Chapter-I

INTRODUCTION

1.1.0 GENDER DISCRIMINATION – A SOCIAL STIGMA

Gender discrimination is meant for women as women are the victims of gender discrimination. Although the cognitive difference between male and female does not exist but no research has so far proved it. Instead, the women are doing exceedingly well whenever given the equal opportunity. But, the historical shadow has tremendously affected the women's confidence until the contemporary period when the women scholars and intellectuals have challenged the prevalent view on gender discrimination and issues of gender and science have taken centre stage. The prevalent view had been that men's brain is developed for spatial ability and women's brain is developed for verbal ability. The root cause of such view has been traced back to sociological, cultural and environmental differences. Number of times such view has been refuted as women in many cases excelled men in science and engineering subjects. Due to lack of opportunities, misguided counseling on careers, indifference of teachers, lack of effective teaching and learning styles, and negative self-esteem of girls themselves have deterred girls in participating in hard sciences and scientific professions (Jaireth, 2008).Women and girls have been subject to different forms of abuse and violence in home, educational institutions and organizations. Discrimination against woman starts from her birth and continues throughout her life.

Discrimination against women is well known fact in a male dominated society.The direct and indirect impact of violence and gender discrimination against women and girls often cannot be measured however, the resulting economic burden on the society is enormous. Ginet (1988) has stated that gender is implicated not only in race relations, in social stratification, in legal codes and practice, and in academia, but that it also affects religion, family and workplace, aesthetic and moral values, social and cognitive development, conception of self and so on. Gender based violence including sexual harassment in workplace and in educational institution is a common phenomenon. Gender inequality in education is a worldwide phenomenon. In most African countries factors like, the educational attainment of the head of the

household and standard of living can exert considerable influence on a child's enrolement and completion of even primary education (Lloyd and Blanc, 1996). In India and Philippines it has been observed that children of rich, urban, white – collar parents have a relatively higher level of educational attainment than their counterparts having poor, rural, farmer parents (Tan and Mingat, 1992). In the Indian context a social aspect reflecting gender discrimination is son preference, which blocks the access of daughters to social assets like education. A patriarchal culture provides better incentives for a boy's education as the economic return from it far exceeds those from educating a girl. However, households with educated mothers seem to deviate from this social norm. Extended exposure of the girls to new ideas and social contacts beyond the household could also lead to greater enrolment at both primary and secondary levels (Kar and Kar, 2002). Although efforts have been made to empower women, yet they still belong to the weaker section of the society. Womens' lives have been influenced by the pressure of traditional customs, norms of male domination, burden of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and economic marginalization and other types of human deprivation. Women continue to bear the burden of poverty, illiteracy, economic marginalization, and exclusion from decision making process, lack of access to resourses, social stereotyping, and violence at household and societal levels. There is a persistence and institutionalised discrimination against the women and mechanisms to achieve gender equality and women empowerment still remain inadequate and these need to be streamlined (Jharta, 2006). Gender discrimination exists in varying degrees in almost all the social institutions of a society.

1.1.1 EFFECT OF GENDER DISCRIMINATION ON SOCIAL AND PERSONAL LIFE

Gender discrimination negatively affects in the social inclusion and personal life. Women face discrimination for ages. Now gender discrimination exists in various forms. As a result, most of women fail to understand their own right and freedom. Gender discrimination in educational institutions can reduce girl's enrolment. When one looks at the educational statistics, one can easily observe that enrolment and retention rates of girls are lower than those of boys. The number of girls who have

never attended school is higher than that of boys. The reason for low participation of girls in education at school level, and later, is because of the factors which are well known. These are: (i) community's/society's prejudice against girls' education and preference for boys' education, (ii) absence of a desired demand for girls' education, (iii) parents' need for girls' help in sibling care, domestic chores or by becoming an economic unit of the family, (iv) adherence to traditional female roles, (v) inadequate number of women teachers, and (vi) negative and discouraging attitude of teachers towards girls (Devendra, 1995). A great deal of evidence from around the world indicates that gender inequalities undermine the effectiveness of development policies. It is seen that despite progress, gender desparities persist around the world. For example, in no region do women and men have equal rights. In a number of countries, women still lack independent access to land, manage property, conduct business, or even travel without their husbands' consent. Women remain vastly underrepresented in politics and policymaking. They hold less than 10 percent of the seats in parliament in most regions and less than 8 percent in government ministerial positions (King and Mason, 2001). Gender inequality retards economic growth. There is growing evidence to suggest that several aspects of gender relations, the gender-based division of labour, disparities between males and females in power and resources, and gender biases in rights and entitlements, act to undermine economic growth and reduce the well being of men, women and children. In addition, women have poorer command over productive resources like education, land, information and financial resources, exercise limited decision making power and have insignificant political influence as compared to men (Meenai, 2003). Women are under represented in scientific fields. According to the National Science Foundation (2003), women constitute less than 25% of all physical scientists and 10% of all engineers. Although the roots of occupational segregation are complex, gender discrimination has played a significant role (Farmer, 1997). Historically, for example, University by laws prevented women from entering graduate programmes in many scientific fields well into the 20^{th} century (Weisgram and Bigler, 2007). Astin (1984) sugests that perceived discrimination in the workforce contributes to individuals' perception of the occupational opportunities afforded to them and leads to differential expectations and aspirations among males and females.

1.1.2 STYLE OF GENDER DISCRIMINATION FOUND IN PAST AND THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIETIES

Inequalities caused by gender role stereotypes have become increasingly unacceptable in contemporary society (Spitz and Huber, 1980). The Israeli Declaration of Independence clearly stipulates the principle of equality for all citizens without reference to religion, ethnicity, or gender. Despite that mandate, social, economic and political inequality continues to exist in Israeli society (Shachar, 1996). In politics, the number of female members of the Knesset (the Israeli Parliament) decreased in the 1996 general election from 10% to 7.5%. In the business sector, women constitute a mere 2% of company directors (Slater, 1996). On average, women earn 30% less than men, despite a 1964 law outlawing wage discrimination on the basis of gender (Ephroni, 1990). Children and adolescents are continuously bombarded with deeply embedded expectations about what constitutes suitable gender-specific behavior according to parents, teachers, counselors and peers. In daily routines children are induced to express beliefs, aspirations, and goals consistent with the prevailing gender categorizations, including sex-stereotyped educational preferences that will eventually shape their choice of college major (Marini et al, 1996). William and Best (1990) noted that traditionally masculine stereotype is associated with the traits of dominance, aggression, autonomy and achievement and feminine stereotype is associated with traits of affiliation nurturence and succorence. In patriarchy, male was the law maker, controller, organizer, therefore, more powerful, so, he obviously framed the basic structures and infrastructures of society to suit his own sweet will, in brief, to grind his own axe. Women surrendered because of biological weakness. Mahatama Gandhi has summed up this apathy, "… subjugation and exploitation of women was a product of men's interested teachings and women's acceptance of them" (Mohini, 1998). As a result, they were not only excluded from political, social and economic power but also from the power of knowledge. At the worst level, women were conditioned to defend men and possess anti-women attitude. Socio-cultural and religious traditions train them to obey, to serve, to please, to protect and to sacrifice for the benifit of their menfolk. Women have become increasingly aware of sexual inequities in every sphere of life. Everywhere we find that women are excluded from certain crucial social, political or

economic activities, that their roles as wives and mothers are associated with fewer powers and prerogatives than are the roles of men (Sharma, 2005).

Gender bias is entrenched in the cultural heritage of Indian society. It is a society that idiolizes sons. Sons are considered ritually and economically desirable, essential not only to light the funeral pyres of their parents in order to release their souls from the bondage of their bodies, but also to ensure continuation of the lineage and family name. They also become the economic support of parents in their old age. From the day of her birth, a girl is viewed as more of a burden and a liability and is likely to be given a meager share of the family's affection and resources. This is because investment made for her brings no return; instead when she gets married, a sizeable dowry has to be given to her, draining the family resources. Girls are thus socialized from the very beginning to accept their situation and the ideology of male supremacy which makes them prey to a whole range of discriminatory practices. While gender discrimination exists in providing care to the girl child in the area of health, nutrition, education and distribution of work during early childhood years, this gets further heightened with the advent of puberty. As a young girl is seen to become more vulnerable, numerous restrictions are imposed on her as far as her movements and behaviours are concerned. There is an intense preparation in the socialization process for her to take on the roles as a wife and a mother (Jha, 2002). Girls still comprise two-thirds of the schoolage children in the developing world without access to basic education, and girls are much less likely than boys to enroll in mathematics and computer science courses. Female basic education in Central and Eastern Europe, where there are high levels of female adult literacy and primary and secondary school enrolment, is less of a concern. Here the relevant educational obstacle for women is the lack of affordable higher education and training for IT Jobs. However, throughout Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, basic education and literacy are out of reach for many girls and women. In Malaysia women made up 80 percent of industrial workers in the first phase of industrialization. By 1986, the percentage fell to 67 percent and continues to fall (Dhull, 2005). While there has been some progress since the 1930s in breaking down barriers to women's entry into nontraditional fields, the statistics remain grim. It still takes 2,000 high school girls to produce one female doctorate in science or engineering. In 1989 only 3.1% of all

engineers were women, and 20% of all scientists and engineers were women. The major exceptions to the failure of colleges to cultivate female students' interest in math and science fields are women's colleges (Sebrechts, 1993).

1.1.3 INDIAN SOCIO-CULTURAL SET UP AND GENDER DISCRIMINATION

India is male dominated society and women in India face discrimination in terms of several political, social and economic opportunities due to their inferior status. Patriarchy can be defined as the 'rule of the father', but in social terms, refers to the system of male dominance i.e., where children's name is traced through the father; where the ownership, control and inheritance of all assets are in the hands of men. Therefore, Patriarchy establishes discrimination against women in various aspects. Due to patriarchal ideology and socio cultural practice, parents give priority on son in every aspect in a gender discriminated society. In developing countries like Bangladesh women or girls are everyday targets of discrimination within their household due to cultural practice; girls have to learn domestic skill and begin to take on domestic duties. In rural areas it is believed that son should be educated because unlike a daughter who after her marriage serves another family, a son will need to support his parents. Similarly, in Malaysia, Malay women face discrimination based on their socio-cultural belief or custom (Sultana and Zulkefli, 2012). Gender inequality in education is extreme in our country. Girls have less access to school or to achieve in education. Education helps men and women to claim their rights and realize their potential in economic, political and social arenas. It is also the single most powerful way to lift people out of poverty. Education plays a particularly important role as a foundation for girls' development towards adult life. It should be an intrinsic part of any strategy to address the gender- based discrimination against women and girls that remains prevalent in many societies (Sushma, 2010).

Gender discrimination is well documented in Indian society. Patriarchy is the definition of society on the basis of family units, where the father takes responsibility for the welfare of the family. In India women have been oppressed for centuries and depicted differently in history, literature, religions, art, education, and culture (Hasan, 2010). In most of the Indian family, a woman's status is influenced by the

family structure. In a lower socio-economic group, girls are entrusted with the duty of looking after the younger siblings, cooking, cleaning the house, fetching water, and collecting firewood. Boys are allowed to play freely in the neighborhood while girls are permitted to play in the vicinity. In employment and work participation women are less than men. Of the total female work participation, 90 percent women are in unorganized sector. Out of this, 80 percent are in agriculture area. Rest 20 percent are in the field of construction, factories and household labor. In our society a number of women work in informal sector for long hours, at low wages and without any legal protection against exploitation. They work harder for long hours, and contribute to the economy (Singh, 2010).

Gender discrimination remains pervasive, by manifesting itself throughout the life cycle in the guise of foeticide, female infanticide, son preference, girl child marriage, dowry, domestic violence, sexual harassment and host of custom - specific devaluing women and girls. More than 1 billion people (majority women) in the developing world today live in unacceptable conditions of poverty. The gender disparities in economic power sharing are also an important contributing factor to the poverty of women (Alam, 2011). Girls education is emerging as one of the top priorities of Indian society. Much progress has been made in recent decades in this regards. The number of girls attending school is increasing but in some parts of India a large number of girls still receives little or no education. Even today there are many girls who don't even have access to primary education. There are many cultural and economical reasons for girls' illiteracy like verbal and physical abuse, lack of sanitation, long distances between home and school, hazardous experience that deter parents from sending their daughters to school. In addition women education in India is multidimensional phenomenon. No single factor or cause can be held responsible for very low literacy rate of women in India. Subsequently, it is associated with combination of many factors including social, cultural, economic, educational, demographic, political and administrative (Bharadwaj and Rani, 2011). Akhilesh and Singh (2010) remark that the major obstacles in the way of girls' education are: (a) religious factors: some religions do not treat women equal to men. They are always dependent on men – either on father, husband, or son. So, a very little importance has been given to education of women, (b) geographical factors:

women being a weaker sex, girls are not being sent to attend schools situated at a long distance. Boys are allowed to go to schools but girls are not, for the safety purpose, and (c) biological factors: girls are physically weak by nature in comparison to boys. This distinction is biological. The schools in India are not girl friendly, so parents prefer to withdraw their daughter from school at adolescent age. Complaints of sexual harassment are not properly addressed. Approximately one quarter of India's population comprises girls up to the age of 19 years. Within the backdrop of the declining sex ratio for women, it is noteworthy that every year about 15 million girls are born in India and despite being physically stronger than boys, almost one quarter of this number does not see their 15^{th} birthday. In this connection, problems of female feticide and female infanticide are causing concern to government and other development activists (Jha, 2002).

1.2.0 GENDER MAINSTREAMING--A PRIORITY AREA FOR DISCUSSION AND PLANNING

Gender mainstreaming refers to strategies and processes to integrate gender-responsive goals in the directions, policies, budgets, and projects. It is concerned with ensuring that women and men have equitable access to society or organization's resources, including socially valued goods, opportunities and rewards (Reyes, 2011). The University Grants Commission appointed a standing committee to introduce women's studies within the universities. In 1986 Parliament adopted a National Policy on Education (May 1986), which included a section on 'Education for Women's Equality', giving a new mandate to the country's educational system and recognizing women's studies as an instrument for the empowerment of women. The UGC guidelines for the development of women's studies within universities accepted the three prolonged thrust of teaching, research and extension for women's studies centres (Sharma, 2002). International concern with the elimination of discrimination against women is not a new phenomenon, but despite the existence of numerous declarations and conventions, such discrimination is endemic. Violations of women's right have not received the required attention in the human rights movement. Human rights law tended to exclude much of women's experiences. International human rights standards are perceived to be gender neutral; however, this neutrality often

amounted in practice to a disregard of women's right. The principle of non-discrimination on the basis of sex and assurance of equal protection has been emphasized in both national and international law. The United Nations Charter contains the equal protection norm. The Charter's preamble states the determination of the people of the United Nation to refaffirm faith in the equal rights of men and women. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) also underline the principle of non discrimination and equal protection. Feminist have often argued that though Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is well meaning effort to recognize and protect women's rights, it has perpetuated the tendency to treat women's concerns as separate from general human rights concerns. It is often charged that women's issues have been 'ghettoized' within the UN system. The greatest challenge before the CEDAW committee lies in not creating a'parallel universe' for women, but in bringing gender issues in the mainstream of the human rights agenda (Saksena, 2007). Political and institutional support for gender mainstreaming is unprecedented for any equality policy. The Platform for Action commonly identified as the international agreement launching gender mainstreaming, was produced at the Fourth World Conference on Women, in Beijing, in 1995. It has since been adopted by the European Commission, and by all members' states of European Union (Verloo, 2001).

The goal of gender equality and women empowerment is difficult to achieve without mainstreaming gender issues in the existing plans, policies and practices of an institution. In the case of higher education institutions, gendered academic environment avails the opportunity for both women and men to obtain decent employment and to participate fully in decision-making in the political, economic and social arenas (Yehualashet, 2010). Sweden's low representation of women in traditionally male dominated fields is surprising within its social context. Beginning in 1968, the Swedish government undertook a series of reforms that were aimed at increasing equality in access to education by class and gender, to encourage gender atypical educational and occupational choices, and to link education and occupational outcomes more closely (Erikson and Jonsson, 1996). In various

international conventions on human rights, in general, and women's status, in particular, nation-states are directed to widen access to public institutions to maximize the life chances of all citizens. Hence, they should remove discriminatory barriers to individual choice and institute compensatory reforms when such obstacles have been identified (Bradley, 2000). In parallel with the EFA movement (Education for All), the global women's movement was working for gender equality demands in a rather different manner. A huge worldwide mobilization of women inside and outside government has taken place from mid1960s to advocate for women's rights and gender equality in policy and practice, drawing particular strength from global connections between organizations and regional alliances (Ashworth, 2000; Antrobus, 2004). The Gender in Education Network in Asia (GENIA) co-ordinated by UNESCO, brought together education officials in Asia who had a special gender brief- termed gender focal points – to share experiences. This group held training sessions, produced guides on gender and planning, briefing papers, undertook research, and acted as a mobilizing group within Ministries (Jensen and Rajagopalan, 2004).

1.2.1 ACHIEVEMENT OF SOCIAL COHESION AND SOCIAL WELL BEING THROUGH MAINTENANCE OF GENDER PARITY–AN ANALYSIS

Gender equality strengthens countries' abilities to grow, to reduce poverty and to govern effectively. Promoting gender equality is thus an important part of a development strategy that seeks to enable all people – women and men alike – to eliminate poverty and improve their standard of living (World Bank, 2001). Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision making process and access to power are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace; women's rights are human rights (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, 1995). If discriminatory norms, structures and practices are not challenged, then the marginalization and vulnerability of women may increase (Morrisson and Jutting, 2004; and Jones et al., 2010). The abolition of school fees and heavy investments in education to improve infrastructure and ensure more and better-

trained teachers has had a clear impact on increasing enrolment rates in the developing countries of the world. Overall, the gender gap in primary education has shrunk, and primary enrolments are now 48% for girls and 52% for boys (UNESCO, 2005). However, despite this progress, gender parity has not still been achieved in the developing world as a whole. For example for every 100 boys out of school: in Yemen there are 270 girls; in Iraq 316 girls; in India 416 girls; and in Benin 257 girls (UNESCO, 2007). For the past 20 years, the North American educational systems have attempted to equalize opportunity for female students because of real or perceived inequities in educational and labour market prospects (Sadker and Sadker, 1994). Konrad et al. (2000) stated that modern women value job attributes such as freedom, challenge, leadership, prestige and power in the same way as men do. Career aspirations of female university students have become more similar to those of male students (Astin et al., 1997). No country, developed or developing, has been untouched by the demand for gender equality and the pressure for equal representation of women in all spheres of social activity - political, cultural, economical and educational. While the number of women participating in public life has increased, their participation is often relegated to areas deemed suitable for women and at lower levels of the occupational ladder. These gender inequalities arise from discriminatory socio-cultural values, norms, and attitudes and educational opportunities (Indiresan, 2002).

1.2.2 CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT FOR REMOVING GENDER DISCRIMINATION

The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties, and Directive Principles. The Constitution not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the state to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favor of women. The “Fundamental Rights” chapter in the Indian Constitution guarantees various rights. The rights of special importance to women are the Rights to Equality in Article 14 and Prohibition against Discrimination in Article 15. Article 15(1) prohibits discrimination against any citizen of the state “on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them” (Sharma, 2005). The Preamble to the constitution speaks of securing to all

citizens of India equality of status and of opportunity as well as justice- social, economic and political. One of the Directive Principles of State Policy prescribes that the state should direct its policy towards securing equal pay for both men and women. Although the Directive Principles are Fundamental in the governance of the country and are to be applied in enacting legislation, they are not judicially enforceable. In this context, one of the provisions of the Constitution has special significance. After having laid down that the state shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds of sex, among other things, it provides that nothing in this article shall prevent the state from making any special provision for women and children, so, there is a Constitutional provision in India permitting the state to discriminate in favour of women, if such discrimination is found necessary (Jha and Pujari, 1996). In the matter of equality, Article 14 confers on men and women equal rights and opportunities in the political, economic and social spheres. Article 15 prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex etc. Article 15(3) makes a special provision enabling the state to make affirmative discriminations in favor of women. Similarly, Article 16 provides for equality of opportunities in matter of public appointments for all citizens. Article 39(a) lays down that the State shall direct its policy towards securing all citizens, men and women, equally, the rights to means of livelihood, while Article 39 (c) ensures equal pay for equal work. Above all, the Constitution imposes a fundamental duty on every citizen through Article 51 A (e) to renounce the practices derogatory to the dignity of women. The question, however, is: Have the women been able to reap the benefits provided for them under the Constitution of India? The answer unfortunately is not encouraging. There is a long way to go to achieve the goals enshrined in the Constitution. In tune with various provisions of the Constitution, the State has enacted much women- specific and women- related legislation to protect women against social discrimination, violence and atrocities and also to prevent social evils like child marriages, dowry, rape, practice of sati etc. (Hasan, 2010).

In the field of education the government sought to translate the Constitution commitment of compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years. In 1990, a World Declaration on Education for All was adopted at the World Education Conference in Jomtien, Thailand. This was an international

commitment to provide access to good quality education for all citizens, as well as to address the diverse learning needs of children, youth, and adults. This vision of a basic education for all could be realized both through formal and non-formal education programmes. In Dakar in 2000, the World Education Forum re-affirmed this vision, and adopted a Framework for Action that emphasized the need for quality in basic education as well as access to it (Leach, 2003). The Forward Looking Strategies for the advancement of women (FLS) was heralded as the most significant document to emerge from the Third International Conference on women held at Nairobi in 1990. It was intended to provide a springboard for action to advance the status of women in national and international levels (Joshi and Pushpanadham, 2001). Gender equity in education is increasingly viewed as an indicator of development and political and economic maturity (World Bank, 2005). International events have encoded gender equity in policy priorities.

1.2.3 GENDER MAINSTREAMING PLANS, POLICIES AND MEASURES – THE MYTHS AND REALITIES

Gender mainstreaming is a technical process that requires the application of gender planning tools and methodologies. It entails gender analysis to identify the differential impacts of policies and programmes on men and women and the collection of sex- disaggregated data (gender statistics) to know, discover and determine the extent of differential impacts on men and women (Reyes, 2011). At the international level, prohibition against sex discrimination was first articulated in the United Nations Charter of 1945 and later reiterated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. Since then, virtually all human rights instruments have reinforced and extended protection against discrimination. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights adopted in 1966 guarantees equal protection of the law to both sexes (Hasan, 2010). 'Most of the world's governments are committed, on paper, to equality for women' (Seager,1997). Since the first UN women's conference in Mexico (1975), women have continued to build international networks and coalitions to lobby for their gender interests. This has resulted in the formulation and adoption of numerous conventions, of which the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women is the most widely known.

It aims to shape national policies in all countries towards guaranteeing women's equal rights with men in areas such as education, employment and marriage (Wach, and Reeves, 2000). Women activists regard the Convention as a powerful tool to continue their struggle against discrimination, even where reservations are made or where states have refused to ratify it. Women's pressure groups can push governments towards attaining these internationally recognized minimum standards (Seager, 1997).

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy that makes women's and men's experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes (Tiessen, 2007). In India the concerted efforts of women's group and NGOs resulted in a landmark judgement by the Supreme Court of India in August 1997, directing all institutions (including universities, technical education and management institutions, vocational training centers and distance education departments) to constitute an independent complaints committee on sexual harassment. By pinning the responsibility of ensuring a non-hostile working environment on employers, the court made it difficult for them to legally evade their responsibility. The judgement provides for making the complaints committee completely autonomous and ensuring that the committee involves every segment of the campus – faculty, students and administrative and maintenance staff. Since the landmark judgement, higher education institutions have constituted committees. However, there is no research-based evidence of the impact of the judgement on women's safety (Vimala 2010). The international community has largely felt the need for universal primary schooling as an essential aspect of basic human development (UN, 1994; UNICEF, 1990; USAID, 1995). The Programme of Action chalked out at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994 has underlined two major aspects of children's schooling. The first is universal primary education for both boys and girls, while the second is education for girls beyond the primary level. Principle 10 of the programme states, 'Everyone has the right to education, which shall be directed to the full development of human resources and human dignity and potential, with particular attention to woman and the girl child.' Highlighting the elimination of gender inequality in schooling along with higher educational attainment for the girl child, the Programme

mentions: ‘Beyond the achievement of the goal of universal primary education in all countries before the year 2015, all countries are urged to ensure the widest and earliest possible access by girls and women to secondary and higher levels of education’. That the main emphasis with respect to education beyond the primary level is to promote girls’ schooling is evident in the summary of goals of the ICPD presented in the States of theWorld Population Report 1995 (UNFPA,1995).

1.3.0 GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATIONAL DYNAMICS - A BRIEF SKETCH

In 2005 United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) estimated that there were 100 million children out of school, 55 percent of whom were girls. Worldwide approximately 771 million adults were illiterate as a result of never accessing or completing school. Education is still denied in the poorest countries and for the poorest sections of the population (Unterhalter, 2007). Shamai (1994) stated that in Israel, the prevailing gender stereotypes in society reinforce the fact that female students choose predominantly humanities and domestic sciences whereas male students choose science and technology. Martin et al. (2002) found that women are more sensitive to and understand gender bias better than men; women, for instance, often recognize and acknowledge sexual harassment, which exists in most organizations, before men do. Ahmansson and Ohlun (2000) stated that despite equity legislation, discrimination against women is, in some cases to be found in governmental educational politics.

