CHAPTER-II

FACTORS OF INFLUENCE ON THE WRITINGS OF BHĀRTENDU & BEZBAROAĀ
2.00 INTRODUCTION:

Bhartendu Harishchandra (1850-1885) and Lakshminath Bezbaroa (1864-1938) were born at such a conjuncture of the age when India had to proceed through several struggles. Both these two writers were very much concerned to find the sad plight of the country. In fact, a man, who is socially conscious and thoughtful, cannot keep himself aloof from the impact of the environment nor he can accept the deterioration of the country as well as of the nation. Because such people regard themselves as responsible for saving their country and the nation from deterioration. Different influential factors inspire the conscious and thoughtful people to be responsible for all these. From this point of view, the influential and inspirational factors of Bhartendu Harishchandra and Lakshminath Bezbaroa's creations are to be discussed and analysed, because then and then only there would be a just evaluation of the writings of Bhartendu and Bezbaroa.

For a proper evaluation of the dramas of Bhartendu and Bezbaroa, it is necessary that one should make an analysis and discussion of the influential and inspirational factors of the time, because the then political, social, religious and cultural inconsistencies were depicted by both the dramatists in their plays elaborately. Therefore, to understand the psychology behind the dramas, the contemporary situations are to be analysed.

2.1 THE INFLUENTIAL & INSPIRATIONAL FACTORS:

The analysis of the influential and inspirational factors can be studied under the following heads:

(a) Influential factors — Political, social, and religious factors;
and (b) Inspirational factors—Life and personality; literary and cultural traditions.
2.1:1 THE INFLUENTIAL FACTORS:

As stated certain factors of the social, political, economic, cultural and religious fields had enormous impact on the life and works of both Bhārtendu and Bezbaroa.

Let us discuss them one by one. First, political situation in the days of Bhārtendu.

2.1:1 POLITICAL SITUATION:

Modernity in India began after the death of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. Modernity is the other name of the change in ancient tradition. In the words of Tennyson:

"पुरानी व्यवस्था बदलकर अपना स्थान नई व्यवस्था को दे देती है, यही आधुनिकता का सूत्रपात है।"

Upto the life time of Aurangzeb the whole of the Mughal empire in India was bound together by one central bond. After his death the bond of unity became not only slack but also severed one; and a state of anarchy came into existence. With this change, the foreign merchants began to enter into the political arena; which may be described as the indirect introduction to modern age.

The European merchants came to India during the peak period of the Mughal empire, who established their business centres. Gradually they began to fight for suzerainty over Indian territory. Of the Europeans who fought for suzerainty over India, were the British and the French. But in the first part of the eighteenth century the British defeated the French and became the rulers of India. The East India Company was victorious in the

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1. Hindi Sāhitya Kā Brihat Itihās, Dr. Vinay Mohan Sarmā, p-3.
battles of Plassey (1756) and of Boxer (1764) and the conspiracy of eliminating the Nawabs of Lord Clive was successful.

Bhārīndu was born in 1850 A. D. From the point of politics the age was an explosive one. The policy of the East India Company was a policy of expansion of the British empire of which Lord Delhousie was the leader. The administrative policy of the Company dissatisfied the Hindu and Muslim Rajas and the Nawabs.

The revolution of 1857 was the great and extensive collective attempt of the Hindu and Muslim Rajas and the common people against the foreign rule over India. This revolution has been described as the 'Sepoy Mutiny' by the British historians. On the other hand Indian historians call it the first war of independence in India. There are, of course, different views about this rebellion. The first opinion is that it was a mutiny of the soldiers; while the second says that it was a conspiracy to re-establish Mughal rule by the Muslims. The third opinion on it says that it was the effort to establish dominance of the Marathas i.e. the "Peshwarshahi" rule of the Marathas, while the fourth says that it was the first collective attempt of the Hindus and Muslims to drive away the British from India. But the British historian P. Speare called it a reaction of the fundamentalist Indians against the scientific Western Civilisation:

"वास्तव में प्राचीन रूढ़िवादी भारत का आधुनिक विज्ञानवादी पाश्चात्य सभ्यता के प्रतिष्ठापक अंग्रेज शासकों के अभिवेकङ्गरण कृत्यों के विरुद्ध प्रतिक्रियात्मक विरोध था।"

The revolution of 1857 was a failure. The British established their Colonial empire in India.

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1. Hindi Sāhitya Kā Bṛihat Itihās, Dr. Vinay Mohan Sarmā, P- 6.

2. Hindi Sāhitya Kā Bṛihat Itihās, Dr. Vinay Mohan Sarmā, P- 6.
On November 1, 1858, Queen Victoria issued a proclamation, in which she declared that Indian culture and religion would be safeguarded and at the same time the rights of the Rajas along with the treaties made with them would be honoured and safeguarded. But the British did not give up their crooked policies. Of course, they opted modern scientific means and methods.

The British occupied India by all means, foul and fair and made India a part of their empire. Bhârtendu Harîshchandra’s life began in this juncture of time and therefore, there was a great impact of the political atmosphere on his life. Therefore, it remained a very important factor for the literature of Bhârtendu.

In 1876, Surendra Nâth Banerjee established the Indian Association. Again one British citizen, Hume established the Indian National Congress in the year 1885 with the intention of debarring a mutiny in India after the revolution of 1857. But when the Indian National Congress began to speak of political independence, the British rulers began to treat this Association as dangerous.

There had been a great dissatisfaction and disappointment among the conscious section of the people due to the partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon. Bengal became the centre of British administration. The than Bengal did not constitute with only modern Bengal and Bangladesh; but it was a bigger area with some parts of present Bihar and Orissa. In this connection Dr. Suniti Kumâr Chatterjee remarked:

"What is now Uttar pradesh (or United Province of Agra and Owdh) was known as the North-Eastern Province of Bengal and Bengal comprised not only of Bengal Proper but also Bihar and Orissa as well as Assam and even when an extended Assam was separated from Bengal in 1874, under a chief commissioner, it became just a pendent to Bengal."  

3 Lakshmînâth Bezbaroa, The Sâhityarathi of Assam, Ed. Dr. M. Neog, p-5.
Several Indians tried to co-ordinate the modern and ancient ideas at the time of Indian renaissance. An attempt was made to unite the glorious political history of India with the patriotic feeling of the West which had enormous influence over the contemporary conscious and thinking people. Such impact fell upon Bhārtendu Harishchandra who lived in one of the major centres of North India, Kashi.

The family of Bhārtendu was a follower of Indian tradition. Since his father was an established and powerful man, their drawing room was a centre of political discussion. Because Bhārtendu lived with his father since childhood, the impact of those discussions fell upon him which reflected in his literature. The political uprisings and changes had a very deep impact on the mind of young Bhārtendu:

"भारतेन्दु ने अपने 7 वर्षों की वास के समय से भारत का पहला स्वतंत्रता रंगा। इसी शासन के समय और अपनी उन्हीं आँखों द्वारा उमकी कार्यकर्ताओं का दमन भी देखा था। कम्युनिस्ट बहादुर के जालिमाने राज्य की समाजिक और महारानी चिकटोरिया के मधुर आश्वासनों तथा लुभावन्त्र सपनों से भरे घोषणा पत्र को भी सुना था।" 4

Since literature of Bhārtendu germinated at the drawing room of his father, the impact of humour and satire is evident in it:

"वास्तव में भारतेन्दु युग की राष्ट्रीय चित्तन-धारा के दो पक्ष हैं-देशप्रेम और राजनीति।" 5

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4. Bhārtendu Samagra (Bhārtendu Ke Parhne Ke Bād), Ed. Hemanta Sarmā, p-13
Considering the writings of Bhārtendu from political point of view, two clear streams are evident there; one apparently the royalty to British administration and the other criticism of the administration indirectly through humour and satire. The reason behind it was that the family of Bhārtendu received favour from the British. On the other hand, love of motherland began to grow slowly in the hearts of Bhārtendu.

Bhārtendu praised and at the same time condemned the contemporary British rule in the manner in which he praised and criticised the ancient political incidents through his humour and satire. The reason behind it was that Bhārtendu studied deeply the ancient history of India and had the direct knowledge of the contemporary political atmosphere.

2.1:2 SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT DURING THE DAYS OF BHĀRTENDU:

There had been two reactions in the Indian society in respect of the British—first, to stick to 'Indianness' and the second, to give it up. According to Dr. Sushilā Dhīr:

"वास्तव में अंग्रेज अपने साथ नयी दृष्टि, नए साधन और नए सामाजिक बोध लेकर आए थे और सत्ता और शक्ति के विस्तार के साथ अपने-आप को सामाजिक दृष्टि से उन्नत समझनेवाले भारतीय समाज के समानान्तर आना चाहे हो-गया था।"  

6. During the revolution of 1857 some property of the Benaras residency was kept with Bhārtendu's father, Babu Gopal Chandra by the British to make it secure. So, the family of Bhārtendu enjoyed not only favour but also faith of the British. Bhārtendu Samagra, p-15.

