Chapter 2


2.1 Social Novel

A novel which is written basically based on social life. The novels are called social novels in which any aspect of politics, economic or religion is reflected. In ‘A Glossary of Literary Terms’, M.H. Abrams has said in this way: The sociological novel emphasizes the influence of social and economic condition on characters and events; often it also embodies an implicit or explicit thesis recommending social reform. ¹ Prahalad Barua also has said in this way: Generally such novels are termed as social novel which are written with analytical and constructive views of practical social life. ² In the social novels, any section or class of the human beings are dealt with. Besides some eternal problems which create numbers of conflicts in both the individual and social lives are dealt with in such novel, the intolerable conditions of the poor or depressed class of people which are created out of the economic exploitation of the privileged class, i.e. rich or powerful persons, the way of the life of the non-privileged people who generally face with never-ending troubles and impediments created by the privileged class of people and the environments and situations that followed the condition are mainly placed in the social novels. In most cases, some obstacles appear in the growth of human life for their social belief, rites and rituals, thoughts and behaviours, folk philosophy and age-ing traditional superstitions. As a result, the society itself becomes the obstructions against the human aspiration and hopes.

Under such circumstances the people of the society become compelled to fight against such problems face to face in order to resist themselves from such reverse environments, sometimes somebody stand against the traditional thoughts and ideas with revolutionary ideas. In such struggles, they sometimes win or sometime fail. Generally, such practical and critical angles of the society are analysed in the social novels. Though, the social pictures are given in the social novels, yet the analyses of the social problems are fundamentally given more importance in them. And in such analysis, a true importance is given upon the
criticism of the social conflicts. So the real and unreal aspects of the society become apparent in the social novels. On the account of the analysis of the people and the society the social novel turns out to be trimmed with the study of the society and history for the cultural, economical, political, religions, general folk-faith, customs, rituals etc. are reflected through social-novel. Although these are the general picture of the society or the reflection of the age, these are in reality the social novels, not history. Despite its real picture of the society, it cannot avoid its aesthetic part in which all tastes and beauty are created.

The true inspiration of the social novels is society and its criticism. A social novel created out of the inspiration of the hopes and aspirations for equal rights and freedom of thought. Thus in a social novel, criticism of justice and injustice is applied. But this criticism is always indirect as a novelist doesn’t point out one’s good or bad directly. The characters are informed by virtue of their characteristics, behaviour and activities. For example, in the novel, ‘Halodhia Charaye Baodhan Khay’, Homen Borgahain, the novelist, has mentioned nowhere directly whether Sanatan Sarma’s character. But his evil character is displayed through his thoughts and activities.

For such capacity of information, a social novel can widely be accepted as the genuine quality as an art form.

There is no hard and fast rule that the love affairs in between males and females are inevitable in a social novel. Yet almost in all novels love affairs becomes the main trend of the story. After observation of the main role of the love affairs, in the novels, Johnson has said, Novel is a smooth tale, generally of love. The love-affairs of a male and female become a stronghold in a social novel. For example, in ‘Miri-Jiyari’ the novelist, Rajani Kanta Bordoloi, has drawn the various pictures of the society on the basis of the love-affairs. In this novel, the love-episode is the main plot and the pictures of the Mishing Society are reflected along with the main plot.

Though the social novel can be enjoyed more through the love strings, the idea of suggestion for reformation of the society is also expressed. It reveals that in
most cases the prejudices prevalent in the society pause as an impediment in the way of union of the hero and heroine. The novelist, at the same time, keeps in mind, to drive out the prejudices from the society which is adverse to the good of the society. In this way, a novelist also tries to inspire the readers to be revolutionary in their thoughts, because a social novelist has a great responsibility towards the society. The creators have the urge to educate people through their creations. In this connection, Rene Wellek and Austin Warren have expressed –The writer is not only influenced by the society; he influenced it. Art not merely introduces life but also shapes it. People may model their lives upon the patterns of fictional heroes and heroines.⁴

The plot and characters of a social novel are drawn from different environments of the society. The novelist creates his characters according to his choices and capacities. The novelist creates his social novel according to his imaginary thoughts on the basis of the practical events that take place in the society. So, it is an imaginary literature. On the one hand, Hem Bora has divided the social novels into the following categories in his book, ‘Sahitya Bicharar Mulkatha.’ These categories are –family social novel, social novels based on science, symbolic social novel, social novel of purpose, allegorical social novel, psychological social novel and regional social novel.

1. Family Social Novel: - The social novel where full of family episodes appears, then it is called family social novel.
2. Social novel based on science: - The social novel based on scientific matters is called social novel based on science.
3. Symbolic social novel: - Sometimes symbolic ideas with mystic matters appear in the novels. This type of novels are called symbolic social novel.
4. Allegorical Social Novel: - On the other hand, an indirect significance is involved in some novels along with the direct significance. This type of novels is called allegorical social novels.
5. **Social Novel of Purpose:** Novels with a purpose are considered as the social novel of purpose. Weak plot and representative characters are seen in such novels.

6. **Psychological Social Novel:** In the social novels, only external events are not placed; the internal events of the characters are also important in such novels. When such characteristics are given more importance, such novels are called psychological social novel.

7. **Regional social Novel:** When picture of a particular region is drawn in a social novel, such novel is called regional novel. Such type of novels are found important place now-a-days.

The novels dealing with such a variegated subject-matters and ideas are called social novels.

2.2 *The Assamese Social Novels from 1960-1980.*

Before going to discuss the social novel, from 1960-1980 A.D. it will be plausible to take a review of the development of Assamese Social Novel. The Modern Assamese Literature has been started from the mid 19th century with the publication of ‘Orunodoi’ a mouthpiece of the American Baptist Missionary. The contribution of the Missionaries gave inspiration to many Assamese writers and their literary endeavour gave a new impetus to the Assamese language and literature. As a matter of fact, the writers of ‘Orunodoi’ are the pioneers of the modern Assamese literature.\(^5\)

The Assamese novel has been started by way of translation. In the year 1848 the multifaceted Nathan Brown (1807-1886) translated ‘The Pilgrims Progress’ of John Bunyan into Assamese with the title of ‘Jatrik Jatra’ which was published and circulated through the Orunodoi part by part. Then it was published as a book form of the social novel in the year 1857. After it, Mr. Garney and Mrs. Garney consecutively published the novel-‘Kamini Kantar Caritra’ and ‘Alokeshi Bessyar Visay’ in the year 1877.\(^6\)
‘Alokeshi Bessyar Visay’ of 34 pages is written in Bengali by Miss M.E. Leshley which was translated into Assamese. After it, Mrs. Garney published ‘Fulmoni Aru Karuna (1877) which was originally written in Bengali with the title ‘Fulmoni O Karuna’ by Mrs. Mullen. Of Course, the novels by Garney and others were written with a view to preach Christianity.  

At the period when the missionaries published novels, Hem Chandra Barua also wrote a novel named ‘Bahire-Rang-Sang Bhitore Kowa Bhaturi’ (Playing in the parlour, empty is the larder) in 1876. In the words of Umesh Deka (1955- ), there is no attempt at any plot construction here. Only a collection of situations are viewed from a satirical perspective. The story itself is sketchy and on its slight frame are hung various single dimensional and exaggerated characters. The two main characteristics of the novel – a well knit-story and free analysis of character are not found here. The satirical style of writing cannot be the sole feature of a novel proper. In the year 1884, ‘Sudharmar Upakhyan’ of Padmavati Devi Phukanani appeared. In it too, the requisite characteristics are not found. In the words of Umesh Deka again-But unnatural events and co-incidents have removed the story from the reality. Moreover, there is no analysis and development of character as such.

Anyway, the Assamese novel fully bloomed in the romantic period. In the year 1890, ‘Bhanumati’ of Padma Nath Gohain Barua (1871-1946), and in the year, 1891 ‘Padum Kunwari’ of LaxmiNath Bezbaruah (1868-1938) appeared with all characteristics of a novel. Padmanath Gohain Baruah didn’t write after two novels and LaxmiNath Bezbaruah after one.

After them, Rajani Kanta Bordoloi (1867-1939) contributed historical novels under the influence of the English novelist, Sir Walter Scott and the Bengali novelist, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. The contribution of Rajani Kanta Bordoloi has left an immeasurable influence in the field of historical novel. Maheswar Neog has opined in his ‘Asomiya Sahityar Ruprekha’: As a direct literary adventure of the educated youths, the ‘Jonaki’ (1889, Moonlight) brought out a strong literary revolution both in form and spirit and bridged over the gulf between the East and the West. It observed freely and consciously the form and the spirit of western,
especially English literature with an eye on the established Bengali authors and assimilated them in a way that is unique and modern. The ‘Jonaki’ has been the most synthesizing and modernizing influence in our literature. Out of his 8 (eight) novels, 1 (one) is social novels. ‘Miri jiyari’ which appeared in the year 1894 is the only social novel and it is his first novel.

In this novel, the story develops centering round the love affairs of Jonki and Panei. They were grown up intimately since their childhood by playing, singing and dancing on the bank of the river Suvansiri. This childhood relationship and affection of the playmate turns into the adolescent love. They love each other from the core of their heart and one wants to get the other as the life partner. But Tamed, the father of Panei stands as a wall between the two lovers. He prepares himself to marry of Panei to Kumud, the son of the rich Gam for the sole purpose of gaining wealth. But Panei refuses to submit to her father’s arrangement. So she ran away from home with Jonki at the first time but after a month they were captured Tamed and Kumud and brought to home. After a few days, Panei runs away from home without the knowledge of anybody. After hearing this news Jonki also runs away from the village and at last they were captured by ‘Gashi Miri’ i.e. hill Miri and ultimately loses her life with Jonki in a conspiracy made by Rebang, a wicked love suitor of Panei and ends in a tragic note. ‘Miri Jiyari’ enacts the sad love story of a Mising boy and a girl, Jonki and Panei. The narrative is graphic and the environment particularly nature is delineated with a passion.

Just after him, Sarat Chandra Goswami, Hari Narayan Dutta Barua, Chintaharan Patgiri, Sneha Lata Bhattacharya, Deiba Chandra Talukdar, Dandinath Kalita, Chandra Prabha Saikiani and many other writers influenced much the field of novel with their contributions. After them, Dinanath Sarma contributed some famous novels in the field of Assamese literature. These are –‘Usha’ (1951), ‘Sangram’ (1954) and ‘Nadai’ (1960). All these creations will remain ever bright in Assamese literature.

The year 1944 is a memorable year for the Assamese literature and in that year, the undisputed Assamese social novel, ‘Jivanar Batat’ appeared. Birinchi Kumar Barua wrote with his pen-name as Bina Barua. If we look at it from historical
view point, the time when the novel was published had been a tumultuous period. The world was passing through hue and cry. India suffered a sensitive period as it was on the way of achieving independence and many drastic changes appeared in the field of economic and social environment in the world. Birinchi Kumar Barua selected to depict the rural conditions on the eve of independence period in his famous novel ‘Jivanar Batat’ on the basis of rural social life.

This novel has succeeded deeply in depicting the story and characterization in the field of Assamese novel. At present the popularity of ‘Jivanar Batat’ can be acclaimed unparalleled in the Assamese social novel. Birinchi Kumar Baruah contributed another social novel, ‘Seoji Patar Kahini’ under another pen-name Rasna Barua in the year 1958. This novel is also about the condition of tea laborers of Assam. Despite its different background, the novelist must be praised for his capability of drawing social picture aptly. Observing on such basis, the standard of Assamese social novel is measured high.

In the real sense, the ‘Ramdhenu’ (1951), a monthly magazine edited by Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya (1924-1997) brought much change to the modern Assamese literature in the direction of subject-matter, style and thought. Bhattacharya brought changes in the Assamese novel and prose works in the field of Philosophy and culture also. On the eve of independence there appeared new changes in Assam in various ways. The number of schools and colleges began to increase in good numbers. University and Radio Station were founded, a deep sense of feeling visited in the minds of the people. At the same time, the number of educated people began to increase. In this way these kinds of growth helped to influence the middle class people in Assam. As a result, the opportunities for literary creation became easier and finer gradually for these changes.11

It appears that Assamese novel found its opportunity to bloom in a better way during the decade of 50. Prafulla Dutta Goswami (1919-1994) began to write novels with a new style, named ‘Kecha Patar Kaponi’ in the year 1952, and the novelist, Hitesh Deka wrote ‘Azir Manuh’ in 1952. In this way, Syed Abdul Malik and Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya wrote Rathar Cakari Ghure and ‘Raj Pathe Ringiay’ (1955) respectively with new tastes and ideas. These two eminent novelists mainly
shouldered the responsibility of occupying a large field in Assamese novels from 1950 to 1960. Another remarkable novelist of the period was Jogesh Das (1927-1999). His ‘Dawar Aru Nai’ (1955) is a novel of repute of that period.

