RELIGION OF THE BOROS
AND
THEIR SOCIO-CULTURAL TRANSITION

CHAPTER V
The growth and development of the Boro language and literature is a subject, which needs a serious study from past to the present. The subject is not only of wide range but also of heterogeneous character and one has to delve into the subject with more enquiry and larger span of time, indeed, to highlight the matter in proper perspective. Here, I have made an effort to focus on the historical aspect of the development of the Boro language and literature.

Under the impact and impulse of the great Boro leader Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma the Boro people found a new direction of self-consciousness, and the Brahma dharma movement culminated the thought of self-identity and national integrity.

The progress of the Brahma movement and the process of development in the field of education and literature went hand in hand among the Boros. Towards the early decades 20th century introduction of Brahma religion by Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma and the hectic effort to revive Boro culture and literature followed by socio-political reforms led the
growth of education and literature. Gurudev Kalicharan realized the need of education for an overall development of the Boros, whereas there was not any educational institution in the Boro areas. When the Chief Commissioner, Assam visited Dhubri, Kalicharan with the help of the Deputy Commissioner of Dhubri, Mr. A.J. Ley, met him and submitted a memorandum requesting him to establish educational institution in the Boro areas as the poor Boros could not afford to go for study to Dhubri or other towns. As a result of this effort an amount of rupees thirty thousand was sanctioned for the establishment of three institutions, one Middle School, one Weaving centre and one Carpentry centre at Tipkai near Railway station, and several primary schools came into existence in Boro areas in 1912. But these institutions shifted to Sapatgram in 1927 against the will of Kalicharan Brahma. These three institutions were amalgamated as one institution, hence it was known as ‘Sapatgram Amalgamated Academy’, and it was upgraded to High School.

The Deputy Commissioner Mr. Ley, who was also the chairman of Local Board, was favourable to Boro people and suggested that the Board might sanction a Primary School where minimum number of students would be not less than thirty. Number of Minor (Middle) School might be increased if the Primary Schools could produce the required number of students, and with the increasing number of Minor Schools a High School would be established at Kokrajhar.

Till 1917, the Bengali language was the medium of institution in the schools of this region, where as the Boros were much closer to the Assamese culture and society. In 1916, Kalicharan Brahma submitted a memorandum to the Chief Commissioner, Assam, pleading to introduce the Assamese language as the medium of instruction in the schools of Boro dominated
areas including Tipkai Minor School. Consequently, all the schools in the Boro areas were converted from Bengali medium to Assamese medium in the subsequent years. The Boro language was introduced as medium of instruction in the primary level of schools much later in 1963, and subsequently it was upgraded to Secondary level.

With a view to assisting the Boro students in pursuing education, Kalicharan founded the ‘Brahma Boarding’ at Dhubri. Most of the residents of the Brahma Boarding were the followers of Kalicharan Brahma and it became the first centre of think-tank of the Boros to envisage the developed Boro nationality. They were inspired by Kalicharan to find out the Boro inhabiting in different parts of the country and bring them under one umbrella socially and politically, which had a far reaching effect in the Boro society. As a first step the students of the Brahma Boarding decided to form a student organization in 1915 and to mobilize mass opinion. And under the active initiative and leadership of Rupnath Brahma and Madaram Brahma, the disciples of Kalicharan Brahma, the Boro Chatra Sanmilani (Students’ Organization) took birth in 1919 at Kokrajhar town. One of the significant decisions adopted by the Chatra Sanmilani was to devote themselves for the creation and development of the Boro language and literature. In fact, it was the hectic beginning of the great effort undertaken by the refined generation to introduce the Boro language to the literary world, and it can be said as the seedtime of the Boro language and literature.

There was a strong urge for literary work because it was by that time that, a considerable number of Bodo youths became educated achieving higher education in different fields and this generation is mainly responsible in giving shape to the new socio-political and educational standard of the Boros in the subsequent decades. Although the Boro Chatra Sanmilani was
formed by the educated Boro youths of Goalpara district, who set about to work within the jurisdiction of their district, yet, it exerted tremendous influence on the conscious Boro through out the State and outside of Assam. The Boro students and gentlemen from other districts like, Nagaon, Kamrup, Lakshimpur, of Assam and North Bengal came to participate in the Annual Sessions of the Sanmilan. Every year a conference was held where the participants recited poems, read out stories, essays, and delivered lectures on socio-economic, culture, and development of Boro language and literature. This session helped to understand each other and unify the scattered Boro population of different parts of the country, who had been isolated from each other till then. The Sanmilan also undertook a project for building a 'Greater Bodo' race by uniting all Bodo groups of people like, Boros, Kocharies, Sonwals, Lalungs, Dimasas, and Garos into one stream. But it could not be accomplished due to lack of adequate manpower and resources.

In 1935, the conscious public of entire Kokrajhar region undertook a bold step to establish a high school at Kokrajhar town and with the hard labour and leadership of Bishnu Charan Basumatary, Madaram Brahma, and Rupnath Brahma the work has been accomplished. This institution added a new dimension in the earlier growth of education among the Boros. And the Kokrajhar College, the premier college in Boro area was established in 1959.

SCRIPT ISSUE:

The Boro language has no script of its own. It is not clear whether the Boros used independent scripts in the past. Bishnu Prasad Rabha, the famous artist and scholar of Assam, said that in the ancient time a kind of Deodhani
script was prevalent among the Kocharies (Boros and Dimasas). Rabha has gathered Deodhani alphabets from an informant of Dimapur area, which was noted for Kochari reign and remains representing the art and architecture. 6

But so far our information is concerned; the Roman script was used to write Bodo language, for the first in 1884 by Rev. Sidney Endles. This script was used introduced to teach the Boro children in the year 1904 in ‘Cachari Reader’, published by the Government of Assam. This script was also used for teaching Boro language in Goalpara district in 1931. 7

Later on some books were found, which were written in Bengali script too. Boroni Gudi Sibsa Aro Aroj, a collection of the Boro poems, was published in 1926 and it was written in pure Bengali script. But the actual growth and development of the Boro language and literature were carried out in Assamese script till the recent years. Most of the important literary works of the Boros are still available in Assamese script, and now many of them have been transcribed into Devanagri script.

After the formation of the Boro Sahitya Sabha on 16th November 1962 at Basugaon, the script question came to forefront, whether Roman or Assamese script should be used for writing Boro language or literature. But when the Boro medium was introduced in the lower primary schools of Kokrajhar sub-division on experimental basis in 1963. The Cachari Reader was replaced with Mokhojennai, a textbook of Assamese script, written by Rajendra Lal Narzary of Shillong.

The script question has remained a hot debate in every session of the Boro Sahitya Sabha since the introduction of Boro language as a medium of instruction in the primary schools. In the 8th session of the Boro Sahitya Sabha held on 4th, 5th and 6th February, 1966, at Kokrajhar town, an Expert
Committee formed to look into the script question under the strong pressure of the Boro Students Union. As this committee could not suggest any satisfactory solution a new Expert Committee was formed under the leadership of Saisingra Mushahary at Rongapara convention in 1969. The eleventh session of Boro Sahitya Sabha, held at Mahakalguri in West Bengal, endorsed the use of Roman script for writing Boro language and literature.

The Boro Script Sub-Committee, which was formed by the Boro Sahitya Sabha, met on 9th February 1989 at Guwahati and accepted the Roman script on following consideration.

(i) The Roman script is easy and quick to learn, whereas there are more than three hundred letters including compound letters and other variation in Assamese, Bengali or Devanagri scripts.

(ii) It is suitable for mechanical manipulation i.e. typing, printing, sending messages, etc.

