CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Conceptual Background

'Higher education' is broadly used to mean education of the post-secondary stage. The Encyclopaedia of Britannica defines it as, "any or various types of education given in the post-secondary institutions of learning and usually affording at the end of a course of study, a named degree or certificate. The institutions includes not only universities and colleges but also various professional schools that provide preparation in such fields as law, theology, medicine, music and art and in addition separately organised teacher-training schools, junior colleges and various kinds of institutes of technology" (Torsen, 1985, p. 917). In 1962, the UNESCO Conference on Higher Education held in Africa defines higher education as, "all types of education (academic, professional, technological or teacher education) provided in institutions such as universities, liberal arts colleges for which (a) the basic entrance requirement is completion of secondary education, (b) the usual entrance age is about 18 years and (c) in which the courses lead to the giving of a named award (degree, diploma, or certificate of higher studies)" (Britannica, 1985). The significance of the traditional functions of higher education in its acquisition, preservation, dissemination and extension of the frontier of knowledge, the balanced education of individuals and the training of higher level personnel for all walks of life is obvious (Biswas, 2008).

Universities and colleges are the institutions of higher learning which are intended to equip the learners with the required skills for quality life with dignity and confidence. It is the apex stage of learning where the integration of knowledge and value take place. As such the importance of higher education increased rapidly in recent years. The concepts and scopes of higher education keep changing from time to time. Higher education, which was considered as a practice of teaching and learning transformed into different shape and structure until it became multi-dimensional, multi-disciplinary, integrating subjects and streams. Today, higher education is a liberating force for many ignorant and superstitious people around the world. It has shown the world about the strength and capacity of knowledge and science. The concept of education as acquiring

new ideas and knowledge existed right from the earlier days of human history. The spark that ignites a sense of discovering new and useful ideas, helpful to him in different ways, from time immemorial has been the constant companion of the human race, which keep developing towards higher level according to the prevailing civilization and had taken many forms. In fact, great civilisations existed because of the higher level of understanding and creativity that were manifested by the contemporary people toward the phenomena of life, environment and science. Although, the formal forms of education that we know of, now, may be understood to have been originated in more recent times, the learning (education) practises in many countries like India preceded the political history of many powerful nations today. Ancient records of the Indian tradition testify to the search of the rishis and sages for higher knowledge (*para vidya*), and their discoveries have been continuously transmitted to posterity and kept alive through its long history, marked by periods of expansion, specialization, decline and renewal. This theme of higher knowledge informs and inspires even the latest developments in the Indian educational system[1]. It has been a significant component of the country's struggle for freedom, attainment of independence and an awakening from the slumber in which people were cast into during the British rule. Higher education eradicates superstition and ignorance. Thus, Higher education, "is a place where the student has the opportunity of education in conversation with his teachers, his fellows and himself." (Scott, 2007, pp. 8,9)

As the name suggest, Higher education implies the highest level of knowledge in the educational pyramid regardless of the place and time. In the present days of formal education, Higher education is generally understood as the levels of teaching or learning provided by the schools, colleges and universities. Education imparts not only the established facts and knowledge but also inculcates independent and critical thinking on the part of the learners. Proper education in its truest terms is a stage where proper integration of knowledge and human values are assimilated to achieve maximum gains both to individual in particular and the society in general. Higher education is a necessity for any country if it wants to build up a knowledge-based society in the 21st century. Huemmert (2011) citing Barnett (1992) divided the development of the idea of Higher education into two main groups. In the first group, Huemmert stresses on the importance

[1] Consider the recommendation on meditation by the Secondary Education Commission.

of higher education as the production of qualified manpower (the starting point for research career), the efficient management of teaching provisions and a field for extending life chances. This aspect of higher education is concerned with policy makers, funding bodies, and other interested parties. In the second group, he heighted the role of higher education on the students where higher education plays an important role in the development of the students' personal qualities, their intellect, knowledge, autonomy, critical skills, character and their ability to adapt with the needs of the society.

The presence of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in a particular place is still considered as a regional boosters. Higher education Institutions are not only expected to provide education and conduct research but also to play an active role in the development of their socio-economic and cultural surroundings (Kyvik & Lepori, 2010, p. 22). With this approach, the equal distribution of Higher education Institutions in every region of the state or country is crucial so that no part or region should be left behind in the process of development and transformation. Thus, higher education should be available and accessible to the people of all regions for the development of their economy and the social life.

The geographical focus of studies specifically points out a particular region of the state or country, where the administrative division clearly demarcate the geographical territory. Regional and local focus is the approach with which this research had been stirred to. Region here is defined as a sub-national specific entity, an administrative division of the state. There is a renewed interest in regionalism in most European countries. Regional and local authorities take an active role in the enhancement and promotion of innovation and regional development. Region competes for skills, investments, infrastructures, tourism, etc. In the age of competition, regional authorities see Higher Education Institutions as (to used Kyvik & Lepori's term) 'booster engines' powerhouse, driver to regional growth and prosperity. This way, Higher Education Institutions are expected to breed new economic activity, innovate new development and revitalized the existing activities in the region. (Kyvik & Lepori, 2010).

In India, higher education is imparted through colleges and universities. For most part, colleges are the only institutions imparting higher education. Davis and Murrell (1993, p. 5) had defined College as, "Colleges are learning communities and individual accepted into these communities have the privileges and responsibilities of

membership". All colleges are not alike. They vary in size and quality. They cited the work of Lazarsfeld and Thielens, which indicated that as the size of the college increased, higher was the proportion of professors who were productive. Similarly, the rated quality of the college bore a close relationship with the productivity of the academic men. The better colleges had higher proportion of academic men who were productive compared to lesser ones. (Hiremath, 1983, p. 49).

Some thinkers criticise institutions of higher education in that they manufacture academic degrees in basically the same way as a company such as Universal Widgets Inc produces widgets. They argued that like widgets, academic degrees come in several models and price ranges. They are known as baccalaureates, masters, and doctorates. Under this Widget Theory of Higher education, the more cheaply a College or University can produce marketable baccalaureate, master and doctor degrees, and the more efficient and cost-effective the institution is. It is a basic premise under the theory that if two colleges or universities produce the same degree, the one that produces it more cheaply is the better institution. It is more cost effective. Management is very important in widget production and, under the theory, it is equally important in the production of academic degrees (Flawn, 1979). In the present age, ideas and principles of democracy has brought about democratization of education. In this way, states shouldered major portion of expenditures in higher education by absorbing many institutions and establishing new ones. Higher education in the present age is already a struggle beyond this theory.

The concept of Human Capital Theory has brought a new era in the development of national educational system. One of the main points of this theory is:

> Education, rather than being looked upon exclusively as consumption, should be looked upon as an investment for the individual as well as for society. The human capital theory influenced investments in education as well as educational policy and planning discourse. However, in the late 1960s and early 1970s the theory was heavily criticized, not only by university students but also by researchers in education. Teaching at the university had to be more relevant to the real world in order to contribute to economic development. During the economic recession of the 1980s and 1990s, the human capital theory was referred to when educational systems were expanded. The theory experienced a renaissance resulting in political rhetoric on the important role of investment in education throughout the life span of citizens and in all kinds of contexts, including so called lifelong and life-wide learning. (Ingemar Fagerlind, 2004, p. 18)

Institutions have become larger, considerably more complex and resourceful and more important to collective life. Educational institutions are far more homogeneous across the nations than would be expected considering the variation between national societies and cultures (Ingemar Fagerlind, 2004, p. 19).

The study of Higher education focusing on students is the immediate concern of the institutions of higher learning. This domain include the use of classroom, libraries, residence halls, student unions, athletic facilities, laboratories, studios and galleries. The social dimension reflected in the contacts with faculty, informal-student friendships, clubs and organisations and student organisations have become more complex than before.

Astin in the mid 1980s presented a theory of Students Involvement, which to him means the student's investment of physical and psychological energy in the academic enterprise. "The five principles of his theory are : i) Involvement refers to the investment of physical and psychological energy ii) Involvement occurs along a continuum that can change over time iii) Involvement has both quantitative and qualitative features iv) the amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement in that program; and v) the effectiveness of any educational policy or practice to increase student involvement." (Davis & Murrell, 1993, p. 35)

1.1.1 Concept of quality in higher education

The concept of what is termed as 'quality' in higher education has been viewed from different angles by different scholars. Some focus on the purpose, while others look at the outcome. Those who look for 'quality input gives quality output' type advocated for admission of the best school leavers to the colleges. Some scholars have democratized it to mean avoiding errors consistently (Parri, 2006). This definition can be prescribed to industries but to educational institutions, it is very difficult to set such definite standard of flawlessness in the educational process. It will also mean the production of two identical products which are not desirable and aimed at in education. Quality as transformation or reshaping and enhancement focuses on the constant and continuous development and improvement of what existed. Quality as value of money essentially brings in the idea of cost-effectiveness of educational institutions. This theory has made several governments strengthened the bond between the quality of education

and its monetary value mainly through demands for efficiency. In the present era, minimum standards have been set to measure external quality assurance as well as internal quality assurance in the educational institutions. (Parri, 2006).

The concern for quality in higher education can be traced back to the Indian University Commission 1902 which was appointed to,

> ..enquire into the condition and prospects of the universities established in British India to consider and report upon any proposals which may have been or may be made for improving their constitution and working and to recommend such measures as may tend to elevate the standards of university teaching and to promote the advancement of learning. (G.Philip, 1993, p. 310)

Kothari Commission 1966 also stated thus,

> There is a general feeling in India that the situation in higher education is unsatisfactory and even alarming in some ways, that the average standards have been falling and that rapid expansion has resulted in lowering quality…..many realize how serious are the actual conditions, academic and physical that are obtain in colleges and universities. Even those who are broadly aware of the situation fail to notice its poignancy because they have become used to such conditions. (G.Philip, 1993, p. 310)

The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 and the Programme of Action (POA) 1992 has recommended that, "Excellence of institutions of higher education is a function of many aspects: self-evaluation and self-improvement are important. If a mechanism is set up which will encourage self assessment in institutions and assessment and accreditation by a council, ... the quality process, participation, achievements etc will be constantly monitored and improved."

In pursuance of the quality in institutions, the University Grants Commission (UGC) under section 12 CCC of the UGC Act (Act 3 of 1956) established the National Assessment and Accreditation Coouncil (NAAC) as an Autonomous Institution on 16th September 1994 with Registered Office at Bangalore. This council has accredited a number of institutions both colleges and universities giving them grades. The council investigate the condition of the institution inspecting aspects like infrastructures, learning resources, management, academic activities, co-curricular activities etc. Accredition by NAAC has now become a standard for most higher education institutions, thereby encouraging many more institutions without such grading to strive towards attaining NAAC accredition with higher grade.

1.1.2. Aims of higher education

In the context of India, the Pursuit of integral knowledge and liberation, which has been a constant endeavour of Indian culture, is also the central objective of the Indian education. Education is also visualised as an evolutionary force so that each individual is enabled to evolve from purely material consciousness towards superior planes of intellectual and spiritual consciousness. Education is also perceived as a bridge between the past, present, and the future and as a means by which the best of the heritage is transmitted or transferred to the new generations for its further progression. In receiving the modern message of learning to be, our endeavour is to harmonise it with the insight of our ancient Indian wisdom according to which this goal can be achieved only by the realisation of our internal and imperishable being (soul), thereby attaining salvation (Moksha). Our educational system also aims at promoting environmental protection, universal peace, and international cooperation; and since harmony and unity in external space can best be realised through internal purification and perfection, our educational system endeavours to promote harmonious relationship between both the inner and outer dimensions of the individual, environment and the cosmos. This aspect has been the eternal goal of the Indian concept of education all through the ages.

The objective in the Indian higher education is not only to promote equality and social justice, but also to provide the right kind of work ethos, professional expertise and leadership in all walks of life. Above all, this endeavour is focus onto foster among teachers and students and, through them in society generally, integral development of values inherent in physical, emotional, rational, aesthetic, ethical and spiritual education.

1.1.2.1. Aims of higher education according to India Education Commission 1964-66 (Kothari Commission) (S.D. Khanna, 2002, p. 127)**:**

1. To seek and cultivate new knowledge, to engage vigorously and fearlessly in the truth and to interpret the old knowledge and beliefs in the light of new needs and discoveries.
2. To provide the right kind of leadership in all walks of life, to identify gifted youth and help them to develop their potential to the full by cultivating physical fitness, developing the power of the mind and cultivating right interest, attitudes, moral and intellectual values.

3. To provide society with competent men and women trained in Agriculture, Arts and medicine, Science and Technology and various other professions who will also be cultivate individuals with a sense of social purpose.
4. To strive, to promote equality and social justice and to reduce social cultural difference through diffusion of education.
5. Lastly, to foster in teacher and students and through them in society generally, the attitudes and values for developing this good life in individuals and society.

1.1.2.2. According to Robbin Commission,[2] the aims of higher education are:

1. Instruction in skills, suitable to play a part on division of labour.
2. Promotion of the general powers of the mind so as to produce not more specialists but cultivated man and woman.
3. Advancement of learning through research.
4. Transmission of common culture and common standards of citizenship.

1.1.2.3. According to the Manipur University Act 1980[3], the aims of higher education are to disseminate and advance knowledge, wisdom and understanding by teaching and research and by the example and influence of its corporate life, and in particular, to promote the following objectives:

1. To foster the composite culture of India and establish such departments or institutions as may be required for the study and development of languages, arts culture of india, and in particular those of the north eastern region of the country.
2. To promote an awareness of the rich cultural tradition of Manipur which is a national heritage and is an example of a happy blending of the culture of India and Southeast Asia; and provide for the study of the culture of Manipur in this wider context;
3. To take special measures to facilitate students and teachers from all over India to join the university and participate in its academic programmes;
4. To promote in the students and teachers an awareness and understanding of the social needs of the country and of the Northeastern region of India in particular and prepare them for fullfilling such needs;
5. To make special provision for integrated courses in humanities, science and technologies in the education programmes of the Universty;

[2] J. Devi (1989) Education in Manipur, Rai Pravina Brothers, Imphal.
[3] 1st and 2nd Annual Report of Manipur University 1980-81, 1982-83.

6. To take aproppriate measures for promoting interdisciplinary studies in the un iversity;
7. To establieh such departments or institutions as may be necessary for the study of languages, literature and life of foreign countries with a view t inculcating in the students a world perspective and international understanding.
8. To promote a spirit of himanism, of tolerance, of social justice and fellowship of faith, of reason and a spirit of free enquiry in the search for truth and a scientific approach to the problems of the society.

Beside the vast coverage of the aims of Higher education in the past decades as seen from the above given lists, there has recently been a new tide of educational thought which aims at drawing from our current experience of all that is quintessential, as also to develop a new vision in the light of the highest traditions of Indian education and of the contemporary needs and aspirations. The basic aim of liberation from the bondage of ignorance and backwardness can never be over-looked. Education, especially higher education is aimed at inculcating and integrating the physical, mental and spiritual powers to develop highly humane and cultured humanity. Along with the general idea of seeking and cultivating new knowledge by engaging vigorously in the pursuit of truth, cultivating the right kind of work ethos, professional expertise and leadership in all walks of life for quality and social justice has been the overall purpose of higher education. Fostering integral development of values inherent in physical, emotional, rational, aesthetic, ethical and spiritual qualities among teachers and students of higher education, and through them the society in general and the synthesis of such knowledge and values that will revitalise our country is the immediate concern of higher education in our country.

1.1.3. Role of higher education

In the Indian context, higher education in the ancient period was to realise the self and obtained salvation (Moksa). The role of higher education had seemed to be limited to the individual and his need for spiritual fulfillment and transformation in the past. While the idea of transformation of the individual still hold good as one meaning of the word education, the concept of role of higher education in the modern era is not limited to the individual alone. It has played various role in the development of the individual and goes beyond also to play the role of transforming the society into knowledge based society. At present, higher education has been responsible for the rapid

changes and developments taking place all over the world. It also act as a preserver and transmitter of the best of our heritage and accumulated experiences. The Economic Changes, Attitudinal Alterations, Political Reformations, Social Reconstructions, Modernisation and Urbanisation are but the product of higher education and its subsequent effects. Higher education has helped people to adopt themselves to new environments and situations. Higher education has made a significant contribution to economic development, social progress and political democracy in independent India. (Commission, 2007, p. 21)

Higher education inculcates the abiding elements of respect for human personality, freedom of belief and expression for all citizens, a deep obligation to promote human well-being, faith in reason and humanity. India being a democratic country, depends for its very life on a high standard of general, vocational and professional education. Dissemination of learning, incessant search for new knowledge, unceasing effort to plumb the meaning of life, provision for professional education to satisfy the occupational needs of our society are the vital tasks of higher education. Not only mere vocational and technical education, but education of moral and values is the underlying role of higher education. It must ensure that our society has scientists with conscience and technicians with taste who wouldn't find a void, a moral vacuum, within themselves. Higher education preserves the values of democracy, justice and liberty, equality and fraternity. Universities stand for these ideals. Thus, the Indian Constitution while laying down the general purposes also state that the universities should educate people on the right lines to make the understanding and vision of the framers of the Constitution, the common possession of all the Indian people.

