Chapter 1

Introduction, Aim & Objective

The media popularly called the fourth estate of a democracy has played an important role in informing and creating public opinion in India. However, there seems to be a basic lack of information and news on problems faced and issues concerning the Northeast. The purpose of this research is to find out if this feeling of neglect by media is felt by the people of Northeast. Through this research people from Northeast residing in Bangalore will get a chance to express their views on media coverage of Northeast. This research will analyse the views of Northeast Indians regarding their representation in the mainstream media in India.

Northeast refers to the eastern most region of India consisting of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. Barring Sikkim, the other seven states are commonly referred to as the seven sisters. Northeast India is ethnically, linguistically and culturally very distinct from the rest of India. However, years of neglect, government apathy from the Indian central
government and minimal connectivity to the mainland has left this part of India economically and socially backward.

“In essence, the mass media are the essential tools or technologies that facilitate dissemination of information and entertainment to a vast number of consumers. They are the tools of large scale manufacture and distribution of information and related message.”(Keval J. Kumar, 2002). Internet, television, newspapers, magazines, music, radio, films, advertisements and books are different types of media. However for this research media only refers to Indian television news channels and national newspapers.

Media plays a very important role in the world especially in the democratic countries where it has immense power. In India, media is also known as the fourth estate along with Legislature, Executive and Judiciary. Media not only presents facts but also gives interpretation of those facts; it formulates opinion of the public and propagates ideas and ideologies. Media is the only pillar that represents the public by guarding their interests, bringing them to forefront, reporting on failings and lapses of the government and other bodies exercising governing power. The media has therefore been rightly described as the Fourth Estate.

However after the process of economic liberalisation, the status of media in India has changed immensely. Changes are in terms of content, technology, and ownership pattern. Media has tried to build more public interactions in different ways. One interesting concept is the concept of citizen journalism where the citizens can report on various issues with the support of the media. But the big question is has the
effect of media or the changes of media been helpful to all or only to certain sections of the societies or certain zones?

Presently the new media has also build the already existing media providing it more facilities and technology to reach the audience. Example – the use of mobile phones and SMS technology to interact with the public. The public can now post their comments using this technology.

One interesting factor is the coming of the Internet, the biggest invention and revolution to happen in 20th century. Internet has helped in making the world a truly global village. If a status could be given to Internet in India then it could be called the fifth estate as Internet is not only used by the voiced but also by the voiceless.

The research would look at the representation of Northeast India by the Indian national mass media by doing a survey on the Northeast people to see if they are satisfied with the way the media covers their issues or if there is a lack shown in the interest of the media towards Northeast. The tools used for this survey are mentioned in the methodology section of this paper.

Apart from the focal point stated in the research above, a number of different issues arise which will be dealt within the research as it moves forward. Some of these issues are varied but inter-related in one way or the other with the aim of this research. These issues or objectives have been discussed in further detail under the section Objectives in this research paper.
1.1 Brief Focus on the 8 Northeastern States

1.1.1 Arunachal Pradesh

Arunachal Pradesh is the 24th state of the Indian Union, bounded by Bhutan to the west, Myanmar to the east, China to the north and north-east and the plains of Assam to the south. Post 1947, the state became a part of the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA). Thick evergreen forests with numerous rivers and hundreds of species of flora and fauna cover more than 60% of the total area. More than 500 species of birds have been recorded, many of which are highly endangered and restricted to this state, such as the white winged duck, Sclater, Monal bangal florian, etc. There are 26 major tribes and a number of sub tribes living in the state. For 35% of the population agriculture is the main occupation. 17% of total cultivated area is under irrigation. The main crop is rice, grown on valley bottoms and on some terraced slopes. Maize, millets, pulses, potatoes, wheat and mustard are the other important crops.

1.1.2 Assam

Assam is the gateway to the north-east, a state known for its breath taking scenic beauty, rarest flora and fauna, hills and waterways as well as for its festival Bihu. Nagaland, Manipur and Myanmar bound it in the east, West Bengal on the west, Bhutan on the north and Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Bangladesh, Tripura and Mizoram on the south. Assam forms part of a global bio-diversity “hotspot”, 41 listed endangered species of wildlife are found in Assam, which includes Golden Langur, Hoolock Gibbon, Pygmy Hog, Hispid Hare, White-Winged Woodduck, Tiger, Clouded Leopard etc. Ethnic origin of the Assamese varies from Mongoloid tribes to
those of directly Indian descent. The inhabitants of Assam can be divided into three categories, namely the tribal population, the non-tribal population and the scheduled castes. The Tribals consist of different ethno-cultural groups such as the Kacharis (Bodos), the Miris, the Deoris, the Rabhas, the Nagas, the Garos, the Khasis, etc. The non-tribal groups include Ahoms, the Kayasthas, the Kalitas, the Morans, the Muttaks, the Chutias, etc. The scheduled castes includes the Basfors, Baniyas, the Dhobis, the Hiras, the Kaibartas and the Namasudras, etc.

1.1.3 Manipur

Manipur means the 'land of gems'. The natural vegetation occupies an area of nearly 67% of the total geographical area of the state. There are 500 varieties of orchids, which grow in Manipur. The Hooklock Gibbon, the Slow Loris, the clouded Leopard, the spotted Linshang, Tragopan, four different types of Hornbill, etc. forms part of the rich natural heritage of Manipur. However, the most unique is the ‘Sangai- the dancing deer’ and attracts many tourists every year all by its own. Manipur is a place where different waves of races and culture met through the ages. The Meities popularly known as Manipuris are a separate group having their own identity. The 29 tribes inhabiting Manipur hills may broadly be divided into Nagas and Kuki.

1.1.4 Meghalaya

Meghalaya, a Sanskrit word meaning "the abode of cloud", was created as an autonomous State on April 2, 1970. The full-fledged State of Meghalaya came into existence on January 2, 1972. Of about 17000 species of orchids in the world, around 3000 varieties are found in Meghalaya. A botanical wonder, the pitcher plant, an
insect eating plant is found in the district of Jaintia hills, West Khasi hills and South Garo hills of the state. Animals and birds that are found in the state are elephants, tigers, bear, jackal, leopard, golden langurs etc. Meghalaya is mainly a Christianity dominated state. The Khasi, Garo and Jaintia are the main types of people living in the state.

1.1.5 Mizoram

Mizoram, a mountainous region is sandwiched between Myanmar in the east and the south and Bangladesh and Tripura in the west with its northern frontiers touching Assam and Manipur states. With the implementation of the North-Eastern Reorganization Act in 1972, Mizoram became a Union Territory. Besides being an ornithologist's delight with many types of orchids, the jungles are home to tigers, wild boars, leopards, monkeys, barking deers, sambar and elephants. The term Mizo means “the “men who live in the hills”. Mizo comprises of 5 major tribes and 11 minor tribes known under the common name Awzia. The 5 major tribes are- Lushei, Ralte, Hmar, Paihte and Pawi.

1.1.6 Nagaland

Nagaland is almost entirely inhabited by the Naga tribes except some Kukis, Kacharis, Garos, Mikris, Bengalees and Assamese. Nagaland is a hilly state. Forest covers most of the land and is abundant with animal life. The birds found are: white vulture, black partridge, grey partridge, spotted dove, hoopoe, malabar pied hornbill, common babbler, mahratta woodpecker etc. Among the animals the most common are: wild boar, barking deer, Himalayan black bear, wild goat, jackal, jungle cat, royal
Bengal tiger, wolf, leopard, wild dog, python, stag, elephant, land tortoise and other snakes.

1.1.7 Tripura

Tripura, the ancient home of the Bodos, is the northeastern state of India located by the side of Bangladesh. In Tripura, there are not only people hailing from different regions but also people constituting different ethnic groups. Each ethnic tribe has its own language and distinctive forms of cultural expressions, such as music, dance and festivals. Tripura, for instance, have the Garia dance, Reangs have the Howzagiri and the Chakmas have the Bijhu dance. 56.52 percent of the total geographical area of the state is forest with a variety of flora and fauna.

1.1.8 Sikkim

The first inhabitants of the state were the Lepchas. As of now apart from Lepchas, there are the Limbu, Bhutias and Tibetan people residing in the state. On April 14, 1975, a referendum was held, in which Sikkim voted to merge with the union of India. Sikkim became the 22nd Indian State on April 26, 1975. Sikkim is bound by Tibet in the north, West Bengal in the south, Tibet and Bhutan in the east and Nepal in the west. Sikkim is a land of rich and varied scenic beauty, snow covered mountains with Kanchenjunga being the most famous, rivers and variety of flora and fauna including the most widely known red panda amongst all the animals.
1.2 Aim

The aim of this study is to see if the North East people living in Bangalore are satisfied with the kind of attention and coverage given to them by the Indian national media.

The motivation to conduct this research has come from a visible communication gap about the people from Northeast in the main stream or the national media.

The hypothesis for this paper is that media is not successful in giving the right picture of Northeast India to the rest of the country thereby making people from Northeast dissatisfied with the amount of media coverage or the kind of media coverage they receive.

An article written in E-Pao, an electronic publication in Manipur by Rajkumar Sushan Singh states that “Apart from the initiatives from Government, NGOs and other stakeholders, media needs to play an active role in Nation building giving importance to the Northeast India.” The article further mentions that even though there are many day to day activities happening in Northeast but the media gives attention only when insurgency related issues crop up in these regions thereby creation a negative illusion.

This study will also look into these issues mentioned by Rajkumar Sushan Singh to see the views of those from Northeast and find out if they feel the same.
Presently if there is an absence of main stream media, many different subsequent platforms can be used. This study will also see if there are any regional disparities the media has resorted to with regards to covering different issues. That is if there is an imbalance in the media interest while covering different zones in India, is there more coverage of one zone than the other?

The foremost focus of this study is Northeast Indians opinion on the media representations they receive. The main function of media is to create awareness and to disseminate information to the public. However has the Indian national media been able to do this function when it comes to the Northeast? This is another point that will be discussed in this research.

1.3 Research Question

a. Is the media successful in giving the needed space and the right picture of Northeast India to the rest of the country?

b. Are Northeast people dissatisfied with the amount of media coverage or the kind of media coverage they receive?

c. Is media also responsible for the lack of information about the Northeast?

d. Do people in India know about Northeast India?
1.4 Objective

This research seeks to find out the views of Northeast people residing in Bangalore on the amount of coverage that Northeast India is given in the national media.

The research connects a number of issues together and seeks to find answers to them. The objectives are varied though interconnected directly to the focal point of the research. The specific objectives of this study are:

1.4.1 To observe if Northeast India gets enough coverage in Indian national media

As we know India as a developing nation has several issues to deal with, most of which are unique to the particular place or region where it originates. Northeast is no exception. Various developmental issues such as lack of basic amenities, drinking water woes and aggression by China and extremists have affected the region over many decades. Tourism was and still remains the primary source of income and livelihood for most people in the region. Connectivity with the mainland is minimal even after 63 years of independence. Reports on farmer suicides, poverty and other issues from Mumbai, Bangalore and Delhi are frequently covered but is the same being done for Northeast? Are the issues and other aspects being given coverage in the national media?
1.4.2 To learn the reasons why there is lack of coverage of Northeast India in Indian national media

Internationally media has grown to be a corporate entity that is highly ad driven and has its own list of choice and preferences. The picture is not much different with India. Times Of India remains the topmost newspaper in the country with its publications originating from almost every major city in the country. There are other major national dailies as well. So if the coverage of such a big culturally diverse region is minimal or neglected then what are the major reasons for it? Not to forget that the region has the potential to pitch in with ad revenue if approached. Whether the reasons are plain economic or cultural or social, needs to be looked into and deciphered.

