CHAPTER - VIII

Conclusion

We have traversed a long way of the life and legacy of Ambikagiri Roy Chowdhury from 1905 to 1967 and in an attempt to rediscover a personality today, have come face to face with a man who lived life to the tilt, who had ranged over diverse fields and areas and left his imprint. This son of Assam rooted and moored to his native locale strived throughout his life to establish his beloved Assam as a strong, vibrant, resurgent entity. He appears in many forms, visionary, poet, lyricist, radical, anarchist, revolutionary, he has achieved an extension of significance whatever he ventured into.

For forty years he was the voice of Assam, loved and honoured as a man and a poet not simply by a few discerning critique but by people from different walks of life. As we embarked on a journey of his life we see him transforming into a revolutionary, an anarchist in his early youth imbued with radical thinking. A man of steadfast will and purpose, Roy Chowdhury has been recognized as one of the greatest literary figure of the Assamese literature. His life contains so many interesting elements that we risk the temptation of transforming him into a myth alien to the reality that surrounded him during his life time. His voice was the growl of a lone lion voice in his concern over the future of the Assamese people. His voice was heard and his influence was felt but “has been much maligned and misrepresented in recent terms as a narrow chauvinist an ultranationalist and an anticommunist”,¹ but his perceived apprehension and his role as a spokesman of those prevailing apprehension in the minds of the Assamese people are increasingly becoming evident in the post independence years. His program, speeches and his plans to usher in the concept of a very strong regionalism are reflective of a longing to promote an Assamese nationalism with its distinctive identity. His personal background and inclination turned him towards dissatisfaction with the prevailing situation and he moved on to a new direction even becoming firmly involved in the complications of an edgy time.

The most enduring of his works are the poetry songs and political essays that we have already discussed in the previous chapters.

He is the master of the art of simple living. His essays are perpetual inducement to others to know and practice whatever is required for the larger interest of one’s own nationality. To an age of fundamental complexities he came with a wholesome message of nationalism and humanism. In his expectation of a general transformation of society he pours out his feelings, chiefly in his poetry and songs, as he was the most expressive writer of his age, voicing the hopes and despair in relation to an increasingly complicated situation unfolding at various levels right from political to economic and socio-cultural. A solid conviction scattered through all his works, one finds a mad pursuit of creating a society full of vigour and vitality, a society progressively moving ahead making its presence felt in the wider national context.

This fiery poet, with his blazing and vigorous steps had in the forefront of his mind the welfare of Assam, more than that the regeneration of the youth of Assam. This again is but one aspect of the poetic personality of this interesting person for his mind had a reach that also covered the larger problem of the world.

The fear of having swamped, by immigrant from the neighboring regions and of losing one’s cultural identity, as a nation consequent to the erosion of economic and political rights - still a lingering issue in the present political scenario – was expressed loudly in the writings of Roy Chowdhury published in the early part of the second decade of 20th century.

For the understanding of Roy Chowdhury and his political importance it is necessary to distinguish rather sharply between the immediate purposes for which he setup parallel organization even being an active worker of the Congress and the influence he exerted. What he attempted was not a great success, but he did exert influence in the political sphere of Assam. Two distinct patterns emerge in Roy

Chowdhury’s political ideals from 1926 onwards. That was the year of Pandu Congress (1926) and he was working enthusiastically as a dedicated Congress activist. In the same year Roy Chowdhury came up with the idea of Asom Sangrakshini Sabhā and formally it was established in the same Congress pandal.

With a comprehensive framework he is seen addressing political and social issues put forward most unambiguously. His manner of introducing the Sabhā was in the highest degree of significance. The problem confronting Assam at a crucial historical phase and the manner in which Sangrakshini Sabhā responded to it mark its critical stages. He intended to secure the preponderance of Assam even in pursuance of a wider political goal as provincial Congress engaged itself in a political struggle directed by national leadership. The whole idea of Sanrakshini Sabhā was to project and promote the interest of Assam which gets obscured sometimes by the political compulsion of a larger political movement. For him Sabhā was to provide a public forum for people who would be working with utmost dedication for implementing the program announced by it. In a period of change and turmoil that intervened in the course of history of a country Roy Chowdhury’s social concern and moral commitment during which he addressed some of it’s more pressing politico – economic issues is a matter of great significance. He did not merely guide the Sangrakshini Sabhā, he gave it an ideology and a technique of action. He brought that idealism into the realm of politics and demonstrated its viability. In his approach we see a non-confrontationist attitude and a profound indigenous root. He evolved a pattern of thought and a program of political action in pursuance of his clearly defined objectives. The whole idea of the Sangrakshini Sabhā as conceived and executed by Roy Chowdhury was to emphasize the need for collective self assertion by the Assamese in order to resist their economic and cultured marginalization in their own land. 3

The grouping scheme of the cabinet mission created a stir in the political life of contemporary Assam. The perceived threat of the inclusion of Assam with Eastern Bengal had in fact generated a charged political atmosphere. Quite apprehensive of

it’s possible implication for the future of Assam Roy Chowdhury responded vigorously launching his anti-grouping campaign. Through his writings in Dekā Asom Roy Chowdhury created a high level of public awareness and prepared them to stand against grouping. The idea of the formation of the Asom Atma Rakshi Bāhini and the response Roy Chowdhury was getting from different parts of Assam has already been referred to in a previous chapter. It was an aggressive and intense campaign launched by Roy Chowdhury as suggested by the evidences cited earlier has not been given due recognition. Finally this whole hearted effort of Jatiya Mahā Sabha and APCC saved Assam from a possible inclusion in Pakistan.

Of all the great poets in our literature no other is so consciously, so completely, so magnificently dedicated to the cause of indigenous Assamese people. One of our greatest literary figure, and the reader will do well to begin with the ‘Tumi’ which show him at his very best and it has been referred to in a previous chapter although we conveniently skipped its literary evaluation.

For 40 years he pursued the objectives defined after a prolonged process of thinking, sometime he faced indifference, sometimes ridicule, working bravely and cheerfully towards what he believed most urgently required for Assam and the Assamese people. We have already mentioned that he was more closely associated with the social and political struggles of the age. Roy Chowdhury went vigorously to work on what he thought to the most important task of the hour i.e. to promote Assamese national interest and we always have the impression of a keen, honest mind with utmost devotion to the cause of Assam and Assamese people.

Transported from his Barpeta origin to Guwahati at a time when the spirit of Swadeshi had engulfed Bengal and some ripple effects were being felt in Assam as Roy Chowdhury himself narrated in the autobiographical essay “Mor Jivan Dhumuhār Esāti’ A young enthusiastic Roy Chowdhury ingratiated the spirit, mostly influenced by Govinda Lahiri, manager Assam Valley Trading Company. The euphoria that greeted the beginning of 20th Century in Bengal a large scale protest against curzon’s

partition of Bengal, merging Assam with eastern Bengal never provoke a much upsurge in Assam but at the same time a group of young boys led by Roy Chowdhury did embark on a path of protest marked by sporadic subversive activities as we have already referred to in the first chapter. It was a phase of youthful spirit and activities right from composing patriotic play, culminating in the Fuller incident that eventually landed him at Barpeta as an intern. The years spent in Barpeta can be seen as the most creative in literary and cultural field. In fact a cultural renaissance he launched initiating vigorous movement in drama followed by music school, circus party, and gymnastics. Roy Chowdhury engaged himself in these activities urged by a spirit of nationalism.

Two things are manifestly clear in this phase:

(a) Promotion of everything indigenous i.e. a clear manifestation of a nationalistic urge.

(b) A desire to erase the anarchist tag that landed him in Barpeta. His good spirit and enthusiasm were contagious. Eventually amnestied in 1917 he left for Dibrugarh to earn a livelihood engaging in different activities like music teacher, railway clerk and more importantly he joined ‘Assam Bandhav’ as sub-editor. As usual he was intensely involved in the cultural sphere, participating in varied activities in Dibrugarh. He entertained people there even as a chokra dancer that had quite a repercussion in the media.5 Internship at Barpeta put an end to Roy Chowdhury’s first introduction to revolutionary euphoria. His brief Dibrugarh sojourn ended in 1917 and he finally landed up in Guwahati with a burning zeal inside him to venture into the world of journalism, once settled in Guwahati he started vigorously to work on his dream project “a press and a journal of his own.” The press he did establish passionately and launched Cetana, as we are well acquainted now with the ideas behind the launching of Cetana.

The journal continued publication through the difficult days of national upheaval and personal setbacks until he was imprisoned and his press burnt down. Aruna Press rendered considerable free service to the Congress Committee. The

growth of the press was central to the development of public politics and thus to the definition and expression of concepts of politics. This discourse could be used to claim a stake in national affairs. The press and the amorphous pressure, interests and opinions understood by the term public opinion, were part of the political press. The political influence of the press was of significance from the point of view of the creation of public opinion in an era of great political happenings and played a major role in the development of national political campaigns. It also offered possibility of a pluralism of opinion. Roy Chowdhury’s Cetana and Dekā Asom were central to the process of politicization strengthening sustaining and widening of a specific political consciousness simultaneously with the national political awareness. His journals can not be judged by modern journalistic standard with sophisticated technology, but it was initiated with a missionary zeal. The marked level of criticism that was voiced that became more pronounced during those days of a nationwide struggle was such that opposition to government policy could be freely encouraged. What Roy Chowdhury precisely wanted was a specific political consciousness to familiarize the people with specific problems confronting Assam and he did generate a level of consciousness. By the time Roy Chowdhury launched Cetana he had already established his position as a promising poet.

In the editorials of Cetana he showed that he was a constructive thinker visionary power. In Roy Chowdhury we have the rare combination of dreamer and the profound social thinker. Himself being a very vital and restless type he thought in terms of manliness, self respect, national existence and a society which could renovate itself by forsaking narrow and high bound ideas.⁶

In 1919 (Cetana editorial) made a statement that is explicitly sub-nationalist in tone and carriage much relevance in present Indian political set up. He stated, in larger India all its inhabitants are included in a great entity, but even then each one has his particular characteristics. Among these characteristics, apart from one’s local customs and mannerism one’s mother tongue is also one of the markers of identity. If one can fulfill oneself by nourishing these characteristics, then only can the larger

---

⁶ P. C. Goswami. Op cit,
national life of India thrive heart-fully. P. C. Goswami rightly says that, “It is difficult to translate Ambikagiri properly because of the volcanic hard hitting lava like style of this writer, but that his vision was prophetic has been amply proved by the situation in India at this date."

His first encounter with Gandhi (1921) was to have a profound impact on his subsequent political activities. His political philosophy underwent a change from the revolutionary euphoria (Swadeshi days) to matured political thinking and act that also entailed a phase of suffering in jail. He had no political ambition when he got into congress as a dedicated activist. By 1926 he became rather a creation of his purpose and eventual aim in an increasingly political atmosphere. Never being detached from Congress Roy Chowdhury was averse to the attitude of the Congress leaders of Assam who he thought were concerned with all India issues than with the immediate and pressing problems of Assam. We see him demanding more focused attention of Assam Congress leaders and the pages of Dekā Asom are replete with such demands. He therefore considered it his duty to make the people increasingly conscious about their problems before involving them extensively in national issues, Being a strong advocate of strong regional nationalism Roy Chowdhury offered the concept of nationalism which saw India not as one nation but as a great nation a ‘Mahadesh’ which was a conglomerate of many small nationalities. His view on nationalism is based on identity distinctiveness which according to him is very profound in the geo-political entity called India. According to him no single Hindu or Muslim ruler had been able to nullify the existence of small nations within India. It was only because the identities of various nations were jeopardized by the imposition of foreign rule that they had temporally agreed to sacrifice their national interest for a common cause. But once India attained independence the smaller nationalities would assert their identities. Hence his insistence on strong, distinct and healthy Assamese identity within the greater political identity which he viewed to be a federal structure (Bharat Jukta Rastra). Roy Chowdhury carried a deep seated anxiety caused by a threat perception of Assam’s existence being threatened by an increasing dominance of its economy,

---
politics and cultural life by outsiders (including other Indian nations). According to Roy Chowdhury while the Assamese leadership was partially responsible for encouraging the free flow of outsiders into the region, the Assamese people themselves lacked self-confidence, self-consciousness and self-respect, human qualities that enabled a race of people to strengthen its roots in its own homeland. Roy Chowdhury was impatient of the tendency to glorify the past without ensuring the means for a better and more meaningful tomorrow. He considered such hollow bragging as the worst kind of mental servitude. To Roy Chowdhury the only means of overcoming such servitude is through the strengthening of the national consciousness, hence his relentless effort through “Cetana and Deka Asom” to raise the level of national consciousness. His entire political thinking has this sub-nationalist overtone. It is very interesting to go through the linear progression of his political ideas from revolutionary radicalism through sub-nationalism culminating in the deeper political philosophy of universalism manifested in the booklet, “The ultimate goal of man and lasting peace”.

His engagement with Congress that stretched beyond 1926, the formation of the Asom Sangrakshini Sabha, articulating a different notion of nationality (Jāti) and Nation (Mahājati) had been discussed in detail in chapter (3) and (4). In fact his political career started with Congress and his active involvement in Congress continued upto 1930 holding varied responsibilities right from organizational work to constructive activities and a massive propaganda drive.

Often condemned as a chauvinist for his advocacy of regional exclusiveness, Roy Chowdhury viewed cultural and linguistic nationalism as native to a particular region and needs to be promoted and preserved. Therefore when people from one region settle down in another, there should be a conscious endeavour of the outsiders to assimilate with the local people. But if they attempt to impose their ‘vested interests’ would result in an atmosphere of tension and conflict. Roy Chowdhury’s nationalism had this element of assimilation and inclusion which he strongly put forward. So candid is his views on the protection of regional distinctiveness that Roy Chowdhury was brandishing a protest against this label of chauvinist and asserted that

10. S. N. Sarma, loc cit, pp.1031-1032.
11. Roy Chowdhury souvenir, published by Asom Sāhitya Sabhā, p.8
the Assamese people would march towards greater Indian nationalism and even towards internationalism only if their own house was in order.

But it has become crystal clear in the study that Roy Chowdhury, perceived as a chauvinist Assamese is a wrong notion that can be substantiated with evidence that has been consulted. Medini Chowdhury, a renowned novelist made an observation that established Roy Chowdhury not as a chauvinist but a visionary propagating the idea of a greater Assamese society. In todays Indian political system a rise of regional nationalism has become a real-politik where more and more provincial autonomy is in high demand. But in the pre independence era Roy Chowdhury propagated this idea as a viable political option and necessity for a democratic political future of India. In the Panchayati Raj System put forward by Roy Chowdhury has also been proved essential for a thriving democracy like India where decentralization of power to the grass root level has been discussed in detail.

Generally perceived as an anti-Bengali Roy Chowdhury emerged quite contrary in the study undertaken and this has been substantiated with a number of reliable evidences. One such evidence was during the language movement of the 1960’s and it has been highlighted by Mahendra Bora in his autobiography Upalā Nadir Dare. Bora narrates an incident in detail about how Roy Chowdhury sheltered a Bengali family in his house against public wrath.12 There are other sources available that present him not as an anti-Bengali but as a humanist who made enormous efforts to forge a feeling of unity among different communities living in Assam. One cardinal point of his philosophy is to live and let live and he believed that the cultural diversity that prevails in India makes this nation a multi-cultural pluralist entity where in all composing states should strive for the preservation of this cultural diversity. The constitution of India enshrined the principle of unity in diversity but even before independence Roy Chowdhury exactly propounded this principle that later on became a constitutional reality. Perhaps Bhupen Hazarika, an admirer of Roy Chowdhury was inspired to write the song: Mor Aaik Bhāl Pāon Bulile Anar Aik Jano Ghīn Karātō Bujāba. (I love my mother, it does not mean that I hate others.)

12. Mahendra Bora, Upalā Nadir Dare, pp. 243-245.
The historiography of nationalism in Assam must also include the cultural component of Roy Chowdhury’s nationalism. It was as much, if not more, a source of inspiration as his exposure to the economic consequences of the British rule in Assam. It was perhaps this influence that gave Roy Chowdhury hope of living through his literary works after death. The springs of the cultural dimension of Roy Chowdhury’s nationalism lie in the assertiveness of an exclusive identity during this phase of colonial dispensation. This restless individual seeking salvation was not to live for himself alone but was to attain his goal in social context. The society in which he was born had long been emasculated politically, economically and culturally by an empire which was at once the most sophisticated the well entrenched and culturally the most degrading.

By 1926 he became rather certain of his purpose and aim in an increasingly political atmosphere and through Dekā Asom he began to make serious political points. While his interest had been aroused in the possibility of change he was clearly disappointed by what he had seen and experienced in the context of the politics of Assam. We see his projection of the specific concern of Assam and his articulation through various mediums like writings, correspondence with all India leaders as well as the leaders of Assam on issues like immigration, Sylhet, Grouping etc. Roy Chowdhury remained a lone voice throughout the period of the growth of Congress and his views were not well received by the provincial Congress leadership being more increasingly aligned with all Indian leadership. His ideas and actions were more radical than contemporary political thinking and action. Had there been a positive response to his appeals from the government machinery particularly in the immigrant issue there would not have emerged the complicated problem on the same issue in Assam for the last four decades.13

13. The emergence of Assam movement from 1979 to 1985 on the sole issue of illegal immigrants from neighbouring Bangladesh assumed a large proportion becoming one of the biggest student movements in the history of the world spearheaded by AASU. In the wake of the movement Assam accord was signed in 1985 and Asom Gana Parishad came into power in Assam. This period also witnessed the emergence of insurgency in Assam with the political goal of a sovereign Assam. Opposite political formation like AUDF and subsequently AIUDF played an active political role for the protection of minority interest. North East India Council for Social Science Research has published a number of books on this issue by distinguished authors like Hiren Gohain and Deba Prasad Baruah.
The notion of an alternative scheme of popular politics within the Indian National movement is expecting too much in the period under discussion (1926-56). During the period, popular politics organized independently of the Congress was getting overshadowed by the larger presence of Congress. In this context whatever Roy Chowdhury did through the Asom Sangrakshini Sabha and the Asom Jatiya Mahā Sabha is indeed worthy of academic discourse as it still retains the contemporariness. In post independence Assam a growing disillusionment with Congress politics was clearly discernible in relation to some issues and Roy Chowdhury’s appeal for national self defense began to be viewed with interest and a new significant attached to his views by the people of Assam from the days of Assam agitation on foreigners issue (1979-1985). But the man who initiated a resounding patriotic move in Assam died a disappointed and embittered man. Bedanar Ulka – written at the later stage of his life carriage an impression of a disillusioned man who though cynical at the fag end of life, is honest in his unhappy outlook on society. His poetry of this period is generally rhetorical, manly and sincere reflective of that particular mood.