It can be concluded from an alternative analysis of history that three classes of people were created under the British rule. They were:

a) the Ruling class;
b) the Rich class; and
c) the Common people.

Of these three classes, the first was the oppressor, the second exploiter and the third was the exploited one. The exploited class had to live hand to mouth and to live with much difficulty. In the words of Ramgopal:

"यदि मुग़लों या नवाबों के शासन में कृषकवर्ग की दशा खराब थी तो ब्रिटिश राज्य में तो वह और भी खराब हो गई।" 8

The policy of Lord Litton was not to give any relief to the cultivators but to satisfy the capitalists, Zamindars and Talukdars and thereby to fortify the position of the British in India.

The dominance of the English in Bengal provided them the monopoly in trade and business in the country. Only the trade in salt, betel-nut and tobacco remained in the hands of the Indians; and that too was taken away by the officials of the Company, in which Lord Clive was also a party. As a result, people, who maintained their families through these trades, found it difficult to survive now.

The British got profit out of export and import. The import duty of British goods, particularly of cloth, was going high. As against this, the Indian goods were rarely sold in the British market. For example, the introduction of railways in India was definitely an act of social welfare. But it benefitted the British merchant much to collect the raw materials and to distribute their finishing products with high import charges. The economic policy of the

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British rang the death bell of many cottage and handicraft industries in India which had a tremendous impact on the social set up in India.

The impact of English education effected the Indians in two ways—first, it produced repugnance in the minds of some Indians against Indian culture and tradition. This section began to think that our country was lagging far behind and they did not have any glorious heritage. As a result this section wanted to own the Western Culture by any means. Lāla Rajpat Rai remarked in the ‘Young Indiā’:

“ये नौजवान प्रत्येक भारतीय चीज को नफरत से देखते थे। उनके अंग्रेज़ आका यदि गिरेंगे में जाते तो वे भी, गिरेंगे में जाते, यदि वे ग्यात्रं चिंतन करते तो ये भी वही करते। वेश-भूषा, खान-पान, यहाँ तक कि गोमांस भक्षण में भी ये उनका अनुकरण करते।”

Second, the feeling of Indianness and of Nationalism grew in the mind of another section of the educated class. This section began to think of ways and means to get rid of the slavery of the British; Bhārtendu supported the reformatory movement; but at the same time he could not tolerate the people who hated the Indian social system. In his writings, the good in the ancient society and reformatory activities of old system are found to be welcomed. It was due to the impact of contemporary social reform on Bhārtendu.

“भारतेन्दु ने कार्यत: सन 1868 ई. में साहित्य-रचना का काम आरम्भ
हिंदी।”

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9. Young Indiā, Dr. Lālā Lājpat Rāi, p-120.
It is, therefore, natural that the thoughts and ideas of Bhārtendu were rather influenced by the rise and fall of the then social system.

During the days of Bhārtendu women’s education did not got priority. The members of the society did not encourage women education. During the time, when Thomson was the Lt. Governor, one school for girls was opened at kashi. Then Bhārtendu’s elder sister Mukundī Bibi was sent to that school by her parents. It was really an important incident in those to send a girl to school and break the social custom.

Since there was improvement in the communication system, there had been a great change in the postal system, rail services, use of steam boats, news papers etc.

Although Bhārtendu was born and brought up in a conservative family yet after the death of his mother at a young age, he became fickle and notorious. He was a man of independent nature. As a result he came to the touch of all classes of people, high and low, from royal families to the poor, drunkards, gamblers, beggars, prostitutes etc. Therefore, the influence of all these different kinds of people are seen.

His personal life and family life along with degraded political situation and a society full of superstitions had considerable influence over his person and his writings.

It is only possible to ring in the social upliftment for a leader who is reformist and who can herald a new era. The attention of the patriots was drawn towards the evil customs of the society and they wanted to remove them. The reformists began to inspire all the reformatory activities like expansion and development of education, reformation of the condition of women, abolition of child marriage and introduction of widow remarriage, abolition of casteism, introduction of travelling of foreign countries etc.
Bhārtendu Harishchandra appeared in the field of Hindi literature at this juncture of Indian renaissance with his great literary personality. He realised deeply the complex social situation which he witnessed with his own eyes. Therefore, his writings became the true image of the then society.

2.1:3 RELIGIOUS ENVIRONMENT:

The religion has always an important position in Indian life. During the days of Bhārtendu several exercises in the name of religion were prevailing. Being inspired by the Western civilisation, some youths in Calcutta even opened up clubs for taking beef to show their hatred to Hindu faith. But such movement met its death at the very beginning due to lack of support from the people. Most of the supporters of modernity, who were educated, realised that we must safeguard our ancient culture although we were not independent. In this connection the attempt made by Rājā Rām Mohan Rāy is praiseworthy. In the year 1828, he established the Brahma Samaj within the ambit of Hinduism. He proved the scientific foundation of Hinduism on the basis of the Upanishads. He opposed the 'Sati system' on moral ground and proved that Hinduism is based on real principles. Unlike the mediaval 'Santas', he opposed idol-worship, principle of incarnation pilgrimages and such other outward customs. He was strict follower of the Vedant.

In 1850 A. D., Keshab Chandra was initiated to the Brahma Samaj. But he was leaning towards Christianity more. Therefore, under his influence some Indian youths left Hinduism and were converted to Christianity.

In 1875 A. D., Swami Dayānand Saraswati established the 'Aryya Samaj'. There is no idol-worship, casteism, child marriage and polytheism in real 'Aryya' religion. In the like manner, Dr. Atmārām Pāṇḍurang established one Prarthana Samaj in 1867. It was also against casteism and believed in the incorporeal existence of God. But traditional practices of the Hindus and idol worship were not totally banned. Rām Kṛṣṇa Paramhans found one
and the same truth in all religions. He recognised marriages between Hindus and non-Hindus and conversion of non-Hindus into Hinduism. The Râm Krîśhna Mission was established in the year 1898. The Theosophical society was established by one Russian lady Madam Blavatsky and Col. Alcot in America in 1857 and one Irish lady Annie Besant introduced it in India in the year 1893 A. D.

There had been a sense of disappointment and indifference in the minds of the Muslim due to the lost of Indian empire. The Muslims began to hate English language and the Western civilisation at the time of establishment of the British empire in India. For them the study of the koran was sufficient.

The entry of the Christianity in India began during the first Christian era, when the East India Company extended its sway over many parts of India, the Christian Missionaries were very much encouraged. But in the meantime, the Hinduism was corrupted due to social inequalities and such other evils. As a result the Christianity gained ground among the ‘Dalits’. The ‘Padris’ began to establish churches, hospitals and educational institutions and began to propagate Christianity and side by side they propagate Western civilisation and culture in India.

When Bhârtendu witnessed the corruptions in the Jagannath Temple, he was very much worried. He took up only one vow to eliminate the corruptions in the name of religion. He began to study deeply about the fall of religious atmosphere and attacked the religious corruptions through humour and satire.

Bhârtendu was a follower of the ‘Ballabh Sampraday’ in case of his religious faith. He was attracted very much to “Shringaar Rasatmak Bhakti” of Râdhâ-Krîśhna. He was a monotheist and the devotee of Lord Krîśhna. Most of his poems written in Brajbhasha are full of sweet “Bhakti Rasa” and
of worship of Radha-Krishna jointly. These may easily be compared to those of Sundas.

A secular viewpoint can be evident in Bhartendu’s religious thoughts and culture. There was an equal respect in his mind for all religions. He had the intention to lift religion from all narrowness and to use it for the good of all.

2.1:4 POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT DURING THE DAYS OF LAKŚHMĪNĀTH BEZBAROĀ:

Since long past, Kamrup i.e. present Assam has been maintaining one independent political identity. The Ahoms ruled over Assam about six hundred years with full vigour. But due to some internal conflicts the rule of Ahoms became unstable. The downfall of the Ahoms began from the rule of Chandrakānta Singha. The administration went to the hands of some power greedy and selfish ministers due to the carelessness of the king Chandrakānta Singha. As a result the Burmese attacked Assam. The East India Company came to the rescue of the Ahom kings and there was a war between the British and the Burmese. Finally, the Yandaboo Treaty was signed between them in 1826. Assam came under the British rule as a result of this treaty. It is to be noted here that Assam came under the British rule very late in comparison to other states of India.

Gradually peace and tranquility was restored in the trouble torn Assam within a short time. But with the restoration of peace, Indians began to realise the colonial policies of the British and the sense of revolt against the British began to grow. The patriots wanted to free India from the shackles of slavery; and as a result the first war of independence broke out in 1857. The movement irrupted throughout the whole country. Although the British suppressed the rebellion by several means yet it gave birth to national consciousness in the mind of the Indians.
This national movement had a great impact on Assam. The freedom-lover patriots of Assam joined hands to make the movement successful. The names of Manirām Dewān, Piyoli Phukan and Gomdhar Konwar are worth-mentioning in this connection.