1.4.3 To find if North East people in Bangalore are satisfied with the kind of coverage they get

Satisfaction is a relative term. What needs to be looked at is the collective thought among the sample population chosen for this survey. Whatever collective thought is portrayed through their answers can then be taken and implied to the general populace. By coverage it does not imply a discussion on occasional Chinese incursions into Northeast by the media. It means a general discussion and a sustained effort on part of the media to bring the socio, political and cultural issues plaguing Northeast regions on the forefront for the masses. Dissatisfaction on part of the Northeast people on media coverage they get may lead to a sense of feeling of alienation among them or even to a growth of nationalist sentiments.
1.4.4 To find out if the internet fulfils the void left by the media in terms of coverage of Northeast

Internet has grown by leaps and bounds thanks to its relatively low rates of accessibility, its reach across national boundaries and frontiers, and the freedom to use it without much censorship. Also the factors that geographical limitations as present in the Northeast does not limit the reach of Internet and the limitless space in which one can interact with any person across the globe has fuelled its growth across most places of the Northeast. Internet no doubt has captured most parts of Northeast where we can see more and more people interacting on social networking sites like Facebook and Orkut, more websites coming up dedicated to Northeast issues related to identity and nationalism like www.nagarealm.com. A look at these websites and their posts would suggest an active participation of people from the Northeast, active discussions on the social and cultural issues and other conditions of general life as present in that region. In the lack of media coverage and other forums of discussion, Internet has opened a whole new world for the people.

1.4.5 To determine if a lack of media interest creates lack of information among Indian nationals on Northeast

It has been noted with people across all regions that there is indeed a general lack of information among Indian populace on Northeast. While this can be attributed to also a lack of participation in public forums like television by people from Northeast until recently, the point remains that media is a disseminator of information and through that function dons the role of an educator as well. So there comes the probability that
a lack of media interest may in fact accentuate the lack of information among Indian nationals on the Northeast. Media nowadays has come up as a forum of public discussion and opinion through such programmes such as The Big Debate in NDTV 24x7. But we seldom see any topics being discussed on such forums related to Northeast other than occasional topics related to Chinese incursions. Discussions on other issues as faced by this region may in fact help to bring out more people from these areas into the public limelight thus informing others and creating an informed opinion on Northeast India.
Chapter 2

Methodology & Limitation

The research is of quantitative nature employing the questionnaire method of data collection. A quantitative analysis with the use of numbers allows greater precision in reporting results. A questionnaire method was used in this study as it would help gather perception of the people in a collective manner. It helps to examine many variables (essentially the attitude of people in relation to the topic of study).

The questionnaire presents a combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions. The objective of using open ended questions is to provide the respondent with the freedom and opportunity to give in-depth answers. These open ended questions was analysed in a qualitative manner thereby giving more scope for an in-depth study. The close ended questions required the respondent to select an answer from the list provided. The survey was carried over a period of 45 days (May 2010 – June 2010). Some questions have used Likert scale. A Likert scale in this research was used to measure attitudes, preferences, and subjective reactions thus making it easy to tabulate data too.
Ranking scales are also used in the questionnaire. ‘A Rank Order scale gives the respondent a set of items and asks them to put the items in some form of order. The measure of order can include such as preference, importance, liking, effectiveness and so on. The order is often a simple ordinal structure (1/A is higher than 2/B). It can also be done by relative position (1/A scores 10 whilst 1/B scores 6).’

2.1 Research Instrument: Questionnaire

The questionnaire will be divided into four sections:

2.1.1 Section A

This section of the questionnaire is aimed to elicit personal information about the respondent. The respondent had to share name, details on age, gender, present state of residence, state of origin, contact number and e-mail id. In addition the profession of the respondent was also asked. If the respondent is a student then course details had to be mentioned. This section caters to many requirements. Firstly, it helps the researcher to stick to the target sample of Northeast people living in Bangalore who are either working or are students pursuing their post graduate degrees. Secondly with respect to contact details, it helps the researcher to contact the respondent at a later stage for whatever reason related to the research or a third party who may want to verify details about the sample.
2.1.2 Section B

This section serves as an introduction to the research topic. It prepares the ground for the questions that come later in the questionnaire as well as gives the researcher details on the level of media awareness on part of the respondent. The questions seek to find how often the subject reads national newspapers and which ones. Shifting to broadcast media the respondent had to answer how often he/she watches national news channels and which ones are frequently watched. Final two questions in this section seeks respondents personal views as to which regions of the country get maximum coverage in national media and if the national media is fair in its coverage on different regions of the country.