Gender inequality in education is a world wide phenomenon. The magnitude of variation across countries is presented in the UNDP’s (United Nations Development Programme) Human Development Report (1995). It is revealed that in the developing regions as a whole, combined primary and secondary enrolment for girls increased from 38 percent of the total in 1970 to 68 percent in 1992. Still, cross country variations are yet to be eliminated (Kar and Kar, 2002).Women in male dominated occupations are more likely to experience gender discrimination than those in traditionally female jobs (Mansfield et al., 1991). The negative psychological and work outcomes that are associated with gender discrimination toward women are similar to sexual harassment outcomes. For example, experiences

of gender discrimination have been related to lower job satisfaction for women managers as well as decreased professional self-confidence and career satisfaction and an increased sense of isolation for women in academic medicine (Murrell et al., 1995). Both sexual harassment and gender discrimination, even in their mildest forms, may act as daily hassles or microstressors; these are small, relatively subtle experiences that over time may accumulate to have a substantial impact on the target (Harrell, 2000). Further, sexual harassment is recognized as an act of aggression against women (Koss et al., 1994; O' Leary- Kelly, Paetzold, and Griffin, 2000). Golombok and Fivush (1994) argued that boys gain more praise than girls for their knowledge and are more often reprimanded for disobedience, while girls receive more reinforcements for obedience and are more often reprimanded for lack of knowledge. It appears that teachers and their male pupils frequently interact over behavioral problems. Girls very rarely choose physics as a major subject in school, and at the university level female students are underrepresented in computer science, physical science and engineering (OECD, 2006). This unbalanced gender ratio has been related to girls' negative self concept of ability in mathematics and the sciences, since the subject specific self concept of ability has been repeatedly found to predict course selection in school (Dickhauser, Reuter and, Hilling, 2005; Eccles and Wigfield, 2002; Marsh andYeung, 1997).

1.3.1 GENDER DISCRIMINATION – AN ACCUTE AND COMMENLY FOUND ISSUE IN THE FIELD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Currie and Thiele (2001) stated that universities are patriarchal institutions where sexual discrimination is often deployed to keep women out of the senior positions. University cultures around the world tend to value and reproduce concepts of career, academic achievement and institutional and intellectual work based on male life trajectories (Itzin and Newman, 1995) and the pathways to success tend to be built on dominant male traits and characteristics (Izraeli and Alder, 1994). Castleman et al., (1994) concluded that the major factor accounting for the paucity of women in senior positions is management's own masculine styles and practices. They discounted factors such as domestic and family responsibilities, merit or women's disinclination to advance their careers.The under representation of women in senior positions is

consistent across Australian Universities (DEET, 1993). In 1989 men made up 85% of staff above senior lecturer level, 74% at senior lecturer level and 58% at lecturer level (DETYA, 1998). Women are under-represented in positions of prestige and power in all the higher education systems (Lie and Malik, 1994; Brooks, 1997). UNESCO (2012) report notes that women have reached parity with men in earning Bachelor's degrees. In Master's degrees they have an edge over men, accounting 56%. However, a different story is found at the highest levels of education (PhD), where they only account for 44%. Accounting to data presented at a recent British Council Workshop, Absent Talent: Women in Academic and Research Leadership in East Asia, just 7% of Turkey's Vice Chancellors are women. The situation is worse in Japan, where only two of its 86 public universities (2.3 percent) are headed by women. This gap is less wide in Australia, where 18 % of higher education institutions are led by women (Grove, 2013). Brown and Ralp (1996) indicated that women were making little progress in achieving equity with men in attaining leadership positions in educational administration and policy making. Universities remain incredibly hierarchical gendered institutions. This applies both between universities and within universities. The higher the status of the university, the more male academics are likely to work there. The primary academic labour market among the full time academic staff is also profoundly gendered (Hearn, 1999).

Women are still vastly under represented in universities. Although women have been pursuing university education in unprecedented numbers, they continue to be underrepresented in mathematics, engineering and computer science programmes. Probert et al. (1998) emphasized that women academics typically begin and / or finish their doctoral qualifications later, are more likely to work part time for a period or throughout their careers, and tend to have more career interruptions than male academics, linked to women's responsibilities for dependent children. Women academics' lower classification levels and their lower remuneration compared to their male colleagues was due to two specific factors; less years overall in university employment and being less likely to have a PhD. A lower proportion of women (36 per cent) holds PhDs than men (56 per cent) and women had had 8.9 years of employment in a university compared with men's 13.8 years. The promotional criteria in higher education thus embodies indirect sexual discrimination, in that the

disadvantage to women academics' position relative to their male colleagues arising early in their career, often due to them bearing and caring for children, but compounds and accumulates over time and throughout their careers. Women academics are less likely to have the advantage of mentoring by an eminent senior scholar and are less likely to have strong international networks which will enhance academic careers. Female students face traditional access issues such as perceived stereotypes and lack of positive role models in all areas of their graduate careers. These included application procedures, assessment and lack of flexible entry and exit points to higher education that family commitments can require (Rees, 1990). Gender based violence including sexual harassment in educational institutions is common phenomenon. Increased publicity on harassment in the workplace affects women in many ways. In some countries it may inhibit women's participation in higher education institutions and workplace. The nature and availability of residential facilities is an important issue at the tertiary education level. For example, in South Asia caste and religion issues acquire importance - especially if girls from socially disadvantaged communities find it difficult to integrate. Women students from dalit and tribal communities could face discrimination and this in turn exerts a strong influence on retention and completion (Vimala, 2010).

1.3.2 TYPES OF GENDER DISCRIMINATION FOUND IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Sexual harassment is more likely to occure in male dominated subjects, such as the sciences (Grauerholz, 1996; Hesson-Mclunis and Fitzgerald, 1997; Hulin et al., 1996; Mansfield et al., 1991; Murrell, Olson and Frieze, 1995). Because science is a male dominated field, and in this field rates of sexual harassment in academia are generally high, women faculty members in the sciences may be at particular risk for sexual harassment. In addition, academia has a heirarchial structure in which those with the most power tend to be men, whereas most of the women are untenured and thus relatively they are less powerful (Grauerholz, 1996). University and college administrators should institute mechanisms that provide periodic checks on women faculty's satisfaction both with their department leaders and their experience as faculty members (Settles, Cortina, Malley and Stewart, 2006). The cencus report

(2001) as given by Azad Education foundation reveals that at the beginning of new millennium literacy rate in India stands at 65.38% with male literacy level at 75.85% and female literacy level at 54.16%. There has been only marginal increase in literacy level from the last cencus in 1991 (literacy level was 52.2 %). The pace of progress in literacy rates, as revealed by decennial censuses, is very slow in India. Between 1961 and 1991, a span of thirty years, literacy rate has gone up by a mere 23.9 percentage points, from 28.3% in 1961 to 52.2% in 1991. From 1991 to 2001 there is 13.36% increased. However the literacy scenario in India is characterized by wide inequalities among different sections of the population. The female literacy rate is still low in comparison to male population. Country's half of the female population is still illiterate even after so many years of independence (Sushma, 2010). As Mariamma Verghese, the senior consultant opines: "statatistics clearly point to the need to develop "aggressive affirmative action policies" to increase women at all levels- teachers and administrators. The annual reports prepared by UGC have always pointed the enrolment of women in higher education as abysmally low compared to men. Their enrolment distribution in the various faculties shows that a little over half 51.10%, are enrolled in the faculty of Arts, 19% in the faculty of Sciences, and 16.70% in the faculty of Commerce. Among professional subjects, they are shockingly lower: Medicine 3.90%, Engineering 3.60%, Education 2.40% and Law 1.80%. Regarding women in academia and management, there are 15% less in the topmost positions of Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice Chancellor and very few Registrars and Finance Officers in the universities. Women are 18% or less in professors, the percentage of readers/ lecturers is slightly more and 30 % college principals but most of them are in women's colleges" (Byrappa, 2011).

