CHAPTER 5
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5.1 ‘Dandabidhi’ And ‘Rinādānbidhi’ of Hedamba State :

In the later half of eighteenth century law related prose writing was introduced in Bengal with patronization of the British ruler. Bengali replaced Persian as an administrative language in 1838 AD. Therefore various kind of legal matters were translated in Bengali from English for administrative use. Jonathan Duncun, Charles Mayer, Henry Peter Forster and others had done those translations. Although they were assisted by ‘Pandits’ and ‘Munshis’ for the translation.

Simultaneously in Cachar region law and code related matters had been written in Bengali, regarding this some instances is found. In the first half of nineteenth century this trend was set up by the supervision of Cachar dynasty. Padmanath Bhattacharya had found some documents and manuscripts of this dynasty. Then he edited there manuscripts and published two compilation, titled ‘Hedamba Rājyer Dandabidhi’ (Penal code of Hedamba state) and ‘Hedamba Rājyer Rinādānbidhi’ (Borrowing code of Hedamba state). These were published from ‘Gauhati Banga Sāhityānushilani Sahā’ and ‘Shrihatta Cachar Anusandhan Samiti’ respectively.

“Written by Gobinda Chandra, the last king of Cachar” was mentioned in the title of ‘Hedamba Rajyer Dandabidhi’. And “Borrowing code in the reign of Gobinda Chandra Narayan, The last King of Cachār” was mentioned in the title of ‘Rinadanbidhi’. To be noted that King Gobinda Chandra ruled between 1813 AD and 1830 AD. Thus it could be said that in the first half of nineteenth century ‘Dandabidhi’ and ‘Rinādānbidhi’ had been written with the name of Gobinda Chandra.

Padmanath had found two manuscripts of Hedamba state. And both the
manuscripts were not intact. He obtained those manuscripts from Bipinchandra Lashkar and Nandalal Burma. Padmanath had given a description about that manuscript, which he obtained from Bipinchandra Lashkar:

दुःखेब बिबाह दुःखेविषयिन्य विशेषितो गोपी गभर मात्र आमादेव हस्तगत हইয়াছে। তাহাও এত
জीব ও কীটময় যে অনেকগুলি অক্ষর ও শব্দ পড়িতে পারা যায় নাই; আবার পত্রিকার
নিমিত্ত নাড়াচাড়া করিয়া সময়ের পত্রগুলির অনেক অংশ পড়িয়া গিয়াছে।

এই পত্রগুলির সংখ্যা ৮ হইতে ২২, উভয় পৃষ্ঠায় লিখা। আদি অংশ যে পাওয়া যায় নাই
পত্র সংখ্যাই তাহার প্রমাণ। পশ্চিমদিকে যে অস্পষ্ট তাহাও প্রকব্রের শেষ সূচক কেমনো
শব্দ বা চিহ্ন না থাকায় স্পষ্ট প্রতীত হইতেছে।

[It is woeful that we obtained only fifteen pages of ‘Dandabidhi’. But these are too much decayed and moth-eaten, thus so many letters and words are illegible. Even some parts of these pages turn out during leafing through.

We got pages from 8 to 22, both sides are written. Page numbers are showing that beginning parts are missing. Even back pages are missing. Because in page 22 there is no a word or punctuation mark which can signify the finishing of this manuscript.]

Secondly, Padmanath’s comment on the manuscript, obtained from Nandalal Burma:

নদনলব্রু প্ৰাপ্তের নাম ৰ- পূৰ্ব্ব প্রাপ্ত হইল। খ-পূৰ্ব্বিকালিতামৃ খণিত; মাত্র ১১ খানি পাতা,
১৬ হইতে ২৬। তবে পাতাগুলি বড় ; প্রত্যেকটিতে প্রায় ৩০ টি করিয়া ছবি, প্রতি ছদ্রে
অক্ষর সংখ্যা গড়ে ২৭। ইহারও আদি এবং অন্ত নাই। কিন্তু ইহার প্রাপ্ত অংশ সমতই বসন্তব্যাদ;
সংষ্কৃতাং ছিল বলিয়াই স্পষ্টত: অনুযুক্ত হইয়া পাওয়া নাই।

[The manuscript, obtained from Mr. Nandalal is named manuscript B. This is also not intact. Only 11 pages are there— 16 to 26. But these are large sized. Each page consists 30 lines, and each line has 27 letters in average. Beginning and concluding parts are missing in this manuscript also. But the parts we obtained

2. Ibid, P.2, Preface.
are completely Bengali translation. It seems that there must be some parts which consist Dandabidhi in Sanskrit.

Both the obtained manuscripts of ‘Dandabidhi’ have some subject. But the style of composition is different. The manuscript obtained from Bipinchandra Lashkar, written in Bengali and Sanskrit. In the left of ‘Dandabidhi’ written in Sanskrit language and in the right part Bengali translation of it.

A thief is he, who has the connection with other thieves, and from whom a spud or other digging tools are recovered and stolen goods also recovered from one’s possession. These evidences are enough to identify a thief.

A king should take initiative to return those goods to its true possessor, and he should punish the thief according the law.

A King should take special effort to persecute the thief. The king attains glory by the persecution of thief, thus I will also take initiative for this.

It is mentionable that each and every code or procedure has the introduction.

One of those is given below:

It should be known that from 1 Baishakh, 1739 a law has been enforced by Lord Nripendra Bahadur. The King of Hedamba, according to ‘Vivad Darpan’ (law against altercation), which is written in Sanskrit and vernacular language to determine a punishment for a person who killed another person secretly or publicly.

A description is given below about the manuscript, obtained from Nandalal Burma:

[It is woeful that we obtained only fifteen pages of ‘Dandabidhi’. But these are too much decayed and moth-eaten, thus so many letters and words are illegible. Even some parts of these pages turn out during leafing through.

We got pages from 8 to 22, both sides are written. Page numbers are showing that beginning parts are missing. Even back pages are missing. Because in page 22 there is no a word or punctuation mark which can signify the finishing of this manuscript.]

Though both the manuscripts have the same subject, yet a little difference is there in the construction of prose.

5. Ibid, P.7, Appendix.
a. The first manuscript has a line—‘জায়ে চোর হয়’ (Those who will be the thief), but in the second manuscript has ‘সেহি চোর জানিনা’ (Those are the thief).

b. Second manuscript does not have introduction like the first one, but a sub-head is there.

On the contrary it should be mentioned that ‘Dandabidhi’ of Hedamba state originally was not written in Bengali.

বিবাদদর্পন গ্রন্থনুসারে দেববাণী ও ভাষাতে নীচের লিখিতনুসারে শক ১৭৩৯ সালের ১
পাহিলা দৈশাবে জরিয় করিলেন। ৬

[According to ‘Vivad Darpan’ following laws are enforced from 1 Baishakh, 1739 Shak written in Sanskrit and Vernacular language.]

It is mentioned in every part of the first manuscript. Simultaneously ‘Vivad Darpan’ is mentioned in ‘Rinadan’ also. Besides, ‘Shuddhi Chintamani’ and ‘Vivad Nirnay’ are also mentioned in Dandabidhi. Bachaspati Mishra and Gopal Panchanan are the authors of these two books respectively. But the author or source of ‘Vivad Darpan’ are yet unknown. Padmanath Bhattacharya said:

"বিবাদদর্পন" নামক কোনো সংস্কৃত নিবন্ধ আছে কি না জানি না; দুই এক স্থানে জিজ্ঞাসা
করিয়াও ইহার তথ্য জানিতে পারা যায় নাই। কিন্তু আমার বোধহয় এই ‘বিবাদদর্পন’
গোবিন্দচন্দ্রের পূর্বকালীন সময়ের কালীনের আইনেরই নাম। এমনও হইতে পারে যে, ব-
পুরাতন যে গ্রন্থেরই একাংশ, তাছাইই নাম ‘বিবাদদর্পন’ ছিল। ৭

[I don’t know whether there is any Sanskrit treatise named ‘Vivad Darpan’. I have not got any information about this from anywhere. But I suppose that before the reign of Gobinda Chandra ‘Vivad Darpan’ was the treatise of law in Cachar. May be, the name of some parts of manuscript B was ‘Vivad Darpan’.]

But Padmanath could not find any conclusion. Because both manuscripts were not intact. Padmanath edited another manuscript—‘Hedamba Rajyer Rinadanbidhi’. It was enforced from 1 Falgun 1738 Shaka according to ‘Vivad Darpan’ in Sanskrit and vernacular language.

History of Cachar Dynasty is related with Ghatotkach (a character from Mahabharata, the epic). People of this dynasty had been claimed themselves as the descendents of Ghatotkach, son of Bhim and Hidimba. Therefore the Cachar state was famously known as Hidamba state. Gobindachandra Singha was the last king of this dynasty. He became the king in 1813 AD after the demise of Krishna Chandra, the king. He was interested in music and literature. Dandabidhi and Rinadanbidhi of Hedamba state were come into effect by his initiation. Upendrachandra Guha said about this law or code:

“কাছাড়ীর নিয়ম” বা কাছাড়ী রাজাদের আইন বিভিন্ন সময়ে প্রচারিত হয়। কথিত আছে কাছাড়ীর সমচেতন তারা কাছাড়ী জাতি অধিকার করিলে বাঙালী প্রজাবর্গের বিরুদ্ধে বহু অসুবিধা ঘটে। এই অসুবিধা নিবারণকারী বাঙালী ভাষায় আইন প্রচারিত হয়।

[‘Rule of Cachari’ or the law of Cachari king had been come into effect in various periods. It is said that when Cachari clan occupied the plains of Char then they faced problem regarding the judicial matter of their Bengali subject. To overcome this problem legal matter were written in Bengali.]

A question will arise naturally that how immaculately ‘Dandabidhi’ and ‘Rināḍānbidhi’ were used in the reign of Gobinda Chandra. There are valid points for this question or doubt. Two points are mentioned below:

a. From 1813 AD to 1830 AD the overall situation of Cachar was not in favour of the dynasty. In north Cachar Tularam Senapati declared himself independent. Even Gobinda Chandra was subdued in that period by the attack the king of Manipur.

b. Rules and regulations of ‘Dandabidhi’ and ‘Rināḍānbidhi’ were strict and confusing. Punishment like chopping hard or cleaning lips were how much applicable, that really doubtful.

It is notable that ‘Dandabidhi’ and ‘Rināḍānbidhi’ have similarity with Manu Sanhita. Example:

a. তথ্যেতে পরিষদ্বত ধান্যে বিহির মূলটি পশরো পদ।

২ তথ্য শ্রমের পথে নির্দিষ্ট প্রতিক্ষিত।। (৮/৩৮)

8. Upendrachandra Guha, Kachārer Itibritta, P.58.
If somebody sow seeds on abandoned land without fencing, and if some bovine animal spoils the crops by eating or some other way, then the king will not punish herdsmen.

If somebody tills land near (village) without fencing, and if cattle’s spoil the crops without the intention of their herdsmen, then this is not termed as guilt of these herdsmen.

b. পাশিমুল্লাম দণ্ড বা পাষিচেচনমাতি ।
পাদেন প্রহরন্ন কোপাং পাষিচেচনমাতি। ॥ (৮/২৮০)

[শুদ্র যদি শ্রেষ্ঠ জাতিকে মারিবার জন্য হত্যা বা দণ্ড তোলে, তবে রাজা তাহার হত্যা দণ্ড করিবেন; আর পাদ দ্বারা প্রহার করিলে পাষিচেচন হইবে।]

First Manuscript:

প্রথম পুষ্পি : ব্রাহ্মণেৰু কোপাং পাষিং প্রহরন্ন শুদ্রঃ পাষিচেচন দণ্ড।
শুদ্র যদি কোপাং করিয়া ব্রাহ্মণেৰু হত্যার প্রহার করত্বে তাহার হত্যা দণ্ড করিত হয়।
কোপাং পাদেন প্রহর পাষিচেচন দণ্ড।
শুদ্র যদি কোপাং প্রহার ব্রাহ্মণেৰু প্রহার করত্বে তাহার পাদ হত্যা দণ্ড করিত হয়।

Second Manuscript:

দ্বিতীয় পুষ্পি : শুদ্রে কোপাং করিয়া যদি ব্রাহ্মণেৰু হত্যার প্রহার করত্বে তাহার হত্যা দণ্ড করিয়া রূপ দণ্ড জানিবা। কোপাং পাদ দ্বারা প্রহার করিলে পাষিচেচন রূপ দণ্ড জানিবা। ১০

[If Shudra raises his hand or a staff to beat a person of higher strata, then the king will chop his hand; and if he kicks then the king will chop his leg.

If a Shudra beats a Brahman with his hand out of anger then his hand should be chopped off.

If Shudra kicks out of anger, then keep in mind that punishment will be chopped off leg.

If a Shudra beats a Brahmin with his hand out of anger then keep in mind that punishment will be chopped off hand. If kicks out of anger, then keep in mind that punishment will be chopped off leg.

This kind of similarity is found clearly in ‘Rinādānbidhi’ also:

a. বালান্যাসিকে রিক্ষাত তাব্বানজনপালমপেতাই।
   যাবৎ স স্যাত সমাবুস্তো যাবচাতীতে শৈশব।। (৮/২৭)
   [পিতৃমাতৃতন্তীন অন্যান্য বলকের ধন রাজা নিজে তাব্বানজন পর্যাতন্য নিত করিবেন, যাবৎ বলক গোপুরক ইংরে গৃহস্থে সমাবুত না হয় অথো দে পোষ্টণ না সে অধীত শৈশব হয়।
    যোঁশহস্ত যোধ ইংলে বলক অধীত শৈশব হয়—ইহা নারী বচন।]

b. কুলজে বৃত্তসম্পর্য ধর্ম্মজে সত্যজাতি।
   মহাপ্রশাসন ধরিতায় নিক্ষেপে নিক্ষেপে পুরুষ।। (৮/১৭৯)
   [সত্ত্বতামাতে, সত্যচার, ধর্ম্মজে, সত্যজাতি, বহ পরিবার, ধর্ম্মজে ও সত্যাচার ব্যাধির নিকটে]

A wise man deposits his money with a person, who belongs to a virtuous family, who is well-behaved, religious, truthful, rich, and dignified and have a large family.

‘Rinādānbidhi’: Money should be deposited with a person, who belongs to virtuous family, religious, truthful, engaged with various professions, having friends and who is noble.

One thing is clear from these instances that ‘Pandits’ had written ‘Dandabidhi’ or ‘Rinādānbidhi’ according to the scriptures. Brahmin-pandits emphasized on scriptures rather overall situation and circumstance of Cachar state. We believe that imposition of these laws had played important role in terms of glorification of this dynasty or Sanskrit influence on it. Simultaneously it is also said that Cachar dynasty had shown its liberal character by accepting the language and culture of the plains—it seems the harmony of hills and plains.

In Cachar dynasty Bengali study was in practice before nineteenth century. Earlier Maibang was the capital of Hedamba state. In 1745 AD Khaspur became the capital. It is mentionable that Dimasa kings had been using Bengali in administrative works from Maibang.

In this context two stone inscriptions of king Meghnarayan should specifically, which were in scripted in 1498 Shakabda (1576 AD). We have already discussed about these in chapter one.

Letters of bestowal, recruitment and assurance were written in Bengali in Cachar dynasty. In 1734 Shakabda (1812 AD) Maharaja Krishna Chandra bestowed few amount of land as Brahmottar (land or property belongs to Brahmin) land to Atmaram Bhattacharya. Following line was mentioned in Krishna Chandra’s bestowal letter:

In 1746 Shakabda (1824 AD) Maharaja Gobinda Chandra had recruited Sonaram Sharma, native of Udharband, as a Deshmukhya (chief) of Udarband and Banshkandi mouja.

[Shri Sonaram Sharma, Udarbandh Pargana, Hidamba state, you are the ‘Deshmukh’ of Udarbandh.]

Date of ‘Bangabda’ (Bengali calendar) was used in this recruitment letter.

[Dated Jaishthy a, in the year of 1231, according to Bengali 1746 Shakabda.]

An assurance letter from Krishna Chandra in 1713 Shakabda on 1791 AD could be mentioned here. Maharaja Krishna Chandra:

[Krishna Chandra and Gobinda Chandra, last two kings of Cachar had sent letters in Bengali to the then British rulers. Krishna Chandra and Gobinda Chandra’s thirteen and sixteen letters respectively were compiled in ‘Prachin Bāṅgālā Patra Sankalan’. In 6th March, 1824 AD at Badarpur, Raja Gobinda Chandra and Governor General David Scott had signed an agreement; language of that agreement was also Bengali.]

15. Ibid, P.112.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid, P.119.
Whatever, Dandabidhi and Rinadanbidhi of Hedamba state couldn’t resist the influence of Sanskrit. Some characteristics of these manuscripts are given below:

a. Least use of punctuation and long syntax are one of the main characteristic of ‘Dandabidhi’ and ‘Rinadanbidhi’. Example:

[Dandhabidhi: If somebody makes fake gold with other materials using chemicals and sells it or somebody sells mutton pretending version than they have to face severe punishment like chopped off nose or hand or make them toothless alongwith they have to bear a penalty of 62.5 kahun (a unit of counting).]

[Rinadanbidhi: Mortgaging cow, horse, boat or vehicle for a limited period than they cann’t keep these with them.]

b. Interdictory word ‘na’ was used before and after verb.

i. Dandabidhi: [Article] the nikit kudi kariria yadi beza na dey ehto bete palko the ihaabtire be te bete palko dey be naa doh janniria.]

[‘Dandabidhi’ : If a farmer don’t use fencing around his farming land, near a village and the bovine animal would destroy the crops without any wrong intention of its herd, then the herd will not found guilty.]

ii. Dandabidhi: Ghot kariria gir bhula acharan karile sud pay na.]

22. Padmanath Bhattacharya Vidyavinod, Ibid, Appendix, Puthi II.
c. Compounded words were fused more. Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bengali</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>মরণাতিক, সুর্পর্তিরিক্ত, যজ্জোপবীতাদি, ব্যবহারমুসলে, কা:থ্যানুরোধে ইত্যাদি।</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

d. To make an adjective ‘iya’ (ঈয়া) suffix is used in ‘Tatsama’ and ‘Ardha-Tatsama’. Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bengali</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>মারণীয়, তড়িন্নীয়, প্রকারীয়, ঋণকালীয় ইত্যাদি।</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

e. Caseending word ‘-ate’ (এঠে) is used in ‘tritiya’ and ‘saptami’. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bengali</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>কেশেতে, একাসনেতে, পায়েতে, প্রতিভাগেতে, ভিডেতে, শুদ্ধেতে, ক্ষত্রিয়েতে ইত্যাদি।</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

f. Foreign words were almost not used. But few Arabian-Persian words were used. Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bengali</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>আদালত, আমানত, জামিন, জারি, নিকালিয়া, নিক্ষিপ্ত প্রভৃতি।</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In nineteenth century Bengali prose was hugely expanded by the initiative of Fort William College. In this period Raja Rammohan Ray’s ‘Vedanta Grantha’ (1815) too was published. But there is no influence of that expansion of Bengali prose on Cachar or Hedamba state. In that period this region was not enlightened a bit with modern education and mentality, and there was no use of modern technology also. But in this context Bengali prose study had taken place in Cachar dynasty and the initiative of Pandits and Brahmins were worth to be remembering.

In this region Bengali prose study was uplifted from correspondence and documents to ‘Dandabidhi’ and ‘Rinädänbidhi’. It is noteworthy that in that period Cachar state was not pondered by the patronization of colonialist. Even the influence of Kolkata had not been seen in Cachar in terms of Bengali prose study. ‘Dandabidhi’ and ‘Rinadanbidhi’ could be stand out with originality. Because, without receipt any influence of colonial period, Raja Gobinda Chandra and his Pandits had taken interest to write legal matters in prose. This originality or characteristic is the glory of ‘Dandabidhi’ and ‘Rinädänbidhi’.
After ‘Dandabidhi’ and ‘Rinādānbidhi’ of King Hedamba three more law related books had been published. These books were published from Assam, and the author of all the three books was Anandaram Dhekial Phookan. These three books are: ‘Phookan Dewaner Kāyādbandhi’, ‘Sadar Dewāni Nishpatti’ and ‘Āin O Byabasthā Sangraha’. It is mentionable that we could not find the first two books. Therefore our discussion will confine to ‘Āin O Byabasthā Sangraha, Part I’.

