CHAPTER V
BANKIM CHANDRA AND LAKSHMINATH BEZBARUAH

Our object in this work is to attempt a comparative study of the literary works of Bankim Chandra and Lakshminath Bezbarua. There are two types of geniuses, one which creates a distinctive new world, never before seen and known, and the other, which not only creates something new and different from the old, but arouse and inspire others to create. Both Bankim Chandra and Lakshminath fall in the last mentioned category. So we have included in this study how Bankim Chandra and Lakshminath influenced the following generation.

Bankim Chandra was born in a famous Brahmin family of Bengal and Lakshminath also born in a renowned Brahmin family of Assam. The British rule was firmly established in India at that time. Both their fathers held important government posts in the British administration. The father of Bankim Chandra, Jadav Chandra Chattopadhyay came in close contact with English officers holding executive posts, in connection with his service. He realised the importance of English education and got his son admitted into an English school for English education. The father of Lakshminath also rubbed shoulders with important British officers in connection with his job. He also realised the importance of
English education and arranged to educate his son Lakshminath through English medium.

Educated in English and serving under the English Jadab Chandra felt a conflict in his mind between the old culture and the new. In his everyday life he sincerely and strictly followed every ritual according to the dictates of the Hindu scriptures and deeply loved the language and literatures of his own. But in his practical life outside his home, he maintained a cordial relation with the English and the Western minded people. He was a devoted Brahmin and in his home, studies and discussions of Sanskrit scriptures and literature and also of Bengali literature went together. The life and education of his father and the strict discipline and devotion to religion at home, had a great influence on Bankim Chandra in his later life.

On the other hand Dinanath Bezbaruah, father of Lakshminath, was a liberal minded person with a strong personality. Though he mixed with the English and moved about with them in connection with his service, he was a devout Vaisnab in the core of his heart. In his day to day life he followed every ritual of the Vaisnaba religion strictly and with great sincerity. Lakshminath spent his childhood in an atmosphere of Vaisnabism and strict discipline at home. The Vaisnabic atmosphere at home coupled with strict discipline
and his father's foresight and broadmindedness had a lasting influence on Lakshminath's life and helped greatly to build his characters.

Having come in contact with Western literature in the 19th century, Bengali literature and culture experienced a new awakening in them. These new values derived from Western education paved the way for the coming of modernism in the native literature. The study of Western literature aroused self-respect, nationalism and love for one's country, in the Bengali-mind and we may say that this planted the seed of modern Bengali literature. Ram Mohon (1772-1833), Akshay Kumar Dutta (1820-1886), Iswar Chandra Vidysagar (1820-1891) were the pioneers of the great intellectuals of the time and in their writings they indicated the path for the good and benefit of the people. These pioneers were wisdom-seeking sages. At that time the Bengali mind, educated in English, experienced in it a conflict between the old and the new culture. The British rule had taken a firm root in the Indian soil after the Sepoy rising and the far flung parts of the country were brought closer together by rail transport and telegraph. It was at this critical juncture of history Bankim Chandra appeared like an ambidexter in the arena of Bengali language, literature and culture.
"If we give the name custom-tradition period to the previous age, then the period under discussion should be named the Educatve-period. The trend of literature in the previous age was in the direction of breaking down the obstacles to reform the society. The trend of literature in the period under discussion was to reform the mind and to rebuild the house".¹

The newly awakened national consciousness of the 19th century achieved a successful culmination by the magic touch of Bankim's genius.

"The liveliness, the joy and cheer and the awareness of life which are found in the literary pursuits of the meditative and thoughtful Bankim Chandra, established him as a celebrated epoch-maker by the irresistible necessity of the time".²

¹ "Pürber samayke jadi sanskār parba nām diy tabe āloch-ya samayke baliba shikshā parba. Pürber juge sāhitye prabanatā chila samāj sanskārer abhimukhe, beda bhāṅgār dike. Ālochya juge sāhityer prabanatā haila chitta sanskārer abhimukhe, ghar gaḍār dike".

² "Chintānāyak Bankim Chandrer sāhitya sādhanaṃ parshāte je prābhayatā, je ekti ānandamai jihan chetanār sphurṭi chhila, tāhāi juge anibārya prayojane Bankim Chandrake kīrtimān jugasrāṭār āsane pratiṣṭhita kariāche.
Adhir Dey : Ādhunik Bānglā Prabandha Sāhityer Dhārā, 1988,p.114."
What Bankim Chandra had done for Bengali literature and culture, can be said in short, to be without a precedence. The chief achievement of Bankim Chandra was to give the Bengali prose literature an easy and attractive shape, to write successful historical and social novels and to introduce an honest, clean and pure humour in Bengali literature. He was the first to start literary criticism by Western standards and paved the way for it. He had another achievement to his credit. He tried to correctly assess the true values of Hindu religion and scriptures with the help of an educated and independently thinking mind. For all sorts of vulgarity and obscenity he had a deep abhorrence in his heart. What went in the name of humour in literature before Bankim Chandra was nothing but the vulgar humour of the ignorant, half-backed pundits and the stale, hackneyed jesting of the rustics and Bankim hated these vulgarities like anything. In his hands humour was raised to a level fit for a discerning and cultivated mind. He was a worshipper of beauty. Whatever was truth and enduring, whatever was beautiful, Bankim Chandra loved them from the core of his heart. He had in him the sensitivity of a poet's mind. His genius could not be confined in a single pursuit, it was varied and many sided. Of course, it is a fact that his precursors in literature advanced the Bengali language and literature in its different aspects, but it was Bankim Chandra who gave the Bengali language and
literature its mature form in all its aspects. With his exceptional genius Bengali language and literature rose to a level of inconceivable excellence. In this connection we may recall the remark made by Rabindra Nath,

"So long our Bengali language could sing only one tune like 'Ektārā', (one stringed musical instrument) was only good enough to sing a religious hymn. Bankim Chandra added one string after another to it with his own hands and made it a 'Veenā'."

He not only gave a importance to produce creative literature but he also thought deeply about the progress and development of his country and his people. His chief objective was to awaken the self-respect of the people and to instil self-confidence in them. He always bore in his mind the thought, how to do good to the people, how to bring social reforms, and how to raise the standard of life of the people. He held Bengal and the Bengalis nearest to his heart. All his works are steeped with a noble idealism and a deep emotional love for his people.

3 "Etadin âmáder bangabhāgā kebal ektārā jantrer mata ek tāre bāndhā chila, kebal sahaj sure dharma sankirtan karibār upajogi chila. Bankim Sahaste tāhāte ek ekti kariā tār charāiyā aaj tāhāke Veenā jantre pariṇata kariā tuliachhen"

Rabindra Nath Tagore : "Bankim Chandra".
In about the middle of the 19th century, Hemchandra and Gunaviram tried to put Assamese language and literature on a modern foundation. In later times Chandrakumar. Lakshminath and Hemchandra Goswami provided it with the necessary leadership for its progress and development. Lakshminath was the leader of this literary movement. In their later life they brought a new era in the realm of Assamese language and literature. Lakshminath was a literator with a varied and many sided genius.

"He nourished and developed all branches of Assamese literature with his versatile genius".  

Having born in an ancient and aristocratic family, Lakshminath got the opportunity to study the Assamese people and society from all possible angles and the influence of this observation has been revealed in all his works in his later life. Bezbaruah started his literary career in Calcutta environment.

"All our writers studied the works of Bengal writers very assiduously along with English literature and came forward to write books in Assamese from the experience derived from them.

4 "Teon bahumukhi sāhityik pratīvā dwārā Asamiyā Sāhitya sakalo bibhāgār paripuṣṭi sādhan karichil". Satyendranāth Sharmā: Samikshatmak Itibritta (p. 320).
There is no doubt that they were inspired by the Romantic literature of England; but the literary ideals which inspired them and made them translate those ideals into Assamese, was the Bengali literature of those days. The construction of well-connected and well-built sentences in prose composition, the techniques of rhyme and rhythm in poetic composition and the method and manner of writing novels, were taken up by the Assamese people from Bengali literature.\(^5\)

The influence of western literature and the characteristics and virtues of Bengali literature, were the sources of inspiration of Bezbaruah's literary pursuits and his ardent desire was the all-round development of his homeland, Assam. Since he lived away from Assam most of the time, the real and a clear picture of Assam and the Assamese people were vividly clear to him, distance gave him a clear perspective.

