is nevertheless an inseparable part of the common Indian heritage. It has a rich legacy of culture and civilization from the time immemorial.

The NER of India lies between 21°57'N - 29°30'N latitude and 89°46'E - 97°30'E longitude comprising of seven full-fledged states, popularly known as "Seven Sisters" resembling each other to a great extent in the practice of shifting cultivation, culture, social patterns of behaviour and other innumerable factors, mostly belonging to a common ethnic group called the Mongoloid group. This region is 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, remain isolated geographically from the rest of the country and outside influence. The region is connected with the rest of the country only

through a 32 km. wide neck of a strip level land called the West Bengal Duara Gate along with the foothills of the Himalaya. The efforts for development in this region were made only after Indian achieved her independence from the Britishers on the 15th August, 1947. Prior to independence, Manipur and Tripura were Princely states and other areas of the NER formed parts of the provinces of Assam.

The North-Eastern Region having an area of 2,55,083 sq.km., which is larger than that of United Kingdom (U.K.) having an area of 2,44,108 sq.km., shares 7.75% of the country's total geographical area of 32,87,259 sq.km. and it has a population of 3,15,47,314 sharing 3.72% of the country's total population of 84,63,02,688 as per 1991 census. The nature has bestowed, NER a pleasant climate throughout the year, indowed with rich flora and fauna, abundance of natural and mineral resources, but poorly developed amidst the plenty, in comparison with the rest of the states of country. Three-fourths (75%) of the region is hilly and mountainous. It shares one-sixth (16.7%) of nation's forest, products some two-fifths (40%) of the country's natural oil and stores some 30% of India's hydel power


potential, but still backward.\textsuperscript{5} Assam which is a little better developed than others, contributes only 2\% to the country's manufacturing products. The region's share in the country's installed capacity of electric power is only 1\% at present.\textsuperscript{6}

Agriculture is the main occupation of the people of this region, but only 14\% of the regional area is available for the cultivation against 52\% for India as a whole. Over one seventh (14.28\%) of the geographical area of the region is under shifting cultivation. Means of transport and communication are not properly developed and as such have a great regional imbalances. Difficulties of transport and communication are considered to be a major hindrance to rapid economic development of the region. Except Assam, in all the states in the NER, there is no advantage for travelling by train to their respective capitals. It is imprudent to ignore the basic fact that railway system in NER is deplorably inadequate.\textsuperscript{7} There are a number of remote and sparsely populated villages in the NER, which could not be easily accessible not only by the outsiders but also by the bonafide citizens of the respective states.


1.1.1. Dawn of Western Education in NER:

Prior to the arrival of the Britishers, there were agencies in NER to execute the educational programmes in accordance with the needs and traditions of the land. Before occupation of Assam by the foreigners the Ahom rulers patronised a system of education known as the "Gurukul system". The indigenous institutions of that period can be classified in the following types viz. 8 (i) "Pathsalas" for Hindus (ii) "Madrassahs" for Muslims (iii) "Tols" for Brahmins (iv) "Satras" for Baishnavas.

Assam became under the rule of East India Company (E.I.C.) after the "Treaty of Yandabo" in 1826 even though the actual control took place in 1838. According to the terms of the Treaty, the king of Burma renounced all the claims upon the territories of Assam, Manipur and their neighbourhood as well as Tenassirum and Arakan and the same claim had been given to the British. Thus, after many years of anarchy and desolation the management of this region was entrusted to the control of E.I.C. and the people heaved a sigh of relief. It was the beginning of the modern period and dawn of Western (English) Education in the history of NER. Not only Assam

came under British rule, but politically NER became an integral part of India and period of political isolation of the region came to an end. 9

The First Political Agent of the East India Company, Mr. David Scott, arrived in Assam in 1826 and soon after his arrival, he took up measures for promotion of indigenous systems of education in NER. In order to placate the feelings of the leading Assamese gentlemen of both the communities that is, Hindus and Muslims, he started 11 schools mostly in Lower Assam. Each school had one "Pandit" and 30 pupils. David Scott also opened a school in Garo Hills for expansion of elementary education among the hill tribes. Many christian missionary organisations also established schools in the hills and plains of Assam. 10

The proper development of education in NER particularly in the hill areas has taken place after independence, as there were negative attitude towards western education by the people in the past. They had a psychological fear of being exploited together with the apprehension of losing their language in course of time. Consequently,


they do not like to allow people of other areas to earn a living and help in economic development of the region, though there exists the shortage of manpower and labour.