Anandaram Dhekial Phookan was born in 7 Ashvin, 1751 Shakabda, Tuesday. Father Haliram Dhekial Phookan and mother Prasuti Devi. Haliram’s ‘Āssām Buranji’ was published in this very year. Haliram was well known personality in Bengali intelligentisia because of ‘Samāchār Darpan’, ‘Samāchār Chandrikā’ and ‘Bangadut’. Simultenously he was front runner to made a correlation with British Administrative officer in Assam. In that period he had been working as an Assistant Magistrate of Guwahati. But he died within few days. Anandaram was only a child of three years then. Now all the responsibilities of Dhekial Phookan family came upon his uncle Yagnaram Kharghariya Phookan.

Yagnaram was first Assamese person who was educated in English. He was the pioneer in modern mentality and thought. At first he sent his own son Durga Ram and Haliram’s son Anandaram to Yasodhar Adhyapak of Umananda to learn Sanskrit and other subjects. By then in 1835 AD two government schools were established. One of those was English and another one was Bengali medium school. Yagnaram took very important role to establish those two schools. And certainly Yagnaram admitted his own son Durgaram and nephew Anandaram to the English medium school in 1837 AD. But Yagnaram died just after one year. Thus there was no one to look after the Dhekial Phookan family. But in that time Mr. Jenkins and Mr. Methy helped a lot that family. Gradually Anandaram Phookan had been progressing all around with the help of these two Englishmen. After listening their advice Durgaram and Anandaram had gone to Kolkata to pursue
higher education. There they took admission in third class of ‘junior department’ at Hindu college. It is noteworthy; they were the students of first class in the school of Guwahati.

They met eminent personalities of Kolkata. We got the information from the biography of Anandaram:

In that period Dwarkanath Tagore, Raja Radhakanta Deb, Raja Kalikrishna Deb, Prasannakumar Tagore, Motilal Sil, Akruur Datta, Ramkamal Sen, Satyacharan Ghosal, Rasamay Datta, Madhabchandra Bandyopadhyay, Madhab Datta, David Hare and others was the rich and dignified person in Kolkata. Phookan brothers met with them.

After few days Durgaram got fever. And he died. It is mentionable, after 1842 AD Anandaram stayed alone in Kolkata. In that time Hindu College had three stages: junior, senior and college. After passing out from junior one had to move up to senior section.

There one had to pass the junior scholarship examination. And then can move up to college. There one had to give examination for senior scholarship.

In early 1844 AD Anandaram came to third class of senior section. Then in Hindu college he got Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, Gopikrishna Mitra, Jaygopal Seth, Meng Eastjohn, Meng Jones, Captain Richardson and others as faculty. But in later part of that year he came back to Guwahati.

If he were stayed there two more years then he would sit for the junior scholarship examination. Whatever:

By the time he came back, he learnt Arithmetic, few methods of almost complete Algebra, first chapter of Geometry, History of England, Rome, Greece and India and English verse etc. He even learnt English language and etiquette. He learnt Bengali language too.

After came back to Guwahati Anandaram get married with Mahindri, daughter of Pashupati and Kamaleshwari Phookan.

In this period Anandaram employ himself intently in studies of various kinds of laws. Regarding this he took help from the supervising officer of headquarter. He read ‘Āin O Āssām Kāydaṇabandi’.

In 1847 AD Anandaram appointed as a tax collector in Khata Pargana temporarily. Simultenously he appeared in an examination for the post of sub-assistant in British administration. Subjects of that examination are given below:

a. English translation of Bengali application.

b. Bengali translation of an English letter, sent from commissioner’s office.

c. Reading a document of magistrate office, and make a gist out of it.

d. Question and answer from criminal, civil and revenue law of Bengal and ‘Assam Kaydabandi’.

e. Various methods and procedure of land-survey.

Anandaram appeared in this examination in 1847 AD. In this very year introducing of Bengali language in Assam completed a decade. And it is clearly assumed from the above mentioned list that in that period Bengali got how much importance in terms of administrative work in Assam.

Anandaram was Dewan of King Amrit Narayan of Bijni for few days. During this time he published the code of rules regarding revenue, law and order,

trial, duty and responsibility of administrative staff and punishment of Nij Bijni Pargana. This rare collection was known as ‘Phookan Dewaner Kaydabandi’.

In 1850 AD Phookan came to Nagaon. There he joined as an acting sub-inspector. But he was transferred to Goalpara after four years. In this year Phookan’s ‘Sadar Dewani Niti’ was published.

Then Phookan went to Kolkata to make a plea to government for the king of Bijni. Simultaneously he took part in various functions in Town Hall and Metcalf Hall and in gathering of Brahmos. He met with Rajendralal Mitra, Motilal Sil, Raja Satyacharan Ghosal, Prasannakumar Tagore and others. Among the Europeans he came close to Meng Haliday, Dr. Mowatt, Major Marshall and others. Needless to say, Anandaram’s second visit to Kolkata made him intellectuality prosperous. On the way back to Assam he even made a visit to Dhaka.

From October, 1852 Anandaram was recruited as a permanent sub-assistant in Barpeta. In a letter to Phookan Col. Methy had mentioned:

[Your progress made me glad. See, if you would not go to Kolkata and pursue education according to the advice of mine and col. Jenkins then you has been appointed to the highest post among the Bengali and Assamese people, who work in Assam. You are the first who got such a highest post as well as salary.]

When Anandaram lived in Barpeta then on 9th January, 1853 his second daughter was born. Phookan named her daughter Padmavati Devi Phookanani. In this very year started writing ‘Āin O Byābasthā Sangraha’.

Judge of civil court headquarter of Kolkata Andrew Moffat Mills came for research of Assam’s language and literature. Phookan met with him on 4 July in Guwahati and told him about the characteristic and distinguish nature of Assamese language. At the same time he made a demand for the introduction of Assamese language in administrative sector.

Anandaram was recruited as junior assistant from April, 1854 AD. In that period he had been working at Nagoan head-quarter. It is mentionable, during this time Nagaon was going through scarcity of food. Then Anandaram showed his presence of mind, he compelled the hoarders to sell food items. Thus the problem had been solved to some extent. Phookan’s this decision was named as ‘Bharal Bhanga’(ভারল ভঞ্জা).

Anandaram was the representative of second generation of renaissance. This generation was enriched by Devendranath Tagore, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, Michael Madhusudan Datta, Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay and others. These reformers and authors widened the path of first generation of renaissance like Rammohan Ray, Derogio or young Bengal.

In Assam Haliram Dhekial Phookan, Yagnaram Khargharia Phookan, Jaduram Deka Baruah and others were the predecessor of Anandaram. He took active part in the introduction of Assamese language instead of Bengali in administrative sector. He had written ‘A few remarks on the Assamese language’ in 1855 AD. It is a booklet of 54 pages. Here he showed the difference between Bengali and Assamese language with logic and example. Even he made a plea to A J Moffat Mills regarding this:

For more than ten years after the annexation of the Province the Assamese was the language of the courts. On what grounds the Bengali has been new allowed to supersede the Vernacular we are at a loss to understand. The Assamese being the Vernacular language as well of the majority of the judges and ministerial officers of the courts, no inconvenience can possible arise from its use, and if it be advanced that the Bengali bears close resemblance to the Assamese than it does,
to the Uria language, and if the courts of Orrissa be allowed the privilege of using the language of the country, we are unable to understand why the same benefit should have been withheld to the Assamese.27

Assamese was introduced in place of Bengali simultaneously in the field of education and law with these efforts and initiatives. But it was implemented after thirteen years of Anandaram’s death.

Sir Edward Gait had said about Anandaram Dhekial Phookan:

Anandaram Dhekial Phookan, a well-known Assamese scholar.28

Anandaram, ‘the main encourager of Assamese language’ (আনন্দরাম দেকি পুকা, আসামীয়া ভাষার প্রধান উৎসাহদাতা) had simultaneously studied Assamese language and literature and authored book in Bengali. His significant Bengali book is ‘Ain O Byabastha Sangraha, Part I’. It was published in 1855 AD. Anandaram planned to publish this book in five parts. But, unfortunately not a single volume was published after part one. May be it was not possible because of his brief span of life. Title of the book said:


title

That means

Substantial compilation of treatise, customs, law of England, Government law, construction, circular and case-law of court, which are practiced in Bengal.

Authored by Anandaram Dhekial Phookan

PART ONE

Calcutta]

Anandaram mentioned about his aim to compile this book in the preface part:

[It is a responsibility of gentlemen to know about the rights of the subject in Bengal and how to upkeep these rights. Therefore we took utmost care to compile all the treatise, civil and criminal laws and revenue laws for common people]

The aim of this book is clear from its title page and preface. Anandaram’s main aim was to publish an easy and simple edition in Bengali about the laws practiced in Bengal.

Anandaram earlier planned to translate ‘Civil Procedure’ of Mekfasson. But later he changed his mind and concentrated writing of compilation England. For this work he studied all the laws and construction circulars of Government and the law and order of Hindu and Muslim. Anandaram made a substantial compilation of these laws and orders. This book was printed at new press of Kolkata in 1855 AD.

A total page of this \( \frac{1}{4} \) demy sized book was 330. Besides, title page, preface and content list were included in the beginning of this book. It is mentionable that, preface was printed in Bengali as well as in English. To give an overall picture of this book Anandaram mentioned in the preface:

The work, of which the first Volume is now offered to the public, is designed to consist of V parts:

Part I., after treating of the volume of laws in general, will describe the absolute Rights of persons, the Constitution and prerogatives of Government, the reciprocal rights of Master and Servants, Husband and Wife, Parent and Child and Guardian and ward, and will close with a chapter on corporations.