The subject of our concern is the year 1960 when the writers belonging to another language wrote on the life and society where no writer existed. For example, Lummer Dai wrote his novel ‘Pritibhir Hanhi’ (1963) on the life and society of Adi community. These novels helped to expand the field of Assamese novel and the readers for a good understanding with the people of other state. This must be acclaimed as the praiseworthy work.

From the year 1960-80, in other words, just before or after the aforesaid contemporary period, the spirit of political consciousness and thought unveiled a new avenue in the Assamese novel. From ‘Rathar Cakari Ghure’ of Syed Abdul Malik (1919-2000) to ‘Rajpathe Ringiay’ of Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya the political consciousness was strongly revealed. But it can be said that the novels written with in 60/70 decades Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya have become more successful than his novels written within the decade 50. In his novel ‘Mritunjoy’ (1970) for which he has been awarded Jyanpith, Birendra Kr. Bhattacharyya has expressed the non-violence of Mahatma Gandhi and the plight of the common people in the independence movement. Bhattacharya is a humanitarian in the true sense of the term. His political consciousness is not to establish a particular political philosophy. Rather his aim was the common people; the political philosophy is just only the co-operation in fulfilling humanitarian interest. In this way, we can include ‘Bippanna Samay’ of Medini Chaudhury in this class. In these two novels, the picture of particular ages of Assam has been properly drawn. In this way, among the successful novels in drawing the pictures of the age are ‘Anya Yug Anya Purush’, of Debendra Nath Acharya, ‘Sachi Patar Puthi’ of Trailokya Nath Bhattacharya, ‘Swarna Lata’ of Tilottoma Mishra are noteworthy.

On the other hand, the name of Nirupama Borgohain must be mentioned amongst the novelists who tried to give human value in their novels. In the writings of Nirupama Borgahain, a new avenue of feminine concern has been found place in a new form. In her novel, ’Sai Nadi Nirabadhi’ (1963), a character like Laxmishow
a deep attachment towards the Pagladia river despite it creates always ferocious conditions with irrecoverable to the village life with havoc. In her writings, the social and political consciousness is apparent. Over and above in the creation of that period the pictures how the womenfolk had to bear their troubles in the society governed by men and the suggestion for the necessity of equal status of women with men are depicted. Such a socio-political consciousness is visible in the writings of Polen Barkataky, Arupa Patangia Kalita also. The novel, ‘Asirbadar Rang’ by a noted-dramatist, Arun Sarma, can also be referred here. Of course, the flow of this consciousness that flowed in the decade 70 had slightly been retarded in the decade 80.


‘Iyaruingam’ (1962), ‘Mritunjay’ (1970) are also notable novel of Birendra Kumar Bhattachaya. For this literary work, he was Awarded Jyanpith, the highest Literary Award. Indira Goswami alias Mamoni Roisom Goswamy is another noted woman novelist of Assamese literature. Raisom Gaswami is adept in depicting the picture of women folk on the practical affairs of the class. She made the novel literature stronger which is noticeable in her creation. Her noted novels are ‘Chenabor Sat’, ‘Nilkanthi Braja’ (1972) and ‘Mamore Dha Torowal’ (1979) are noteworthy.

The famous literature, Homen Borgahain has also contributed a lot in the field of novel. For example, ‘Halodhia Charaye Baodhan Khay’ (1973), ‘Pitaputra’ (1975) are notable.

Beside them many other novelists, both old and new have contributed in the field of Assamese social novel.
The works of name novelist are undertaken to discuss in brief to their influence in the field of Social novel. First, the ‘Suruj Mukhir Swapna’ of Syed Abdul Malik. Appeared in the year 1960. It is the story about the happiness and sorrow of the Assamese Muslims of the village, Dalim on the bank of the river Dhansiri. It is written based on the cordial relationship and good understanding of Hindus and Muslims who inhabit in a village far from modern urban civilization. It is a picture of the Assamese Society. In that village on the bank of the Dhansiri river, there is no antagonistic attitude between the Hindus and the Muslims. There is no space of misunderstanding between the two communities. Rather, a good fraternity and brotherhood prevailed among them. Regarding the novel, the novelist himself confessed, the plot of ‘Suruj Mukhir Swapna’ is based on fact. 12

Gulas is an ordinary young man who is an active and ambitious to establish himself with his own energy. He is fond of giving donation for generous works. But he was weak towards opposite sex. Yet it is also reflection of the practical life. Kapahi, Tora, Chenimai are the representative woman characters of the Assamese village deprived of urban sophistication. Of course, the purpose of the novelist is to highlight the social life of the general peasants of the village. The novelists have become successful in activating the villagers in the social responsibility. In this novel, there is a character named Chandra read upto class VI. To the novelist Chandra is a symbol of modern social consciousness. This novel can be classified as social novel. Truly, the novelist has opened a way to solve permanently the socio-economic problems of the village. He has shown that communal distinction is not a problem of the village community, rather lagging behind the modern way of life is the real problem.

On the other hand, we find more political consciousness in the novels of Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya. Its good example is ‘Iyaruingam’. The story of the novel is imported from the background of the political affairs of Naga Hills. It is based on the two political aspects of the Nagas the real political events of the Nagas and the political aims of the Nagas. Based in the love-affairs of Rishang, Khutingla, Fanitfang and Sarengla the novelist has introduced the Naga problem in the Assamese novel. Though the true love of Nikula, the treachery of Kandarpa and the
changeable love of Sizebha has been placed in the novel, the main purpose of the novel is, of course, to highlight the thought and aspirations of the revolutionary Naga people.\textsuperscript{13}

Then we can cite the name of Indira Goswami alias Mamoni Roisom Goswamy. \textit{Before 100 hundred years, some social reformers of the 19th century like Hem Chandra, Gunabhiram and others highlighted through their writings in favour of widow marriage in order to remove the tragic conditions of the widows. Yet the tragic conditions of the widows have not ended today. This particular aspect can deeply be felt in the writings of the famous novelist, Mamani Raisom Goswani. In the male dominated society every rules and regulations are framed or law is dissolved by men according to their interest. Men govern and guide everything and every work. Freedom of women is not possible without being free from the shackles of men domination. Mamoni Roisom Goswamy was going to express all these ideas directly or indirectly.}\textsuperscript{14}