The British took actual control and possession of Assam in 1838 as stated earlier. The British Government had brought Arunachal Pradesh also under their administrative control. Thus the seed of English Education was shown by the Britishers when they came to the soil of NER and traditional system of education could not remain influenced by the environment. A system of education which is now called western (modern) education emerged. This period is called "Dawn of Western Education" in NER.

1.2. Nomenclature:

The North-Eastern Region has an exciting nomenclature and is still a virgin land in this country. Alphabetically nomenclature of the seven states are given as follows:

i) Arunachal Pradesh: The words "Arunachal Pradesh" is a Sanskrit word, meaning "The Land of rising Sun", as the ray of the sun touched-down first at the soil of this state in the country.


ii) **Assam** : The word "Assam" is derived from the Sanskrit word "Asom", meaning "Peerless", judged by her exquisite natural beauty, cultural richness and human resources.¹³

iii) **Manipur** : Literally, the word "Manipur", means "The Land of Gems" or "The Land of Jewels", as there were jewels in all parts of the land at the time of formation of land.¹⁴

iv) **Meghalaya** : The word "Meghalaya" is a Sanskrit word, meaning "Abode of clouds".¹⁵ The cloud obscures the landscape and dims the horizon to one's view. Thus it creates inner anxiety or drowsiness. The mist in the hills usually intervenes between the rain and sunshine and vice-versa.

v) **Mizoram** : The word "Mizo" is a generic term which stands for several tribes, sub-tribes and clans living in and around Mizoram including Myanmar. The term "Mizo",

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is derived from the words "Mi" meaning "Man" and "Zo" which denotes "Highlanders". Thus "Mizo" means "Highlanders" or "People living in the Hills".  

vi) Nagaland : The most plausible theory as to the origin of the word "Naga" is one which has Burmees connections. This is supported by historical facts. The Nagas had tradition of making holes in the ears for ear-decorations. The Burmees called that group of people with hole in ears as "Naka" meaning pierced ears. The anglicised word for "Naka" became "Naga". Thus Nagaland means "The Land of Naga".  

vii) Tripura : Literally the word "Tri-pur" means a land of three cities. It is said that a mythical king called "Tripura" named his kingdom after his name.  

1.3. Annexation of N.E.R. by the British:

There were different petty kingdoms in NER, when Assam came under British rule under the Treaty of Yandabo 1826. The Kacharies dominated in Cachar areas, the Khasis had 19 petty Chiefs, the king

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17. ibid, p. 41.
of Jaintia was ruling over Jaintia Hills. The tiny kingdoms of Moran, Muttock, Khantis, Simphos spread here and there in N.E. Region. The Nagas had their own Chiefs. Similarly, the Mikirs, the Miris, the Garos had Chiefs who were ruling in their respective hill areas.

By 1874, the territories of Govind Chandra of Cachar, Ram Singh of Jaintia, Bar Senapaati of Matak, Sadiya Khowa Gohain, the Chiefs of Duphalas, Abor and Miris, Mishmis, Akas, and the hills inhabited by the Garos, Khasis, Nagas and the Lushais were tagged to the Assam administration. The inconvenience in administering of such a vast and diverse territory was felt in the later half of the 19th century by the administrators. Therefore, commissionership of Assam was separated from Bengal and together with the District of Sylhet of the Daca Division, constituted into the Chief Commissionership of Assam in 1874 by a proclamation of Governor-General-in-Council. The political officer of the Manipur was also placed under Assam Commissioner. In 1874, Shillong was made the capital of Assam.

1.3.1. Organisation of NER under British period:

The North East Frontier as distinct from Assam began to emerge in 1875-76. According to scheduled District Act of 1876, Government was authorised to administer these areas. In 1886 under the authority of the Scheduled District Act of 1874, Assam Frontier Tract Regulation
was passed. This Regulation authorised the Chief Commissioner of Assam to prohibit or permit the operation of any law to propose rules for the administration of the Frontier Tracts.