2.1.3 Section C

This section goes much deeper in trying to delve with some of the issues that people from Northeast people residing here may be facing in their daily life. Questions on if they have been confused with people from other Asian countries and other related questions on identity features prominently in this section. Going further, the questions seek to find if the subject thinks that media neglects Northeast and the avenues through which they get frequent information about their home states or the region.

2.1.4 Section D

After the build up through the last 3 sections, this section is one of the most important from the research point of view as it focuses on the coverage of Northeast India in terms of opinion of Northeast Indians. This section elaborates on the kind of coverage
on the region or if there is a lack of it. This section also focusses on the alternatives used by the people from Northeast to cover the absence of media. Issues of increasing unity and alternative identity also find a brief mention here. The last question of this section allowed respondents to give their comments on the coverage of Northeast by the Indian mainstream media.

2.2 Sampling

The sample or respondents for the study is Northeast people (from 8 states) living in Bangalore. This sample was chosen as they have more and faster access to national media than the people living in the Northeast. The present figure of the Northeast population in Bangalore is not available however as per an article in the Hindu Metro Plus, published in March 30, 2005 there were 25,000 students from Northeast in Bangalore.²

For this research 100 respondents were chosen using a snowball sampling method. Moreover the respondents are either students from the Post graduate level or the working population of Northeast in Bangalore. Under graduates have been excluded as they may not be aware of the topic of this research.

From the respondents, the sampling consisted of 64 males and 36 females. The samples are from the following eight Northeastern states living in Bangalore.

- Arunachal Pradesh

• Assam
• Manipur
• Meghalaya
• Mizoram
• Nagaland
• Tripura
• Sikkim

2.3 Use of Statistics

Coding software SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was used to code and Microsoft excel was used to make illustrations as graphs, charts and diagrams.

Ranking scales were used to measure the responses. The responses are illustrated using graphs and charts. If any relationship was found between any two items they are shown in a cross table or by bar diagrams or through correlations.

2.4 Limitations

Public Opinion is subjective and can change from time to time depending on many other factors. As we know public opinion is prone to change depending on situations and external factors such as social, cultural and economic. It’s very much possible that people looking at the questions of this questionnaire may infer them
differently. While such a characteristic does add up to the uncertainty of answers
given to questions, it’s very difficult to control and hence is a limitation of sorts.

**The study only applies to a selected segment of the population and may not apply to all.** The population here consists of either people who are working in Bangalore or those who are studying post graduate studies. Other segments of the population may have different views and inferences to the same questions. Such is human nature. However this population group has been selected since the researcher considers them mature enough to comment on the topic.

**Time Limit for the study is less.** The researcher has been given a time of approximately 6 months to conduct the study from scratch to finish. The difficult part however is to find suitable sample and the time needed to administer the questionnaire. More time means better chance of doing it in a controlled setting so as to minimize external variables.

The sample of 100 may be very less to give a true picture of the topic. Population of northeast India exceeds many a millions as a whole. Out of these a few thousands would come under the sample group needed for the study. But the sample size is a meagre 100 leaving out majority of the population who necessarily may not have exactly same views as the sample here. Hence with such a small population on hand, it may not be enough to provide a complete and true picture of the topic. Also since the sample comprises of only people from the Northeast the opinions may be biased as far as their responses are concerned.
Chapter 3
Review of Literature

3.1 Studies on Northeast Indian mainstream media representation

There are very few studies done on public perception on media coverage of Northeast India or representation of Northeast India by the mainstream Indian media. However, there are many forums and journals discussing this issue.