Education has brought some light of undestanding to the erstwhile tribals and head hunters to peaceably settle and live. Now, higher education has given them the insight of seeking development of various sort such as political, economical and educational developments. The once savages were now clothed with a civilized mentality and western clothes by education. And higher education has led many of them to be among the top brasses in the state and country as well. The act of transformation of people and their way of life has been one great role of higher education in the construction of better society among the erstwhile savaged tribals in the state of Manipur.

1.1.4. Regulating Framework of Higher Education in India

The institutions imparting higher education in India at different levels are regulated by the following bodies:

1. University Grant Commission (UGC) was set up under the UGC Act 1956, is responsible for the coordination, determination and maintenance of standard and release of grants to universities and research organisations or institutions.
2. All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), has been established under the AICTE Act, 1987. The council is authorised to take all steps that are considered appropriate for ensuring coordinated and integrate development of technical education and for maintenance of standards.
3. National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), is a statutory body set up under the NCTE Act, 1993, to facilitate planned and coordinated development of the teacher education system in the country and for regulation and proper maintenance of norms and standards in the teacher education system. The council is empowered to grant recognition of institutions offering courses or training in teacher education.
4. Medical Council of India (MCI) was set up by the Indian Medical Council Act 1956, amended in 1993. The council is empowered to prescribe minimum standards for medical education required for granting recognised medical qualifications by universities or medical institutions in India. The council is responsible to give its recommendations to the central government for establishing new medical colleges, opening of new or higher courses of study and increase in admission capacity in any courses of study or training.
5. Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) has been established to set up various centres to meet the various agricultural research and educational needs of the country. It is actively pursuing human resource development in the field of agricultural Sciences by setting up numerous agricultural universities across the country.
6. Dental Council of India (DCI) constituted under the Dental Act 1948, is a statutory body incorporated under an Act of Parliament to regulate the dental education and the profession of dentistry throughout India. This council is responsible for the recognition of dental education degrees awarded by various

universities and also for maintaining uniform standards of dental education in India.

7. Pharmacy Council of India (PCI) was constituted under section 3 of the Pharmacy Act, 1948. The PCI controls pharmacy education and profession in India up to graduate level. The council prescribes the minimum standards of education for qualification as pharmacist.
8. Indian Nursing Council (INC) is a statutory body constituted under the Indian Nursing Council Act, 1947. The council is responsible for regulation and maintenance of a uniform standard of training for nurses, midwives, auxiliary nurse-midwives and health visitors.
9. Bar Council of India (BCI) is empowered to make rules to discharge its function under the Advocates Act 1961. An important rule making power with reference to laying down guidelines for the standards of professional conduct and etiquettes to be observed by advocates. The BCI can also specify the conditions subject to which an advocate must have the right to practice and the circumstances under which a person must be deemed to practice as an advocate in a court.
10. Central Council for Homeopathy (CCH) was established under the Homeopathy Central Council Act 1973. The council prescribes and recognises all homeopathic medicine qualifications. The council is responsible for constitution and maintenance of a Central Register of Homeopathy and for matters connected therewith.
11. Central Council of Indian Medicine (CCIM) is the statutory body constituted under the Indian Medicine Central Council Act1970. This council prescribes minimum standards of education in the Indian System of Medicine namely Ayurvad, Sddha, Unani Tibb. The council is responsible to maintain a central register on Indian Medicine and prescribes standards of professional conduct, etiquettes and code of ethics to be observed by the practitioners.
12. Council of Architecture (COA) was constituted under the provisions of the Architects Act 1972, enacted by the Parliament of India. The Act provides for registration of Architects, standards of education, recognized qualifications and standards of practice to be compiled with the practising architects. It regulates the education and practise of profession throughout India, besides, maintaining the register of architects.