Lakṣ̱mināth Bezbaroa was born after seven years of the first war of independence (1857) of India. Dīnānāth Bezbaroa, father of Lakṣ̱mināth was a government official. Therefore, Lakṣ̱mināth got the chance to travel during his childhood different places of Assam with his father. But during those days, it was difficult to know the actual political situation in different places. In the drawing room of Bezbaroa’s father there was no political discussion like those in the drawing room of Bhārtendu’s father. Therefore, there was no direct impact of politics on Bezbaroa. His father being a government official was heavily busy. Bezbaroa met his father only in the time of Namkirtan (Prayer) and at the dining table. But Bezbaroa was not unaware of political matters of the time.

During the days of Bezbaroa the British rule was not only very harsh but the exploitation took a very terrific shape also. There is a reflection of all these in the writings of Bezbaroa.

Bezbaroa studied deeply the glorious history of Assam; and its knowledge inspired him much in his literary life. Through his writings he gave a call for the new generation to follow the glorious past of Assam, and thereby to tackle the political situation of the day.

Lakṣ̱mināth Bezbaroa was in Assam till his passing of the Matriculation examination and there after he went to Calcutta for higher studies. Calcutta was the then capital of British empire in India. Students from different parts of India came to this centre of the western education. At the same time, Calcutta was the centre of renaissance for political, literary
and cultural activities. Therefore it was natural for a conscious scholar like Bezbaroa to be influenced by the political situation.

The first session of the Indian National Congress, established by Mr. Hume, was held in 1885 in Bombay (now Mumbai) under the presidentship of W.C. Bandopadhyay. Gradually the congress began to take the reign of freedom struggle. The freedom struggle became more serious under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Bezbaroa was not directly connected with both the Congress and the national movement. But its impacts definitely fell upon him. It can be evident in the humourous and satirical dramas of Bezbaroa. His political ideas can be found in his political plan in the humourous and satirical article 'Bhārat Uddhār'.

Practically speaking, although Bezbaroa was not directly connected with politics yet he was a supporter of the freedom struggle. He also wholeheartedly supported the nationwide movement under the leadership of Gandhijee. Bezbaroa wanted that the common people of Assam should be politically conscious. Therefore he made the glorious historical events the basis of his writings. For example, we can refer to his dramas- Jaymati Kunwari, Chakradhwaj Singha and Belimār. So, it can be said that Bezbaroa had the intention to arouse national consciousness in the mind of the people of Assam, in which he was quite successful also.

2.1: 5 SOCIAL SITUATION:

Like Bhartendu, Bezboroa was born in a social juncture. The Indian renaissance had begun in those days. There was an environment of alarm and disaster in the social life as a result of the invasion of the Burmese. Later in 1826, as a result of the Yandaboo treaty, there was the end of independent identity of Assam. It came under the British rule. There had

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12. ibid, p-1274.
been a considerable change in the social life in Assam. The activities of Bezbaroā began under such circumstances.

During the mediaval period the Upper Assam was under the Ahoms while the lower Assam under the Koch-Rajbanshis. Therefore, the customs and traditions of these dynasties prevailed in the respective regions. During the days of Bezbaroā, the old traditions and customs did not come to an end although there was the rule of the British. Inspite of the evil impacts of the Burmese invasion on Assamese people, the virtues like simplicity, friendliness and brotherhood remained in fact in the Assamese society. Bezbaroā witnessed the social life from much near when he travelled along with his father in different parts of Assam.

The British rule played important roles in the creation of new social order in Assam. Prior to the coming of the British, practically there was no town in Assam. What was known as the towns in those days were nothing but some developed villages only. The towns in Assam were established during the British rule. The cities began to grow in different parts of India like Calcutta (now Kolkata), Bombay (now Mumbai), Delhi etc. where almost all modern amenities are available. Most part of Bezbaroā's life was spent in Calcutta. He was also in Sambalpur of Orissa in connection with his business. Therefore it is quite natural that impact of changed atmosphere fell upon his writings in a quick manner. Although Bezbaroā lived outside Assam yet the rural-life in Assam was always in his mind. He witnessed the life of the village people from near. He used these reflections in his writings.

Bezbaroā witnessed that there had been a considerable change in the social life of Assam due to the British rule. The life style of the people underwent a great change. Since modern amenities were available and there had been a development of education, a new social uprising took place. But even then there were some traditionalist in the society. In addition to it some bad habits made the society down graded. Bezbaroā’s viewpoint
against these evil practices like drinking of wine, eating of opium, gambling etc. was very much damaging and critical. Hem Chandra Baruā (1835-1896) another important writer of Assam, in his “Kāniār Kīrtan”\(^{13}\) exposed the evils of eating of opium. Barua showed in his farce to what extent the poisonous and evil effects of opium eating destroyed the Assamese nation. Bezbaroa also used his pen against this poison, which ruined the Assamese society.

During the days of Bezbaroa, conservativeness was evident in the field of marriages. Specially in the Brahmin families, child marriage was prevalent and girls were married in a very tender age. In this connection, Gunābhirām Baroā (1837-1894)\(^{14}\) in his drama “Rām Nawami” depicted a living picture of this social evil of child marriage and advocated for widow-remarriage.

During the British rule, there had been the beginning of tea plantation in Assam. Since labours for this purpose were not available in Assam, labours were procured from other parts of India like Bihar, Orissa, M.P etc. With the coming of these labours there had been a change in the social life of Assam. Bezbaroa had the experience of the life of labourers in the upper Assam. So, it was not unnatural that the impact of the mixed culture fell upon him.

Most of the educated class having English education wanted to shape their society after the western social set up. As a result of which, changes took place in old values. Particularly, such changes were evident in the urban life of Calcutta. Bezbaroa who went to Calcutta for higher education, experienced this new wave\(^{15}\).

When Assam was brought under the British, some Bengali clerks with working knowledge in English were brought to Assam for executing official

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13. Asamiya Sāhityar Samīxātmak Itibritta, Ed. Dr. Satyendranāth Sarmā, p-303  
14. ibid, p-306.  
works. With the insistence of these Bengali people, Assamese was replaced by Bengali in the courts and educational institutions in 1836. As a result the "Yatra-Gaans" got their way into Assam, which had certain impact on the Assamese life style. Even one Tithirām Bāyan of Barpeta became famous for his "Yatra-Dal" in the upper Assam. The school children also began to sing the songs and dialogues in Bengali from this party. The teachers and employees who came to Assam from Bengal had no respect for Assamese culture. But conscious Assamese people could not tolerate it. The replacing of Assamese by Bengali as the medium of instruction had a very evil effect on the mind of Bezbaruah in his childhood days, He related it as:

"मदन भोधन तर्कालकात बंगाला ‘शिशुशिला’ प्रथम भाग मोक, दिया हुत; कारण सेह कालत देशाधिकारसंग हियर बुद्धि बलत बडत भापाई अस्मर बिरालयोरत शिकोति हैछित; अस्मीयार आचल माक अस्मीया भाषाई बकराणित हे ठाई पाईछित; आरू बिदेशिनी बडता भापाई आइर ठाई अधिकार कार ले अस्मीया शिशुबोर मुखात मात्रत्तर सल्लि "फिरिंट बटल" अर्थत् गाकौर कल दि सिह्णेंक "काल काक, भाल नाक” शिकाई तेऊँसै "खिलि खाई, मिलि जाउँबै" कैछिल।"

The Christian missionaries from America, published one Assamese magazine - the “Arunodai” from Sibsagar in 1846, in which attempts were made to re-instate Assamese language. In this magazine a literate section of Assam like Ananda Rām Dhekālphukan, Gunābhīrām Baroā and Nidhi Levi Farwel advocated for re-introducing Assamese in the courts and educational institutes of Assam. It was Sir George Campbel, to whom credit goes to re-introduce Assamese in Assam in 1973. In this case, "A few remarks on Assamese language," a book by Anandaram Dhekālphukan played a

16. ibid (Mor Jiwan Sonwaran), p-8.
17. Asamlya Sahityar Samitmak Itibritta, Ed. Dr. Satyendranāth Sarma, p-297.
considerable role. The happiness at the re-introduction of Assamese knew no bound for educated youths like Bezbaroa.

Many conservative Hindus and Muslims were not in favour of educating their children in English medium although it was very common under the British rule. Both Raja Ram Mohan Ray and Lord Macaulay were supporters of English education. But they supported it from different reasons. Macaulay wanted that some English educated Indians should extend their supporting hand to the British administration while on the other hand Raja Ram Mohan Ray wanted that Indians should have some knowledge of the western civilisation through English. In Assam some families also learnt English secretly. The conservative Brahmin, Dinanath Bezbaroa and Hemchandra Baroa are two glowing examples. Dinanath Bezbaroa accept the learning of English as the 'Yuga-Dharma' (or need of the time), and established one English school at Lakhimpur. He sent his two sons Gobinda and Gopāl to Calcutta for higher studies. But when both of them gave up their customs and began to take western food, he was very sorry. So, he did not allow Lakshminath to go to Calcutta. Because he believed that Lakshminath would follow the path of his brothers.

