3.1 INTRODUCTION

Art has developed in tandem with the exigencies of a region and nation in constant evolution: the artists responding to the socio-political and economic tenors of each decade with alacrity. The potency of Indian art stems from its ability to include and adapt all the multiplicity that it encounters rather than exclude on the basis of claims to purity. Indian art from every region is an amalgam that are globally experienced and shared with remarkable developments in information technology and web-based sharing.

The history of modern Indian art traces a complex and chequered trajectory. The Indian encounter with modernism was not the result of a natural evolution in the context of an industrialized economy. Unlike its western counterparts, modernism in Indian art was a slow evolving process against the backdrop of severe ruptures in the social, economic and political fabric of the country especially in the context of the colonial encounter. (Lochan: 2010)

Contemporary form of art is of the post 1960- modernist period, the word ‘contemporary’ means belonging to the same period of time; of about the same age, current, and modern. It was this period of the late 1900s which saw major socio-economic, cultural, political and also educational changes the
world over, which undoubtedly influenced art, amongst many other productive fields. The rigidity in defining types of art was lost to a large extent during this time and this is what came to define contemporary art. Its flexibility aside, contemporary art deals with issues directly related to its present day world.

Contemporary artists chose to highlight the idea or impulse their work rather than concentrate on the medium or method used. They unlike earlier artists were not deterred by the thought of using various media and techniques in combination. Open to experimentation, these people pioneered of setting their audience thinking about the subject as the most important aim of the artwork. Topics like racism, global warming, cloning, and biotechnology, international politics, human rights, spirituality and economics are reflected in the works of contemporary artists.

The advent of contemporary art marked the breaking of shackles by artists to move from the conventional inclination towards aesthetic beauty and purity to address subjects as politics which affect the lay man. This is what brought the common man closer to the artist who didn't seem 'high and mighty' like an untouchable philosopher any more.

Contemporary art can be defined variously as art produced at this present point or art produced since World War II. The definition of the word contemporary would support the first view, but museums of contemporary art commonly define their collections as consisting of art produced since World War II.

Since the 20th century onwards, with the advent of Modern and Postmodern art forms, divisions between what is generally regarded as the
fine arts and the low arts have started to fade, as contemporary high art continues to challenge these concepts by mixing with popular culture.

The term 'Modernism' has been used by critics and writers on art, to identify art that appears to be specific to our own historical period, beginning in nineteenth century, The term was not used simply to refer to the most recent art (that is, the most modern), but to refer to art with specific qualities that set it apart from more traditional art that was primarily devoted to naturalistic representation. (Risatti: 1990)

As evolution of modernist art and theory, attention increasingly shifted away from representational elements in art toward more formal qualities- that is abstract qualities of shape, line, color. As a result, modernist aesthetic values and judgments about art came to be based on these formal qualities, and the work of art began to be seen as a discrete object its own properties that were not dependent upon imitation of nature. While these ideas were temporally called into question in the Great Depression of the 1930s, especially during the years after World War II, that was characterized by the sudden emergence of influence of American art and critical theory. That particular period has become identified as Late Modern to differentiate it from earlier- European-centered Modernism. This Late Modern art, as it developed in America tended to avoid social and political issues and to concentrate upon purely formal artistic problems, especially as the writings of American critic Clement Greenberg.

By the middle of 1970s, the social and political events that followed the Vietnam protests in America and the May 1968 student protests in Paris...
signaled major changes in both art and critical thought. This period, beginning in the 1970s, has now become known as Postmodern to indicate its distinctiveness from Modern period in general and from Late Modern immediately preceding it.

In the arena of art, the immediate dissatisfaction with modernism that promulgated the initial notion of postmodernism began as an attack upon what was seen as too narrow and restrictive a theory of art, rather dearth of individual emotion and socially relevant subject matter. In other words, the strictly formal interest of Modernism seemed to be insufficient and insensitive in the context of new social and cultural concerns as the environment, civil rights, feminism and Third World Issues. Postmodern critics and artists began to question not only the theoretical structure of art, espoused by Greenberg, but also the meaning, purpose, and the function of art vis-à-vis society. Art has come to be considered a form of knowledge and a means of communication with important consequences for the construction of sexuality and the self. “Walter Benjamin proposed that the reproducibility of a work of art erodes its ‘aura’ or its quality of uniqueness. This insight does demand contextual reflection, as far as the history of prints in India is concerned.” (Dasgupta: 2006)

The entire process of print making can often be so engaging and refreshing that the artist always tends to get deeply involved in it with great zeal. The art of print making is definitely catching up in a big way in India. More and more artists now choose to express themselves through the graphic
medium. Art lovers are also slowly appreciating the hidden creative processes involved in print making.

The origin of printing can be traced back to China, where it was the need for religious literature and pictures in connection with the propagation of Buddhism. In general, block printing is thought to have been used for printing portraits of the Buddha in 650 A.D. In Europe printing with the use of movable types began in the fifteen century, although block printing was known much earlier. Even in Europe the credit for the invention of the movable types is variously ascribed to Gutenberg (Germany), Coster (Holland), Johannes Brito (Belgium), Pamfilo Castalde (Italy). (Naik: 2006)

It is not that the printed picture was altogether unknown in India before the British settlement. As far evidence is concerned the Mughal period record faithful attachment with printed illustration or rather engravings of European graphic artists (Plate 3.1), which were presented to the court by the European envoys and merchantmen from 1557 onwards during the reign of Akbar. However the Mughal artists copied the style and iconography of European art not the technique of print-making in general. There is no faithful evidence to recommend that the practice of print making was known and available to the artists of the Mughal court. (Das: 1994)

Whether from Babylon or from the Bible, India was open to new ideas. It was Christian missionaries, who wanted to produce the Bible in the several languages of the country, who introduced printing and publishing in India. In fact, we got the first printing press as a happy accident. As early as 1542, Francis Xavier, a Spaniard, was teaching the Bible in Tharangambadi
(Tranquebar), Tamil Nadu. Also, when the Viceroy of Goa, on behalf of King Joan III of Portugal, opened schools for Indians, books had to be provided. Thus, pressure was put on Portugal by Francis Xavier to dispatch printing presses to India, Ethiopia and Japan. Meanwhile, the Emperor of Abyssinia (Ethiopia) requested the king of Portugal to send a press along with the missionaries. Thus the first batch of Jesuit missionaries left for Ethiopia on March 29, 1556. En route, they arrived in Goa on September 6, 1556. But, while they were preparing to proceed to Ethiopia, news reached them that the Ethiopian Emperor was not keen to receive the missionaries. Thus, as luck would have it, the press stayed in Goa and was set up at the College of St. Paul in Goa. (Verghese: 2007) Today, the huge arch of the St. Paul's College gate (Plate 3.2), restored by the Archaeological Survey of India, stands as a witness to this pioneering effort.

It was only in 1556 when Jesuit brother Juan de Bustamante (1536-1588), who knew the art of printing, landed Goa with the printing press. The art of printing entered in India for the first time on September 6, 1556 through Jesuits. (Kakar: 2008) So Bustamante must therefore be considered as the pioneer of the art of printing in India. Printing came to India in 1556, almost hundred years after Gutenberg's Bible, with the abandonment in Goa of a printing press meant for Abyssinia, and its use by Portuguese Jesuits to print and disseminate religious literature. The first woodcut illustration for a book was found in *Doctrina Cristiana*. This book also happened to be the first in vernacular language Tamil printed in India, was produced in Quilion, presently Kollam of Kerala. (Sunish: 2011)
As the Portuguese started mechanical book printing in India, the British traders started printing pictures and illustration during last part of eighteenth century. The assertion of the arrival of foreign artists in India began with Tily Kettle, a British painter, in Madras in 1767. History enlightens us about sixty amateur foreign artists, those who visited in India from 1767 to 1820. More or less all the amateur, artists were settled in Calcutta and its conurbation. (Das: 1994)

In India during the late nineteenth century it was a revolutionary change in a printing industry, when major printing presses dedicated their full concentration on the production of prints subjected on god-goddesses, mythological themes and historical icons. Later the medium, lithography was soon expanded to other subjects for advertisement of goods and services as well for Freedom Movement Propaganda. It was not so far that the Indian film Industry had also taken the advantage of this medium.

This low cost medium of print production became very popular in the society soon for different reasons i.e. religious icons, advertisements, and political mode of communication & of course for its very affordable cost. Many presses, such as Ravi Uday Press, Ravi Uday Vijaya Press, Ravi Varma Press, Modern Litho Works, Calendar Mfg. Co., Picture Publishing Co., Bolton Offset Litho, and Shivraj Offset Litho published such litho prints on many common as well as famed subjects in bulk. It was noted that the lithography was popular in India from late 19th Century to middle of 20th Century (about beginning years after independence. It was undefined term of production that they published these lithographs in particular sizes i.e. 5 x 7
Print making as a contemporary medium has accepted witness to the development of the nationalist aesthetic in art. Printed illustrations, caricatures, and political cartoons have served as a means to study and satire contemporary social anomalies. One can see this clearly in Gaganendranath Tagore's chromolithograph print as entitled Advut lok done in 1917 (Plate 3.7). That print making could allow for an intermingling of disciplinary sensibilities, is probably one of the most vital reasons why it survived as an expressive medium.

“Print making in contemporary India is relatively a more recent medium of expression. Although the growth the language in this medium cannot be considered in isolation from other contemporary visual arts, nonetheless it has emerged through last three decades having its own special geniuses.” (Panikkar: 1994) However, till today a large number of graphic artists are also painters, which makes it essential to enquire into the inter-relationship and the validity of graphics in terms of language which an artist evolves. This is necessary because in the contemporary condition a print seems to be viewed as having hesitant status in comparison to say, painting, unlike in the western countries. Further, a print maker’s language, remains only partially analyzed as often taking more for their technical virtuosity and less for what are all about they are all about in terms of language. Again, developing technical skill in relation to evolving a methodology of linguistic presentation or specific artistic vocabulary is a vital aspect of any art practice. Significantly such interdependence is more acutely fell in print making. The interest that was
evoked in the 60's and 70's regarding the facility of the prints in making art available to a larger audience has not yet been really fulfilled. The limitations and the vested interests involved in the contemporary gallery system may be one of the reasons. The lack of conviction, commitment and adequate knowledge in taking up the cause of popularizing print has resulted in comparatively limited number of exclusive shows of prints in the galleries during that period in India. Since the 70's, however, print making, as a whole, in India, thematically speaking, have been progressively dissociating itself from older sensibilities, which it would appear have fallen out of pace with contemporary values. The extent of specific place, regional engagement with print making, and through print making with different aspect of modernism, cannot be exaggerated though.

Print making has often been looked upon as a medium that is heavily 'technique-dependent', especially when it comes to if being taught in institutions. Not only has print making laid itself open to be employed in counter-cultural art initiatives, but it has also served as an inspiration to artist to deviate from regular modernist protocols. Interestingly enough as a medium, print making has involved materials and techniques which approximate industrial processes at a smaller, more personal scale.

3.2 IMPRESSION ART IN INDIA: 1850 TO 1950

The beginning of Impression or graphic art lies in the origin and development of printing in India, for, essentially, printing was the predecessor of print making. The progression of printing led to, first, the advent of book illustration and then to independent single-sheet display print, which ultimately
led to the print as a work of art in its own right. Connected with this was the introduction of printing mediums such wood and metal engraving, lithography, and etching. Initially used for printing both text and pictures, the mediums continue to be in use today for print making. (Sengupta: 2012) In the course of its long journey, print making has undergone continuous shifts from its role as a technological tool to print text and illustrations in the colonial printing and publishing industry, as a medium of documentation and dissemination in an era preceding photography, and finally, as a medium of artistic expression and pedagogical importance in the pre- and post-Independence years.

The story of printing is not merely a matter of what was printed when, but how the Gutenberg invention proved a handmaid to the cultural uplift of the nation. In literature, spanning all its genres, in art, in music, in folklore, in language and rhetoric, how did printing expand the intellectual horizons in the country? How did printing achieve this in the sciences, in philosophy, in the social sciences, and various other disciplines? The promethean effort of bringing knowledge from exclusive palm-leaves and other manuscripts into the houses of ordinary people, and familiarize them with their cultural heritage, is an aspect of this history in every Indian language. How printing has served tradition, and also challenged tradition, is a very exciting story. Printing has no political, social or religious barriers, and is a mode of broadcasting ideas adopted by all shades of opinion. (Kesavan: 1998)

If the location of the earliest printing presses in India were plotted on the map, it will be found that they were all located along the coastline of peninsular India. Goa, Cochin, Punnaikkyal (near Kanyakumari), Vypicottai
(near Kodungalloor), and Amblakkadu (near Thrissur), were the places along the west coast. Tharangambadi (Tranquebar), Madras, Fort William, Calcutta and Serampore along the east coast represent the shaping of Indian printing. Bombay contributed its share towards the second phase of the vigorous growth of early Indian printing. Roman priests of the Catholic Missions and the Protestant Missions from Europe fathered and furthered this impulse in their anxiety to translate the Bible and thus spread the Word of God. (Verghese: 2007)

The start of printing in Goa, spread along the southern coast and its attainment of maturity at Tharangambadi and Madras has been described as the dawn of printing in India, but the sunrise in all its brilliance was when William Carey set foot in India on November 11, 1793. The Bengali alphabet in movable type followed a long time after the Tamil alphabet had been devised in movable type. The Serampore Mission of Carey was a pioneer in this respect, helped by William Ward and Joshua Marshmann, establishing a press in Serampore in 1800. Worth to mention that, an exhibition entitled the Carey Exhibition of Early Printing and Fine Printing Calcutta had been held at National Library, Calcutta in May 1955 as tribute to great service of William Carey. (www.wmcarey.edu: 2013) Two able Indians, Panchanan Karmakar and Manohar helped in casting the types, publishing in 40 Indian languages, for the first time. Carey also set up the first paper making factory and the first foundry in India.

Nathan Brown, Oliver Cutter and Miles Bronson, all missionaries, established a press in Sadiya, Assam in 1838, bringing a literary revolution in

The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) established a press in Tharangambai (Tranquebar) in 1713. Many missionaries, including Ziegenbalg, Schultze, Beschi, Nobili, Fabricius, Rhenius, Rottler, Winslow, G.U. Pope and Calwell were involved in promoting Tamil language and literature. And C.P. Browne laboured for Telugu language. In Bombay, the American Mission Press was established in 1812. Ravi Varma (1848-1906) is an early protagonist in the Indian artist’s passage to modern. He becomes the most celebrated professional painter on mythological genre, of his time, casting himself in the role of an autodidact, of a gentleman artist in the Victorian mould. It is precisely in such matters that Ravi Varma is the indisputable father figure of modern Indian art. (Kapoor: 2000) Worth to mention that patrons and clients, both Indian and foreign, princes and literati has been keen to acquire his work until finally the middle class can also acquire it as well, but in the form of oleographs. As Ravi Varma and his younger brother C. Raja Raja Varma began reproductions of his painting images in a newly set up lithography press near Bombay in the early 1890s as such oleograph entitled Shakuntala Patralekhan (Plate 3.3). Although during early 19th century in Calcutta, printing activities became flourished and well established in woodcut illustration by Bat-tala printers.
which had been directly taken the ideal of Bengal folk painting tradition in religious and native subject matter as such print entitled *Bhaiphonta* or brother’s day (Plate 3.4).

The British administration settled industrial art schools in Lahore, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata and they had appointed British artist-teachers and skilled technicians to train the native students. Their ambition was to produce skilled illustrators, calligraphers, draughtsmen, block-makers and modellers to support the industries developed by European entrepreneurship in the newly formed colony. In the training schedule of the industrial schools subjects like drawing, still life studies, human figure, studies, engraving, lithography and clay modelling were introduced. Thus these newly formed industrial schools delivered well-trained and technically competent artist-craftsmen to work as illustrators in industry. Ananda Prasad Bagchi, first batch alumni of Government School of Art, Calcutta, established Calcutta Art Studio as done some extraordinary lithographic print on Puranid Hindu religious theme (Plate 3.5) and (Plate 3.6).

Within India, Bengal was the place where it all begun- the story of Indian print making, the inception of modern Indian art. Calcutta School of Industrial Art was founded in 1854. After a few years, in 1865, the industrial school of Calcutta was named as Government School of Art and Craft. In its history of more than one hundred and fifty years, the institution shifted its focus and played a pivotal role in development of modern Indian art practice. (Roy: 2011) The Government Art Institution (presently the Government College of Art and Craft) carried the legacy of British academic schooling in its training program.
A series of situations contributed to the productivity of that time, circumstances weighed down with tension and violence. There is one element that binds the artists Nandalal Bose, Mukul Dey (Plate 3.8), Ramendranath Chakrovarty, Benode Behari Mukherjee, Ramkinkar Baij, Chittaprasad, Haren Das, Somnath Hore and others- that of belonging to Bengal, and the fact that they pictorially and conceptually navigated the meaning of this belonging. During first decade of twentieth century, Rabindranath Tagore who along with Abanindranath and Gaganendranath worked hard in establishing the Bichitra Club at Jorasnko House, Calcutta. At that time Gaganendranath discovered a new medium or giving expression to his fund of humour and satire in caricature. As realising demand of his cartoon in local magazines, Gaganendranath decided to publish them in book form, especially in lithograph technique.

For this purpose an old litho press was purchased and with the lithographic (an old Mohammedan printer was appointed especially to help Gaganendranath in Lithography technique) equipment a new section was added to Bichitra Club in 1917, Gaganendranath’s colour lithographic cartoon album ‘Adbhut Lok’ 1917, (Realm of the absurd) was printed in this press (Plate 3.7). Gaganendranath was clever enough to take the opportunity of mechanical printing to popularize his cartoon. (Mukhopadhyay: 1994) Apart from creating a new art form, Gaganendranath interest in graphics and also through Bichitra Club, initiated a new meaning in the modern Indian art movement.

Graphics or specifically print making, introduced by the British in the art schools, was mainly used for re-duplication of pictures or for illustrations of
books to make it interesting for the newly growing reading public in Bengal. Outside the Art Schools, print making was already in vogue with the private studio-owners but it served mainly as a mass-communication media rather than as a creative medium. From the first illustrated book (printed in 1816) to Gaganendranath it took more than hundred years for the Indian artists to give certain prestige and stability to the graphic medium as a whole, which Europe had achieved at least a century back. In India the experimentation in the artistic expression was gradual and steady in the 1920s. It was attempted by the artists who had their training in Indian artistic tradition and initiative in experimentation was inspired by contemporary environment, exhibition of Bauhaus artists of German expressionism. (Gangoli: 1922)

Print as a creative medium and as an academic discourse in India started during the second decade of the twentieth century. This new era in Indian art began with the establishment of Kala Bhavana in Santiniketan in 1919 by Rabindranath Tagore. When in 1921 Nandalal Bose took charge of Kala Bhavana, the newly established art college, the creative ambience received a new energy and an unprecedented chapter was added to the history of Indian art. Graphic art was introduced in the teaching program of Kala Bhavana right from the beginning. Nandalal Bose, as a teacher, greatly encouraged print making. The printing machine of Kolkata’s Bichitra Sabha was brought to Santiniketan, from the private collection of William Pearson the famous etchings and dry points of Muirhead Bone were also transported.

During 1921-22 French artist Madame Andre Karpeles visited Santiniketan. She was an expert in wood engraving and demonstrated the art at Kala Bhavana. Thus artists of Kala Bhavana became familiar with the
technique of engraving, and for the first time engraving was practiced there. Andre Karpeles left Santiniketan after six months. It was during her visit that Ramendranath Chakravarty learned the technique of engraving, though Ramendranath and his fellow students had already gone through William Pearson’s personal collection of original etchings and dry points made by the renowned British print maker Muirhead Bone. The introduction of western technique of woodcut had grown interest of Nandalal in print making and extracts his personal style of print making where he omitted the detailing, but focusing on the broad essential areas in black and white. Rabindranath’s ‘Sahas Path’ which illustrated by Nandalal Bose are worth to mention in this regard. (Gupta: 2011) In 1923 the Mexican connoisseur Fryman visited Santiniketan. Though he was not a perfect print maker he had had an opportunity to observe the technique of Japanese multi-colour woodcut process from a Japanese print maker while he was in Paris. Fryman demonstrated his knowledge at Kala Bhavana. It was around 1925 that Ramendranath Chakravarty started experimenting with colour woodcut prints in Japanese multicolour technique similar to Ukiyo-e prints.

During the year 1925 Surendranath Kar, an artist-craftsman, technician and architect, went to London to learn the technique of lithography and etching. There in County Council he did a few lithographs and offset prints. Though Surendranath was unable to equip himself as an expert in lithography and etching, he was able to create an interest among other artists to start lithography and etching upon his return to Kala Bhavana. In 1926 Gaganendranath Tagore donated his litho press to Kala Bhavana (Plate 3.39) and a pressman was appointed to look after it.
Ramendranath learned the primary techniques of lithography and etching from Surendranath. As a result of intense interest for lithographic print, Nandalal Bose drew up a program to publish a folio depicting Bengal dolls in colour lithography. After having four or five prints of different Bengal dolls printed in monochrome and stained in colour ink, the project did not work out, fully due to technological gaps. But we must pay our attention to the excitement that was created. Surendranath was unable to pay much attention to the graphic section as he was busy with the various other developments at Visva-Bharati. When Surendranath left Kala Bhavana, Ramendranath tried his best to ensure a working atmosphere in the lithography studio. During this period Nandalal Bose, Ramendranath and a few artists of Kala Bhavana executed some lithographs but after a short while, the lithography section got closed due to lack of proper manoeuvres. Ramendranath and a few artists continued etching and woodcuts.

In 1924 Nandalal Bose visited China and Japan, and when he came back, there was an authentic collection of Chinese rubbings and Japanese colour woodcut prints with him. Artists of Kala Bhavana came into direct contact with the original print of the Far East. Nandalal's vision could immediately adapt this to the creative possibilities and scope of graphic art. He had experimented and worked with various print making media such as woodcut, wood engraving, linocut, etching, dry point, lithograph and even non-traditional matrix like cement block, following the rubbing and relief process. It is generally agreed that Pablo Picasso was the first to explore linoleum as a medium as entitled Toros Vallauries for artistic creative expression during 1958 (Plate 3.10). But prior to Picasso's attempt, Nandalal Bose selected the

The linocuts of *Sahaj Path* (Plate 3.9) should be considered as a turning point in the history of Indian creative print. His linocuts were based on simple design, clear arrangement of space with balanced distribution of black and white and strong negative and positive forms. It is interesting to note that the art of paper cut is prevailing as traditional art among the Santal Community. ‘Modoya’ or ‘mandap’ is a bamboo roofless pavilion with four sides open, and is a place where generally marriage ceremonies take place. The bamboo arch is decorated with colourful paper cuts of daily life, animals, birds, foliage and animals. The negative area of the image is cut out by scissors or knife. While cutting away the negative images the four-sided border frame is kept, similar to stencil process or bas relief (like the temple terracotta plaques of Bengal). The images are flat, silhouette, bold and contour-based images.

In the work of Nandalal's *Sahaj Path* illustration we see the similar character of image making in terms of solid negative and positive space on paper. It is presumed that Nandalal might have seen such art of paper cut in the Santal community of surrounding Santiniketan. The black & white linocuts of Nandalal had strong influence. Printing linoleum block was technically less complicated and easier to handle and it gives an attractive monochromatic image. It quickly became popular even at the school and was introduced to the syllabus. The school magazine of Patha bhavana is one of the brilliant
examples, and the annual magazine *Amader Lekha* embellished with black &
white linocuts done by the students. During that time, Chittaprosad, a socially
committed graphic artist in the rise of revolutionary popular art in India in the
1940s, whose iconic prints of people’s resistance against foreign colonial
power and the indigenous elite has become legendary. Modern history of art
always makes reminiscence of the terrible Bengal famine of 1943 and artist
Chittaprosad’s documentation of the terrible of Bengal famine as his linocut
print entitled *City-street bed done* in 1952 (Plate 3.11) and the artist is also
usually mentioned in the history of Indian print making. (Singh: 2011)

We see an important change in the approach towards graphics from
this time onwards. For the first time Indian artists were not too concerned with
the reproductive value of graphic media. In fact, they concentrated more on
doing a 'complete' work by itself, which could stand out as an independent
work of art. During this decade a different aim could be seen in the work of
Benode Behari and Ramkinkar. Both these artists had experimented with
various graphic media: woodcut, wood engraving, linocut, etching, dry point,
lithography and even with large cement blocks. Benode Behari Mukherjee, a
successful disciple of Nandalal, created some outstanding etchings,
woodcuts, and linocuts. He used solid form in black and white with utmost
simplicity of form. Instead of building spatial depths, in his works we find
brilliant use of positive and negative spaces. Black and white created the
distinctions between solid and void, not between light and shade. Again in
etching and lithography we notice the importance of line and its several
formations. (Gupta: 2012) Benode Behari Mukherjee (Plate 3.12) and
Ramkinkar Baij (Plate 3.13) executed a series of graphic prints which are the
most striking examples in the history of Indian art. Though trained under Nandalal Bose and prevailing the "Bengal School" of that time, they departed from its influence by evolving their own conception and style. In their works one could no longer see the romantically poetic and lyrical elements of the Bengal School, but their works became more precisely stylized and eclectic taking various styles and expressions of Indian, Far-Eastern and European origin. In the works of Benode Behari and Ramkinkar, well organized forms and textural values could be seen.

Ramendranath Chakraborty’s preference was more for the print making. He was exposed to modern techniques and technologies as his linocut print entitled *The view of Ganga* done in early 20th century (Plate 3.14). But he was not plagued away by the new exposure. He continued in the faith for and ideals of Nandalal with catholicity and zeal of nature and great Indian tradition. (Chakraborty: 1999) When Ramendranath left Santiniketan, Biswarup Bose became an effective teacher for the print making section. After his return from Japan he was able to create a new enthusiasm among the students to experiment with various graphic media. Before 1969, print making was merely a part of the department of painting. The relief process was widely taught at Kala Bhavana, and intaglio and planography were mainly for the advanced students. During this period woodcut, wood engraving, linocut and stencil processes were compulsory for the junior section and their works could be divided into three major groups; (1) Creative Print making, (2) Printed design and (3) Re-Production of Picture. In the first group, students were taught to create original prints mainly based on monochromatic matrix. Due to the lack of proper understanding of the medium their works became nearer to
painting than being truly graphical. In the second group there were Alpana and design in woodcut and linocut. This was a period when Alpana of Kala Bhavana was well-known all over India for their oriental and decorative character. Alpana floral design or floral painting became a special interest among the students. In the third category, there were reproductions of Indian painting, especially mediaeval and contemporary paintings of reputed masters by means of colour woodcut and stencil process. For an example, Nara Venkat Ratnam executed a few colour reproductions of the paintings of Nandalal Bose in woodcut technique.