In 1898, the Lushai Hills at the Chittagong Hill Tracts were transferred to the Assam Administration along with the Assam Tracts of Lushai Hills. In 1905, Assam was combined with Eastern Bengal to make a new province known as Eastern Bengal and Assam. In 1912, Assam was restored to its former states when the partition of Bengal was annulled.

In 1920, Assam was made a Governor's province when reforms were introduced in the system of government as the Government of India Act, 1919 was promulgated. In 1920 North East Frontier was put under the charge of the Governor of Assam as Deputy Governor-General of India. In 1937, further changes were introduced in the system of government, when the Government of India Act, 1935 was partially introduced. This position remained till August, 1947, when the British left India. The district of Sylhet was separated from Assam and merged into East Pakistan now known as Bangladesh.

1.3.2. The Merger Agreement of Manipur and Tripura:

Prior to independence, Manipur and Tripura were princely states and all other areas of NER formed parts of the province of Assam as stated earlier. Sardar Patel, the Home Minister of India,
was keen to complete the integration of the states as early as possible. Only three states namely (i) Benaras (ii) Manipur and (iii) Tripura were left to complete the integration of states to the Indian Union. Out of the three states, the merger agreements of Benaras and Tripura were signed on the 5th and 9th September 1949 respectively, though these states were to merge only on 15th October 1949. Thus only Manipur was left. By a strange coincidence, Manipur which was the last state to be conquered by the British, became the last state out of the erstwhile 554 states to be merged to Indian Union.

The Merger Agreement of Manipur was signed on 21st September, 1949 and the state was formally merged on 15th October 1949 along with Benaras and Tripura. Thus, Manipur and Tripura acceded to the Indian Union and became part -"C" state on 26th January 1950 and Assam became part -"A" state on the same day. After re-organisation of states in NER on 1st November 1956, Manipur and Tripura became Union Territories.

1.4. Integration of India:

On 26th January 1950, the Indian Constitution came into force and under it, the component parts of India were divided into 4 (four) categories. In the first category, called Part "A" states, were placed the nine Governor's Provinces, with their territories augmented by the merger of numerous states.


1.4.1. First Category: Part "A" state -

a) Assam  
(b) Bihar  
(c) Bombay  
(d) The Central provinces and Berar (renamed Madhya Pradesh)  
(e) Madras  
(f) Orissa  
(g) Punjab (commonly known as East Punjab)  
(h) The United Provinces (renamed Uttar Pradesh)  
(i) West Bengal

These 9 (nine) states were placed in the 1st category of Part "A" state. Thus Assam was placed 1st rank in the 1st category Part "A" state of Indian Union.

1.4.2. Second category: Part "B" State comprised of -

a) Hyderabad  
(b) Jammu and Kashmir  
(c) Mysore  
(d) Madhya Bharat comprising of 5(five) unions:  
i) PEPSU  
(ii) Rajasthan  
(iii) Sourashtra and (iv) Travancore-Cochin

Thus, there were no place for NER in this category.

1.4.3. Third category : Part "C" state -

The British influence to Manipur between 1825 and 1891 was very slow and steady. The British Government treated Manipur as an independent but protected state lying outside its borders. A British Political Agent was sent to Manipur in 1835 for observation of the administration of the king. This system continued till 1891.
However, because of the quarrels among the Manipur Princes in the attempt of the throne the British Government captured Manipur in 1891. But Manipur was also left by the British as independent region in the 14th August 1947. Later Manipur was merged into Indian Union on 15th October 1949. Then constitution of India come into force on 26.1.1950 as stated earlier. Accordingly, Manipur was placed at the 8th position in the third category Part "C" state:

The third category comprised of the following states: 22

The first three states are old Chief Commissioner's provinces and the rest seven are new ones. Thus Manipur and Tripura were the 8th and 9th part "C" states of Indian Union and above ten (10) states were formed the third category of the Part "C" state.

1.4.4. The Fourth Category : Part "D" state-

The fourth category comprised of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which continued to be directly administered by the centre through Chief Commissioner and are not treated as a "State" in the Indian


Constitution. The British Government built-up whatever laboriously for more than 150 years had been demolished overnight, leaving the administration of India in the hands of her own people.

In August 1947, when the transfer of power took place very few could have conceived as possible the revolutionary changes that were to come over the states within such a short time. On 26th January 1950 Indians had to integrate geographically all the states and brought them into the same constitutional relations with centre as the provinces. The Indian States Forces were to be absorbed into Indian Army. Thus the total 554 states are integrated into the Indian Union.

1.5. Constitutional Evolution:

Assam has been truncated a number of times, since independence as a result Sylhet and some parts of Cachar were given to East-Pakistan (Bangladesh) in 1947 following a referendum. A small chunk of 85 sq.km. comprising of Dewangiri in north Kamrupa was ceded to Bhutan. The North Eastern Frontier Agency (NEFA), though nationally formed part of the state since 1947, was never a part of Assam administratively.

1.5.1. First Re-organisation Act 1956 in NER-

The problem of Manipur did not end as it was made part "C" state; after integration with Indian Union in 1949. Central leadership was against its merger in Assam as was considered by the Re-organisation Commissions. Hence, it become a Union Territory under State. Re-organisation Act 1956 along with Tripura, which also become a part "C" state after independence. Thus, Manipur and Tripura became a Centrally - Administered Territory in 1956.

1.5.2. Second Re-organisation of NER 1963-

In 1961, Naga Hills District of Assam and Tunsang Division of the NEFA were amalgamated under the name of Nagaland. The Parliament passed the State of Nagaland Act, on 4th September 1962. By this Act of Parliament, Naga Hills was Constituted into separate full-fledged state named "Nagaland" on December 1, 1963. Thus, Nagaland became the 16th state of Indian Union.

1.5.3. Third Re-organisation of NER 1970-

The language disturbances of 1960 in Assam and creation of Nagaland encouraged the Hill leaders to demand for separate Hill States. Meghalaya was created as an Autonomous District within the
state of Assam, for the satisfaction of the aspirations of the people of the Khasi-Jaintia and Garo Hill Districts, on April 2, 1970.  

1.5.4. Fourth Re-organisation Act 1972 in NER-

In order to provide the people adequate opportunities to associate themselves in the task of development, the NER was re-organised in January 1972. Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura were elevated to the rank of full-fledged states and NEFA and Mizo Hills District of Assam were renamed as Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram respectively. Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram were territories at that time.

1.5.5. Fifth Re-organisation in NER 1987-

As a sequel to the signing of the Historic Memorandum of Settlement (HMS) between Government of India and Mizo National Front (MNF) in 1986, Mizoram had been granted statehood on Feb. 20, 1987 along with Arunachal Pradesh as a 23rd and 24th full-fledged states of Indian Union. Thus, there are 7 (seven) full-fledged states (i) Arunachal Pradesh (ii) Assam (iii) Manipur (iv) Meghalaya (v) Mizoram (vi) Nagaland and (vii) Tripura, with effect from 20.2.1987 in NER. The States of the North-Eastern Region of India, are fondly referred to as the "Seven Sisters".

1.5.6. Socio-Economic and Cultural Background.

Social: The concept of unity in diversity is a remarkable characteristic of the people of the NER of India. The present population of the NER of India may be broadly classified into three cultural groups: Hindus, Christians and Muslims. The Hindus constitute the dominant population in Assam, Manipur and Tripura and rest by the christians. The proportion of the Muslims has increased considerably in Assam and Manipur. Muslims are having their fair concentration in Tripura. All the people, in the NER of India are generally patrilineal with exception to the Khasis and Garos of Meghalaya, who are matrilineal. 26

Economy: The main occupation of the NER of India is agriculture. There are two types of cultivation. One is terrace cultivation specially in the valley areas and other is Jhum/shifting cultivation in the hill areas. New measures such as the use of high yielding varieties of paddy, application of fertilizers, adoption of plant protection, etc. are introducing for improving agricultural practices. Next to agriculture, various forest-based industries like plywood, pulp and paper, sawing and milling, handloom, etc. are the main organised industries and major sources of income of the people. Assam and Manipur and famous throughout the world for its rhinoceros and Brow Antlered Deer (Sangai). The principal mineral resources of NER of India are petroleum, coal, lime-stone, etc. The natural resources comprising of flora and fauna have direct and indirect economic value of the people inhabiting in this region.

Cultural: The culture of the NER of India is composite. It is the Austries, the Mongoloids and the Indo-Aryans. Though the region had remained geographically isolated from the main stream of Indian culture in the past yet we find the Aryan's influence on the region specially in the valley areas of Assam, Manipur and Tripura.\textsuperscript{27} Manipuri Dance is noted throughout the world for its gracefulness and colourful dress and style. Ras Lila, Lai Haraoba dance, Khamba Thoibi dance are some of its popular forms. The cultural identity of each of the seven political units which are distinct in existence as observed from festivals, fine-arts dresses, traditions, etc. suggest that the approach for regional unity must be formed on such a basis that it recognised the existence, growth and development of individual identity. The new administrative set-up and constitutional evolution imbalanced to a great extent in the cultural, economical and educational fields of the people giving them a better opportunity to develop in their respective areas.\textsuperscript{28}

1.6 Emergence of North-Eastern Council:

The whole North-Eastern Region was politically, economically and culturally inter-woven into a single unit. After independence, NER gradually disintegrated and formed new states. For the smooth development of the region with similar characteristics, joint planning and united efforts on parts of the present constituent is needed. To provide a frame work for the purpose, an organisation known as the

\textsuperscript{27} ibid: pp. 16-25.

"North-Eastern Council" (NEC) was constituted in August 1972, under the North-Eastern Council Act 1971. The Council has been playing a great role for joint development in the matters of common interest including education of NER.

There are a number of functions to be discharged by NEC for the development of its constituent units. Today, there is facility for research scholars to work in the academic fields but this facility was not provided before independence. The reasons were many and the most important reasons were that the tribal areas were kept isolated from the plains and official documents were not available for the scholars. Now there is scope for the tribal people to join the main stream of national history, culture, education and other allied branches without losing their political and cultural identity. There is also a great need to reconstruct the integrated educational history of NER of India. In doing so, the scholars should not ignore or should kept an attentive eyes to the cultural, political, economic and educational links between NER of India and other parts of the country in ancient, medieval and present times.

1.7. Growth of Population:

Though the year 1872 marks the beginning of census taking in India, the systematic work began in 1881. It is being held once in 10(ten) years. The present one is the fifth after independence. The population statistics is of greater use from view points of economic

welfare of the people. The demographic events and the measurements like fertility, mortality, migration, density, literacy, urbanisations and employment trends etc. are such indices on which policies and budgets of central and state governments are bound to be based. The population statistics is also useful from point of view of political and socio-cultural studies. Population is the point of reference from which all the other elements are observed and from which they all singly or collectively derive significance and meaning. It is therefore important to know the structure of population in India as a whole and in the North-Eastern Region of India minutely for studying the development of primary education in this region.

1.7.1. Every Sixth Person of the World is an Indian-

The data thrown up by census 1991 make a fascinating reading. The population of the country on the sunrise of March 1, 1991 is 84.63 crore (84,63,02,688), comprising of 43,92,30,458 males and 40,70,72,230 females. According to UN estimate, the population of the rest of the world in 1990 was 443.9 crore. This means that about 19% of the world's population lives in India. In other words, every sixth person of the world is an Indian. The immediate impact is the pressure of population on land. The country accounts for only 2.42% of the total world area. The area of India is 3.28 million sq.km. out of the total world area of 135.79 million sq.km. In absolute terms, the population of India has grown by 16.06 crore during the decade 1981-91. This


is almost equal to the population added during the three decades 1931-61. The absolute addition to the population during the decade 1981-91 is more than the total population of Japan.

1.7.2. Sex Ratio in NER-

The sex ratio in India has been generally adverse to women i.e. the number of women per 1000 men has generally been less than 1000. Apart from being adverse to women, the sex ratio has also declined over the decades. Studies made so far have offered several explanations for this phenomenon in the past. Some of them are:

a) A preference for male children resulting the neglect of female babies.

b) The relative gap in the health conditions between males and females.

c) Lower expectation of life at birth for females in the past compared to males.

However, it is difficult to pin-point any particular reason for the decline in the sex ratio.

The sex ratio of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura according to 1981 census are: 862, 910, 971, 954, 919, 863 and 946 respectively and in 1991
it became 861, 925, 961, 947, 925, 890 and 946 respectively. The percentages of female are very poor in Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland in comparison with other states in NER in the three consecutive census of 1971, 1981 and 1991. It is very interesting to note that Manipur has the highest percentages of female in the above census in NER. The sex ratio of the NER of India is given in the following Table No.1.1.