1.3.3 DIFFERENT SPHERES OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND GENDER DISCRIMINATION

Higher education institutions are viewed as promoting the social good, not only for individuals who attend, but also for society at large. The UGC's programme for promoting women's studies envisages assistance to universities for setting up centers and cells for women's studies. The centres/ cells are required to undertake research, to develop curricula and to organize training and extension work in the areas of

gender equity, economic self-reliance of women and girl's education, population issues, issues of human rights and social exploitation. These activities are expected to contribute not only to social awareness and change but also to academic development. However, the Women's Study Centers are not expected to be like other conventional departments of a university, they are not required to run courses that lead to an undergraduate or a postgraduate degree. The following activities were reported by the Women's Study Centers under Teaching Research and Extension:

(i) Teaching: curriculum development and upgradation material for training manual for women; leaflets on women's issue,

(ii) Research: research projects on women's issues and

(iii) Extension: Newsletter, Couselling and Aid Center, Family Counselling Center, Literacy Mission, Community Development Surveys, and Assistance to audio-visual unit to prepare video on problems concerning women (Agrawal, Yasin and Sherwani, 2001).

Gender discrimination has been a major obstacle in granting equal opportunity for women in higher education. It has been identified as a crucial category and deserves attention in the education equality paradigm. Today, women's education has become an issue of debate within which it is now necessary to shift the focus from women's intellectual development to women's autonomy in decision making, freedom of expression and control of over resources. Empowerment is the manifestation of a redistribution of power that challenges patriarchal ideology, transforming the institutions that reinforce or perpetuate gender discrimination. In 1948-49 the University Education Commission commented that colleges should be established that would serve both men and women simultaneously for higher education but, nonetheless, gender inequalities in access to higher education have continued through decades. The target of higher education is to provide women's access to vocational, technical, and professional education and emergent technologies (Banerjee, 2010). High levels of disparity across social groups and classess go hand in hand with new forms of gender discrimination precisely at a time when more and younger women are accessing higher education (John, 2012). Women's enrollment rates in science are lower than those of men globally (Dhull, 2005). Sexual harassment remains a problem across all employment sectors. A series of problem faced by many women

in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields is a hostile research environment (MIT, 1999; NAS, 2007).

1.4.0 NORTH EAST INDIA- A SOCIO GEOGRAPHIC PROFILE

North East India is the eastern most region of India connected to East India via narrow corridor squeezed between Nepal and Bangladesh. The region stretches from the foothills of the Himalayas in the eastern range and is surrounded by Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Nepal and Myanmar. It includes the seven sisters- Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura, along with a small and beautiful cousin in the Himalayan fringes, namely Sikkim. The region has a long international boundary, about 96 percent, with China and Bhutan in the North, Myanmar in the east, Nepal in the west and Bangladesh in the south and west. According to 2001, Cencus, the eight states cover an area of 2,62,179 Sq. Km. consisting 7.9 percent of the country's total geographical area, and the region has only 39 million people or about 3.8 percent of the total population of the country . Over 68 percent of the population of the region lives in the state of Assam alone. Richly endowed with natural resources, the region is identified as one of the world's biodiversity hotspot; it hosts species- rich tropical rain forests and supports diverse flora and fauna and several crop species. The forest cover in the region constitutes 52 percent of its total geographical area. The region is covered by the mighty Brahmaputra- Barak river systems and their tributaries. The region's high rainfall averaging around 10,000 mm and above creates problems of eco system, high seismic activity and floods. The geographical locations/features of each state of North Eastern India are given here:

Assam: Assam is a state of India in the north- eastern region. Located south of the eastern Himalayas, Assam comprises the Brahamaputra and the Barak river valleys along with the Karbi Anglong and the North Cachar Hills with an area of 30,285 square miles (78,438 km^2). Assam is surrounded by six of the other Seven Sister States: Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, and Meghalaya. Geographically Assam and these states are connected to the rest of India via a strip of land in West Bengal called the Siliguri Corridor or "Chicken's Neck". Assam shares international border with Bhutan and Bangladesh; and culture, people and climate

with South-East Asia – elements in India's Look East policy. A significant geographical aspect of Assam is that it contains three of six physiographic divisions of India - The Northern Himalayas (Eastern Hills), The Northern Plains (Brahmaputra plain) and Deccan Plateau (KarbiAnglong). In 2011, literacy rate in the state was 73.18%. Male literacy rate was 78.81% and female literacy rate was 67.27%. Assamese and Bodo are the major indigenous and official languages. Bengali is the second most widely spoken language of the state (27.5%). Assam produces more than half of India's tea. The economy is based on Agriculture. There are diversified important traditional festivals in Assam. Bihu is the most important and common and celebrated all over the state. It is the Assamese New Year celebrated in April of the Gregorian calendar. Durga Puja is another festival celebrated with great enthusiasm.

Arunachal Pradesh: Arunachal Pradesh is a state of India, located in the far northeast. It borders the states of Assam and Nagaland to the south, and shares international borders with Burma in the east, Bhutan in the west, and the People's Republic of China in the north. Most of the people living in Arunachal Pradesh are of Tibeto-Burman origin. Much of Arunachal Pradesh is covered by the Himalayas. The Himalayan ranges that extend up to the eastern Arunachal separate it from Tibet. Different tribal groups have their own set of beliefs and notions about their religion. As the people of Arunachal Pradesh are segregated into three cultural groups, each group practices its own religion. The people of the first group are usually Buddhists, while people of the second group practice Donyi Poloism (worship the Sun God and the Moon God). Christianity and Hinduism are generally observed by people of the third group.

Manipur: Manipur is one of the seven states of North east India. The state is bounded by Nagaland in the north, Mizoram in the south, Assam in the west, and the borders of the country Burma in the east as well as in the south. The state covers an area of 22,327 square kilometres. Its people include the, Meeteis, Nagas, Kuki, and Pangal, who speak different types of Sino – Tibetan languages. Physiographically, Manipur may be characterised as two distinct physical regions – an outlying area of rugged hills and narrow valleys, and the inner area of flat plain, with all associated land

forms. These two areas are not only distinct in respect of physical features but are also conspicuous with regard to various flora and fauna. The climate of Manipur is largely influenced by the topography of this hilly region which defines the geography of Manipur. Lying 790 meters above sea level, Manipur is wedged between hills on all sides. Meeteilon, a Tibeto- Burman language, is the official language of Manipur. Manipur has the highest number of handicrafts units as well as the highest number of craftspersons, in the entire northeastern region of India. The state is covered with over 3,000 square km of bamboo forests, making it one of India's largest contributors to its bamboo industry.

Mizoram: Mizoram is bounded in the north by the state of Assam and the state of Manipur, in the east and south by China Hills and Arakan (Myanmar), and in the west by the Chitagong hill tracts and Bangladesh and the state of Tripura. Mizoram borders three states of India- Assam, Manipur and Tripura. Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy of the state. The jhum (shifting) cultivation of the state produces a number of varieties of agricultural products ranging from paddy to pineapples, Mizo art and crafts items are worth treasuring. Mizos celebrate a number of festivals like the Mim Kut, Chapchar Kut, and Pawl Kut in the state. The economy of Mizoram is totally agriculture based. Mizoram is famous for its fibreless ginger. Crops which have Agriculture occupies a very important place in the economy of Mizoram.

Meghalaya: Meghalaya is located in between Bangladesh in the south and the Brahmaputra valley in the north, in the north-eastern portion of India. It shares the boundary with Bangladesh in the south and Assam in the north. The Meghalaya subtropical forests ecoregion encompasses the state; its mountain forests are distinct from the lowland tropical forests to the north and south. The forests are notable for their biodiversity of mammals, birds, and plants. Meghalaya has predominantly an agrarian economy with a significant commercial forestry industry. The state is geologically rich in minerals, but it has no significant industries. The state of Meghalaya is mountainous, with stretches of valley and highland plateaus. The Meghalayan forests are considered to be among the richest botanical habitats of Asia. These forests receive abundant rainfall and support a vast variety of floral and faunal

biodiversity. Tribal people make up the majority of Meghalaya's population. The Khasis are the largest group, followed by the Garos then the Jaintias. Meghalaya is one of three states in India to have a Christian majority. About 70% of the population practices Christianity. English is the official and widely spoken language of the state. The other principal languages in Meghalaya are Khasi and Garo.

Nagaland: Nagaland is a state in North east India. It borders the state of Assam to the west, Arunachal Pradesh and part of Assam to the north, Burma to the east and Manipur to the south. Agriculture is the most important economic activity and the principal crops include rice, corn, millets, pulses, tobacco, oilseeds, sugarcane, potatoes, and fibers. English is the official language of Nagaland and it is the medium for education in Nagaland. Other than English, Nagamese, a creole language form of Indo-Aryan Assamese, is a widely spoken language. Christianity is the predominant religion of Nagaland.

Sikkim: The state is bordered by Nepal to the west, China's Tibet Autonomous Region to the north and east, and Bhutan to the east. The Indian state of West Bengal lies to the south. Sikkim is a popular tourist destination, owing to its culture, scenery and biodiversity. The predominant religions are Hinduism and Vajrayana Budhism. Sikkim's economy is largely dependent on agriculture and tourism. Due to a centuries-long population influx from Nepal, the majority of Sikkim's residents are of Nepali ethnic origin. Sikkim's Nepalese majority celebrate all major Hindu festivals, including Diwali and Dussera.

Tripura: Tripura is bordered by the country of Bangladesh to the west, north, and south, and the Indian states of Assam to the north east and Mizoram to the east. The physiography is characterised by hill ranges, valleys and plains. Tripura is an agrarian state with more than half of the population dependent on agriculture and allied activities. However, due to hilly terrain and forest cover, only 27 per cent of the land is available for cultivation. Rice, the major crop of the state, is cultivated in 91 per cent of the cropped area. Majority of the tribes in Tripura - the Tripuris, Reangs, Jamatia, Noatias and Halams - are Hindus and practice all the Hindu religious rites. Bengali is the most important and dominant language of the state.

1.4.1 PROFILE OF EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF NORTH EAST INDIA

Today, there is a highly motivated drive towards making our world a knowledge society, as postulated by most of the leading academicians world wide, in which people would ideally have access to information and knowledge; for which general and higher education to all would be an indispensable tool (Naskar, 2009). Like many states of mainland India, the North East State (NES) have also succeeded in increasing the literacy rate of manifold and some NES even performed better than the national average (De, 2004). Among the states of North East Region (NER), Mizoram has the highest literacy rate (91.58) and Arunachal Pradesh has the lowest (66.95) literacy rate. The literacy rate of Assam is 73.18 according to 2011 Census and it is below the national average. In the entire North East Region male literacy rate is higher than their female counterparts. Among the NES, Mizoram has the highest female literacy (89.40) rate followed by Tripura (83.15). On the other hand Arunachal Pradesh (59.57) and Assam (67.27) are place at bottom. In Assam, the difference of literacy between male and female is lower compared to the difference at the national level. The difference of literacy between male and female in Assam is 11.54 percentage points on the other hand in India, it is 16.68 percentage points. The literacy rate in Assam is lower than the national average but Assam is doing better in terms of gender equality in educational opportunities. In terms of learning achievement of the students, NES are also having similar kind of problems faced by India as well as the world such as poor performance by the students in learning achievement tests, gender difference, rural urban difference etc. However, some NES have reached a satisfactory position compared to other states of India. Both central and state govt. have to give some relaxation in opening a new school in NES compared to other states of India (Ahmed, 2013). The educational profile of each state of North Eastern India is given here:

Assam: The education system in Assam is categorized into school education and college or university education. The Government of Assam handles the major part of the education however, there are schools and colleges that are run by private concerns and famous educationists in the state. The institutions under the state government follow a state centric syllabus. The private educational concerns have their own syllabus, administration and fee structure. Assamese is the medium of instruction in the state run schools, whereas English is preferred as the medium of

instruction in the private schools and the colleges and universities. State run public, self financed private as well as government aided schools offer quality education to children in the cities and towns of Assam. Most of the schools follow the state's education and examination board. Many of the private schools follow the CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education) and ICSE/ISC (Indian Council of Secondary Education for Class X/Indian School Certificate for Class XII) syllabus. The infrastructure of the schools is well developed with playgrounds, libraries and spacious classrooms. For the 3-year graduation courses the candidates need to have passed the higher secondary examination as it is prevalent in other states.

Arunachal Pradesh: School Education in Arunachal Pradesh follows uniform structure of 10+2 system. The primary stage of schooling consists of standard I to V, the middle stage from standard VI to VIII and the secondary stage comprises standard IX to X. Classes XI-XII falls under the higher secondary education stage. In order to universalize elementary education in Arunachal Pradesh, state government offers free education to students up to the age of 14. The medium of instruction in schools and colleges in the state is mostly English. Schools are either affiliated to the Indian Council of Secondary Education board (ICSE) or Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). Arunachal Pradesh has a few renowned institutes that offer higher education in the state. Among them North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and Technology (NERIST) plays a very significant role in raising the technical and management education in the state. Another premier educational institution in the state of Arunachal Pradesh is Rajiv Gandhi University.

Manipur: The new education system adopted by the state government has indeed changed the face of secondary and higher secondary education in Manipur. The educational needs of the people of the state of Manipur are catered to by the colleges and institutes in Manipur. There are several colleges and institution in Manipur that specialize in providing the students with technical knowledge in the streams of arts, commerce and science. The present higher educational system in the state is not up to the desired standard. The quality of education in the colleges has deteriorated due to the mushroom growth of private colleges. These colleges are running without adequate infrastructures and proper facilities. There are reports of irregular admission

procedures, recruitment of incompetent teachers and financial hardship to make payment of teachers salaries etc. in these colleges. There have been mismanagement and corruption, and lack of proper academic atmosphere except in few urban colleges in the state. The present higher education system has contributed to the problem of unemployment in the state. There has been increased in the number of graduates in the faculties of science, arts and commerce. There is lack of professional and technical institutions in the state.

Meghalaya: The state has colleges that offer academic courses in Arts, Science, and Commerce. North Eastern Hill University or NEHU and Martin Luther Christian University or MLCU are 2 universities in Meghalaya. The universities are situated in Shillong. NEHU also has a campus at Tura. With the implementation of flagship programmes like SSA and RMSA, the educational profile of the state is expected to improve further. The Meghalaya schools conduct regular examinations to keep the students up to date with the syllabus. Quite a few schools in the state of Meghalaya are affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education or (CBSE). These CBSE schools in Meghalaya are well-equipped with all sorts of facilities that aid the students to earn knowledge in a very interesting way. The North Eastern Hill University of Meghalaya particularly aims at developing the socio-economic conditions of the people of Meghalaya by improving the academic, intellectual and cultural aspects of the state. The North Eastern Hill University at Meghalaya offers both instructional as well as research oriented educational programmes.

Mizoram: Education in Mizoram consists of a diverse array of formal education systems ranging from elementary to university, from training institution to technical courses. The government of India imposes mandatory education at least up to the basic level.The structure of education in the state is based on the national level pattern with 12 years of schooling (10+2+3), consisting of eight years of elementary education, that is, five years of primary and three years of middle school education for the age groups of 6-11 and 11–14 years, respectively, followed by secondary and higher secondary education of two years each besides two years of pre-primary education. Pre-primary classes form age group 3 to 4. The higher secondary school certificate enables pupils to pursue studies either in universities or in colleges for

higher education in general academic streams and in technical and professional course. Mizoram Board of School Education is an autonomous academic body under the purview of the Department of Education, Government of Mizoram, India. It is an authority on conducting state level examinations of schools. The Mizoram State Board of School Examination evaluates students' progress by conducting two board examinations-one at the end of class X and the other at the end of class XII. At elementary level, private schools use English as a medium of instruction, while the government run schools are mostly with Mizo medium. At higher levels, English is strictly the major language or medium of instruction.

Nagaland: Nagaland has many educational tiers starting with primary school to university studies. Most of the schools in Nagaland are affiliated to NBSE (Nagaland Board of Secondary Education). Few schools are also affiliated to the CBSE Board. After completing 10+2 tier of education, a student can enroll for college education. There are many colleges in the state (offering B.A., B.Sc., and B.Com). Admission into colleges is done through college entrance test. Alternatively, a student will also have to get minimum cut off marks in the last qualifying examination as required by the enrolling college.

Sikkim: The education system in Sikkim is divided into different tiers of: Primary School, Secondary School, Pre-University/ College, and University. The medium of instruction in the schools and colleges of Sikkim is English. A student progresses from primary to secondary school and has to complete twelve years of schooling before attending college. Two board examinations are held in Sikkim; one at the end of class X and the other at the end of class XII. The central and state government authorities have also introduced the ‘Sarva Siksha Abhiyan’ (SSA) to encourage the education of every child in Sikkim. Every school in Sikkim is either affiliated to the ICSE or the CBSE board.Colleges and universities in Sikkim are equipped with modern facilities and teachers in these institutions are also well informed.