\(^5\) "अमर लेखकशाकले एंग्राजी साहित्याला लागते बंगाली लेखकांना साहित्यांू तन्नाकू तन्नाकू अध्यायकरिले आँणे साहित्याला अर्थात असमीया भाषेत रच्या काले अग्निकरिले। एंग्राजी रोमांटिक साहित्याला द्वरा जे तेोलंू अनुप्रस्तुत हाधी, आँणे बिषये संदेह नाही; किंतु जी चानकी चाची आणि बाह्यदर्शक असमीयत रूप दिले आणि चानकी होणे स्थानात बंगाल साहित्या। गद्यत सुसंघात दुरंतू बाक्य गाथनार रेती, काजीदर चांदा रेती आणि साहित्याला अरु असमीयाला लोकसाखेत ग्रहण करिले".

Satyendranāth Sharmā : Asamiyā Sāhityar Samikshatvānāk Itibritta (p. 310).
"His chief objective was how to arouse self-confidence in the backward mind of self-forgetful senile and superstitious people of Assam and how to resuscitate their social life with the light of knowledge and wisdom". 6

It is quite evident that to arouse national consciousness and the progress and development of the Assamese people in all aspects of life was the only inspiration behind his literary works and the goal of his life.

"The intellectual atmosphere and the cultural milieu which gave to Bengal and India the giants of Bengali literature during the second half of the last century also gave to Assam its greatest personality in modern Assamese literature, the real builder of modern Assamese literature in all its various aspects, namely Lakshminath Bezbaruah". 6

6 "To mūl lakṣhya āchil kenekai Asamiyā samajat ātmabismrita, sthabir, elandhū grāmya monojagatat ātmā-pratyayā jāgāi tuliba pāre āru gñāṅ-buddhir ālokpat kari sāmājik jibanat prāṇ sanchālan kariba pāre".
Dilip Barua : Bezbaruār Sāhityadarshan (Lakshminath Bezbaruaj p.20

7 Suniti Kumar Chatterjee : The Nineteenth Century Renaissance in India and Lakshminath Bezbaruah of Assam : (Lakshminath Bezbaruja, The Sahityarathi of Assam, p.6)
A large portion of the works of Bezbaruah fall in the category of literature of humour and satire. In fact majority of the people know him to be only a humourist.

The characteristics of Bezbaruah's humour was the exposition of social corruption and the satirical portrayal of superstitious beliefs, exaggeration or the creation of a humorous situation by presenting contrasting and contradicting, incidents, witty remarks, simple and light humour and in particular places and situations, harsh and plungent satire.

"It was Bezbaruah who exposed and ridiculed a number of superstitious beliefs, pretentions, false pride, wrong ideas, imitative tendencies and ignorance which hindered the progress of the Assamese society, particularly the Assamese society of the early part of the 20th century. He also wished to put Assamese nationalism on a solid foundation by sometimes taking up political programmes, instilling a moral strength and ....

The targets of his attack were the corruption in high places like the Brahmins, the Gohains, the Mohantas, the police, their envy and jealousy, their frog-in-the-well mentality; the inordinate hankering of the educated and the
bureaucrats after titles, their fascination for jobs, and injustices related to marriage; ............. and the fruitless movement of the young generation for women's liberation, some new items published in newspapers and the contempt of the subscribers and the readers, the injustice done to women and their silence, the fruitless research of the pundits, and the absence of intelligent curiosity, the meaningless attempt to write poems without any knowledge of poetics; blind aping of dresses, manners of others and a vain show of luxury and wealth; narrow nationalism; ...........

.........an unscientific attitude to medical science, lack of common sense and superstitions".

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8 "Bezbaruāi Asamiyā samājāri - bisheshkai ādi kuri shatikār samāj khanar - unnatīr pariṇanti bhāleman kusanskār, bhāndāmi, micchā bhem, micchā dhāranā, anukaranpiyātā, āru āgnatāk upahās kari thakhā - sarakā karār upariō samaye samaye teon Asamiyā jātik hai dh-wani, rajnaitik kārya-kham āru naitik bal di Asamiyā jātiyatār bheti daahdahiya karibalai bichārichil ............ Brāhmaṇ, Gohāin, Mahanta, police āru dāngariā sakalar dūrnīti, ākrosh āru kupamanḍūkata; shikshita āru āmalā sakalar upādhimoha, chākuri moha, āru bibāha ādijanit abichār; ............. āru dekā sakalar strīswādhinatār bābe antaswārśūnya āndolōn, sangbād patrar ketbor sangbād āru grāhak paruwar abagna, tirotār prati abichār o tirotār nīrabatā, pānditar bhua gabeśānā, āru anusandhītsār abhāb; kāvya-kula āyatta karibār chestā nakari kabitā likhār apacheśtā, akhar jotonir bībhāt, sāj-poṣāk, dharan-karan āru bājhyārmbarat anār andha anukaran; sankīrṇa jātiyatābād, .............; chikitsār prati ābāignānik monōbhāb, sadhāran gn anar āgnata āru kusanskār - ei bilakei āchil teour ākramaṇar biṣay bastu".

The creative originality of Lakshminath is beyond question, for he brought a new era in Assamese literature by his literary pursuits.

"Lakshminath Bezbaruah was thus an illustrious son of India, and a member of the galaxy of great men and women, who raised high, the name of India during the last century". 9

Bankim Chandra is acknowledged as the most successful novelist in Bengali literature. He was not only the pioneer of Bengali novel writing, he was also the creator of the artistry of modern Bengali novels writing.

"In the hands of Bankim, Bengali novel has grown to its fullest development of beauty and strength". 10

All told Bankim Chandra wrote fifteen novels big and small, the first was in English which he could not see in its published form. Out of the remaining fourteen, four may be said to be extended stories.

9 Suniti Kumar Chatterjee : The Nineteenth Century Renaissance in India and Lakshminath Bezbaruah of Assam (Lakshminath Bezbaruah, The Sahityarathi of Assam, p.6).

10 "Bankimer hāte Bāṅglā upanyās pūrṇa joubaner shakti ma saundarya lāv kariāchhe".

Srikumar Banerjee : 1973 : BANGA SAHITYE UPANYĀSER DHARĀ (p 64).
"A particular characteristic of narrating a story, an attempt to portray the true picture of the real life of man through a story, the attempt to develop characters through clash and conflict of events, the subtle analysis of the confusion and conflict that always go on in the life of man living in a society, and through these a revelation is made about a wider and deeper truth of human life - we may say these to be the ingredients of a novel".  

The result of western education was that the Bengali novel was directly influenced by its English counterpart. Modern Bengali novel means stories written according to the methods and norms of English novels. All the novels of Bankim fall in the category of romance, no matter whether they are social or historical. The principal matter dealt with his novels, is the conflict in love between men and women. There is no doubt the Bankim Chandra started writing his novels setting English literature as ideals before him, but it is equally true that he did not neglect

11 "Galpa balibār ektā bishesh dhangaik - galper madhyadia mānuṣer prakrita jibaner chhiba ānkibār chestā, ghatana sanghāte tāhār charitra sphuraner udjog sāmājik manuṣer madhye je aharaha ektā ākarṣan-bikarṣaner dwandha chalitecchhe tahār sūkha ālochana, o ei dwandha sanghāter madhya diā manuṣya jiban sambandhe ektā brihatter, byapakata sahyākē phutālā tolā - ihākei upnyās bāke jāite pāre".

the ideals of native stories and plots. He fused the elements of English novels with native fairy tales and stories similar to that of the Arabian Nights, assimilated them in his own being and gave them a indigenous character.