### TABLE NO. 1.1

**SEX RATIO OF THE NER OF INDIA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Arunachal Pradesh</td>
<td>861</td>
<td>862</td>
<td>861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>894</td>
<td>901</td>
<td>925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>971</td>
<td>961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>942</td>
<td>954</td>
<td>947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Mizoram</td>
<td>946</td>
<td>919</td>
<td>924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Nagaland</td>
<td>871</td>
<td>863</td>
<td>890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>943</td>
<td>946</td>
<td>946</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Basic Statistics of North-Eastern Region (various volumes)
Above table indicates that in 1981 census only Meghalaya crossed the national level or Indian context of 950, but the number of female is again reduced in 1991 census. Assam has gradually increasing number of female but sex ratio of Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland will take time to come up to the national level. All India sex ratio of 1991 population is 929. Thus Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura have higher sex-ratio than that of all India level of ratio in NER according to 1991 census.

1.7.3. Comparative size of population in NER-

The NER represented only 3.72% to the total population of India (84.63 crore) on the sunrise of March 1, 1991. In NER, Assam has the highest number of population followed by Tripura, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram respectively. The following Table No. 1.2 shows the comparative size of population of NER, rank in NER, rank in India, percentage to the total population of India and percentage to the total population of NER of India respectively, according to 1991 census.
### Table No. 1.2

**Comparative Size of Population in NER of India**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank in NER</th>
<th>Rank in India</th>
<th>Name of State</th>
<th>Population in 1991 census</th>
<th>Percentage of population of India</th>
<th>Percentage of population of NER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>2,24,14,322</td>
<td>2.64%</td>
<td>71.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>27,57,205</td>
<td>0.33%</td>
<td>8.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>18,37,149</td>
<td>0.22%</td>
<td>5.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>17,74,778</td>
<td>0.21%</td>
<td>5.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Nagaland</td>
<td>12,09,546</td>
<td>0.10%</td>
<td>3.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Arunachal Pradesh</td>
<td>8,64,558</td>
<td>0.10%</td>
<td>2.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Mizoram</td>
<td>6,86,756</td>
<td>0.08%</td>
<td>2.18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total NER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population in 1991 census</th>
<th>Percentage of population of India</th>
<th>Percentage of population of NER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3,15,47,314</td>
<td>3.72%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
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**India**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percentage of population of India</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>84,63,02,688</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
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</table>


Assam has the highest 2,24,14,322 population contributing 71.04% to the total population of NER in 1991 and the state placed at the 13th rank in all India by representing 2.64% to the total population.
of country. Tripura having 27,57,205 population placed at the 2nd and 19th rank in NER and India by representing 8.74% and 0.33% respectively. Manipur having 18,37,149 population is the third rank in NER and 20th in all India by representing 0.22% and 5.82% to the total population of India and NER respectively in 1991. Meghalaya having a population of 17,74,778 is placed at the 4th rank in NER by representing 5.61% to the total population of NER. This state is placed 21st position in all India by representing 0.21% to the total population of India.

Nagaland having a total population of 12,09,546 is placed at the 22nd position at the India level and represented 0.14% to the total population of India. This state ranked 5th place in NER and represented 3.87% to the total population of NER. Arunachal Pradesh having a population of 8,64,558 placed at the 24th position in all India, represented 0.10% to the total population of India. This state ranked 6th in NER, represented 2.74% to the total population of NER. Mizoram having a population of 6,89,756 placed at the 7th position in NER represented 2.18% to the total population of NER. Mizoram placed at the 26th position in all India level and represented 0.08% only to the total population of country.
1.7.4. Trends of Population in NER-

The population of NER is composed of many heterogenous elements of this region. There are three distinct group of people viz. the hill tribes, the plain tribes and the people of the plains. In the plains there are Ahoms, Bengalis, Meiteis, Muslims and hill tribes. Nagaland, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram are completely tribal areas. Two districts and 60% of total area of Assam are inhabited by various hill tribes. In Manipur, about 80% of the state is hilly area, inhabited by various tribes. Most of the tribal areas in NER are located along the international boundary with China, Myanmar and Bangladesh. The tribal population constitute 22.9% of the total population of the region. 32

There are 12 tribes in Arunachal Pradesh, 23 tribes in Assam, 29 tribes in Manipur, 14 tribes in Meghalaya, 14 tribes in Mizoram, 5 tribes in Nagaland and 19 tribes in Tripura respectively. 33 Thus there are 116 major tribes in NER of India at present. These major tribes are sub-divided into numerous sub-tribes and clans. Each sub-tribes or clans have its own distinctive character. There are differences in languages, dialects, dresses, ways of worship, habits, political organisation etc. throughout the NER. Trends of population in the NER are given in the following Table No.1.3.