Tripura: The education system of Tripura is divided into the stages of: Primary Education, Secondary Education, College Education and University education. English/ Bengali is the medium of instruction in the majority schools and colleges of Tripura. School education in Tripura is divided into the two distinct groups of

primary and secondary schooling. Students in almost every part of Tripura are entitled to free education till class VIII going by the principles of the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan. Board examinations are conducted at the end of class X and class XII. The schools are affiliated with the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE), the Central Board for Secondary Education (CBSE), the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) or the Tripura Board of Secondary Education. Under the 10+2+3 plan, after completing secondary school, students are typically enrolled for 2 years in a junior college, also known as pre-university, or in schools with a higher secondary facility affiliated with the Tripura Board of Secondary Education or any central board. Students choose from one of three streams, namely liberal arts, commerce or science. After completing the courses at junior college or higher secondary schools the students enter at college/ university system.

1.4.2 STATUS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN NORTH-EAST INDIA

The institutions where post 10+2 education is provided are generally regarded as higher educational institutions. In the North East India most of the colleges have initiated new courses such as BBA, BCA, Travel and Tourism, Sericulture, Environmental Science etc. in addition to regular bachelor programmes. Even in universities also various professional courses have been introduced in addition to the general academic courses. The establishment of the first university at Guwahati in January 1948 gave a real boost to the expansion of higher education from the pre-university up to the post graduate and doctoral level in the whole of North East India. In spite of the late start, higher education in North Eastern India had a very rapid growth in post independent era. The university network in North East India today consists of: 1. Gauhati University, Assam, 2. Dibrugarh University, Assam, 3. Assam University, Silchar, 4. Tezpur University, Assam, 5. Rajiv Gandhi University, Itanagar, 6. Manipur University, Imphal, 7. Mizoram University, Aizawl, 8. The North Estern Hill University, Shillong, 9. Nagaland University, Kohima 10. Tripura University, Agartala, 11. Sikkim University, Gangtok 12. Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat, 13. Krishna Kanta Handique State Open University, Guwahati and 14. Central Agricultural University, Imphal. Thus at present there are fourteen central and state govt. Universities in North East India. This region also has another

sixteen private and deemed universities (Konwar and Chakraborty, 2013). One of the objectives of higher education is to equip students to be socially aware and give back benefits to the society. Statistics show that the most students from the NER availing HE in other states or outside the country- cannot go back to the region for lack of professional opportunity that meets their demand considerably limiting their scope to contribute to the society where they grow up in. Hence, to let the NER gains from its own educated people, it is imperative on the nation to create an atmosphere conducive for education and scope of employment (Naskar, 2009).

A study conducted by North East Support Centre and Helpline in March 2011 clearly reveals that the lack of higher education infrastructure is the main factor for people to migrate to the megacities for higher education. North East Council 2020 vision reveals that only 6 percent of students graduating from a 10+ 2 school system enroll in govt. colleges in the region. 90 percent of these students opt for the Arts stream. The rest migrate to other cities of India for further studies and employment in private companies. Of the 66.35% of students from the North East Region that migrate for higher studies, 78.15% are looking for graduate studies, 11.48% for engineering/ managerial jobs, 6.80% for research/ PhD and 3.57% for medical studies while 35% of migrants migrate for employment opportunities in other cities of India. The Increasing number of challenges could be confronted by addressing the lack of higher educational infrastructure in the region (Chandra, 2011).

1.4.3 NEED FOR STUDYING THE GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS OF NORTH-EAST INDIA

Gender is a constitutive element in all social relations. The term ‘gender’ refers to the social classification of men and women as ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ (Oakley, 1972) and their expected behavior based on their assigned social roles (Basin, 2000). The different roles that are ascribed to men and women are socially and culturally determined and influenced by traditional practices, institutions, customs and beliefs. Most of the societies in north east India are patriarchal society where men dominate and exercise control over most of resources and are considered superior to women

(Buongpui, 2013). Rustogi (2004) reveals that the dropout rates are very high in the states of north east region than many states of the rest of India.

Gender inequality exists between men and women in terms of access to education, employment and political participation. Women are disempowered and their status are low than that of men in this region. 'In higher education institutions of North-East India, how far gender discrimination is prevailing' is an emerging concern for the researchers in the field of education. Therefore, a need is felt to take a research project in gender discrimination in educational practices of higher education in North- East India.

1.5.0 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Social Equity is fairness in the delivery of public services; it is egalitarianism in action-the principle that each citizen, regardless of economic resources or personal traits, deserves and has a right to be given equal treatment by the political system (Shafritz and Russell, 2003). It has been noted that "the provision of a safe and inclusive environment is the responsibility of the university in order to allow all to achieve their potential" (FAWE, 1998). The dawn of the present millennium has witnessed that several countries of the world are struggling to achieve equity and equality in education and in other related fields. The Millennium Development Goals has already set the agenda in motion by highlighting that achieving universal elementary education and promoting gender equality and empowerment in education; and this need to be given priority by all signatory countries of the world. In the context of gender issues in education, there has been a constant realization by policy framers and educationist that though women comprise half of the humanity and 2/3rds of the world's work- hours, they earn only $1/3^{rd}$ of the total income and own less than $1/10^{th}$ of the world resources. Further, they are excluded from socio-economic political and knowledge power. Therefore, to address the forces of exclusion and to bridge gender gaps in all development initiatives for making the process of economic growth gender inclusive, developing countries of the world have adopted gender sensitive main stream approach (Srivastava, 2010). Sushma (2010) stated that gender inequality in education is extreme. Girls are less likely to access school, to remain in school or to achieve in education. Everybody has the

right to education, which has been recognized since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948. The right to free and compulsory primary education, without discrimination and of good quality, has been reaffirmed in all major international human rights conventions. According to the 1981 census (Government of Pakistan) female population comprises over 48 percent of the total population and the educational and vocational needs of girls must be addressed. It is clear from the data cited by the planning and Development Division, Government of Pakistan (1996-97) that the enrolment for female is much lower than males, though enrolment rates for females have risen since 1983-88. The present Govt. has taken some steps to correct this imbalance. Much greater funds have been allocated for the education of girls but this increase is no where near being sufficient (Lari, 2000). Gender is constructed by different roles for different sexes. In every society, that practices gender division or discrimination, there is a demarcation between roles, clothes, toys, games, attitudes, behaviors, language and skills that are meant for females and males respectively. For three decades gender has been accepted as a category in the formation of policy and curricula frameworks in India. "Equality" and "Empowerment" of girls have also been used as key words in educational documents for long as it is evident from the policy perspectives (NCERT, 2006). The home seems to attach more importance and the value on the male child than the female child. The school reinforces this practice. Teaching therefore seems to fulfill the gender beliefs and exceptions of the society holding the learner.

Gender issues are very common issues found at both international level and in our country level as well. International concern for the elimination of discrimination against women is not a new phenomenon, but the existence of numerous declarations and conventions, such discrimination is endemic. Violation of women's rights has not received the required attention in the human rights movements. Human rights law tended to exclude much of women's experiences. Over the past century there has been much to rejoice about the positive development of women in India: increased visibility of women in the public sphere, closing of gender gap in primary and secondary school enrolment, the presence of women in the labour force across international borders and lower fertility rates. In addition, women's organizations have been able to raise issues such as sexual and reproductive health and rights,

violence against women, and inequality of power in gender relations, and make these the pivotal issues of debate in national and global arenas (Segran, 2010).

Gender discrimination is commonly visible in the field of higher education. India's population is still marked with significant inequalities in achievements of men and women in various fields. The country, in fact ranks very low in the world in terms of parity between in the two sexes. The 'Gender related Development Index' (GDI) in the Human Development Report, 2006, of the UNDP puts India in the 97th position among the select 177 countries in the world. Remarkably, India's position is better than that of only the neighboring countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal along with a host of the countries from Africa. The GDI that is based on the measures of life expectancy, school enrolment, literacy and income captures inequalities in achievement between women and men in the population. The lower the value of GDI than the overall Human Development Index' (HDI), the higher is the inequality between men and women (Hassan, Daspattanayak and Rath, 2008).

Gender equality is a fundamental condition for the enjoyment of human rights by women and men. The goals of global citizenship education encapsulate the key themes of justice, equality, tolerance and peace, and these are now being adopted by a variety of countries. The aims are to ensure that children are educated about the most important social and economic issues in the world. In global citizenship education curricula, there are attempts to address gender equality and to show how female citizenship issues affect global, national and local communities (Marshal and Arnot, 2005). A more truly gender responsive culture would be characterized by gender equity in access, redressing structural barriers that influence the access and participations of both sexes and women's active role in decision making in the management and administrative of higher education (Commonwealth Secretariate, 1999).

