

CHAPTER III

Development of Education and Literature: Bodo-Garo Comparative Approach

The history of educational system in Assam can be traced back to the Varman dynasty of Kamrupa kingdom. According to P.C. Choudhury under the educational patronage of Bhaskar Varman, *Kamrupa*¹ became the centre of learning and many students from outside were attracted to come to Kamrupa.² In the 7th century A.D. during the reign of Bhaskar Varman, Kamrupa became the centre of Aryan culture. He made a provision of liberal donation of lands and gifts to the Brahmanas and higher classes. But in the 7th century A.D. when the kingdom came under the influence of Arya dharma, establishment of a centre of Aryan culture came into being.³ The *Varnasrama dharma*⁴ played an important role in Assam while imparting education in ancient period. The learning was transmitted orally in *gurugrihas*, *tolas*, temples and *shrines*, which served as the educational centres. A section of the Tantrik- Buddhist *siddhas* also through their preaching and literary contribution helped the people to be educated. The *guru* was considered as indispensable while attaining education in *tolas* or *gurugrihas*. Madhavdeva one of the Vaishnavite saints could become a guru after only receiving his education under Sankardeva.⁵

In the medieval period, it appeared that the education was more of private individual's concern. Some scholars got royal patronage for their intellect and contribution towards the dissemination of learning in Assam. During this period, education was imparted through two modes. The first mode was formal or institutional. The subjects and disciplines like philosophy, grammar, literature and poetics, smritis, astrology and astronomy were taught in *tols*, *pathsalas* or *chatrasalas* and were mainly confined to the upper class of society, especially to the Brahmins, Kayasthas and the Kalitas. Another mode of imparting education was related to the arts and crafts. These were acquired either on hereditary line or through the medium of professional guilds or *Khel*. The latter mode of education did not require formal curricula or course of training.⁶ Under the influence of Vaisnavism, the *Satra* institutions disseminated the learning. The *Namghar* as a centre of culture, education and learning encouraged the village people in idealizing them. The spiritually enlightened *Satradhikars* and Vaishnava disciples undertook writing on the chronicles of their respective *Satras* and Vaishnava saints called *Charit Puthis* which not only contributed a lot for the Assamese literature but also served as valuable source for reconstructing the socio-economic history of medieval Assam. The important historical works developed in the 16th and early 17th century A.D. were the *Yogini Tantra*, *Hara-Gauri Bilasa* and *Hara-Gouri Sambada* which threw historical information on *Kamakhya Tantra* and *Tiksa-Kalpa* which dealt with the worship of the goddess.⁷ The writing of *Buranjis* under the royal patronage of the Ahoms also showed how the Ahom kings took interest in historical literature of their rules. It was mandatory for the nobility to accumulate knowledge on *Buranjis*.⁸

In the 19th century of the modern period with the onset of the western education rapid changes began to take place in the Assamese literature. The trend in Assamese literature then was directly influenced by the English Romantic poetry of the 19th century. The expression of the boons of natural beauty was found in the new Assamese poems. One of the results was the journal *Jonaki*.⁹

Under the aegis of the Christian missionaries several English medium schools and printing presses came to be established to spread the western ideas through western education among the people of Assam. The first printing press was established in 1844

at Sibsagar. In 1846 the Baptist missionaries published the *Orunodoi*, the first Assamese monthly magazine at their printing press. It was devoted to religion, science and general intelligence. During those days the magazine played an important role in spreading ideas and knowledge among the young generation and also in expressing their views and opinions of the period.¹⁰ In short it cemented in transforming the intellectual atmosphere in Assam.¹¹ The Baptist missionary simultaneously also published the *Digdarshana* and *Samachar Darpan* in Bengali.¹²

But before the introduction of Charter Act of 1813, the attitude of British East India Company towards the policy of education in India was one of indifference.¹³ Earlier the company felt that missionary activities would perturb the traditional beliefs of the indigenous people and this could endanger their political setup in the region.¹⁴ However, the Charter made the education company's responsibility to encourage and impart knowledge of science and literature among the inhabitants of British Indian territory.¹⁵

Educational Policy of British in Assam

The British adopted liberalism and evangelicalism in their policy towards India. The earliest new policy makers towards India can be credited to Charles Grant (1746-1823). He considered the Hindu religion and society as 'error and ignorance' and wished to rescue them by gradual introduction of Christianity among them. Therefore, he adopted the policy of western education as the tool to be implemented through the missionaries.¹⁶

Prior to the introduction of British rule in Assam, the educational scenario in Assam deteriorated on account of the political chaos, conflicts and internal rebellions. Besides, during that period common use and consumption of opium among the large section of population also worsened the social condition and educational atmosphere of Assam.¹⁷ The British had an observation on those situations from the beginning. Incidentally, in 1826 David Scott was appointed as an Agent to the Governor General for looking after the whole of North-Eastern Frontier of Bengal. At the same time he was also given the charge as Civil commissioner of North East Rungpore (Goalpara and Garo Hills) and the Judge of the court of Sylhet.¹⁸ Soon after taking both the charges, to

improve and promote the indigenous educational system, Scott obtained a sanction from the Government of Bengal to establish a number of schools in upper and lower Assam.¹⁹ In implementing the policy, he was always aware that undue emphasis of western education may hurt the sentiment of local people and it would lead misapprehension among the people against the British rule. To fulfill the needs and importance of education among the common Assamese people he appealed to the Government for the establishment of *Pathshalas* in Assam. In 1826 on the prior approval from the Government of India, Scott instructed to establish eleven schools in *gurukul* style in different parts of Assam like Guwahati, Nilachal, Naduar, Pati- Darrang, Hajo, Bajali, Sheela, Biswanath, Nagaon and Mangaldai.²⁰ The curriculum in those institutions consisted of medicine, arithmetic and astronomy. The medium of instruction was Sanskrit. In 1831 another school at Guwahati was established by Captain White in association with James Rae, where the work of translation from English to Bengali in elementary science also formed a part of curriculum.²¹ The British for their advantage of communication made Bengali as official language in court and schools in Assam. It became more necessary in the newly founded schools due to the unavailability of adequate local teachers to impart education.²² Successively in 1833, Lieutenant James Matthie, the collector and Magistrate of Northern central Assam with a view to introducing a broader curriculum, established a school at Mangaldai.²³

Francis Jenkins, the Commissioner of Assam (1834-61) to gain confidence over the former official aristocracy who had lost their political influence and power on the British occupation, thought that it would be appropriate to facilitate them by employing in government service. He strongly insisted the government to impart English education under supervision of local authorities of Sadar stations of Goalpara, Guwahati, Nagaon, Darrang and Biswanath. It was also urged that a number of youths be sent to Calcutta for necessary training so that the teachers would be capable of teaching both English and Bengali. On the policy of Jenkin, the local people got encouraged to accept English education, even the inhabitants of Guwahati funded an amount of Rs. 1740 to speed up the process.²⁴ Subsequently, the General Committee of Public Instruction accorded its approval from Government of India to establish English school at Guwahati in 1835 and accordingly Mr. Singer a European Headmaster was appointed forthwith. In the

beginning the school was started with an enrollment of fifty eight (58) students and it rose to one hundred and fifty eight (158) in 1838.²⁵