Jayanta Kumar Ray and Rakhee Bhattacharya in Development Dynamics In North-east India (2008) focus on inter-related issues in the entire region of Northeast with regard to development as the pivotal and overarching factor. The fifth section of this book is dedicated to the ‘Role of Institutions and Media in Northeast India’s Development’. This section has a paper written by Subir Bhaumik ‘Challenges before the Media’ discussing the role media plays in the Northeast in terms of development and the problems that the journalists face in covering the issues in Northeast. The issue of identity crisis in Northeast and the coverage of this crisis are not mentioned in this section. However identity crisis is covered in The Nation, The State and Indian Identity (1996) edited by Madhusree Dutta, Flania Agnes and Neera Adarkar. In this book in her ‘The People's Movement of Self Assertion in Northeast’ Nandita Haskar analyses the ferment in the Northeast and the identity crisis. She says “the Northeast is very distinct from the rest of India essentially because of race”.
A study ‘Shooting the Sun: A Study of Death and Protest in Manipur’ by Jogendro Kshetrimayum published in *Economic and Political Weekly* (2009)\(^{iii}\) states that some protests in Manipur are never reported in the national media, while the killings of Biharis or non-Manipuri’s are highlighted. This article discusses how the media neglects Manipur. However, no solutions to the media neglect are mentioned in his work.

‘Naga Nation on the Net’ by Maya Ranganathan and Shiva Roy Chowdhury, published in *Economic and Political Weekly* (2008)\(^{iv}\), explores the use of Internet for nation building in Nagaland by groups which have been engaged in a power struggle with the Union of India since many decades. This article does show how Internet is being used to reach the Northeast public however there are no studies that determine how these websites affects its users laying more importance to discussion forums and user-related activities.

There are many other online forums which discuss about the media coverage of Northeast India. ‘Making news in the Northeast’ (2009) by Ammu Joseph in *India Together* argues that Northeast India is not given space in the media. She says “What does it take to make news in these times of 24x7 media? If it's the Northeast, generally, it takes a major eruption of violence or a large-scale disaster.” She reflects on the silence in the media about recent events and issues in Manipur arguing how fashion shows, companies announcing their quarterly and annual results, job placements in the IIMs, cricket matches, Bollywood films and film stars romances are regularly happening and “the media cover all these happenings faithfully despite their invariably repetitive nature.” Ammu Joseph further argues that Irom Chanu Sharmila
also known as the Iron Lady of Manipur is neglected by the media. She asks “But a woman who is so serious about a political struggle (with widespread popular support in the state) that she is willing to sacrifice her life for it is not worth a mention merely because her short-lived respite from more than eight years of imprisonment occurs every year?” Lack of information creates unawareness which could further lead to various other issues. For example ‘You Daft......I'm from Northeast India......not Nepal or China’ is a forum in Facebook which has 454 members. It discusses problems faced by the people of Northeast mainly that of racism in their own country. These forums are used by the people from Northeast to express their views openly.

An article, ‘Fourth Estate on Sale’ (2009) in Economic and Political Weekly argues how the Indian media is selling its soul to the market and forfeiting its claim to be an independent estate. If the media becomes a slave to the market Northeast may never get the needed space in the media.

Prasun Sonwalkar in ‘Mediating otherness: India’s English-language press and the Northeast’ (2004) published in Contemporary South Asia examines how India’s English language press views issues from the northeast and argues that news is heavily influenced by socio-cultural factors and journalists' notions of 'us' and 'them'. He goes on to comment how general awareness on the northeast region and its people is minimal in the Indian public sphere and the lack of its coverage in the national English press leads to little public agenda or pressure on the central government to solve critical issues faced by this region since last many decades. Thus showing how lack of media interest can also lead to lack of Government interest.
There was almost two months of blockade in Manipur by Naga groups in NH 39, leaving the Manipuris suffering for essential commodities. Such a long blockade can only be found in the Northeasters Indian states as the media nor does the Government gives much attention to these issues of Northeast. Such long blockades have not been witnessed in other Indian states so far.