The British established courts and offices as a part of their administration. English knowing people were inducted from Bengal to work in these offices. With the coming of these people, new townships began to grow with new social set up there.

The bullock carts, elephants and boats were the means of transportation in those days, and the buses, ferries and merchandise ships were not in use. Bezbaroa in his auto-biography 'Mor Jiwan Sonwaran', gave a dangerous picture of boat journey along with the natural beauty of Assam. Bezbaroa was born on a boat when his parents made a journey by boat as his father was transferred. Since there was no good communication system, outward influence was comparatively less than that in other parts of India.
But when the facilities for posts and telegraph, trains and ferries gradually became available then relationship began to grow with other parts of India and the narrow boundary of regional social system had to be extended and it touched national and international fields also.

In the year 1901, when the Cotton College was established in Guwahati, the road for higher education became clear for many. In the meantime the number of educated people began to grow with the establishment institutions, for higher education in different places. Along with it, there was the spreading of women-education and as a result there was a positive impact on the Assamese society.

With the introduction printing presses, publicity became easier. As a result the scope of studies increased. There had been novelty in the social life with the spread and development of education.

In practice, there are two impacts of the social system - positive and negative. During the days of Bezbaroā, the society was groaning under both these two impacts. There was a tussle between the old and the new values of life. Some people adhered to the old customs and traditions while some educated people tried to get rid of them. Bezbaroā witnessed the transitional period from a close and therefore, he played progressive roles in his writings. He had complete faith on the social tradition but he did never encourage superstitions and evil customs. Therefore, his reformatory view points are reflected in his farces while his faith on the customs and traditions in the historical plays.

2.1:6 RELIGIOUS ENVIRONMENT:

Dīnanāth Bezbaroā, father of Lakṣmīnāth Bezbaroā was an Orthodox Vaishnav. His family was fully faithful to the ‘Ek-sharan Bhagawati Dharma’ as propounded by Śrīmanta Shankardev and his great disciple
Śrī Śrī Mādhabdev. Therefore, the ‘Naam Kirtan’ was performed as daily duty. In addition to that, the holy ‘Tithis’ (Death anniversaries) of the Gurus like Shankardev, Mādhabdev and their great disciple Padma alias Badula Ata, besides the celebration of the ‘Ras Yatra’ and the ‘Holi’ at their home.

As stated, Bezbaroa was born in a family full of Vaishnavite atmosphere. Right from his childhood, he had to practise Vaishnavite rites. There was a regular ‘Naam Kirtan’ at his house and he had to take part in it. As a result there had been a deep influence of the Vaishnavite religion on him. Bezbaroa also gave publication to the ideals of great saints Śrī Shankardev and Śrī Mādhabdev. He edited two biographies under the titles ‘Śhankardev’ and the ‘Mahāpuruṣh Śrī Sānkardev and Śrī Mādhabdev’.16

In practice, discussions on Śrī Shankardev began with Lakṣmīnāth Bezbaroa.

While in Calcutta, Bezbaroa came across most of the reformatory organisations like the Brahma Samaj, Parthana Samaj, Ramkrishna Mission, Theosophical society etc. The reformatory ideals of these organisations deeply influenced Bezbaroa. Even his marriage was celebrated under the Brahma Samaj principles without performing ‘Hom-Yajna’ etc. of the Vedic rites.

Bezbaroa was dead against to the superstitions and evil practices prevailed in Assamese Satras in the name of religion. He tried to expose them through humour and satire in his dramas. He did not like the impact of the Bengalis falling upon the Gosain and Mahantas of the Satras and the performing of Bengali Yatras on the holy Tithis (death anniversaries) of the Gurujana. He found the reflection of the ‘Chaitanya Panthis’ (Devotees of Chaitanya) in the prayer-songs of the Hajo Madhab Temple like -

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16. Lakṣmīnāth Bezbaroa, (article by Dimbeswar Neog), Ed. Chandra Prasād Saikiā, p-293
There was a respect for Islam in the mind of Bezbaroa. In the 'Jikirs' and 'Jharis' of Ajan Fakir, there are impacts of Vaishnavite songs on them. Several Persian and Urdu words are used in the courts of Assam. Even some such words are also found in the writings of Shri Shankardev. Bezbaroa was very liberal in religious faith. He studied the Bible and the Koran along with Hindu scriptures like Veda, Vedanta, Upanishada, Geeta, Bhagawat and the works of Shri Shankardev and Shri Madhabdev. Bezbaroa wrote a book entitled 'Naamdharma Tatwa' in which he declared that there may be differences in the name and the methods of worship, but God is one:

"शंकर-गामधव गृहधार रामधर प्रकृति युद्धर नियमता काल माणारा।"

अधिकारी परमपुरुष परमेश्वर, आरु खीष्टर God the Father आरु महमदर 'आल्लाहे आकबर'।

19. ibid, (Bezbaroaar Jiwan Alekhya, article by Navakanta Barua), Ed. Chandra Prasad Saikia, p-10
It is remarkable that due to this liberal attitude of Bezbaroā towards all religions, his youngest daughter, Dipikā accepted Christianity. The Assamese people are very much tolerant in respect of religion and because of this not a single voice has been raised against any religion in Assam. There was no movement against the 'Arunodai' even when Nidhi Levi Farwel criticised Hinduism very severely to praise Christianity in this journal:

"निधि लिवाइ फारवेलर रचनात हिन्दु धर्मर यथेष्ट निन्दा थँका
सत्त्वो अस्फोदयर बिरुद्दे कोनो धर्मीय आन्दोलन होवा नालिछल। 21"

In this connection, Bezbaroā may be regarded as the right representative of Assamese people. In his writings, it is seen that he was going to find out the actual truth in religious matters. In this connection Prof Upendra Chandra Lekhāru remarked:

"धर्म आरू कर्मक्षेत्र तेयो महापुरुष शंकरदेवर आद्योर अनुग्राणित है। तेयो धर्मक्षेत्र जिन्होर तर्क-विवर्तक आरू ब्रह्म-प्रतिमात्र प्रवृत्त है। तेयो सेइभोर सत्त्व प्रतिप्रदाय बाबे हे कार्यिछल, कोनो लांकर बिरुद्दे वा धर्मगुरुस्थकलर बिरुद्दे नहय। 22"

It is seen, therefore, the impact of the 'Mahāpurushiyā Dharma of Assam was the main impact on Bezbaroā. He studied and discussed about Vaishnavism throughout his life. It had a great influence on his writings also. But at the same time he did not accept superstitions and evil customs in the name of religion.

21 Lakshmināth Bezbaroā, (in Bezbaroār Jiwan Ālekhya, Navakānta Baruā), p-2
22 Sityarattii Lakshmināth Bezbaroā, Upendra Ch. Lekhāru, p-39
2.2 INSPIRATIONAL FACTORS:

It is a fact that a man is not only influenced by external factors, but also he is influenced by internal factors. Both these two conscious litterateurs, Bhārtendu and Bezbaroa were influenced by the incidents of their personal life. They also got inspiration from their predecessors, particularly literary predecessors and cultural traditions of their society, which were helpful in getting perfection in literature. Therefore, it is necessary that we should discuss about their life and personality and the cultural traditions into which they were born, in connection with the inspirational factors of their writings.

