CHAPTER-III

THE DRAMAS OF BHĀRTENDU & BEZBAROĀ: A SURVEY
3.00 INTRODUCTION:

Bhārṭendu and Bezbaroā were the pioneer in Hindi and Assamese literatures in an age of transition. They wielded their pens to infuse new life-blood in to the veins of Indians filtered with shackles of slavery. They portrayed the socio-political realities of their contemporary life especially in their dramas. Both the dramatists reminded their countrymen of their golden past and tried hard to build a healthy and prosperous society by removing what they felt were the ills eating into the vitals of life itself.

3.1 THE DRAMAS OF BHĀRTENDU:

Hindi literature had a well-settled tradition in writing dramas at the time when Bhārṭendu set out on the uncharted journey of drama-writing and Hindi literature lacked even a treatise on dramatic theory. He had with him to guide only the ancient traditions of drama-writing based on treatises on theory of drama in Sanskrit literature. Bhārṭendu was not inclined to imitate blindly what was outmoded. Hence he brought about a fresh wind of change by casting aside the values worn out by time and yielding instead to the new ones kind of blending of ancient traditions with new ways of life.

Bhārṭendu is called the father of modern Hindi. He started writing dramas, in 1867. He penned one and a half dozen of dramas in the short span of his life. They can be classified in three categories: (1) Translations (2) Original and (3) Comical.

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The Dramas he translated had their corner-stones based on dramatic creations in Sanskrit and English literatures. He has to his credit the translations of five Sanskrit dramas (Ratnāwalī-Nātika, Pākhandヴィδांमलर, Karpur Manjari, Dhananjay Vijay and Mudrārākṣhas) along with ‘Durlobh Bandhu’, the translation of Shakespearean Comedy, ‘The Merchant of Venice’.

The portion of ‘Ratnāwalī’ (written on Vaishakh 1, Sambat-1925) has been translated from ‘Ratnāwalī Nātikā’ composed by the epic-poet Śrī Harś. Commenting on this piece of translation, Bhārtendu himself states: Setting aside ‘Śākuntalā’ only, ‘Ratnāwalī is the best, the most readable and entertaining of all the dramas existing and hence I have translated it into Hindi. This statement stands to prove that he had translated the whole dramas but its ‘Prastavana”and “Viskambhak”are only existent now-a days. As regards the translation, he opines: Had if been translated by a man well-versed in Hindi, the composition would have been an excellent creation. It would be quite unjustified to hazard an evaluation of the work when it is not available in its entirety.

The basic structure Bhārtendu’s ‘Pākhandヴィδांमल’ stands on is the third Act of ‘Prabodh-Chandrodaya’ authored by Pandit Krishna Midrī in Sanskrit. It was translated by Bhārtendu in Hindi in Sambat 1925 (Vikr). There are four prominent religious sects in our country namely, the Jain, the Buddhhas, the Shaiva and the Vaisnava. The pure religious fervour and authentic devotion are available only in Vaishnavism. Hypocracies and exaggerated formalism had made ample rooms in the remaining three. The dramatist of ‘Prabodh-Chandrodaya’ has brought those blemishes in open. The menal faculties have been characterised by Bhārtendu and various kinds of recreations enjoyed by devilish faith have been shown in the character of Kāpālinī. She embraces the naked Kāpālik and pollutes him.

\[2\] Bhārtendu Samagra ‘Ratnāwalī’ (Bhūmikā), p-300.
\[3\] ibid, p-300.
The drinking bouts begin there after and the whole assembly sings profusely the praise of wine. With one stroke Bhārtendu unfolds the whole range of their hypocrisies, external formalities of the rituals and grim misconduct. While translating only this Act of the drama, Bhārtendu had in his mind to show that pure faith in and influencing devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa are the only ways leading to the well-being of human-being and at the same time to destruction of the devil-minded.

'Dhananjay Vijay' is another drama in Sanskrit translated by Bhārtendu. Its author is Kavi Kānchana Pandit. The time of its writing is not exactly known, but Bhārtendu has referred to it in 'Vyayog' to have found a manuscript written in Sambat 1537 (v). The translated drama was published in 'Harishchandra Magazine' for the first time in 1873. It is placed under 'Vyayog' among the various forms of drama. The chief characteristics of 'Vyayog' are: (1) Its action is spread over only a day, (2) the action dramatised must be a well-known event and (3) its hero should be an illustrious person of great fame or a god.

The plot of 'Dhananjay Vijay' has been carved out of the 'Mahābhārata'. Abducting the cows of king Virat, tho Kauravas were running away in great haste. Arjun took Prince Uttar under his stewardship and pursued them in a hot chase. The cows were snatched away from the Kauravas by defeating them. The king Virat was beside himself with joy and got his daughter married to Abhimanyu, the son of Arjun. While translating the drama, Bhārtendu naturally translated the whole including Nāndī, Prastavana, Sutradhar and Bharat Vakya. However, 'Bharat Vakya' shows a little change with that of its original.

'Mudrārakshas' of 'Vishakh Dutta' has been translated by Bhārtendu from Sanskrit under the same name and style. He took up the work at the
request of Rājā Shiva Prasād Sitārehind. Its preface had been published in number 2, year 2 on the second Falgun, 1931 Sambat (Vik), i.e. in February 1875.

The whole drama exhibits the political and diplomatic strategies enacted by Chānaka and the Minister 'Rakshas'. They are lively and full-blooded. One is keenly engaged in tackling the political stratagems brought in force by the other. There blood-shed, play of immoral forces and deceit, yet both of them are quite absorbed, working unselfishly to reach at their goals. Chānaka nurses a deep sense of hatred towards the Nanda dynasty and plans to get Chandragupta enthroned, by driving the Nandas away. Rākṣas, on the other hand, is deeply devoted to his king, the Nandas and he wishes to take revenge on Chānaka and desires to save Chandan Dās as well. None of these two is goaded by one's own self-interest. They show large-heartedness and nobility of feelings as they rush on fighting each other to achieve their own ends.

'Karpur Manjarī' is a translation of 'Sattak' authored by the Kshatriya poet Rājshekhar in 'Prakrit'. It was published in 'Kavi Vachan Sudhā' beginning from Chaitra Sukla Navami, 1933 (Vikr. Sanib).

The king and the queen rejoice in describing the spring festivals and the slow moving breeze toning up the spirits. Just then starts a competition between the Jester (Vidushak) and Vichakshan in describing the spring. The Jester is somewhat offended and runs away. He returns after some time accompanied by a well-versed ascetic Bhairabānada. He (the ascetic) is requested by the king to show something marvellous, (ascetic) presents then and there beautiful Karpur Manjarī, the princess of Vidarbha. The king is charmed at her beauty and pines for her hastily, they are chained in wedlock.

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6. 'B. S.' 'Mudrārākṣas' (Bhumika), p-326.
7. 'B. S.' 'Karpur Manjarī' (Bhumikā), p-423.
'Sattak' as based fundamentally on the facts of Tantricism. In the very first act, the princess is presented by the magic spell of Bhairabâñanda and an illusion in the mind of the queen, Vibhramlekhâ is also well-maintained by the same. Bhârtendu perhaps wanted to show what kinds of poisonous shadow were being cast on the royal family in the age of Râjâshekhar.

'Durlobh Bandhu' is the translation of Shakespear's 'The Merchant of Venice'. Its first scene was published in 'Harîshchandra Chandrikâ' and 'Mohan Chandrikâ' in Jyestha Sukla 1937 (vik.sam). It had been left incomplete, which was brought to completion afterwards by Pandit Râm Shankar Vyâs and Bâbu Râdhâ Krișna Dâs and was published.

Anant is a tradesman of Bansnagar, who helps one and all by lending money with no interest. He cannot stand those lenders, who charge interest on loans. It is why he looks down upon Shailâksha, a Jain merchant. Basant happens to be a bosom friend of Anant. To celebrate his marriage with Purâshree, a young damsel, he (Basant) borrows Rs. 6000/- from Shailâksha on the express guarantee extended by Anant. The terms and conditions of the loan were so drawn up that Anant was under compulsion to pay up the loan within three months, failing which Shailâksha would be entitled of slice up half a seer of flesh from his body. The ships of Anant loaded with marchandise sank down in the ocean and he was unable to pay the loan on time. Shailâksha seeks redress from the law courts. Basant offers to pay Shailâksha an amount many times more than what he had borrowed, but Shailâksha refuses to accept money. Purâshree and Narasimha present themselves in the court as the lawyer and the clerk on behalf of Anant. Purâshree pleads there in the place of Balwanta, an advocate previously engaged for the job. Purâshree requests Shailâksha to be kind-hearted and accept repayment of the loan. But Shailâksha obstinately refuses to accept money. Purâshree at the long last yields to the

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8. 'History of Sanskrit Literature', S.N. Dâsguptâ, p-455.
9. 'B. S.' 'Durlobh Bandhu' (Bhûmikâ), p-488.
claim of Shailākṣa. She says that he (Shailākṣa) is really entitled to slice up half a seer of flesh from the body of Anant, but the terms of the agreement do not authorize him to shed a single drop of blood in the act. Shailākṣa is defeated in the court of law and he is penalised, which leads to confiscation of his entire property. Purashūree and Narashūree cleverly take away the nuptial rings from Basant and Girish respectively, as the fee for pleading in the court. They (Basant & Girish) were promise-bound with their wives that they would part with rings at no time and under no circumstances. Purashūree and Narashūree reach home before Basant and Girish. Purashūree and Narashūree tease their husbands at the first instance asking them to show the rings. They feign offended and complain that they (husbands) have perhaps presented the same to some other loving-hearts. These loving skirmishes and in a joyous outburst when Purashūree and Narashūree present those nuptial rings and narrate how they had played the roles of the pleaders in cognito.

Bhartendu had invented his own methodology for naming characters in his works of translation. He has hindised the English names of the characters. He has transformed the English names in to Hindu ones and the Jewish names into seemingly Jain-looking. It shows the dramatist’s great insight into the inter-play of social forces working during his times.

The corner-stones of his translated dramas are laid on 'Pouranic' sources. A fundamental change in the plot has been brought about and the translations, thus emerge, out fresh with full vigour. Bhārtendu’s ‘Vidyā Sundar’ and ‘Satya-Harishchandra’ can be classed under this category.

Bharat Chandra Roy had authored a poetic work in Bengali on the model of 'Chour Panchasika' in Sanskrit on the pattern of the same poetic work. Yatindra Mohan Thakur had written a drama, ‘Vidyā Sundar’ by name. Taking a cue from Yatindra Mohan Thākur’s ‘Vidyā Sundar’, Bhārtendu came out with his own play. Bhārtendu himself write that its preface had
been prepared in Chaitra 1939 (V.S) and the first edition was published some fifteen years ago, i.e. in 1867 A.D.

Vidyā, the princess of Vardhaman had laid down a solemn promise that she would marry only the man who defeats her in erudite discourses. So many princess came to try their fortune but none could defeat her. The Minister of the king came to know that Prince Sundar, the son of Gunasindhu, the king of Kanchipur happens to be a well-versed scholar in all the religious scriptures. He sent Gangā Bhāt to bring the prince. In the meantime, the prince is also informed of the promise of the princess. He travels to Vardhaman and takes shelter as a guest in the house of Hira, the Gardener's wife. With the clear endeavour of Hira, the prince manages to meet Vidyā and they tie their nuptial bond in accordance with their own wishes, called 'Gandharva Vivah'. When the king comes to know of it, he inflicts capital punishment on Hira. Just at the nick of time, