CHAPTER - II

BENGALI AND ASSAMESE NOVELS AND NOVELISTS (TILL 1950)
A special branch of modern literature is novel. Novel is a unique creation in the history of literature. The word 'Novel' originates from Italian 'novella' that means a new small object, that implies a new kind of writing in prose.\(^1\) Again, *Encyclopedia Britannica* defines novel as,

Novel, an invented prose narrative of considerable length and a certain complexity that deals imaginatively with human experience usually through a connected sequence of events involving a group of persons in a specific setting.\(^2\)

The etymological meaning of novel is message, which is always new, not old or traditional. This reference to message has ultimately turned into the massage or information regarding the life of the people or rather the life-story of the contemporary man and woman.\(^3\)

There is no trace of anything like novel in any ancient literature. Its link is with the modern age and its social psyche affected by struggle. Social system and man's ignorance about his relationship with that system stood as barrier for the development of novel. But then man could know himself, understand himself.

It can also be said as,

মধ্যযুগের দেববাদ্যবৃত্ত মানবতাবাদের ভর পার হয়ে আধুনিক তথা নবযুগের আধ্যাত্মিকে বলীয়ান মানুষ আধুনিক সাহিত্যে এসেছে।\(^6\)
In ancient literature of Bengal and Assam, the subject matter was drawn from the lives of specially higher class and also from the 'activities' of the gods and goddesses. On the other hand novels deal in the lives of those common men. For example, *Panchanan* by Saratchandra Chattopadhyay; *Parchani* by Bibhutibhusan Bandyopadhyay; *Jeevanbar* by Manik Bandyopadhyay; *Jeevanbar* by Bina Baruah (Birinchi Kumar Baruah) etc.

Again, it cannot be said that a glimpse of the novel was not present in old literature. In the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* or other ancient literary works a picture of common man's sorrow and happiness is found. Along with the hymns dedicated to the different gods and goddesses, we find to hear the stories of the hearts of men. Elements of novel are also found in the Sanskrit prose works like *Kathasaritsagara*, *Betala Panchavimshati* etc. 

Realistic stories are also found in the Buddhist *Jatakas*. The Buddhists were influenced by the democratic spirit and gave importance to the real life situations of man's life.

In the same way *Krittibasi Ramayana* and *Kashidasi Mahabharata* of mediaval Bengali literature a great change in thoughts is marked. Mereover, realistic storyline is also noticed in the folk, a religious literature-written on the goddesses Chandi and Manasa. Gods and Goddesses have become subordinate to man. For example, in *Kalketu* by Mukundaram, the characterisation of Kalketu bears the sign of realism.
So, it is said that most of the qualities are found in him. It can be surely said that had he been born in today, he would have been a novelist instead of being a poet. Again the pictures of the society depicted in Chaitanyadeva’s Charitgranthas, is realistic.

Realistic elements are also available in ময়মনসিংহ পীতিকা. The heroines here maintain the respect of womanhood ignoring the restrictions of scripture. They understand the language of their own hearts.

Sri Dinesh Chandra Sen also says,

That is why this Gitika is mentionable from the perspective of the beginning of novel. Realistic depiction of life is also found in the literature of the Royal court of Arakan.

Then came an important change in the Bengali society towards the end of the 18th century as a result of Renaissance or Revival movement.

This movement brought changes to the thoughts, society, politics and economics along with literature and culture. This Renaissance started and evolved through the period starting from 1800 to 1921.
people came into the influence of the British civilisation. The spread of printing press, reformation of Raja Rammohan Roy and Vidyasagar also brought important changes.

Moreover, spread of women’s education, new novels, poetry, drama, articles, literature of Bankimchandra, Rabindranath — all these played a vital role. In this backdrop, novels were written on diverse problems of man and woman.

Against this,

But in the first part of the emergence of Bengali novel, women’s problem especially analysis of her psychology was not accommodated. Here, attempts are made to chronologically discuss the novels dealing in woman's problems. The first novel বাৰু (Babu) by Bhabani Bandyopadhyay is a modified version of Babu (a title affixed to the name of a gentleman) of সমাচার দর্পণ. It depicts the indiscipline and recklessness of babulife. But it bears no picture of any woman tormented by social conflict. Then we find ফুলমণি ও কল্যাণ (1852) by Heena Katherine Mallance. It depicts the life story of many Bengali families converted to Christinity. The writer’s purpose is to glorify Christinity; woman's problem is not touched upon.
Then reference may be made to the world of Bengali novel Pyarichand Mitra (1814-83). He occupies a significant place in Bengali literature. His *Pyarichand* is an example of a fulfledged novel. But here also, there is no discussion of women's problem. Bhudev Mukhopadhyay (1825-94) is the first author of historical novel in Bengali. His *Bhaktiratna* is an anthology of two brief historical stories. They are *Sakhal Sankha* and *Amdurir Bibhidas*. The second one is given important place for leading historical novel writing. Here, he projects the modern aspirations of life in the backdrop of ancient Indian history. Woman's independent right regarding selection of life partner gives a special dimension to it.