2.2:1 LIFE & PERSONALITY OF BHĀRTENDU HARISHCHANDRA:

The patriot litterateur, Bhārtendu Harishchandra was born in the historic city of Varanasi in the family of Amichand. There are, of course, some controversies about the date of his birth. He himself did not indicate the actual date of his birth. But there are certain references in his writings which can be taken as 'internal evidence'. While making a reference to his family, in the 'Uttarardh Bhaktamal' (1877), he says:

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“जैस्य अग्रकुल में प्रगट बालक्रुण्ण कुल पाल।
ता सुत गिरिधर-चरन-रत बर गिरिधारीलाल॥

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गोकुलचंद्राग्रज भस्मे भवत दास हरिचंद॥२३”
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In addition to it, the reference to his family is available in some other books also. In the 'Śrī Chandrāvalī Natikā' (1876) he referred himself as the son of Giridhar Dāś:

In the same manner, he wrote in the 'Madhu Mukul' (1880):

"कविता गिरिधरदास तनूभव हरिशचंद्र कुत-गाने \(^{25}\)"

Now from these internal evidences and other evidences, his genealogical tree may be indicated as follows:

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Bālkrishna
  ↓
Giridhārilāi
  ↓
Amīchand
  ↓
Fātaḥchand
  ↓
Harṣhachand
  ↓
Gopāl Chandra (alias Giridhar Dās) & wife Pārvatī Devī
  ↓
Harišchandra  Gokulchandra. \(^{26}\)
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Hariśchandra was born in Benaras on September 9, 1850 (Monday in the Morning). Since Gopāl Chandra, his father was born at the blessings of his Guru, Goswāmī Giridhar Dās, he took the nickname 'Giridhar Dās' in his poems. This Gopāl Chandra was a famous writer. He knew Sanskrit and Hindi well. He had an interest in writing poetry and in the 'Puja-Path'. His genius was outstanding:

\(^{24}\) ibid, p-14
\(^{25}\) ibid, p-14
\(^{26}\) ibid, p-14
Gopal Chandra wrote poems in Sanskrit and Urdu also. He composed several books like the ‘Jarāsandh Badh Mahākāvyā’, ‘Bhārati Bhūshan’, ‘Bhāsha Vyākaran’, ‘Rasa Ratanākar’, ‘Garg Sanhitā’, ‘Nahuṣh Nāatak’ etc. of his books, the ‘Nahuṣh Nātak’ is known to be the first drama of Hindi language. Bhārtendu speaks of his father’s works as follows:

"जिनि गिरिधरदास कवि रचे ग्रंथ चालीस "

Bhārtendu inherited the literary estate from his father. When Bhārtendu was five years old, his mother was dead and his father passed away at his age of ten years. At the death of his mother, the responsibility of bringing him up went to the maid Kālikdamanā and the servant Tilakdhāri. His step mother did not like him. After the premature death of his father, proper arrangement for his education was not made. Then he went to Benaras to have his education at the Queen’s College. But being a man of independent nature, he was unstable and arrogant and could not devote his attention to studies. He was a man of sharp intelligence and strong memory. Prior to the death of his father he was studying under Pt. Is’wari Dutt. Maulavi Taz Ali taught him Urdu and Pt. Nandkishor taught him English. After leaving the college, he got knowledge on his own accord. He learnt a number of languages like Marathi, Bengali, Gujrati, Marwari, Punjabi etc. on his own account. He even composed poems in those languages.

At the age of thirteen Bhārtendu married Manna Devi, daughter of a noble man of Shiwale, Lalā Gulāb Rāy. He had to arrange for a pilgrimage to the Jagannath Temple at the behest of his family at the age of fifteen. This journey become a stumbling bloc to his education on one hand and on the

27. ibid, pp-18-19.
other, it gave him opportunities to learn new ideas and thought. When he was at Puri, he opposed superstitions and evil customs. The Pandas (priests) of Puri used to keep an idol of Bhairava near the throne at the time of the 'Bhog' ceremony of Lord Jagannath. Bhārtendu was disgusted at this and he took rest only after removal of the idol of Bhairav from there.

In 1871, Bhārtendu travelled widely to different places like Kanpur, Lucknow, Saharanpur, Mussouri, Haridwar, Lahore, Amritsar, Delhi, Braj, Agra etc. Again in 1877 went to Ajmer for pilgrimage at Puskar. In that same year he went to Prayag being invited by the Hindi-Vardhini Sabha. There he delivered an important lecture in poetry on the development of Hindi. In 1880, he went to Vaidyanath with the king of Kashi. He narrated this journey in a very beautiful manner. In this essay he also depicted his feelings in the journey.

Bhārtendu received a huge property along with his glorious heritage and literary talent and taste. In this connection Rāmgopāl Singh Chauhān remarked:

"भारतेन्दु को अपने पूर्वजों के विस्तार में तीन प्रमुख वस्तुएँ प्राप्त हुई थीं-धन, जिसे उनके पूर्वजों ने जनता का शोषण करके और राज्य सरकार की सहायता करके कमाया था, कुल-गौरव तथा अपने पिता से साहित्यिक अभिसंचिा।"

Since he inherited a huge property from his father, he was nothing to worry about the economic field. 30

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30. "चाहिए के चलने में खुलने वाला भारतेन्दु का भयंकर सामाजिक कालावर्ष में ही युवा पत्थर था। कहते है कि उनके विकास में कुंदे में गोले घोंटकर वाला का जगाई किया गया था। भारतेन्दु तीन पौत्र तथा थे।" Bhārtendu Samagra, Ed. H. Sarmā, p-16
But his paternal property came to an end on account of his lavish spending in donations and printing his works during his life time. Due to this he had to borrow from others in the last part of his life. But even then his donation was equally going on. He spent most of his money on the development of education. Because he believed that without proper education no nation can arrive at the zenith of progress. Bhārtendu gave donations to those educational institutions freely, which gave more importance to Indian culture. Besides these, he gave donations for the development of the institutions like the National Fund, Homeopathic dispensaries, the Gujrat and the Jaunpur Relief fund, Selje Home, Prince of Wales Hospital, Carr Michael Library etc. Considering his nature of donations, he was named as the 'Data-Karna' in Kashi. There was great love and respect in the heart of Bhārtendu for the country, nation and language and culture of India. Bhārtendu had the only intention to make Indians healthy and stout in the physical, mental, cultural and spiritual fields and thereby making India powerful to stand in the comity of nations. To fulfil this intention he took the pen in his hand.

Bhārtendu realised that a powerful literature is indispensable to take the people in the path of progress in any country. He served literature, society and the nation throughout his life. What he had done in his short life is not possible for another to do even in hundred years. He sacrificed his life for his own ideals and principles. His personality and genius are related to life directly. He was the epoch-maker in the history of Hindi literature, because he was the torch-bearer of new Hindi literature. Bhārtendu not only wrote by himself but inspired others to write. As a result, some literature, established one 'Bhārtendu circle' and began to serve Hindi literature through it.

The most important achievement of the Bhārtendu era was the writing of poetry in the 'Khariboli'. According to Dr. V. Sarmā:
Bhartendu published the 'Kavi Vachan Sudhā' in 1873, the 'Harishchandra Magazine' (which later rename as the Harishchandra Chandrika and again in 1884 as the Navodita) in 1873. He also published one Bala-Bodhini for the welfare of women in 1874 and then established one association in 1873 as the 'Kavitwa-Vardhini Sabha'. He also established one Penny-reading Club in 1873 where writings of the good writers were read and different articles of amusement were made. In the same year he established one 'Tadiya-Samaj' for the preaching of the Vaishnavite religion, and devotion to the Lord, which published a magazine, the 'Bhagawad-Bhakti Toshini'. He also established a number of associations like the 'Vaishya-Hitaishini Sabha' (1874), the 'Young Mens' Association (1867) and the ‘Debating Club’ (1868). Bhartendu was always endeavouring to establish Indians in an honourable position.

The king of Kashi was loyal to the British. So, being a feudal Lord under the king of Kashi, Bābu Gopāl Giridhar Dās received many facilities from the British government. The British government offered him high posts like the 'Honorary Magistrate', the commissioner of Kashi Municipality etc. But later when he began to voice against the British, he became the victim of their wrath.

Bhartendu had a deep faith on the Indian Sanatan Dharma (Firmal Religion) and Indian philosophy. He tried to show the right path to religion and philosophy and to remove the superstition and evil customs from them. Bhartendu was a versatile genius. He worked throughout his life for the development of Indian society and culture and Hindi language not as an individual but as an institution. He became very popular through his own

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31. Hindi Sāhitya Kā Brāhat Ilhās, Dr. Vinay Mohan Sarmā, p-143.
personality and activities. As a result people wanted to propagate him as a ‘Star’. In 1880, Pandit Rāmeswar Dutt Vyas gave expression to such an idea in his article in the ‘Sarsudharridilni.’ The whole country accepted his proposal and since then he came to be known as Bhārtendu, that means Chandra (Moon) of Bharat. An age of modern Hindi literature has been named after his name.

Bhārtendu devoted his whole life for development of education, reformation of society and development of literature. On January 6, 1885 he breathed his last at the age of 34 years 4 months. Within this short span of life, what Bhārtendu did for Hindi language and literature is quite remarkable.

2.2:2 LITERARY TRADITION:

Bhārtendu improved the literary Hindi, gave birth to a new movement in Hindi literature and established it in national and popular field. He was a literary genius. He enriched the treasure of literature through his dramas, poetry, history, religious books and other prose writings.

Bhārtendu has been regarded as the father of modern Hindi prose literature. He covered all the literary world with his talents. He laid more stress on dramas because he found that Hindi literature was lacking in this field. He was inspired by his father in this regard. He knew Sanskrit literature and therefore, the unlimited treasure of Sanskrit was near to him. He translated a number of Sanskrit dramas. He prepared a book in the form of article on ‘Drishya Kavya’ on the basis of Sanskrit ‘Laxan Granth.’ In the meantime, relationship of Hindi speaking people with the western literature was established through English. Bhārtendu studied about Shakespeare and other western dramatists. His attention was drawn particularly by the writings of Shakespeare. Because there was much similarity between the Elizabethan dramatic art and ancient Indian dramatic art.