Homen Borgahain, too, expresses his social consciousness through his novels. The best example it is ‘Halodhia Charaye Baodhan Khay.’ The noticeable thing of this novel is his realism and that realism is fully painful and objectionable which is called the realism of indictment.\textsuperscript{15}

In the beginning of the novel, a true picture of the hopes and dwindling mind of Raseswar, the cultivator is depicted. From it, we are informed that our cultivators have to depend on the conditions of rains and weather for their cultivation till today. On the other hand Sonaton Bapu is a lewd or blood sucker who is a parasite on others. Raseswar is a common cultivator of typical nature. Through the character of Raseswar, the novelist has shown that new laws for cultivators, new land laws and framing of odd laws are practically vague meant for exploiting the cultivators only. The government is a black power to exploit the weak cultivators. The stronger exploits the weaker. This happened in the case of Raseswar, too. The novel can be compared to Gogol’s ‘The Overcoat’. The exploitation of the stronger upon the weaker is found in both the novels.

Our next attention goes to Nirupama Borgahain after him. Her writings are also dealt with feminism. She is not extreme feminist, rather a social feminist. The
aim of the feminist novelist is to empower the women in the field of social freedom. This is generally not desired or neglected by the male writers.

LaxmiNandan Bora is also an apt novelist in delineating the picture of the environment of rural life of a particular region in an enchanting way. He has compassion for the people who are exploited in the society. In his writings the setting and criticisms are prominent while the characters are light with no importance. Unable to vent the conflict among the characters of the story refrains from being deep in its course events. In the same way, ‘Ganga Chilanir Pakhi’ is also a regional social novel in which the story is picked up from the bank of Sonai river. It is written on the basis of love of a teen girl named Basanti towards a boy named Dhananjay. It is mainly the story of Basanti with her happiness and sorrow, weeps and laughs. Along with this story, the pictures how the rural environment had been deteriorating gradually economically are represented. In such a changing situation the life of Basanti turned upside down. The overall environment of the bank of Sonai river, its natural beauty, the thought of the people, the system how they led their lives has found space in this novel. Dhananjay is a boy who can control himself. But Dhananjay cannot initiate any work in this economic centric society. On the one way, how the newly imposed political atmosphere like the Panchayati Raj have created quarrels and conflicts among the villagers and had resulted a complete breakdown of the amity among them. Any way, this novel of a small volume appeared in the year 1973 left a deep influence on the Assamese literature. Jogesh Das is also a novelist who wrote novels on the life of stereotype common people in the rural background. His ‘Nirupay Nirupay’ (1963) is a novel based on social problems. There arose a conflict in between the two families and through this conflict the good relationships was broken. The novelist tried to show that to establish stable good relationship was not an easy matter and for it precautionary measures are required from all aspects. When the elder sisters tried to revive the good relationships through Gautam and Sabitri, the problems began to appear. The foregone episodes between Gautam’s father, Barua and Chitralekha’s mother Phukanani reappeared again with this affair. In their tender age a relationship was established in between Barua and Phukanani. But the relationship vanished in
the course of time. *The novelist took hard pain in the analysis of the characteristics of Gautam.* In this novel, the characteristics of other characters are also informed flesh and blood.

From the above discussed social novels we can discern that the Assamese novels of that period were written mainly on the environment of the social lives and social aspects. The novelists have suggested to be conscious in the political economic directions in the novel from 1960-1980, the pictures of the life of common people are exhibited. Among these pictures, how the common people of weak economic background had to bear with patience the tragic situations, how the people of traditional outlook had been confused with the newly mastermind modern age were mainly treated in these novels. Besides it, in the writings of woman novelists like Mamoni Roisom Goswamy and Nirupama Borgohain, the obstacles, tragic events, loss and gain, laugh and cry of the womenfolk were prominently found place. To speak the truth, they are the pioneers among the exponents’ feminine concerns. The matters which could not be upheld and neglected by the male writers were picked up and handled by these two women novelists, with stern and strong language in their novels. Over and above, a deep compassion for humanity and description with acute observations are visible in their writings.

For this discussion, we can arrive at a conclusion to classify the novels of Assamese of the period, 1960 to 1980 under the following categories:-

1) *The category of Agricultural life*
2) *The category of Regionalism*
3) *The category of Political, and*
4) *The category of Feminism*

1) **The Category of Agricultural Life:** Agricultural life is reliant upon nature. Keeping a close connection with nature they cultivate their agricultural products. It is found that such agricultural life is depicted in the stories or novels. Though enough changes have taken place in the social life of the 50/60 decades, yet the happiness and sorrows, laugh and cry, troubles and problems, hopes and depressions of the cultivators have been occupying importance in the old and present novels.
The Assamese society is still relying upon the agricultural life. It is a way of life of the people of Assam, so most of the novelists have not been able to write novels without the life of agricultural people. Only the few have become successful to come out this pre-occupation. For such pre-occupation their novels are full of the agricultural life events on and around the rivers Kalong, Kapilee, Pagladia, Amranga, Sonai, and Dalimgaon. It is one of the characteristic in other novels of other parts of India. They are also not lagging behind in depicting their vivid social environments.

The main basis of Assamese novel is the practical environment of the life and activities. By the term practical environment we haven’t meant human society only, it has rather been meant inclusive of imaginary communication of the novelists to highlight it before all. In this light all the novels cannot be acclaimed of equal category for the reason that in some of the novels social traditions may occupy immensely and in some novels, only some aspects of the social pictures may be represented. Any way, the responsibilities of the novelists are immense to reflect the social pictures. The attempt to suggest or reflect gradual movement from agricultural rural base to urban mid civilization is the main basis or source of the Assamese novelists. In the novels of Nava Kanta Barua the picture of such kind of change is found in the way. Red cap i.e. the British sepoys didn’t attend to the administrative system of the country. The reign of the real Company had begun after that man of black suits arrived. They need money to administer the country, too. A good number of new systems have been introduced. It means they have imposed revenue per head, at first then they started the revenue of plough. This plough revenue brought a balance to some extent. The revenue is measured as much as the number of ploughs. The person who had no plough was exempted from revenue. Probably the land was measured with the number of ploughs. When an enquiry came to Barua to know many ploughs he possessed, he instantly said in fury- ‘Do I plough to know myself how many ploughs I have? Ask the bearded Ramcharan whether he knows the matter or not.'
Again, the ploughs were not possessed by every body. In the mean time there came many types of impositions. It is the change that has come along with the change of the environment of agricultural life.

‘Kaka Deutar Har’ is a big novel of big volumes. But it has created its greatness in the novel for its characterization and beautiful presentation. There are many characters of high and low profile and Navakanta has presented them proportionately.

In this novel of agricultural environment the social ceremonies, behaviours, dietary system, dresses, traditional rites and rituals, conversations, the behaviours of the responsible persons and many other aspects are well depicted.

Virtually the grand father or the grand mothers who are the story teller is the symbol of agriculturist. Only in the villages such a custom of telling the stories by the grands before the grandchildren is prevailed. The grand father or grand mothers who have the knowledge of folk tales told before their grandchildren with the admixture of their experience and imagination about the creation of the world.

In this way, the treatment of agricultural life is lucidly expressed in the ‘Halodhia Charaye Baodhan Khay’ by Homen Borgahain, through the main character Raseswar. One Sanatan Sarma who is an exploiter, of the lay cultivator played some indirect tricks and converted the documents of land of the simple cultivators in his name. It is a miserable story about this simple cultivator who was compelled to resort to a daily labour in order to sustain his livelihood for his penurious condition for being dispossessed of his land for the tricks of Sanatan Sarma. When he suited a case in order to recover his lost lands, he had to forgo from the dearly golden rings of hands and ears kept secretly inside his box and had to sell the new Endi scurf of his wife and also all the milk giving cows and cultivating bullocks from his sheds. Moreover, he had to engage his school going son to a rich family as a bonded labourer. On the one hand, his daughter, Makhani bade them adieu from this world out of starvation and want of treatment and medication. In the episode of the novel, Sanatan Sarma, Dimbeswar Mondol and clerks, peon, chawkidar, S.D.C are all accounted as
social canker worm. Such kind of idea is also exposed in another novel ‘Kushilaba’ (1970). In this novel his sympathy and impatient thoughts are expressed. Anyway these are the true pictures of agricultural life. Another novel ‘Pita Putra’ (1975) is also the same kind of novel on agricultural life. For this reason Madan Sarma has said in his article, ‘Homen Borgahainr Upanayas’, ‘Pita Putra’ and ‘Halodhia Charaye Baodhan Khay’ are the novels written giving unexplained importance on the general life of the cultivators and the society of the villages trampled by the administration of the feudal system mainly.  

In his ‘Pita Putra’ Borgohain has depicted the picture of the rural life and its environment of Assam in the Post-Independent period. In this novel he has not only drawn the pictures of environments of two generations of a family of the undeveloped regions, rather he has reflected the pictures of the problems of three decades that appeared in the rural society of Assam which involved the first changing conditions in the human society especially the exploitation of the rich on the poor and deserted people. In this novel, Sibnath is the main character. He was a feudal lord (zamindar). Sibnath, the protagonist, is an attractive character in the novel. He was the most ambitious man who strove for distant dreams. He has deep sympathy for the members of the Keibortya Community who cultivated his lands and had no land property of their own. So they were poor. Being a low caste, they were neglected and remained untouchables in the society. So he felt the neglected and tragic conditions of the Keibortyas. He considered independence of the country meaningless as it failed to bring any change for the deserted people of the Keibortya villages. On the other hand, he was very apprehensive of his lands to be transferred to them. He had every possible respect to those who had sacrificed for the nation. But he himself is indolent in this regard. Sometimes he asks himself-‘Am I really a selfish and aspirant to be a leader?’ In this way the appearance of the change of the society had resulted erosion in the family of Sibnath too. His eldest son Gaurinath deserted his family ties as soon he desired to marry a Kaibortya girl. His youngest son LaxmiNath created chaos in the family of Sibnath being a
drunkard and hooligans. On the one hand, his middle son, Kalinath didn’t complete his higher education and returned home and attached to the social reforms. Kalinath is the only son of Sibnath on whom he can expect hopes and aspirations. Kalinath coped with the desires of his father, so he didn’t marry his beloved after all. Sibnath stood by Kalinath for his forward career. Despite Kalinath was fully aware of the corruption and bi-character of the Congress Party, yet he became M.L.A and a minister of the state.

The novels that we have discussed above are really clear reflection of the picture of the rural agricultural life. All the problems including happiness and sorrows, cries and laughs have been put in these novels. These are the records of the events of the agricultural life how the environment of time can make intricate their course of life. In this discourse, we have undertaken the novels from 1960 to 1980. The story of the ‘Pita Putra’ is the exemplary of the change of the decade seventy. After it, there came a striding change in the agricultural life of Assam. In that period the influence of modern civilization expedited too fast in the villages of Assam. New classes of cultivators were born. They either tilled their lands with hired persons or cultivated their lands by other persons on contractual basis and they themselves managed government jobs in the offices. The unemployed youths came out more from such families. The gradual growth of the numbers of extremists is a noteworthy aspect of Assam at that period. On the other hand, the advent of electronic media weakened the independent culture of the agricultural society and with the aggression of glamorous commercial culture, the value of humanity begun to erode like the river banks. Ultimately the decaying conditions of the life of cultivators happened to be dimmed. Such environment of life was depicted in the novels after 80.

We can say in the true sense of the term that the agricultural life from 60 decade to 70 decade serving despties many sided troubles. But a sudden change appeared in their life in between 1970 and 1980. And a dim picture is reflected in the Assamese novels then.
(2) **The category of Regionalism:** In reality, the novels written on the basis of a regional colour is called regional novels or the novels of regional category. According to Phyllis Bentley - *The regional novel is the national novel carried to one degree further of sub-division; it is a novel which, concentrating on a particular region of a nation depicts the life of that region in such a way that the reader is conscious of the characteristics which are unique to that region and differentiate from others in common motherland.*  

In the opinion of M.H. Abrams - *The regional novel emphasizes the settings, speech and customs of a particular locality, not merely as local colour, but as important conditions affecting the temperature of the characteristics and their ways of thinking, feeling and acting.*

*There is no definition of what is called a regional novel.* There are so many discourses regarding the shape, settings etc. of the regional novel. It can ultimately be said that a regional novel is created on the basis of any particular region, but it doesn’t fix on the worldly situations. *The students of English literature at once become reminiscent of ‘Wessex’--a novel by Thomas Hardy, in connection with the regional novel. In this novel the natural vegetation of Wessex region, the original habitats or their characters as characteristics including life-style thoughts and matters of life and death are reflected.* In such novels the influence of regional aspects are so deep that any kind of characteristics cannot come out of its shackles. Over and above, the Wissex itself turned into a character itself. *In this regard, if we respect the novels of Hardy as the only regional novel with limited scope and now-a-days to determine the characteristics and scope of the regional novels of other languages to cite the novels of Hardy is not sufficient.* We will have to give importance to other kinds of novels and other regional novels, according to Umesh Deka - *It is also true that a regional novelist need not necessarily be inhabitant of the place of which he writes, but he must have a keen interest in detailed information of it and, above all, a sharp power of observation.*
Again he says, *a good regional novel cannot certainly be written with the help of official data and second hand information or a cursory glance of a tourist. But where the writer himself is a resident of the place of the novel, it is natural for him to possess an inherent affinity and attachment to the local people and surroundings and it is convenient for him to have knowledge of local specialities.*

In the novel, ‘*Suruj Mukhir Swapna*’ (1960), the renowned novelist, Syed Abdul Malik, has drawn the picture of the sorrows and suffering, loss and gain and enjoyment of the common folk residing in a village named Dalimgaon beside the river, Dhansiri. *The feelings and sentiments of the life and sorrows of the cultivators of a Muslim village near a river have been drawn.* An indiscriminate type of experiences appeared in the life of Gulas, a young man of nearby the Dhansiri river has a consequences on Chenimai, Kapahi and Tara. Over and above, he has drawn the simple nature of the people of Dalimgaon. The other affairs of the village life like flood, rough conditions of the roads and communication, backwardness of education, life depending solely upon agriculture and other odds have been placed in the novel. Such things are lucidly described in the novel itself- *

*there are dense forest in the west and south of the village, big trees, hisses of snakes, roars of tigers, trumpets of elephants, breys of asses........anyway we must cross over the Dhansiri river, then it is ok. And then it is not necessary for way.*

*In the novel, Dhansiri river herself is the central figure.* As the Suvansiri river is the central figure in the ‘*Miri Jiyari*’ of Rajani Kanta Bordoloi, the river Dhansiri is also the central figure in this novel. In the Bodo novels too, the novel ‘*Mwihur*’ of Dharanidhar Wary and some novels of Chitaranj Muchahary fall in the category of regional novels. In such categories of novel, the hopes and aspirations of the people of the region, the rites and rituals, faith and belief, education, folk-festivals, the atmosphere and situation of the daily life, economic situations and political affairs are placed. The novel, the ‘*Suruj Mukhir Swapna*’, too, is the expression of the people and their life affairs residing beside the river, Dhansiri.
Laxmi Nandan Bora in his novel, ‘Ganga Chilanir Pakhi,’ has depicted the picture of a region, the story of which is based on a love-affair. A girl named Basanti on the one side of river loves a young man named Dhananjay of the other side of the same river, the Sonai. The bath place of Sonai is the breeding point of the love in between the two beloved. The episode is all about the loss and gain and happiness and sorrows on life of Basanti, in the true sense of the term. As is the picture depicted in the ‘Suruj Mukhir Swapna’ as well as ‘Miri jiyary’ about the situations of the life of Muslim Community of Dalimgaon beside the Dhansiri river and the about the happiness and sorrows and many aspects of the Miri Community beside the Suvansiri river, This novel, too, we can see the expression of the life-affairs of the people of a region. In the same time, in ‘Sei Nadi Nirabadhi’ which is the maiden novel of writer Nirupama Borgohain, has been depicted love-affairs of Laxmi with her contemporary Dipu who belonged to the village beside tumultuous Pagladia river. Along with it the novelist has drawn the picture of the life and situation of the people of the locality. The penurious and sorrowful life of the villagers who are mainly cultivators to the farthest distance from Nalbari have been drawn in the novel. The novelist have drawn the picture of the life security beside the Pagladia river is always unwarranted, insecure. The novelist has symbolized the Pagladia river as the symbol of sorrow of the villagers. The role of the river is always mysterious. It flows ethereally. Sometimes it flows meagerly, silently; at times it flows turbulently in ferocious too harming its people with no bounds. In the novel, every form of devastation is described. The erosions of the banks of river during the time of flood, the scenery of thatched houses, complete vacations of the paddy field with the effects of inundations, communal and religious issues, questions of untouchabilities, female education and the inseparable relationship to bamboos in their livelihood and many other related things are depicted in the novel. For example, bamboo house, bamboo fance, bamboo bed, bamboo winnowfan, bamboo sieve, bamboo basket, fishing bamboo hooks, milk keeper bamboo hole, salt keeper bamboo hole, bamboo spoon, bamboo fan, bamboo comb, bamboo scale, bamboo pipe, bamboo ladder. Besides these, in the novels
of Hitesh Deka, Silbhadra, Navakanta Barua, Swarna Bora, Pranita Devi, we can trace the regional pictures.

(3) The category of political: - As much as the social affairs, the political affairs also have been taken place in the novels of some writers of that period. Of course, the life of the people and their affairs have considered more or less along with the political affair. But as the political affairs have been given more emphasis in these novels, they have been leveled as the political novels, these political novels have been undertaken to analyse in this discussion. The renowned scholar Aristotle said: *Man is by nature a political animal.* 35 A political being lives in a disciplined society within the jurisdiction of political conditions. So politics is inevitable in the social life of men- the best animal of the world. Over and above, the sorrows and sufferings, happiness and unhappiness appear in the human life from the very beginning according to conditions of environments in their life. As a result of which love and compassion creates in our life to our parents and family members to whom we had been associated from the very beginning of our life. For same reason, our love grows to our motherland also and it flows eternally in our mind in conscious with the times and situations.

*A social conscious being cannot evade the influence of the politics.* *The Patriots blood’s is the seed of freedom tree.* 36 With single word, Gotfreed Kuller, the Swedish writer has said that *politics is associated in all affairs of our life.* 37 On the other hand, in his ‘*Politics and Novel’, (1954)* Irving Howe said ‘*A mere information of Political philosophy cannot be considered as political novel, that philosophy must be deeply rooted.*' 38 In other words, political event should be the central point in the novel. Of course, the contemporary political events of the contemporary society must be placed in such novels. At the same time political events it shoulders the responsibility controlling human affairs in their life and death and give colours of the human relationship- all these aspects appear in these novels. As not only political events but also human environments also appear within the ambit historical events in the historical novels, so also the
general human life affairs are seen to be appeared practically in the political novels within the ambit of political affairs. Such kind of novels is based on a political movements or any kind of turmoil for administration or for mass movements or for any other political situation. In his book ‘Politics and the novel’, Irving Howe has said, A novel, to become a political one, must have either a political background or political ideas should play a significant role in it. He further stated that- By a political novel, I mean a novel in which political ideas play a dominant role or in which the political milieu is that dominant setting.

He has illustrated again in connection with socio-political novel-The political novel... is peculiarly a work of internal tensions. To be novel at all, it must contain the usual representation of human behaviour and feeling yet it must absorb into its stream of movement of the heart and perhaps insoluble pellets of modern ideology.

The name of Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya can be cited as the political novelist who wrote novels on the political environment of that time. Almost all his novels are ideological, in the novels where political ideology doesn’t take place, his casted social ideology in such novels. He is the most noteworthy among the political novelists. On this Umesh Deka has rightly remarked. Among these few novelists only Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya is worthy of mention. He has produced novels purely based on political problems in Assamese.

He further said-He is undoubtedly one of the foremost novelists of the period. A recipient of the prestigious Jnanpith Award, Bhattacharya began his literary career as a poet and short story writer. He entered the field of the novel in the middle of the sixties. A man with social and political consciousness, Bhattacharya is greatly influenced by the socialistic ideas. In fact the ideal of classless socialistic society is a prime concern in his novels.

Of a good number of novels written by him, ‘Iyaruingam’ (The rule of the people, 1960) written on the life of Tangkul Nagas, is said to be the best. ‘Iyaruingam’ is his reflection of non-violence of Gandhism which he carried from his young life. Although he didn’t support the freedom movement of Subhas
Chandra Bose through violence, yet it made a deep impact in the mind of Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya for which this aspect of the freedom movement is apparent in his novel. He has successfully drawn the pictures of the conflict between the role of Gandhi based on non-violence and the role of Subhas Chandra Bose group based on violence in connection with the Indian freedom movement based on the political situation of Nagaland. *The theme of the novel is based on the socio-political situation in Nagaland during the forties-the climatic decade where India’s agelong freedom struggle came to an end the Indian people formed their own democratic Government and when the country experienced the effects of the Second World War. It is not only rich in social understanding but also in political consciousness.*

Rishang, the hero of ‘*Iyaruingam*’ went to Calcutta to study in the college in the last period of Indian freedom movement. The young Naga youth was deeply influenced by the national spirit of M.K.Gandhi at that time. An educated youth of the region, Rishang wanted to give leadership to this group of Nagas. After the war ended while studying in Kolkata his young mind came to be exposed to the cruel outcome of communal rivalries, the inhuman torture of the freedom fighters by the Britishers. Gandhiji’s message of peace and the love of Christ, all these factors gave a definite shape to his mental outlook. He dreamt of Nagaland free from the British Sovereignty but which is an inseparable part of India. *It is noteworthy that Reishang Keishang, the Chief Minister of Manipur appeared as Rishang in ‘*Iyaruingam’.* According to Gobinda Prasad Sarma, *Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya had friendship with Rishang in their early period. On the other hand Videshelley, an opponent character of Rishang was the conscientious creation of the writer. ‘The war raised in the mind of Videshelley, the young Naga revolutionary had an extreme desire for the freedom of Nagaland while in the heart of Rishang, the devastation of war awakened the ideal Christ’s deep love for mankind and a desire for peace. The differences between the ideas of these two characters form the basis of the novel, ‘*Iyaruingam.’ It can be cited that Rishang Keishing has been projected as the follower of M.K. Gandhi and Videshelley has been projected as the follower of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose who was Fizo in practical life.*
The main story develops around the activities of Rishang, Khutingla, Sarengla and Fanitfang. Rishang and Sarengla were known to each other from childhood. With the blooming of youth they came even closer to each other and exchange of hearts took place. But with aggression of Japanese, she had been molested by the Japanese soldiers who compelled her to accompany them. She could no longer be part and parcel of Rishang for being physically impure for the immoral deeds of the Japanese soldiers. Even yet Rishang was love her and had sympathy for Sarengla. But Rishang couldn’t accept her because of social ethics. Therefore, Rishang is then drawn towards Khutingla. Their attraction becomes deeper through physical union but the inter-family rivalry and difference of religion stand as an obstacle in the way of their marriage. In this connection the author has given an account of how the introduction of Christianity caused a feud between the Christians and the Kaulies. This clash divides the Nagas into two groups. The outcome of which is experienced by Rishang and Khutingla. With the uncertainty of marriage, Rishang with the help of the Missionary proceeds to Calcutta for studies and Khutingla come to Gauhati for a course in sericulture. Having return from Calcutta after experiencing pre-Independence revolutions and communal clashes, Rishang is confronted by Videshelley, the champion of a free Naga state. After the Independence of India the hope for reconstitution which the war-affected Nagas and cherished is belied. This gradually leads them away from the ideal of Videshelley. After returning from Calcutta, Rishang is confronted with two problems. The first of which is in keeping with the Naga tradition, to take revenge upon Khutingla’s father, the murderer of his father. But by doing so he would to lose Khutingla for ever. Moreover he is mentally committed to deep love of Christ. On the other hand, the influence of Mahatma Gandhi’s ideal of Ahimsa was also on him. Therefore, he succeeds in overcoming his animal hatred and giving greater importance to love. The second problem is to liberate the Naga society from the threatening grip of Videshelley. In keeping with his ideal, he with the help of master Jivan and a group of followers goes from village to village preaching the message of peace against the hostile and violent attitude of Videshelley. But unfortunately Rishang is injured by the bullets of Videshelley’s
soldiers who also shot dead master Jivan. On the other hand on account of his deep love for Khutingla, Fanitfang (who had a previous relation with her) betrays his own troops and saves Rishang’s life. In the mean time the death of their parents clears the way of union between Khutingla and Rishang. They get officially married in the Church. On his second mission of peace, the wounded Rishang is taken care of in the hospital by both Sarengla and Khutingla till his recovery. During the period of recovery Rishang dreams through his future child of the rule of the people in Nagaland.