Jackson (1997) stated that an educational theory which fails to take into accounts feminist critiques and gender analysis is doing a disservice to both men and women by not considering the ways in which existing pedagogies can be enriched. Gender bias and gender stereotyping existing in text books and curriculum create gender biases in their transactions if conscious efforts are not undertaken. The gender

sensitivity in teaching and learning styles across cultures probably will eliminate gender stereotyping in the roles, occupations and career choices of girls and boys. At the time of independence women formed less than a quarter of the total enrolment i.e. 28% at the primary stage, 18% at the middle stage, 13% in high school and 10.4% in universities. Presently girls constitute 47% at the primary level, 45% at the middle stage, 41% at the high/ higher secondary stage, and 40% in higher education of the total enrolment (Jaireth, 2008). Drez and Kingdon (2001) have found strong evidence of sharp gender bias in school participation in rural north Indian states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. It has already been established in the literature that the probability of school participation increases with parental education. Pal (2004) has found that mother's literacy significantly enhances the probability of school enrolment among girls but it is insignificant for boys, similarly fathers education significantly encourages boys schooling and doesn't have any perceptible impact on girls. Glick and Shan (2000) advocate that, the gender gap in schooling is partly due to the response of parents to the much different chances of success in the labour market for men and women, or because they don't realize the highly non market benefits of female schooling in the form of better child health, nutrition and leading better equality of life in the following generations. So, parents value boy's 'education more than girl's education'.

Sushma (2010) stated that education plays a particularly important role as a foundation for girls' development. It should be an intrinsic part of any strategy to address the gender- based discrimination against women and girls that remains prevalent in many societies. Kay (2007) founds in a study, significant difference between gender in their perception of the barriers to female mobility in the hierarchy of higher education institutions. Gender is the most pervasive form of inequality, as it operates across all classes, castes and communities. Yet, while gender equality has been a key objective of education policy in India for over three decades, it has lacked critical edge in implementations (NCERT, 2006). The UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education (1998) examined the status quo with regard to the major issues of women and emphasized the promotion, notably through the use of binding legal instruments, of the rights of women as citizens to full participation in all areas of social development to ensure that highly qualified women will participate fully in

the decision making processes of society through their roles in government, in the community and in the family by strengthening the leadership capabilities. UNESCO aims to foster a gender inclusive culture through education in order to promote sustainable development and peace. The NPE (1986) emphasized on equality between sexes as one of the core social values. The POA emphasizes the need to revise textbooks to remove gender bias and gender sensitize all educational personnel so that equality between sexes could be internalized through gender sensitive, gender inclusive curriculum and its transaction (NCTE, 2003). The Education Commission 1964-66 headed by D.S. Kothari also supported equal educational opportunities in all fields of education for both girls and boys (Nayar and Usha, 1995).

Gender equity and equality sat uncomfortably with instrumentalist notions of education for girls and an unanalytical approach to educational- and particularly curricular processes. The NPE Review Committee pointed out that although the NPE (1986) gave prominent space to education for gender equality, there was no reference to gender in the entire chapter on the 'content and process of school education', except for a mention that 'equality of the sexes' is to be one of ten core curriculum areas (NCERT, 2006). It is worth noting that while India has the second largest system of higher education, next only to USA, the total number of students hardly represent 6 percent of the relevant age group, i.e.18 - 23, which is much below the average of developed countries, which is about 47%. Thus, access, equity, accountability and quality should form the four guiding principles, while planning for higher education development in India in the twenty-first century. It is true that enhancing social access to higher education is still important in the country. But, the major challenge before the Indian higher education system is to bring equity in quality of education across the length and breadth of the country. This should be more close to the heart of students in rural, semi urban and urban areas, because they also wish to be able to participate in the new economic revolution. Several social, economic and political reasons seem to act as constraints to access and equity in higher education in India. Poverty leads to high dropout rates even at primary, middle and secondary school levels. Lower status of women, lack of easy access, lack of implementation of existing programmes, inadequate utilization of resources,

absence of political will and inadequacies in coordinated actions across all equity fronts within institutions seem to be the other reason. Financial constrains also often form a significant factor in advancing equity (UGC, 2003). In practice, this gender inequality is found in our educational system. And how far our education system/ educational institution succeed in maintaining gender equality is a serious question to be asked now a days. Emphasizing the role of education in bringing gender equality in higher education system in specific and in the whole system of education in general, the National Policy on Education (1986) described education as a unique investment in the present and the future. It extolled the acculturating role of education, "It refines sensitiveness and perceptions that contributes to national cohesion scientific temper and independence of mind and spirit, thus furthering the role of socialism, secularism and democracy enshrined in the Constitution", NPE (1986) laid emphasis on the removal of disparities and equalizing educational opportunities by attending to the specific needs those who have been denied equality so far. In this endeavor, special emphasis has to be laid on the education of Women, Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes, Minorities and the Physically challenged persons in order to ensure their equalization with the general population at all stages and levels of education in all the four dimensions- rural male, rural female, urban male and urban female (NCERT, 2007).

North East India, which remains in extreme point of north eastern part of the country, is one of the educationally under developed areas of the country. Not only from educational front, but also from many socio-geographic fronts, the region is under developed. The region is filled in with hills, terrains, valleys and small rivers including the big river like Brahmaputra. This region is connected with main land of India with a narrow strip of chicken necked land route which passes in between southern part of China/ Bhutan and northern part of Bangladesh. The entire region is a meeting pot of different cultures, religions, and traditions. The socio-geographic disadvantages of the region made the region educationally disadvantaged. The region has a slow pacing growth in the field of its education starting from school education to higher education. In fact, higher education institutions are established in this region very recently. The first higher education institution of north east India is Cotton College, Guwahati which was established in 1901. Most of the higher

education institutions in North East India were established after independence. After independence, the Govt. of India in co-operation with State Governments of North East India is trying to facilitate higher education in NE region in a faster speed, but the progress is not upto the mark till today. However, during last one decade a good progress in higher education in North East India is visible. Now North East India has premier higher education institutions like Assam University, Silchar; Rajiv Gandhi University, Itanagar; Nagaland University, Kohima; Mizorma University, Aizawl; North Eastern Hill University, Shillong; Tripura University, Agartala; Sikkim University, Gangtok; Manipur University, Imphal; Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati; National Institute of Technology (in each state of north east India) along with many other institutions and colleges. Since gender discrimination is a common phenomenon/ practice in the higher education institutions in many parts of our country as well as at world level; and since North East India higher education institutions are not of having high standard, so, how far the North East India higher education institutions are maintaining the gender equality, is a serious question before the researchers and other stake holders of education. Further, the study of the gender gaps in higher education institutions of N.E. India is based as a medium to eradicate the existing gender gaps found in such institutions. On the basis of these research gaps the problem of the present study is stated as:

1.6. 0 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of the study can be stated as: "***Gender Discrimination in Educational Practices: A Study of Higher Education Institutions of North-East India****"*.

1.7.0 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE TERMS USED

Gender Discrimination: Gender discrimination refers to any kind of unequal treatment based on gender; and also it refers to practices of sexism. In other words, it can be defined as a feeling /maintenance of superiority/ inferiority in our society by a group of people from the other group because of their gender differences. In this study gender discrimination is understood in terms of socio- psychological positions/ status achieved/ attained by female (person) / girl in comparison to male (person) / boy.

Educational practices: In general educational practices refer to the activities/ means/ mechanisms/ processes relating to education. In the present study,educational practice is understood in terms of seven broad parameters/ aspects relating to education:

(i) Teacher behaviour
(ii) Curriculum
(iii) Institutional/departmental activities
(iv) Discipline
(v) Enrolment
(vi) Achievement
(vii) Providing benefits to the students

Higher education institutions: Higher education institutions are those educational institutions which provide beyond school education. Beyond school education includes undergraduate and/or post graduate courses both in professional and non-professional areas of learning. Colleges, Universities and many other similar cadre institutions are considered as the higher education institutions. Present study is confined to the university level higher education institutions which provide undergraduate and/or post graduate courses both in professional and non-professional areas of learning.

North East India: North East India is a region of India located at extreme north eastern part of India. North East India includes eight educationally and socio geographically disadvantaged states of India. i.e. Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Sikkim and Tripura.

1.8.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

These are the objectives of the present study-

1. To study the status of women employees in comparison to men employees in higher education institutions.
2. To study the status of girls in comparison to boys in higher education institutions.
3. To study the gender issues in educational practices in higher education institutions.
4. To study the existing policies of the govt. for protection and reservation for women and their inclusion and implementation in higher education institutions.

1.9.0 DELEMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is delimited to these points:

1. The study is delimited to higher education institutions which provide undergraduate and/or post graduate courses.
2. The study is delimited to both professional and non-professional higher education institutions.
3. The study is delimited to higher education institutions managed by both Central Government and State Government of all the states of north-east India.