### TABLE NO. 1.3

**TRENDS OF POPULATION IN THE NORTH-EASTERN REGION OF INDIA**

(Thousand persons)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Year</th>
<th>Arunachal Pradesh</th>
<th>Assam</th>
<th>Manipur</th>
<th>Meghalaya</th>
<th>Mizoram</th>
<th>Nagaland</th>
<th>Tripura</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>3,290</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>3,899</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>4,637</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>5,560</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>6,695</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>8,029</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>606</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>10,837</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>769</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>1142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>14,625</td>
<td>1073</td>
<td>1012</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>1556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>632</td>
<td>18,041</td>
<td>1421</td>
<td>1336</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>775</td>
<td>2035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>865</td>
<td>22,414</td>
<td>1837</td>
<td>1775</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>1209</td>
<td>2757</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NA = Not Available.

**Sources:**


1.8. Development of Primary Education:

There were only 9,746 primary schools in NER during 1948-49 of which 9,144, 239 and 368 were in Assam, Manipur and Tripura. The total number of pupils in these schools were 6,08,652 comprising of 4,45,476 boys and 1,63,176 girls. There were 5,67,043, 21,858 and 19,751 pupils in Assam, Manipur and Tripura including 1,59,422, 951 and 2,803 girls in NER. The number of teachers at the primary schools were 14,025 comprising of 12,528 men and 1,497 women. Assam had the highest number of teachers (12,781), followed by Tripura (699) and Manipur (545).

The total number of educational institutions at the primary stages rose to 50,538 comprising of 41,833 primary and 8,705 upper primary schools in NER during 1992-93. Assam has the highest number of educational institutions at the primary stages (34,579), followed by Meghalaya (4,874), Manipur (3,861). Tripura (2,497), Nagaland (1,662), Mizoram (1,619) and Arunachal Pradesh (1,445). There are 64,18,289 pupils at the primary stages in NER of which 48,59,780 and 15,58,509 are at the primary and upper primary schools including 22,64,102 and 6,72,791 girls during 1992-93. The total number of teachers at the primary stages in NER rose to 1,78,147 comprising of 1,16,475 and 61,672 at the primary and upper primary schools including 28,333 and 12,190 women respectively. Detail study on the development of primary education in NER of India will be discussed later on.
1.9. Literacy:

Literacy continues to be one of the most pressing world-wide problems. It is also one of those problems, which along with hunger, sickness and unemployment, have aroused the greatest response in terms of international collaboration. Literacy is an important characteristic of population. For the purpose of the census a person is regarded as literate if he or she can read and write with understanding in any language. In the last few censuses children below the age of five were treated as illiterates. Since ability to read and write with understanding is not ordinarily achieved until one had some schooling or at last sometime to develop these skills, it was felt by the Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD) and Planning Commission that the population aged 7 years and above is to be classified as literate or illiterate. Hence in 1991 census the question of literacy was canvassed only for the population aged seven years and above unlike earlier censuses which took into account population of 5 years and above for this purpose.

1.9.1. Decadal variation of literacy rate-

Literacy rates of Mizoram is the highest in NER having 53.79%, 74.26% and 82.27, whereas Arunachal Pradesh has the lowest rates having 11.29, 25.54% and 41.59% during the censuses of 1971, 1981 and 1991 respectively. Manipur was placed second rank among the
NER, having 32.91% in the year 1991, followed by Tripura (30.98%), Meghalaya (29.49%), Assam (28.15%) and Nagaland (27.40%) respectively. The census of Assam was not conducted in 1981 so the data is not available for this state. In this census period Nagaland was placed second rank among the states of NER having literacy rate 50.20% followed by Tripura (50.10%), Manipur (44.61%) and Meghalaya (42.02%) respectively.