If we search the history of print making of Kala Bhavana from its early stage to 1967, we will notice that mediocre and less talented students were not being benefited by the teaching program, nonetheless a few talented students, namely, Nara Venkat Ratnama, Kripal Singh, Sankho Choudhury, Madhukar Sheth, Dinkar Kowshik, K G Subramanyan, G Dikshit, Jagdish Mittal, Gostto Behari, Banabehari Ghosh, and Binodh Rahut Roy were able to create something original, especially in woodcut and linocut. In the year 1967, when five year degree and diploma courses was introduced at Kala Bhavana under the guidance of Dinkar Kowshik, various changes took place. With the new syllabus of five year degree and diploma, the entire course of study was divided into four departments: (1) Painting (2) Graphic Art, (3) Sculpture, (4) History of Art. Along with these four departments, the two years certificate course in crafts and design also continued. Every student had to join first the elementary course, and he had to work for three years to qualify himself to select any of the four specialized streams. (Majumder: 2012)
Each of these four departments had a course and curriculum of two years at the specialization stage. Print making as a specialized course in the graduate level was introduced in India for the very first time. And a separate graphic section, with three sub-sections, (1) Relief process; woodcut wood engraving, linocut etc; (2) Planography: lithograph and Platography (commencing later, in 2005); (3) Intaglio; etching, engraving, drypoints, etc. During the summer recess of 1968, Kala Bhavana arranged a graphic camp and participating artists as Somnath Hore, K G Subramanyan, A Ramachandran, Binodbehari, Ramkinkar and Sukhomoy Mitra. In this camp special interest was taken in lithography and etching. Somnath Hore joined as the head of the department of graphic arts in the year 1969. A renewed enthusiasm was created in the print making section under the expert guidance of Somnath Hore and Biswarup Bose. The first batch of students joined the department to be specialized in print making in the year 1970. (Das: 2007) Somnath Hore lost no time in introducing various techniques, especially in lithography (Plate 3.16) and etching. This was a period of experimentation with different graphic media. Somnath Hore and Biswarup Bose, the two great experimentalists, allowed and guided their students to explore graphic media with the attitude of research in the field.

The popularity of the department increased. People gradually came to appreciate the standard of the print making section. In 1973 a silkscreen class for senior students was started under the supervision of Biswarup Bose. Tapan Mitra & Santanu Bhattacharjee devoted their full time to establish the serigraphy section in Kala Bhavana. But the project came to an end after a year due to not enough involvement of serious students in the section. The
practice of serigraphy restarted again in 1990 is continuing till date. The department has continuously been boosted up with eminent personalities along with their outstanding prints like Somnath Hore, Sanat Kar, S K David, Santanu Bhattacherjee, Lalu Prasad Shaw (Plate 3.18), Nirmalendu Das (Plate 3.19), Pinaki Barua (Plate 3.20), Suranjan Basu (Plate 3.24), Pulak Dutta, Arpan Mukherjee (Plate 3.22), Ajit Seal and Salil Sahani (Plate 3.21) joining the faculty. The Graphic Art Department of Kala Bhavana has not only become an active centre for creative prints, but gradually enhance new, non toxic, easy handy methods and materials and introduced those into the curriculum syllabus.

3.3 PRINT MAKING SCENARIO SINCE 1950

After 1950 Indian artist also find wider scope to explore various media in print making, incorporating continuous research in the field of printing evokes in Europe. Generally speaking, from the middle of the nineteenth century Impression art became a personal expression that parasitic, more aesthetic than merely reproductive or illustrative. With the evolved language and its special character, impression art became self-sufficient, independent and more forceful and expressive than previous work in the area which was more far removed from trade and commerce. Since the last century’s new techno- crafts of printing and the combination of photomechanical process enlarged the scope and possibilities of impression art for artistic expression.

However, print making was being practiced intermittently by a few artists in different parts of India. F. H. Rulfder, a Madras and Bangalore based artist, did a few color woodcuts; Lalit Mohan Sen, an ex-student of Lucknow
College of Art, had been to London and studied etching at the Royal College of Art. On his return to Lucknow he continued to practice woodcut and linocut. Y. K. Shukla, an alumnus of Sir J. J. School of Arts, Bombay, who later settled in Ahmedabad, soon earned a name as an etcher.

Haren Das of Calcutta, another notable name, made a positive mark in skillful polychromatic woodcut prints and also became a full-fledged print maker, a rarity in those days. Chittaprosad’s name is worth mentioning in this regard; though he could not complete his formal education in Calcutta and Jaipur Art College, he seriously adopted linocut and woodcut techniques for his strong artistic expression. In 1946 he settled in Bombay and continued his linocut and woodcut print making. During the period the notable names who did print making include- Binodh Rut Roy (Bhubaneswar), Murlidhar Tali (Bhubaneswar), Saifuddin Ahammad (Calcutta), Roy Dalgarmo (Bombay), Gunen Ganguly (Delhi), Jivan Adalja (Delhi) and a few others. A virtuoso in both relief and intaglio techniques, Haren Das’s keen sense of observation and portrayal brings to his idyllic rural world a special, haunting quality. His sensitive use of line, tonal variations created in aquatint through step bite process indicates his mastery over tricky medium as such intaglio print entitled After the Rain done in 1962 (Plate 3.15). Haren Das might be the only Indian print maker who actively engaged with these mediums and tried to explore new possibilities with it. (Roy: 2011)

It was only after independence that print making came into the mainstream. The 1950s was the period of ferment in the making of new India and readjustment in Indian art and technology. Under the Ministry of Education of Culture and that of Foreign Affairs several developments for art
and cultural activities took place in India. The Indian Council for Cultural Relations was established in 1950 as a cultural bridge between India and the outside world. In 1951 the Lalit Kala Akademi was opened and started functioning as an active centre for promoting contemporary art as well as preserving living traditional art. In the same year the National Gallery of Modern Art was established. The idea behind these three organizations housed in New Delhi was to promote and preserve contemporary Indian arts and crafts and also to introduce them to foreign countries.

Worth to mention in this point in time about Somnath Hore, as one of solicit keepers of the art scene, notwithstanding that he was one of the finest artists of his generation, a great pioneer and achiever in the field of print making. Compassioned with communist party ideology and also whole hearted activist, Somnath Hore left Calcutta after completing final exam at Govt. College of Art & Crafts and moved to Delhi to take charge of the print making section at the Delhi Polytechnic. In Delhi his focus shifted further from art with oblivious political content to the aesthetics and techniques of art, especially print making. At the beginning of the 50s it was further the political thrust of his art that he took to print making. (Siva Kumar: 2010) Almost independently, through trial and error, he not only learned to make multicolored etchings and lithograph entitled *Quake victim* done in 1969 in less than a year but also perfected it over the next few years (Plate 3.16). And it became by 1964, replacing painting, his main means of expression.

Even with the compartmental approach in Indian art education, institutions have played a large role in the making of artists who have contributed to contemporary visual culture, in print making and otherwise. In a
theoretical-methodology that is only now being questioned, art institutions in India have been the yardstick to categorized artists and interpret movements and styles in art. (Sunish: 2011) Most artists from all over India seeking to experiment with print making during their earlier years either went to Kala Bhavana, Santiniketan, Maharaja Sayajirao University in Baroda, or Delhi College of Fine Art. This gave artists a chance to learn from a first generation of experimental print makers such as B C Sanyal (born 1901), Somnath Hore (born 1921), Jyoti Bhatt (born 1934), K G Subramaniam (born: 1924) and Sanat Kar (born 1934).

Discussing of history, a number of interesting quotes and anecdotes about the early days of art of print making in Baroda can be had from the book, *Contemporary Art in Baroda*, edited by Gulammohammed Sheikh, from the chapter titled, *A Post-Independence Initiative in Art*, by Nilima Sheikh. In the 1950s, (the faculty was established in 1949-50) woodcut and linocut were the first and popular print making mediums and print makers experimenting with it were Vinodray Patel, Haroon Khimani, Shanti Dave, Jyoti Bhatt (Plate 3.25), G M Sheikh and Jayant Parikh. ‘Experimenting’ might be a rather tame way to describe what these artists did; they worked on large prints (with single/multiple wood or lino blocks) and complex graphic schemes in color, using large sheets of paper to print on. (Sheikh: 1994)

Several artists, especially from Bombay Progressive Group who mastered the art of print making mostly from the studios in Paris and continued with it return here, have switched over to painting is mainly because of financial reasons. There were no takers for their prints even though offered at ridiculously low prices. In 1957 a group of artists including Hussain,
Gaitonde, Ram Kumar and Tyeb Mehta worked on litho stone and offered small editions of their prints for Rs. 25/- each. None were sold! (Dutta: 2002)

Although, the present market for print making is not very different today. Under the cultural exchange programme original works of art including graphic prints foreign countries begin to be displayed in major cities in India. Indian artists became aware of the latest print making activities of foreign artists through these exhibitions.

During the 1960s a new direction opened. Under the foreign scholarships scheme of the Government of India and also under the aegis of private schemes, a few Indian artists went abroad, where they learnt print making. Those were mainly the French Government Scholarship, the British Council Scholarship, the Commonwealth Scholarship, the Japanese Government Scholarship and Fulbright Scholarship (private) to study in U. S.A. The chief centers of those countries, where a section of Indian artists were trained in modern methods and material in print making, were Atelier 17 in Paris, the Slade School of Arts and the Royal College of Arts, both in London, Gerrit Reitried, Amsterdam. The practical experience received from these centers undoubtedly boosted the scope and possibilities of the print making scene in India when some of the artists continued their carrier as fully fledged print makers on their return to India.

The Society of Contemporary Artists (SCA) can be considered as the proud inheritors of the traditions of print making that began in Kolkata in the 19th century. Ajit Chakraborty, the notable print maker, after his return from Czechoslovakia offered the member of SCA the studio in Kolkata where had been working. As Ajit Chakraborty had brought back a hundred of etching,
engraving, woodcut, lino and litho prints by latest print makers of Czechoslovakia in 1961, they were displayed at the Artistry House Gallery, Kokata. (Report: 2011) This had inspired young artists of SCA of that time, who had gradual established themselves as remarkable print makers of the country. A founding member of the Society of Contemporary Artists, Sanat Kar was born in 1935 and graduated from the Government College of Arts & Crafts in 1955. He began his career as a painter and went on to become one of the most inventive print makers of India. Early in his life he was enchanted by the immense prospect print making held as a creative medium over the years made exemplary contributions to this field. His technical expertise, coupled with his unique formal and thematic concerns which is the hall mark of his prints as his Untitled engraving done in 1977 (Plate; 3.17). (Majumdar; 2011)

Among the contemporary artists, the foremost print maker of her generation in India, Anupam Sud has built up a distinctive style, which is both open-ended and highly deliberated. For over two decades Anupam Sud has been recognized for her extraordinary graphic facility, for the immensity of visual and emotive detail that she succeeds in coaxing out of the zinc plate (Plate 3.28). Particularly in the decades of the late eighties and nineties, her prints were distinguished by their large format, and the dominant sculptural human figural composition which exists outside any recognizable narrative.

Another renowned print maker is Chennai based Ramanathan Palaniappan. Having acquired a degree in painting and post graduation in ceramics, he later focused on print making, besides using computer-aided imagery as his digital print entitled North West 81 degrees done in 2000 (Plate
One of India's leading print makers, he has held several exhibitions, won many awards and has also held print making workshops at the prestigious Royal College of Art, Oxford Brookes University and Art Academy of Cincinnati. Any print maker has to contend with two different surfaces. One, the surface, made of copper, zinc, screen, wood or limestone that helps form the image, and the other, a plain one on which the image is produced. It's the double-surface concept. A mirror image is etched that is later reproduced.

In the course of dealing with two surfaces, print art has developed its own techniques. There are other practical problems faced when one wants to pursue print making. In the 1970s when prominent graphic artist and painter Lalitha Lajmi wanted to pursue print making after the J J School of Art evening course in graphics was discontinued, she found it extremely difficult. She had to order a lithography machine custom-made from Baroda and did some excellent piece of print making as her *Untitled* engraving print done in 2008 (Plate 3.27). A new studio devoted to print making at The Academy of Fine Arts, founded by artist and former J J School of Art professor Kashinath Salve now has overcome the lacuna as the artists can make lithographs, serigraphs and etchings there.

Print making scenario, as a whole has received the much-needed impetus due to such initiatives. The Mumbai-Glasgow print Exhibition was one such platform for talented print makers to show their skills. It provided an overview of the subsequent merits of the Link Exchange and brought together the work of the participating artists. The Glasgow Print Studio (GPS) has a 30-year old history of producing and associating with the very best in contemporary print making. Anant Nikam, Madhukar Munde, Paul Kouli,
Rajan Fulari, and Vilas Shinde represented India along with six leading print makers from Britain. Revealing his thought process, Madhukar Munde notes as, very often, the color the artist/printer sees before he applies brush to canvas or before it is produced in print, though it may appear beautiful to the viewer, the artist/printer is dissatisfied. In other words, a beautiful scene that pleases the eye should simultaneously relate to our thoughts. Anant Nikam had the opportunity to work with Glasgow Print Studio in the summer of 2000. During this period, the cultural and social events and various incidents that occurred inspired his thoughts and powers. The effect of this on the human mind made him give way to expression in color, shape, texture on lino and intaglio print making as such his *Untitled* etching print done in 1984 (Plate 3.23).

While Baroda, Santiniketan, Kolkata, Delhi, Chennai and Hyderabad emerged as the primary centre of print making though the modernist era, isolated individual efforts are visible elsewhere. Kolkata based print maker Ramendra Nath Kastha initiated a print making studio called ‘Studio Gavura’ at Kalighat locality with his individual effort since 2009, which has been explored non toxic print making techniques as polyester litho, offset plate lithography, solar etching, photo polymer etching and wood engraving rather avoiding health hazard material as nitric acid, benzene, kerosene etc. As experimenting with particular genre of non toxic print making for the first time in India, Kastha’s prints are based on superb craftsmanship, and he has founded his own creativity on the solid base of strategies which advanced technology has made available to the contemporary print makers. In terms of his experimentation of non-toxic print making as polyester lithography and
Two such examples can be cited as offset litho and polyester print entitled *Benaras ghat* and another *Untitled* print in solar etching done in 2012 (Plate 3.34) and (Plate 3.35), the viewer will not be hypnotized, they will be invited to think out the implications of the complex meeting of technique and material, abstraction and sensuousness, design and desire. (Bhattacharya: 2008) Worth mention as in spite of dearth regarding proper infrastructure and facilities in metro cities or important places new genre of print makers, migrated from small town, has been emerged significantly with their extra-ordinary prints and also initiative of print makers along their excellent prints as Susanta Guha (Plate 3.29), Vijay Bagodi (Plate 3.30), Nagdas Velayudhan (Plate 3.31), Walter D' Souza (Plate 3.32), Sidhartha Ghosh (Plate 3.33), Atin Basak (Plate 3.36), Anupam Chakraborty (Plate 3.37) and Srikanta Paul (Plate 3.38).

The research on Indian print making initiated by Prof. Nirmalendu Das, renowned print maker and teacher at Department of Graphics, Kala Bhavana, Visva Bharati University and also alumni of both Kala Bhavana, Santikitan and Faculty of Fine Arts, M S University of Baroda who has been conferred Doctorate of Philosophy for his unique unpublished thesis entitled *Adhunik Bharatiyo Silpodharai Chaapchitrer Xthan* under supervision of Somnath Hore in the year 1984.

The year 2012 two important books exclusively on print making has been published, authored by renowned scholar and major print maker in India as Waswo X. Waswo and Dr. Paula Sengupta. The first book *Between the lines: Identity, Place and Power Selections from the Waswo X. Wawo*
Collection of Indian Print making” curated by Lina Vincent Sunish has been published during the month of August 2012 along with a splendid Show of prints of Waswo X. Waswo collection at National Gallery of Modern Art, Bangalore.

The Waswo X. Waswo Collection of Indian Print making represents over seventy-nine Indian artists from diverse geographical regions. Consisting of woodcuts, etchings, lithographs and screen prints, the works in the collection span a time from 1916 to the present. Unlike many surveys of contemporary print making, Between the Lines approaches its subject matter with an emphasis on imagery and meaning rather than technique. It stands as a completely fresh approach to a much neglected subject. In the book eminent print maker Jyoti Bhatt remarks as, Other than the print makers themselves, there are connoisseurs who have been collecting original prints also. Mr. Waswo is one among them. He is an artist himself and has gone through the actual experience of making prints, serigraphic as well as photographic ones. This gives an edge to his collection. He has been sharing this with art lovers all over the world via his writings and blog. Presently he is sharing with us through this book. (Bhatt: 2012) Art historian and curator Lina Vincent Sunish makes a unique analysis of the sociological and historical context that has moulded the growth of Indian art. Arguing that images often straddle the lines of arbitrary categories, she approaches The Waswo X. Waswo Collection of Indian Print making as a particular pathway through a complex aesthetic and historical geography. With keen insight she elaborates on how the concepts of Identity, Place and Power have shaped artistic creation, while at the same time encouraging us to think between these
categorical parameters. Sengupta has written the first volume of the history and evolution of print-making in India, *The printed Picture: Four centuries of Indian Print making*, showcasing 250 prints in chronological order from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. As Dr. Sengupta speaks, emphasize of the markets for prints had developed in the West much earlier; It is a niche area because the marketing strategy is different. And she added, there are dedicated print galleries for collectors of prints which is growing trend in the West. (Chatterjee: 2012)

### 3.4 ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF PRINT MAKING IN PRE-INDEPENDENCE ASSAM

Assam, integral part of North East of India which comprises eight states of the region including Sikkim with remarkable homogeneity from the point of view of ethnicity, cultural virtuosity, customs so on and so forth. The particular region is also being presented the panoramic artistic view of the region with indigenous flavor, forms, color inherent in inhabitant’s life and culture throughout the centuries. Nearly three hundred sixty years ago, Mughal army general Mir Jhumla invaded Assam, he was accompanied by two writers who have left their impressions of the strange and terrible country which finally succeeded in expelling them. One was Shihabuddin, also known as Talish, the other was Mulla Darvish of Heart, who composed an ode about his experience. Neither writer is very flattering about Assam, though Talish praises the courage of the royal rulers the Ahoms and the splendor of their palaces. Both writers, however, appear to have been impressed above all else by the 'otherness, of the country such as strange nature, beauty and
grace of the females, about streams and rivers beyond limit and estimate
divide tribe from tribe inhabitants. (Elwin: 1958)

In the entire North Eastern states of our Country, the Brahmaputra
valley is the largest valley. The other two valleys in the region are Imphal
Valley (Manipur) and Barak Valley (Assam). The valley, formed by the river
Braahmaputra and with an average width of 80 km, comprises a major
geographical portion of the state of Assam. The North East frontier region
shares an extensive international border. It has Bhutan, Tibet and China to
the north; China and Myanmar to the east; and Bangladesh to the south. It
shares approximately a mere three percent of its territory with India,
connecting it to the state of West Bengal. (Baruah: 2012)

North East India is also well-known as of local indigenous stone
monolith (Plate 3.43), temple architecture (Plate 3.44) relief sculpture (Plate
3.45) and (Plate 3.46), terracotta, mask making and wood carving tradition,
the school of miniature and manuscript painting traditions (Plate 3.48), (Plate
3.49) and (Plate 3.50) which were like domesticated folk images as a result of
the neo- Vaishnavitel follower of supreme Hindu God Vishnu, religious fervor
of the Xatras/ monastery and Srimanta Sankaradeva, the Mahayana,
Vajrayana, Tantric Buddhist developments in the Himalayan region as Bhuta,
Sikkim, Tibet, Arunachal Pradesh, Tai-Ahom Buddhist tribes in the North
Eastern parts of Assam, the Gargaon School of miniature painting born out of
the confluence of local traditions with Mughal School as a result of the
repeated onslaughts of the Mughal invasions into the Ahom territories
constituted of what should be known as the quintessence of art traditions of
the North- East. Nearby Bengal and Assam, although had been neighbors
with knowledge of each other’s existence from times immemorial as have been described by such widely variant sources as the Mahabharata and the seventh century Chinese traveler Hieun Tsang, their cultural traditions developed independently of each other as did the Chaitanya inspire Gaudiya Vaishnavism of Bengal and Sankaradeva inspired Vaishnavism of Assam. The process of independent development gave to each culture a distinctive regional identity. (Ray: 1992)

Yet neither the culture of Bengal nor that of Assam of the older times was cloistered cultures. The impact of common pan-Indian iconography, mythology broke down the bounds of regional and folk separateness both in Bengal and Assam and helped the development of classical forms of culture. Through voluntary takings from pan-Indian heritage, the regional high forms of cultural expression of Assam and Bengal close to each other. Despite differences Gaudiya Vaishnavism and Sankaradeva’s Vaishnavism were united in the emphasis on Bhakti meditation a pan-Indian phenomenon. The age-old woven fabric of the tribes and diverse ethnic communities with wonderful set of designs of each, even more fascinating virtuosity of color combinations comprised of latent sociological undertones added to massive wood carvings from Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland: the Sherdukpanes, Manpas and Wanchos (Plate 3.49) fulfilled the age long drama of art traditions in the entire region; of course leaving so much of the story untold. (Brahma: 2007)

The advent of print has an important influence upon the circumstance of the concept of language as well British imperial trade in Assam and India as example such as the print entitled Tea cultivation in Assam (Plate 3.52). Print has taken the role of selecting, codifying and finally making a particular
variety the standard variety in many of the world’s languages, and thereby enabling the people to imagine to be the members of a particular speech community and later on to assert a common identity in a geographical space. This study is an attempt to deconstruct that complex dynamic in two of the earlier magazines of Assam in the colonial context of the province. *Orunondoī*, the first Assamese magazine, was an effort of the Baptist missionaries and in the common literary and historical discourse credited with revitalizing the Assamese language which was almost at the verge of attrition due to the colonial policy of replacing Assamese with Bengali as a medium of instruction and language of the court. *Jonaki*, on the other hand, was the journal brought out in Calcutta in the year 1889 by *Axomia Bhaxa Unnati Xadhin Xobha* (Association for the Development of the Assamese Language), a students’ body, with an ideological slant towards a linguistic nationalism. It was the endeavor undertaken by the native middle-class that had grown up with English education. The embryonic form of sub-national identity founded in the pages of *Orunodoi* matures in the pages of *Jonaki*. The study is an attempt to recount this journey from the unconscious to the conscious by reading through the pages of these two magazines.

With the publication of an Assamese literary magazine *Orunodoi* (1846) by the American Baptist Mission in Assam, the literary genre of fiction writing in Assamese literature saw a fine modernist departure. It is worth mentioning that it was in this magazine that art-illustration in wood block relief printing was introduced for the first time in the North East. Main thematic content of illustrations were on Christian religion, though published numerous numbers of illustrations with knowledge of great invention as train...
(Plate 3.53) and printing press (Plate 3.60), portraits of great people, bad
customs prevailing in society (Plate 3.55), pictures of different animals (Plate
3.54), illustration on historical event (Plate 3.56) illustrations of Bible (Plate
3.57), self portrait of wood engraver (Plate 3.58), picture of ethnic
communities of this region (Plate 3.59), decorative title lettering *Orunodoi* in
Assamese (Plate 3.63) and many other subject matters. Local people perhaps
belongs to traditional wood carver community and in guidance of Christian
Missionaries, made the *Orunodoi* wood engraving blocks out of thron of the
*Bajormani* (a kind of forest tree, Xanthoxylum budrunga) and the cost of
preparation of single block was something like rupees twenty. (Chetia: 1993)

The printed picture of *Orunodoi* can be divided stylistically into two
groups. In some illustrations the print makers imitated the style of foreign
magazines, both in terms of the subjects as well as the meticulous
craftmanship of nineteenth century of European reproduction process (as in
the works of Bewick). As instance, we can get an illustration of the *Orunodai*,
captioned as *Young Man and Woman of Australia* (Plate 3.62), which has
mentioned as taking reference from the illustrated London News, which was
published in January 1851. All the elements of Western academic Realism
such as chiaroscuro, perspectives, tonal variation, proper anatomical
proportion, depth and volume, etc were visible in some illustrations. But some
*Orunodoi* illustrations do not follow any European ideals or norms, but
express the feelings of the artists. Those prints have some resemblance with
the great Indian manuscript tradition or even the folk painting as the
illustration *Indra on a Elephant* (Plate 3.61). Actually it is thus a mixture of
indigenous traditional style and imported style. Some of the artists dedicated
to this genre were Rev. Nathan Brown, Tularam, Kanuram, Mohiram, Tuleswar, Young, etc. (Mazinder: 2006)

It was only with the coming of the missionaries that the first printed book entered Assamese literary circles; the first printed book being the New Testament (Dharmapustakar Antobhag) printed by William Carey in 1813 with the help of Atmaram Sharma and in 1833 (Plate 3.51) the entire Bible at Serampore Mission press near Calcutta. William Carey, as a translator of Bible, has been regarded as one of the greatest linguistic scholars of the world. Between 1800 and 1832 Serampore press printed books in 48 languages of which 45 were Bible translation including in Assamese. (Chatterjee: 2004) In connection with the American Baptist Mission Press, which is the first press to be established in Assam, the first name that comes to the forefront is that of the Reverend Dr. Nathan Brown. Nathan Brown was born on 22 June 1807 in New Ipswich, New Hampshire, USA. He graduated from Williams College in 1827 holding the highest position in the class. He married Eliza Ballard on 5 May 1830. For a few years, he was Associate Principal of Bennington Seminary and editor of a weekly newspaper called The Vermont Telegraph. He attended the Newton Theological Institute in order to prepare himself for work as a missionary. He graduated in 1832. The American Baptist Missionary Union appointed him as a missionary to Myanmar in 1833. He headed for Assam at the request of Captain Francis Jenkins, the Commissioner of Assam. This request was made in order to launch the “Shan Mission” aiming to help the British administration to enlighten, refine and educate the warrior tribes of Shan, Khamtis and Singphos. Brown and his associate Oliver Cutter along with their printing
press sailed to Calcutta. After a stopover in Calcutta, they set out for Sadiya by river. A long, tiresome and dangerous trip brought them to their destination on 23 March 1836.

With the establishment of the first printing press in Assam, Brown’s arrival ushered in an era of literary development in the region. Due to inadequate assistance from the Mission and due to tribal aggression in Sadiya, Brown had to shift his base to Joypur near Naharkatiya in 1839 and then to Sibsagar in 1843. He found Sibsagar to be a better place to work from. In fact Upper Assam is seen the hub of printing and the early birthplace of the printed book in Assam. He remained there until 1855. Towards the end of 1844, Brown travelled on foot from Sibsagar to Guwahati, visiting villages in order to study the diverse cultural backgrounds of the people. He along with two other missionaries, Miles Bronson and Cyrus Barker, organized and founded the first Baptist church at Panbazar in Guwahati on 25 January 1845. Brown also pioneered in establishing schools in different parts of the state. He established 14 Assamese medium schools in and around Sibsagar by 1846.

*Orunodoi* was the first Assamese magazine, printed by the Baptist Missionary Press in Sibsagar; it was first published in January 1846. The tag line for the magazine was, The *Orunodoi*, a monthly paper, devoted to religion, science and general intelligence. It continued to be published till 1879; the press however was sold in 1883. The editors of this magazine include Dr. Nathan Brown, A.H Denforth, William Ward, and others. Though propagation of Christianity remained the main aim of the paper, it contained other articles related to science, current affairs, astrology, history, and local
trivia. This paper helped in entrenching the Assamese intelligentsia, bringing into the forefront three key figures of Assamese literary world, Anandaram Dhekial Phukan, Hem Chandra Baruah and Nidhi Linai Pharowal. The crowning glory of Brown’s career was *Orunodoi* which means ‘the dawn’. Brown did the editorial work whereas Oliver Cutter was involved in printing and publishing the magazine. Apart from portions of the Bible, hymn books, tracts and school books in Assamese, a good number of other works were published under Cutter’s care at the Mission Press. In 1853, Cutter left the mission work and joined as superintendent of the Government Press in Calcutta. Even today, the place at Sibsagar where Cutter established the printing press is locally known as Chapakhana. *The Asom Year Book 2008* acknowledges Cutter, Brown and Bronson among the six foreigners (along with Edward Gait, John Berry White and Charles Alexander Bruce) who rendered benevolent service for Assam. (Website: 2013)

After Brown, the *Orunodoi* was in circulation with occasional breaks until 1880. Following the example of *Orunodoi*, several newspapers and magazines were published in Assam in the second half of the 19th century. Prominent among these were *Asam Bilasini*, 1871, published by Dharma Prakash Press, Auniati Xatra, Majuli (Plate 3.66), *Asam Darpan* (1874, Tezpur), *Asam Mihir* (1872, Guwahati), *Goalpara Hitshadini* (1876, Goalpara), *Chandrodaya* (1876, Nagaon), *Asam Dipak* (1876, Guwahati) *Jonaki* (Calcutta, 1889) and *Assam News* (an Anglo-Assamese weekly, 1885, Guwahati), *Assam Bandhu* (1885, Nagaon), *Mau* (1886, Calcutta). Sri Sri Dutta Dev Goswami, *Xatradhikar* the head of the institution of *Auniati Xatra* (religious institution), bought a printing machine from London and installed it at the
Xatra in 1871 (Plate 3.65). Assam Bilasini the second news magazine of Assam was published from the Xatra, in 1871. (Sharma: 2011)

Printing and publishing began in Assam from around the end of the 19th century, a number of presses being established in Dibrugarh (also in Upper Assam). The first press in Dibrugarh was established by Radhanath Changakot, on 9 May 1881 called the “Radhanath Press”. Shivnath Bhattacharya established the “Bhattacharya Press”, around the same time, printing mostly school text books and religious books. Nandeswar Chakravarty, a tea planter set up the “Sadasiva Press” in 1905, “Ahom Press” established in 1910 are few names of important press of Assam. It was due to the effort of Chandra Kumar Agarwalla that the “Assam Printers and Publishers Limited” was formed, a joint company established along with Nilmoni Phukan, Sadananda Dowerah, Lakshminath Phukan. The “Borooah Press” established in 1928 by Guna Govinda Borooah, “Bholanath Press” established by Bholanath Gohain, “Rajkhowa Press”, “Jagaran Press” etc. were important presses established during that period. One of the first indigenous names of Assamese origin is Anandaram Dhekial Phukan. Phukan (1829–1858) was a writer, government employee and supporter of the American Baptist Mission Press and of its leaders Brown and Bronson for their work in the propagation of Assamese. Phukan was a great scholar and studied English literature, was one of the very first students of the school established by Francis Jenkins in 1835 and went on to study at Presidency College, Calcutta. He started his literary career at the age of seventeen by contributing articles to Orunodoi. He then wrote Axomiya Loraar Mitro, a textbook for schoolchildren modeled on English textbooks, publishing it from
the Mission Press at Sibsagar. He wrote a pamphlet called *A few remarks on the Assamese Language and on the Vernacular Education* in Assam printing 100 copies from the Mission Press and distributing it to various government officials for the purpose of putting forward the case of Assamese language. The *Jonaki* (Moonlight) magazine, published by ‘probashi’ living away from home, Assamese students in Calcutta, was the result of this zeal.

The students living in Calcutta at the end of the nineteenth century in various ‘messes’/ hostel strove towards the development of the Assamese language. One issue of the magazine (Vol. 5, No. 7) relates the inception of the magazine as the outcome of the expat students’ meeting on Wednesdays and Saturdays at 67 Mirzapur Street mess on Saturday 25 August 1888. Thus a committee was set up; ‘Axomiā Bhāxā Unnati Xādhini Xabhā’ the development of Assamese language and literature “is the primary aim of the organization. (Dutta: 2011) For that purpose it strives to preserve the old Assamese texts available, to translate different important books from Sanskrit and other languages into Assamese which are not available in the mother tongue, to develop reading habit among the masses to introduce pure grammar and orthography instead of the impure orthography and grammar, and to create one standard written language all through the areas of Assam. It was however, rather strangely a Marwari businessman from Tezpur who would finally come to the aid of the Sabha, which did not have the financial means to have the magazine printed. The ‘Agarwalla’ family of Tezpur, is of course not an unfamiliar name in the world of Assamese literature, the most famous of them being the illustrious poet, writer, filmmaker, musician, freedom fighter Jyotiprasad Agarwalla (1903–1951). Haribilas Agarwalla(1842–1916),
like the Baptist missionaries printed books in Assamese and his son Chandra Kumar Agarwalla became a leading literary figure in the late 19th and early 20th century. ‘Jonaki’, a path-breaking journal started in 1889 with illustrations (Plate 3.68), published by a group, of whom the principal figures were Cchandra Kumar Agarwala and Laxminath Bezbaruah, gave a thrust to art and literature of Assam. A new wave of subject matter, techniques as cultural re-awakening and new inventions came in its wake. (Kesavan: 1997)

The general consensus is that Jonaki was printed till 1898 from Calcutta. With the total number of 69 issues were published. Jonaki was again published from Guwahati in the year 1901 which continued till 1903. A pioneer in the journalism movement of Assam, Chandra Kumar started an Assamese weekly called Asamiya from Dibrugarh in 1918. From 1924, he published it from his newly established press at Kharghuli (Guwahati) called “Asamiya Press”.

Bijuli (1891) meaning thunder is another important journal of this era, like Jonaki, it too was a student magazine being brought out from Calcutta by members of the Assamese Literary Club. Banhi, meaning flute, a monthly periodical magazine (Plate 3.69) was the brainchild of Lakshminath Bezbaruah, the celebrated littérature; he was both the editor and publisher of this magazine, which was influential in propagating many influential writers and poets of Assam. The magazine was published from 1909 to 1940. The first English weekly The Times of Assam was printed from the “Radhanath Press” in Dibrugarh and the first issue came out on 5 January 1895.
In the history of printing and publication in Upper Assam, particularly in Golaghat district, *Jadumani Chapakhana*, an early printing press (Plate 3.41) and (Plate 3.42) situated in the heart of the town Golaghat, has been playing a significant role since its establishment in 1922. It has played a significant role in publication and popularization of literature as similarly to that of Bhattacharyee Agency of Dibrugarh and Borkotoky Company of Jorhat since Pre-Independence India. (Bardoloi: 2011) Significantly a special corner of *Jadumani Chapakhana* is an archive and museum preservation centre Also the legacy of Goswami family have been trying to preserve some of the old publications of rare books and also good collection of old printing press in its working condition and also related machineries.

The emergence of ‘Modern art’ in the early part of 20th century had been a complete departure from the traditional art forms like the miniature, manuscript painting, mural, traditional sculpture and crafts, that thrived for centuries and started dwindling due to political turmoil and other factors. (Kandali: 2009) In the pre-Independence period, some youths from Assam studied in the Calcutta Government School of Art. A few of them completed the course but none could practice enough so that their work could attain any maturity, not to speak of contemporary character. Lakhi Ram Baruah perhaps first alumni from entire north eastern region who studied at Government College of Art, Calcutta during second decade of twentieth century (Keitzer: 2002). (Plate 3.68) shows his brilliant painted image on Biblical theme with adequate skill and craftsmanship. Other distinguished names as Suren Bardoloi (Plate 3.69), Mukta Nath Bardoloi, Bhavesh Chandra Sanyal, Birendralal Bhowmik, Jagat Singh Kachari, Sashidhar Saikia and Jibeswar
Baruah can be mentioned in this context. (Brahma: 1998) Later Tarun Duarah and Rabin Bhattacharya passed out from the same school. Significantly Bhabesh Chandra Sanyal, originally belongs to Dibrugarh, Assam, moved to study art in Government School of Art, Calcutta in 1923. At this time, the school was running under the supervision of Percy Brown who was himself an artist, painted in water color on the British style. (Vashistha: 2010)

Mukta Nath Bardoloi was foremost creative artists belongs to that generation with his several book illustrations as such in Assamese children book titled Moyna authored by Harinarayan Barua which picture pages were printed in lithography in Bharatmihir Jantra, Calcutta during 1930 (Plate 3.70). Significantly Birendralal Bhowmik have been published some books for children art education as series of picture book titled Chiralekha along with his illustrations and the preface (Plate 3.71) (Bhowmik: 1952). Another alumni of Government School of Art, Calcutta, Sashidhar Saikia experimented in print making techniques during his study period under guidance of Mukul Dey as his Untitled lithograph print done in 1930 (Plate 3.72).

Since sixties of last century onwards, due to fast developing communication systems, the bridge over Brahmaputra, extension of the broad-gauge railway line to Guwahati and beyond, direct national road transport links etc. have slowly induced artists of Assam to show contemporary temperament through their works. The easy access they have to the mainstream of various art centers in the country today has accelerated the process.
However, it took several more decades in the dynamics of modern art in north east to evolve a vibrant trend in the realm of print making by the eighties of the twentieth century in the true sense of the term. Unlike other genres of art like painting or sculpture, print making requires specific infrastructural facilities to develop and sustain along with various socio-cultural and political factors. Owing to such dearth of facilities the trend of print making had to undergo hurdles to flourish till a turning point came in.

In 1958 the Fourth National Exhibition of Art of the Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi was arranged at the newly constructed building of the Assam Emporium at Ambari, Guwahati. That was the first practical exposure to Indian Contemporary Art the people of Assam had the occasion to encounter. Sashidhar Saikia, Madan Mohan Lahkar, Sobha Brahma, Benu Misra, Mukunda Debnath and Neelpawan Baruah are some renowned name early practitioner of impression art. Their works of art had been published in various Assamese journals as *Abahan* since early parts of 20th century, as illustrations (Plate 3.74), (Plate 3.75) and (Plate 3.76) in wood block prints by Madan Mohan Lahkar and mental block print by Sobha Brahma (Plate 3.73) and Benu Misra (Plate 3.77). Benu Misra explores the graphic medium to reproduce his drawing as his *Untitled* etching print done in 1995 (Plate 3.78). Mukunda Debnath, an alumni of Kala Bhavana, Santiniketan experimented with relief printing medium (Plate 3.79). The Guwahati Art School was established in 1947 with the effort of Jibeswar Baruah with limited Government support, which may now have been taken over by the Government of Assam and is functioning as the single complete art institution under Gauhati University. Among early students of Government School of Art
and Crafts, Guwahati, who occasionally experimented with various graphic medium as Indra Mohan Koch (Plate 3.80) and Rajen Hazarika (Plate 3.81) under tutorship of Sobha Brshma and Benu Misra. Rajen Hazarika went to Garhi studio, New Delhi in 1980 to study print making for a year. But sudden demise of him in 1983 we lost a genuine potential of print maker from this region.

Since the fifties several young boys and girls came out of Kala Bhavana, Santiniketan, Government School of Art & Crafts of Calcutta, J. J. School of Art of Bombay, M.S. University of Baroda and Lucknow Art College. Till 1990s, well-known among them, are basically painters except Ajit Seal (Plate 3.83) and Dilip Tamuly (Plate 3.84). Artists in Assam till nineties are bringing forth their works in different media.

Ajit Seal amongst them has been early practitioner of print making since his early days of Government School of Art and Crafts, Guwahati, experimenting in various painting and print medium as taking inspiration from both traditional ideal and modernist ethos/ thoughts. With the establishment of the Department of Graphics in the Government College of Arts & Crafts, Guwahati In 1990, this specific turning point and a new departure was ushered in the art scene of the North East. The Department had facilities for different media of print making such as lithography (stone/ metal sheet), etching, woodcut, serigraphy, along with experimental works of different kinds like plastic sheet etching, plywood engraving etc. The two artists, who have made an immense contribution to the development of the art of graphics in the
initial stage of development in this department in the present Government College of Arts & Crafts, Guwahati are Dilip Tamuli and Ajit Seal.

Except this department no other art college or university have any department for print making in this region though Assam University, Silchar (Plate 3.40) and also Manipur art college have few equipments or machines with optional classes in print making. Of course, the opening of a studio with facility for etching and lithography in the Lalit Kala wing of Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra in Guwahati in 2004 was a boon for a region dearth of infrastructural advantages.

It was Ajit Seal who had gone outside Assam for studying print making during 1979 at Garhi studio, New Delhi and later studied in Kala Bhavana, Santiniketan. After achieving Post Diploma from Department of Graphics, Kala Bhavan, he joined as lecturer at Govt. School of Art & Crafts, Guwahati and for the first time took over the charge of the Graphics Department in 1986. Another alumnus of Kala Bhavana, Dilip Tamuly was also the first one to hold the print making exhibition in the region in 1981 in the state art gallery in Guwahati along with Bula Chakravarty. His passionate creativity and experience/exposure of working in foreign studio in Denmark and Norway brought in much needed momentum in the genre of print making not only in the state but also the entire region as many student started coming to the college from the other states of the North East. To speak about his work as a print maker, his artistic expressions are renderings with primitivistic evocation, passionate and powerful. Sparked with an inherent energy within the distorted anthromorphic forms, the works are recurrently expressed in intense black figuring patches /forms/masses. Dilip Tamuly's extensive research
documentation of the various folk and tribal art forms of entire north eastern regions has definitely enriched his artistic vision and sensitivity.

Ajit Seal served the graphics department of the college along with Dilip Tamuly (Plate 3. 86) with utmost zeal and for their collective endeavor to bring out many graduates who are now working outside the state and country and carving a niche for themselves. Drawing from the woodcarvings of 'Namghars' the religious institution of Assam and other 'Xatra' Vaishnavite monestry drawings, he establishes a bond between traditional style and modernist ethos by imbibing the stylizations of Vaishnavite paintings into modernist contents and visions. It is herein worth mentioning that along with these two artists another senior artist, Madhusudan Das has also played a role in spreading this definite genre of art in the suburb areas of the State. Madhusudan Das as a print maker has been trying to evolve an idiom of his own in the expressionistic approach in the medium of woodcut and lithograph.

The artists who have come out from Department of Graphics in the Government College of Arts & Crafts, and other major art centers of India during the last three decades to be engaged in this field for decades in different parts of north east, the country and abroad are, Maneswar Brahma, Santana Gohain, Temsuyangar Longkumer, Manikanta Choudhury, Nabakumar Das, Lima Anok, Sujit Bora, Debojit Sharma, Raj Kumar Mazinder, Partha Pratim Sharma, Pramod Baruah, Khil Bahadur Chhetri, Moirangthem Thomas Singh, Manika Devi, Niva Devi, Aditi Chakravarty, Shymali Chaliha Dutta, Upasana Bora, Pallavi Jiten Sharma, Sankar Baro and others(Plate 3.85).
Most of the artists discussed are based in the region though two of them are taken from those settled outside the region or India. The two print makers (who are graduates from this department) carving a distinct idiom of their own in the broader paradigm of art scene outside the region are Santana Gohain from Assam and Temsuyangar Longkumar from Nagaland. Moirangthem Thomas Singh, a print maker from Manipur and a M.V.A. with specialization in Graphics (Print-making) from Rabindra Bharati University is another name that calls attention. Working as lecturer in Graphics Department, Faculty of Visual Arts at Kala Bhavana, Visva- Bharati University at Santiniketan, he has been engaged in the arena with a desire to explore new possibilities imageries and idiomatic variety. Among these artists we would like to focus a few to have a glance at the contemporary practice in the North East. (Kandali: 2011)

3.5 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PRINT MAKING SCENARIO OF ASSAM WITH THAT OF OTHER PARTS OF INDIA

Assam is the gateway through which the sister states are connected to the mainland and also place of avant-garde ideas for individual/collective motivation regarding society, art and culture. The term “the Land of Seven Sisters”, had been originally coined to coincide with the inauguration of the new states in January, 1972, by an Assamese origin Jyotiprasad Saikia, a journalist, in Tripura in the course of a radio talk show. (Stirn: 2001) The seven states of North –Eastern corner of India including Assam, came to be known as ‘Seven Sisters’ during seventies of 20th century. “Seven Sister States (Sat Bhani in Assamese) also called “Paradise Unexplored” is a name
given to the contiguous states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura in North Eastern India. (Wikipedia: 2013)

The realm of Art (literary/ performative / visual) in the social collective sphere of the South-East Asia –Pacific in general or the North –Eastern –Seven –Sister states in particular is closely intermingled with other socio-political dialectics and existential politics. It is well known that, a paradigm shift had occurred in the artistic map of India, with a completely new set of art categories and principles based on western model of modern art (as the Maculeyean Education Policy was introduced by the British) in the 19th century, the reflections of which had sweeping manifestations all over the nation including the North East.

The literature in Assam in general, had already struck the modernist chord before the beginning of 20th century with the publication of a literary magazine Orunodoi (1846) by the American Baptist Mission. It was in this magazine that art-illustration in wood block relief printing bearing the markers of British Academic Realism, was introduced for the first time. The highlights of the emerging modern art scenario in Assam in Assam can be traced as-emergence of few Calcutta trained artists as Lakhiram Baruah, Suren Bardoloi, Mukta Nath Bardoloi, Jagat Singh Kachari, Pratap Baruah, Birendralal Bhowmik, Sachdhar Saikia, Tarun Duara) since second and third decade of last century onwards; establishment of the first art school by Jibeswar Baruah in 1947, convention of the 4th National Art and Crafts
Exhibition by Lalit Kala Akademi in 1958 and the National Art and Craft Exhibition organized by Art and Craft School of Assam in 1960.

The first phase of modern art in Assam manifests British Academic Realism, Renaissance representations with some overtones of Romanticism. The second phase of fifties and sixties as the second phase brought in expressionistic/ surrealist/ post-impressionistic syntax and idioms. But it was at the advent of seventies, that a new movement encompassed the art world of Assam with a varied range of experimentation, in creative imaginative order marked with aesthetic sensibilities. Art production and art activism both were charged with an acute enthusiasm to define new parameters for emerging modernist manifestation of regional and cultural specificities as a departure occurred following the entry of some trained artists from Santiniketan, Baroda and Bombay who brought new thoughts and ideas and began a wave of cultural activism. These artists with their holistic vision and eclectic mode of representation freed the realm of modern art from its overbearing romanticism, trajectory and other lingual and conceptual limitations.

The modern art scene in Meghalaya became vibrant only during the decade of eighties with the formation of Meghalaya Artists Guild in 1986. Till date only two or three artists from the pre-independence time are known to be engaged in practicing art mostly in traditional or realistic mode. The introduction to the one year post graduate diploma course in the Centre for Creative Arts and Cultural Studies under North Eastern Hill University in Shillong in 2003 initiated the formal education in Meghalaya. With the establishment of the Agartala Art College in 1975, the traditional artworks
gave way to formal art education in Tripura. However, as the demographic set up of Tripura is comprised of the ethnic communities and the Bengali population, the latter group had close acquaintance with cultural and artistic developments of Bengal and often would go for art training in Calcutta and Santiniketan. Most of them have been actively participating in the discourses/activities in these places to seek boarder avenues and wide exposure and they concept manifestations of art discourses in Bengal. The first trained artist who emerged in mid seventies in Nagaland was Bendang, followed by V. Noudi who passed out from Government Art College, Calcutt in 1980. Though there are a lot of self taught artists, a very few professional trained artists have come in Nagaland.

Like Nagaland, modern art movement in Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram also began in the mid eighties. Of course the first art graduate of Arunachal Pradesh, Taka Riba was a student of Ramkinkar Baij, who passed out from Santiniketan in 1965. However, the art scene gathered momentum during late eighties when Arunachal Academy of Fine Arts was founded. The art movement in Mizoram is also in an emergent stage beginning its journey only in the late eighties. Almost all the practicing artists are youthful and like their contemporaries in the hill states of the region; their roots also lie in their rich tradition, folklore and mythology, although expressed in modernist idiom.

Compare to the other hill states of the region, Manipur seems much more vibrant in the initial stage of the development of modern art with the presence of some notable artists patronized by the artistically inclined royal court, though in the later period both Assam and Manipur contribute in a
parallel ground to the growth of modernist art in this region. The Imphal Art School was established in 1949 which later became a college in 1959. The fifties and sixties lacked any newer experimentations or exploration except a continuation of the immediate past. But in a similar manner like Assam, the decade of seventies saw new momentum, a sudden burst of newer sensibilities not only in art but also in other creative avenues like theatre and literature.

For most people living in other parts of India, the North East is a region marked by socio-political unrest, tribal conflict and border skirmishes. Like most stereotypes about people and places, this picture frames only half truth. A visit to Assam and other North Eastern states makes us come face to face with an overwhelming truth- that in an atmosphere in particular however that is not entirely salubrious as far as the production of art is concerned; it is inspiring to see artists accepting new challenges. It is also heartening to see them pushing hard to create works for non-existent art-market, critical reviews, in places with hardly any commercial galleries or collectors. (Bordewekar: 2006)

Contemporary print making practices has been commenced some extent since the establishment of art institution in different major centers/places of North East India as Govt. College of Art & Crafts, Guwahati (1947), Imphal Art College (1949), Govt. College of Art & Crafts, Agartala (1975), kokrajhar College of Music & Visual Art (1991), Department of Fine Arts at Assam University, Silchar (1996), College of Fine Arts, Barpeta Road (2006) Department of Fine Arts, at Tripura University, Agartala (2009) . Worth to mention that Guwahati Art College, Kokrajhar College of Music & Visual
Art and Imphal Art College are among few art institutions which has separate print making department and also offering Degree/ Diploma Course in print making specialization since 1989, 1999 and 2002 respectively. The few students from this region studying in Calcutta in the Pre-Independence were totally unconscious about the rich tradition at home and mainland India. After Independence, also our artists were motivated either by the Western traditional or modern developments or traditional Indian schools with some hesitation. However, in the last part of twentieth century onwards Indian artists has been thrived hard to the cause of their native traditions, the language and indigenous urge of the soil. These developments also were injected in the creative process of the country as a result of movements in the west (Brahma: 2007)

Also during the last four decade and from then on, students from the region had returned from Kala Bhavan, Santiniketan, J. J. School of Art, Bombay, M. S. University of Baroda, Rabindra-Bharati University, Calcutta, College of Art, New Delhi etc. No doubt, they had imbibed the best of elements of technical expertise, new contemporary approach and idiom of international media, spirit of assimilation from multiple sources. These aspects within reasonable periods of time were sure to render the hitherto barren fields of art fertile with fresh possibilities. The most contemporary elements of modern life, terrorism, the stark reality of ‘Old order changes yielding place to the New’ so on and so forth, which also swayed this remote human habitation, were all portrayed in the works of the artists of present generation.” (Brahma; 2007) Noni Borpujari (Plate 3.82), a self taught painter, studied and print
making at Garhi studio, New Delhi during 1980s, regarded as powerful print maker of our country.

Madhusudan Das, senior print maker from Guwahati, studied Faculty of Fine Arts, M S University of Baroda, has been experimenting wood block relief printing (Plate 3.87) since almost the last 25 years as well as expressing his creative zeal on particularly diverse human conditions. He himself writes, The prime subject for his last print making show is Goddess Durga (Plate 3.88) to reflect own feeling resulting from human conflict and agony and referred to Devi's (Goddess) Shakti/ power for welfare of all her creations. (Das: 2012)

Temsuwang Longkumar was an alumnus of Government College of Art and Crafts, Guwahati, studied graphics in the Department of Graphics under guidance of Ajit Seal Dilip Tamuly. That time he experimented with mainly lithography and etching with native life of folklore of Nagaland as and lithograph entitled Black and White and A Print of Truth done in 1997 and Untitled etching done in 1995 (Plate 3.104) and (Plate 3.105). Later period after doing Master Degree in Graphic Art in M.s University of Baroda, He studied in Royal College of Art, London with Inlak Scholarship. At present a contemporary British Indian artist active in London. (Longkumar attended the Royal College of Art, from which he holds an M.A. in print making. Longkumer is an Associate Member of the Royal Society of Painter-Print makers at the Bankside Gallery, London, and has been artist-in-residence at the Cité international des Arts in Paris and the Fondazione Pistoletto in Biella, Italy.) In his recent prints one can undoubtedly decode certain contexts and motifs drawn from the definite cultural milieu of his native land. He also delves deep into the dynamics of migration (The significant series titled Immigration) and
the associated dilemma and contradictions in the human conditions of the entire experience.

