Chapter-6

Boro and Assamese Novels: A comparative Study
(1960-1980)

6.1 The Assamese novel started its journey in the age of Aronodoi (1846). The Christian Mesonaries published this magazine to promote their religion thought. But for the interest of their religion they made the magazine popular by publishing some story. In this way they opened the way for translation of some English and Bengali novel.

Hemchandra Barua could published ‘Bahire Rong-Cong Bhitare Kowa-Bhaturi’ (1876) with the help of Christian Missionaries. This could be looked somewhat as novel but it was not the exact novel.¹ In this way Padmavati Devi Phukanani’s ‘Sudharmar Upakhyan’, which could not be called a novel, rather we could see that this writing was only trying to show the right or wrong doings of human being and thus it took just the form of Romance story.²

With the story, plot, character, dialogue, setting, aesthetic, suspense, ideology and from the written technique, ‘Bhanumati’ by Padanath Gohain Barua published in 1891, is the first successful Assamese novel ³ It is appeared in Bijuli (1891) magazine. After this, another novel namely, ‘Lahary’ published in 1892 by Padmanath Gohain Barua. ‘Padum Kunwari’ (1891) by Laxminath Bezbaruah published in ‘Janaki’ magazine. ‘Miri-Jiori’ a successful social novel by Rajani Kanta Bordoloi was published. Thus we see from
1848, the trends of Assamese novels continuing through translation works and it is the success period from 1891 to 1895 of Assamese novel. Thus within the year 1895 to 1900 in the hands of Rajani Kanta Bordoloi becomes scope to widen the field of novels.4

But the Boro novels are lagging behind in comparison to the Assamese novels, because Christian Missionaries didn’t show much interest towards the Boro literature at that moment which we have mentioned above, for which the Boro literature lags behind. In 1924, when the ‘Bibar’ magazine is published by ‘Boro Chatra Sanmilani’ the ‘Jugal-Murti’ a novel by Dandidhar Sonowal is appeared through this magazine, but it is written in Assamese language, yet the first magazine is Boro. The first Boro novel is published in 1962 by Chittaranjan Muchahary. By 1891 we could see that the Assamese novel was fully ripened and a fully grown up on the hand of Padmanath Gohain barua in the field of Assamese Literature. On the other hand after about 71(seventy one) years later on 1962 a first Boro novel ‘Jujaini Or’ was written by Chittaranjan Muchahary. As Syed Abdul Malik has contributed a lot of the Assamese novel, in the same way we could see a good number of novels of Chittaranjan Muchahary to the Boro novels.

Thus, we have seen the situation of Second World War and freedom movement of India are reflected in the Assamese novel. For example, ‘Sei Nadi Niravadhi’, ‘Ganga Chilanir Pakhi’, ‘Iyaruingam’etc, are good example of such situation. While comparing to those novels we don’t find such situations in the Boro
novels. In Boro novels we find on about the simple happenings of the life of village falk which took place after the Indian Independence. We find such situations, as that occurred while going to Muslim villages in search of the leaves of caster oil plant. If one wants to adopt the silkworm at ones home one have to plant the caster oil plant at own home. What is the benefit if one have to search the leaves carring battle nut and leaves, rice, and yarn made of endi(Eri) etc. along with? Earlier it was like the Boro women those goes in search of the endi leaves could bring the leaves without giving to the owner of the leaves. But now it is troublesome to go to the Muslim villages and also it is seen that the women have to give to the Muslim bete nuts and leaves, rice, yarn etc.in return of endi leaves. Therefore they have no benefit to their own in adopting the silkworm. Therefore the literate persons advise to the illiterate women in the village to give up such works. Thus we can get, Ramchandra Basumatary’s novel ‘Khafalni Bwswn’- in the words of Boro old man sayings- on Sunday it is discussion, on Monday it is think, on Tuesday it is performed, Jwishing. So the simple living Boro people are always discuss about their work on Sunday and they think about on Monday and finally they get ready on Tuesday. Therefore we see in this novel Dukharu and Mayashi’s marriage also solemnized on Holy Tuesday. In this way they start for their good work. This is the picture of the simple Boro people who lives in a remote village situated far from the towns and cities. Such types of portrayal are given on the boro novels by the Boro novelists.
On the other hand in the Assamese novel their novelists portray the picture of the Second World War and the Freedom Struggle through rural pictures. As in Nirupama Borgohain’s novel ‘Sei Nadi Niravadhi’, she presents as- happening war, Second World War. In 1942, gradually the war has knocked the door. Another novel ‘Ganga Chilanir Pakhi’ by Laxmi Nandan Borah mentioned as- there is very much changing take place within this two years. The gravel path which is near by the Sonai river has reached to the ‘Thing market’. Two service buses are now available in a day. The minds of the people have become critical and selfish. The various rumours of the women have now been spread. Now in the villages the Panchayati Raj has been seen and also we could see a quarrel between the villages for selecting the Panchayati member, chairman. There was a fight among the people and they start to form separate villages............ The people those who are living near by the Sonai river have now learned to understand the politics. In general language it is say that the spreading of politics near by Sonai has been take place.

6.2 If we look widely at the 1960-1980, the Assamese novels we find as we have already discussed in the earlier chapters likes—
1. The Category of Agriculture
2. The Category of Regionalism
3. The Category of Political
4. The Category of Feminism
But, on the other hand such scopes are not available in the Boro novels. The pictures of the cultivator and regional novels may be seen, but the political and the feminism are not seen in the Boro novels as seen in Assamese. Only the life of the simple illiterate Boro people who are maintaining simple way of living are seen in our Boro novels. If we going to compare with the Boro and Assamese novels the Boro novel does not present the political or the feminist as the Assamese novels present. The Boro people are still not conscious about the political after the long sixty four years of Indian Independent. If we go deep into the situation of 1960-1980, the development of Boro people lacks very behind. On the one hand we have a glance on the problems of women though females are not dominated but we could see that the female of Boro society lacks behind in education. The sons of the Boro families are given better importance in education while girls are not. For this reason the literacy rate of Boro women is very low and this would be seen in the Boro magazine named ‘Bibar’ published in 1924- though our boys are gradually developing in education but such facilities are not given to the girls.9

On the other hand in case of Assamese social novels the novelist has not stopped their writings within only Assam but step in outside also. The good examples are ‘Iyaruingam’ by Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya and ‘Chenabar Sot’ by Mamani Raisom Gaswamy. Bhattacharyya presents the Gandhism Indian Racism Movement and the group of Subhash Chandra Bose for the envious
freedom fight through his ‘Iyaruingam’. He has also portrayed the picture of the freedom fight where he drawn the scenery of political movement of Naga Hills. Another his mentionable novel is ‘Mrittunjoy’, here he drawn a picture of freedom movement of India as well as including Assam, while the ‘Iyaruingam’ is a novel on the people living in Naga hills including Indian Freedom Movement.

The plot of this novel is based on the Second World War where the Naga people became helpless socially and economically, totally breakdown by heart. The novelist who tried to find out the philosophy of race which leads to rise high could succeed to present through their novels. Through this we could see the simple way of living they live. While discussing on ‘Iyaruingam’, Prafulla Kotoky said that- ‘Iyaruingam’ has brought togetherness to the Nagas who was almost gone away from us and it has also drawn a picture of their hope and anxiety and showed it to us. Such types of literature helps us to join hand to these states who were fighting for their own separate states for border clash, such literature brings back us to our good relationship. But such encouraging novels are not found in Boro literature. The novel ‘Iyaruingam’ gives us knowledge about the Naga people, and the ‘Miri-Jiori’ helps us to know about the mishing people, and their life style and through ‘Rangmilir Hanhi’ about the Karbi society, thus ‘Iyaruingam’ is one of the most memorable novel on this side.