(iii) The use of Roman script is commercially economic as it takes less time and labour and it costs less.

(iv) The Roman script is quite suitable for the use of science and technology.

(v) It will maintain a uniformity of spelling and pronunciation among all section of Bodo people living within the country and those who are living in other countries such as Nepal, South Bhutan, Bangladesh and Western Burma. And they will get opportunity to exchange their thoughts and ideas through this script for the development of their language and literature.

(vi) Further, there is a provision in the Indian Constitution under Article-29 that every language has a right to preserve its own script even
Article-343 has provided the use of the Roman numerals for Hindi language.  

But a section of the Boro people fosters the continuation of the Assamese script for the Boro language. They have forwarded the following arguments in favour of retaining the Assamese script.  

(i) The Boros have become accustomed to the Assamese script and any change of the script at this stage may slow down the development of Boro language and literature.  

(ii) The Assamese script is the script of the state language of Assam, whereas Roman script is the foreign one. So, the use of Roman script will create a communication gap in between the Assamese and the Boros.  

(iii) The Boros are an integral part of the greater Assamese society and they are inter-dependent in many ways. So, Assamese script should be retained as the script of the Boro language. The use of Roman script may shut the door of relationship with the next-door neighbour.  

Whereas the opinion of the majority of people as well as of the experts was in favour of the adoption of the Roman script as that would make the spelling of the Boro words easy and unequivocal.  

A deputation team of the Boro Sahitya Sabha met the Chief Minister of Assam on the 30th August 1971 for the implementation of Roman Script. But Mr. Mahendra Mahan Chaudhury, the then Chief Minister of Assam did not approve the Boro text book in Roman script by showing reasons that: 1. Roman script is a foreign script. 2. The English language is going to be banished from India very soon, hence the importance of Roman script will decrease. 3. The Boro Sahitya Sabha is politically biased. 4. It does not represent all the Bodos.
The failure of the talks held in between the Boro Sahitya Sabha and the Government of Assam on script issue was followed by several phases of movements. In the course of the Roman script movement fifteen people lost their lives as a result of the repressive measures taken by the government. Most probably it was the first instance in the history of mankind that fifteen people sacrificed their lives for the cause of a script.

The President of the Boro Sahitya Sabha Sri Ramdas Basumatary, on the advice of the Prime Minister’s office, submitted an alternative or dual memorandum to the Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi in New Delhi, one for the Roman Script other for the Devanagri Script as an alternative for Roman script, without consultation with the Executive Committee of the Boro Sahitya Sabha. The Prime Minister including departmental officials gladly conceded to the Devanagari script for the Boro language, subject to the approval of the Executive committee of the Boro Sahitya Sabha and the State government of Assam. The convention of Dhing of Nagaon district in 1975, accepted the Devanagri script for the Boro language after a hot exchange of opinions. Since then Devanagri script has become the script of the Boro language for teaching in the Boro medium schools and now it has reached up to the university level. But the script issue still remains controversial.

On the other hand, the Assamese script is still in vogue among the older intellectuals, outside the school premises. Most of the journals, newspaper, like Bodosa, Bodoland Radab, Aronai, etc. were published in Assamese script till the recent past, even today, though most of the books, papers and journals are printed in Devanagri script, a few writers bring out their work in Assamese script. One of the basic reasons of using Assamese script is that most of the established intellectuals, writers, have no command
The formation of the Boro Chatra Sanmilani in 1919, under the guidance of Kalicharan Brahma, brought renaissance in the Boro society. Being the first generation of the enlightened Boros and having been inspired by Kalicharan Brahma they gave a unique contribution to development of education and literature of the Boros. The Boro Chatra Sanmilani thought that, the lack of education and poorness among the Boros was responsible
for their backwardness on all fronts. So, they took a challenge by adopting several measures to encourage and spread education among the Boro masses, which had positive results in the subsequent years. Some important measures are as discussed below:

(i) To encourage the poor students in pursuing education, the Sanmilan introduce a fund for poor Boro students known as the Daridra Boro Chatra Bhandar. Late Joy Chandra Brahma was the Secretary of the trust. Public extended generous help in forming the fund for this trust. The students good in study, bearing good moral character were entitled to receive the scholarship from the trust. The amount of the scholarship was rupees three for the students of High School and rupees two for the students of Middle School. One who desires to enjoy the scholarship had to produce a good moral character certificate from the Head Master and low-income certificate from a prominent person of his locality. If a student became unsuccessful in any examination, he would be deprived of enjoying further scholarship.

(ii) In the fifth session of the Boro Chatra Sanmilani a remarkable decision was taken to award silver medals to outstanding students as a token of encouragement in pursuing education. These medals were donated by two prominent Boro personalities.

(iii) Another prominent person Sabha Ram Brahma donated two silver medals to the Chatra Sanmilan, which were awarded to two outstanding students by the Sanmilan in 1923. The first medal given as an award to the student who had secured the highest position in the Metric Examination 1923, among the Boro candidate of Goalpara district and the second medal was given to the student who secured
highest marks in the Primary scholarship (*Britti*) examination for Dhubri centre in 1923.

Along with these, Shyama Brahma donated the third medal, and it was given as award to the best girl student of Primary School in 1923 in order to encourage the women education among the Boros.

It had become a convention of the *Sanmilan* to organize huge gathering and distribute awards to talented students, every year for the cause of uplifting education in the Boro society. One such gathering was held at Kamalsing School in 1924, the 4\textsuperscript{th} January, under the chairmanship of Satish Ch. Basumatary and it distributed prizes to the students of that region. Those who secured first, second or third position in the class examinations were given prizes like books, portraits, towels, etc. and those who passed in the scholarship examinations were awarded medals.

On 10\textsuperscript{th} January 1925, another gathering of the *Sanmilan* was held at No. 190 Gilaguri Primary School and it provided all the required books, papers pen and other materials in their school curriculum to those students: (i) who secured position in the scholarship examination, (ii) who are skilled for the best handwriting, (iii) who had good moral character. ¹²

Apart from the contribution of the *Chatra Sanmilan* toward the development of education in the Boro Society, some generous and rich person came forward to extend financial help to talented Boro Students in achieving higher education. As for instance, Motilal Brahma offered financial assistance of rupees ten per month to a student of Dhubri High School. Motilal continued the assistance for his subsequent studies as well.

Thus the Boro *Chatra Sanmilan*, which was a product of the social revolution of the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century, brought about an upsurge of spirit in the thought and pursuit of education among the Boros. The Boro parents and
children got new inspiration and realized the importance of education in the new era and as a result of it, the number of schools goers increased remarkably and in the Boro areas more Primary Schools and Middle Schools came into existence in the subsequent years. This process revolutionized the whole society and they were able to reach the level of other advance communities living with them.

BORO LANGUAGE AND CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES:

The Boro language, for the first time put into writing in Roman script in the Year 1884 by Rev. Sidney Endle in his book An Outline of Kochari Grammar. There is no trace of written Boro language prior to Endle. Though the writings of the missionaries were not creative literature, yet they were the pioneer in this field and paved the way for developing Boro language and literature in the near future.

Sidney Endle was sent by the society for the propagation of the gospel, to Tezpur in Assam to assist Mr. Hesselmyar, the then in-charge of Kochari mission at that place. With this missionary work he traveled on foot in the Kochari villages and so much mingled with them that villagers use to call him Gamini Brai, the old man of the village, with respect. “It was Mr. Endle’s repeatedly expressed wish that he might end his life and be laid to rest among his Kocharies.” He was invited to take part in the village festivities and among the villagers listening to the tale of their simple joy and sorrows, jokes and talk to them. Mr. Endle established village schools in the Kochari areas served by trusted converts.  

In his book An Outline Grammar of Kochari or Mech language, 1884, he describes the principle of Bodo language and grammar as spoken in the
district of Darrang. His other book, *The Kocharies*, was published in 1911, after his death by J.D. Anderson, then D.C. of Darrang district. Besides giving a brief picture of the Boro society the book also comprises a collection of folklore tradition, like folk tales, folk songs and beliefs of the Boro Kocharies, in Boro language as well as in English. The folk tales are:

1. *Doima Doisani Khourang* (How rivers were made)
2. *Sase Olsia Gothoni Khourang* (The story of the lazy boy)
3. *Bamun Aro Bini Sakorni Khourang* (The Brahmin and his servant)

After Endle, J.D. Anderson also contributed to Boro literature by his writings *A Collection of Kochari Folk Tales and Rhymes*. He also added a collection of three folk tales in the appendix II of Sidney Endle’s *The Kocharies*. They are: (i) *Abrani Khourang* (The story of the simpleton), (ii) *Mukhra aro Sesani Khourang* (The tale of the monkey and the hare), (iii) *Sase Phalangi Gothoni Khourang* (The story of a merchant boy).

Anderson’s *A Collection of Kochari Folk Tales and Rhymes* contains ten folk tales; (i) *Gotho Maoriani Khourang* (The story of an orphan), (ii) *Moi Aro Daokha Dondani Khourang* (The story of the deer and the crow), (iii) *Brai Saseni Khourang* (The story of an old man), (iv) *Khusung aro Mokrani Khourang* (The story of the tortoise and the monkey), (v) *Khana Khujani Khourang* (The story of the blind and the cripple) (vi) *Sase Abra Braini Khourang* (The story of an old simpleton), (vii) *Bida Binanaoni Khourang* (The story of brothers and sisters), (viii) *Embu Bonglani Khourang* (The story of the frog), (ix) *Brai Burini Khourang* (The story of the old man old woman). 15
In 1889, *A Short Grammar of Mech or Boro Language* was written and published by L.O. Skrefsrud. A. Kristiansen brought out his book, *Grammar and Dictionary of Kochari Language*. In 1968 Rev. Maguram Mushahary edited and published the *Boro English Dictionary*. To this book was added a vocabulary of about 2700 Boro Words. Besides that the Christian missionaries worked as the initiator of undertaking research work on various aspects of the Boro language, culture and tradition in the subsequent periods.

**FOLK LITERATURE:**

The Boro folk literature, which have been passing from generation to generation first recorded in book by the Christian missionaries. The Boros have a rich folk literature such as, tales and tradition, songs, riddles, proverbs, sayings charms, seasonal and agricultural observances, cure of disease, superstitions, belief, etc. Ramdas Basumatary says, “Although at the frowning of time most of the Bodo folk items have been lost their traces and decayed in the womb of oblivion, yet hundreds of them are still alive with the cowherds, the ploughing youths, the paddy planting girls, the fishing man and women, and the old couples of Boro families.” 16 Endle’s *The Kocharies and Enderson’s A collection of Boro Folk Tales and Rhymes* have been recorded as the earliest written work on the Boro language and literature. Even if there were some written works of the Boros they might have obliterated long back. In 1924 a folk tale entitled, *Abrani Solo Batha* was written by Jogendra Nath Kochari in Bibar Magazine. In 1964, Rahini Kumar Brahma published *Serja Sipung* consisting of two long myth: (i) *Serja Ujinaini Solo* (story of the origin of violin), (ii) *Siphungni Solo* (story
of the flute). The first one is mysterious story of two sons of Kharia Brai (Siva) Dhansing and Mansing and about the creation of heaven, earth, Serja (traditional violin) and the philosophy of his creation. The Second myth also tells how in the Treta-Yug Brai Bathou Maharaja (Siva) came down from heaven to earth by golden ladder building a dyke in the sea he created Siphung as an instrument of entertainment. The myth also tells about the miracles of Brai Bathou and the old social customs and rituals of the Boros.

Another contributor to the Boro literature is Sukumar Basumatary, who published a book of fifteen folk tales in 1988. His other books of folk literature are, Thophlase Solo, Solo Batha Duli and Khonapherai Solo. He claims that his last book is a traditional legend of the Boros whose evidence is still in existence.

In this area remarkable contribution has been made by Mahini Mahan Brahmay by his book Boro Kochari Solo. He had collected folk tales and songs from different parts of Assam as a research scholar under the Folklore Department of Gauhati University and they were written down both in Assamese and Boro language. The tales are divided into four categories according to the nature of the story. They are tales of wonder, narrative tales, tales of fate and tales of fool and wise.

Herskovits says, “a substantial body of folk tales is more than the literary expression of a people. It is in a very real sense, their ethnography which if systematized by the student, give a penetrating picture of their way of life.”

The Boro folk literature is not merely a means of recreation and entertainment but it depicts and reflects the very roots, which are deeply embedded in culture. The moral tales and proverbs in Boro serve the functions of maintaining conformity to the accepted pattern of behaviours.
and value system in the society and very often it controls the society and find some ways of escaping from social repression and taboos. The Boro folk tales and folk songs are also found as the expression of love and joy or as the feeling of anger, anguish, and hatred against the injustice and exploitation prevailing in the society. Thus the Boro folk literature carries a great importance in the process of development of the Boro language, culture, and literature.

The folk tradition of the Boros has enriched, not only, the Boro literature but it has also made a remarkable contribution to the granary of the Assamese literature. There are some tales, proverbs or saying in Boro folk tradition, which are also found in Assamese or other languages with a little variation or vice-versa. The influence of the Assamese or Hindu culture in this folk literature cannot be ruled out. The long co-living of the Boros and the Hindu Aryans must have interblent with their process of thinking, evaluating morals, in making tales, myth, legend or ballads, etc., which might have given birth to some similar kinds of folk literature.

THE PERIODIZATION OF THE BORO LITERATURE:

Though Sidney Endle’s *An Outline Grammar of Kochari pr Mech language* and *The Kocharies* are the premier works of the Boro language yet the creative literature in Boro language came out much latter as a result of the great effort made by the *Boro Chatra Sammilan* to uplift the Boro language. The period witnessed so many new developments in the Boro Society, which inspired the refined Boro youths of new generation to undertake some constructive work. It was the time of sanskritization in the traditional Boro society, which brought them within the fold of mainstream
with a rising social position and status and with a new outlook. It was also a
time when the Boro dialect took the shape of standard language in the hands
of the energetic youths of new generation.

One of the great efforts made by the student organization was to
adhere to their project of writing creative literatures in Boro language with
this aim in view, a periodical magazine (three monthly), Bibar was brought
with its first issue in 1924 the Boro Chatra Sanmilan and Satish Ch.
Basumatary was the Chief editor of the periodical, Bibar. In the editorial
column of the first issue it was written that the Sanmilan organized a
common platform for the exposure of hidden faculties and for representing
their talents on the stage, like songs, poems, plays, essays and lectures. And
it, surprisingly, inspired the young to write poems, stories, essays, and
dramas, etc. in their mother tongue. As a result of this movement some
masterpieces of poems, stories and plays were added to the Boro literature.

The development of Boro language and literature has been divided
into four distinct periods.

1. The missionary period began from 1884 the publication of Endle’s book
   An Outline Grammar of Kochari or Mech Language, up to 1919 the
   formation of Boro Chatra Sanmilan.

2. The Bibar Muga or Bibar period commenced in 1920, right from the
   preparation for the publication of the periodical, Bibar in 1924 and
   continued up to the publication of another periodical, known as
   Alongbar.