Rameshchandra Dutta (1848-1909) is another important name in the field of Bengali novels. His historical and social novels are — *Bhogbijanta*, *Madhurikaran*, *Mahanastri*, *Jeevan Prabhat*, *Jeevansandha*, *Sosoor* and *Samaj*. His female characters are — Bimala, Sarala, Amala, Kamala of *Bhogbijanta*, *Hemalata* of *Madhurikaran*, *Saruyubala* and *Lakshmbai* of *Jeevan Sandha*. In his *Sosoor* and *Samaj*, he explore the past into the present. These two novels are based upon the sorrows and happiness of social and family life. Sudha, Bindu, Uma, Kali etc. are female characters in *Sosoor*, while Sushila in *Samaj*. In *Sosoor*, we find his *slogan* in favour of widow marriage, in *Samaj* inter-caste-marriage.

Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay (1838-94) is the great name in the history of the Bengali Novel. In his essays on psychological novel and prose literature, he introduces his readers to a new taste.

বিশেষ শতাব্দীর প্রথমার্ধে যেমন রবীন্দ্রনাথ বলা হয়ে থাকে, তেমনি উনবিংশ শতাব্দীর
শেষ তিন দশকের বদ্ধমুখ বলা হয়।

47
All his historical, social, familial novels are considered valuable assets of Bengali literature.

His Rammohan's wife depicts the modern Bengali family life. After this he wrote as many as fourteen novels. Here it may be mentioned that,

In Bankimchandra's novels, self conscious assertion of female personality is found in the characters — Ayesha, Kapalkundala, Bhramar, Shaibalini. Again the female characters — Rohini, Kunda etc. have become the victims of the cruelties of the surrounding world. The women find their lover in a man of opposite character. So they faces troubles of life and ultimately sacrifices their love.

We may classify his novels into different classes. The Ashvaghosha, कपालकुंडला, चंद्रशेखर, भुगলिनी are his Romantic novels.

Here also he depicts a social-familial story centered around female personality. Ayesha, the daughter of a muslim guard of a fort offers her love to an imprisoned Hindu prince. In Bimala, we see the complexity of life
in woman conscious of her personality. Then comes Kapalkundala of his

For him the self independent of a woman is very important. That is why he speaks of imaginary independent women. In the feudal society, there is no recognition for woman's love. So she has to sacrifice herself. Her self sacrifice is a protest against the traditional systems of the society. 

was published three years after Kapalkundala. In Sahamaran of Manorama had discussed. Here author considered the Sahamaran System in his writings. A high dose of romance is noticed in Bankimchandra, Anandamath, Debottobaran, Sitaaram. After writing two short novels Shyalinini and Radharami the background of is historical, it is modern to a great extent.

The women characters of Bankimchandra, inspired by the Renaissance values, challenge fate and God. In an age when discarding husband’s home was an impossible idea, when age old restrictions were the well accepted law, Shaibalini faces issues.

Debottobaran depicts a simple but conflictful life picture. It is a family story of Bengali society of that time. Landlord Haraballabh and his cowardice, torture upon daughter-in-law, humble Praphulla etc. are very lively. Towards the end, the novel declares the win of family life over celibacy. But in and we don't find women's problem, as they deal in
religious theories. In his historical novel, many male and female characters develop around the main story of Rajsingha-Aurangajeba war. The proud character Jebaunnisa undergoes immense change in course of the novelist. The proud Shahajadi becomes humane. His other social and familial novels are — and was a short novel. After this Bankimchandra created the character Rajani in the novel on the basis of The Last day of Pompeii by Lytton. Genuine love between man and woman ends in happy union. Lust has not been considered a vice here. is a social novel which deals in the tragic consequence of people's life who do not agree to resist their passion. It shows the play of illegitimate lust and conflict between characters. In a letter from Suryamukhi it is written:

Though Suryamukhi laughs at Vidyasagar regarding the issue of widow-marriage, she ultimately accepts polygamy. Bankimchandra who took side of heritage in its conflict with new thinking, makes a protest through the silent death of Kunda. At end of the novel, Bankimchandra himself acknowledges the marriage of Kunda. Kunda dies as the wife of Nagendra. Again, is a successful creation. It may be referred to us the greatest novel of Bengali literature of that period. It is the best product of his talent. It is the married life of Gobindalal and Bhramar is destroyed by Gobindalal's lust for beauty and Rohinis (a widow) lust for life. In this novel Bhramar tells:

এখন তোমার উপর আমার ভক্তি নাই, বিশ্বাস নাই।
This resolute comment hits at very basis of the institution of marriage. Bhramar is self consciousness even inside troubles. Again the character of Rohini is also a result of the influence of Renaissance thoughts. Harlal tells her,

দেখ রোহিনী, বিধবাবিবাহ শাস্ত্রসম্মত।

But, even then, she is not fully free from hesitation, termented by the restrictions of tradition. So, in the second part, this sense of legitimacy has won. Still Rohini, who is illuminated by the light of life, is a unique creation. She wants to live in this life. She speaks up মারিও না। She gives words to the dumb questions of Kunda.

Still it has to said that, the problems of married life, women liberty, free-love, hesitations of the middle class etc. have not acquired special place in his novels. The problems of the prostitutes and the widows virginity, later explored by Rabindranath and Saratchandra, were there in the time of Bankimchandra also. But the courageous and deeper presentation of them can be attributed to Rabindranath and Saratchandra only.

Taraknath Gangopadhyay (1843-1891) is a famous contemporary writer of the time of Bankimchandra. His depiction of simple Bengali life is devoid of romance, স্বাভাবিকতা is first and the best novel.

Svarnakumari Devi (1855-1932), a writer of multifaceted talent is an important name in Bengali literature.

স্বর্ণকুমারীর দীর্ঘ বাঙালি নারী ঔপন্যাসিক, এবং তিনিই আমার নেয়া পাঁচজনের মধ্যে আধুনিকতম চেতনাসম্পন্ন, শিল্পিতাত্ত্বিক তত্ত্বের মিশ্রিত ভেষজ মিশ্রিত।

নিদ্রাহ ইর মার্কিন ইজ্ফ হিসট্রিক্যাল নোভেল এবং কাহাকে ই হিসেবে একটি মনোযোগী সামাজিক নোভেল। মানী বা মৌলিক উইলিয়েন্স। তার জীবন সম্পন্ন নয় এবং তাকে একটি শিক্ষিত তত্ত্বের মধ্যে একটি প্রতিকৃতি ভেঙে ফেলে।
section of Bengali women: she does not belong to a poor family and she is not uneducated. Still, marriage brings troubles to her life. Svarnakumari focuses the problem of widow; the desire of the educated girls to marry persons of their own choice. In her also, helplessness of Kanak or Snehalata is depicted.

Shailabala Ghosjaya, another novelist, also has raised the question of inequality of rights for married man and women.

Moreover the novels of Shanta Devi and Sita Devi also depict problems of women's education, women's liberty. In the novels of Anurupa Devi, Nirupama Devi, Giribala Devi, inequality between man and women, dowry system, second marriage of man; loneliness of widowhood, troubles faced by woman in the society are discussed. by Nirupama Devi, deals with the problem related to the issue of marrying off one's daughter. Again by Nirupama Devi, by Anurupa Devi, by Giribala Devi the problem polygamy was discussed.

After Bankimchandra, Bengali novel got its true shape in the hands of Rabindranath (1861-1941). His attempts at the variety of taste, subject matter and character is still esteemed highly.

*Tagore was the pioneer of realism in Bengali fiction and yet an element of romantic idealism coloured his later novels. He*
directed the Bengali novel to the world of everyday which abounds in love and hate, strain and conflicts, suffering and pain, but it was left to his successors to weave them into the fabric of their work.\textsuperscript{73}

In the later years, many writers could not come out his influence. In the following lines we present a discussion on his novel writing.

His first novel করুণা, was published in 1877-78. Though the female character Karuna, is not built traditionally, it cannot be considered a nature novel. It tells of the attempt by an individual at self expression and close examination of the feelings of heart also starts from this novel. Under the influence of Bankimchandra, he started with historical romantic stories. His early novels বৌঁদাকুণ্ডারী হাট and রাজবিরী\textsuperscript{75} are called the stories of Bangladesh and Tripura. চৌধুরী বালি\textsuperscript{76} is famous as a novel based on conflict. After Bankimchandra’s কৃষ্ণকান্তের উইল, চৌধুরী বালি was a great turning point in Bangali novel. From চৌধুরী বালি, Bengali novel came down to the middle of life.

In this novel we find the attraction towards males from Binodini, who is widowed at her childhood. It also shows the history of the changes in her mentality. Bankimchandra did not tolerate the weakness of widowed women towards men. Such characters have had to give life poison or pistol bullet.

চৌধুরী বালির পর হইতে বিধবা গ্রেমের এক নতুন অভিবিন্যতা স্নাতী হইয়াছে। বিনোদনী হীরা ও রোহিণীর মনের রোগ বাহিকৃত এক উচ্চতর, বিচিত্রতর মধ্য অধিকার করিয়াছে, সে অভ্য, বিবর্ণরী ও কমলের পুরুষবৃত্তি ও গঠনশীলতা।\textsuperscript{78}

নৌকাভুবি,\textsuperscript{79} is the next novel. But it shows no novelty. In his যোগাযোগ,\textsuperscript{80}
Rabindranath depicts the spoiled married life of Madhushudan and Kumudini. Women personality fully reflected on Kumudini’s character. This women belongs not only to the past but also to the present. Though a sense of independence is expressed through the character, it is not mentioned till the end. The author ultimately accepted the age old tradition. It betrays his own contradiction.

Though the early novels of Rabindranath reflect the feelings of the heart, গোরা,৬২ ঘরে বাইরে,৬৩ চার অধ্যায়৬৪ show how the influences of the modern time agitate the lives of man and woman. In গোরা, through characters of Sucharita and Lalita, the authors throws light upon marriage, love and independent discussion of woman. In ঘরে বাইরে, two men are attracted towards Bimala, the character of Bimala takes the issue of women’s problem one step forward. Earlier, woman’s problem was linked with familial and social restriction. Now we may take notice to the time of overcoming the mental problem. She is not simply a materialistic commodity, she is someone to be realised and is of utilisation.

After much humiliation Bimala discovers the truths. This solution of Bimala is the proof of the authors confidence women’s power. Here we notice that, 

রবীন্দ্রনাথ মেয়েদের জীবন নিয়ে নতুন কিছু ভাবতে চান.৬৬

In his চার অধ্যায়, he reveals the cruelty of terrorism practised in the name of nationalism and patriotism. চতুরঙ্গ৬৭ এবং শেষের কবিতা,৬৮ are romantic and poetic novels. চতুরঙ্গ is the story of the strong psychological conflict and relationship of Shachis-Damini. It is mentionable that only here, Rabindranath got free from the dogma regarding widow-marriage. Damini appears like,
Through she is not as educated as Bimala, Lalita or Sucharita, yet she much more bright in the sense of consciousness for self right. Rabindranath has not rejected woman’s lust for life in the name of religious or social morality.

Again, woman influences a man’s life in the form of a beloved or of a mother. It is established in [ചുണ്ടാണം. In the second, the author has not gone deep down into the psychological deformity of diseased woman.

As a whole, we notice two trends of female characters in Rabindranath’s novels. In the first trend Hemanalini, Sucharita, Kumu; in the second one, Binodini, Damini, Bimala, Ela. Hemanalini, Sucharita and Kumu are the epitomes of calmness and purity. Though the turbulations of the material world have tried to pain them, they failed to smear their actual image. But in Binodini, Damini, Bimala and Ela, cruelty of the realities of life have left them new people.

A new dimension was added to Bengali novels by Saratchandra Chattopadhyay (1876-1938). He explored such female characters who never open their mouths even in heartbroken condition. He has vastly attempted at characterisation of female characters and in giving expression to women’s problems. He raised the issues of the widows and the prostitutes. His novels starting from 1899 till 1935. His काशीनाथ, चण्ड्रनाथ, बिल्मुर देशे, रामार
etc. are based on the conflicts in the Bengali family life. In later novels he wanted to establish the fact that even without social recognition, love has greatness of its own,

In this context mentions may made of শুভদা, মণ্ডলি, বড়ুড়ি, পরিশীতা, দেবী, বিরাজবোয়া একাদশ etc. In বড়ুডি he has dealt in the problem of widow's love relationship. On one side, there is question widow's love, which is unrecognised by the society, on the other, there is the oppression of Jamindar. In বিরাজবোয়া, the reason behind Biraj's rejection of home is economic and social. In দেবী love has failed due to social obstacles and the cowerdice of Debdas. But the love relationship between Debdas and Parbati, that has its origin in their childhood remains unobliterated inspite of Parbati's marriage with other persons.

Saratchandra was much more successful in the characterisation of female characters than his predecessors. So far she had been limited to a narrow boundary as was the social reality. For example in Bankimchandra-ব্রহ্ম, সূর্যমৃতী, প্রফুল্ল পাঠ্য মূলত ধ্বন্তী বিশেষত ইং প্রতিশিষ্ট, অন্যান্য সহস্রাধিক সমাজের প্রতি পরিকৃত স্ত্রীর মনোভাবের যে অলঙ্কার পরিবর্তন হইতে পারে, তাহারই উদাহরণ।

So far, woman's problem of private life had been shown as their class problem. They bear that identity which society has imposed upon them. In this early novels of Rabindranath, like নৌকারিণী, চোখের বালি that identity of woman is seen to be preserved. But in later novels like Sucharita in বোসা, Bimala in ঘরে বাইরে etc. woman started to acquire a new identity. New inspiration, new ambitions are shown in female character. In Saratchandra's
novels, woman is free from the society given image. In his novels, woman has been shown to occupy important place in family life. She is not conducted by the age old ideals only. That is why Bindu, Narayani, Bairajbou, Parbati, Lalita press a glow along with womanly softness. They are not decorative objects. Their independence of mind keep them apart from the traditional norms. That is why Parbati has not given up her love developed in childhood. Bindu, Shailaja etc. also have not lost their self-identity inspite of being daughters-in-law.

Again we find criticism of the society in the novels like অরক্ষণীয়া, বামুনের মেয়ে, পাশী সমাজ. The aim of the author in these three novels is to make protest against social oppression and outrage. Rabindranath also has made comments against narrow social traditions of the Hindu community. But in Saratchandra, the protest is more vast and deeper in dimension. He gave expression to how many a family lives are spoiled as a result of cruel social norms. অরক্ষণীয়া is about dark skinned girl of a poor family who faces problems in marriage. পাশী সমাজ, is not about any particular social evil, but about a complete life cycle a Hindu society.

In his দেনা-পাগনা and দত্তা we find simple rendering of innocent and uncritical love stories. Again, Saratchandra's চরিত্রধারাঃ শ্রীকান্ত, গৃহনাত্মক etc. were some of his banned anti-social novels based on love. In all these novels he draws a painful picture of woman's self realisation against the power, cruelty and tradition of the society. Sin commited by men and momentary weakness may make men aimless but does not affect the purity of life and that cannot be judged by social intelligence and lowmoral standard — So Saratchandra has quoted.
Rabindranath expresses the women character based upon ideology but Saratchandra express the women character as a realistic one. The character of Kiranmayee and Sabitri in the novel চরিত্রধীন and those of Rajlakshmi and Annadadidi in the novel শ্রীকাত and Abhaya stand for individual freedom of rebellious women.

Various problems of women in one of the main ingredients of this novel. Puti's father could not marry off his daughter. The character of Kamallata is also sorrowful. Women were sold in the society and as a result of this, the lives of many women were spoilt. One day Rajlaksmi also became prostitute. In গৃহাব তhe life of Achala has also become painful. Achala's attraction towards Suresh and Mahim. Hesitatingness and the analysis of women's psychology are some of the features for which this novel is remarkable.

Except this, imitative novels are like the suffering of India under British regime or the main theory of revolt is the subject of the novel. Through the character of Kamal in the novel a new life theory has been established.

In বিষ্ণুদাস he failed in his attempt to depict the clash of thought. He seemed to have not completed the novel by himself. After all, Sharatchandra with his keen observation and thoughtfullness took the world
of Bengali novels for ahead. In rigid lifeless women character he established spirit and strong will power, he is still living in our memory.

Again in Bengal Jagadish Gupta (1886-1957) is an exceptional writer in the domain of Bengali literature. The next stage after the movement of literature against Rabindranath is called *Kallolyug* and he was the mouthpiece of this *Kalol Gosthi*. In 1950's he wrote many novels.\(^\text{100}\) He was proper realistic. In his writings is found the real truth of life. Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay (1894-1950) was one of those who emerged during the lifetime of Rabindranath. With *Pather P়িলি*\(^\text{101}\) began his journey as a novelist. His other novels include, in 1950's, *অপরাজিত*, *চাঁদের পাহাড়*, *আরোহখ*, *আর্দ্র হিস্টু হোটেল*, *দেববান*, *কেদার রাজা*, *ইয়মতী* etc. In comparison with other writers he was an exceptional one. As he looked at the world and life with the same eyes of poets and philosophers, social reality and problems of life were not reflected in his novels. He was not able to show any speciality in the depiction of characterization and problems of women.

Tarasankar Bandyopadhyay (1898-1971) was a memorable name among the contemporaries of Rabindranath in the Bengali literature. Though he was mainly famous as a novelist but he composed many poems, dramas and short stories etc. He has 65 novels to his credit. His first novel was *তার সৃষ্টি নারীরা এত স্বাভাবিক যে আচার-আচরণের পৌনঃপুনিকতায় তারা সহজেই বিকৃত হয়ে পড়ে। প্রথম সাক্ষাৎতে তারা মুখ্য করে, কিন্তু বিকৃত্তির পরেই তাদের বাস্তব যে, তারা কেউ নড়েড়া করেনা। সর্বজয়া থেকে শুরু করে তিনি ভাষাবাদনাথদের নারীচরিত্রিক বিভূতি-ভূষণ এঁকেছেন। কিন্তু তারা কেউ কখনো উপন্যাসের গতির নির্মাণক, নিয়ম নয়-নম্ন তো নয়ই। এর একমাত্র ব্যক্তি যে পথের পাঁচালীর দুর্গা। একমাত্র বলিকা যার স্পৃহা চলাফুড়া, চঞ্চলতা উপন্যাসের মাঝে আলো জীবন শুক্তি।\(^\text{102}\)"

Tarasankar Bandyopadhyay (1898-1971) was a memorable name among the contemporaries of Rabindranath in the Bengali literature. Though he was mainly famous as a novelist but he composed many poems, dramas and short stories etc. He has 65 novels to his credit. His first novel was *রাস্কনক বন্ধুরায়*\(^\text{103}\) The economic problems of farmers, their family lives, the great danger and conflict in the moral lives of their wives are described in it. The
problems of moral lives of womenhood are reflected in it. In addition are some of the noteworthy novels in 1950's.

Like Tarasankar, Manik Bandyopadhyay (1908-1956) is also a prominent figure in the world of literature. In his writings is found the touch of Froed's psycho-analysis and mental distraction theory. He has rendered a living picture of problems and lives of common people as well as that of physical appetites of the people. was his first novel. In 1950's he also wrote many novels. However in his novels he has shown the industrious aspect of the women. Jashoda in and Rambha etc. are industrious women.

Again in Bengal, in the characterisation of women, many novelists made well efforts to present various problems of women, but there were some other novelists in those days, dealing with the same subject in their novels. Among those novelists mention must be made of Sanjeebchandra Chattopadhyay who was one of the contemporaries of Bamkimchandra were some of his novels. Prabhatkumar Mukhopadhyay wrote novels on how vivid imagination, great expectations and mistakes create humour in the Bengali lives and it was here that no serious problems were found. were his compositions. In the writings of Bibhutibhushan Mukhopadhyay we abundantly find the elements of humour. His mental pleasure creates a new variety in his novels. His etc. were popular. Satinath Bhaduri's and was the marvellous sign of literary genius. written in the context of August movement 1942 was a political novel. Humanity was the soul of his writings he was none other than Balaichand Mukhopadhyay. etc. were his novels. Annadasankar Ray's etc. were his novels.
were noteworthy novels. Premendra Mitra was a novelist, poet, writer all rolled into one. His were the two remarkable modern novels. Narendranath Mitra was the true representative of Kollol yug. He had a good number of novels to his credit. His first novel was धीपुर्ण. His other novels include रुपमंजरी, अक्षर-अक्षर, चेनामहल, etc. Naresh Sengupta was a memorable name of those who were active in making new plans and purposes गुड्डा, मेघनाद, लुप्तिका, सर्वहारा were noteworthy novels. In most of his novels were described the history of women’s religious persuasion and the attempt to gain peace in religious life. Manindralal Basu’s novel रमला where sense of beauty and psychology exist side by side also deserves prominent mention.

Besides these many novelists belonging to Bharati Gosthi wrote novels. Among them mention must be made of आत्मन, ब्राह्म, by Manilal Gangopadhyay; शेषলिय, मातृभूषण, बेणी by Saurindramohan Mukhopadhyay, বরণডালা by Charu Bandyopadhyay; পাল, মহুষ্ঠা by Hemendra Kumar Roy and মহু, বরণপাল, by Rakhaldas Bandyopadhyay etc.

On the other hand, it must be noted, in the context of the emergence of novels in the history of the Assamese literature, that there was no conscious effort of writing novel in the ancient and the middle ages. Though there is evidence of prose in Assamese much before that in Bengal, novel had to wait till the modern age. Though Sankaradeva was one of the pioneers in writing drama in new Aryan language, signs of novel is not found before the modern age.

To be precise, the emergence of the Assamese novel is in the second half of the 19th century. Because the society was yet to experience the concepts like individualism and individual liberty. So the Assamese novel is also the result of the influence of Western education, mainly of the British.
By establishing printing press, publication of newspaper, grammar and dictionary and by establishing prose as the medium of literature, the missioneries paved the way for writing novel.

When informations about foreign countries, western thoughts and objective discussions started get published in Assamese society was attracted towards literature. In this context, the first title to be taken in reference to the birth and developed of prose story is यात्रिक यात्रा (1850-51).

Its translator probably was Brawn Sahib. The story describes how one carrying badness of sins of life, becomes the pedestrian on the path to emancipation, and how life achieves at the right of Bhagawata. कहीं कहीं is another title to be reckoned with. Then appeared कामिनीकान्त, एलोकेशीवेश्याब कथा and फुलमणि आक कथा. In एलोकेशीवेश्याब कथा Mr. Garni writes about,

एलोकेशी नामव एजनी कुमलीया कालते बिध्या होवा युवतीय जीतने बिच्छे अविज्ञा, प्रलोभन परिष्कर परमास्त, बणिता आक पाचत बेश्याबके जीवन यापन आक सर्षेलेत उदास खुशार्थ अशाय ले परिष्क जीवन पर्षे प्रतार्ष्टन प्रदर्शन कविचे।

One important problem of the Hindu society is the question of child widow. Physical urges and other temptations led many astray later. The pathetic story of such a victim of cruel social system is depicted here. So it remains a good example of creation dealing in women's problem. Then, in कामिनीकान्त though there is a mention of married woman called Sarala. It is nothing more than a discussion of and a logic in support of Christianity. In फुलमणि आक कथा we find an imaginary story of two Christian young ladies.
Phulmani and Karuna. Other important female characters here include Sundari, Rani and Piyari. Here also the main objective of the writer was to glorify Christianity.

Again in Assam, বাঁচিয়ে বং চং ভিতরে কোনাকঠুমি111 by Hem Chandra Baruah was the first satirist story.112 The objective of the author is to denude the society submerged in philistine culture and hypocrisy. Mention also must be made of another founder of the Assamese novel — Padmavati Devi Phukanani. Eight years after the publication of কোনাকঠুমি, সুধামণ্ডল উপাখ্যান113 by this female author was published. It depicts the consequences of the acts of the good and the evil people.114 Though female characters like Sudharma, Leelavati, Manorama etc. crowd this novel, these characters are not properly developed and analysed.

Then one experiences a special change, the beginning of a new era the formation of অসমীয়া ভাষা উদ্যোগ সাধিতা সমাজ in 1888. Its aim and objectives was to develop vernacular literature. To replace old traditions with western ones. It resulted in the publication of জোনাকী,115 the mouthpiece of the organisation and then of বিষুধী.116 The above mentioned জোনাকী published পাদুম্বুকুবী117 and বিষুধী published ভানমুণ্ডী118 and সেম.119 Within two years লাহী120 by Gohainbaruah and মিতি জীবনী,121 by Rajanikanta Bardaloi were published. As a whole, the Renaissance in Bengal made an influence upon the Assamese students studing in Kolkata.

Padmanath Gohainbaruah (1871-1946) is an important name in the history of the Assamese literature. His two creations at the very initial stage of his glorious journey of Assamese novel, are really praiseworthy. And that is why,
Though ভানুমতী ব্যতীত কোনো কৃতিতে ভানুমতী নারী কাহিনীর গৌরব হয় না। প্রত্যেক কৃতিতে ভানুমতীর ব্যক্তিগত প্রত্যক্ষ আনন্দ হাসি শোচনা চরিত্রের আংশিক প্রকাশ হয়েছে।

Then, লাহীরী by Gohainbaruah is a social and familial novel. Yet the female character Lahari is placed as the leading character. The author wanted to show the win of goodness and the defeat of evil. Through the historical background of Bhanumati is the reign of Shibsingha and that of Lahori is the invasion of the Mans, history is not important here. Moreover women's problem of any other contemporary social problem are not dealt with in these novels.

Another literary figure, who enriched all the branches of Assamese literature by the sheer strength of his unique talent, is Lakshminath Bezbaruah (1864-1938). The following lines tell about him correctly.

পদুম-কুকুরী হল তাঁর প্রথম কাহিনী। এটি কামালেশ্বর সিংহের সময়কালের কম্পুরের ভিত্তিতে রচিত। বইটির চরিত্রগুলির মধ্যে নারী কাহিনীর প্রভাব দেখতে পাওয়া যায়, কিন্তু কৃতিতে নারী কাহিনীর লেখার অভাবের পরিকল্পনা থাকে।

During the same period নিলকান্ত বরুইয়ার প্রথম কাহিনী প্রকাশিত হয়েছিলো।

Following lines are also to be noted,

ুপন্যাস হিচাপে ইয়াত হয়েছে যথেষ্ট কৃত্রিমতের অভাবের জন্য তাঁর সামাজিক সমস্যার আকার নিষ্কল্প হবে।
The important character Mem or Kamal is a victim of the social reality.

Then, another very influential personality in the history of Assamese literature is *Upayan Samrat* (Emperor of the domain of novels) Rajanikanta Bardaloi (1869-1939). He tried his hand in drama, article, story, poetry, textbooks, letters along with his most important field of novel. All his novels except मिबि जीर्णी are historical\textsuperscript{127} and are important assets of Assamese literature. मिबि जीर्णी is based upon the society of the Miri community. How friendship of childhood matures into love relationship in youth and finally how their relationship is cruelly denied and destroyed by the orthodox society, is depicted in it. In मनोमती\textsuperscript{128} he depicts the love affair between two youths of two rivalled families. In the beginning Manomati is a nervous girl but then gradually develops to discover self confidence. Two other female characters are Pamila and Padumi. The novel shows how downtrodden illiterate female members proved their general intelligence and common sense. In राहदौई\textsuperscript{129} Rahadoi is an excellently ideal woman. This novel throws light on how the female class faces challenges and problems in every step that they put in the male dominated society. Woman does not enjoy liberty in the society, they always have to look up to the male members for everything. Targeting this reality the author shows, through the character of Rahadoi, the ways by which a woman can break away from the cruel traditions of the society and maintain a self identity. In this novel Bardaloi has focussed on women's liberty. That is why, the unequivocal conclusion is that this is the germination of feminist thought in the Assamese literature.

असमीया साहित्य एया नाबीबादी चिन्ताब सुरुपात।\textsuperscript{130}

As a whole female characters have been treated with seriousness in his novels. Panei in मिबि जीर्णी, Padumi and Pamila in मनोमती, Rangili in बबिली,\textsuperscript{131}
Aghoni in all these female characters have got importance. The author is very much aware of the women’s position in the Assamese society. That the female class is downtrodden and that they also have a desire for emancipation, have recurrently been discussed in his novels.

Another historical novel  by Hiteswar Barbaruah deserves attention. It is based upon the conflict between the Ahoms and the Kacharis. Then comes by Sarat Ch. Goswami, here he depicts love, struggles of life and there painful consequences in the life of three female characters. Moreover by Harinarayana Dattabaruah is another mentionable historical novel. Of course the following comment reduces its importance.

As a whole at the beginning of the development of the Assamese novel the authors were more eager to produce historical novel than the social ones. The social system was responsible for this. The Assamese society was controlled by certain forces mentioned in the following remark.

The restrictions prevalent in the society not reflect the real picture of the people’s psychy. And that is why the early Assamese novels do not present the analysis of love affairs that revolt against the accepted norms of the society nor they present natural mutual relationship between man and woman.

As a result, the Assamese novel of the pre-independence era can be divided into three categories. In the first category we find simple story based novels, for instance, etc. In the
second category, we find the novels that present social criticism and the ideals of social reformation. For example the novels by Dandinath Kalita and Daibachandra Talukdar may be cited. It is aptly said,

"The third category gives up the mission of social reformation and presents an analysis of sorrow and happiness, desires and expectations in a minute and interesting manner. Assamese novel also introduced room for recognition of woman's liberty, proliferation of education, recognition of individualism, Froedian thoughts, Marxian philosophy etc.

One social novel, that belongs to the first category is *Kusum Kumari* by Hareswar Sarma. The central theme of the novel is a love affair. Of course, the story is poor in social realism. Another title is *Chandrprabha* by Nabinchandra Bhattacharya. The novel deals in the issue of dowry system. The heroine of the novel is herself a victim of this social evil. Chandraprabha has to suffer in the hands of her in laws as a result of dowry. This novel gets due importance because of the burning social of dowry being discussed here. The historical importance of this novel also cannot be denied. Women's problem has been dealt in also in *Chapala* by Chintaharan Patgiri.

The story of Pratima who has to lose her life in the hands of father-in-law, mother-in-law and sister-in-law, is really heart rending. In *Chapala* by Dandidhar
Sonoyal, we find the depiction of a husband who comes under the evil influence of his wicked wife and who gets degraded morally. In জীবন by Bhabadeb Bhagawati, we find an easy narration of love affair. কিংবা by Kamaleswar Chaliha (1904-1984) depicts how immoral rich persons being a poor girl into sinful environ. শ্রীমতী বন্ধু by Snehalata Baruah (1904-1971) is based upon family life. শীঘ্র is based upon the issue of child widow of upper caste Hindu society. Moreover here is an appeal for women’s progress through violation of traditional rules and regulations. In the clash between social bindings and the urge of the heart, ultimately heart has won. Prakash and Bina are united. More than that, it also discusses the problems of women’s education, uncivilised rules of the society. Again, বন্ধু revolves around the confusions and turbulence related to the issue of a ring. Here also, we find the concerns regarding the spread of women’s education, widow marriage according to Brahma dharma, support to love relations etc. Another important Assamese novelist is Chandraprabha Saikiani (1901-1972) who wrote before the World War-II. In her বন্ধু she narrates the story of Madhabi, who in order to save rescue her own plot of land and also to free her father from debt, gives up her love and marries someone else. The story of this novel is strictly limited to the sense of filial love and responsibility towards father. Again another rare Assamese novel is হিসেবে কানীয়া কথা. It deals in the tradition of child-marriage, that prevalent in Assam, mainly in the Brahmin society. It opposes the system of buying bride.

Dandinath Kalita (1890-1950), the straightforward opinionist social reformer and patriotic personality, is known for the social criticism in his novels. He was altogether a dramatist, poet, biographer, translator etc.
The theme of ফুল is based upon the invasion of the Man's aggressions. The important female characters are Phul and Rambha. The pass through many troubles before materitising their union with their lovers. But it does not explore any of the women's problems.

The best novel by Kalita is সাধনা. It tells a triangular love story. Prabha is the heroine who gives up her love relationship with Dinabandhu at the emergence of another female character Usha. Rambha of this novel is a morally degraded character.

Moreover, Dinabandhu and Rambha of have re-appeared in আবিন্দন under new label. The story centres around the attractions and repulsions among the hero Madhab, and Pratima and Malabika. Pratima is led astray and directed towards danger of life. On the other hand Malabika fails to express her love for Madhab and married away by another person. Then she becomes a widow and married again by Madhab. Thus the author wants to convey a message in support of widow marriage. Now other issue related to women is found here.
is a detective story and  is based on the Mowamaria. It is said,

The conditions of our life are always not the same. Some unknown force leads it through meandering path. Consequently life is full of sorrow and happiness, tears and smile, frustration and hope. We do not always get the explanation of such ups and downs. As a result, human life is very complex, depicts this reality. Moreover, it also deals in child marriage, superstition etc. though women's problems are not focussed here. With this in (1950) he also take the role as a social reformer.

Another important novelist is Daibachandra Talukdar (1901-68). His novel are criticisms of the Assamese society. He also contributed to the fields of poetry, drama, analytical essays etc.

The novels by Talukdar are which he wrote when he was a student, it is a love story. It does not tells of ideals and reformations. Mereover lack of experience in plot construction is also evident. Here, we do not find any deep study of the society, individual life etc. are women's problems. Of course his deals in the problems of a widow. Revolting against the social norms, Kanak, a son of a widow, marries the widow Aikan. Here we find an easy treatment of the social problems. which is a sequel to the former novel, deals in the life of Kanak and Aikan. After his revolutionary marriage, Kanak
engages in the movement to save the country from the foreign domination. It depicts how he spread the fire of revolution in different villages and cerney. Except the attempt at the analysis of their individual lives, the author is interested in any other aspect.

In *अपूर्ण* written on the basis of the non-co-operation movement. The novel narrates the love story between Premadhar and Purnima and also tells of the influence of Gandhianism parallel to the love story, it also represents different rituals and restrictions of the society. Though Purnima represents a poor village girl, the character does not give expression women’s problem.

*জীবনবাটিত* is the gateway to the post-independence novels. Birinchi Kumar Baruah (1910-64) is its author. He was a personality who wanted to analyse the life and problems of people without any specific reformistic or satiristic standpoint. The picture of the mental world of the Assamese female community is found here. Tagar who makes a journey through the troubles of becoming wife, mother and widow, is nice creation. The novel is also an evidence of how women are deprived, outraged and tortured in the male chauvinist society. The path of life is not a smooth and straight line. The person who is felt closely at the early stage of youth, is dreamt of as partner in the long runs. The person, who brief touch enlivens, memory of him inspires in the long journey of life such a story of a girl is. Hard-working, simple girl Tagar comes closer to Kamalakanta. Though he gives her a ring, she is married off to Dharani then, her life is spoiled by torture from her mother-in-law.

বিধাতা পুরুষে অসমীয়া তিবোতাক সৃষ্টির দিনে বিধান কবি দিয়া চোঙান সরো, পানী অনা, ধান কনা কমব এনিমুকো চুলিভালমানো হেরকেব হাব মোরাজে।
Tagar goes on tolerating everything as an ideal daughter-in-law. Because, as if tolerating all types of oppression and torture itself is a hallmark of an ideal wife. Of course, after the birth of a child, the mother becomes less jealous. Then follows imprisonment of Dharani, infection by TB, helplessness and poverty of Tagar. As a whole, it is the life story of Tagar.

After this an account may be taken of the Assamese novels, in this period Praphulla Goswami (1919-1994) gain a new dimension to the Assamese novel. He brought the modernist trend to the Assamese novel. The central character Navakumar is described as fellows.

Lack of confidence in traditional social norms, melancholic self centeredness, degradation from traditional ethics, restlessness, loneliness negative outlook towards life etc. are reflected in him as signs of modernity. The focus is not on the female characters, though there is discussion on female mentality. Failure in married life is described here. As a whole it is a modernist drama. By Sayed Abdul Malik was published in 1945-46 many consider him the crownless emperor after Rajanikanta Bardaloi. He has presented many novels and is his first parallel to the storyline, it also presents the socialist ideals of the author. The L.C.M. or the lowest common multiples are to rescued, women's problem does not appeared here.

is a romantic novel written by Kanchan Baruah. It is based upon an imagined thirteen hundred years old city. Many female characters interect here. Important among them are Parbati, Champa, Gauri and Uma. Mohammad Piyar is also famous for his novel etc. Middle class, muslim society is depicted here.
Mereover, there are some more names Dinanath Sarma, Hitesh Deka, Jogesh Das, Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya, Homen Bargohain, Nirupama Bargohain, Mamani Raisham Goswami, Trilokya Bhattacharya etc. But none of them published his novel within 1950s. That is why their discussion is avoided here.

This long discussion of the traditions of Bengali and Assamese novels makes it clear that in both these regions, the novel was the product of the Indian Renaissance, and the novels of both the regions have faithfully represented the problems of the women of the regions from different points of views. Indeed, a majority of the novels in these regions have attempted to focus the laughter and pain, the aspiration and desires of the woman-soul in their true sprits. These varied emotions and sentiments of the woman become the indicators of the concerns of the novelists of these regions.

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