The novels of Bankim Chandra can be divided into three categories; pure romantic novels, interesting and attractive, such as, "Durgeshnandini", "Kapālkundala", "Mrinālinī", "Indirā", "Jugalānguriya", "Rādhārāṇī" and "Rājsingha". There is hardly any conflict in the love episodes between the hero and the heroine in these novels. The conflicts in the plot have revolved around the obstacles in the way of union between the hero and the heroine, the conflicts of events and the machinations of destiny. Secondly; social novels with certain ideals and principles, such as, "Bīṣābrikṣha", "Krīṣṇakānter Will", "Chandrasheshkhā" and "Rajānī". In these novels stress has been laid mainly on the internal conflict in love between the hero and the heroine. Thirdly, idealistic romances with a touch of spiritualism, such as, "Ānandamath", "Debi Chowdhurāṇī" and "Sitārām". The ideals of patriotism and welfare of the people have been proclaimed in these three novels.

The publication of "Durgeshnandini" is an epoch-making event in the history of Bengali literature. It appeared in a form with fledged development of ideas.
language, story and attractiveness. We observe some characteristic devices employed by Bankim Chandra in the construction of his plots. Such as, (a) love before marriage, e.g. premarital love, premarital love was unthinkable in Bengali literature before Bankim Chandra except in fairy tales (b) there is no conflict in the love affairs of the main heroine in any of his novels excepting "Rajani" and "Chandrashekhar". Whatever the conflict, it involves the hero only in general (c) almost in every novel of Bankim Chandra we find that the control of events of the plot is caused by forecast of the future, the power of magic and the mysterious and unearthly powers of the sages. (d) In most of the novels of Bankim Chandra two love stories run in parallel, (e) the heroines have very little connection with real life but comparatively his heroes are more practical (f) but his heroes are mostly without personality. In comparison the heroines are more mature.

"Rājsingha" was Bankim's only historical novel, on the other side Bezbaruah's only novel was also written against a historical background. The chief objective of Bankim was to show the physical prowess of the Hindus, on the other hand the objective of Bezbaruah in his novel was to sing the glory of patriotism. Bankim Chandra wrote his "Rājsingha" with a definite intention. He has himself said that "Rājsingha" was his only historical novel. In the
advertisment to "Rājsingha" he has said, "to demonstrate the physical powers of the Hindus is my objective and as an example I have chosen Rajsingha. I believe that the Rajputs were physically more powerful than the Marathas ...........
when to demonstrate physical prowess is my objective, then I can take novel as its medium". By this advertisement Bankam Chandra himself has professed his objective clearly when he wrote "Rājsingha". A work does not get degenerated because it has been written with a definite intention. "Rājsingha" is an undeniable proof of this. The spiritual message of "Rājsingha" is the message found in the Geeta, "It is better to die for one's own religion; but an alien religion is dangerous". (Swadharmā Nidhanang Shreya; Paramārtha Bhayābaha). The story ends after the defeat of the Singhalese army and the rescue of Chanchalkumari. An event of history has been very skilfully fused with a story of love. It is still quite attractive though there is weakness in the portrayal of characters.

Lakshminath Bezbaruah wrote only one novel, "Padumkunwari" written against a historical background. The historically famous "Danduā" rebellion is its backdrop. The novel narrates the climatic events of the rebellion in which two patriots, Haradutta and Bidadatta, tried to rescue their motherland, Kamrup, from the hands of the autocratic Ahom
The plot of the novel has progressed and reached a climax centering around the love affair between Padumkunwari, the daughter of the leader of the Dundua rebellion Haradutta, and Suryakumar. It may be said that more importance has been given to the historical rebellion than the love episode. The story of love which has been built around, Padumkunwari, Suryakumar and Phool, is not history but fiction, born out of the author's imagination. Its plot is quite weak. Strange incidents and sudden turn of events have obstructed the free flow of the story. Though the author has tried to present a pure and chaste portrait of love, the dialogue and activities of the characters are seemingly unbelievable. The characters of the story do not appear to be fully revealed through the interactions of their behaviour and activities, and even in some cases there are strange contradictions between what has been said about them by the author and their real activities in the story. For this reason none of the principal characters, Haradutta, Biradutta, Padum, Suryakumar, Phool etc. have developed naturally. All appear like unreal inventions of the author. The worth of the novel has been lessened by the introduction of some unreal incidents, eye-catching ending and unnecessary or undesirable description. But the success of the author lies in this, that he has been able to fuse a love episode with a historical event quite skillfully.
"Bhanumati" (1891) and "Lahari" (1892) by Padmanath Gohain Baruah and "Padum Kunwari" by Lakshminath Bezbarua (1890), are the three novels which launched the Assamese novel, on its illustrious journey. Bezbarua's "Padum Kunwari" is the first historical novel in Assamese literature.

The beginning and development of short story came much later than that of the novel. Both the novel and the short story in Indian literature are the direct offshoots of the study of Western literature. Though both of them tell stories, yet both in length and characteristics, they are quite different. Like the novel, the short story was also born outside India, in Europe and in America. A short story is not an abridged novel, nor a novel is an enlarged short story. The story has some definite characteristics of its own which distinguishes it from other prose writings.

"Very briefly the characteristics are that, like a lyric poem, the short story must have a definite and compact shape; there may be one or more than one point of interest, but they should not reveal themselves independently but must help in the development of the central theme. In the construction of the plot, from the beginning to the end, a single interest must join all the events, and above all, these
should be no difficulty in differentiating a short story from a novel".  

Bankim Chandra did not write a short story according to this definition, he was the creator of the artistry of writing novels. But he wrote four big stories. Out of these four stories he enlarged two and gave them the size of novels. Written in 1873 "Indira" is a big story. Later in its fifth edition, he enlarged it and gave it the size of almost a novel. In the manner of its presentation and plot construction, the novel broke new grounds. The book is like a diary, a talk about self. The speaker is not the writer, but a third person, the heroine herself. Bankim adopted this method taking it from English novels. It is really a story of adventure though ostensibly it is an ordinary homely story. In the story Indira goes out in search of her lost husband. The incident of the robbery has made it thrilling and attractive. The character of Indira, the heroine, is more firm and mature in comparison with the male counterparts. Yet the story is both interesting and attractive.

12 "Khub chamukai sei lakṣaṇa keita hal ei je geeti kabiitar dare chuti galpara etā akhanda satwa bā ghana sannibadha roop thākiba lāgiba; tār mājat ekādhik ghatarar bā prasangor ullekh thakilī seibore nije swatantratābhae bikashita nahai galpator kendriya uddēsyar bikāshatahe kebal saha kariba lāgiba; galpator ādyopāta nirman kārya eketi mātra bhābar aikya sūtrere grathita hābā lāgiba; āru sarbopari, upanyṣar parā chuti galpak pritak kari bāchi ulioat bindumātra asubidhā hābā nelāgiba". 

Homen Bargohain : Bezbaruār Chuti Galpa (Bezbaruā Pratita, Satabāršīkī Smritigrantha, p. 87).
His smallest big story is "Jugalānguriya" (1873). The child-love of the protagonists of wealthy families and their union after going through many difficulties and troubles, have been narrated here. Here we get much of the acknowledged artistry and characteristics of a big story. The story is woven and unwoven around a couple of rings, and hence the title Bankim’s style has made it pleasant reading.

"Radhārāṇī" is another of Bankim's big story. This is a simple, beautiful and pleasing love-story, rather like a fairy tale. Though the names, places and the characters are of the present day society, but the way in which the story has moved through strange and unreal incidents and situations, and the way in which the story reaches its climax and its strange ending, only reminds us of the unreal atmosphere found in a fairy tale. In the skillful hands of Bankim Chandra the story has become attractive no doubt but it certainly falls short of as a mature work of art.