13. Distance Education Council (DEC) was constituted under statute 28 arising from section 25 of the IGNOU Act 1985. It is responsible for the promotion and coordination of Open University and Distance Education System and for determination of its standards. It provide guidelines to promote excellence, encourage the use of innovative technologies and approaches, enable convergence of all systems and sharing of resources through collaborative networking for access to sustainable education, skill up gradation and training to all.
14. Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) was set up with the enactment of RCI Act in 1992. This council prescribes that anyone delivering services to people with disability without possessing qualifications recognised by RCI could be prosecuted. The council has twin responsibilities of standardizing and regulating the training of personnel and professionals in the field of Rehabilitation and Special Education.
15. National Council for Rural Institutes (NCRI) is an autonomous society fully funded by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. It was established with the aim objective of promoting Rural Higher education for advancing rural livelihoods with the instrument of education based on the value proposed by Mahatma Gandhi.
16. State Councils of Higher education (SCHE): Following the National Policy on Education respective state governments have established State Council Higher education. These councils prepare coordinated programmes of development of Higher education in each state. Thus they seek to consolidate the efforts and investments of institutions of Higher education with the state (Mete, 2013).

1.2. Rationale of the study

Higher education in Manipur is provided by the available colleges, two universities and a university campus. These colleges are concentrated in the valley districts which constitute only about 8% of the total land area of Manipur. Out of the total number of colleges in Manipur, affiliated to Manipur University, which is 79 according to the Annual Report of the Manipur University 2012, only about 22.78% are in the hill districts. Neither the government nor NGO's or individual cares to study to make proper policy toward the growth and development of higher education in the hill

districts. As such, many people of the hill tribes had to struggle to go for higher education mostly in the valley region, which is not everybody's cup of tea for the economically backward tribes. As such, many promising youths drop their study and went about earning their livelihood and so wasting the good talents. The reason behind the slow rate of growth of higher learning institutions, the lack of quality in the existing colleges and the non-availability of proper infrastructures need to be assessed well to find out those down-dragging factors to solve the problem of higher education in Manipur in general and the hill areas in particular. Nevertheless this will not be an easy job. It will require time, money and an expert hand. Unless education is made free and heavily subsidised, it cannot reach the under-privileged (Natarajan, 1993, p. 57). The ground realities usually betrayed the reports of the government agencies in regard to the provision of higher education in the hills. The reason why people living next-door to these hill colleges do not go to these colleges, and instead, look for other colleges in the valley is an astounding fact that best explains and describes the conditions of the colleges in the hill districts. For instance, Churachandpur, the second largest town in Manipur, has only two government colleges and two private colleges and it is still far better as compared to districts with just one college in the whole district. And out of all the colleges in the hills of Manipur, there is no professional college except for a lone non-functional private law-college.

The present study is concerned with the existing state of affairs of colleges affiliated to the Manipur University, which are located in the hill areas of the state. The state, being a democratic government, has had two distinct administrative policies at the grass-root levels namely Panchayati Raj and Autonomous District Council for the more developed, more populated, more educated valley region and the otherwise hill areas respectively. This separation of political and governmental policy also comes because of the categorisation of the people into different categories as General, Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Other Backward Classes. This classification was deemed necessary by the constitutional provision of the country for protecting and safeguarding the backward minority groups and their traditional culture, preserving and mainstreaming these communities. Accordingly, the people in the valley region of the state constitute the General (Gen), Scheduled Caste (SC) and Other Backward Classes (OBC) categories, while, the people in hill areas constituted the Scheduled Tribes (ST)

commonly denoted as Tribals. These tribes of the hill areas are culturally, economically and educationally backward as compared to other sections of the society. Their mainstreaming and transformation, more like their acceptance of modern developments and amenities were of recent phenomena although swift and rapid. Even at this juncture, the areas mostly affected by the rapid development and transformation are usually the administrative headquarters of the districts. Larger regions of the hills, still awaits the coming of modern amenities and development. It is in this state of affairs that the government with the hope of throwing some lights into the social attitude of the people, had absorbed some privately established and run colleges in this region. For prolong period, these colleges had been idle because the government ignores them, the locals don't trust them and the people in them were not earnest and honest to their profession. However, in recent development, these colleges have attracted large crowds of students from the surrounding. There is a phenomenal change surrounding the few available colleges as they are now looked to for more than just providing educational facilities to the students. The sudden unprecedented growth of enrolment in the past few years has made it necessary to see if the mostly neglected state of affairs of the colleges, in all its aspects – infrastructure, manpower and other resources is in a condition to accommodate the growing number of students with quality. The colleges which were once observed with a handful of students idling around the campus even as that was taken as an excuse by the college teachers half a decade ago, now, crowds with students somehow indicate either the growing awareness of the need for higher education has woken up the people or that the people are just swept by the global cultural movements around the globe.

Due to lack of the research work in Higher education in this region, many social issues related with understanding that comes through higher education have not been studied and appraised appropriately. This resulted in the mushrooming of many complexities arising out of a conflict over the social and economic changes that are likely to take birth in the region. Education according to some educationists should be the mid-wife of such positive changes. Besides the above brief discussion, the need of the study also arises mainly due to the following reasons:

i) Few studies have been conducted in the specified area but most were limited to a specific aspect of higher education or specific district other than the hill areas, which has not been given the attention it deserves. In this regard, studies were conduct by M.

Chamubati Devi (1984), M. Shanti Devi (2001), Jamini Devi (1989) and Jangkholun Mate (2009). However, when studies were conducted in the state of Manipur, the focus is always on the valley areas which comprises of only four districts, where the unplanned concentration of institutions of higher education is thriving. The hill areas where the tribals made their home, which consist of about 90 percent of the total geographical area and 35.1 percent of the total population of the state has always been pushed to the background, despite the vehement preaching and policies on equality, especially educational equality. No doubt, various factors like geographical, communications, political unrest in the hilly region and many others contributed to this end. There has not been a specific and comprehensive study of higher education in hill areas alone so far, which seems dying and remained a challenge to the policy makers and implementing agencies. Furthermore, many ethnographical, historical and sociological studies on different communities among the hill tribes had been studied from the colonial period till now mostly based on cultural, socio-economic practices of the tribals.

ii) The outflow of students of higher education especially that of the collegiate or general higher education to the institutions in the valley or to other states despite the availability of colleges in the local areas and the high cost of education in the valley and outside of the state is a great concern. The intra-state and inter-state mobility of students of higher education which tend to flow and concentrate in one region or town is telling greatly on the available colleges in the hill areas resulting in the decreasing number of student in these colleges. The reasons for which the available colleges didn't attract enough students testify to the fact that something is not quite right with these colleges. Therefore, the present study will enquire into the various aspects of higher education in the hill areas, focusing particularly at the prevailing conditions of the institutions, teachers and students.

iii) The lack of proper and in-depth investigation in the area has weakened the understanding of the people to have faith in the available colleges despite government's effort to mend the holes. Unconfirmed voices of underestimating and despising these learning centres have rendered the colleges to a very low state. Lack of the spirit of ownership of the locals have made the colleges in the hill areas as the educational garbage, where the undetermined and third grades were left out to. The government's apathy toward the development of infrastructures and other necessary requirements has worsened the situation. This also calls for proper and systematic investigation.

iv) Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Regional Campus Manipur (IGNTU-RCM) is a newly established post-graduate institution, situated in the hill areas, has made the study more necessary.

The present study is aimed at filling in the knowledge gap as discussed in the above aforesaid points. The research in these areas especially in higher education, wherein the status of higher education in the tribal areas which are geographically hilly and lack lots of communications and infrastructural development will be of tremendous help to the policy makers, academicians, Non-Governmental Organisations and students interested in the study of higher education and socio-economics, politico-geographic conditions of these regions. Much changes had been witnessed in various regions of the country after the country's independence in 1947. However, these regions still remained in the same pathetic condition for decades even after 1947. Ever since the statehood of Manipur in 1972, development in the valley region had speeded up but the hill areas remained dark for years. Some handful initiative works had been initiated in the pre-statehood era in some better develop regions of the hill areas which usually were the district head-quarters.

Beside the above points, the present study also will look for the solutions or measures to help improve the education to be at par with that of the institutions of world class in order to attract the locals for whom the institutions were mainly established.