32. Bhārtendu Hariśchandra, Dr. Lakṣhmīsāgar, Vārśhneya, p-24.
It is remarkable that Bhārtendu translated the famous play the Merchant of Venice of Shakespeare under the title 'Durlobh-Bandhu'. Bhārtendu's plot was quite Indian, but western influence is evident in the art and style of presentation. Particularly his inspiration for humour and satire was surely from the western dramatic literature.

There were two ways open for Bhārtendu when he paid attention to dramatic literature-first, he should pay attention to the theories of ancient Acharyyas, being inspired by the renaissance, or, second, he should follow the western pattern like the Bengali dramatists. But Bhārtendu's role was of a co-ornator. The dramatists like Michael Madhusudan Dutta, and Dwijendralal were influenced by the renaissance of Bengali literature through English.

Bhārtendu introduced a new tradition in Hindi literature through a healthy co-ordination of the Indian traditional classical literature and poetry with the ideal and aesthetics of the western literature.

Bhārtendu made a deep study of the Indian dramatic literature and the western dramatic literature and translated a number of English and Sanskrit dramas into Hindi. He also enriched Hindi dramatic literature by translating Bengali dramas and the dramas written in Urdu or Hindustani by the Persian Companies, particularly the Shakespearian dramas, into Hindi. In this connection Dr. Vārṣhneya remarked:

"भारतेन्दु के नाटकों में ‘हिन्दीलिपि’ है। विषय चयन, रचना पदन, भाषा, राजनीति-भावना, समाज-सुधार, भक्ति-भावना आदि की दृष्टि में उनकी समन्वयात्मक बुद्धि ने ‘हिन्दीलिपि’ को पुष्प किया और उसे मौलिकता प्रदान की।"

33. Bhārtendu Harishchandra, Dr. Lakṣţmisagar Vārṣhneya, p-86.
Bhartendu proved his multi-faced genius in poetry also. The chief characteristic of his poetry is the recognition of the traditional element. He wrote a number of 'Padas' after Sur and Meera. He wrote a number of poems of the Shringaar Rasa following the Ritikalin poets; and wrote a number of 'Lawani' and 'Mukriya' following the folk-poets. He also composed 'Ghazals' after Urdu Ghazals. While composing poems he generally used the Braj-bhasha. But his writings in Khariboli was also not in less number.

There was an impact of the Vaishnavite literature and the Mediavel Shringaar Rasa on Bhartendu. His romanticism was different from those of both the Chayawadi poets and Bengali and English poets. In his poetry there is no attraction towards 'Anant' nor any philosophy of the 'Nirakar' nor he accepted the 'Laxanik Vyanjana'. His romanticism shined in the 'Viyog-Shringaar'. This 'Viyog-Shringaar' was not only of the heroine but also of the hero. 34

Bhartendu got inspiration from his preceding poets. It is true that no writer can never proceed in his work without inspiration from his predecessors. Of his predecessors, Joydev, Dev Kavi, Shri Nagri Das, Shri Surdas and Anandadhan were his beloved poets. He also got inspiration from the Urdu poets like Nazir and Anis35.

Pt. Loknath was the 'Kavya Guru' of Bhartendu; but his interest in poetry was from his childhood. He gave the proof of his poetic quality at the age of about six years:

"चन्द्रज्ञ नाथद्रु' की संगीत करके माया बाबा उनके पिताय 'चन्द्रज्ञ नाथद्र' नाम लिख गिये थे, तो चन्द्रज्ञ नाथद्र ने गीता करके का आग्रह किया और उनसे प्रेमपूर्ण आज्ञा प्राप्त कर उन्होने तुरन्त यह दोहा चन्यायः:

34. Bhartendu Harishchandra, Dr. Ramvilas Sarmā, p-103
35. Bhartendu Samagra, p-1113
Bhartendu is a poet of human being. So, he took up subjects relating to human being in his poetry. Prior to him the poets took up subjects like fairies, princes or princesses and their magical activities in the Shringaar Rasa.

It is seen, therefore, that Bhartendu got a literary environment in his family and a knowledge of literature from his predecessors. Particularly, he gained much from Hindi literature of Medieval and Ritikalin period, Sanskrit dramatic literature and English literature, the reflection of which is found all over his writings.

2.2:3 CULTURAL TRADITION:

In fact, the identity of a nation inherents in its culture. India is one of the pioneer nations of the world in respect of culture. Ordinarily culture can be divided into two-folk culture and classical or scriptural culture. Indian people gained much from both these two types of culture. The family of Bhartendu may be regarded as the co-ordination of both these cultures. Therefore, he inherited Indian culture along with the western culture from which his family was not free.

Indian culture is basically related to rural life. One of the main features of Indian culture is the capacity to absorb everything. Therefore, the cultures of all the migrated peoples to India since time immemorable were absorbed in the ocean of Indian culture. The Muslims arrived in India as the aggressors in the tenth and eleventh centuries. They wanted to impose their

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36. Bhartendu Hariśchandra, Dr. Lakshmisāgar Vārśhneya, p-21
religion and culture over India by establishing their rule here. But they could not escape the impact of Indian culture in various fields.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the British established their political suzerainty over India through all means—fair and foul. They also wanted to influence Indian culture with their western culture. There had been enough influence of their culture in dress, behaviour and style of living of the Indian people. But a considerable section who were faithful to Indian culture tried to keep their culture in order. When one section educated in English medium hated and neglected Indian culture, then the culturally conscious section did not sit tight. Of course, as a result of the British rule, a new type of urban culture began to grow. It is natural that there was a gradual mix up of Indian and western culture.

Bhartendu was born and brought up in Kashi. Kashi remained to be the life-centre of traditional Indian philosophy, religion and culture even when there was the impact of western culture on India. Bhartendu was acquainted with folk-culture like the Ramlila, Raslila and the Nautanki. He was respectful towards Indian art of painting, architecture etc. He was extremely sorry to see the pitiable plight of the Hindu culture and tried to restore it. Here the impact of the travelling folk-dramas and the Persian theatres is worth mentioning here, because the Persian theatres staged corrupted culture in the name of culture which Bhartendu could not tolerate. Under such adverse situations, Bhartendu was inspired to write dramas. He expressed his agony by writing the 'Bandar Sabha' (a meeting of the Monkeys) and wanted to arouse cultural consciousness in the society. The songs in the dramas of Bhartendu also carry the sense of rebellion in them. Bhartendu had deep respect and 'Bhakti' to Indian culture.

In spite of his being educated in modern education, he laid more importance on development and preservation of traditional Indian culture.
Right from the ancient times, India had originality in the art of painting. It is noteworthy that only after five years of Bhārtendu’s birth i.e. in 1854 one art school was formally established in Calcutta for the first time.

Bhārtendu realised it very well that the only means to influence directly on the society is the drama. Therefore, he concentrated much in writing dramas. He was much inspired by the Persian dramatic art and the Shakespearian dramatic style along with the folk-drama of Northern India. Bhārtendu himself took part in the dramas. He himself organised theatre parties and staged some of his dramas.

It is seen, therefore, that Bhārtendu was inspired much by several dramatic arts from the Indian traditional folk dramas to the western dramatic art. The skill used in his original dramas enormously proved it. There is inspiration from traditional culture even in his translations of Sanskrit and English dramas.

2.2:4 LIFE AND PERSONALITY OF LAKSHMĪNĀTH BEZBAROA:

"एकोजन पुरुषर ............... एको आँजोरत
बहुयुग आणबाडि जाय,
एकोजन पुरुषर ............... एकोटा ठेलाई
बहुकाल संसार चलाय॥"

[The society can go ahead of several centuries at the instance of a single personality, and like manner, such personality can guide the society for a long period]
Once T. S. Eliot remarked on Shakespeare- "those who are great poets give expression to the whole age when they go to express themselves through their poetry". This statement is equally applicable to Sāhityarathi Laks̄mināth Bezbaroa. Because he not only expresses himself through his different writings but also expressed the whole of Assam through them.