On the other hand the name of Lakshminath Bezbarua will remain deathless in the history of Assamese short story for this reason alone that he was the forerunner in this branch of Assamese literature. He was the first who wrote short stories in Assamese. Short story is a new addition and a new thing in world literature. It was born in the 19th century as a new branch of literature with a story element in
it and within a very short time it established itself firmly as an important branch of a modern literature. "Suravi" (1909), "Sādhu Kathār Kuki" (1910) and "Jonbiri" (1913) of Bezbaruah are the first anthologies of short story in Assamese literature. After his death, an anthology of fourteen short stories of Bezbaruah, "Kehokali", was published. Of course, all the short stories of Bezbaruah do not satisfactorily show the necessary characteristics of a standard short story. He named one anthology of his short stories, "Sādhu Kathār Kuki". This sādhukatha or fairly tale and short story, though belong to the same literary genius, but the two are basically vastly different. Inspite of being in the same category, the characteristics and objective of short story is quite different from that of the Sadhukatha. Though they are accepted as stories yet they have not risen to the level of a modern short story. Particularly the stories like, "Ghar patā kaka", "Mūlā khowā Burā", "Jene cho Tene Tangon", and "Bhom kerolā", have taken the guise of short story yet as bottom they have remained pure sadhukatha. "Swargārohān", "Mor Haite Manāir Dwanda" and "Lo-v", these three stories have become personal essays and not short stories. By no excuse these can be called short stories. His "Milārāmar Ātmajibanī", "Cheni Champā"; "Kekokakā"; "Ārjoo" "Kānīa Sabhār Adhibeshan" and "Pado āru Bhado" have become short stories but burlesques with fun and satire. Some of his stories have historical backgrounds and characters
Such as, "Maidām", "Mālatī", "Jayantī", "Kanaklata" etc. of these the story "Kanaklata" has been called a historical novel by the writer himself. In the other stories we find much exaggeration and long descriptions where he has shown his penchant for sticking to historical truth. "Amaloi Nepāharibā", "Putrabān Pitā", "Kāshibāsī", "Mr. Fipson", "Dār Kholā", "Sītā", "Dāctor bābur Sādhu" etc. are, though undeniably attractive, yet they are at the same time quite tiring because of the unnecessarily long description of characters, they have failed to develop into short stories proper.

"A satisfactory short story can never be the product of an idle mind in an idle moment. It demands deep sensitivity, absolute concentration and tireless mental alertness from the writer. In the stories of Bezbaruah the want of this mental preparation is distinctly visible".

Most of the short stories of Bezbaruah written against the background of the hollow and deadent social order.

13 "Sārthak chuti galpa kettiāo alas manar, alas mukheta-sriṣṭi haba noāre. Ee likhakar parā nibir anubhuti akanda monojog, āru aklānta mānasik parimārjanā dābhī kare. Bezbaruāhr chuti galpat ene manasik prastutir ēhā nirbhul bhābe spastā".

Homen Bargohain : Bezbaruār Chuti Galpa (Bezbarua Prativā, Satabārśiki Smritigrantha, p. 94).
of the last part of the 19th century. The middle class with its pretentions of a so-called aristocracy, the corrupt bureaucrats of the English administration, were the subject matters he dealt with in his stories. He had at his fingers the true character of the village elders, sunk deep in blind superstitions, and these have been revealed in his stories with satire and irony.

"Bezbaruah had intimate knowledge of the life of the people in the towns and villages of the last part of the 19th century. For this reason he could portray the degeneracy and the downward trend of the society of the time very truthfully. But since he laid more stress on reformation through iron and ridicule, we see little expression of sensitiveness or going deep into the subconscious and analyse the complexities of the human mind."

If we study and examine the stories of Bezbaruah we see,

14 "Unabingsha shatābdīr sheshar gāon āru nagariā jibanan lagat Bezbaruāhr parichay gavīr achhil. Sei karanē sei samayar samājar asangati āru adhaṭaṭaṇar chitrābani ānu bhābe ankan karība pārichhe; kintu byangatmak la sanskārak monobrittir prādhānya hetuke sumukār anubhuti prakash naibā manar gavīr sthalat prabesh kari mānasā bislešaṇar cheṣṭā teotr galpat bishesh dekha na jai".

"He has used his stories as weapons for social criticism".\textsuperscript{15}

In this context we may mention the remarks of the famous critic of stories, Sri Trailakya Nath Goswami. He says, "There is no attempt to express the ideals of the complexities of life, the depth of sensitivity and the meanness as well as the greatness of the human mind, in the stories of Bezbaruah. Yet his stories are interesting and attractive. He attracts the readers by the lucidity of his style and the magnetism of his wit and humour. He had intimate relation with the life of the people in the villages as well as in the towns. But most of the characters have been drawn from the rural life. But the characters have not been uprooted from the society. But his awareness of the faults and weakness of the society, his tendency to reform made him attack the high-ups of the society harshly with irony and ridicule, and this is found in most of his stories. Exaggeration and excessively long descriptions have also found their places in his

\textsuperscript{15} "Teon galpak sāmājik samālochanār astraswarūpe byabahā karichhe".

Jatindranath Goswami : Sāhityarathī Lakshmināth Bezbaruā (p. 197).
stories. Perhaps he did not make any attempt to express refined feelings".16

In truth Bezbaruah's mental make up was not suitable for creative writing, he was a man with a critical bent of mind. Most of his stories are disguised social criticism. Yet out of this more than fifty stories of this great writer acknowledged as the epoch-maker of Assamese literature, at least five or six stories carry the sure sign of his great genius. These stories are - "Dhowā Khowā", "Bhadari", "Bāpirām", "Bhuruki Bou" and "Mādhāi Mālatī". The special feature of these stories is that they are pleasant creative works of art, dealing with serious subjects and the unfathomable mind of men. We discern a symbolic meaning in the character of Rameswar in the story "Dhowā-khowā". The sympathy and deep insight with which the author has portrayed


the character of a feeble-hearted person in "Bhuruki Bou", is an unforgettable experience for the reader. By any standard of any age, it is a wonderful and flawless short story. In the stories "Bhadari" and "Bāpirām", the incomprehensible mind of man and its greatness, have been revealed with rare artistic talent. The name of Bezbaruah will remain evergreen in the history of Assamese literature not only because he is the pioneer of Assamese short story, but also because he wrote a few short stories which are perfectly mature and satisfactory from the literary point of view.

Bankim Chandra has been acknowledged as uncrowned king of the modern Bengali literature. His glorious achievement is for this contribution in the fields of novels and essays. On the other hand Lakshminath has been acknowledged as a great literature by the people of Assam. Bankim Chandra worked all his life tirelessly for the progress and development of the Bengali language, literature and culture and the uplift of his country and his countryman, through his literary pursuits. And the life long struggle of Bezbaruah to guard the purity of the Assamese language, will remain a memorable episode in the history of Assamese literature for all time to come. By the magic touch of his genius Bankim Chandra succeeded in developing the Bengali language to an astounding degree, and started a new chapter in Bengali literature by his literary works.
Bezbaruah also achieved the same glory, for he also began a new epoch in Assamese literature. Bengal and the Bengalis were the dearest things to Bankim Chandra. Lakshminath also did not attempt to write anything in particular where his sole aim was not the all round development of his land and his people. In truth as Bankim Chandra was the most successful creator and originator of the modern Bengali language and literature in its totality. So Lakshminath also has placed the Assamese language and literature in a seat of great honour and distinction and has brought it to the limelight in Indian literature.

"In Bezbaruah the century-long hopes and aspirations found a common focal point of concentrated literary expressions. What was just a pencil sketch in "Arunodoi", became a complete painting with its magnificent chiaroscuro in his. Bezbaruah occupies the same place in Assamese literature, what Bankim Chandra, Madhusudan and others occupied in Bengali literature or Fakirmohan Senapati, Gauri Shankar Roy and others occupy in Oriya literature ...... he stands to be the supreme dominating personality of the modern Assamese literature of the romantic period".17

For the welfare of the country and the good of the people and for general communication for this purpose, Bankim Chandra published a monthly magazine in 1872, edited by himself. The magazine was named "Banga Darshan" and in the pages of this magazine Bankim Chandra published most of his works. Lakshminath also published a monthly magazine named "Bānhi" in 1909 and many of his works were published in different issues of this magazine. Like Bankim Chandra, Lakshminath also showed his skill in editing newspapers and journals. On the 1st day of the month of "Baiśākh," 1279 B.S. (1872), the monthly magazine "Banga Darshan" was published under the editorship of the great literateur Bankim Chandra. At that time he was a reputed Deputy Magistrate, and at the same time the successful writer of three novels, "Durgeshnandinī", "Kapāl Kuṇḍalā" and "Mriṇalinī". All the three novels were published in the book form at first. Yet it may be said that he started testing his pen in the pages of "Sambād Prabhākar" of Iswar Gupta, in the beginning. Later Bankim Chandra himself admitted that he was much indebted to "Sambād Prabhākar". His literary works of the early period were published in this magazine. In his younger days he was much influenced by Iswar Gupta and even at that tender age he realised the importance of newspapers and journals. He was perfectly aware of the importance of journals and also of the responsibility that was needed, for editing them. He knew how great was the responsibility of an editor and how he was
answerable to the people for his work. Periodicals are one of the chief vehicles for spreading knowledge and extending the horizon of culture and civilization; they are the carriers of the thought and wisdom of great men and great literature and make them easily accessible to the common man. An ordinary reader need not go to books if the reads periodicals assiduously which have been correctly and intelligently edited. Any new theory, new ideas, inventions and discoveries, can be easily and successfully brought to the people through newspapers and periodicals. To bring people closer to one another and bind them together, there is no better medium than the periodicals and newspapers. The literary genius of Bankim Chandra flowered, particularly when he was working at Berhampur, West Bengal. He not only wrote novels but also devoted himself heart and soul for the welfare of the society through his literary pursuits. At that time he met a galaxy of great men of the time, at Berhampur, such as, Bhudeb Mukhopadhyay, Ramdas Sen, Lalbehari Dey, Ramgati Nayaratna, Rajkrishna Mukhopadhyay, Dinabandhu Mitra, Loharam Shiroratna, Ganga Charan Sarkar, Akshay Chandra Sarkar, Baikuntha Nath Sen, Taraprasad Chattopadhyay, Diva Nath Gangopadhyay, Gurudas Bandhopadhyay. With these great intellectuals and great thinkers, Bankim Chandra entered into serious discussions for the progress and development of the country, the people, his language and literature. His sole thought became the establishment of an easy means of
communication for mutual understanding between people and people. The result of this worrying thought was the publication of "Banga Darshan". There was no dearth of writers. At the time when he arranged the publications of "Banga Darshan" there was no truly standard periodical in the country and hence an urgent need for it was strongly felt. He realised that with his single handed effort it would not be possible for him to serve his country, every one must join hands in that great task. With this objective before him he took up the laborious responsibility of editing the new Bengali monthly magazine for the interest of Bengali language and literature and the good of his land, Bengal.

"The day when the novelist Bankim Chandra took up the responsibility of editorship, was the day of the beginning of a new epoch, a new chapter, a new dawn and the opening up of a new horizon for Bengali literature".  

Studying the background of his country and the time Bankim Chandra realised that to hasten the progress and development of the Bengali literature from its childhood he took up the task of editing the Bengali monthly magazine "Banga Darshan".

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18 "Oupanyeśik Bankim Chandra je din theke Sampādake dāyitwabhār grahan karlen se din theke Bangla Sāhitya nūtan yug, nūtan adhyāy, nūtan prabhāt, nūtan digantā suchanā".

its youth, it was necessary to arouse and turn the interest of the newly come up Bengali society, who had Western education, towards Bengali language and literature. Though English was the language of the ruling class, it should be the Bengali language which must be the vehicle of thoughts and ideas of the educated Bengalis. The Bengali language must be placed on a throne of honour; the strength and beauty and the glory that lie hidden in the language must be revealed and brought to light. He realised with his deep insight that unless the neglect of the people towards their own mother tongue was removed, the removal of the decadent condition of the country would be an impossible task for any one. So for the interest of the country and the people, widespread study and cultivation of the mother tongue is the first and the most important task. He proclaimed this necessity in the introduction in the first issue of "Banga Darshan" in the first year of its publication edited by him. He said in the said introduction with what noble goal in view he started the publication of "Banga Darshan".

"......... so long as the well educated and intelligent Bengalis do not express their thoughts in Bengali language, there is but little chance of the progress and development of the Bengalis".

19 "...... Jatadin nā shushikshita, jñayanabanta Bāṅgāleer: Bāṅglā bhāṣaẏ āpan ukti sakal binyasta kariben, tātadī Bāṅgāleer unnatir kono Sambhābanā nāi".
Bankimrachanābalī : Vol 2 : Ed. Jogesh Chandra Bāgal (p. 60)
Bankim Chandra opines,
"The neglect of the Bengali language by the Bengalis, is augmenting the neglect of Bengal".

Bankim Chandra started publishing "Banga Darshan" chiefly with three objectives in view. In the first place, he said, "We shall attempt to take due care to make the magazine worth reading by the well educated Bengalis"; Secondly, "we present this magazine in the hands of the learned section of the community again with the hope that they would utilise it as their mouth piece". Let it show their learning, imagination, artistry of composition and their cultured mind to the Bengali society, let it carry their thoughts and illuminate Bengal with the light of their knowledge", and thirdly, "we shall make all possible efforts so that the new educated section, and the ordinary men are brought closer together with better understanding between them". He edited "Banga Darshan" for four years continuously. Its publication remained stopped for two years after this and from 1284 to 1289 B.S. it was published under the editorship of his elder brother Sanjib Chandra Chattopadhyay, but the publication was irregular. The appearance of "Banga Darshan" was a memorable event in the history of Bengali literature.

"By the writings of Bankim Chandra himself and by the other writers under his leadership, who h...
modern education, "Banga Darshan" became the mirror reflecting Bengali life and culture".  

In the words of Rabindra Nath, "Bankim's "Banga Darshan" came and right away robbed the hearts of the Bengalis". 

Moved by the ideals of Bankim Chandra and enthused and guided by him the intellectuals of the time, Rājkrishna Mukhopādhyāya, Akshay Chandra Sarkār, Tārāprasad Chattopādhyāy, Rāmdās Sen, Chandra Nāth Basu, etc. started contributing in "Banga Darshan". There was hardly any subject like, science, philosophy, literature, Sanskrit literature and poetics, Sociology, religious studies, History, Archaeology, Economics, Music, Linguistics, review of books, etc., which did not find its place in the pages of "Banga Darshan".

In the discussions of these topics Bankim Chandra discarded the beaten track and cut out a new path for himself.

Inspired by Bankim Chandra, other contributors of "Banga Darshan"  

20 "Bankim Chandrer nijer ebong tāhār senapatye ādunik shikshay shikshita lekhak gosthir rachanāy "Banga Darshan" Bāngālīr jiban o Sanskritir darpan swārūp natyā uthila".  
Ibid p. 51.

21 "Bankimer "Banga Darshan" asia Bangaleer hriday ekebore loot karia laila.  
Ibid p. 60.
Darshan" showed their originality in the discussions of different branches of literature. He enthused different writers to write on different subjects. In many cases he edited their writings and published them in "Banga Darshan". Later he corrected and edited the entire composition of many writers and published them. As a result literature was upgraded and developed and language also became more beautiful and attained a modern standard. By writing on literature, science, history, etc. Bankim Chandra set an ideal before the people through "Banga Darshan". His light and satirical writings, his serious and thought-provoking essays, critical literature and the novels, began to be published gradually. He showed that even on an ordinary subject like the day to day life in the Bengali society, a good quality novel could be written. His novels "Biṣabriksha", "Indirā", "Jugalāṅguriya", "Chandrashekhār" "Rādhāraṇī" appeared in "Banga Darshan" one after another. Under the editorship of Sanjib Chandra, "Rajānī" "Krishnakānter Will", "Rajsingha" and "Ānāndamath", were published. "Lok Rahasya" and many other topics of science began to appear in "Banga Darshan". He took up his pen to expose the faults and weaknesses, the vanity and defects that are at the vitals of the contemporary Bengali society and made efforts to correct and remove them for its betterment.
Another undying contribution of Bankim Chandra in "Banga Darshan" was the opening of the Book Review Section, where critical reviews of new books sent to it, were published. In this section he severely and uncompromisingly criticised the contemporary literature month after month. Even in these early days he showed what is impartial criticism of literature. Bankim Chandra is not only the pioneer of modern Bengali novel, he is also the guide who showed how to write creative literature, and he is also the foremost man in the field of journalism and editing periodicals.

In 1909 Lakshminath Bezbaruah published his monthly magazine "Bānhī" from Calcutta. In the modern times newspapers and journals have assumed a significant role in the spread and development of literature. In the fast life of the present age people usually keep themselves in touch with literature and the external world through the medium of journals and newspapers. It is the journals and newspapers which change the literary taste of the people and lifts them to a higher intellectual level. It is also one of the functions of newspapers and journals to acquaint its readers with the varied and various ideas and thoughts and literary styles coming up in different parts of the world. From its very birth newspapers and journals exposed and criticised the defects and weaknesses of the society, initiated socia
reforms and guided the people in the path of progress and prosperity.