The Wood's Despatch of 1854 laid the foundation of modern system of education in India. It repudiated long cherished Filtration Theory which deals with the transition of education and knowledge from the higher to lower strata of the society. Education was encouraged through a number of high, middle and primary schools to be supported by grant in-aid. With the aim of diffusing 'useful and practical knowledge' to the masses, steps were taken to establish a number of self supporting schools under the subsidy scheme. Initiatives were taken to offer rewards to the teachers to attract large number of pupils to their schools to acquire the rudiment of the three R's. In 1871-72 when grant in-aid to self supporting schools was raised, the number of institutions increased to 160 as well with enrollment of 5278 pupils.²⁶

In this chapter, a comparative study of two major tribes namely the Bodo and the Garo has been undertaken as both the languages belong to the Indo-Tibeto-Burma family of languages. They were one and same before 2000 years. Both the tribes came in contact with the Christian missionaries and their languages were influenced and developed due to the contribution made by the missionaries. An attempt is being made to study how these two sister tribes progressed in the areas of their education and literature.

Establishment of Schools

Prior to the advent of the British in Assam there was no formal education among the Bodos and the Garos. In the early stage of the British regime there was no specific rule for the expansion of education among these tribes. Schools were established at places far away from the Bodo inhabited villages. So the education had little impact on the Bodos. The Bodos also did not take interest to receive education.²⁷ But in the Garo hills, schools were established in the Garo villages and they had easier access to education.

The process of imparting education to the Bodos was initiated by Francis Jenkins, the then Commissioner of Assam in 1835, by opening three public schools and

a few numbers of private schools in the Darrang district. By 1847, the number of primary schools rose to 8. In 1853 when A. J. Moffatt Mills visited Darrang and Goalpara districts there were 9 vernacular schools in Darrang and 10 in Goalpara district. From 1854, the Provincial Government adopted a specific educational policy in relation to the Bodo people of Darrang district through the Christian Missionaries. This initiative for the first time brought the Bodos into the limelight. The policy was adopted at the interest of the tea planters in the district. But in other two districts of Goalpara and Kamrup, no such steps were undertaken for the tribe in particular, during the nineteenth century.²⁸ The American Baptist Missionaries in Assam were the first to come into contact with the Kacharis or Bodos. In December 1841, Oliver T. Cutter during his visit to Tezpur in the then Darrang district realized the need for establishing schools in the Bodo areas. He made the people aware of the importance of education. In 1843 Rev. Cyrus Barkar was sent to Tezpur where he spent only two months. In his short period of stay, he travelled in the Bodo villages of northern Darrang.²⁹ In the same year he set up a mission station at Guwahati. Barkar observed the eagerness of the Bodos to accept the gospel. So, he made several visits among the Bodo tribe and convinced them of the necessity to have discussions on different matters. In 1848, A.H. Danforth after joining hands with Mr. Barkar and Ward engaged in the task of converting the Bodos by catechizing and distributing Christian literature prepared in Bodo dialect. It may be mentioned that at the boarding school established by Barker in Guwahati the majority of the students were mainly drawn from the Bodo tribe. In 1849 a boarder Aphinta of Jhargaon village of North Kamrup was baptized and he became the first Bodo Christian in the history of evangelization of the Bodos of Assam.³⁰

Change of Policy

The Revolt of 1857 changed the policy of government towards the missionaries. The missionaries were found responsible by the authorities in England for the outbreak of the revolt. Since then the institutions were placed under the control of government supervision and mandatory instructions were given to impart secular education in those institutions. On this sudden decision of changing the prevailing system by the government, W.S. Atkinson, Director of Public Instruction of Bengal expressed dissatisfaction because he felt that it would hurt the progress of education among the

tribes. So, he suggested to the Government of India to exclude Assam from implementing the new policy but to grant discretionary power to the authorities to work in their own way. The Government of India accordingly agreed to accept the suggestion and made liberal grants to different missionary institutions in the backward areas of Assam.³¹

The new mission society determined to dedicate for the cause of the Bodos. So, in the beginning of 1864, the mission station was fully upgraded for the Bodos and accordingly Rev. C. H. Hesselmeyer was made the first in-charge of the Kachari Mission. In the same year twelve schools were established in Darrang for the Bodos and one for the Miris. Under the supervision of Rev. C. H. Hesselmeyer, 277 boys received elementary instructions mainly in Assamese with moderate use of Bengali in the said newly established schools.³²

The number of government aided schools in Goalpara district increased from 15 in 1856-1857 to 31 in 1870-1871 and in the same period the number of students increased from 194 to 862. In 1872 Sir George Campbell introduced a scheme for educational reform by extending grant-in-aid rules to large number of unaided schools of villages. By 31st March 1873, under this scheme 82 schools with enrollment of 1,882 students received government aids.³³ In 1872-1873, 65 more government aided primary schools including two girls' *pathsalas* in the district were established. A total number of 1,321 boy students enrolled, out of which 212 were Muhammadans and 151 Garos, Rabhas and a few number of Bodos.³⁴ It is to be mentioned that the Bodo pupils started to get themselves enrolled in these schools.³⁵ Like the other districts of Assam the primary education in Goalpara district made a rapid progress. There were only 80 primary schools with 1,840 students in 1874-1875, and by the 31st March 1876 the number of schools in the district increased to 129 with enrolment of 2,295 students. Later it rose to 230 schools with 5,827 students in 1901.³⁶ In 1907, the American Baptist Mission received an annual subsidy amount of Rs. 286 from Government of Assam to open four lower primary schools at Goalpara among the Rangdonia Rabhas. Due to the absence of separate schools for Bodos in those days, the Bodo students had to study in the schools situated in the Dhubri sub-division.³⁷

In 1929 the mission set up a permanent mission station at Gaurang near Kokrajhar along with a primary school. The school was later upgraded to Middle English school and to a high school in 1947. In 1935, they established separate mission station for the Bodos at Bongaigaon along with a boarding school for the convenience of extending their work among the Bodos of Kamrup, Darrang and Lakhimpur.³⁸

There was no remarkable progress in educational field in the Goalpara district up to 1930. S.K. Sharma in quoting the mission report of the year 1930-1931 mentioned that, "Education is still very backward among the Kacharis of this district (Goalpara), not a single woman or girl can read or write. There are only one or two village schools and these are very poor".³⁹ In the Census Report of Assam, 1931, subsidiary table V, the Bodos were recorded as Kachari (Tribe) and Hinduised Bodos were as Kachari (Hindu) based on racial group.⁴⁰ The literate Bodos during 1921 and 1931 in per thousand populations are given below in **table 3.1**.