Debajit Sarma, among first batch of Bachelor Degree students of Government College of Art and Guwahati, latter studied print making in Faculty of Fine Arts, M. S. University of Baroda experimenting with mainly in various lithography techniques (Plate 3. 91). He worked in Atelier 2221, New Delhi with Devraj Dakoji for some time during 1994. His serious concern of both images and various print making techniques reflected in his print as his lithograph entitled Untitled 12 done in 1995 (Plate 3.92).

Maneswar Brahma's love for playfulness in limestone is finely evident in his work. He passionately declares that though at present lithography is slowly dwindling in the contemporary trend for fascination towards new media works, his passion for this medium is immense and addictive to which he desires to stick forever with utmost fervor. According to the artist the weather of North east is best for the medium of lithography (using limestone) compared to the entire parts of India. The artists with his politically reflexive texts which are manifestations of his own lived-experience as a victim of terrorism (with too many bullets piercing his body) weaves up some evocative litho-prints in red filled with recurrent motifs of corpse or bullets. His lithography series entitled 'victim' (Plate 3.93) can be studied as continuous weaving of the entire act of symbolic meditation of his personal horrific experience of violence encountered by the artist himself in a very intimate individual level as seen in Untitled etching print (Plate 3.94). His works almost transforms into an act of meditative stance of a Buddhist the monk chanting...
repetitive hymns in seeking salvation from the suffering of the world!” (Kandali: 2012)

On the other hand, in Khil Bahadur Chhetri’s prints as etching (Plate 3.95) and lithograph (Plate 3.96), layers of compartmentalized spaces are juxtaposed; unfold a mythical past, a space of forgotten memories, all reminiscent of some un-excavated truths. Manikanta Choudhury, Lwhir Lwhir Mushahary (Plate 3.102), Jayanta Kalita, Pramud Boruah (Plate 3.103), Naba Das, Bikash Acharjee, Chandan Bezbaruah, Anup Majumdar are few significant names of young print makers who has got rare acclaim in national and regional arena.

Contemporary print making in North East, as predominant feature is the emerging dominance of women artists in the genre. Jabeen Rehaman Ghose Dastidar, Punam Kalita, Santana Gohain, Archana Rajgurujm, Niva Devi, Aditi Chakravarty, Monica Devi, Sabita Pegu Upasana Bora Tamuly, Pallabi Jiten Sharma are few names among this particular genre. (Kandali: 2010). Jabeen Rehaman (Plate 3. 89) was an alumnus of Department of Graphics, Kala Bhavana, Santiniketan later shifted to History of Art. Santana Gohain, a known name in the contemporary print making scene in India, is presently based at Baroda after her training in the department of Graphics in the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda. Mostly working in etching and wood cut (Plate 3.98), the process of print making is very important in her work. As an abstractionist painter her paintings too manifests this entire dynamics of print making process unfolding minute scratches, signs, marks with much emphasis on the tactile quality of the surfaces. Experimenting with the print making process, she uses it on paper as drawing and at times
prepares her own surface using graphite, pigment and acrylic medium like clay and applying it on paper. The objective of this creative innovative impulse is to trace things beyond the mundane, the facile and the visible realms thereby transcending into the ethereal, invisible and the surreal. Archana Rajguru, alumni of Kala Bhavana Santiniketan and M. S. University of Baroda, experimented with mainly in lithography (Plate 3.97), dealing self feminine issues.

Monica Devi’s work (colored lino print, multi-plate etching, wood engraving etc) weaving a distinct idiom of her own addresses a similar women centric issues and ideas (Plate 3.99), but she very often transcends the limits of women centric issues to the address the larger concerns of the society. Aditi Chakravarty explores a silent surreal world in her prints (Plate 3.100) where a lonely protagonist would be placed centrally surrounded by certain recurrent motifs like peacock, fairy, waterfall, etc. But slowly she has evolved into a more socio-politically reflexive mode of expression by creating certain images and narratives depicting the day to day struggle and suffering of women in her marginal gendered existence.

Shyamali Chaliha’s Dutta’s narratives are often dictated by a contemporary strategy of experimenting with self portrait and using bright vibrant color and the usage of self portrait in her serigraphy print entitled Myself done in 2001 (Plate 3.101). She takes an internal inward journey to the self to map the conflicts and dilemmas of a modern day women in the contemporary set up of a highly globalized consumerist world, with her easy hand in colour lithography, serigraph and also blending of digital technologies.
It is mentionable that few overseas artists belong to this part of our country as Bula Chakraborty Agbo, Temsuyanger Longkumar, Mamta Barua Herland residing in various parts of the globe, has been attained critical recognition and acclaims for their deeply rooted affinities for motherland North East India and Assam as well.

Bula Chakravarty Agbo, born in Assam, presently lives and works in London after completion of Post-graduate degree in Graphics from Kala Bhavan, Santiniketan. As a painter and print maker she asserts herself as a 'story-teller', where her Eastern and Western heritage are viewed through a parallel world which is reflected back as archetypal figures within a personal mythology. Artists and thinkers that inspire her are Michelangelo, Blake, Chagall, Picasso, Somnath Hore, K. G. Subramanyan, Jung and Gandhi. In her figural spontaneous execution in lithography (Plat 3.106) and etching (Plate 107), she work intuitively in her guided by internal necessity. As a child in Kamrup, Assam her imaginings formed a land of myths; fertile with meandering rivers, feeding a sense of spirituality and mysticism that perhaps excited and intrigued in her works. Bula Chakravarty has exhibited both nationally and internationally in various art galleries of England and America and got rare acclaim several times.

Her work seeks to tap into the spiritual qualities of the land and its people through a personal mythology. Beings half human and half animal inhabit a poetic timeless landscape. The buffalos and cows she saw and drew in India are transformed into heroic and elemental figures. They seem to wrestle and embrace mankind, benign and threatening in turns. On
occasions she finds parallels in Western mythology, in the unicorn and Minotaur/ Greek myth Bull man, ancient manifestation of natural powers. The ideas of the co-existence of the spirit world and the 'everyday' world separated by a wafer thin membrane of perception central to her work, recalling her childhood experiences perhaps. When we are young we tend to experience the world more intensely and without the rational preconceptions of adulthood, we are more open to the magical realms of existence.

At the 'The Mystical and Spiritual in British Art', lecture Valerie Woodgate, lecturer and Guide at Tate and the Dulwich Picture Gallery during 2005 said, In the context of the mystical and spiritual in British Art, Bula Chakravarty Agbo's works have featured as a contemporary artist who continues to work in the lineage of Henry Fuseli, William Blake, Samuel Palmer, John Constable, Richard Dadd, Millais, Burn-Jones, Stanley Spencer, Anthony Gormley, Richard Long, Andy Goldsworthy, Shirazeh Houshiari, Anthony Caro and Mark Wallinger.

Mamta Baruah Herland is a painter and digital artist born in Assam, now living just outside Oslo, Norway. She has studied Visual Arts at Sydney College of Arts in Australia, Graphic Design in Oslo and has her Masters degree in Fine Art — Painting from Winchester School of Art, England. Mamta has exhibited internationally, among them galleries in New York, London, Madrid, Barcelona and Ferrara, Italy. She participated in the International Biennale of Art in Florence (Firenze) in December 2005. In relevance to Mamta’s digital art she has written the thesis “The impact of Giclée, a shift towards digital print in future art” discussing the influence and acceptance of
digital technology in the international art world. Through the thesis and some of her digital works (Plate 3.108) and (Plate 109) Mamta questions how the digital revolution will influence visual arts, among them the concept of authenticity, originality, limited editions and how art available through the World Wide Web will influence the traditional museums and galleries. Mamta has her atelier at Mamta Gallery located in Sandvika, just outside Oslo, Norway.

3.6 CONCLUSION

The third chapter analysis the contemporary study of print making practices in Assam in comparison with rest of our country has been divided into some sub chapters as impression art in India: 1850 to 1950, print making scenario in India since 1950, origin and development of print making since Pre-Independence Assam and comparative analysis of the print making scenario of Assam with other parts of India and conclusion.

The chapter studies the origin and development of print making practices in India. The progression of printing method in colonial India since 16th century led to, first, the advent of book illustration and then to independent single-sheet display print, which ultimately led to the print as a work of art in its own right. Connected with this was the introduction of printing mediums such wood and metal engraving, lithography, and etching. Initially used for printing both text and pictures, the mediums continue to be in use today for print making.
In the course of its long journey, print making has undergone continuous shifts from its role as a technological tool to print text and illustrations in the colonial printing and publishing industry, as a medium of documentation and dissemination in an era preceding photography, and finally, as a medium of artistic expression and pedagogical importance in the pre- and post-Independence years. In the research, it is interesting to investigate several frameworks within which print making has been practiced and extended as a fine art and also a commodity in artistic transaction in India. Print making pedagogy in the studio format has also been discussed in the research.

Generally speaking, from the middle of the nineteenth century impression art became a personal expression that parasitic, more aesthetic than merely reproductive or illustrative. With the evolved language and its special character, impression art became self-sufficient, independent and more forceful and expressive than previous work in the area which was more far removed from trade and commerce. Since the last century new technocrafts of printing and the combination of photomechanical process enlarged the scope and possibilities of impression art for artistic expression.

The story of printing is not merely a matter of what was printed when, but how the Gutenberg invention proved a handmaid to the cultural uplift of the nation. In literature, spanning all its genres, in art, in music, in folklore, in language and rhetoric, how did printing expand the intellectual horizons in the country? How did printing achieve this in the sciences, in philosophy, in the social sciences, and various other disciplines? The promethean effort of
bringing knowledge from exclusive palm-leaves and other manuscripts into the houses of ordinary people, and familiarize them with their cultural heritage, is an aspect of this history in every Indian language. How printing has served tradition, and also challenged tradition, is a very exciting story. Printing has no political, social or religious barriers, and is a mode of broadcasting ideas adopted by all shades of opinion.

If the location of the earliest printing presses in India were plotted on the map, it will be found that they were all located along the coastline of peninsular India. Goa, Cochin, Punnaikkyal (near Kanyakumari), Vypicottai (near Kodungalloor), and Amblakkadu (near Thrissur), were the places along the west coast. Tharangambadi (Tranquebar), Madras, Fort William, Calcutta and Serampore along the east coast represent the shaping of Indian printing. Bombay contributed its share towards the second phase of the vigorous growth of early Indian printing. Roman priests of the Catholic Missions and the Protestant Missions from Europe fathered and furthered this impulse in their anxiety to translate the Bible and thus spread the Word of God.

The start of printing in Goa spread along the southern coast and its attainment of maturity at Tharangambadi and Madras has been described as the dawn of printing in India, but the sunrise in all its brilliance was when William Carey set foot in India on November 11, 1793. The Bengali alphabet in movable type followed a long time after the Tamil alphabet had been devised in movable type. The Serampore Mission of Carey was a pioneer in this respect, helped by William Ward and Joshua Marshmann, establishing a press in Serampore in 1800. Two able Indians, Panchanan Karmakar and
Manohar helped in casting the types, publishing in 40 Indian languages, for the first time. Carey also set up the first paper making factory and the first foundry in India.

Impression art, in which lie the beginning of print making, was introduced to India by the Portugease settlers in Goa in 1556 and become a flourishing industry by the mid-18th century under colonial British rule. It follows that the medium of print making was largely alien to India and was introduced to Indian artisan of painter, jeweler, metalsmith and wood-carver origin by European artists, printers and print makers. Initially these artisans performed as mere aides to the British, soon developed technical and creative skills of their own. With the gradual emergence of vernacular literature and the growth of indigenous printing industry, indigenous schools of print making appeared in the bazaars of Calcutta, Delhi, Bombay, Amritsar, Lahore and later, Mysore. However with the advent of industrialization and the entry of art school graduates into art as a professional enterprise, the naïve bazaar print maker gradually lost his ground. It was replaced by a new ‘kitsch’ or pretentious art comprises as oleographs and chromolithographs of the calendar variety by Indian artists with affinity of British academic realism.

The introduction of printing and the consequent development of the languages of India had a tremendous socio-political impact, leading to enlightenment and empowerment. The second half of the 19th century began to witness a change from the old to the new, from the medieval to the modern. A scientific new educational system was being launched and practices like Sati (widow burning) and infanticide were being abolished.
In the realm of literature, the foundations of prose had already been laid. It is indeed as the dawn of the Indian Renaissance. The missionaries, through the introduction of printing and publishing helped the Indians think of the need for political freedom and social progress, and at the same time question certain traditional superstitious beliefs and practices. In a word, literature of the modern age became democratic. Whereas in the past, ownership of a handwritten book used to be a matter of pride, now, thanks to the advent of the printing press, even a man of average means could read and possess books.


The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) established a press in Tharangambai (Tranquebar) in 1713. Many missionaries, including Ziegenbalg, Schultze, Beschi, Nobili, Fabricius, Rhenius, Rottler, Winslow, G.U. Pope and Calwell were involved in promoting Tamil language and literature. And C.P. Browne laboured for Telugu language. In Bombay, the American Mission Press was established in 1812.
Ravi Varma (1848-1906) is an early protagonist in the Indian artist's passage to modern. He becomes the most celebrated professional painter on mythological genre, of his time, casting himself in the role of an autodidact, of a gentleman artist in the Victorian mould. It is precisely in such matters that Ravi Varma is the indisputable father figure of modern Indian art. Worth to mention that patrons and clients, both Indian and foreign, princes and literati has been keen to acquire his work until finally the middle class can also acquire it as well, but in the form of oleographs. As Ravi Varma and his younger brother C. Raja Raja Varma began reproductions of his painting images in a newly set up lithography press near Bombay in the early 1890s.