3. The Alongbar Muga or Alongbar period starts in 1938 with the
   publication of the periodical Alongbar and lasted up to 1951.

4. The period, after the formation of the Boro Sahitya Sabha, 1952 and
   onwards is regarded as the modern period of the Boro literature.
Though there is a slight difference among the litterateurs in fixing the dates of these periods, basically they have no contradiction regarding the periodization of the history of Boro literature. Brajendra Kr. Brahma puts very distinct dates for these periods which, are as follows- from 1884 to 1918 as missionary period, from 1919 to 1937 as Bibar Period, from 1938 to 1951 as Alongbar period, and from 1952 onwards is considered to be the moderns age of the Boro literature. 18

On the growth and development of Boro literature M.R. Lahary remarks, “Unlike the world’s great literatures that sprang up into existence out of ancient scripture, epics, sagas, sayings, Boro literature grew up out of its sheer force of necessity and spontaneity unaided by any previous ancient lore on literary citadel.”19 The early Boro writers were urged by the socio-political, cultural, and historical necessity and inspired by the thoughts and ideas of Kalicharan Brahma and they put their creative talents in to writings.

THE BIBAR PERIOD WITH SANSKRITIC IDEAS:

In the Bibar age, Boro literature originated through journals, periodicals, souvenirs, seminars, which came out from time to time in simple and clear Boro language, with a spirit of love for their society and emotions. Most of the early writers who contributed piously to the Boro literature were students who were acquainted with western thought, rise of nationalism and consciousness of new horizon. This group of writers was guided by the philosophy of Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma whose socio-religious movement aimed at cleansing all injustice and discrimination inflicted on them. So, they envisioned to have a spiritual and enlightened Boro society by wakening the Boro people through their writings, many of their writings had been influence by the Vedic philosophy.
The writers of that period dealt with a few branches of literature—poems, songs, essays, stories, drama, etc. The critical literature did not take independent form in that period and the biography was yet to appear in the Boro literature. But, the Boro writers were familiar with these branches of literature in other languages.

Rupnath Brahma and Madaram Brahma ushered in the new era for Boro literature with the publication of a book of Boro poems and songs, in 1923, entitled *Khanthai Methai*. The *Khanthai Methai* was, jointly, edited by Rupnath Brahma and the Book consisted of six songs and eight poems. The contributors of those poems and songs were Rupnath Brahma, Madaram Brahma, Satish Chandra Basumatary and Surendra Nath Brahma. The work was dedicated to Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma who was very much pleased with their effort and work.

The main theme of these songs and poems were metaphysical philosophy inspiration of learning and zeal for reviving the society in a new situation and they were mostly religious in character. All the writers were educated and they borrowed the style technique and metres from Assamese and Bengali literatures and applied them to their own theme and ideas.

CONTRIBUTORS OF BORO LITERATURE IN BIBAR AGE:

**Rupnath Brahma** was born in 1992 at Auabari village of Kokrajhar. He passed the matriculation examination in 1920 from Dhubri and took his graduation form cotton college in 1925. He also passed Law from Calcutta in 1927. As a student he was active worker of the *Boro Chatra Sanmilan* and helped Gurudev in every activity. He was the first among the Boros to use mysticism in Boro poems. His mystic poems are *Iswarni Nam Godoi* (Sweet...
name of God), *Monhasouyoi* (Beyond reach), *Phishani Dahayao Gabnai* (Crying in the sorrow of Child). All these poems were written in classical style and the main concern was religious thought and mysticism.

**Padmashri Madaram Brahma** was born in Gunikhata village of Dhubri District of Dhubri district in 1903. In 1923 he passed matriculation examination and went to Cotton College. He became the head master of Harisingha High School in 1932 and was appointed as the officer in the Block Development Board. In 1985 he received literary pension from the government of Assam and in 1988 he was awarded Padmashri by the Government of India for his contribution towards society and Boro literature. He died on 6th September 1990.

Boroni Gudi Sibsa Aro Aroj, a collection of his poems is the greatest creation of Madaram Brahma. The poems are mystic in character. His important poetical works are- *Sor Nong, Ayo Bibar, Jakhang De Borofor, Bongfangao Gakhono Dalai Nangou*, which were published in the Khantai Methai. Moderam Brahmas poems are rhythmic and philosophical. Madaram Brahma was also a dramatist and his outstanding works are *Raimali* and *Dimapur Nogor Baikhonda*.

**Satish Chandra Basumatary** was born in 1901 at Balukmari Village of Kokrajhar district. He passed his matriculation from Dhubri High School in 1919 and joined in Cotton College. But he left the college soon and took part in the freedom movement of Gandhiji against the British power. He became the first editor of *Bibar* magazine. Though basically he was a dramatist he also wrote poems- *Bima Fisa, Habab Fongai Godai, Ja Habab*, etc. His
other works like short stories and essays were written in his penname \textit{Rangdashi Phagli}. As his writings desired to reach the common Boro people he adopted a simple mode of expression yet his idea was strong. Responding to the call of Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma, he led the \textit{Boro Chatra Sanmilan} as a General Secretary of the organization and in the first session of the \textit{Sanmilan} a drama written by him entitled \textit{Nala Buha} was performed on the stage. His other dramatic works are \textit{Rani Laimuthi, Naiphijayoi, Bikhani Or} and \textit{Dorson Joholao}, etc. And through his creative works he envisaged for the reclamation of Boro society by dramatic entertainment. Though these dramas were presented on the stage, yet they remained unpublished. \textsuperscript{22}

Darendra Basumatary was born in 1902 Godamari Bhaoraguri village and served as a teacher of Primary school in the village. He got three month training about theatrical performance and direction, and on the model of Bengali \textit{Jatra}, which contains five gems of literature, he wrote drama in Boro like \textit{Sukharu Dukharu, Nilambar Raja}, etc. He was basically a lyricist and numerous songs and poems. Three songs of Darendra Basumatary became very famous and popular among the Boros, just like National Anthem. His outstanding songs are, \textit{Joholao Jaliya Gothofor Jong} (we are the brave children of brave ancestor), \textit{Ma Ise Mojang Dinoini Horalai} (what a beautiful night), \textit{Jagai Jennai} (beginning). \textsuperscript{23} Most of his songs are patriotic with some elements of romanticism and they appeared in an appropriate time with a spirit of nationalism.

The other contributors to the literature of Bivar age were Kailash Ch. Brahma, Jaladhar Brahma, Bishnu Charan Basumatary, Jogendra Kochary, Parasu Ram Brahma, and Mani Ram Islary. Most of their poetic creations
were characterized by the beauty of nature, joy and festivals and they uphold the spirit of building a great Boro nationality.

Though language and subjects were not sophisticated, their fineness involves both spoken dialects and simple literary language. The main subjects of their literary works were about the injustice in society, social evolution and awareness, metaphysics and mysticism, etc. The vital thought and ideal, which influence the poetic creation of that time, were the inspiration of new Brahma religion and reformation movement of Kalicharan Brahma. The vision of almighty god and awakening their latent faculty gave birth to a number of poems and other works. It was the beginning of the formation and the development of the Boro literature, in which the spiritual vision of the new refined religion was friend, philosopher and guide for the new generation of that time.

In those days it was not easy to publish a book as because printing press was not easily available and it caused huge expenditure. In 1932 a magazine Bodosa Bithorai was edited and brought out by Pramad Ch. Brahma, which were written by hand. In 1937, Pramad Ch. Brahma published a bilingual magazine Sansri Aro Mushri in Assamese and Boro language with a great effort. But this magazine was also published one issue only. Usually, the Bibar magazine used to appear thrice in a year but it is hard to say how many issues were published because a few issues have been discovered so far. The Bibar contained the articles of three languages. They are Assamese, Boro and Bengali but only the articles of the Boro language got place in the Boro literature. But very soon this magazine ceased to appear due to lack of regular supply of articles. One of the reasons for irregular supply was that most of the early writers were involved in the
socio-religious movement of Kalicharan Brahma and had a little time for literary activities. Hence the growth of literature in the Bibar age progressed slowly. Yet those new literary works extended a great help to the socio-cultural transition of the Boros and the process of *sanskritization*.