Bezbaroa was born in a respectable family of Assam. His ancestors were the royal Physicians of the Ahom Kings. His father Dīnānāth Bezbaroa was also a royal Physician recognised by the crown. The last Ahom King, Purandar Singha tested his knowledge of medicine formally and found him the best physician. He was made to take oath in the Temple of Kameshvara and then was given the title 'Bezbaroa'. Although Dīnānāth Bezbaroa was the royal physician and had one dispensary of his own, yet he did not make it the only source of living. The British government appointed him as a 'Munshif' (a magistrate) like other educated young men. So, as a government servant he with his family had to travel different parts of Assam. Once when his family was moving from Nagoan to Barpeta on boat, Laks̄mināth was born on the boat at a place Ahatguri by name in the year 1864. It was a full moon day known as the 'Laxmi Puñnamā'. So Laks̄mināth described his birth as not 'Bhumistha' (to born on the ground) but as 'Naukastha' (to born on the boat). Since he was born on the 'Laxmi Puñnamā', he was named as 'Laks̄mināth'. Ray Bāhādur Padmanath Gohain Baruāh remarked on his birth:

"लक्ष्मीनाथ बेजबरोह जन्मते विशेषत्व, कियो, तेजों उपजि 'भूमिस्थ'
होंचा नाहि 'जलस्थ' हे हैँसिल 39"

There are certain controversies about the date of Laks̄mināth Bezbaroa's birth. According to Arunā Devī Mukherjee, Bezbaroa's eldest
daughter, the date of Bezbaroa’s birth was ‘1786’ Saka era. But Bezbaroa submitted his birth certificate to the City of Glassgo, an Insurance Company, through the following affidavit:

“Lakṣmīnāth Bezbaroa, son of late Dīnānāth Bezbaroa of Sibsāgar, Assam, do hereby declare that I was born in Nov. 1868. This fact I state as I heard from my parent and I do also, that to the best of my knowledge and believe, it is a true statement.”

Again, Bezbaroa informed the Bezbaroa Samity, while it felicitated Bezbaroa on Oct 8, 1931, that he was 67 on that date.

On the otherhand Bezbaroa was older by about one and half years to his intimate friend Chandra Kūmār Agarwāllā. From this point, since Agarwāllā was born in 1867, Bezbaroa’s date can never be 1868, but it should be around 1864.

Bezbaroa spent his childhood days at Barpeta, one of the pilgrimages for Vaishnavas of Assam. He was much influenced by the ‘Naam Kirtan’ held at Barpeta Satra. Similarly the flood in Barpeta also had tremendous impact on his mind.

The responsibility of Bezbaroa’s family at Barpeta was with a relative, Rabināth Majudal Baroā, whose influence on Bezbaroa was very deep. This Rabināth was expert in story-telling. He was expert in signing also. He was incharge of the children there. Most probably in later life Lakṣmīnāth Bezbaroa showed interest in folk literature only with the influence of this person, Rabināth.

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40. “Lakṣmīnāth Bezbaroa was born on the 16th Nov. 1864, Sakabda 1786, Fragrant Memories, p-1
41. Sāhityarathi Lakṣmīnāth Bezbaroa, Jatindra Nāth Goswāmi, p-14.
42. “अनि यो 67 माह ब्या ४१। अनि यो वरस लेखात्मक रेखाकृती भाषिकता सेवा अनि चूर्ण।”
Samidhān, Lakṣmīnāth Bezbaroa, (in the Āwāhan, 4th year, 4th issue, Māgh 1854 Saka)
43. Lakṣmīnāth Bezbaroa, (Bezbaroaār Jiwan Ālokhya by Navakānta Baruā), p-4
As started earlier, the family of Bezbaroa was an orthodox Vaishnava family. Therefore, his family followed traditional Satriya culture. There was regular ‘Naam Kirtan’. Prasanga, and reading of the Bhagawat, in every morning and evening. Bezbaroa’s father Dīnanāth offered ‘Pujas’ to the ‘Shalegram’ regularly. He also was a stern disciplinarian and kept his children disciplined. He looked after two things, discipline and performance of daily rituals. The scene of dining in the family of Bezbaroa might be compared to a public meeting. During dinner, Dīnanāth, who was busy all times with various business, took stock of the activities of his children. Being the eldest among the children of the family, Lakṣāmināth could not become self-centred. Therefore, most probably it was the reason behind his being extrovert everywhere, in his life and in his works.

In 1874, Dīnanāth Bezbaroa was transferred to Lakhimpur from Tezpur. Lakṣāmināth Bezbaroa begin his educational life here in Lakhimpur. He already acquired the quality of eloquence from his uncle Rabināth. His education began through Bengali medium of instruction in Assam. Bezbaroa finished his school education finally in Sibsagar.

In 1886, Bezbaroa passed his Matriculation examination and went to Calcutta for higher education. He was admitted into the Ripon College at Calcutta. During those days Calcutta was the centre of western education and therefore, students from all over India came to Calcutta for higher studies. In 1890, Bezbaroa passed B. A. examination and the British government offered him ‘Extra Assistant Commissioner’ post, which he did not accept as he loved freedom. He wanted to become a lawyer in the Calcutta High Court. With this view in mind, he got admitted in the B.L. class of the Ripon college and M. A. classes in English in the Presidency college. He always attended the High Court and enjoyed the pleading of several lawyers like Advocate Gen. Sir Charles Paul, Standing Concel Phillips, Barrister Jackson, who was nicknamed as the ‘Tiger’ and so on. But his
dream of being as advocate did not come true nor he could pass the M. A. examination.

Bezbaroa married the grand daughter of Maharshi Debendra Nath Tagore in 1891 in accordance with the customs of the Brahma Samaj. The name of his wife was Prajna Sundari. Debendra Nath Tagore presented a pen of gold to his grand son-in-law, Bezbaroa and blessed him saying,

"तोमार एइ कलम थेके सुनिपुण लेखा बेहुबे। "

Bezbaroa then started business in timber with the help of the merchant Bholanath Baruah in Calcutta. His father Dinanath died in 1895. Bezbaroa worked with the B. Baruah and company upto 1903 and the later part of that year differences grew with B. Baruah and he left the company. He then went to Sambalpur in Orissa and carried the timber business there alone. But when he failed in his business. Mr. Clark Patrick gave Bezbaroa the responsibility of two departments-timber and civil sanitary in his Ward Company.

Bezbaroa was grave, steady, kind, dutiful and liberal. He behave equally with his children and servants. He was also kind to animal and birds. Patriotism and nationalism were the special features of his personality. Wherever he lived in Calcutta or in Sambalpur, he established himself as a venerable man. He did not join in politics directly. But he was a supporter of the constructive ideals of the Indian National Congress. He was dead against violent activities of the Anarchist. He had a great respect for Mahatma Gandhi. He was elected the president of the Assam Chhatra Sanmilan in 1916 and of the Assam Sahitya Sabha in 1924.


47
In the Sibsagar session of the Assam Sahitya Sabha in 1931 the president, Nagendra Nārāyan Choudhury conferred the title 'Rasarāj' upon Lakṣmīnāth Bezbaroa.

Bezbaroa breathed his last in Dibrugarh, on March 26, 1938 at the residence of his second daughter Ratnā Baruā. He was born on the bank of the Brahmaputra, passed his on the banks of the Bhagirathi and the Mahanadi and in the last died on the bank of the Brahmaputra.

In fact, Bezbaroa was not only a powerful litterateur but also the life-force of the Assamese national life. He was not an individual but an institution himself. He not only enhanced the glory of Assamese literature but also made the Assamese national life glorious and richer.

2.2:5 LITERARY TRADITION:

A litterateur not only produces literature but builds the nation also. He produces national literature with his building of the nation. The nation which has no literature, can never be great\(^{45}\). A litterateur enters into the happiness and distress, hopes and aspirations, life-style and luxuries, behaviour and customs and composes his literature, in accordance with place, time and the people which reflects the real picture of the nation. He also shows the way for future progress in a correct line. In this sense, Lakṣmīnāth Bezbaroa may be called the pioneer of Assamese literature.

Like Bhāltendu, Bezbaroa got inspiration from his father in literary activities. Because his father Dīnanāth was a writer. He translated the 'Utkal Khanda' of the Skanda Purāṇa into Assamese and wrote an Assamese book -"Āchāryya Sanhati' on the basis of 'Hara-Gaurī Sanwād' of the 'Rudra-jāmal'. He also composed one 'Bar-chant'\(^{46}\) on the biography of Shu

\(^{45}\) Bezbaroa Pratibhā, Ed: Maheś Chandra Dev Goswāmi, p-17

\(^{46}\) Bar-Chant, Dīnanāth Bezbaroa, First published in 1987, Guwahātī
Sankardev and Shri Madhabdev. He copied two volumes of the book on his own handwriting and presented them to the Barpeta and the Kamalabari Satras. He also wrote one ‘Bezbaroa Banśhāwali’ (Genealogy of the Bezbaroās). Besides the influence of his father, Lakṣṭmināth Bezbaroa was also much influenced by the traditional Vaishnavite literature of Assam.

It was just the beginning of modern Assamese literature when Bezbaroā went to Calcutta for higher studies. In the meantime the modern Bengali had began, which induced the sense of patriotism in the mind of the students living outside Assam i.e. migrated to Calcutta for studies. They began studying Assamese literature in Calcutta. Most of the writers of the then published ‘Assam Bandhu’ (1885) were students from Calcutta. In 1872, the “Asamiya Chatrar Sahitya Sabha” (Assamese Students Literary Club brief by the ASL Club) was established in Calcutta under the leadership of Gangāgobinda Phukan. This club arranged sittings of all Assamese students in Calcutta on every Wednesday and Saturday in the name of ‘tea-parties’. This club began to think of Assamese and the Assamese language. As a result of the sittings of the club, a new association for the development of Assamese language came into being on August 25, 1888 at the Hostel for Assamese students situated at the 67 Mirzapur street under the name ‘Asamiya Bhashar Unnati Sadhini Sabha’. In 1889 (February 13) a monthly magazine, ‘Jonākī’ began to publish under the editorship of Chandra Kumār Agarwālī. Lakṣṭmināth Bezbaroa and Hemchandra Goswāmī were also behind the publication of the ‘Jonākī’ with Agarwālī.