Table 3.1 - Literacy of the Bodos per thousand populations during 1921 and 1931

Name of Community	Number per 1,000 aged 5 years and over who are literate			Number per 1,000 aged 7 years and over who are literate			Number per 10,000 aged 5 years and over who are literate in English			Number per 10,000 aged 7 years and over who are literate in English		
	1921			1931			1921			1931		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
Kachari (Tribal)	11	21	--	33	62	3	6	13	--	23	54	--
Kachari (Hindu)	42	78	04	41	75	03	60	114	02	57	108	01

Source: Census of India, 1931, Volume III, Assam, Part I-Report, Subsidiary Table V, p.163

Umon K. Marak played an important role in the expansion of education among the Bodos in the district. He was a Garo Christian who later became a Pastor. As the foreign missionaries were short in number they appointed U. K. Marak a local to look

after the new Bodo Christians. He was posted at Tukrajhar. He not only took up the missionary activities but also took keen interest to educate the Bodo Christians in the mission schools. In 1930, the Balajhar Primary School was shifted to Tukrajhar and he helped in the establishment of the Boys' hostel at Tukrajhar. Within a short period of time the activities of the Bodo Baptist Church spread to Burijhar, Bamugaon, West Patabari, East Balagari and other places. Further in 1933, Minaram Basumatary was sent by Guwahati Baptist Mission to look after and work among the Bodos of Goalpara district. The school run by Minaram Basumatary was the only school in the Goalpara field which received Mission aid in that year. The Goalpara Baptist Association supported the two teachers in the school. Hostel facility was provided within the compound and it was a co-educational lower primary school with boys and girls. In 1936, the number of primary schools rose to 11 with 66 girls and 113 boys.⁴¹

At the same time the local people of Tukrajhar took initiative to establish a Middle English School in their native place. Accordingly on 23 October, 1937 the new school was inaugurated and Minaram Basumatary was appointed as the headmaster and his wife as assistant teacher of the new M.E. School. In the beginning the school was enrolled with 43 boys and 15 girl students. There were also 4 teachers. By 1938 its enrollment increased to 93. But due to the shortage of teachers the school faced difficulties and could not be run smoothly.⁴²

In respect of the Garos David Scott was the pioneer in uplifting them from backwardness. He believed that it could be achieved only through dual purposes, one by imparting education and the other by converting them to Christianity.⁴³

As his first initiative David Scott sent 3 Garo boys to Serampore Missionary College in 1823. Thereafter, a systematic step for the educational policy for the Garos was adopted which could be drawn from the correspondence between Bishop Heber and Mr. David Scott in November 29, 1825. In 1826 the Lt. Governor approved the pioneer scheme for reclaiming Garos into modern civilization. Accordingly Mr. Valentine William Hurley was appointed as a teacher in the Garo School to be established at the Singhimari. But, due to some reasons Mr. Hurley resigned and in his place Mr. Fermine was appointed. In 1828 he began the functioning of the school at Singhimari for the first time. Jenkins, the Commissioner also established a school for the Garos at

Goalpara in 1847.⁴⁴ There were also some noble individuals among the Garos such as Ramke Momin and Omed who for the cause of the upliftment of their community prompted themselves to leave their jobs to do Christian work among the Garos. Ramke opened a school at Goalpara termed as Normal School. In 1867, 15 Garo boys were enrolled in that school.⁴⁵

In lower Assam under the government grants and supports the mission extended its education effort in the Garo areas of the Goalpara district with establishment of 6 schools. The mission looked after the northern part of the Garo hills while the government looked after the southern part with its 5 schools in 1874. In 1875 the number of schools increased to 9 with 181 students under the management of Deputy Commissioner of Garo Hills. Some of the places where schools came to be established were Turagiri, Betajhora, Kodal Doha, Mahendraganj, Totlengkura, Onajhora, Maijpara, Dabreng and Mendengpara under the supervision of the Sub-Inspector of Schools.⁴⁶

From the Report of the Garo Hills Administration for the 1875-1876 it is seen that there were two different sets of schools in the Garo Hills. They were government sponsored schools and missionary run schools. In the south-west and southern part of the district there were nine (9) schools established and in the northern part there were eighteen (18) schools opened and managed by the American Baptist mission. These mission schools were maintained mostly with the annual government grants of Rs. 1,824.⁴⁷

The Missionaries also took initiative for the girls' education among the Garos. In 1874, Mrs. Keith opened a girls' boarding school at Goalpara Mission with ten students from the Christian village of Rajasimha. But it could not be managed successfully for more than a year. In 1883-1884 Miss Miriam Russel established a girls' school at Nishangram a Christian village and later shifted the school to Tura mission compound with 21 girl students.⁴⁸

In 1883, a Teachers Training School was opened at Tura with the objective of producing more efficient teachers. Rev. Thangkan Sangma, who did his studies in

America, was appointed as the headmaster and Mr. Burdette the supervisor of this school.⁴⁹

The education in the hill district was in steady progress. In 1901 it recorded 7.41 percent of Garo children going to school. It was also found that in every 1000 persons 8 (eight) persons were literate. For the session 1903-1904 it recorded 15 percent of the district's children literate. In 1915, as per the D.P.I. report out of 1000 persons 23 persons became literate. Out of about 1,59,000 people in the district 6249 persons were found educated. The number of schools in the district also increased. In 1902-1903 there were 3 Upper primary and 86 Lower Primary schools besides Tura station school. By 1915 there were 8 Upper primary, 153 Lower Primary and 3 Middle English schools established by the government.⁵⁰

In 1905-1906 the Normal School was upgraded to Middle English School. This change increased efficiency of the teachers. In the same year i.e 1905, the then government reviewed the entire educational system through Sir Bamfield Fuller and schools were taken over by the government as schools opened by the missionaries were virtually made 'Theological Schools'. The government appointed its own School Inspectors to supervise the schools. Accordingly, a Khasi Deputy Inspector of school for the Garo Hills District was appointed in 1908. By this the tasks of the supervision of the schools were made governments' responsibility. Similarly, in 1911, Mr. Jobang D. Marak was appointed as Sub-Inspector of schools. In the same year the government revived the teachers' training school at Tura to which Mr. Macdonald, a Khasi Christian was appointed as its superintendent. Thus, the government was gradually taking over the schools originally established by the missionaries.⁵¹

In 1926 there were 101 schools under the management of government of which 78 were Garo Primary schools. Besides these, 74 primary schools were under the maintenance of Baptist Mission and 60 schools were managed by the private agencies. By 1939 because of the progressive taking over policy of the schools by the government the schools under the management of Mission were considerably decreased. For instance, the monthly grant of Rs. 192 was discontinued and at the same time the government also took over 29 of the Mission schools under their complete supervision.

In that year only 3 schools were left under the maintenance of mission in the Garo hills.⁵²

From the above discussion, it is clear that the educational policy of the British government towards the Garos was much earlier than to that of the Bodos. It was possible among the Garos because the missionaries arrived much earlier among them. It is also a fact that the population of the Bodos in Assam was much scattered in different parts of the state but the majority of the Garo population was concentrated mainly in the Garo Hills and neighbourig districts. Therefore, it became much easier for the British government as well as the missionaries to emancipate the Garos through rapid establishment of educational institutions in the Garo dominated areas. The government provided grant-in-aid to the missionaries to run the schools smoothly.