Part II., will treat of the following subjects viz. of Property in general, — of Real and Personal property, of the different landed tenures of Bengal— Zamindaries, Talloks, Lakheraje tenures etc etc; of Title to property by Descent, on a compendium of the Hindoo, Mahomedan and English laws of inheritance; of Title by Occupancy, of Fonfeit and Alination, of the laws of contract, Gift, Will, Sale and Mortgage.

Part III., after describing in a few preliminary chapters the different species of Private Wrongs, the constitution and Functions of the Courts of Justice, and the various means of obtaining redress for civil injuries, will proceed to give the substance of the law of Procedure in Regular Suits— In treating of this subject the author proposes to give a translation of Mr. Macpherson’s recent work on ‘Civil Procedure’, with the necessary additions and alternations.

In part IV., the author designs to describe the procedure of the courts in summary and special suits; which will necessarily embrace a brief of the law relating to summery suits, Settlement and Bautwara cases, and Resumption Suits etc etc.

It is intended to give an outline of the criminal Law of Bengal in Part V., compiled from Beaufort’s Digest, Blackstone’s Commentaries and other sources.31

Anandaram’s main aim was to write down various aspects of law in easy and simple Bengali. He admitted it in the preface of this book:

The government rules which are practiced in Bengal were published in native language, but the language of those is too difficult to understand. Mainly, the Hindu and the Muslim laws—practiced for the rights of Hindu and Muslim subject—are entirely written respectively in Sanskrit and Arabic, therefore only few people understand it. And those rules were imposed according to case-laws of court are written in English. These are also at no use of common people. There are laws of Hindu and Muslim, government rules and case-laws of court to upkeep the right of the subject in Bengal. To divulge all these rules in simple Bengali I planned to publish ‘Ain O Byābاستہ Sangraha’ in five different parts. The first part of this voluminous work new presented for the common people.

It is noteworthy that Anandaram tried to write down this book in simple way thus it will be understandable for all. When Bengali prose found a new way with the ‘Tattwabodhini Patrika’ (1843), in this very time Anandaram, an Assamese speaking person successfully followed that way.

Anandaram’s book started with ‘Niti O Byābاستہ’ (Rules and Regulations). In the beginning he mentioned about the meaning of rules and regulation:

In this world everything is happening according to the rules, which were imposed by the God. For an example— birth and death of animal and birds, trees come out from seed and extinct, all these happen according to the ascertained rules. Nothing happens against these rules. There are some rules and regulations should be maintained by human being for their conduct and deed; we will give detailed description of those rules and regulation in this book.

In the Bengali write up the sentence is too long. But that does not effect the co-relation of the context. He used the language which is understandable for all. He used the easy and simple language to present the complex subject like law. For example:

a. এ দেশে নিদিষ্ট কেকো গ্রাম ও পরগনার উপর এক ২ খানা অর্থী পুলিস সংস্থাপিত হইয়া ঐ খানা দারোগা প্রভৃতি কর্মসংক্রান্ত করিয়া তাহা আপন ২ এলাকায় শাসনক্ষম করিয়া কোন বাণিজ্য কুক্ষি করিতে চাহিলে তাহা নিবারণ করিবে এবং কেহ কোন অপরাধ করিলে তাহাকে প্রেফডার করিয়া তাহার দণ্ড হইবার নিমিত্তে ম্যাজিস্ট্রেট সাহেবের নিকট পাঠায়।

b. কোন ব্যক্তি যদি আপন উত্তরাধিকারিত্ব সমুদায় বা তাহার কোন অংশ পরিত্যাগ করিতে

34. Ibid, P.36.
[If somebody renounced their or part of inherited property then there is no obligation, but according to Muslim law if somebody dies without any successor then their property could not be inherited by others, not even their property could be handed over through donation and selling.]

c. мৃত ব্যক্তি এক কি তত্ত্বাত্মিক ব্যক্তিকে তার সম্পত্তির অর্থ নিয়ন্ত্রণ করিয়া গেলে তাহার আদালত কো অর্থ তাহার অনুমতির অনুপস্থিত না করিয়া মৃতের সকল সম্পত্তি অধিন করিতে পারে, এবং অর্থ নিকট সম্পত্তিকারী কি উত্তরাধিকারী যাহিলেও তাহার ওঙ্গী হইবার নিমিত্ত কোন আপত্তি করিতে পারে না।

[If a person appointed or successor for his family to look after it after his death, the successor can bring all the property under his control after the demise of that person, to do this the successor need not take any permission from the court or any one else, even the near relatives and the heir of the demised person can not make any objection against the successor.]

Anandaram’s this book was published in 1855 AD. In this period Bengali prose was influenced by Vidyasagar. ‘Bētāl Panchabingshati’ was published in 1847 AD. It was the beginning of Vidyasagar era. That era came to an end with the publishing of Bankimchandra’s ‘Durgeshnandini’ in 1865 AD. It is noteworthy that Vidyasagar’s ‘Shakuntalā’ (1854) was published one year before the ‘Āin O Bybasthanā Sangraha’. Anandaram was contemporary of Akshaykumar Datta, Devendra Nath Tagore, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar and he tried to present the critical subject life law in easy and simple language. Bankimchandra Chatterji said,

রচনার প্রধান গুণ এবং প্রথম প্রয়োজন সরলতা এবং স্পষ্টতা।

38. Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, Bāṅgālā Bāhāsā, Bankim Rachanāvali, 2nd part, P.344.
[The main quality and the first requirement of a literary work are simplicity and clarity.]

Assamese speaking Anandaram set an example of Bengali prose far away from Kolkata, the mainland of Bengali study. This lesson known fact is really unimaginable and astonishing. Features of his prose are given below:

a. Logical deliberation was seen in the Bengali prose of nineteenth century, naturally it was seen in Anandaram’s prose too. Example:

i. Logical deliberation was seen in the Bengali prose of nineteenth century, naturally it was seen in Anandaram’s prose too. Example:

b. English, Arabic, Persian and other foreign words were used in Anandaram’s prose for the sake of the context. Example:

   [There is a general rule about a matter in law. But it is impossible having special rule for each and every specific matter, if that sort of matter arises then the law should be applied to do the justice properly.]

ii. There is a general rule about a matter in law. But it is impossible having special rule for each and every specific matter, if that sort of matter arises then the law should be applied to do the justice properly.

   [This country is governed by Company Bahadur, but the ruler of this country is the ruler or parliament of England. Because those who known as company Bahadur, is actually the subject of England. They got permission to rule this country according to the charter of parliament of England. Thus we will discuss about the parliament.]
The orders are passed from the council of Governor General regarding Court procedure, tax, custom duty (Sayerat Masul), government revenue, rights of Zamindar and subject, salt and opium trading of Company Bahadur, rights of native and non-native person under the court and their properties. These orders are remained in written at the record office of the court; these are being published and imposed as law.

In above stated excerpt is seen that Anandaram used ‘Tatsama’ words as well as ‘Tatbhava’, English, Arabic, Persian words with ease. Some foreign words are given below, which are used in this book.

English: Tax, Company, Governor General, Collector, Parliament, Stamp etc.

Arabic: Hasil, Masul, Adalat, Hukum, Ejmali, Musbida, Fariadi, Jari etc.

Persian: Phiristi, Bakhradar, Bandobost etc.

It is noteworthy that, he used the foreign words but it didn’t obstruct the spontaneity of the language, rather it became clearer. The fact is, the prose of this book had formed according to the subject. This prose increased the richness of Anandaram’s composition.

c. In the early part of nineteenth century there was a specific grammatical use in Bengali prose, it is seen in Anandaram’s prose too. This grammatical use is suffix of a case-ending ‘Diga’ (-ধিগা) with plural number, example:

তাহারদিগের, শাসনকর্তাদিগের, মনুষ্যদিগের, ইংরেজদিগের।

But everywhere he didn’t use ‘this rule. He even used ‘তাহাদের’ or ‘তাহাদের’ (their) in his prose.

d. In early nineteenth century in Bengali prose different kind of sentences were combined with conjunction. Sukumar Sen had said:

ভাবের বিরুদ্ধতার এবং বাক্যের ভারসাম্যহীনতার জন্য রচনা নিতান্ত কর্মশ্চ এবং লালিতাহীন হইত। অক্ষয়কুমার পদ্মপ্রভু তির লেখায় বাক্যের এই ভারসাম্যহীনতা কাটিয়া সিয়াছিল।[42]

[The composition sometimes being harsh and there is no suavity due to the matic contradiction and misbalance of sentences. But these flaws are not seen in Akshaykumar Datta or others composition.]

We can make a close view of Anandaram’s prose in the context of this comment. Like Akshaykumar Datta his prose also has the balance. Earlier we have mentioned that Anandaram Dhekial Phookan had published three books on law. The two are:

a. Phookan Dewaner Kāyābdandi:

Amrit Narayan Bhoop, the king of Bijni appointed Anandaram Dhekial Phookan as dewan. He handed over almost every responsibilities of governance to Anandaram. In this period Anandaram introduced some rules and guidelines for Bijni. These are regarding revenue, maintaining peace, judicial duties and penal code. Even the duties and responsibilities of administrator, bill-collector, accounts clerk, revenue collector and others also included. This code of rules is known as Phooan Dewaner Kaydabandii. It was introduced in accordance with the various kinds of governmental rules. Now this collection is hardly found any where.

b. Sadar Dewāni Nishpatti: 1850

Sadar Dewāni Nishpatti had been published monthly in English with the governmental initiative for the court and common people. Anandaram Dhekial Phookan had translated some books of these

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42. Sukumar Sen, Bangala Sahitye Gadya, P.48.
Nishpattis (decisions). And it was published in the title of ‘Sadar Dewani Nishpatti’. It was the first book of ‘nazir’ (case-law) and ‘nishpatti’ in Bengali. Gunabhiram Barua said:

बंगाला भाषात नजीक वा निसपटी पुस्तकब एই प्रथम जन्म। एतिहा अनेक निसपटी छपा
हेचेक अननदनाम फूकनव उद्याविकाश्चति आक चित्राइ तब जन्म मूल कावण।

[Now plenty of books have been published on the same subject, but root of all these books is the inventory idea and thought of Anandaram.]

There two books have not been found yet. If those were found then it is needless to say that the newer aspects of Anandaram’s Bengali prose would be unveiled.