The British administration settled industrial art schools in Lahore, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata and they had appointed British artist-teachers and skilled technicians to train the native students. Their ambition was to produce skilled illustrators, calligraphers, draughtsmen, block-makers and modellers to support the industries developed by European entrepreneurship in the newly formed colony. In the training schedule of the industrial schools subjects like drawing, still life studies, human figure, studies, engraving, lithography and clay modelling were introduced. Thus these newly formed industrial schools delivered well-trained and technically competent artist-craftsmen to work as illustrators in industry.

Within India, Bengal is the place where it all beginning- the story of Indian print making, the inception of modern Indian art. A series of situations contributed to the productivity of that time, circumstances weighed down with tension and violence. There is one element that binds the artists Nandalal Bose, Mukul Dey, Ramendranath Chakrovarty, Benode Behari Mukherjee,
Ramkinkar Baij, Chittaprosad, Haren Das, Somnath Hore and others— that of belonging to Bengal, and the fact that they pictorially and conceptually navigated the meaning of this belonging. With the rise of swadeshi or nationalistic trends, there arose the need to establish a new intellectual and artistic identity. Print making became a tool to illustrate the avant-garde nationalist literature of the time and to reproduce paintings made by the emerging Orientalist artists. It was not until the pioneering efforts of Gaganendranath Tagore, Nandalal Bose and the artists of ‘Bichitra Sabha’ of Kolkata and Santiniketan School during second decade of 20th century that artistic print making in India was born.

Gaganendranath Tagore’s interest in graphics and his printed colour lithographic cartoon album ‘Adbhut Lok’, (Realm of the absurd) 1917 and also through Bichitra Club, initiated a new meaning in the modern Indian art movement. Graphics or print making, introduced by the British in the art schools, was mainly used for re-duplication of pictures or for illustrations of books to make it interesting for the newly growing reading public in Bengal. Outside the Art Schools, print making was already in vogue with the private studio-owners but it served mainly as a mass-communication media rather than as a creative medium. From the first illustrated book (printed in 1816) to Gaganendranath it took more than hundred years for the Indian artists to give certain prestige and stability to the graphic medium as a whole, which Europe had achieved at least a century back.

The gradual spreading of print making practice to institutions of art education across the subcontinent occurred from Kala Bhavana, Santiniketan, from 1930s onwards. In the 1950s and 1960s, pioneer print makers such as
Somnath More, Jagmohan Chopra and Krishna Reddy were actively practicing and popularizing the medium among artists and students. This period also witnessed the funding of several organized artist initiatives to promote print making. Gradually, in the decades leading up to the 21st century, varied modernist ethos, languages in the print making discourse emerged and expanding towards everywhere of our country.

The research also studies history and compartmental approach in Indian art education, institutions, which have played a large role in the making of artists who have contributed to contemporary visual culture, in print making and otherwise. In a theoretical-methodology that is being a general overview, art institutions in India have been the standard to categorized artists and interpret movements and styles in art. Most artists from all over India seeking to experiment with print making during their earlier years either went to Kala Bhavana, Santiniketan, Maharaja Sayajirao University in Baroda, or Delhi College of Fine Art. This gave artists a chance to learn from a first generation of experimental print makers such as B C Sanyal (born 1901), Somnath Hore (born 1921), Jyoti Bhatt (born 1934), K G Subramanyan (born: 1924) and Sanat Kar (born 1934).

While Santiniketan, Baroda, Kolkata, Delhi, Chennai, Mumbai, Bhopal and Hyderabad emerged as the primary centers of print making through the modernist era, isolated sporadic efforts are visible elsewhere. Chandigarh, Jaipur, Lucknow, Varanasi, Goa, Guwahati, Khairagarh, and Bangalore have had active print makers over the years. Worth mentioning among those practicing in the modernist era are Ajit Dubey in Bangalore, Ajit Seal in Guwahati and Santiniketan, Bhavani Shankar Sharma, and Vidyasagar
Upadhayay in Lucknow, Shail Choyal in Udaipur, Hanuman Kambli in Goa, and V. Nagdas in Khairagarh.

The chapter also analyses impression art and its development in India as well as Assam since second half of nineteenth century. In 1826, after the Yandaboo Treaty, the British took over power of Assam from the invasion of Burmese and reign till 1947 as part of Independent India. The Christian missionaries introduced printing technology at this time. The first Assamese book in printed form brought out by the British missionaries was the Bible (The Assamese New Testament) in 1813 as the initiative of William Carey at Sreerampore press near Calcutta.

With the publication of an Assamese literary magazine Orunodoi (January, 1846) by the American Baptist Mission in Sibsagar Assam, it is worth mentioning that it was in this magazine that art-illustrations in wood block relief printing was introduced for the first time in the North East with varied themes of Bible and general interest. We know not much about the people who carved the wood-blocks for printing in journal ‘Orunodoi’ except for some names- Dr. Nathan Brown, Tanuram, Mr. Rudford, Tuleswar, Young (a Khamti youth), Mohiram, Bhogai, Monroe Wood, Mr. Sepping, Kanuram, George Boxi etc. So ‘Orunodoi’ did a quite bit of work for popularizing print making in Assam.

In the pre-Independence period, some youths from Assam studied in the Calcutta Government School of Art. A few of them completed the course but none could practice enough so that their work could attain any maturity, not to speak of contemporary character. The names of Lakhiram Baruah,
Suren Bardoloi, Mukta Nath Bardoloi, Birendralal Bhowmik, Jagat Singh Kachari, Sachidhar Saikia and Jibeswar Baruah could be mentioned in this context. Later Tarun Duarah and Rabin Bhattacharya passed out from the same school.

The most important event of this period was the establishment of the art school in the year 1947. Jibeswar Baruah, on whose initiative and devotion the school was established, practically took its entire burden on his own shoulder. Without Baruah, who himself was a painter, the art school would not have come up so early and so easily. Sobha Brahma and Benu Misra made their appearance during the fifties. In 1958 the Fourth National Exhibition of Art of the Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi was arranged at the newly constructed building of the Assam Emporium at Ambari, Guwahati. That was the first practical exposure to Indian Contemporary Art the people of Assam had the occasion to encounter.

For most people living in other parts of India, the North East is a region marked by socio-political unrest, tribal conflict and border skirmishes. Like most stereotypes about people and places, this picture frames only half truth. The research accesses the actual picture or reality of Assam and other North Eastern states and makes us come face to face with an overwhelming truth—that in an atmosphere in particular however that is not entirely salubrious as far as the production of art is concerned; it is inspiring to see artists accepting new challenges. It is also heartening to see them pushing hard to create works for non-existent art-market, critical reviews, in places with hardly any commercial galleries or collectors.
However, it took several more decades in the dynamics of modern art in Assam or North Eastern states of India to evolve a vibrant trend in the realm of print making by the eighties of the twentieth century in the true sense of the term. Unlike other genres of art like painting or sculpture, print making requires specific infrastructural facilities to develop and sustain along with various socio-cultural and political factors. Owing to such dearth of facilities the trend of print making had to undergo hurdles to flourish till a turning point came in.

In Assam, for developing a artistic movement with a conviction behind it and also transforming print making to an individual's serious creative activity and images, should go to Govt. college of art & crafts, Guwahati of the fifties to its’ undisputed leaders- Jibeswar Baruah and Sobha Brahma. With such an illustrious background, the Late Sri Jibeswar Baruah started the Gauhati school of art in 1947 (today's reputed Govt. College of Art & Crafts, Guwahati) where print making as a preliminary medium of expression was introduced as a part of the curriculum. Esteemed artists like Sobha Brahma, Asu Deb, Neelpawan Baruah and Benu Misra all showed considerable interest in the medium and occasionally tried their hand/experimented with wood-cut and lino-cut prints. With the establishment of the Department of Graphics in the Government College of Arts & Crafts, Guwahati in 1990, this specific turning point and a new departure was ushered in the art scene of the North Eastern India. The two artists, who have made an immense contribution to the development of the art of graphics in the initial stage of development in this Department in the present Government College of Arts & Crafts, Guwahati are Ajit Seal and Dilip Tamuly.
It was Ajit Seal went out of Assam for studying print making during 1979 at Garhi studio, New Delhi and later Kala Bhavan, Santiniketan. After achieving Post Diploma from Department of Graphics, Kala Bhavan, he joined as lecturer at Govt. School of Art & Crafts, Guwahati and for the first time, in 1986, he took over the charge of the Graphics Department. Another alumnus of Kala Bhavan, Dilip Tamuly, was also the first one to hold the print making exhibition in the region in 1981 in the State Art Gallery in Guwahati along with Bula Chakravarty. His passionate creativity and experience/exposure of working in foreign studio in Denmark and Norway brought in much needed momentum in the genre of print making not only in the state but also the entire region as many student started coming to the college from the other states of the North East India. The artists who have achieved the degree from this Department of Graphics in the Government College of Arts & Crafts, Guwahati and other major art centers of India during the last three decades to be engaged in this field in different parts of north east, the country and abroad.

Noni Borpujari, who is also one of the pioneer print makers from Assam, is taken up as the case study for the research. Noni Borpujari, a self-taught artist, originally from painting background, senior-most among former two print-makers, started Print making during eighties at Lalit Kala Studio, New-Delhi and later participated in a print-making workshop at University of Southern California, U.S.A. conducted by Prof. Paul Lingren in 1983. Since then he established himself as a distinguished print maker of our country with his mastery over monochrome dry point, aquatint and multicolor intaglio prints. Also during the last four decade and from then onwards, students from
the region had returned from Kala Bhavan, Santiniketan, J. J. School of Art, Bombay, M. S. University of Baroda, Rabindra-Bharati University, Calcutta, College of Art, New Delhi etc. No doubt, they had imbibed the best of elements of technical expertise, new contemporary approach and idiom of international media, spirit of assimilation from multiple sources. These aspects within reasonable periods of time were sure to render the hitherto barren fields of art fertile with fresh possibilities. The highlights of the emerging modern art scenario in Assam in Assam can be traced as- emergence of few Calcutta trained artists (Lakhi Ram Baruah, Suren Bardoloi, Mukta Nath Bardoloi, Jagat Singh Kachari, Pratap Baruah, Birendralal Bhowmik, Sachdhar Saikia, Tarun Duara) in 2nd and 3rd decade ; establishment of the first art school by Jibeswar Baruah in 1947, convention of the 4th National Art and Crafts Exhibition by Lalit Kala Akademi in 1958 and the National Art and Craft Exhibition organized by Art and Craft School of Assam in 1960.

The first phase of modern art in Assam manifests British Academic Realism, Renaissance representations with some overtones of Romanticism. The second phase of fifties and sixties as the second phase brought in expressionistic/ surrealistic/ post-impressionistic syntax and idioms. But it was at the advent of seventies, that a new movement encompassed the art world of Assam with a varied range of experimentation, in creative imaginative order marked with aesthetic sensibilities. Art production and art activism both were charged with an acute enthusiasm to define new parameters for emerging modernist manifestation of regional and cultural specificities as a departure occurred following the entry of some trained artists from Santiniketan, Baroda and Bombay who brought new thoughts and ideas and began a wave of
cultural activism. These artists with their holistic vision and eclectic mode of representation freed the realm of modern art from its overbearing romanticism, trajectory and other lingual and conceptual limitations.

The chapter focused on contemporary art scenario of Assam as prime vibrating, leading genre of modernist ethos and sensibilities in whole North eastern periphery of India in broader perspectives and three print makers of Assam Noni Barpujari, Ajit Seal and Noni Borpujari extensively and their credentials in the field of print making which have been identified as pioneering and ground-breaking as touching the core of artist-generation of all over North-East and also in the point of view of contemporary print making in India. To identify those credentials of three print makers of Assam in larger perspectives of our country as well as entire globe, a detail and comprehensive study has been taken in specific. It has been examined to catch the uniqueness, diversified cosmos and originality of creative expression of three print makers of Assam, those who are living in the remote corners of India. It also analysis the uses of art and technological part which are essential component of whole print making activity which has been initially made sparkle by those three print makers of Assam within the material unavailability and financial constraints. A detail study has been taken to identify the changing scenario of print making of Assam in the global society.

To focus on the chapter various art institutions and organizations as Garhi studio, Department of Graphics, Kala Bhavana, Santiniketan, Government College of Art and Crafts, Guwahati, etc., was survey to identify the studio facilities and pedagogical aspect of art of print making in all over India which has been associated with three print makers of Assam over the
years. A comparative study has been taken out to identify the rare nuances of motifs and method of creation/practices by those three print makers of Assam have been counted to preserve for future generation.

The chapter also gives attention to individual effort of three print makers of Assam and also their initiative to inspire whole generation to spread the knowledge and creative possibilities of art of print making. It has been found that with the effort of those three print makers of Assam circumstances of whole North Eastern India becomes full grown as leading centers among all over our country and also abroad. The artists who have achieved the degree from this Department of Graphics in the Government College of Arts & Crafts, Guwahati and other major art centers of India during the last three decades to be engaged in this field in different parts of north east, the country and abroad.
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