It is to be mentioned that the establishment of schools was comparatively less among the Bodos than to that of the Garos. Nevertheless, it is also a fact that the government did not encourage to upgrade the primary level schools to higher grade institutions among the Garos. In spite of the progress of education in the district one would be surprised to know that till 1938 there was only 1 Middle English School at Tura for the Garos and 1 High English School in 72 years (1866-1938) of British occupation of Garo Hills district. But, the degree of educational awareness instilled by the missionaries and the government for the Garos was far higher than that of the Bodos. As early as in 1911 there were a few Garo individuals such as Mr. Jobang D. Marak who studied in America and while returning he joined the government service as Sub-Inspector of school.⁵³ The Bodos during those periods hardly had any formal education and none studying abroad.

As per the report of the 9th biennial conference of American Baptist Mission, the government also made an arrangement for the provision of scholarship among the Garo students. From the Report of the 4th Triennial Conference of the Assam Baptist Missionary it is known that the government introduced six (6) lower primary scholarships for Garo students and Upper Primary scholarships examination was also introduced. Besides, the government also granted fund for the teacher's salaries. In addition to that with a view of encouraging competition among the students a capitation fee per student was also granted by the government in the following order- *annas* 6 for

the first class, *annas* 5 for the second class and *annas* 3 for the third class. It was granted on the basis of the regular attendance and proficiencies in studies.⁵⁴ But no such provisions were found recorded for the Bodos in those days.

Medium of Instruction

As per the medium of instruction in the schools is concern, there was no separate medium of instruction for the Bodos during the colonial period. Therefore, the Bodo students studied in all general schools for pursuing education. It was only in 1963 that the Bodo language became a separate medium of instruction in the primary level of schools run by the government of Assam.

As far as the medium of instruction for the Garos is concerned it can be understood from a letter to the Commissioner of Coochbehar, dated 25th June 1867, Lt. Williamson, the first Deputy Commissioner of Garo Hills District who stated that the Garo boys should be able to read and write in Bengali which would be of great service while communicating with the traders at the *hats*. He also wished that the English alphabet would one day be in a position to substitute the native tongue. However, he urged that the Garo boys be taught English first and Bengali later.⁵⁵ Even at Damra a school was established under Mr. Ramke Momin as the Headmaster with Bengali as its medium of instruction. It was with the help of Ramke Momin, Mr. Stoddard and Mr. Keith that a few books for elementary knowledge in Garo dialect of Damra area were introduced. It may be mentioned that the medium of instruction then, in other parts of lower Assam was in Bengali but in Garo hills both Bengali and the Damra dialect of the Garo language.⁵⁶ In 1893 the Baptist missionaries resolved to change the Garo literature from Bengali to Roman character. Accordingly, Bengali was withdrawn from the lower primary course and it was made an elective subject in the advance stage. From 1903, the Garo students could study in their mother tongue and English was required to be studied in the advance stage. The problems of medium of instruction in the Garo schools had been persisting from the very beginning. The British government could not maintain any consistent policy in this regard. Bengali was the medium of instruction till 1910. By the following year English was also made a medium of instruction. Bengali was replaced by Garo as medium of instruction.⁵⁷

Use of Script

Both the Bodos and the Garos had no written scripts of their own in the colonial period. Therefore the Assamese and Bengali written scripts were used in the schools to teach the Bodo pupils.⁵⁸ The Bodos initially used Roman and Assamese scripts till 1974. Though the Bodo language was introduced as the medium of instruction in the primary level of schools there was no unanimity among them to which script they would use finally. It was only in 1974 that the Bodo Sahitya Sabha (BSS) published Bodo text book entitled *Bithorai* in Roman script but due to some political reasons it could not last long as a text book. At present Devanagari script is used by the Bodos for any literary purpose. From 1890's to 1930's, most of the missionaries used the Roman script for writing in Bodo language. Later on, with the onset of the *swaraj* movement, the missionaries started using both Assamese and Bengali scripts. However, after independence Roman script was again used by the missionaries. These literary pursuits of the Christian missionaries not only helped in the growth of Bodo literature and but also helped in increasing the interest of the people in their own language. The same had its impact on the demand for the Roman script during the post independence period.⁵⁹ Similarly, the Garos adopted Bengali scripts and in the later period used both Bengali and Roman scripts.

School Text Books

During the colonial period in the schools up to the primary level the Garo students were facilitated with Garo text books but the Bodo students were accustomed to adjust with any other medium of instruction.

In the history of text books of the Garos, the Garo Primers (1868) and Garo Grammar (1874) were the foremost. Except Garo Primers and Garo Grammar no serious attempt was made for publication of text book till the writing of text book on Arithmetic in Garo by Mrs. Phillips in 1888. In the same year the book 'Peep of Day' (*Sengbaa*), was illustrated and translated by Miss Mason. In 1896, Bakal Sangma published his 'The Way to Health' (*Ansengani Rama*) in Garo language. In 1900 Rupsing Sangma also brought out a book entitled 'An Introduction to Bengali in Garo'. Within a period from 1867-1902 a few number of text books: 3 Garo Primers, 2 Mental

Arithmetics, 1 Primary Arithmetic, 1 Bengali Primer and 2 Rapid Readers emerged in Garo language. All these books were printed in Bengali script.⁶⁰ In 1908 E.C. Bond translated the text book *The Art of Teaching* into Garo language. In 1910 another text book in Garo on geography entitled, *Small Geography of Garo Hills* and small Garo-English Dictionary was written and published by a Khasi teacher.⁶¹ In 1917, Miss E.C. Bond and Mr. Madhunath Momin for the first time prepared a series of text books as desired by the government namely with *Poraiani Bak-I, II, III* and *IV* written in standard vernacular keeping in view the Garo School Reader. These books contained the multi-disciplinary features of geography, history, biology and descriptive essays and poems.⁶²

The books used in the government schools included the Infant Teacher, *Charupath*, *Bodhoday*, *O.A. KA. Kha*, Arithmetic and Grammar. The missionary schools used books such as the Garo Primers, part- I, II, III, the Gospels in Garo, *The Sishu Sikshsha Part-I, II, III*, *Bodhoday*, Bengali Grammar, Geography and Arithmetic, History of Bengal, History of Hindustan etc. Garo Primers of Rev. Stoddard and Garo grammar of Rev. Keith were the only books written in Garo for Garo students. The rest of the books were in Bengali which used to be taught in Bengali.⁶³

Observing the nature of books published in Garos, P.C. Kar stated that majority of the books in Garo language were primarily translated works instead of originally written in Garo. The rudiment of secular literature was not found though the age of written Garo language was about 50 years. In addition, Mr. J.R. Cunningham in his work *Notes on Education in the Garo Hills* in 1915 also opined that the education in Garo was in a blind alley and the school text books consisted of the translation of the books on catechism.⁶⁴

Literary Development among the Bodo and the Garo

A comparative study is attempted on the literary development of the Bodos and the Garos.