The history of journalism in Assam started with the publication of "Arunodoi" in 1846. Even from his student days, Lakshminath started making contact with journals. Particularly, after the publication of "Jonākī", Lakshminath Bezbaruah became one of its chief organisers. The experience he gathered from this helped him to publish his "Bānhī" in 1901 from Calcutta. Short stories, discussion of ancient Assamese literature, essays on different subjects, poems, and discussions of contemporary language and literature and social problems, everything found its place in the pages of "Bānhī". The point of view of "Bānhī" was fearless and a little different. Editing the "Bānhī" from 1909 to 1924 without a break, Lakshminath established the Assamese literature on a strong foundation and succeeded in producing a group of new writers. His essays "Kāhudi" aru "Kharali", "Krishnakathā", "Tattwakathā", etc. published in "Bānhī", showed his intellectual ability and power of deep thinking. His opinions, remarks and discussions of Assamese language and literature were acknowledged as the guidelines for the Assamese society of the time. His opinions on literary matters were acknowledged on all hands. To enthuse and encourage the group of new writers was also one of his chief achievements. To bring about the all round development o
the country through the media was his first and chief objective. He will be remembered as one of the successful journalists of the new era for all time to come. He took up his pen to fight against the faults and falsehoods of the society in the pages of "Bāhnī"; he awakened the Assamese people from their age old slumber by bringing to light and reasserting the past glory of Assam, and wrote essays to guard the purity of the Assamese language.

"In the pages of "Bāhnī" he founded and made the beginning of novels and short stories of Assamese literature, acquainted the Assamese literature with caricature and cartoons, nourished the critical reviews of books, extended the horizon of the literature of translations, brought the people in contact with the new discoveries and inventions of science, and above all finally established Vaishnavism and the great preachers of the religion like Sri Sankardev and others, in the minds of the people".22

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22 "Bāhnī" ye Asamiyā sāhityat galpa āru upanyaś supratisthita karile, caricature āru bisheshkai cartoona: Asamiyā sāhitya jagatā lagat suparichita kari dilo pathe samālochanāi paripuṣṭi lāv karile, anubād sāhityat prasārata la vile, nūtān baṅk-anik ābīkārār lagat rāijat parichita kari dile, āru sarbātopari Vaisnab dharmā āra Asamiyā Sri Shankardevā pramukhe Vaisnab dharmā prabartak āru guru sakalar rāijar manat punar-pratisṭhā na karile".

To introduce chaste and faultless humour in Bengali literature is one of the great achievements of Bankim Chandra. On the other side a substantial portion of the literary works of Bezbaruah falls in the category of the literature of humour. In truth, minds having the power of deep thinking can create successful humour and subtle irony. Their aim is to purge the society of its defects and make it cleaner and also to point out the mistakes and clear the illusions of a class of people so that they can better equip themselves and help in the building of a new, better and cleaner society.

Bezbaruah's first and original literary compositions were his humorous essays. His newly awakened nationalism and love for his country have found their places in these essays. On the other side Bankim Chandra avoided the vulgar and crude jesting, current at the time, in his works and gave its readers the taste of a clear and subtle humour. For all crudity and vulgarity Bankim Chandra had a healthy abhorrence. For this reason there is nothing unclean or disgustingly crude in his humour or any unkind personal attack in it. The ordinary and natural weaknesses of human nature are the targets of his chaste and polished humour.
He started publishing "Banga Darshan" chiefly with two aims in view, the development of Bengali literature and serve the society. To publish literary compositions, keeping in view the standard of the magazine was a very difficult task. How difficult it was to fill the pages of a first class magazine like "Banga Darshan" with standard writings in those days is a matter of serious conjecture. Again to make the magazine popular and palatable to all and sundry, the publication of light and humourous compositions were also a necessity. Bankim Chandra began to publish both serious and light compositions in "Banga Darshan" to meet the taste of all, and as a direct consequence of this intelligent attempt with great foresight, we have got a great literature. Three books, "Lokrahasya", "Kamalākānter Daptar" and "Muchirām Gurer Jiban Charit", though written in a lighter vein are also good examples of educative literature. His "Kamalākānter Daptar" is not only a work of humour, it has also a distinctive place in his works as something quite new as a work of great literary art. Bankim Chandra himself admitted it to be his best work. The plan of "Kamalākānter Daptar" was in step with De Quincey's "Confessions of an Opium Eater". His essays and humourous writings are steeped with serious thoughts, interspersed with polished humour and are illuminated with bright intelligence. His ever inquisitive mind could not always remain satisfied with serious and thoughtful writings, but frequently sought relief by delving...
into the deep mystery of life and then he had no alternative but to seek shelter in the hands of the opium-addict Kamalakanta. What he could not say, straight and point blank and in full consciousness, he could easily say those things through his mouth-piece Kamalakanta without any qualm. In the sweetness of language, in the greatness of thoughts and ideas, in chaste and polished humour and in true love of country, Kamalakanta has no parallel. Kamalakanta is a poet, a philosopher, a social reformer, a seasoned politician and a true patriot, all rolled in one. Kamalakanta is not simply a literary character created by Bankim Chandra, the voice of Kamalakanta is the voice of Bankim Chandra, his words are as it were, the words of the author himself. When Kamalakanta says,

"We cannot exactly say for what purpose we really come into this world". 23

We truly hear the voice and words of Bankim Chandra.

Kamalakanta is a homeless wanderer, an opium addict, an eccentric in the eyes of the society, but in a deeper sense he is a visionary. His philosophy of life is firm and enduring. In the opinion of Kamalakanta,

23 "E sangsāre āmarā ki karite āsi, tāhā thik balito pārinā".

Bankim Chandra : Kamalākanter Daptar.
"Love is all pervading in this world - God is Love. Love is the hymn of life in my ears in the present. Let the great hymn be sung in the strings of the human mind. If I can bestow my love upon humanity then I seek no other happiness in life.

"Let all the vannting men of learning, of intellect, the philosopher, the sociologist, think and see for themselves that there can be no enduring happiness for man without increasing the happiness of others". 

This positive and optimistic view of life, this hopeful expectation, is the philosophy of life of Bankim Chandra. There is darkness in life, there is selfishness and there is envy and jealousy, and yet Kamalakanta hopes that one day the happiness and welfare of others will spontaneously become an integral part of human nature. Kamalakanta has openly declared,


Jata bidwan, buddhimān, dārshānik, sansārtatwabhit, je keha āśphālan kara, sakale milia dekha parasukhor bardhan bhinna manuṣyer anya sukher múlya ache ki nā.  

Bankim Chandra : Kamalānter Daptar.
One day every man will realise that his own happiness has no other value; as man is now running after, power, wealth and pleasure like one mad, so one day he will do everything, like one mad, for the happiness of others. 25

This hope and expectation have developed with full maturity in the works of his last period. We get Bankim Chandra as the greatest singer of patriotism. In "Amar Durgotsab" in "Kamalākānter Daptar" collection, his selfless love for his motherland, his desires, his joy and happiness, his hopes and dreams and also his agony, are expressed in a touching language. In the end of the article "Ekā" the theme of love has been dealt with. It is said there that God is Love. In the essay "Āmār Man", the theme of love and the idea of people's welfare have been discussed in greater detail. In the essay "Ekti Geet" he has given a new interpretation of the song of Chandidas, "Eso Eso, bandhu eso, ādha ācharo baso", where he has really discussed the theme of love. His original thinking about the values of life, and the reactions of people in different circumstances, are found, particularly in "Patanga", "Manuṣya phal", "Dhenki", "Barabāzār", etc. He has

25 "Ekdin manusya mātṛei āmār ei kathā bujhibe jā; manusyer sthāyee sukher anya mūlya nāi; ekhan jeman loka unmatta haiyā, dhan, mān, bhogādir prati dhābita hai, ekdin manusya jāti seirūp unmatta haiyā parer sukher prati dhābāman haibe".