**BORO LITERATURE IN ALONGBAR PERIOD AND BORO SOCIETY:**

In 1938, first issue of a Boro magazine, the *Alongbar*, was published under the joint editorship of Pramad Ch. Brahma and Khagendra Nath Brahma. The magazine was printed at Calcutta. The whole period from 1938 to 1951 is marked as the *Alongbar* period of Boro literature after the name of the periodical.

In the *Alongbar* age, the Boro literature took an independent form and the litterateurs of that generation were the real architects of the Boro literature. By that time the reformation movement of the Boros was about to be accomplished and the Boro society started enjoying the fruits of the movement in that age. There was a tremendous change and progress in the Boro society as compared with the pre-movement Boro society. The number of school and college goers had been increasing considerably and a few Boro achieved higher education in those years. They earned good knowledge in Indian literature but they were also acquainted with the new developments in the western literatures. They were mainly responsible for introducing new trends of writing in Boro literature, which were found in the literature of other languages. The most remarkable change of Boro literature in *Alongbar* age was a shift from classicalism to Romanticism.

It is not known exactly how many issues of *Alongbar* has been published and who were the editors of those issues as there was no system of
preserving those books. Only some issues have been recovered from some individuals till today. Efforts have been made to recover the rest of the issues, if there is any more. In 1940, Pramad Ch. Brahma edited and published a book known as *Hatharkhi Hala*, which contained the poems and writings of high standard. The contributors of that book were Iswan Mushahary, Ananda Mushahary, Kali Kr. Lahary, Munindra Sumpramari. This book has a great contribution to the Boro literature.

In 1940 two note worthy books on poetry *Sonani Mala* and *Phame* of Iswan Mushary were published posthumously and that enriched the Boro literature more than any other else. Iswan Mushary also wrote the first short story in Boro entitled as *Abari*.\(^{26}\)

In 1942, another bilingual magazine, the *Nayak* was published by the Joint effort and editorship of Yogen Hazarika and Mahini Mahan Brahma.

But in 1942, when Gandhiji launched Quit India Movement against the British colony in India, the Boro intellectuals were convinced by the slogan ‘ek jati ek pran mahan Bharat mata’ (one nation one soul, the great mother-India). So during that time, most of the Boro Writers wrote books or articles in Assamese language. As for instance, Rupnath Brahma wrote *Boro Jatir Sankshipta Parichay*, 1946; Biren Das Boro wrote *Kachari Jatir ItiBritta*, 1946; Aniram Basumatary wrote *Koch Kacharies Parichay* and *Kacharir Matribhasa*, 1951.\(^{27}\) Birendra Narayan Bismith wrote *Kochari Jatir Sankshipta Parichay* and Dhuparam Basumatari *Boro Jatir Kinsit Abhas*, etc. During that period the growth of Boro literature slowed down because most of the enlightened Boros had participated in the freedom movement. Their strong feeling, to establish the Boro nationality as a part of the great nation, was reflected in their writings. It was by that time the Boro society came much closer to the main stream Assamese society. When the
Boro literary club had its birth in 1952, the Boro literature took a new turn of development.

ARCHITECTS OF BORO LITERATURE IN ALONGBAR AGE:

The outstanding and sophisticated authors of the Alongbar age were Promod Chandra Brahma, Iswan Mushahari, Ananda Mushahari, and other prominent contributors were Kali Kumar Lahary, Maniram Sumpramary, Mahini Mahan Brahma, Jagat Basumatary, Brajen Islary and many others. **Pramad Chandra Brahma** was born in Godamari village in 1916, passed B.A. from Cotton College in 1937 and he passed M.A. in 1941 from Calcutta. In the same year he was qualified for Assam Civil Service Class II. Mr. Brahma served the state government as Sub Deputy Collector throughout his service life till his retirement in 1971, without promotion due to his indifference to political leaders. Promod Chandra Brahma devoted his whole life for the cause of Boro language and literature in spite of his heavy official duty as a government officer. Since his student days he had been in association with literary works till his death. He edited and brought out literary magazines like *Bodosa Bithorai* 1932, *Sanshri Mushri* 1937 and *Alongbar* from 1938 and *Hathorkhi Hala* in 1940. He was the leading poet as well as prose writer of that age. He gave a new trend to prose writing in Boro language and his poetic skill is evident from his works, which are characterized by mystic and romantic portrait of nature and some are the criticism of life. Manaranjan Lahary regards him as the greatest poet of his time. 28
Iswan Mushahary was born in Turibari village. After completing matriculation he went to Alahabad for studying at Agriculture College. But while he was in Agriculture College died out of Typhoid fever. Iswan’s poetic works during his short span of life have been the unique creation in the literature of Boro language. He brought the romantic movement of Boro poems and critics compare him with John Keats. In the words of M.R. Lahary “Highly romantic in flavour and appeal, expressing at the same time a sense of melancholy, Iswan Mushahary’s poetry stands out as per excellence even today being comparable only with John Keats poetry (who also died very young)”.

His poetical creations were brought out in two books, Phame and Sonani Mala after his death and they were the valuable pieces of work in the development of the Boro literature. His poems Monabili, Badari, Hajo, Goso Moblit, are comparable with any work in Indian language. He is also a pioneer of short story in Boro literature. There is originality in the technique of writing and character for portrayal Iswan evinces his skill of short story. Abari, the first short story in Boro, published in the first issue of Hatharkhi Hala tells a particular event of Abari’s life and suddenly concludes the story without much intricate plot. Though Mushahjary died very young in 1940, in the peak of his poetical creation his works have made him immortal as Shelley or Keats.

Ananda Mushahary was born in 1912, at Takimari village. He was regarded as one of the great prose writers of Alongbar age, though he quite a few in number. His three prose works, Boroni Rao, Aglani Bathra and Noni Maidang were the master pieces of that time where the handles the topic very skillfully and he critically discusses about the condition of the Boro language, literature and the attitude of the Boro people of those days. In his
work Noni Maidang he critically analyses and points out some demerits in the nature of the women. He was also a great critic of literature.

**Kali Kumar Lahary** was born in Kajigaon village in 1916 and was a follower of Kalicharan Brahma. He played a great role in preaching Brahma religion and produced his well-known work *Kriya Darpan* on that religion. He was a dramatist, a lyrist, and a poet. But none of his drama has been published even today except they were performed in the stages. His important books on poetry are *Khanthai Bihung, Khanthai Bijab, Dotto Khanthaini Lo*, *Logo Khanthaini Bihung, Agju*. He wrote poems in classical style with romantic or satirical tone. As a poet he can be placed just after Pramad Chandra Brahma and Iswan Mushahary, but he is noted for his own style of writing and technique.  

**Jagat Basumatary** was a poet of nature and he produced poems on seasonal festivals and various objects of nature.

**Brajen Islary** in his poems, expressed the beauty of his beloved, aspiration and frustration of youth with beautiful words.  