Anandaram planned to publish law related book in five volumes in Bengali, it was unlike the translations of Duncan or Froster. His plan was to do a voluminous work on legal matters which would be easily understandable for the common folk. But his initiative was not materialized. He published only the first volume with his own expenditure. Why the other volumes had not been published?

May be there are two reasons behind it:

a. The brief span of Anandaram’s life,

b. Greater interest on the study of Assamese language.

Akshaykumar Datta was specially known for his science and economics related write-ups and Devendranath Tagore was praised for his theological writings, their contemporize Anandaram then identified as an author of law related matter. At least his undisguised and unknown book could claim that specialty.

History of Bengali journals and periodicals is almost two hundred years old. These journals and periodicals were one of the medium of expression for the enlightened Bengali intelligentsia of nineteenth century. ‘Samāchār Darpan’ (1818), ‘Samāchār Chandrikā’ (1822), ‘Bangadut’ (1829), ‘Sambād Prabhākar’ (1831) and others had opened the door of wide thoughts. Not only in Kolkata or the land of Bengal, journals and periodicals were published from the outside of Bengal also, there are significant instances about this phenomenon.

The first Bengali periodical was published from outside of Bengal is ‘Vārānasi Chandrodhay’. It was launched on 2nd May, 1849. It was a weekly magazine, published from Kasi, and the editor was Umakanta Bhattacharya. After this, many magazines were launched one by one like: ‘Kāśivārtāprakāsikā’ (1851), ‘Tripurā Jnanprasārini’ (1860), ‘Prayāg Dut’ (1868), ‘Āssām Mihir’ (1872), ‘Bihār Dut’ (1876), ‘Shrihatta Prakāsh’ (1876) and many more.

Almost thirty journals and periodicals were published from outside the undivided Bengal in nineteenth century.44 And almost half number of these journals or periodicals was published from undivided Assam.

British ruled Assam was formed with Ahom and its neighboring small states. This region came under the jurisdiction of chief commissioner in 1874. Then Assam was formed with Ahom Empire, Goalpara, and small zamindar family of Sylhet, Jayantiya hill, Khasi, Lussai, some parts of Naga hill and the Cachar state.

The complete scenario had been changing gradually after the arrival of British. These changes were happened in diverse way, which is mentioned below:

1. People arrived in huge number from different land, and their language also different, as the working force for the ruler and their rule.

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44. See, Brajendranath Bandyopadhyay, Bāṅgla Sāmīyik-Patra, Part I-II.
2. Modern education and the exposition of rationalistic thought and conception.
3. Use of modern technologies and
4. Discovery and detection of tea and minerals of this region.

These scenarios had changed the context of Assam or northeast in nineteenth century.

Printing machines were installed in Kolkata or Dhaka after the arrival of clergymen from foreign land. Similarly in Assam machines were brought in by American Baptist Missionaries. ‘Arunodai’ was the first journal of Northeast India, which was appeared in 1846 AD by the initiative of Missionaries. From 1846 to 1900 AD—that means almost entire nineteenth century—lots of journals had been published mainly in three languages, like Assamese, Bengali and English.

It is a significant fact that, in the later half of nineteenth century in this hinterland of India journals was published in huge number due to printing and the spreading of modern education.

In nineteenth century many Bengalis of middle class specify spreaded across India for livelihood. The British rulers had made the road for Bengalis to reach various fields like government office, court, school, medical and even in trade and commerce. They started new life in new circumference. Their cultural and literary heritage had been shown with the establishment of Saraswat Samaj, Hitasadhini Sabha, schools and other activities. In this way arrival, settlement and activities of middle class Bengalis had increased in Goalpara, Guwahati, Dibrugarh, Shillong, Silchar and some other places. In this context Gunabhiram Baruah and Hedambakanta Barpujari, both of them had the proper opinion:

a. আমাব নিজে দেশের লোকসকলে সেই সময়ত ইংরেজ নিয়মে পড়া অথবা লাগতিয়াল বিষয় গালিবালে অসমর্থ আছিল। ইংরেজ নিন্দত সকলে কথাতে লেখা পড়া করায়। আমাব পূর্ববর্তী বিগ্রহসকলে সেই কথা শিখা পাই নাছিল। ... আমাব মনুষ্যে সেই কথা উচ্চ অথবা সাধারণ লোকেরা সমাজে লেখাতে লগ্ন লাগি থাকিব পড়া বিষয় নকিয়া বঙ্গভার্ত এই এক প্রকারে আমাব সমাজে নেতা হল।

[During those days our native people were not capable of doing the useful job for the British ruler. All works had been done in pen and paper in British period. Our forefathers had not got that kind of lesson. So, our people didn’t have the experience to do all those jobs; therefore Bengalis became the leader of our society.]

b. ইংরেজি তেতিয়াব চন্দ্রকে খোল স্কুলবিদাল বঙ্গলায় শিক্ষা মাধ্যম করা দিয়া হ’ল। কিন্তু বঙ্গলায় শিক্ষা দন্ত কাবণে খলুরা শিক্ষক পোরা নগ’ল; গতিকে প্রায় সব স্কুলে বঙ্গলীয়ে কাম নকাবলে নথ পলিক পরাম।

[Meanwhile, in those days Bengali was imposed as medium of instruction in schools. But there was dearth of local teachers to teach in Bengali medium. Therefore most of the schools recruited Bengali teachers.]

One thing is clear from these two opinions that, mainly middle class Bengalis arrived in Assam to do various kinds of office jobs or to be recruited as school teacher. And it is a fact that, emigrated middle class Bengalis took initiative to publish Bengali journal and periodicals with educated people of this region.

It’s better to mention in the beginning that, we could not find any copy of those journals, which was published from Goalpara, Guwahati or Silchar in nineteenth century. But some related information is there. With the help of that information some paints are given below:

a. আসাম মহির:

It was appeared as a Bengali weekly magazine. Later it became bilingual due to the inclusion of English.

‘আসাম মহির’ was printed from Chidananda Press, Guwahati and the editor was Jadunath Chakraborty.

This journal appeared in 1872 AD, and had been running one year. It is mentionable that, this magazine is the first weekly journal of Assam.

b. গোলপারা হিতাধিনী:

It was launched on Baishakh, 1281 BS. After publishing few issues it was stopped. But it was re-appeared in the later half of 1282 BS (1875 AD).

It was started as a fortnightly journal, later it was turned into weekly. And in 1878 AD it was stopped due to poor circulation. Discussion of Assam’s politics and administration was the prime theme of this journal. Instead of general Bengali language Bengali prose pattern of legal matter was used in this journal.

c. Madhumakshikā:

It was appeared in Jaistha, 1282 BS (1875 AD) from Goalpara.

d. Silchar:

First newspaper of Barak valley and Bidhubhusan Ray was the editor. This fortnightly journal had been published from Silchar in 1889 AD. This journal was able to raise the issue of socio-political problem of common people during that period. It is mentionable that, later Bhagavaticharan Ray Gupta took the charge of ‘Silchar’.

e. Chatrasakha:

First issue of this journal was published in Shravan, 1298 BS (1891 AD) by few students, as it was mentioned in this journal. Chatrasakha Samiti from Hailakandi of Cachar district was the publisher of this journal.

‘Āssām Mihir’ was published from Guwahati, and the publisher was Raysaheb Chidananda Choudhury, who was an Assamese. There are some instances that, journals and periodicals were published in Assamese before ‘Āssām Mihir’. Therefore it is an obvious question that, why Chidananda Choudhury took imitative to publish a journal in Bengali? We don’t have any direct information regarding this fact. We could only assume that:

a. Chidananda Choudhury was interested to publish Bengali journal, because in Assam Bengali language was used in administrative work and
b. It is a well-known fact that Chidananda Choudhury was interested in Bengali language and literature. Therefore it was natural for him to publish a Bengali journal.

Printing machine was brought in within two years of the appearance of ‘Assam Mihir’ in Goalpara town. According to the administrative report of 1875-76 AD, there were six printing machines in Assam. These are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Printing Press</th>
<th>Proprieter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sylhet</td>
<td>Srihattaparakash</td>
<td>Babu Girishchandra Deb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Babu Laxminath Sarma</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Babu Saratkumar Das</td>
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<td>Babu Krishnagobinda Das</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Babu Joychandra Das</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goalpara</td>
<td>Hitabidhayini Yantra</td>
<td>Hitabidhayini Sabha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamrup</td>
<td>Chidananda Press</td>
<td>Chidananda Choudhury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dharmaprakash Yantra</td>
<td>Aoniati Gossain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khasi Hills</td>
<td>Assam Secretariat Press</td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some books were also published in that period with the initiative of Goalpara Hitabidhayini Sabha. ‘Goālpārā Hitasādhini’, this journal was published from Hitabidhayini Yantra. How significant was this journal that could be comprehended from a comment, published in ‘The Statesman’:

The ‘Goālpārā Hitabidhyni’, the only influential paper in Assam proper.

Historian Jayanta Bhusan Bhattacharya said about ‘Silchar Patrika’, the first newspaper from Barak valley. He said:

Bidhu Bhusan Sen was the pioneer of journalism in Cachar. ‘Silchar’ was the only newspaper in the district in the last century, and it played a commendable role in guiding public opinion and focusing attention on social and political problems.

47. A Growl from Assam (letter to the editor), The Statesman, Calcutta, January 20, 1880.
It is needless to say that, these journals had distinct character because of the regional flavour. Names of these journals indicate that characteristic, like ‘Assam Mihir’, ‘Goālpārā Hitasādhini’ and ‘Silchar Patrikā’.

In the beginning of nineteenth century, that means the early part of renaissance, Assamese intelligentsia was mainly dependent upon those journals and periodicals, which were published from the land of Bengal. But this dependence almost came down after the appearance of ‘Arunodai’. And in the later half of nineteenth century so many journals and periodicals were published in Assamese, Bengali and English from here. Therefore the urge of publishing local news and various kinds of write-ups were fulfilled in these journals and periodicals. And gradually local issues got prominence with other issues in these journals.

Sylhet was under the jurisdiction of Assam until the independence of India. It was included in the year of 1874 AD. For a long period Sylhet was mentioned with Mithila and Nabadweep for the reputation of ‘nyāy’ (a logical and philosophical treatise compiled by Gautam), philosophy and Sanskrit study. Moreover a mystic poet like Hasan Raja also lived here. However, spreading of modern education was expedited in Sylhet in the later half of nineteenth century.

In 1873 AD three schools in Sylhet town, and twenty three in entire district. Simultenously a college was established in 1892 AD. It is to be mentioned that, during that period in Assam the first college was established, named after Murarichand, who was maternal grandfather of Girishchandra Ray. Needless to say that, the spreading of education had widened the history of journals and periodicals.

Although, before the spreading of modern education Gaurisankar Tarkabagish (Bhattacharya), the worthy son of Sylhet had published journals like ‘Jnānaneshwan’ (1831) and ‘Sambād Bhāskar’ (1839) from Kolkata. But instances of journals-periodicals publishing were seen in Cachar almost after fifty years of these journals, published by Gaurishankar or Gurgure Bhattacharya. The first news based journal of Sylhet was ‘Shrihatta Prakash’, edited by Pyaricharan Das. All total nine Bengali journals are found from entire nineteenth
century, which were published from Sylhet. Brief introduction of these journals and periodicals are given below:

a. Shrihatta Prakash:

Editor Pyaricharan Das. In later period Manohar Ghosh was the editor. This weekly journal was the first news based periodical of Sylhet. Earlier it was printed from Kolkata, but later from the local press ‘Shrihatta Prakash Yantra’.

It was appeared in 1876 AD (in another view 1875 AD). It had been run almost a decade. In later period this journal had been published fortnightly instead of weekly.

In 1867 AD Pyaricharan came to Kolkata to pursue higher education after passing the entrance examination from Sylhet. But he could not pursue education. In that period he joined as a clerk in the external affairs department of India office. Meanwhile, in 1875 AD he was sentenced to three months imprisonment for the change of unintentionally murder of an Englishman, called William Circess. After the imprisonment was over, he did not join the job again. He came back to Sylhet. Pyaricharan was a poet by nature, thus he concentrated his mind in poetry. Simultaneously he had published ‘Shrihatta Prakāṣh’. There is a comment on this journal in a book called ‘Shrihatter Itibritta’. Excerpts:

[Once upon a time ‘Shrihatta Prakāṣh’ was a very famous journal of this

49. Achyutcharan Choudhury Tatwanidhi, Shrihatter Itibritta, Part IV, P.85
region. Moreover, it is heard that, there were other journals also of different names, but illiterate people was in believe that, all were ‘Shrihatta Prakash’. From this fact it is easily comprehended that, this over-publicized journal was how much famous in this region. Pyaricharan was too much busy for the publishing of ‘Shrihatta Prakash’, thus he hardly got time for relax. Those days, it was hard to find the outstation correspondent. Thus the news collection job was too much trouble some. He had to write almost every write-up for his journal."

Pyaricharan had started a new chapter of journalism in Sylhet. Needless to say that, Kolkata-returned Pyaricharan succeeded to bring in a new movement in this outskirt city.

b. Paridarsak:

This journal was appeared in 1880 AD as a weekly. Editor and publisher were Bipinchandra Paul and Radhanath Choudhury respectively.

After two years of its appearance Bipinchandra came to Kolkata. Then some other persons had taken the editorial responsibility. Amongst them noteworthy persons were— Prafulla Mohan Das, Pyari Mohan Das and Gopendranath Arjun.

Bipinchandra Paul said about ‘Paridarsak’ in his autobiography ‘Memories of my Life and Times’:

"... a new Bengali weekly was started in Sylhet about the middle of 1880, and I was invited to be its editor. The name of our new Bengali weekly was ‘Paridarsak’. ... Like the ‘Bharat Mihir’ of Mymensingh, the ‘Paridarsak’ of Sylhet also almost from its birth commended public attention and soon became one of the most powerful exponents of educated public opinion not only of the district of Sylhet but more or less of the whole province of Bengal. ... It was my first independent charge in journalism, and my subsequent career in this line has been very largely indebted to this first opportunity that my Sylhet friends found me."\footnote{50. Quoted in Brajendranath Bandyopadhyay, Bānglā Sāmāyik-Patra, Part II, P.32.}
We have tracked out three points from the above said context:

i. Bipinchandra Paul was invited to be the editor of 'Paridarsak'.

ii. This is the journal, where he succeeded to make a mark in journalism, for the first time.

iii. Not only in Sylhet, but also in the whole province of Bengal, 'Paridarsak' was widely known journal of educated people.

According to Assam Administrative Report of 1893-94 AD, 'Paridarsak', a fortnightly newspaper published in Bengali in Sylhet. But 'Paridarsak' is identified as a weekly journal in another governmental document. And it is also mentioned that, this journal had been published in Bengali and English, that means it was a bi-lingual journal.

On the basis of these governmental documents, it could be said that, earlier 'Paridarsak' had been published as a Bengali journal, but later it was turned into bi-lingual journal. Secondly, this journal had been published weekly sometimes, again at times as fortnightly 'Paridarsak' had been published from 1880 to 1940 AD.

c. Phultatwa Prakāṣikā:

Girija Bhusan Dey was the editor of this annual journal. The first issue of 'Phultatwa Prakasika' was published in 1882 AD. It was another journal, published from Sylhet. Basically this journal had been published with sarcastic write-ups.

This journal had been published till 1926 AD.

d. Shrihatta Suhrid:

This monthly journal was run by the 'effort of boys' [Balakdiger Jatne].

Its first issue was published in Poush, 1295 BS (1889 AD).

51. See, Report on the Native-owned English and Vernacular Newspapers of Eastern Bengal and Assam for the year 1908.

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'Shrihatta Suhrid' had been published with a purpose, and that was:

Now a day, character of most of the boys and youths is being deteriorated. To bring those depraved boys and youths in virtuous course is the resolution of 'Shrihatta Suhrid'.]

This journal usually had been published from Sylhet. But in 1890 AD the January issue was published from Karimganj. And it was edited by Kailashchandra Biswas.

e. Shrihatta Mihir:

Lala Prasannakumar Dey was the editor of this journal. The first issue of this weekly was published in 1297(1890).

'Shrihatta Mihir' could not survive more than a year.

f. Rasaraj:

Lala Prasannakumar Dey was the editor of this monthly journal. The first issue of this journal was published on January, 1891. But this journal was stopped after publishing few issues.

g. Shrihattabasi:

Editor Nagendranath Datta. Earlier it was weekly journal, but later it had been published fortnightly. And in later period this journal was edited by Girishchandra Das.

h. Sachitra Gan O Galpa:

Banku Bihari Das was the editor.

From Baisakh 1303 (1896), this monthly journal had been published from Sylhet.

52. Quoted in Brajendranath Bandyopadhyay, Ibid, P.54.
Achyutcharan Tattwanidhi was the editor of this monthly journal. The first issue of this journal was published on 25 Ashar, 1306 BS (1899 AD). But this journal was stopped after two years.

The proclaimed purpose of ‘Shrihatta Darpan’ was:

['Shrihṭa’s summaray bīṣayā vāyātāe dhālāraṇ prāṭīkālim hītidāe pāre tāṭātī lākṣ rāthsā
ēhā kūra māśik pāṭr prākāśita hīlid']

[This little monthly journal is appeared with the intention to reflect all the issues related to Sylhet with great prominence.]

Really this journal was able to raise the issues of contemporary public grievances. This journal was in the forefront to breaking some news that even government used to pay attention to it. Achyutcharan’s ‘Srihatta Darpan’ even pointed out that, instead of municipality, government should take the responsibility in the prevention of malaria. But Achutcharan’s journal made adverse criticism on woman-education:

[Instead of reading dramas and novels women should learn household work to become a good housewife.]

Did not this comment revealed the rivalry between the activities of Brahma and the doctrine of conservationist?

These journals of Sylhet had been printed in very few numbers. According to governmental document, in the year of 1908 AD circulation of ‘Paridarsak’ was 370. This number is too much little than those journals published from Kolkata, like ‘Bangabāsi’, ‘Sanjibani’, ‘Basumati’, ‘Hitabādi’ etc.

Mainly local issues got prominence in those journals, which had been

published from this hinterland. One of the main purposes of these journals was to publish various kind of news. But these journals were distinct for their local characteristics.

Within the nineteenth century Assam came under the British rule. Earlier Assam was included within the Bengal jurisdiction, later it was recognized as different administrative jobs.

Naturally, Bengalis had arrived in Shillong to do the administrative jobs in British rule. Not only from Sylhet, had Bengalis come from other parts of Bengal also to this place. In this context Bengali study had been increased extensively in Shillong during the nineteenth century. In Poush, 1285 (1878) ‘Shillong Sahitya Sabha’ was established by the initiative of some emigrated learn people in Shillong during that period. The main aim of this society was to study of Bengali language and its comprehensive improvement. And to do so couple of special methods were followed in that period:

a. Collecting Bengali books, thus the members of this society would have been encouraged to read Bengali books with the proper guideline of local admires of Bengali language and some book lover friends. And

b. To grow interest and affection towards composition of Bengali write-ups for the improvement of Bengali language.

In 1302 BS (1895 AD), ‘Saitya-Sebak’ was published and it adopted mainly the second point as its purpose.

During this period Shillong was stirred for the various activities of Brahma Samaj. In 1885 AD ‘Mahilā Samiti’ and ‘Rām Mohan Mahilā Pustakālaya’ were established by the initiative of Hemantakumari Choudhury. Sarada Manjori Datta mentioned in her autobiography about the Bengalis, lived in Shillong during that period:

তখন সহর কেশী বিস্তৃত ছিল না। জেল রোড়, পুলিশ বাজার, মৌখার — এই তিন স্থানেই প্রধানতঃ বাঙালীরা বাস করিতেন। ... অনুচ্ছেদিত রাজনীতিক প্রাদানের মধ্যে ছিলেন শ্রীযুক্ত রাজচন্দ্র
[In those days Shillong was not a much expanded city. Bengalis mainly lived in three places like, Jail Road, Police Bazar and Mokhar. Rajchandra Choudhury, Brajendranath Sen, Pandit Kailashchandra Sen, Lal Madhav Basu were amongst the formally Brahmos. …

In those days there were mutual bondness with too much of unity and amicability. Caste-system was not strict; woman-emancipation was also there.]