Bankim Chandra : Kamalākānter Daptar.
"Kamalākānter Daptār" has occupied an extraordinary and distinguished place in literature by the originality of his thinking and interpretations and his powerful writing.

On the other side the name of Lakshminath Bezbaruah comes first among the essayists of the "Jonākī" age. Some humorous essays with ample doses of sarcasm and irony, were published in "Jonākī" under the pseudonym Kripabar Baruan. These were brought out in the anthology "Kripābar Bar Baruār Kākatar Topolā" in 1904. Later Kripabar Barbaruah again made his appearance when "Jonākī" began to be published in Guwahati. Those essays and some other essays published in the magazine "Ushā", were together published in the anthology "Kripābar Baruāhr Ovatani" in 1909. The essays which were published in "Bānhī" came out in book-form with the titles, "Kripābar Bar Baruāhr Bhabar Burburani" and "Barberuāhr Bulbulani", in 1951 and 1964 respectively. The essays of these four books are full of irony and ridicule, generous humour, inimitable style of humourous writing and his original thinking.

"Like Chesterton, Bezbaruah succeeded in inventing a form half-way between the essay and the short story. It is this that gives his essays their amusing quality, turning multitudes of literary topics and daily trifles, into material for laughter. He created in his essays the character
of Kripabar Barbaruah, in imitation of Sir Roger de Coverly. Assamese life and manners are typified in Kripabar's idiosyncrasies. 26

The character of Kripabar Barbaruah created by Lakshminath Bezbaruah and the character of Kamalakanta created by Bankim Chandra, are the same nature and temperament. Kripabar Barbaruah is the spiritual son of his creator Lakshminath. The opinions and harsh criticisms which cannot be said in plain words before everybody, were put in the mouth of Kripabar Barbaruah in the form of irony and ridicule. Barbaruah is very generous, with an open mind and a broad heart and is never afraid to call a spade, a spade and he is never a hypocrite. He can remember the names of the ancestors of many people for several generations, but he is strangely silent about his own parents. We can know nothing how he prosecuted his studies after he lost his father in his childhood. Such a colourful personality is yet to be born in the literary soil of Assam.

He becomes Barbaruah by adding the word "Bar" before his own original surname "Baruah". He brought out a newspaper but it died soon for want of subscribers. Then he leaves his home and becomes a wanderer. As a wanderer he...

26 Birinci Kumar Barua : Contemporary Indian Literature (pp. no. 14-15, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi).
travels in different and distant places and acquires varied and strange experiences about life and people. His great fault is that he is addicted to hump and opium. He talks with a sense of humour, he can keep his cool and is also a philosopher. We observe his passion for literature, politics, love, religion, national unity, contemporary values of life etc. in the last part of his life, and we do not also miss his love for his country and his people, his language and culture. Never before we heard such thoughtful thoughts in Assamese literature. Kripabar is an ever bright, ever powerful and deathless creation of Lakshminath. With the help of Kripabar, Bezbaruah has tried to reveal the true character and nature of the Assamese people and awaken them with strokes of irony and sarcasm.

Bezbaruah knew that there is no better and stranger weapon for social reform, than literature. The essays contained in "Kākatar Topolā" and "Ovatani" are strange fusions of personal thoughts and social thoughts. Comparatively the essays of "Bhābar Burburani" and "Barbaruāhr bulani" are more personal. Essays on many different topics like, politics, sociology, personal and material etc. were included in these anthologies. These anthologies are glaring examples of Bezbaruah's great inquisitive genius. We find frequent use of irony and inuendoes in these writings. In his Kripabar - essays of a
entertaining nature, we find Bezbaruah as a great writer with a vision of Assam and her people. In his prose writings Assamese people and Assamese society have come alive.

"Revelation of the strange experiences of life in light humour, fusion of the values of life with the oddities of imagination, making himself the object of laughter along with his readers, skill mixed with pity and an attitude of humour, irony fused with jesting strange concoction of mythology and contemporary events, surprising synthesis of feigned seriousness and light mood ..... etc., were the special characteristics of Bezbaruah's essays".27

Kripabar gave away all his movable and immovable properties along with other things to his people of Assam before his death. These properties are - fish from Parashuram Kunda, Sand, many curious colourful pebbles, the river Brahmaputra, the whole Kamak-hya Hills along with the temple

27 "Jibanar bichitra abhignyatār rasāmay prakāś, udbhāt kalpanār lagat jibanbodhar sangmiśran, pāṭhakar lagate nijake hanhiātor pātra kari tolā, kaushalar lagat Kārunya āru hāsya-bhābjarita monobhān, byangar lagat parihās, paurāṇik kāhinīr lagat bartamān ghataṅār adbhut sarjog-sthāpan, kritrim gāmbhirjera lagat laghū kalpanār āshchāraya janak samanway ...... etc. Bezbaruāhr prabandha samāhar baishista āchil".
of Bhubaneswari, Hajo and the few hills near Ashwaklanta, Shilghat with all its flowers, fruits and creepers, the hills near Biswanath and Tezpur, the various kinds of colourful birds which sing and dance in the woods and forests of the entire Assam Valley, the charming butterflies with their variegated colours, the green leaves of trees and so on. Such a strange will is nowhere to be found in the whole world. This will carries the essence of the whole philosophy of life of Kripabar Barbaruah and also the mystery of his life. This mystery is,

"The immeasureable and boundless love of Kripabar for his people, the Nature of his country, his language and culture etc. - the intensity and depth of this love have raised it to the dignified level of romantic passion, far above the common and ordinary love of one's country". 28

"Krishna charitra" and "Dharmatatwa" are two very long essays on religious matters written by Bankim Chandra in the mature period of his literary career. In the history of India's long religious studies and practices, these two books

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28 "Swadeshar prakriti, mānuh, bhāṣā, sanskriti eit, sakolare prati Kripābarar koneo jukhiba noārā seemā-ner, anurāg - ji anurāgar tibratā āru gabhirātāi tāk sadharaś, swadesh premar urdhalal tuli ete 'Romantic passion' ni marjyādā diche".

Homen Bargohain : Kripabar Baruār Chamu Jibani (p. 131) (Lakshmināth Bezbaruā, Prakāsan Parisad).
created great ripples by their new interpretations of the Hindu religion. He deeply felt that it is not advisable to observe religious practices just following the existing customs, traditions and prejudices. The dictates of scriptures should only be accepted after testing its truth and validity on the touch-stone of science. In his opinion a thing does not become believable because it is in the scriptures, on the contrary, a proven fact is truth and hence believable and it is the real scripture. Bankim Chandra, in fact, was a writer who wrote with reason and logic. "Krishna Charitra" and "Dharmatatwa" are the wonderful fruits of Bankim Chandra's deep study and cultivation of the religion and scriptures of the East and the West.

In the fag end of his life Lakshminath Bezbaruah wrote several essays which are included in the anthology, "Srikrishnakathā" and "Tatwakathā", which were published as "Bānhī". The "Srikrishnakathā" and "Tatwakathā" are the mature fruits of Bezbaruah's life long literary cultivation. For these two books Bezbaruah is called, "Tatwadarsī Bezbaruah"). In the essays of these two books there are scholastic discussions of a high level of important religious matters.