On the other hand we have one more famous woman novelist Mamani Raisom Gaswamy who wrote about the life history of the
labourers who were working for the bridge over the Chenab river of Kashmir in her novel ‘Chenabar Sot’. This novel helps us to gain the knowledge of the outsider state as well as people of labour classes and owner classes.

‘Chenabar Sot’ is also about how the company sucks on the labourers, for which reason their life becomes very tragic. The plot of novel is about the real life, it is mentioned in the preface of the author. She said that she had written the novel in the year 1966. The story was written at the labour camp which is near by Chenab river. Since she was young she had less knowledge, it was only the piece of life of the labourers which she had seen with her own eyes. This was the record of eyewitness, only slight coloured on here.\textsuperscript{14}

We see in the novel the company or owner who had come for the construction of the bridge made the labourers to work very hard. The labourers have to face all the sorrows and sufferings throughout their life. They have no peace or merry making in their conjugal life. The labourers have to face a lot of difficulties throughout their life; they were given to live in the ordinary houses (camp).

On the other hand, we feel when we read the novel it will be end, but story is going on, it is her technique of writing. Though, the novel perhaps the social awareness of the people.\textsuperscript{15}

The novel gives a fearful picture of the tortures made to the labourers by the companies. The negative thought for the company took birth in the mind of the labourers after the death of Sadasiva,
one of the labourers. There was no signal of whistle while the blasting occurred and a stone of about 3kgs hit the roof of the temporary camp and it felt on Sadasiva’s stomach and he was death. This incident shows the hatred of the company towards the labourers. These types of various incidents show the hatred of the company on the labourers. In the novel we find Sivanna one of the labourers speaking out on their rights. The novelist very confidently presents that the company was more powerful shucker than the government in ruling the labourers. In the novel we can see such types of various incidences occurring in different ways. But we also find that the company never comes forward for any help to the labourers. The novel, ‘Chenabar Sot’, is a mentionable one with another very interesting plot which is not available in Boro.

Yet, we can see a few about the Abor people in Manaranjan Lahary’s novel, ‘Kharlung’. We come to know about the social customs of Abor’s only when Gohel reached to their place, but not as the plot of the novel. Therefore, in the plot of the Boro novels we can not find the plot as in the novels of Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya and Mamani Raisom Gaswamy. For this reason Swarna Prabha Chainary in her book named ‘Boro Solomani Bizirnay’ (a critical approach on Boro novels) has said that, most of the novelists portrays only the scenery of those picture which comes to their daily life. In this situation, Assamese novelist has reached very far and wide, in their respective creations while in Boro it is very rare. We can come to the clear concept that the Boro novelists
portray only the pictures of the simple Boro societies, about their socio-economic and cultural life styles.

One of the most important comparable situations between the Boro and Assamese novelists is that- the Assamese novelist those are discussed above, contributing more than one novel which presents them as well as skilled novelists. But on the other hand among the Boro novelists excluding Chittaranjan Muchahary and Manaranjan Lahary have contributed single novel book in the field of Boro literature. It is very unfortunate to us. Then one side the Assamese novelists are all of them contributed more than one novel.

If we have a glance on the size or shape of the Boro novels in comparison to the Assamese novels Boro novels are very small in size and pages also very less numbers. In other matter, excluding Manaranjan Lahary’s ‘Kharlung’ and Buddhadev Basumatary’s ‘Dwithun’ we can not find the sub-plot in the Boro novels. But sub-plots are included in most of the Assamese novels and for which reason the size of Assamese novel are in big. On the other hand the writing styles of the Boro novels are straight foreward, but the Assamese novels are written in very tactful way with all types of ornaments of the languages. So it is very easy yo understand the story of Boro novel whereas Assamese novels are not. For which, critic and novelist Dharanidhar Wary has says that, we have to develop the Boro novels to change the style, plot, story and written technique to bring development of Boro novels. If such changes
can bring to the Boro novels a great development like the Assamese novel.

Within this discussion, the social novels from 1960-1980, in Assamese novel we find two renowned women novelists named Nirupama Borgohain and Mamani Raisom Gaswami. Their creations are of very different style with a beautiful plot construction covering wide range. For which hiren Gohain said in his article- ‘Nirupama Borgohainr Upanyas’- I think the main source of her writing is to encourage the raised social consciousness. In her novel she has drawn a very heart touching picture of the changing societies which has created in the readers mind the unavoidable situations changes in happenings, rules and regulations, brings an end to ones life. Though Mrs. Borgohain presents the very pethatic situations in her novels about hindrance on the aims and objections of the society, made the readers surprised. Laxmi and Dipu of ‘Sei Nadi Niravadhi’ are very fine examples of such situations of Assam of that time, which shows the firmed portraits of the situations of Assam.

Mamani Raisom Gaswami belongs to the same categories of the strongness in presenting the characters in her novels. So, Ranjita Biswas said in the newspaper namely ‘Telegraph’ on 24th April 1989 that-human suffering, a sense of melancholia over the inevitability of it and above all, a belief in human endurance and values pervade the works of the Sahitya Academi winner in Assamese literature, Dr. Indira Gaswami. Dr. Gaswami’s bold stand as a writer has also led
to controversies at times. But while focusing on the down-trodden and on social injustice to women, she has not compromised.\textsuperscript{20}

There was no woman writer among Boro at that period like as the Assamese novelists Nirupama Borgohain and Mamani Raisom Gaswami. It can be say that woman writers can bring better picture of women which are seen in the Assamese novels but it is unfortunate in the field of Boro novel. Anyway, \textit{as a general principle any lesson a novelist wishes to teach us is all the more empressive if it emerges from the story itself and the fortunes of its characters. In the hands of a writer of any skill, the effect may be tremendous, for of all types of imaginative literature the novel undoubtedly commands the most powerful and widespread popular influence. Even though the critic may feel that the novel with a purpose is not one of the purest forms of art, it cannot be denied that such works have been responsible forget reforms and striking changes in public opinion, and that they are still read with enjoyment when the conditions that evoked them have long since disappeared. Charles Dickens although, he used fiction as plateform for social reform, he was too good an author not to make his prooaganda all the more effective by means of an absorbing story.}\textsuperscript{21}

It is mentioned that, only in \textit{`Manju Bala Devi`} by Nandeswar Dwimary and \textit{`Dwithun`} by Buddhadev Basumatary, we can see a few reflection of social consciousness. In \textit{`Manju Bala Devi`} shows that there should not be caste discriminations, it is meaningless for the society. On the other hand, \textit{`Dwithun`} presents the importance of
education in our day to day life, and also to help each other in the
time of need. Thus in ‘Manju Bala Devi’, Manju’s philosophy of
faith on religion is just the superstition, the caste system is also the
wrong path of life, all the mankind are same, belongs to the same
family, and this family is the human family.\textsuperscript{22} This is the true moral
lesson, which is we can learn from ‘Manju Bala Devi’. In the same
way we can also learn from ‘Dwithun’ that, I am your friend. A
friend should always helpful to his friend as much as he can in the
time of distress and calamities.\textsuperscript{23} Such as we also find in ‘Anya Yug
Anya Purush’ by Devendra Nath Acharya that, our nation has not
developed yet, since we had lost our philosophy.\textsuperscript{24} That means that
the Assamese people were dominated by the British which stand as
hindrance in developing their land, and the novelists presents this
through the character of Bengbelestor. Indirectly it has advised the
people to be conscious to develop their own nation, because we must
conscious about our development. It is the lesson of this novel.
Bengbelestor is a very ideological character. His love for the nation
shows the young generations to be conscious about the development
of their nation or country.