—In this circumstance monthly journal ‘Sahitya Sebak’ appeared from Shillong.

‘Sāhitya Sebak’ had been published regularly for two years between 1302-03 BS and 1303-04 BS (1895-96 AD and 1896-97 AD). Name of the editor was not mentioned in first and second volume either. Declaration in first volume (1302-03) was: ‘Managed by Shillong Sahitya Sabha’ and published by Haricharan Sen, secretary of Shillong Sahitya Sabha.

Jatindra Mohan Bhattacharya had given information about ‘Sahitya Sebak’ in a list, titled journals edited by Sylheti and published from Sylhet and Cachar (‘শীল্লং সাহিত্য সভা’ প্রকাশিত মাসিকপত্র ও সমালোচনা, শিল্লং হইতে ১৩০২ বাবলা পৌষ মাসে প্রকাশিত, মাত্র ১ বৎসর বাহির হইয়াছিল, অন্যতম সম্পাদক পদ্মনাথ ভট্টাচার্য, বাংলা স. শ্রী (সচিত্রনাদ সংগ্রহ / শ্রীহট্ট সাহিত্য পরিষৎ প্রথাগার)’56

[Sahitya Sebak: A monthly and review journal, managed by ‘Shillong Sahitya Sabha’, appeared in Poush, 1302 BS from Shillong. It had been published only for one year. One of the editors was Padmanath Bhattacharya, Bengali.]

55. Saradamanjuri Datta, Mahayatrar Pathe, P.57.
We have doubt about Jatindra Mohan Bhattacharya’s two points. He had mentioned that, “‘Sāhitya Sebak’ had been published only for one year”, and secondly ‘one of the editors was Padmanath Bhattacharya’. It should be mentioned that ‘Sāhitya Sebak’ had been published regularly for two years. And ‘one of the editors was Padmanath Bhattacharya’—this kind of information is not found in the ‘Sahitya Sebak’, the journal. But those had taken the initiative to publish this journal. Padmanath Bhattacharya was one of them. Besides ‘local’ and ‘emigrant’ Bengalis also there, like Panchkari Ghosh, Jnan Ranjan Guha, Abhaysankar Guha, Nilkanta Goswami, Girindra Mohini Dasi, Hirendranath Datta, Ambujasundari Das and others.

It is mentionable that this journal was appeared mainly with the endeavour of Panchkari Ghosh. He had written two articles, titled ‘Is the Assamese language a separate language’ and ‘Chronicle of Assam’. The first one was published in a journal called ‘Nabya Bharat Patra’ (Shravan, 1816 Shakabda). After four years of this article was published, Rabindranath Tagore had written an article called ‘Bhasha-Viched’ (Dissent of language). Rabindranath’s this article was published in ‘Bharati’, the journal. Then in the Ashvin, 1305 BS (1898 AD) issue of ‘Bharati’ an article was published named ‘Āssāmer Kathā’, written by an obscure writer. In this article Rabindrnath’s opinion was supported as well as opposed to some extent. Probably Panchkari Ghosh himself was that ‘obscure writer’.57 During this time (Ashvin-Kartik, 1305) Lakshminath Bezbarua’s article, titled ‘Āssāmi Bhāshā’ (Assamese language) was also published in a journal called ‘Punya’. However, initiative of Panchkari Ghosh to publish ‘Sāhitya Sebak’ is really remarkable:

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58. Sāhitya Sebak, Shillong Sahitya Sabha, Chaitra 1302 BS (1st year, 4th issue), Appendix.
"Sahitya Sebak" was appeared because of encouragement and initiative of some learned persons, afore mentioned Panchkaribabu is the most important amongst them. He is giving his utmost care and effort to make this new-born journal ‘Sebak’ par excellence. Therefore the association will be grateful forever to him.

— It was mentioned in the ‘seventeenth annual activities’ of Shillong Sahitya Sabha. ‘Sahitya Sebak’ had been published for two years, and printed by Adharchandra Basu, it had been printed from 51/2 Sukia Street, Calcutta and a machine named ‘Manika’ had been used for this purpose. Write ups of this journal could be classified as poetry, story, novel and article-eassy and miscellaneous.

In those days ‘Bangadarsan’ and ‘Bhārati’ were the ideal literary journals in Bengal and for Bengali in true significance. Perhaps for this reason most of the write-ups of ‘Sahitya Sebak’, a mouthpiece of Shillong Sahitya Sabha, were like those of ‘Bangadarsan’ or ‘Bhārati’. But simultaneously it should be mentioned that ‘Sahitya Sebak’ was sincere and liberal to publish write-ups about indigenous history and various tribes of north-east region.

There was a proper lamination in an article, titled ‘Assamer Itihas’ (History of Assam):

jahid

রাষ্ট্রীয় বিদ্যুত জাহাজ কাহিনী অন্দোলন যেমন পার্থ এবং কলাচিকানো সাগর-কুলে জলদস্তান কর্তৃক উদ্ধৃত পুস্তকগুলি সর্বাদ রাখিয়া থাকি, কিন্তু অদেশের এই বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ও তত্ত্বাবধায়নের কোন সংবাদকে অগত্য নহি; — অস্ত্য হোটেলের তিতির বা স্যামুদ্র দীপপ্রলেপের অধীনে কাযাকাউয়ার অর্থকাহিনি জানিবার জন্য আমরা উদ্দীপ্ত হইয়া উঠি, কিন্তু হদেশ এক সমন্ত জাতির তথ্য জানিবার অবদিগকে কিন্তু কোনো জমে না। জনসাধারণ নাগ্ন, শিংপো, আবার বা বাঙালির নাম পর্যায়ে জানেন কি না সহজে; আর তাহারা কখন শুনিয়াছেন, তাহাদিগের পক্ষেও, বেশ হয়, ঐ সকলকেই একাধিক পত্র মাঝে। পরেই পাঠাবার প্রত্যেক হিসাবের ক্ষেত্রেও নিকট ‘উড়ন’ বা ধরা তাহার গৃহদেবতার নায় সুপরিচিত, কিন্তু উঠেই বা সালামের নাম নিতান্তই অপরাপ পদার্থ ।

[We can describe about the Celt tribes of ancient Britain with out much effort, and we are thoroughly informed about the trouble in the Baltic coast created by pirates. But we don’t have any idea about this expanded region of our own country, and its indigenous people. We use to become excited to know about the history of savage Hotent, or the travels of Kalakaua, The king of Sandwich Island, but there is not least amount of interest in us to know about the indigenous people of our own land. It is doubtful, whether the people are familiar with names such Naga, Singpo, Abar or Khasi. And if somebody listen all these names somehow, for them perhaps these are mere synonymous words. But ‘Woodon’ or ‘Thar’ are well-known to Hindu boys, those are pursuing education as their tutelary daily. On the other hand, Ublei or Saljong— these names are just strange materials.]

Naturally this self-criticising part of a preface attracts us. The idea of showing interest about neighbouring language and tribes is seen also in an article, titled ‘Rup-Narayan’:

असाम जंगलाभूमि, एखाने बुरि तथा लोक जमे ना,— एहि ब्राह्मण यहाँ अनेकके परम्परा
करिते देखा याय। किन्तु प्राचीन प्रथाधिक अनुसंधान करिले इहाँ वातावरण दृष्टि है। असाम
जंगलाभूमि फूड़,— राज्य से अभय सेहाने नहीं, असाम रजस्विनी नही।

[Assam is a wild place, mannered are not found here. This is the myth of almost every person. But the fact is seen in ancient scriptures. So what! Assam is a wild place; there is no death of jewels. Assam is not jewel less at all.]

Simultaneously, activities of ‘Sahitya Sebak’ to restore and publish a verse named ‘Durgāpancharatri’ by Jagat Ram Ray, ‘Adbhut Ramāyan’ famed a Bengali poet is really significant.

Needless to say that poetry or verse had been published more in ‘Sahitya Sebak’. In the later half of nineteenth century lyric poem was the trend in Bengali poetry. Poetry or verse, those published in ‘Sahitya Sebak’ were just following that trend.

60. Sahitya Sebak, Ibid, Chaitra 1302 BS (1st year, 4th issue), P. 129.

के तूमि रमणी-मणि एवंबे बसिया,
ठिम-ठिम केश-पाश,
स्नित अन्द्रे बास,
पागलिनी प्राय तेन र'येछ चाहिया? 61

[Oh! Beautiful lady, who are you sitting in this way? Your hair is unkept, and your clothes are tousled. You are looking almost insane, what are you looking at?]

In this journal stories had not been published as much as poems. In the early part of Bengali short story ‘Achalā’, ‘Kamalā’, ‘Chitra’, ‘Samasyā’ and other stories were published in ‘Sāhitya Sebak’. ‘Achalā’ was published in the first issue of second year of ‘Sāhitya Sebak’. It was a complete love story, and narrated by a character of this story was concluded with tragedy instead of happy ending due to social resistance. Suren, a student of Calcutta University raise a question before social people in the finishing part of the story:

তোমারা এখন বলতে পার কি, কবে আমাদের সেই শূন্য সমিলন-দিন উপহৃত হইবে?
কবে আমাদের নিষ্ঠুর বাসনা পূর্ণ হইবে? কবে আমাদের ভয় হারায় পুনর্বাকর জ্বলা লাগিবে! 62

[Can you tell now, when will the auspicious day come that we can unite? When will be our, unfruitful desire fulfilled? When will be our broken heart joined again?]

Needless to that, the story-writer was trying to reveal a social problem and its nature in this story.

62. Ibid, Poush 1303 BS (2nd year, 1st issue), P. 29.
Only one novel named ‘Apurba Bāsar’ was published in ‘Sāhitya Sebak’. This novel had been published episode-wise from second issue of first year, which means Magh, 1302 BS (1895 AD). ‘Apurba Bāsar’ consisted all total fifteen chapters, and finished in the issue of Poush, 1303 BS (1897 AD).