In his discussions on its life and character of Sri Krishna the objective of Bankim Chandra was to oppose the
attacks of the missionaries and their followers on Krishna.
To wipe out all complaints against Sri Krishna Bankim Chandra's first attempt was to discover the real and true Krishna. He believed Krishna to be an Avatar of God Himself, and for that reason alone he took him to be a historical figure. His unshakeable conclusion in this matter was - God Himself was born in this temporal world as a human being, as Krishna, and hence there was nothing wrong or unseemly in his (Krishna's) life and character. He symbolises the best and the most excellent qualities that make a man a man. The message of Lord Krishna in the Geeta - Work without reward and welfare of the masses - herein Bankim found the supreme ideal of man. To establish Sri Krishna as an ideal person, Bankim Chandra quoted copiously from 'Mahābhārata', 'Haribangsha', 'Aṣṭādah Purāṇ' etc. and has given faultless evidence of Sri Krishna's greatness as a man. This also shows his immense depth of scriptural knowledge. Bankim Chandra has mainly tried to prove the greatness and historicity of Sri Krishna by basing his arguments on the conversation of Krishna described in Mahābhārata and the strange events of Krishna's life. In "Dharmatatwa" Bankim has said that the Bhagbad Geeta is the basis of all devotional doctrines and practices. Bankim Chandra wrote his great book "Dharmatatwa" to correctly interpret the religious message of the Geeta and for its widespread preaching and acceptance. "Dharmatatwa" and "Krishna charitra" of Bankim Chandra are supplementary
each other. In his book "Dharmatatwa" Bankim Chandra had defined religion to be the cultivation of the ideal of truth. To inspire every individual to cultivate the ideals of manhood and the greatest humane virtues, has been the objective of the author in this book. Here he has very beautifully and lucidly expounded the duties and obligations of the ordinary man in his day to day life. In the novel set up of a conversation between a preceptor and his disciple, the interpretation of complicated religious matters has been made quite enjoyable. This is quite obvious that the religious message of the Srimad Bhagbad Geeta, has been given the chief place of honour in Bankim Chandra's "Dharmatatwa".

But we see that "Sri Krishna Kathā" and "Tatwakathā" of Lakshminath Bezbaruah contains religious interpretations, outlooks and objectives, which are radically different from that of the "Krishna Charitra" and "Dharmatatwa" of Bankim Chandra. In his essays in the book "Sri Krishna Kathā" and "Tatwakathā" Bezbaruah has discussed different aspects of the Mahapurisia sect along with the Upanishads and the Bhagbad Geeta. Here a particular stream of his thought has been revealed. In these two books we find a logical and analytical discussion of the principles of the broad-minded Vaishnavism practised in Assam. He has discussed theism following the Indian tradition and accepting the teachings of the Vedas and the Upanishads as axioms. The
chief objective of his analytical discussion is to establish the supremacy of the devotional method of attaining salvation. His chief objective in his essays is not only the analytical interpretations of philosophical thoughts but also to establish the greatness of the cult of devotion. Bezbarua was especially attracted to the delightful revelation of the Supreme Being, the Supreme Brahma. God is delight and joy and is supremely compassionate, Sri Krishna, the Absolute spirit, the incarnation of Brahma. Worship of Sri Krishna is the workship of the Supreme Brahma. In the being of Sri Krishna God has revealed His own marvellous and delightful being. The ultimate conclusion of the discussions in "Tatwakathā" is to preach the greatness of Sri Krishna and to establish the supremacy of Nām Dharma. His interpretations of the Vaisnava religion is the fruit of the firm belief of a devoted person. The chief aim of Bezbaruah's religious and philosophical discussions in his essays is to establish the greatness of Nām Dharma and the ideals of Vaishnab religion, particularly that of the Mahāpurusiṇī sect practised in Assam.

Bankim Chandra is the composer of the hymn, "Bande Mātaram". The song of salutation in "Ānandamaṭh" was the hymn "Bande Mātaram".
BANDE MĀTARAM*

Bande Mātaram
sujalāṅg sufalāṅg malayaja shitalāṁ
shasyashyamalāṅg Mātaram,
shuvra jyotsnā pulakita jaminim
phulla kusumita drumadala shovinim
suhasining sumadhrabhāsinim
sukhadāṅg Baradāṅg Mātaram
Saptakoti kaṇṭha kala-kala-ninada karāle
Dwisaptakotibhujai dhrita kharakara bāle
Abalā kena Mā eta bale,
Bahubaladhārining namāmi tārining
Ripudalabārining mātaram.
Tumi vidyā Tumi dharma
Tumi hridi Tumi marma
Tang hi prānāh sharire,
Bāhute tumi mā shakti
Hridaye tumi mā bhakti
Tomāri pratimā gari mandire mandire.
Tang hi Durgā dashapraharaṇadhārini
kamalā kamala-dala bihārini.
Bānī bidyādayinī namāmi twang.
Namāmi kamalām amalāṅg atulāṁ
sujalāṅg sufalāṅg mātaram
Bande Mātaram.
Shyamalāṅg saralāṅg susmitāṅg bhusitāṁ
Dharanining bharamim mātaram.

* Vide Appendix for original script with English translation
"Ānandamath" was published in 1882 in book form and almost at once it spread, first, all over Bengal and later all over India and eventually it became the national song of the country. Whatever may be the place of "Ānandamath" as a novel in literature, it is a very popular novel because it inspired a feeling of patriotism in the people. By writing this novel he did one great service to the country, he aroused the people's desire for freedom and made them strive harder for it. In the hymn "Bande Mātaram" two thoughts have been fused together. In the first part he has paid heartfelt homage to his country and in the last part he has expressed the agony of his mind why we are labouring under slavery though we have the strength to break the shackles.

Bankim Chandra wrote the hymn sometime before he wrote "Ānandamath" and later he introduced it in the novel as a song of salutation. Soon after the publication of "Ānandamath" Rabindra Nath tuned the first part as a song and sung it himself. The meditative and sober image of India as a mother, as the nourisher of the people and the country, of "Ānandamath", was first published in the magazine "Bālak" in 1885. Sarala Devi tuned the entire hymn "Bande Mātaram" as a song. From then on the song was sung by Sarala Devi and other singers in meetings and processions. But "Bande Mātaram" as a slogan was more widespread, more and more popular than the entire song. In the sound of the slogan there was a call for
respect, reverence and devotion to the country, an expression of the strength of unity, the joy and agony and the hope for a bright future. The slogan cast such a spell in the minds of the listeners, that they did not hesitate to make the supreme sacrifice. Hundreds of patriots went to the gallows with "Bande Mātaram" on their lips. To the revolutionaries: "Ānandamath" and "Bande Mātaram" were the beacon lights to guide them in the darkness of slavery of a foreign rule.

The slogan "Bande Mātaram" which went the sky over Bengal from August, 1905, after the partition of Bengal, soon spread all over India and to every nook and corner of the world wherever there were patriotic Indians. There was a great patriotic and nationalistic feeling in the slogan which made it spread with lightning speed everywhere. The great learned person, Mahamahopadhyaya Haraprasad Shastri, has said about the song "Bande Mātaram",

"Whatever Bankim Babu has done ..... everything has converged in one ideal. The ideal is the worship of the motherland. To call motherland mother, to love the motherland - to rever the motherland, what he has done, has not been done by any body in India. So he is worthy of our worship to whom we should pay our homage, he is our preceptor, he is sage, he is our initiator in spiritually, he is the
giver of a spiritual counsel, and that counsel is "Bande Mātaram". 29

The sole objective of Lakshminath Bezbaruah in all the corpus of his works was the allround development of his country and people and to inspire his countrymen with a deep feeling of patriotism. Love of country was an intensely strong appeal in Bezbaruah's life. In the patriotic works of Bezbaruah there is such a deathless appeal that will endure for all time to come. Bezbaruah had a constructive way of thinking. Inspired by this he composed his poem "O' Mor Āponār Desh" which was later accepted as the national song of Assam.

O' MOR ĀPONĀR DESH*

O' mor aponār desh,
O' mor chikuni desh.

Enekhan suwalā,
Enekhan sufalā,
Enekhan maramor desh.

O' mor surīyā māt.

Asomar suwadi māt.


Harpuraprasad Sāstri : Bankim Prasan'a (p. 173).

* Vide Appendix for original script with English translation.
Bezbaruah wrote this poem with a view to arousing the self consciousness of his people and to awaken them who were sunk in deep slumber. The dream of "Maromar Desh" is to inspire the people with the ideal of love of country and to make them self conscious. There is little doubt that this dream has been mostly realised.

"The objective which was set as an ideal in the composition of the song "Bande Mātaram", "Au Mor Āponār Desh" was also composed with the same objective and ideal in view. According to renowned psychologists there is an image of a mother in the sub-conscious of every individual which is ever alive. Every Indian thinks his motherland as his mother. This image of a mother is the essence, the song of the heart of both. "O Mor Āponār Desh" and "Bande Mātaram".30

* Lakshminath Bezbaruah .. "Kadamkali" 1832 Saka.
30 Hem Barua : Bezbaruar Kābya Prativā (Lakshminath Bezbaruā p. 93.