An article ‘The growing importance of media in north-east India’ by Oken Jeet Sandham in kanglaonline.com stated that when British Army Lt General Michael Rose came all the way from Britain to pay homage to their 2nd World War heroes at Kohima War cemetery he could not believe that Oken Jeet Sandham was a pressman. The Lt General said ‘I can’t believe that you people from North east could become journalists, you know when British soldiers were around this region we didn’t hear much about media activity. The writer further argues ‘had there been media persons from this region during those days, things would have been quite different by now. It is true that the turmoil North east people faced since British transferred its power to Indian leaders would have been different had the media been active in this region. Although there were limited media persons and few language papers, it did not live up to the expectation of the people. Therefore it failed to give much impact to the Centre whereby this region was left unattended and neglected for decades.’ Media absence lead to Government negligence which gave birth to several underground outfits and various demands. Media persons were also not treated well in the Northeast. Editors were killed by unidentified gunmen and sometimes journalists were banned from exercising their professions by underground elements. However, today there are a number of media persons from north-east India working with various national papers and magazines, yet it still has not resulted to be the true portal of these states.
There seems to be a definite lack of media interest in Northeast India which can also be reflected in the article ‘Northeast India: Through the Prism of the National Media’ (2007) by Amit Sengupta in *The Echo of India*, Kolkata. The article states that ‘Most of the dailies with multi-editions and news channels shockingly have only one journalist to cover the entire northeast region. Some, like NDTV, have two journalists while the rest are content with their single man/woman army left to cover the vast territory. The dailies like The Times of India, Hindustan Times have a couple of journalists. The Times of India and The Telegraph have their own editions at Guwahati. Hindustan Times also launched its edition in Guwahati a year ago which it had to wind up later. The Statesman and the The Echo of India are the only two dailies in India which have a dedicated northeast page in their editions. The audio-visual media does not have a dedicated northeast edition in their busy 24x7 ceaseless broadcasting frenzy. The Statesman brings out its northeast page every Monday, while The Echo of India carries the northeast page every day on page two along with Sikkim.’

The present media personalities are trying to give more importance to Northeast but it seems too late. Rajdeep Sardesai in an article, ‘Why India is a minnow in world football’ (2010) in *ibnlive.in.com* states that India can be seen participating in the world cup only if the Northeast becomes the football capital in India for Kolkata is too stuck up in politicising the game. However he himself looks too sceptical if this would ever happen.

Northeast has lots going on day to day but it finds no place in the media. One such story is of M C Mary Kom has who won her fifth gold medal at the Asian
Boxing Championship in Astana, Kazakhstan (2010) but India is still unaware of her contribution as an Indian to the game.

All Indian festivals celebrated in India are reported by the media but the Indians are never aware of the festivals and cultures of the Northeast Indians as they are never reported. Such was the case with a 15-minute short English documentary film *Last of the Tattooed Head Hunters*, directed by Vikeyeno Zao and produced by Indrajit Narayan Dev and Hawksbill Productions which was screened at the Cannes Film Festival on May 2010. This film unlike other Indian films that go to Cannes was not reported by the Indian mainstream media. The film captures the Konyaks (a naga tribe) in all their essence: their environment, their traditions and customs, their way of life and their reactions to encroaching modernity.

In the above discussion done so far it shows the role of Media has been discussed but the role of media in identity crisis has not been studied. This research will show that such a crisis may also be generated by the media for the media does not inform the rest of the country about the people of Northeast. Moreover no studies have been done on the representation of entire Northeast in the mainstream media in India and this research will focus on this topic.

It should also be noted that in the above discussion on literature, there is no representation of literature from northeast in the national media as such. Barring one column by Rajdeep Sardesai on football, the most viewed channels such as NDTV 24X7, CNN-IBN and most read newspapers of the country such as Times of India,
The Hindu and Hindustan Times continue to neglect or omit northeast from their coverage.

There are many studies on representation of particular gender, minorities, conflicts but no such representation studies have been done in case of Northeast and this research purports to bridge that gap.

Through this research the researcher will try to find out if the media has not been successful in giving adequate space and proper representation of Northeast India to the rest of the country? And does such representation issues make people from Northeast dissatisfied with the amount of media coverage or the kind of media coverage they receive?


iv Maya Ranganathan and Shiva Roy Chowdhury (July 19 - 25, 2008), Naga Nation on the Net, published in Economic and Political Weekly.


vi Facebook, “You Daft......I'm from Northeast India......not Nepal or China”. 05 Feb 2010, www.facebook.com