In this way, the Boro novel ‘Khafalni Bwswn’ by
Ramchandra Basumatary also shows how the educated people
should be. As educated man Ananta’s help to his cousin sister
Mayashi who is an illiterate girl is an advised to the people through
the novel. Ananta is a man of broad mind who has equal eye for all;
he is exact as Bikash in ‘Dwithun’ by Buddhadev Basumatary.
If we have a glance on all these us can say that the novel is the main instrument for giving advice. In the same way, Prafulla Kotoky also said that *it also work as the public relation of the people.*\(^{25}\) In the true sense- *the novelists, they have reached in their respective ways to the curious aspects of reality and a good number of young writers have registered their promise.*\(^{26}\)

Anyway the prime objective of a novelist is to discover the totality of life. No novel worth its name can be produced without this end. *If poetry educates our emotions, the novel sheds light on the totality of life. The novelist must have a story sense of form and build up his story like an architect.*\(^{27}\) But some of the Boro novelists in their efforts to discover this very totality of life have not been able to come very close to reality. In this common connection Swarna Prabha Chainary said that, *to developed our Boro novels we should follow the other developed novels of other languages.*\(^{28}\)

Whatever, this chapter is all about the comparative study and on this comparative study, Francois Jost comment as- *comparative literature represents more than an academic discipline. It is an overall view of literature of the world of letters, a humanistic ecology, a literary weltanschaunning (i.e. world philosophy, outlook on the world), a vision of the cultural universe, enclusive and comprehensive.*\(^{29}\) Upon this statement we have discussed the Boro and Assamese social novels as in brief form. It is not exactly meaning that if we say comparative, we have to compare each and every plot, each line or every word. Since we have already discussed
in details as far as possible, in the previous chapters, here we have only brought out about the general common pieces.

6.3 In conclusion, we have got some points in comparision to Boro and Assamese social novel. These are as following-

1. The standard of the Assamese novel is higher than the Boro novels. In comparision to Boro novels the Assamese novels are created much earlier.

2. The Assamese novelists are always very broad, deep and sensitive in creating the novels but the Boro novelists, they can’t enter into depth.

3. There are women writers among Assamese at that period of our discussion, where there is no woman writer in Boro.

4. Assamese novelist has created more than one novel but among the Boros excluding Chittaranjan Muchahary and Manaranjan Lahary, none has created more than one novel within this discussion.

5. While discussing the Assamese novels we can bring out several classes likes- agricultural, regional, political and feminism. There are various creations are available in Assamese but on the side of Boro novel is very limited. In Boro we have to scope for discussion on agricultural and regional categories only.

6. The written technique of Boro novels is very straight forward, simple presentation and also we don’t get any sub-plot in Boro novels excluding ‘Kharlung’ and ‘Dwithun’. But the written technique of Assamese novels is very high and in most of the novels we can get sub-plot.
7. The volume of the Boro novels is very small in size in comparison to Assamese novels.

8. Assamese novels are not sketch only about their own local colour but also coloured the outside also, which is we can’t get in Boro.

9. Assamese novelists have presented about the Second World War and freedom struggle and the busy life of the changing world through the village life. In Boro, it is not seen, only the simplest agricultural poor life of the Boro people in the backward villages is presented by the novelists.

10. Anyway, by the end we can say that both Boro and Assamese novels succeed in presenting their own social customs, rites and rituals and social conditions as possible as through their creations. They do not colour the naked scene as we have seen in western fictions. For which we can say that, our novelist has not been blind to the society they live in.\(^{30}\)

*The greatness of a novel is nothing but an expression of the greatness of its author. Here lies the deep relationship between the novel and life.*\(^{31}\) It is true that if any literature is to go on flourishing, it is bound to emerge from the ‘trance of suspended faith’. But it is equally true that mere change is not always a symbol of progress and that every new experiment in literary form or content is seldom a milestone on the road to aesthetic perfection. Anyway, the contemporary novelists have rejected the meaningless values of the existing tradition and made a valiant effort to observe human beings
from an egalitarian and humanistic point of view. Superficial experiences of life and their vague expression lead to the production of unrealistic literature, while the expression of a true realization of life makes literature eternal.

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