One of the most distinguished contributors of the *Alongbar* period was Mahini Mahan Brahma, who was also a scholar of the Boro folk tradition. He edited and brought out the *Nayak Magazine* in 1941-42. As a research scholar of the department of Tribal Culture and Folklore he collected the folk songs and folk tales of Boros, which was published by the Gauhati University. He also wrote several essays and stories in Boro language representing Boro culture and society. Besides him other contributors of the literature in the *Alongbar* age were Maniram Sumpramari, Kitish Brahma, Khagendra Nath Brahma, etc.
But even today many works are found in the form of manuscript, which never reach press to get a place in Boro literature. Some scholars of the present age like Brajendra Kumar Brahma, Dr Mangalsing Hajowary have been making hectic effort to recover all those unpublished works of the by gone years and to bring them to light. Even some published works of earlier time are disappearing due to lack provision of systematic preservation. Some individuals have preserved them but one drawback is that an interested person can preserve only his lifetime.

IMPACT ON SOCIETY:

The literary creation of that period fulfilled the various needs of the Boro society by creating various cultural contents. The new enlightened group of the Boros laid a new foundation of elite society and they could widen and develop the Boro culture by cultural contact and exchange with other developed communities of India which lessen the cultural, social and economic distance between them and fellow countrymen. It made the common people conscious about the overall socio-economic and political situation of the state and it gave rise to national feeling. Many new people with their creative talents and higher education established a new honourable position in the society. Being the first generation of educated section they were honoured by the common people more than any other else and it enabled them to spread their ideas to common people. And as a consequence an intellectual middle class came into being in Boro community, who always looked towards advance Hindu communities as a model, for all round development. Thus the Boro society began to take a new turn of development in the days to come.
The change in the society and the literary creation of this period ultimately led to the formation of the *Boro Sahitya Sabha* in 1952, for the development of the Boro language and literature, which ultimately led the Boros to go in search of their identity in the national level.

**BORO LITERATURE FOR THE GROWTH OF INDIAN NATIONALITY:**

The renaissance and reformation period culminated thought of national integrity among the Boro writers and enlightened people and their literary contribution gave rise to national feeling among the common Boro people. The Ballad on *Bashiram Joholao* (the warrior Bashiram) and *Daoharam Joholao* (the warrior Daoharam) are the valuable writing on nationalism, which narrates the battles and struggle against the alien British power. Mangalsing Hajowary’s play entitled *Jaolia Dewan* and *Baneswar* Basumatary’s anecdote on the life of *Jaolia Dewan*, who fought and died in the hand of British are valuable contribution to the growth of Indian nationality. In the middle part of the 20th century Satish Chandra Basumatary through their dramatic movement contributed the growth of national feelings among the Boros, among which the plays like *Rani Laimuthi* of the former and *Nilambar, Chitrangada* and *Sonani Maibong* of the latter can be definitely claim the spirit of nationalism. The plays like *Bacaspoti Mishra, Raj puja* by late Munindra Islary and *Dimapur Nogor Bainai* of Padmashri Madaram Brahma also carry the national spirit. The poem composed by Sri Rupnath Brahma on *Somdon* who assassinated Major Boid at Gangjong is a genuine spirit of nationalism. The play *Somdon* by Mangalsing Hajowary also reveals the same spirit. The biographies like *Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma*
written by junior Kalicharan Brahma, *Kalicharan Brahma Jiu Khourang* by Dr. Kameswar Brahma and *Phorlang Babaji* by Jogendra Kr. Brahma have highlighted aspiration of national unity.  

Besides these, Boroni Godi Sibsa Aro Aroj by Padmashri Madasram Brahma, *Gibi Bitha* by Bihuram Boro and *Sando Baodia* by Surath Narzary may be grouped as the works expressing national spirit.

**THE MODERN PERIOD OF BORO LITERATURE:**

The year 1952 is marked not only as the beginning of modern period of Boro language and literature but also society as a whole. After the formation *Boro Sahitya Sabha* the Boro literature took new direction with new thoughts and inspiration for giving a full shape to the Boro literature. The new generation Boro writers are destined to carry the Boro language and literature up to the level of national literature. The very foundation of Boro literature has already been laid in the preceding decades. During this period almost all branches of literature made their appearance in volumes and quantity like, prose, poetry, novel, plays, biographies, criticism, history and journals, etc.

**Poems:** In 1952, Kali Kumar Lahary edited and published a book of lyrical verse, entitled to *Khanthai Bihung*. Though Lahary started his literary career in Alongbar age he has also made a good contribution to the modern age of Boro literature. In 1958, Rahendra Narzary produced a book of poetry and story known as *Khanthai Aro Solo*. In the same year Samar Brahma Choudhury publish his book on poems *Radab*. He also brought out a magazine *Boirathi* through which he produced elegant poems like *Bardoisikhla, Sijou Geremsa, Daosri Goba Nagerdong Ang, Monabili*. In
these poems Samar Brahma Chaudhury portrays his romantic thought about nature and life.

The first poetic creation of Bineswar Basumatary entitled as Dimapur was brought out in 1958. His other works on poems and short story are Jagniban 1977 and Onnai 1985 respectively. Other outstanding and brilliant poet of that period were Kamal Kr. Brahma, Manaranjan Lahary, Charan Narzary, Ramdas Boro, Jagadish Brahma, Dharanidhar Wary, Ranjit Kr. Basumatary, Tarun Narzary, Rupnath Basumatary, Daniram Basumatary, Surath Narzary, Shachindra Basumatary, Harihar Brahma, Iswar Brahma, Kamakhya Narzary and others. The poetry books like Ringkhang by Lokendra Wary and Aroj Methai by Maheswar Narzary in 1970, Seuthi by Harihar Brahma and Orgeng by Bisnujyoti Kochary have enriched the granary of Boro literature.

From 1975, Brajendra Kr. Brahma brought a new trend in Boro poetry by publishing a book Okhrang Gongse Nangou, where he critically depicts the mundane affairs and his desire for a new horizon, which will endow freedom and justice to the mankind. He beautifully expressed his thoughts with the help of symbols and his other symbolic poems are Gojam Lama, Gubun Isor, Embu Dingrai Bindu,

After 1975, numerous books of Boro poetry have made their appearance in the Boro literature. Some more outstanding works are Kanakeswars Narzary’s translation work from the Rubiat of Amar Khayyam to Boro language, a masterpiece of Jagadish Brahma’s Daimani Fisa Dimasa based on realism and imagination in1980 and Guneswar Mushahary’s symbolic poems Ha Fisa Houa etc. Applying Robert Browning’s technique of dramatic monologue, Surath Narzary created some
excellent pieces of poems like *khoidang*, *Gangse Laijam*, *Gangse Laijam Vijoy Baglarino*.

Apart from that many new talented poets have been contributing towards the Boro literature.

**Short Story**: The short story originated right from the publication of the *Metzengerstein* of Edgar Allan Poe of America in January 1982. Mabie says, "...the short story is a vital and not an artificial from the literature and fills itself instinctively certain impulses and interest of man."

Though writing short story in Boro appears to be very few in the earlier periods, after 1952 they have been produced abundantly. The Boro short story reflects the individuals and social characters of the Boros, their aspiration, thought, and urge of life. From 1953 to 1970 a great number of short stories appeared through magazines, journals, books, newspapers, etc. Some of the outstanding short stories are Lila Brahma’s *Gosoni Daha* and *Buhul Janai*, Gohin Basumatary’s *Goronthini Unao*, 1956; Monoranjan Lahary’s *Bindi*, 1959; Narendra Nath Basumatary’s *Hatassuriya Kapal*, Iswar Chandra Mushahary’s *Benotho*, Jagadish Brahma’s *Laji Goiyi*, in 1964; Daniram Basumatary’s *Doithun*, Surath Narzary’s *Ang Sorkhou Goso Thonaimon*, Binoy Kr. Brahma’s *Modoini Har*, Baneswar Basunatary’s *Monogra*, Lakheswar Brahmas *Bis*, and in 1970’s Basani Narzari’s *Haoria Kaphal* and Pramila Rani Brahma’s *Laji Goiyi*.