The basic theme of this novel is the love-life of Hemlata and Prabodhchandra. Their bride-chamber was decorated at ‘Gangā-Yatra’, the barge in the sandy beach of a river. In this wonderful bride-chamber they understood each other newly.

Narrative description was the main feature of the novel in nineteenth century. This feature has the predominance in ‘Apurba Bāsar’. It is mentionable that Ramkumar Nandi Mazumdar had written ‘Mālinir Upākhyaṇ’ in 1892 AD, that means before the publishing of ‘Apurba Bāsar’. But ‘Mālinir Upākhyaṇ’ was published in 1940 AD. Therefore, it could be said that, ‘Apurba Basar’, which was published in ‘Sāhitya Sebak’ was the first Bengali novel published from Assam.

Articles of ‘Sāhitya Sebak’ are another treasure. These articles could be divided in some categories:


These subjective and objective articles were written in lucid prose. Two examples are given below:

a. Smiling and weeping are the expression of happiness and sadness respectively. Even a new-born child can express its happiness and sadness this is the law of the universe, otherwise we would not be able to a child smiling or weeping. ‘Sahitya Sebak’ also a new-born child, thus in the very beginning story of happiness and sadness had been told. Therefore, we beg pardon to sincere readers.

b. What is my gender? When I am valorous and majestic Birendra Singh, then definitely my gender is masculine. But when I am your cook, maid-servant and dedicated myself to your auspicious foot, then my gender is feminine. When there is tumultuous war between China-Japan, and it is uncertain that who will go to be winning, then me am neuter gender.

Around twelve hundred Bengali journals or periodicals had been published in entire nineteenth century. During this period Bengali journals or periodicals had the tremendous variety in terms of their names. Various kinds of names are

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63. Sahitya Sebak, Ibid, Poush 1302 BS (1st year, 1st issue), P. 7.
there. Some had the simile of the sun and the moon, such as ‘Sambad Prabhākar’, ‘Sambād Bhāskar’ (simile of Sun), ‘Sambād Kaumudi’, ‘Sambād Chandrikā’ (simile of moon). Some names signified the character of enlightenment, such as ‘Tattwabodhini Patrikā’, ‘Satya Dharma Prakāsikā’, ‘Bijnān Sebadhi’, ‘Jnanoday’ and others. And some names had the regional character, such as ‘Rangpur Bārtābaha’, ‘Dhāka Prakāśh’, ‘Āssām Mihir’, ‘Shrihatta Prakāśh’ and others.

Needless to say that, the name ‘Sāhitya Sebak’ is something different this name suggests a well-initiation. ‘Sāhitya Sebak’ means who are pursuing literature devotedly. Pursuing Bengali literature in outside Bengal in nineteenth century is really a significant devotion. For this great purpose ‘Sāhitya Sebak’, a mouthpiece of Shillong Sahitya Sabha was appeared. Following lines were stated in the ‘offer’ part of this journal:

‘সেবক’ সাহিত্য-সংস্থার নিত্যন শিশু ও সুকুমার,— সুত্রাঙ সুকুমার সাহিত্য-সেবাতেই সহায় পাঠকগণ উহাকে অপেক্ষাকৃত নিযুক্ত দেবিতে পাইবেন। তবে অন্তর্গত কাব্য- উপন্যাস, চরিত-ইতিহাস, অলোচনার সঙ্গে, সাধারণ দর্শন-বিজ্ঞানের বন্ধুর পথেও পদক্ষেপ করিতে ‘সেবক’ চেষ্টার কৃতি করিবে না; কেবল আদেশ পারিবে না— রাজনীতি সমূচনে করিতে ; এ কার্য বাণিজ্যিক উদ্দেশ সাধারণ নাহ।”

[In the world of literature ‘sebak’ are just children and tender. Therefore, dear readers will notice that, it ill be dedicated to tender-hearted literature more. But while it will deal with poems, novels, biographies and literary discussion, simultaneously it will try its level best to walk along the topsy-turvy path of philosophy and science within its range of capability. It will never do only one thing— political criticism; In fact, it is not capable of doing such.]

‘Sāhitya Sebak’ was one of those literary journals, which had been published from the outside region of undivided Bengal in nineteenth century. Characteristics of ‘Bangadarsan’, ‘Bhārati’, and ‘Nabya Bharat’ were seen in ‘Sāhitya Sebak’. But to be frank, ‘Sāhitya Sebak’ had not the standard of those journals in terms of the quality of write-ups. The responsible persons of ‘Sāhitya Sebak’ took the initiative to publish the journal for themselves and their own

purpose. And it became fruitful to them. It is fact that ‘Sahitya Sebak’ could not initiate any literary movement or produce any prominent author, yet it ‘attract sympathy’ of ours. Because:

Far away from Motherland, on the top of the Khasi hills a handful of persons are giving their service to mother language amidst of different language and different nature of people... therefore it could be thoroughly expected that ‘Sahitya Sebak’ will attract sympathy from everyone for its petite purpose.]

Some learned people took initiative to study and give service to mother language with the help of ‘Sahitya Sebak’. Their purposes were ‘improvement of Bengali language’ and ‘recreation for common people’. On the contrary it should be mentioned that they had the interest and affection for the society and literature of neighbours also. This is the glory, which made ‘Sahitya Sebak’ a unique journal.

In the preface of ‘Prabasi’ Ramananda Chattopadhyay had mentioned:

We are going to publish ‘Prabasi’ with the name of Supreme Lord, who fulfills our all desires. This is the first initiative to publish this kind of monthly journal from the outside of Bengal. To publish such journal away from Bengal we have to overcome so many obstacles and hindrance in terms of write-ups, photographs and other things.]

‘Prabāsi’ was appeared in Bajsakh, 1308 BS (1901 AD). Perhaps, in outside Bengal there is not a single journal like this one, which was commercially success and popular. But in nineteenth century lots of monthly journals had been published from outside of undivided Bengal. That means there are examples of publishing monthly journal from outside of Bengal in earlier period also. But those were not commercially success like ‘Prabasi’.

‘Sāhitya Sebak’, the mouthpiece of Shillong Sahitya Sabha was most significant among those monthly journals which were published before ‘Prabāsi’. Contents of ‘Sāhitya Sebak’ were rich and it had the consistency in publishing; these two features were really envious in outside of Bengal. This monthly and review journal was not enlightened and much talked about either, but of course it incited astonishment in us.

Opinions of four contemporary journals about ‘Sāhitya Sebak’ are stated here:

a. The magazine is named ‘Sāhitya Sevak’, and it is proposed to be devoted to all literary and scientific subjects, excluding only politics. *** It contains a number of thoughtful articles. We wish our contemporary a long life.  

b. [Shilong Sāhitya Sevak] has been established by the Sāhitya Sabha. It has been commissioned to publish the literary and scientific works, excluding politics. It contains a number of thoughtful articles. We wish its long life.

[Sāhitya Sebak] came out from Shillong Sahitya Sabha. This association had been existed for a long period, and it was the achievement of founder members of this association. It is really matter of prosperity and greatest delight for Bengali language that for away from the native land on the top of the Khasi hills a handful of people are devoted for the literary practice in mother tongue. Articles

70. Quoted in Hitaishi, Ibid.
of ‘Sāhitya Sebak’ were well-written and much selected. We wish our contemporary a long life.

c. আসাম প্রদেশের শিলং-এর সাহিত্য-সভা কর্তৃক বিপুল পৌষ মাসে হইতে এই বাংলা মাসিক পত্রিকায় প্রকাশিত হইতেছে।  *** আসামের বাংলা সাহিত্য বিষয়ক পত্রিকা এবং সেই পত্রিকায়ে বিশ্বুরূপ বাংলাধর লিখিত ও সারগর্ভ বিষয়ে পরিপূর্ণ। ইহা দেখিয়া আমরা বলতে ই আশাও আনন্দে উৎসুক হইয়াছি। আমরা সেবককে প্রথম উদ্যানেই আসামের ইতিহাস প্রকাশনার একাংশ উপাদানের ও কটিবন্ধন স্ট্যান্ডফ্রেম করিতে দেখিয়া সুখী হইয়াছি।

d. আসামের শৈলশিক্ষার রাজ্য শিলং হইতে প্রকাশিত সাহিত্য-সেবক নামক একখানি মাসিকপত্রকে প্রায় এক বৎসর যাবৎ প্রাপ্ত হইতেছে।  *** ইহা নিয়মিত রূপে প্রকাশ হইতেছে। ইহার ভাৰ্যা প্রাগুক ও সুপাঠ। ইহাতে কম্পতী প্রকাশিত ‘জগদ্রম রায়ের দূর্গাপঞ্চারত্রি’ প্রাচীন প্রথমার্থের অন্তর্গত গৌরবের সামর্থ্য। ইহাতে নবীনতায় সমস্তের কিছু কিছু আলোচনা হয় আশা করি এ বিবর্তন কিছু দেশীরাপে হইবে। ইহার মূল্য, অন্য মাসিকের তুলনায় কম, মাত্র ২২ টাকা।

[This monthly journal had been published from the month of Poush by the Sāhitya Sabha of Shillong, Assam. *** A Bengali literary journal in Assam, its contents are rich and written in flawless Bengali. Therefore we are really excited. And we are happy to see that, ‘Sebak’ in its first issue published an article of hand subject like Assam’s history in interesting way. By any means ‘Sebak’ should be lasted for long.]

[For almost one year we have been sent a monthly journal named ‘Sāhitya Sebak’ published from Assam’s capital and hilly town Shillong. *** It has been published regularly. Language is so lucid and nicely readable. In this journal late Jagadrum Ray’s ‘Durgapancharatri’ has been published serially, which is one of the glorious work of authors from ancient period. This journal published some write-ups about modern science also. We hopethere will be more articles on this subject. This monthly is comparatively cheaper than other journals, only Rs. 2.]

71. Quoted in Saraswata Patra, Ibid.
72. Quoted in Dhākā Prakāsh, Ibid.
— After going through these opinions we are naturally being interested about ‘Sāhitya Sebak’. We are leafing through ‘Sāhitya Sebak’ and being astorished after reading articles of this journal, which was contemporary of ‘Bhārati’ and ‘Nabya Bhārat’, and published before ‘Prabāsi’.