47. Sāhityarathī Lakṣṭmināth Bezbaroa, Jatindra Nāth Goswāmī, p-169.
Lakshminath Bezbaroa was the main patron of the ‘Jonaki’. He published his drama ‘Litikai’ part by part continuously for one year from the first issue of the ‘Jonaki’. He then became the editor from the fourth year of its publication. Bezbaroa published most of his writings in this magazine. In fact, through this magazine, Jonaki all forms of modern Assamese literature like poetry, novels, dramas, stories, humourous essays, articles and such other form had their beginning and different writers began to pour on. During the last decade of the nineteenth century all sorts of literature began to be published which began a new era in the Assamese literature. It should be acknowledged that the students from Assam in Calcutta got inspiration from the study of English and Bengali literature. It was also the reason for writing all forms of literature in Assamese. They also began the translation of the best works in English into Assamese. It was natural that young writers like Bezbaroa got inspiration from the study of English and Bengali literature.

The literary genius of Bezbaroa was multifarious. He was at once, a poet, a novelist, a story-writer, a dramatist, a philosopher, a humorist, a critic, a journalist and a reformer. The basic feature of Bezbaroa’s poetry is healthy-optimism and vigilant patriotism. He was the main supporter of neo-romanticism. In 1913, his ‘Kadamkali’, a book of poetry was published. In his poetry there are the impacts of several songs like the folksong, ‘Bihusong’, ‘Banghošhā’, ‘Āināam’, ‘Lulaby’, ‘Deh Vichār geet,’ and Vaishnavite songs and their philosophy. The poem ‘Bin-barāgi’ is one of his successful pieces of poetry. There are some poems in his ‘Kripābar Baruār Kakatar Topolā’ and the ‘Kripābar Baruār Obhatani’ which are full of humour.

The modern short story is the gift of the western literature. Bezbaroa introduced it in Assamese for the first time through the ‘Jonaki’. He has three books of short stories to his credit. They are the ‘Sādhu Kathār Kuki’ (1910), ‘Surabhi’ (1909) and the ‘Jonbiri’ (1913). Bezbaroa had liking for folk literature. Therefore he published some folk-tales like the ‘Burhi Āair Sādhu’ (1912), ‘Kakādeotā Āru Nāti Lorā’ (1913) and the ‘Junukā’ (1913). The only
novel of Bezbaroa is the 'Padum kunwari', which was published under the title 'Padmakunwari' and was published in a book form in 1905. The 'Padumkunwari' is the first historical novel in Assamese.

Bezbaroa was also a famous dramatist. He wrote both historical and humorous plays (Farces). His farces are i) The Litikāi (1901), ii) Pāchani (1913), iii) Nomal (1913) and iv) The Chikarpati-Nikarpati. (1913) While his historical plays are - i) The Chakradhwaj Singha (1915), (ii) The Jaymati Kunwari (1916); and iii) The Belimār (1915). Bezbaroa enriched Assamese dramatic literature. In fact, Bezbaroa wanted to arouse patriotic feeling through historical plays; and through the farces he depicted the weakness and evils of the Assamese society.

Bezbaroa also wrote in the nicknames- Kripābar Baroa and Barbaroa. In these nicknames generally he wrote the humorous writings. Bezbaroa’s humorous writings are unique in Assamese literature.

Bezbaroa was also attracted by the works of his predecessors like Ānanda Rām Dhekiāl Phukan, Hem Chandra Baroa, Gunābhirām Baroa, Bholānāth Dās, Ramā Kānta Choudhury, Lambodar Borā, Kamalākānta Bhattāchārya, Padmāwatī Devī Phukanani and so on. He had enough study of their writings and got inspirations from them. The writings of English writers, Shakespeare, Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Johnson also had enough influence on him.

Bezbaroa published a news magazine, ‘Bānhi’ and tried to enrich Assamese literature. The ‘Bānhi’ gave birth to a patriotic feeling among the Assamese people. He served Assamese literature from Calcutta and Sambalpur of Orissa. From the marital point he was related to the famous family of Kabiguru Rabindranāth Tagore. While Bezbaroa was in Calcutta.

\[48\] ibid, p-198.
he was inspired by the writings of Bonkim Chandra, Maichael Madhu Sudan Dutta, Vidyasagar, Rabindranath Tagore, Sharat Chandra and Dwijendralal.

Practically speaking Bezbaroa was much influenced by the writings of the Vaishnava saints Śrī Śankaradeva and Śrī Mādhabdev. Therefore, he wrote books on these two saints of Assam and gave publicity to their greatness.

In addition to the traditional Vaishnavite influence, the modern education which he received through English had also influence on him and with all these he tried to enrich Assamese literature. The writings of his predecessors, Hem Chandra Baroa and Gunābhūram Baroa also inspired him to enrich Assamese literature. Besides, the folk life and folk literature also constitute another important factor of inspiration for him.

2.2:6 CULTURAL TRADITION:

Culture is the measuring rod of the national feature. The specialties of any nation are reflected in their culture:

"Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. (Sir Edward)"

Like other cultures of India, the Assamese culture is also based on rural life. Since Bezbaroa was moving from place to place with his parents, he came across different folk-cultures. He got the chance to mix himself up with the Vaishnavite culture at his own home. Again since he was with Rabikākā, he had the opportunity to go through folk literature from his childhood. There was a permanent impact on the mind of Bezbaroa of the...
Satriya culture, particularly of the Bargeets, Naam Prasanga, Naat-Bhaona, Putala Nach, Folk Songs and Folk Culture. He was also influenced by Assamese archeology and antiquarian studies.

Bezbaroa tried to preserve Assamese culture and tried to make them more forceful along with the development and progress of Assamese literature. In his writings, he introduced characters from the most common character of the village to the characters of high class people and small incidents of the 'Satras', and gave expression to the culture of Assam. Bezbaroa tried to preserve not only Assamese literature, but also Assamese culture.

Bezbaroa was conscious of Assamese dress and food. He liked Assamese food more than the western one. He loved the 'Kahudi', 'Khârali', 'Chunga-pitha', 'Tilpitha', 'Fenipitha', meat of a duck etc. of Assamese preparation. In his 'Bânhi' he wrote humour under the caption- "Kahudi Aru Khârali'. He praised Assamese dress like, Churiâ, Chadar, Gamocha, Tangâli etc. against western Pants, Shirts etc. Prof. Navakânta Baruâh wrote about the Assamese dress of Bezbaruah:

"गात छाटि मारि लोचा शेल दिया आलोचन खनेरे लक्षमीनाथ बेजबरुवा।
जिखन आवश्यक चित्र आजिकालिं प्रचलित, सेइखन भाव-भागी सकलो।
एन भारतीय संग्रामत लोकार, तने चित्र देखा जाय देशभक्त चितरजनर,
मतिताल नेहरू, द्विजेन्द्रताल रयर– आरू बहुतर। सेइ एकें धरणांथां चादर,
लोचा संग्रामत पुरूष-पूर्वि महेंजोदरार भारवरात आईए।""
Assamese culture is a part and parcel of Indian culture. It may be said about Bezbaroa that inspite of his being respectful to Assamese culture, he was a worshipper of Indian culture.

Bezbaroa has proved it that if we cannot preserve national heritage and culture then it would be impossible to preserve national existence. He expressed this idea in his presidential speech in the Assam Sahitya Sabha held in Guwahati in 1929:

"आमार जे अतीत एकबारे पैलाउं दिबलगीया नहय; बरे एकालत सि जे भास्तर सकलो उननां प्रदेशर निर्दिना बा तत्त्विक आछिल, सेडिंग जगतर आगत डाँड़ि धरा आरं सेड़ भाबते अनुप्रुणित है निजर जातीय जीवन शकलके गल्लौ लोबा आरं अतीत आरं वर्तमान एड़ दुहर भाजत संबंध आरं सामाजस्य रखिय भविष्यतर बाटेरी आगबढ़ा आमार प्रधान कर्तव्य। अतीत–भविष्यतर भरि भूमि। 51"

In fact, Bezbaroa was the patron of Indian culture. He believed that Assamese culture is a part and parcel of Indian culture. Therefore, inspite of his being a migrant outside Assam he tried to preserve Assamese culture in food habit, life style, dresses and so on. Whenever he found degradation in culture, he tried to rectify them through humour and satire. Therefore, it can be said that inspiration of traditional culture is inherent in all his writings.