1.3. Research Gap and Question

Higher education in the hill areas of Manipur started with the establishment of a degree college by some individuals in the hill district of Churachandpur in the year 1964. After five decades in 2013, the number of colleges have reached 18 (eighteen), out of which there was only one professional college. Tracing the development and growth of higher education in this specific geographical area within the span of fifty years and filling thereby, the knowledge gap in the history of higher education will be the first task of the present study. Few studies conducted on higher education in Manipur had been more or less concentrated on the educationally more fertile region of the state i.e. the valley, with little or no mention of the pathetic condition of higher education in the hill areas. It is hoped that this research work will fill the stated gap and bridged the knowledge gap in this region. It is also expected to throw some light into the dark ignorance of the people and the blind eyes of the government to mend the policies to

encourage and see that higher education grows flourishing in the hill areas as well, to the extreme benefits of the people. Acknowledging the above research gap, the first research question seek to trace the growth and development of higher education over a period of fifty years. The second research question is, "what is the prevailing condition of educational institutions in the hill areas?" The third research question seek to find the various experiences and difficulties pertaining to being a part of the higher education system as students, teachers and administrators of higher educational institutions in the hill areas of Manipur

1.4. Statement of the Problem

The study has been entitled, "Status of higher education in the hill areas of Manipur: A critical study".

1.5. Objectives of the study

The present study is aimed at the following objectives–

1. To study the development of higher education in the hill areas of Manipur.
2. To study the present condition of higher education in hill areas with reference to
   a) Management related aspects
   b) Academic activities
   c) Financial difficulties and
   d) Physical Infrastructures
3. To identify the problems of students and teachers of higher educational institutions in the Hill Areas.
4. To suggest measures for problems of higher education in hill areas.

1.6. Definitions of Operational Terms

The terms utilize in the present study has been briefly explained as under:

1. **Higher education**: Higher education in the present study would refer to the education provided after secondary school or pre-university course through university. Education above the instructional level of the secondary school, usually beginning with grade 13, which is provided by colleges, Universities, graduate schools, community or junior colleges, professional school and other degree granting institutions (Bellingham, 2008, p. 137). Higher education in the present study will deal more specifically on the college

education and university campus with less emphasis on technical and vocational education. The academic aspect of higher education will constitute

2. **Hill Areas**: There are 5 hill districts in Manipur. They are – i) Churachandpur ii) Chandel iii) Senapati iv) Tamenglong and v) Ukhrul district. The hill districts of Manipur are home to a number of tribes, about 34 recognised tribes according to the government gazettes. These tribes are economically and educationally backward. There are places where the light of modern education especially higher education has not reached too. The hills districts covered about 92% of the total geographical area of Manipur.

1.7. Delimitation of the study

The present study has been delimited to the higher education stage covering only university level (undergraduate level onward). It will be focused on the general higher education as professional education or institutions seem to be almost nill in the hill areas. However, it will look into the factors that made the professional education so shrunk in the hill areas.

The study also limits itself to the geographical set up of the region, that is the hill districts of Manipur viz. i) Churachandpur ii) Chandel iii) Senapati iv)Tamenglong and v) Ukhrul district, which in most of the discussions will be inclusively termed as Hill Areas of Manipur.

The present study is basically aimed at finding the status of higher education in hill areas of Manipur. Despite mentioning pieces of historical information, the development of higher education traced in the present study is concentrated between the period of 1963 to 2013, a period of five decades. Data for analysis is based on the information of college and institution for the year 2013.

1.8. Outline of the Chapters in the study

The first chapter is christened as ***Introduction*** describes the concept of higher education, rationale and objectives etc introducing the work. The second chapter is the ***Background of the study area*** where is the locale of the study area and background of the higher education in India are briefly discussed**.** The Third chapter is ***Review of related literatures*** which include Studies related to higher education conducted in other states of India and abroad, North Eastern States of India and the state of Manipur and

Conclusion. The fourth chapter is ***Methodology of the Study*** wherein the Population, Sample and sampling, Tools and Tools constructions, administration of tools, Techniques adopted for Analysis are discussed .The fifth chapter is the ***Development of education,*** wherein the development of higher education in the north east India, Manipur and particularly hill areas of Manipur has been discussed in more detail.. The sixth chapter is the ***Data Analysis and Interpretations***, where data collected through questionnaires, interview schedule and personal observation would be treated with appropriate statistical tools and appropriately interpreted thereof. The seventh chapter discusses the ***Findings, Conclusions and Suggestions*** the result of the study has been discussed in this section where conclusions and suggestions were appropriately drawn.