Missionary Literature

During the colonial period the missionary writers and government agents enriched the wealth of both the Bodo and the Garo literature to a considerable mark. The tradition of writing is important to preserve all aspects of an ethnic group. Here, a focus is on the language and literature of the Bodos and the Garos. All ancient languages including the Bodo and the Garo are rich in oral tradition and they have been handed down from one generation to the other. But they did not have the tradition of writing and preservation.

The tradition of writing in Bodo language came after the missionaries and the British Civil servants published the books on Bodo grammar, folk tales and rhymes etc. in the last half of the 19th century and early decades of the 20th century. The Christian missionaries started to study the structures of the Bodo language and attempted to write the same in the Roman script. They pioneered to convert the Bodo dialect into the written form using the Roman script. The missionaries such as Barker, Danforth and Ward from the American Baptist Mission while evangelizing led the Bodo dialect into a written form in 1848-49. They prepared a few religious books in the Bodo language using the Roman script. C. H. Hesselmeyer translated the prayer books into the Bodo language in 1861.⁶⁵

In 1884, Rev. Sidney Endle wrote *An Outline Grammar of Kachari or Mech Language* as spoken in Darrang, with illustrative sentences, notes, and reading. The book mainly dealt with the dialect of the Bodos of Darrang district. The writings of Rev. Sidney Endle paved the way for converting the Bodo dialect into a written language. He established his base at Bengbari in 1865. During his stay there he translated a part of the *New Testament* and wrote a handbook in Bodo language using the Roman script for the purpose of religious teaching in Sunday schools.⁶⁶ *An Outline Grammar of Kachari or Mech language* was the first ever book in Bodo language written in Roman script. Prior to him there were no such writings in Bodo language.⁶⁷ The monograph of his writing *The Kachari* dealt with the great Kachari race of Boro or Bodo and their social, customs, religion and folk traditions.⁶⁸ The book also describes about the collection of the folk tales, folk songs and beliefs of the Bodo Kachari. They

included *Dwima Dwisani Khourang* (How the rivers were made), *Sase Olsia Gothoni Khourang* (The Story of a Lazy Boy), *Bamun Arw bini Sakor ni Khourang* (The story of Brahman and his Servant) and *Raona Raoni ni Khourang* (Kachari Theory of Thunder and Lightning).⁶⁹

Notably W.M. Dundas wrote a book *Grammar and Dictionary of the Kachari Language*.⁷⁰ Similarly the work of Rev. L.O. Skrefsrud titled *A Short Grammar of the Mech or Bodo language* in 1889 dealt with dialects of Bodos comprising several localities and gave them grammatical form. In 1904, the book *Grammar and Dictionary of the Kachari* by Rev. A. Kristiansen also promoted the development of the Bodo language. The Bodo literature gained momentum when J. D. Anderson published his book *A Collection of Kachari Folk Tales* in 1895.⁷¹ He added three folk tales in the appendix II of Endle's *The Kacharis* viz; *Abrani Khourang* (Simpleton of Story), *Mwkhra arw Sessani Khourang* (The tale of the Monkey and the Hare) and *Sase Phalangi Gothoni Khourang* (The Story of a Merchant Boy).⁷²

In addition to these, Anderson's *A Collection of Kochari Folk Tales and Rhymes* added much colours to the Bodo literary works. They included- *Gotho Maoriani Khourang*. (The story of an orphan), *Mwi arw Daoka Dondani Khourang* (The story of the deer and the crow), *Bwrai Saseni Khourang* (The story of an old man), *Khana Khujani Khourang* (The story of the blind and cripple), *Bida Binanaoni Khourang* (The story of the brothers and sisters), *Khusung arw Mwkhraani Khourang* (The story of the tortoise and the monkey), *Sase Abra Bwraini Khourang* (The story of old simpleton), *Embu Bonglani Khourang*. (The story of the frog), *Bwrai Burini Khourang* (The story of the old man and old woman).⁷³

Other than the missionaries, there were also administrators and adventurers who contributed much to the development of the Bodo literature. Brian H. Hodgson's article *On the Origin, Location, Numbers, Creed, Customs, Character and Condition of the Koch, Bodo and Dhimal people* in 1849 and his book *Miscellaneous Essays relating to Indian subjects* in 1880;⁷⁴ G.A. Grierson's *Grammar and Dictionary of Kachari Language* 1906-1910⁷⁵ and *The Outline of the Tibeto-Burman Linguistic Morphology* by S. N. Wolfenden in 1929 were important works on the Bodo language.⁷⁶

The development of language and literature of the Garos cannot go without mentioning the contribution made by the Christian missionaries. They pioneered to take up the development of the language and literature while evangelizing among the Garos.

In 1868, Rev. Dr. M. Bronson came up with his *Phrases in English and Garo*. In 1869, W.J. Williamson brought out *A Vocabulary of the Garo and Koch dialects*. In 1873, Rev. T. J. Keith published his *Dictionary of the Garo language: Garo and Bengali –English*. In the same year Rev. Ramke Momin produced the best of the dictionaries *Bengali- Garo Dictionary*. All these works served as necessary ground work for the Garo language to develop.⁷⁷

Accordingly in 1868, I.J. Stoddard successfully printed the first Primer named *Skang Skiani Baksa* in Garo which was supervised by Dr. M. Bronson and supported by Rev. Ramke Momin. This was a small reading book running into 60 pages. This became the first ever catechism book which opened the space for Garo language into the world of written language. In 1872, Rev. T.J. Keith joined Goalpara Garo Mission as in-charge. No sooner, he mastered the Bengali and Garo languages and devoted himself for enriching Garo literary works. In 1874 he produced the first Grammar of the Garo language and in 1875 he prepared a first full-fledged Garo language dictionary. So far Bengali script was in use for Garo language and it continued to be so for about 45 years. Subjects such as arithmetic, history, geography etc. were taught in Bengali. The only books available for Garo students were Rev. Stoddard's Garo Primers and Rev. Keith's Garo Grammar.⁷⁸

Other than the missionaries, the British administrators and other personalities left valuable accounts for the Garos. Among them the earliest ever attempt to compile the Garo works was initiated by Francis Hamilton which appeared in the 6th volume of his work *Accounts of the District on Zila of Rongpur* in 1800. Following him Ramnath Chakrabarty who was the Garos Sarvarakar of the British government compiled *The Vocabulary of the Garo Language: English-Bengali-Garo* in 1865-1867.⁷⁹

From the above discussion without doubt it is understandable that the development of language and literature of Bodos and the Garos would not have been what they are today had not been the contribution of the missionaries.