In 1972, Nilkamal Brahma published a book of short stories entitled *Hagra Guduni Moi*, which is an excellent creation of the author to place him on the top as a short story writer. Nilkamal Brahma has his own unique style and technique of expression or narrating story.
After 1972, there has been a rising interest of writing short stories among the Boro writers and they produced innumerable works both important and less important. But, of all, the worth mentioning is *Srimoti Durllai* the first short story book of Hari Bhusan Brahma, brought a new art in writing Boro short stories. He is able to express the life and thought of grass-root people in their own language and style. His other book of short stories is *Rondao Phagla*.

**Novels:** The birth of novel in Boro literature was much later than other branches of literature. Chittaranjan Mushahary was the pioneer of writing of novels in Boro language and his first novel *Jujaini Or* was publish in 1962, which was followed by *Bikha Gayo Khuga Geoya*. From 1962 to 1994 he produced as many as twenty-six novels within a short span of time.

In 1972, Ram Chandra Basumatary brought his novel, *Khapalni Boson*. In 1976, Monoranjan Lahary’s *Kharlung* and Kamakhya Charan Narzary’s *Hangma* were brought out. After that several new novelists came forward with their contribution to the development of Boro literature.


Some authors wrote novels with penname, such as *Bisni Loitho* by Jaraphagla, *Anaru Tho Sigang* by Hangma, etc. Till today more than hundred Boro novels have come out, among which some are of outstanding qualities.
**Drama**: Performing drama on open stage was the oldest form of literature in Boro language. The classical Boro dramas were written by *Gaon Osthad* (the professional dramatist) who composed it with a view to instruct and train up *Jatra Party* (group of performers and in returned he receives a good amount of money. The *Osthad* was the sole writer, director, musician, lyricist of the entire drama and it was a lucrative profession in those days. But the classical drama had never been published till the recent years except some steps were taken by the scholars to recover them and bring out as classical literature. Though the number of published dramas was very few till 1960, it has, gradually, been increasing in the following decades.


From 1950 to 1960, the demand of Boro *Jatra Gaon* (full drama) increased in the Boro society and they were performed whole night on many occasion like, festivals, marriage, feast or ceremonies, etc. and the themes of the dramas were based on imagination or historical facts.
From 1960, instead of open-air stage Boro dramas were written to perform in the theatre, which has three acts. Manaranjan Lahary wrote *Hangma Hangsa*, 1959, *Anari*, *Maoriasron*, *Rangkhini*, *Barhungkhani Unao*, Aniram Basumatary wrote social and historical plays like *Ban Joholao* 1958, *Raja Govinda* 1960, *Gambari Sikha* and *Barhungkha*.

The most eminent and outstanding dramatist in the modern Boro literature is Kamal Kr. Brahma. He has created several excellent dramas taking themes from history or society. In 1963, He produced *Godan Foisali*, a social drama, which was followed by *Raja Iragdao* in 1978, a historical play about the last Kochari King Govinda Chandra. His other remarkable creation is *Mimangni Simang*. In 1984, Mongalsing Hajowary brought out *Somdon* a historical play on a Bodo hero who fought against the British army and sacrifice his life for the cause of the country.

**Other Branches of literature**: There are also published books on biography, prose, criticism, history of literature written by many eminent Boro writers, some of which are included in the academic curriculum of Gauhati University. After the Boro language and literature has been introduced as a department of Gauhati University in the year 1996, the young generation of writers have come up with new vision and ideas which are reflected in their writings of different branches of literature.

**BORO LITERARY CLUB**:

On 28th September 1950, the Boro literary club was formed at Dhubri with a view to include Boro language in the academic curriculum of schools of Goalpara district and other Boro areas. By 1950-51, the number of Boros
in the government jobs had been increasing in Dhubri town. Many leading Boro figures resided in the town. The former president of Boro Sahitya Sabha, Gauri Kanta Brahma and other prominent men like Kamini Kr. Brahma were serving in the government offices at Dhubri. Padmashri Madaram Brahma, then Development Officer, Barada Kanta Basumatary, the Superintendent of Excise, then Sub-Inspector of Schools, Bandhuram Kochari and Birendra Narayan Brahma Patgiri then Vice-Chairman of Dhubri Local Board were the residents of Dhubri and with their great efforts the Boro literally club came into existence.

The following were the executive members of the club:
2. Vice-Chairman: Gauri Kanta Brahma.
3. General Secretary: Rajendra Nath Brahma.
4. Treasurer: Barada Kanta Basumatary.
5. Members: Birendra Narayan Brahma Patgiri
   : Santi Ranjan Brahma.
   : Jogendra Kr. Basumatary
6. Advisor: Dr. Ajoy Kr. Chakrabartee.

The aims of the Boro Literary Club were:
i. to develop the Boro language and literature,
ii. to collect and publish both old and new writings like folk tales, songs, poems, stories and historical data etc. in the form of literature,
iii. to install libraries or reading centers in several places,
iv. to try its best to introduce Boro language in primary and middle school for Boro children,
v. to publish important unpublished works on Boro language,
vi. to assist the poor Boro students in their study,
VII. to do creative work to impart education to the children of villages, and this organization would remain outside the jurisdiction of politics.

As a first step, the Literary Club undertook to publish monthly periodicals *Dimasa*, under the editorship of Jogendra Kr. Basumatary and produced various literary works of different people.

But after working for one year the members of the organization realized that only the workers of Dhubri town were not enough to fulfill their mission, rather they would need active cooperation of the Boros of all parts of the country. So, a greater organization had to be formed comprising the Boros of the entire country. For that purpose, a meeting was held at Kokrajhar town on 26th September 1952 under the chairmanship of Bandhuram Kochari, and the enlightened Boros from different parts of Assam attended the meeting. The meeting resolved to organize a huge gathering inviting the Boros of different states including the Bodos of Tripura, West Bengal, Nepal, and other parts of Assam.

BORONI ANCHAI AFAT:

In the same year Boro students under the leadership of Samar Brahma Choudhury and Prasenjit Brahma founded the *Boroni Anchai Afat* to work for the development of Boro culture, language, and literature. They spread the recorded song of Nileswar Brahma 'Hanoi Sanjaha Sorang Sana Foigou' (see, the sun is rising in the east) among the Boros and brought a tide of cultural upsurge and love for their own language. They also took important decision in the meeting of 26th September 1952, at Kokrajhar.

The meeting of 26th September formed a committee to hold a conference and for that the venue of the conference was selected at
Basugaon, which was to be held on 15\textsuperscript{th} and 16\textsuperscript{th} November 1952. The office-bearers of that committee were Jagendra Kr. Basumatary, Chairman; Gauri Kanta Brahma, Chief Convenor; Prasenjit Brahma, representative of Anchai Afat; Sailendra Nath Brahma, representative from Kajigaon. On the first October, the reception committee was formed at Basugaon to hold the conference. The portfolio holder of the reception committee were Mahendra Narayan Brahma Basumatary, President; Shyama Charan Basumatary, General Secretary; Sunam Goyari, Assistant Secretary and Jagendra Kr. Basumatary was selected as Chief Convenor and Correspondent of the committee. The reception committee worked hard to give birth to Boro Sahitya Sabha on 16\textsuperscript{th} November 1952.

BIRTH OF BORO SAHITYA SABHA:

The conference was attended by four hundred delegates, six hundred and forty delegates, two hundred and fifty artists, two hundred workers and more than thousand observers from entire Assam, Tripura, Bengal and Nepal. The delegate session was presided over by Satish Chandra Basumatary and the open session was presided over by Dharani Dhar Basumatary, the then Member of Legislative Assembly of Assam and Rupnath Brahma, then Minister of Assam was also present throughout the delegate session. The most significant out come of that session was the formation of Boro Sahitya Sabha on 16\textsuperscript{th} November 1952, and it accepted Assamese script as the medium of writing for Boro language. Joybhadra
Hajjer and Jagendra Kr. Basumatary were elected as President and Convenor respectively, pending the portfolios of Secretary and Assistant Secretary to be elected in the next session. In 1953, the 12th and 13th January, the first convention of the Sabha was held at Haflong town of North Cachar Hills, where Boros and Dimasas got opportunity to know each other for the first time. The convention elected Sonaram Thousend as General Secretary and Jogendra Kr. Basumatary as Joint Secretary of *Boro Sahitya Sabha*. 39

ROLE OF BORO SAHITYA SABHA:

On 26th February 1953, a session of Assam Pradesh congress committee was held at Dhubri. A delegation team of *Boro Sahitya Sabha*, comprising Jagendra Kr. Basumatary, Birendra Narayan Brahma Patgiri, and Satish Chandra Basumatary met Bishnu Ram Medhi, the then Chief Minister of Assam and submitted a memorandum demanding the introduction of Boro language as a medium of instruction in the primary schools of Boro medium schools of Boro areas. The same memorandum was also given to Bimala Prasad Chaliha, the then President of Assam Pradesh Congress Committee. In 1954, the second convention of *Boro Sahitya Sabha* was held at Mahakalguri (West Bengal), which also strongly demanded the introduction of Boro medium in Primary schools.

In 1956, Assam government wanted to introduce a book of Boro language in the primary schools of Parbat-Jawar area of Dhubri district. But there were many errors in that book and the proposed area was too small, so, the *Shabha* did not cooperate with the government to implement it. In 1955, at Tangla convention the main attraction and spokesman was Bishnu Prasad Rava, the renowned artist and scholar of Assam, who was a political
prisoner during the time of Basugaon conference. His profound knowledge on the subjects like history, literature, linguistic and music attracted everybody in the Tangla convention.

From 1955 to 1952, *Boro Sahitya Sabha* remained inactive. In those years, not a single conference was held except the observance of 16th November, the birthday of *Boro Sahitya Sabha*. In 1960, when movement for introduction of Assamese as official language of Assam was going on, the people of hill areas wanted English to be sole official language, but a meeting of *Boro Sahitya Sabha* at Kokrajhar expressed its opinion that to maintain uniformity with other parts of India Hindi should be the official language of Assam. During the time of Chinese aggression in 1962, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was sympathetic to the people of Assam and said, “*My heart goes to the people of Assam.*” 40 The Boros of Assam also reacted and cried for sympathy in a procession carried out by around twenty-five thousand Boro men and women at Kokrajhar town on 16th November 1962. The Chief Minister, Bimala Prasad Chaliha, immediately, appointed an enquiry committee under the leadership of Rupnath Brahma, the then Minister of Assam, to enquire about the feasibility of implementing Boro medium in Primary schools. The report of the inquiry committee was in favour of *Boro Sahitya Sabha*.

On 18th may 1963, the Chief Minister of Assam Bimala Prasad Chaliha along with Education Minister Deva Kanta Barua and other ministers and M.L.A.s came to Kokrajhar to inaugurate the Boro medium in Primary Schools, in a function held at Government Higher Secondary School. The function was presided over by Prafulla Goswami, the then President of Assam Pradesh Congress Committee.
The sixth session of *Boro Sahitya Sabha* was held at Malaguri village four kilometer north of Gossaigaon town on 22nd and 23rd of 1964. The student organization took part, for the first time, in the session of *Sahitya Sabha* and raised their voice for the implementation of Roman script as a medium of writing in Boro medium schools.

In 1967, the first batch of students of Boro medium passed primary level but they were refused to get admission in the secondary schools, as they did not know Assamese language. The Kokrajhar district *Boro Sahitya Sabha* had to launch a movement on demand of the implementation of Boro medium in the secondary level of schools, from 28th February to 11th March 1968. On 12th September, the Chief Minister Bimala Prasad Chaliha recognized their demand by his speech in the Legislative Assembly of Assam. The Central *Boro Sahitya Sabha* did not take part in that movement. On the other hand Rupnath Brahma expired on 23rd January 1968, and before his death he was kept outside the Assam politics and Ranen Basumatary occupied his place. But when talk was held between Boro leaders and state government at Shillong on 31st March for the introduction of Boro medium in secondary level, the then Education Minister Joi Bhadra Hagjer, who was also Chairman of *Boro Sahitya Sabha* from 1952 to 1965, refused to implement it and walked out from the talk. Again on the 1st April, a talk was held between *Sabha* and Education Minister for State, Syed Ahmed Ali, where he conceded their demands for implementing Boro Medium in the secondary level.

The Boro medium was formally introduced in Kokrajhar Higher Secondary School, M.E. section, on 28th September 1968. The Boro medium was upgraded to High School in 1972 but it was upgraded to high school in 1972, but it got recognition of the government in 1973. The first batch
students of Boro medium passed matriculation in 1976. So Gauhati University introduced Boro as Major Indian Language in 1977. Finally, Gauhati University opened the Department of Boro from the session 1996-1997 with teaching provision.

Since its formation, the Boro Sahitya Sabha dedicated to the development of Boro language and literature and it has done a lot. But enlightened Boros feel that, unlike other advanced languages, the Boro language has not secured proper patronage of the government, for which it could not cross the boundary of the Boro people to be studied by other people of the world or it could not flourish in the national and international level.

In spite of much progress and development in the Boro language and literature in the last fifty years, it has to do a lot to be in equal footing with other developed literatures of India. In this respect some Boro litterateurs have been making an incredible effort to attain the goal.

IMPACT ON SOCIETY:

The process of social mobility and intellectual movement among the Boros brought lots of changes in their thoughts, ideas, and concept of society and finally gave birth to the Boro Sahitya Sabha. The formation of Boro Sahitya Sabha was a turning point of Boro society from where the Boro society witnessed continuous social tensions with demand of one thing or other. The more the society developed, the more they felt insecure socio-economically, culturally, and politically. They sought to preserved their own identity, culture and language within the union of Indian States. As a result, the P.T.C.A., an independent political party of the tribal of Assam,
demanded 'Udayachal' a separate autonomous region within Assam in 1970's, which later on changed into a demand of Union Territory and finally into a separate state. 42 Again, in 1980's the All Bodo Students' Union, under the leadership of Upendra Nath Brahma, launched another Bodoland movement for separate state.

Charan Narzary, Ex Member of Parliament, P.T.C.A., says "the Boro people, however, small may be in number, are an organized nationalist force today, and their service can be best utilised for the cause of the country. In the face of glaring injustices done to them and in the hope of securing an honourable place in the great Indian Nation, they want to protect their land, check their economic exploitation by others, and conserved their language, culture, customs everything that is best in their society and prevent imposition of anything which will disrupt their distinctive entity, and grow according to their own genius and tradition." 43 Narzary’s remark captures the quintessential sentiment of Boro people who no longer like to be treated as second class citizen in their own country but to be given equal status and honour with other Indinas.


32. Brahma Brajendra Kr.: Boro Thunlaiyao Iswan Mushahary... Op cit.
34. Ibid.
Bijirnai, Kokrajhar, 1994; (iv) Brahma Kameswar and others (Ed.): *Kanthai Mala*: 1999.


39. Ibid:


