A NOTE ON PRONUNCIATION OF ASSAMESE

The present lipi (scripts) used in writing Assamese is derived from the ‘Brahmi Lipi’, and as such they can be very easily translated in to ‘Devnagari lipi’. But the important thing about Assamese lipi lies in their pronunciation. There has been a vast difference between the pronunciation of Assamese and Devnagari letters and words following are some of the important ones –

i) Though theoretically but practically there is no ‘Murdhanya’ pronunciation in Assamese, Hence न and ण or त and ट or द and ड or ठ or ठ and ध and ढ make no difference in pronunciation in Assamese.

ii) Similarly च and छ does not have any difference in their pronunciation.

iii) श, ष and स have the same pronunciation. As like Devnagari श, ष and स they are pronounce as a mixture of ह and ख, like ‘ख’ ‘X’ in Latin, so, असमीया (Assamiya) is not Assamiya but Axomiya and so on.

iv) य has a peculiar pronunciation. It is ‘Ja’ when it is used at the beginning of a word. E.g. येितया – जेितया, ययाित – जजाित, but it is य when it is used in other places धनीया – धनीया etc.

v) In case of Sanskrit Tatsam and Tadbhav terms, श, ष and स are pronounce as in the original e.g. सुरेन्द्र is not ‘Xurendra’ but Surendra.

Again when this letter are combined with other letters then they are pronounced as ‘S’ e.g. स्वाधीनता = Swadhinata, स्वर्ग = Swarga etc.
vi) In Assamese consonant letters in a word except in the end are pronounced with vowel assent e.g. आरती is not Arti or ममता is not Mamta as is done in Hindi language in Assamese.

vii) आरती is Arati and ममता is Mamata both the ways like ‘Ba’ and ‘Wa’. So जीवन is both ‘Jiwan’ or ‘Jiban’ (Both are correct) जीवन = जीबन

viii) ‘क्ष’ is not क + ष in Assamese. The combination of क with ष makes a new letter ‘Khya’

These are some of the out lines of Assamese pronunciation which are to be kept in mind which reading Assamese in Devnagari scripts.