The political overtone is predominantly present in the novel. The story however has become complex because of the intermingling of the wartime politics with social life and individual love episodes. Though this is written on the back-ground of political events, sufficient accounts of social pictures are found in it. For example- swine-rearing, labouring in the field for cultivation, up and down slopes of their dwelling places, wooden platform, for maiden enmity lasting unto death for misunderstanding, rare rehabilitation of the molested women in the society, intolerance in between the co-wives etc. and some of the social pictures of the Naga social life are shown in the novel. The sound of songs sung by the maidens on the field miles away can easily be heard easily. Why is the quarrel for what a piece of land? That piece of land is there on the top of the hillock. Isn’t there the boundary line of the Christians and the non-Christians? Yes, I know. That other piece of land must belong to this village. In this way, Umesh Deka has said, being composed on the background of the Naga society a great many customs; lifestyle and behaviour of the Nagas have come to light in the novel. However, here it is also worth mentioning that Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya is not a member of the Naga community and whatever he portrays in the novels is done as an outsider. Therefore it is natural, the Naga life and society which have been reflected in the novel ‘Iyaruingam’ is also incomplete in its true spirit. Even then within this limitation he has been successful in portraying the social hopes and aspiration of the Naga people.

In this way, ‘Mritunjay’ written by Bhattacharya is also a novel based on political issues. Based on political the novelist has applied the reference by
Sankara -Madhava, the days of the Ahoms in Assam, the Moamoria battle, the heroism of Lachit Borphukan and the supreme sacrifice of Sati Joymati over and above, the faith and belief of the people of Assam, magic and tantric faith, gods and deities, the river deities, offering of ambrosia in the temples, enjoying play-games, rivers and rivulets of Assam, forests and jungles, birds and birdies, flora and fauna, diet system of Assam, social rites and rituals and in addition to these, the pictures of the good relationship of the plain and the hill people are clearly manifested the conversation of the characteristics. In the socio-political life of Assam, the ever rare silk-worms the plantation of beans – mustards, sugar-canies besides paddy cultivation in Assam, the habitation of the people from Maimonshing districts on the beach of the Brahmaputra, the move of the Muslim League to merge Assam within Pakistan- such enormous problems have been placed in the novel. In this way, the political philosophy assumes in the novels prominently through such social environments. For such grounds the Marathi critic, Mahadev Apte has outlined the following characteristics of a political novel:-

1. It must be related to the political incident more than on event.
2. It must have a direct agreement with the political activities.
3. The activities of the characters must be influenced with the political Philosophy.

Of course, all the characteristics noted above may be fulfilled in all the political novels. For this reason, it is stated in the book, ‘Politics & the novels in India’ in this way- It is rather difficult to define a political novel. It is too narrow and mechanistic to say that a political novel is one in which a political movement is portrayed or political condition depicted for most social problems have political dimensions. Yet, we can say that in the novels where political environments are mainly dealt, such novels are categorized as political social novels in the discussion.

4. The category of Feminism: - In almost all the places of the world the position of women in the society is confined to do the household-work, child
rearing and to take care after all the members of the family. For these services, women are paid nothing and not given the equal status of men. For the existence of such gap a thought established in society that women are inferior to men in all respects. Exponents are feminism are not in favour of such discrimination, rather they want to establish the equal status with men.

The first group of Assamese novelists like Padmavati Phukanani has highlighted Assamese women power in her novel, *Sudharmar Upakhyan* (1884), Birinchi Kr. Barua with his pseudonym, Rasna Barua focused the women power through the character of Sonia in the novel *Seoji Patar Kahini*—Sonia was a labour woman who stood against the authority who imposed exploitation over tea labourers.

In *Mritunjay* (1970), Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya has shown the contribution of the helping hands of the women through the characters of Dimi, Kalibai etc. But no change has taken place in the life-circle of women through national revolution. They remained as they were being wives and mothers shouldering the responsibility of their household as before. In this novel no specific improvement and change in position has been shown. It only indicated that women were lagging behind and could not come forward even an inch in the national movement in comparison to men.

In the novel, *Iparar Ghar Siparar Ghar* (1979), Nirupama Borgohain has drawn a village woman character named Poteswari who was subjected to exploitation. Women controlled by the male society become the victim of economic exploitation for not giving equal labour charge in comparison to males. A village richman exploited not only poor lady Poteswari but also sent her daughter to town to work as maid servant at the rate of Rs 10 only per month. Through such pictures the novelist is trying to portray the picture from the angle of feminism that women are not given due status even in the 80 decade of the 20th century.

In the novels of Mamoni Roisom Goswamy, too, we discern the prominence of feminism. For example, in *Nilkanthi Braja* (1976), Soudamini stood against some rites and rituals. Her parent preferred her to remain as widow
by obliging all the forms of the religious code though she lost her husband just a year after her marriage. Though she became a widow, she was in the growing stage charmingly as other girl of her age. Thus she crazed for another boy who was Christian in faith. But being bound by the Hindu society, her parent couldn’t allow her to be married to the young man. Rather her parent had to bring her to the holy place, Brajadham, in order to change her mind. But Soudamini found her all the naked picture of human beings in the name of rites and rituals. There are exploitations upon the young widows in the guise of religious rites. The novel is replete with pathetic description exploitation, tortures and insecurity for young widows within the precinct of the holy place. The novelist has openly revealed all the ugly aspects in the novel. The never ending pangs and pains of the Virtually Radhaswamis of Brajadham were witnessed by the novelist herself and as a consequence she had to share the immeasurable agonies of the victims. The episodes told in the novels, ‘Brajadham’ are all real though they sound unbelievable. From this angle, the creation of the novelist can be credited with the dimensity of success of the creation of Valmiki the gent who fought against the society in order to invoke the crusade against the injustice imposed upon women section.\footnote{58}

It is found that the novel of feminism handled by the females have became more intimate and successful than the novels of males. For, it is obvious that they can penetrate more deeply into the problems of themselves.

 Footnotes and references ;

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43. Ibid, pg-61-62
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