In this study another very significant aspect of the freedom movement has been analyzed and it is the anti-grouping movement in the light of the evidences that has been found. Cabinet mission’s plane of grouping Indian states into a number of categories and the subsequent fall out that Assam’s political future had been tagged with Eastern Bengal created an atmosphere of confusion and insecurity in Assam. These facts are quite well known in Assam and the role Gopinath Bordoloi played in that crisis has already been discussed. What is forgotten here is the role played by Ambikagiri Roy Chowdhury to create a very strong public opinion against grouping and the enormous efforts put by him to make Assamese people aware of an impending danger is a largely forgotten episode in the history of Assam. In this study quite an absorbing amount of sources have to a large extent proves that Roy Chowdhury was equally instrumental in bringing about the desired anti-grouping feeling. He even went to the extent of creating militia force to resist the Muzahid invasion of Assam that had been planned in detail. In this regard Roy Chowdhury spent a substantial amount to acquire a map detailing the proposed Muzahid invasion which was a fall out of the Grouping plan of the Cabinet Mission. Pages of Dekā Asom are replete with a number of essays, articles and pleas for rising against grouping.
The whole issue of insurgency is related to the political economy of N.E. India. Situated in the periphery of India this region is one of India’s backward regions and according to the dependency theory of development core and periphery relations operating at different levels producing material inequalities between states leads to a feeling of alienation among the people of the region. This issue has been elaborately discussed by Raiful Ahmed and Prasenjit Biswas in a book entitled *Political Economy of Underdevelopment of N.E. India*.

The end of this discourse it indeed becomes necessary to refer to the much well known facet of his personality, poet Ambikagiri. Abundant biographical literature permits many glimpses of a man in movement where his literary achievements gets more focused attention but the extension of his political views through literature presumably because of his poetic vision swayed between spiritualism and nationalism becomes increasingly difficult to comprehend.

His own seminal and multiple contribution to literature needs to be viewed in the context of its contemporariness and the spirit it generated, that was the requirement of particular period of history. Judging his literary talent Bani Kanta Kakati told, Roy Chowdhury to concentrate more on poetry. But as well said by the same scholar, that is only one dimension of his personality and he was getting more and inclined towards politics right from the day of the non co-operation.

For a man capable of the considerable literary quality of a text like *Tumi* it must have been a major sacrifice to devote one’s writing talent entirely to the composing of political essays and opinion as part of a deeply felt social commitment Roy Chowdhury himself stated that 18 hours of a day a think about Assam. Indeed his contemporary Raghunath Chowdhury once remarked he (Roy Chowdhury) does not have a solution to the problems of Assam. He thinks that if all jobs in Assam are reserved for Assamese unemployment problem would be solved. All the time he talks about “Assamese Assamese and Assamese”.

---

His philanthropy invariability gained a special luster and conquest of advance circumstances through sheer personal grit, determination and self discipline in his early youth that has been revealed while going through his collected works and it is another facet of this very interesting personality that never faded in the later years of his life.

Roy Chowdhury did have solution to the problems specific to Assam, but people could not quite grasp its significance as the defined goal of the Sangrakshini Sabhā suggests, to ensure the full control of the Assamese over Assam’s land and natural resources, agriculture, commerce and industry trade employment language and literature, culture and ethos. Roy Chowdhury did have solution to the problems specific to Assam, but people could not quite grasp its significance as the defined goal of the Sangrakshini Sabhā suggests, to ensure the full control of the Assamese over Assam’s land and natural resources, agriculture, commerce and industry trade employment language and literature, culture and ethos.15 Today what All Assam Students Union is demanding is nothing new but a resonance of the demands Roy Chowdhury put forward while India itself was in the process of making. But “the man, as Tilottama Mishra said, “who had sung the first songs of resounding patriotism in Assam and was at the forefront of the national movement when it had first began to take roots in this region, died a disillusioned man with a few fellow spirits to share his ever alive fiery ideas about the urgent need to safeguard Assam’s national identity.”16

Ambikagiri’s pursuance of this lingering issue worked as an inspirational factor, as can be seen in the subsequent post independence years, right from Assam agitation (1979 – 1985) to the rise of active minority politics to be precise the emergence of All India United Democratic Front.

Ambikagiri’s revolutionary spirit and the work he initiated with a larger political and economic goal for Assam is still an ongoing process. The emergence of a very strong and one of the biggest student movements was highly inspired by Ambikagiri Roy Chowdhury.

On this very issue Ambikagiri carried a campaign with practical solution as had substantially proved in a chapter (5) of this discourse.