Christian Literature

Most of the literary works of the Christian missionaries were focused with the objective of propagating the gospel message of Christ to people that they are sent to. Among the Bodos the missionaries made all efforts to win them over to Christianity through literature. In 1929, *Stories from the New Testament Bible*, *Bible Reading Books* and *Boro Songs Book* by Rev. A. Kristiansen appeared. His other works translation of *St Matthew's Gospel* in 1934, translation of the *New Testament Bible* in 1937, *Jisu ni Jiu Kourang* and *Gwjam Rodaini Batra* in 1939 were important contributions towards the development of Bodo language. Several works on Christianity by Maguram Mochahary viz; *Jisuni Maonai Dongnai* in 1938, *Baibelni Godan Radai* and *Gojam Radaini Batra* in 1939, *Sadhu Sunder Sing*, *Chandra Lila and Baibelni Solo* in 1942 and *Jisu Kristoni Modoini Solo* in 1944 added richness to the Bodo literature in the colonial period.⁸⁰

Among the Garos the missionaries engaged themselves in translating Gospels into Garo language from the English, Assamese and Bengali versions with the help of local missionaries such as Pandit Ramke Momin, Rangkhū Momin and Gongman Momin. In 1875, Rev. Keith edited the translation of the Gospel of Matthew up to its 20th chapter and got it printed. In 1876, the first translation of the Gospel of Matthew, Mark, John and Luke was completed in Bengali script. Rev. Ramke Momin started translating the Genesis under the supervision of Rev. Mason in 1878.⁸¹ Towards the end of 1895, the translation work of the '*New Testament*' was completed in Garo language. Rev. Phillips and Rev. Mason dedicated themselves for the task of preparation of other religious books. Among the important catechisms mention may be made of *Scripture Teaching* by Dr. Broadus and *An Outline Study of the Life of Christ* by Stevens and Burton. In 1896 the translation work of *Mirror of the Heart (Kotongni Janera)* by Madhunath Momin, in 1899 the preparation and printing of *Notes and Comments on the Gospel of Matthew* by Rev. Mason and in addition to

that the translation work of *Old Testament (Chengoni Manderang)* with the translation of *Leviticus* and *Numbers* by Rev. Phillips in 1912 speak volumes of the contribution of Christian literature in the development of Garo literature.⁸²

Juvenile Literature

Among the pioneering works of the Baptist Missionaries, mention may be made of their contribution in the development of juvenile literature among the Garos. The beginning was made with the translation of the work *Peep of Day (Sengbaa)* by Miss Mason in 1888. This book contained 32 lessons which dealt with instructional stories based on the gospel to provide a religious education in the schools for the beginners. In 1932 in the line of juvenile literature Miss L.M. Halbrook wrote *Bisarangna Sastroni Kata* (Scripture-Stories for Children). She also published another book entitled *Kandikgipa Nama Kata Bisaranga* (A Short Good Stories for Children). So far in the field of juvenile literature of the Garos no standard book was available till the publication of *Achik Kusikni Gitrang Chongipa Bisarangna aroba Dalkalgiarangna* (A Song for Achik Children and Youth) by Miss Ruth Teasdale in 1942. Following her Mr. Sudhindro K. Marak wrote and published a book *Achik Bisarangna Gitrang* (Songs for Achik Children) consisting of 25 self composed songs and tunes.⁸³

In the same way several folktales were written for Bodo children by the missionaries such as Rev S. Endle and Rev. J.D. Anderson. Rev. S. Endle's collection of folktales included *Dwima Dwisani Khourang* (How the rivers were made), *Sase Olsia Gothoni Khourang* (The Story of the Lazy Boy), *Bamun Arw bini Sakor ni Khourang* (The Brahman and his Servant) and *Raona Raoni ni Khourang* (Kachari Theory of Thunder and Lightning).⁸⁴ J.D. Anderson also published a book entitled *A Collection of Kachari Folk Tales* in 1895 with a collection of ten folk tales such as *Gotho Maoriani Khourang* (The story of an orphan), *Mwi arw Daoka Dondani Khourang* (The story of the deer and the crow), *Bwrai Saseni Khourang* (The story of an old man), *Khana Khujani Khourang* (The story of the blind and cripple), *Bida Binanaoni Khourang* (The story of the brothers and sisters), *Khusung arw Mwkhrani Khourang* (The story of the tortoise and the monkey), *Sase Abra Bwraini Khourang*

(The story of old simpleton), *Embu Bonglani Khourang*. (The story of the frog) and *Bwrai Burini Khourang* (The story of the old man and old woman).⁸⁵ He also added another three folk tales in the appendix II of Endle's *The Kacharis* viz; *Abrani Khourang* (Simpleton of Story), *Mwkhra arw Sessani Khourang* (The tale of the Monkey and the Hare) and *Sase Phalangi Gothoni Khourang* (The story of the merchant Boy).⁸⁶ Rupnath Brahma also has to his credit a poem for children *Lekha Rwnghla Gunda Jaya* (Learning does not make one villain).⁸⁷ Madaram's poem *Lekha Pwrwng* (Teach to Learn)⁸⁸ and Darendra Nath Basumatary's *Jwhwlao Jaliya Gothopwr Jwng* (We are the Brave Children)⁸⁹ also added to the improvement of the Bodo literature.

Secular Literature

It was after 73 years (1868-1941) there emerged a new trend of secular literature among the Garos with the active participation of young Garo collegians. Under the guidance of Prof. Haward Dennison Momin, they started a literary bi-monthly entitled *Achik Kurang* (voice of the Garo) which included the contents of poems, essays, satires, belles letters, translated short stories and many others. Besides this, the emergence of journals paved another step ahead for the development language and literature of the Garos. Initially under the initiative of Rev. M.C. Mason and Rev. E.G. Phillips *Achikni Ripeng* (friend of the Garos) appeared as the first ever monthly journal among the Garos in 1879. The volume of the journal included the contents of religion, translation of Gospels, Garo poems and Christian movement in Assam as well as Garo Hills. Following him, in 1912, Madhunath G. Momin and Jobang D Marak jointly published literary monthly entitled *Pringprang* (Morning Star). This journal brought awareness about the western news and views among the Garos. In 1927, Jobang D. Marak and Simison R. Sangma jointly wrote a book *Achik Aganani, Bak-I* (The Garo Folklore, Part-I).⁹⁰ Some other secular journals like *Sengbaa* in 1933, *Chibisik* (a fountain) by Sudhindro Marak in 1943, *Achikna Uiani* (for the knowledge of the Garos) by Sri Rangam G. Momin in 1945 emerged during the colonial period as the masterpiece of Garo literature. In 1939 Dhoronsing K. Sangma also published a book *Achik Golporang Baksa*.⁹¹

Towards the second decade of twentieth century another trends of literary advancement stirred up among the Bodos. Other than the missionaries there were also prominent writers who came into sight and took initiative independently to uplift the Bodos from backwardness of illiteracy. Kalicharan Brahma, the founder of the Brahma religion among the Bodos was one such who declared crusade against illiteracy, social malpractice, habit of drinking and backwardness. Under his influence educated Bodo youths like Satish Chandra Basumatary, Rupnath Brahma, Haladhar Brahma, Mada Ram Brahma and many others actively participated for the cause of social upliftment movement through their writings both morally and physically.⁹²

In the history of Bodo literature the journey of writings in their own language started with Ganga Charan Kachari's work *Bodoni Phisa O Aiyen* on customary laws of the Bodos. This was the first book in Bodo language. It was published by Habraghat Bodo Sanmilani using Bengali script in 1915. The book intended to eradicate the existing social malpractices and lead towards the right path. The reform movement initiated by Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma led to the formation of *Bodo Chatra Sanmilani* in 1919 by a group of young enthusiasts who took the start up process to initiate literary activities. In 1920, the first magazine in Bodo language entitled *Bibar* was published in handwritten form. Satish Chandra Basumatary was the first chief editor of it. After the publication of *Bibar*, other journal like *Zenthoka* (1926), *Hathorki Hala* (1932) and *Alongbar* (1938) were published. Many enthusiastic poets and authors devoted themselves and exposed the knowledge and wisdom through their writings of poems, essays, stories and plays.⁹³

The birth of The *Bodo Chatra Sanmilani* (1919) exerted remarkable influence in the conscience of the new generation western educated Bodo youths in the state. Bodo students from different districts of Assam such as Goalpara, Nagaon, Kamrup, Lakhimpur and even from West Bengal participated in the annual sessions of the *Sanmilani*. The participants recited poems, read out stories, essays and delivered lectures on socio-economic and cultural aspects and shared new thoughts on the development of Bodo language and literature. These sessions of the *Sanmilani*

gradually became the means of unity among the scattered Bodo population to work together for the development of the Bodo language and literature.⁹⁴

For the convenience of literary study, the Bodo language and literature have been classified into four distinct periods which are as mentioned below:

1. The era of missionary began from the publication of book entitled: *An Outline Grammar of Kachari or Mech Language* by Rev. S. Endle in 1884, up to the formation of *Bodo Chatra Sanmilan* in 1919.
2. The *Bibar Muga* or *Bibar* period commenced in 1920 and continued up to the publication of another magazine known as *Alongbar* in 1938.
3. The *Alongbar Muga* or *Alongbar* period started in 1938 with the publication of the periodical *Alongbar* and lasted up to 1951.
4. The period after the formation of the *Bodo Sahitya Sabha* in 1952 is regarded as the modern period of the Bodo literature.

However, there is a difference among the litterateurs in fixing the dates of these periods. Brajendra Kr. Brahma puts very distinct dates for these periods which are as follows. From 1884 to 1918 he periodised as Missionary period, from 1919 to 1937 as *Bibar* period, from 1938 to 1951 as *Alongbar* period and from 1952 onwards as Modern period.⁹⁵

Further, critically analyzing the literature of Bodo language Riju Kumar Brahma divided them into three phases *viz*, Early Age: (a) Religious worship hymn (b) Oral literature; Middle Age: (a) Missionary and non-missionary literature, (b) Renaissance of Bodo literature (from 1919 to 1952) and Modern Age (from 1952 onwards).⁹⁶

Regardless of the views of periodisation, the period from 1919-1952 witnessed the appearance of large volumes of secular literature in the history of Bodo literature which included journals and magazines, novels, short stories, dramas, prose, poems and songs, *pandulipis* or social law books etc. These literary creations mainly flourished in the '*Bibar*' and '*Alongbar*' periods. Various standards of writings in this period highly patronized the Bodo literature.

This phase of the Bodo literature regarded as the *Bibar* period laid the foundation of Bodo literature. The main objective of the *Bibar* magazine was to enrich the Bodo language and literature and also to bring social, cultural awareness in the contemporary Bodo society. The magazine was multilingual as the articles published in it were in Bodo, Assamese and Bangla languages. Their writings touched the branches of literature like prose, poems, songs, essays, stories etc.⁹⁷ The main architects of the *Bibar* period were Satish Chandra Basumatary, Rupnath Brahma, Padmashree Madaram Brahma, Darendra Nath Basumatary, Kitish Brahma, Prasanna Kumar Boro Kakhlyar and many others. They were versatile genius as poets, dramatists, freedom fighters and politicians. Important works during this period were *Bima Fisa*, *Ja Habab*, *Habab Fongbai Godai* (all poems), *Jenthoka* (1925)⁹⁸ and most importantly *Nalabuha* the first One-Act-Play by Satish Chandra Basumatary contributed much to the Bodo literature.⁹⁹

Konthai-Methai a joint compilation of poems and songs by Rupnath Brahma and Modaram Brahma was published in 1923.¹⁰⁰ Rupnath Brahma also wrote Assamese, Bangla and English prose and essays such as *Boro Kacharies*, *Boro Jatir Songskipt Poriso* (Assamese), *Boro Kachari Jatir Somondei* (Assamese), *Milan Songit* (Bangla poem) and *Ahaban* (Bangla).¹⁰¹

In 1926 at the age of 23 years, Modaram Brahma composed a mystic poem entitled *Aroj* (The Pray). Most of the subject matters of his poems were based on nationalism. His masterpiece *Boroni Gudi Sibsha Arw Aroj* was published in 1926 and for this work he has been awarded *Padmashree*, a civilian award by the Government of India in 1988.¹⁰² Besides the poet and essayist Modaran Brahma was also a good drama writer as well. His dramas like *Raimali* (1926), *Dimapur Nwngwr Bainai*, *Sodang Bwirari* were most popular during *Bibar* period.¹⁰³

Darendra Nath Basumatary started his journey of life by writing his first drama *Raja Nilambar*.¹⁰⁴ It was a historical drama translated from Assamese and Bangla dramas. Besides this some other dramas written by him were *Sukharu-Dukharu*, *Bima Batul*, *Juli- Bijuli*, *Sitrangoda*, *Rangalu Jwhwlao*, *Onason-Kalason*, *Nihari*, *Donek Raja* and *Sonani Maibong*.¹⁰⁵ Among the most fabulous songs that went recorded were *Jwhwlao Jaliya Gothofor Jong* (We are the brave children), *Ma Ise Mwjang Dinwini*

Horalai (what a beautiful night) and *Jagai Jennai* (beginning). Most of the writing style of his poems and songs were patriotic and it depicted the elements of romanticism and spirit of nationalism.¹⁰⁶

Kitish Brahma's poems reflect the deep philosophical thoughts of life.¹⁰⁷ Among the most important poems left by him are *Gasa Saonai*, *Okhanaisi*, *Bwisagu Garja* etc. The poem *Gasa Saonai* was his first poem which appeared in the *Bibar* magazine's first edition of 3rd issue.¹⁰⁸

Prasanna Kumar Boro Kakhlyar's literary works were *Khemta Gaon*, *Benar Gaon*, *Bashir Puran*, *Bathou Bishoi*, *Adhya Kandha* (1914), *Bathunam Bwikhaguni Gidu* (1920) and *Ahom- Boroni Daoha* (History). Among the dramas of Prasanna Kumar Kakhlyar's creation were *Laxmanar Shaktishel* (Assamese), *Bardwi Sikhla*, *Daoka Rajani Gyan*, *Jungni Boro Raja Arw Bithangni Mungdangkasin Bhaotina*, and *Ahom- Boroni Daoha*.¹⁰⁹