In the percentage of literacy at 1991 census, Nagaland retained its second position among the states in NER having 61.65% and Manipur came down to the fourth place having 59.89% followed by Assam (52.89%), and Meghalaya (49.10%) respectively, whereas Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh have the highest and lowest rate of literacy in NER as stated above. The rates of literacy in Arunachal Pradesh increased gradually from 11.29% to 41.59% during three decades period even this state always far lagging behind the national rates of literacy 29.45%, 43.56% and 52.19% respectively. In 1971 census, three states in NER, namely Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Assam had lower rates of literacy than the national rate of literacy 29.45%.

The literacy rate of India in 1981 was 43.56%. That year, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya had literacy rates lower than that of the national average and data of Assam was not available due to with- held of census operation. The remaining four states including Manipur have higher rates of literacy than that of national rate.
It is very interesting to note that Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya have lower rates of literacy in 1991 in NER and other remaining five states have higher rates of literacy than that of the national rate 52.19%.

1.9.2. Literacy rate in NER 1991-

The literacy rate of North-Eastern Region of India on 1st March, 1991 is 58.26% which is higher than that of all India rate of literacy. Males and females rate of literacy in NER of India are 65.98% and 49.74% against the national average 64.20% and 39.19% respectively. This reveals that literacy rate of males and females in NER is higher than that of national average. In NER, Mizoram, Nagaland, Manipur and Tripura have higher rates of literacy than that of total average of NER and other remaining states have lower than that of total NER literacy rate.

Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh have the highest and lowest rates of literacy in NER, having 82.27% and 41.59% respectively. Mizoram has the highest male literacy rate (85.61%) followed by Manipur (71.63%), Tripura (70.58%), Nagaland (67.62%), Assam (61.87%), Meghalaya (53.12%) and Arunachal Pradesh (51.45%). Against Mizoram has also the highest female literacy rate (78.60%) in NER, followed by Nagaland (54.75%), Tripura (49.65%), Manipur (47.60%), Meghalaya (44.85%), Assam (43.03%) and Arunachal Pradesh (29.69%) respectively.
Table No. 1.4 shows the literacy rate among persons, in NER according to 1991 census.

### TABLE NO. 1.4

PERCENTAGE OF LITERACY IN THE NER OF INDIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rank States</td>
<td>Literacy rate</td>
<td>Rank States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1  Mizoram</td>
<td>82.27</td>
<td>1  Mizoram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Nagaland</td>
<td>61.65</td>
<td>2  Manipur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Tripura</td>
<td>60.44</td>
<td>3  Tripura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Manipur</td>
<td>59.89</td>
<td>4  Nagaland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Assam</td>
<td>52.89</td>
<td>5  Assam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  Meghalaya</td>
<td>49.10</td>
<td>6  Meghalaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7  Arunachal Pradesh</td>
<td>41.59</td>
<td>7  Arunachal Pradesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NER</td>
<td>58.26</td>
<td>65.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>52.19</td>
<td>64.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the traditional society of NER, the stock of knowledge is limited and grows slowly so that the main aim of education is interpreted to be its preservation. In a modern society, on the other hand, the stock of knowledge is far greater and the pace of its growth is infinitely quicker. Modernisation does not mean a refusal to recognise the importance of or to inculcate necessary moral and spiritual values and self-discipline. Modernisation aims, amongst other things, at creating an economy of plenty, which will offer to every individual a larger way of life and wider variety of choices.

One of the main tasks of education in modern society is to keep pace with the advancement in knowledge. There has been a great explosion of knowledge during the last few decades. Educationists and thinkers all over the world recognised primary education as a crucial factor in raising the standard of living of millions all over the globe. Therefore, it is no wonder that many countries have started giving a close look to their educational systems. Education being the sub-system of the larger social order, it is always under review for adjustment. This process is accelerated to-day because of the very fast changes which are taking place in all directions. A serious review and transformation of the on-going educational systems in various parts of the world is unavoidable for the very survival of human being. However, the transition from the traditional to the futuristic setting is not easy.
Primary education increases the productive capacity of societies and their political, economic and scientific institution. It also helps in reducing poverty by increasing the value and efficiency of labour offered by the poor and by mitigating the population, health and nutritional consequences of poverty. As economies are transformed by technological advances and new production methods depend on a well-trained and intellectually flexible labour force. Thus primary education becomes even more significant for proper development of NER of India on par with the rest of states in the country.