15. Deka Asom, 1st Year, 1st Issue, 1857 saka.
The work he started is still an ongoing process as is seen in the ideological framework of organizations operating in Assam. As a fall out of the Assam agitation the rise of extremist movement can also be looked upon, for instance ULFA movement, although their practices are miles apart from what Ambikagiri thought and acted upon ideologically their goal except sovereign Assam is an extended version of what Ambikagiri was persistently demanding. In this it has been found that Roy Chowdhury never talked about Assam as a sovereign political entity. In fact Assam he perceived as a very strong component of the great Indian nation (Mahā Jāti) with its Assamese identity as well as he perceived other Indian states with their cultural identity to thrive within India. A clear understanding of the geopolitics of Assam prompted him to think and act at organizational level and that encompasses a whole range of activities operated at different levels socio-economic, cultural and political.

In the discourse made above emerges a personality, whose life long endeavour had been to pursue a goal defined by his perception of the prevailing situation in Assam complicated by factors seen in a transitional phase of a country. Moreover a threat perception always in mind about the future of the people of Assam accentuated by an endless flow of the East Bengal immigrants made him work with a focused mind. While dealing with this confronting issue he is seen working at two levels, one vigours awareness campaign through Dekā Asom and two at organizational level practically leading Asom Jātiya Mahā Sabhā with that objective. The solution he offered had been discussed in chapter (5) which seems practical if it is seen in present political context.

Related with this are the works he did in relation to land and education. Land as we all know is a limited resource and one of the factors of production. Roy Chowdhury realized how the proper utilization of land can lead to economic growth. So his emphasis was that people of Assam should have right on its recourses. He did a survey of landless Assamese people and whole heartedly supported line system that can be substantially proved.

Asom Shikshā Prasār Samiti he led with a longtime goal to spread Assamese language among the non Assamese settlers in Assam and that it had been a successful venture had been proved in our study. Today Asom Sāhitya Sabhā is doing exactly the
same what Roy Chowdhury did at a much earlier stage in this regard. Perhaps Ambikagiri was the inspirational and motivational factor behind the concept of Asom Jātiya Vidyālayā which is now in a flourishing state with a chain of Jātiya Vidyālayās coming up in different parts of Assam. So this is a continuation of Ambikagiri’s work and also proves his relevance.

For instance Asomiya Juva Mancha is now projecting the same issue of preservation of land rights for Assamese people.

The spirit of revolutions Roy Chowdhury initiated is still a living force as being proved by the present political happenings in Assam. Highly influenced and motivated by his ideas it is seen that different organizations started movements on issues ranging from economic to political, the most persistent being the foreigners issue. It is still a lingering issue awaiting solution. Even the Asom Gana Parishad. Government came into power on this very issue although nothing fruitful could be done. As an offshoot others organizations sprang up propagating same issue. ULFA (United Liberation Front of Assam) insurgency too had the influential factor of Ambikagiri’s revolutionary spirit. Along with it opposite political formations also emerged impacting the present political setup. For instance active minority politics centering round the same foreigner issue. We also can not ignore the opposite and equal the political relation when the AIUDF has been formed to protect the immigrant interest who not ….. as a preserve group in the guise of the minorities. So, it is a continuous revolutionary process with more or less same ideology which some times gets distracted as the leadership of these movements seem guided by narrow political and other interests. Nothing in his long political career hurt him more and grieved him more than the post independence happenings in Assam whether it is in the field of politics, economy or culture.

One must sit up and think and be abreast when he reads Ambikagiri. His influence upon our life is positive and tremendous if we feel his mission of faith and encourage in a world of doubt and timidity. His strength, his joy of life, his robust faith and his invincible determination enter into the minds of the Assamese community (better termed by Ambikagiri as Asomiya Jati) making it feels different and better after reading them. From his autobiographical work a whole lot of things
can be gleaned of the prevailing social atmosphere if we go through various passages and more importantly the openness rare in the context of the social milieu that he unfolds his life, although not in a coherent manner.

This very great personality reveals him through the life long struggle that he pursued with utmost devotion and sincerity. Ambikagiri envisaged a distinctive Assamese nationality vibrant, resurgent on all fronts, striving for enrichment as a part of the Great Indian Nation (Bharatiya Mahajati).

A powerful Pan Indian and humanist, lyricist and poet Ambikagiri is also seen as a provincial. This irony in Roy Chowdhury was pointed out by renowned critic and intellectual Dr. Hiren Gohain and offered a materialist explanation i.e. changing historical reality. But the point to be noted here is that Roy Chowdhury in the constitution of the Jātiya Mahā Sabhā made it very clear that the political destiny of Assam is inseparable from that of India.\footnote{Constitution of Asom Jātiya Mahā Sabhā, p.2.} His persistent demand centered round the issue of regional nationalism with its distinctive features not getting submerged in pursuance of a Pan Indian nationalism. Whatever he felt and articulated brought to the force an ever increasing tension between the Assamese sub nationalism and Pan Indianism, and this has become a recurring feature in the present Indian political set up. In this present context if his ideas and practices are analyzed a co-relation is clearly visible. The recent awakening of smaller ethnic groups like Bodo, Rabha, Dimasa, Chutiya, Koch-Rajbongshis etc in the awake of a Assam agitation perhaps indirectly influenced by Roy Chowdhury in-fact have carried some non viable political issues. If their awakening can be channelized in a proper way as propagated by Ambikagiri keeping in mind his definition of Jāti and Mahajati an all inclusive development can be ushered in keeping away the divisive tendencies. By this way Assam will earn a respectable position among Indian states.

In an environment of growing nationalism serving as an important, essential component of nation building and for the formation of a common identity and consciousness within state, Roy Chowdhury’s discourse on a distinct identity based on history tradition and culture sometimes got discordant with the prevailing Pan
Indianism. But viewed in the multi ethnic, multi cultured and multi layered pluralistic Indian society whatever Roy Chowdhury argued for seems considerable. Considering the Indian political reality, Roy Chowdhury’s political discourse sounds more relevant. The live in experience of the people of N.E. India marred by prolonged insurgency illustrates the points raised by Roy Chowdhury and problems he raised has become more pronounced today.

As we have already mentioned in the last years of his life Roy Chowdhury was a disillusioned man and his dedicatory lines attached to an anthology of his patriotic verse speaks a lot about the state of his mind in those years. “I have flung my Bando Ki Chandere, the creation of my innermost being into the infinite space because in the light of ever burning pyre of my soul, I have not been able to see a single individual ready to receive it. If any such person exists, he will catch hold of my verses – or else they will disappear in the dust to which they belong. I have no complaints, or remorse, no regrets.”

Today his personality is being rediscovered and a widespread respect for the memory of Ambikagiri Roy Chowdhury illustrates the persistence of the lone voice that he had been all throughout his life. Former Chief Minister of Assam and former Governor of Punjab, Mahendra Mohan Chowdhury perhaps rightly predicted at the time of his death that there would be a revival of interest in his ideas in the near feature. Despite the tag of provincial and narrow minded attached to Roy Chowdhury, Mohendra Mohan Choudhury stated, “a time will come when Roy Chowdhury’s ideal will be inseparable from the goals of the Assamese nationality. The Assamese will realize one day that in order to survive as a nationality, they will have to once again give meaning to Roy Chowdhury’s ideals.” This is sufficient eulogy for a man whose life long dedication was to think and work towards that cherished goal i.e. all round development of Assam. ‘18 hours a day I think about Assam’.

20. Dina Bandhu Talukdar, Asom Keshari Ambikagiri, p.5
A revival of interest in Roy Chowdhury is now being seen right from the days of Assam movement of 1979-85. Moreover the man himself, with his marvelous mind, his youthful spirit, his absolute integrity of character, imperishable excellence of sincerity, a Spartan life style is itself an inspiration to better living. And with this essence all the works and thinking of Ambikagiri Roy Chowdhury may easily be established as Revolutionary.