The *Hampe Phalla* (1924) of Moniram Islary is regarded as the first theatrical Bodo drama. He has other creations to his credit which were translated from the Bangla language. These were *Bima Batul* (Step Mother), *Mewar Kumari*, *Niyoti*, *Basspati Mishra*, *Pap Mukthi* and *Raj Puja*.¹¹⁰

Some other prolific writers of the *Bibar* period such as Bishnu Charan Basumatary, Jagendar Nath Kachari, Porchuram Brahma, Jolodhar Brahma¹¹¹, Moniram Islary, Nabin Brahma, Umesh Chandra Mwsahary etc. were credited for their valuable writings in Bodo literature. Moreover their writings of poems, essays and dramas gave the the Bodo language the shape of invincibility and broadened the written language.¹¹²

Another important period of Bodo literature was the *Alongbar* period which commenced with the periodical publication of *Alongbar* magazine in 1938 jointly edited by Pramad Chandra Brahma and Khagendra Nath Brahma.¹¹³ Enthusiastic Bodo youths like Darendra Nath Basumatary, Kali Kumar Lahary, Ishan Mushahary, Ananda Mochahary, Moniram Sumpramhary, Mohini Mohan Brahma etc. and many others contributed their valuable articles in this magazine. It was a renaissance in the literary

aspect of the Bodo society. During this period dramas, songs and poems came into prominence. Besides, series of magazines and poems like *Bodosa Bithorai* (1932), *Sanshree arw Mushsri* (1937), *Hathoki Hala* (1940), *Sonani Mala* (1940), *Phame* (1940) and *Nayak* (1942) marked the period with new trends of writing style in the Bodo literature. The notable change was the shift from classicalism to romanticism. That was the great transformation in the nature of Bodo writers from the *Bibar* to *Alongbar* period.¹¹⁴ The poems like *Hayeni Suphin*, *Dwi Bajrum*, *Khamaini Hisab*, *Gami Gwdan*, *Bima-Fisa* etc. were most popular creations of Pramod Chandra Brahma of *Alongbar* period. With his writings he brought new trends in the writing style of the poems. He used both subjective and objective nature in his poems. Therefore Heremba Narzary regarded him as the *Alongbar* (polestar) of Bodo poem.¹¹⁵

Ishan Mushahary was one of the greatest romantic poets of the *Alongbar* period. He also wrote *Abari* the first short story of Bodo and published it in *Hathorkhi Hala* edited by Pramod Chandra Brahma. This made the foundation of short story in Bodo literature strong. In his writing the skill of presentation, characterization and the plot of the story were highly commendable and were of high standard.¹¹⁶

It is to be noted that the *Alongbar* period of Bodo literature witnessed the intensity of Indian freedom movement. From the writings during this period it has been revealed that the Bodo writers had strong feelings of nationality. It is an undeniable fact that during that period due to the participation of the enlightened Bodo youths in the freedom struggle movement, the literature of the Bodo retarded to a great extent.

Endnotes

- ¹ P.C. Choudhury cited that the “word *Kamrupa* derived from the Austric or Alpine origin formations like *Kamru* or *Kamrut*, the name of lesser divinity in Santali which justifies the land associated with magic or necromancy. The traditional origin of the name of *Kamarupa* portrayed in *Gopatha Brahmana*associated with the Austric-Alpine culture of Assam.” in *The History of Civilization of The People of Assam to the Twelfth Century A.D.*, Spectrum Publications, Guwahati, 1987, p. 35.
- ² *Ibid.*, p. 185.
- ³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴ Romila Thapar cites social and ritual obligations in accordance with *varna*, in *Early India*, p. 207.
- ⁵ P.C. Choudhury, *op.cit.*, pp. 377-379.
- ⁶ S.N. Sarma, *A Socio-Economic and Cultural History of Medieval Assam (1200-1800 A.D.)*, Bina Library, Guwahati, 2001, p. 157-159.
- ⁷ S.L. Baruah, *op.cit.*, pp. 425-427.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 427-428.
- ⁹ T. Misra, *Literature and Society in Assam*, Omsons Publications, Guwahati, 1987, p. 59
- ¹⁰ S.L. Baruah, *A Comprehensive History of Assam*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, New Delhi, 2005, p. 510.
- ¹¹ T. Misra, *op.cit.*, p. 60.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 59.
- ¹³ H.K. Barpujari (Ed.), *The Comprehensive History of Assam, Vol-IV*, Publication Board of Assam, Guwahati, 2004, p. 348.
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- ²¹ H.K. Barpujari (1980), *op.cit.*, p. 309.
- ²² H.K. Barpujari (Ed.), *op.cit.*, p. 349.
- ²³ S.K. Sarmah, *op.cit.*, p. 74.
- ²⁴ H.K. Barpujari (Ed.), *op.cit.*, p. 349.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 350.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 352.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 78.
- ²⁸ B.C. Allan, *Assam District Gazetteers, Goalpara*, Govt. of Assam, DHAS, Guwahati, 2012, pp. 135-136. & *Ibid.*
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 82.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 84.
- ³² *Ibid.*, p. 85.
- ³³ W.W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Assam, Vol-II*, B.R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1982, p. 93.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 97-98.
- ³⁵ S.K. Sarmah, *op.cit.*, p. 79.

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- ³⁶ D.P. Barooah, *Assam District Gazetteers, Goalpara district*, Govt. of Assam, Guwahati, 1979, p. 452. & W.W. Hunter, *op.cit.*, p.99.
- ³⁷ S.K. Sharma, *op.cit.*, pp. 88-89.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 87-88.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 88-89.
- ⁴⁰ C.S. Mullan, *Census of India, 1931, Volume III, Assam, Part I-Report*, Subsidiary Table V, Government of India, Calcutta, 1932, p.163.
- ⁴¹ S.K. Sarmah, *op.cit.*, p. 89.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.
- ⁴³ J.B. Bhattacharjee, *The Garos and the English*, Radiant Publishers, New Delhi, 1978, p. 217.
- ⁴⁴ P.C. Kar, *Glimpses of the Garos*, Garo Hills Book Emporium, Meghalaya, 1982, pp. 112-113, 134
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 114-115.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.135.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.120.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 117.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.118.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 135-136.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 124, 127-130.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 133, 136.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 130, 137.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 123-124.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 119.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 119-120.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.122, 137.

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- ⁵⁸ S.K. Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 91.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 94.
- ⁶⁰ P.C. Kar, *op.cit.*, pp. 152-153.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 167.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, pp.175-177.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 120-121.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 169-170.
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- ⁶⁷ Sekhar Brahma, *Religion of the Boros and their Socio-Cultural Transition*, DVS Publishers, Guwahati, 2011, p.103.
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- ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 55-68.
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- ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 145-147.
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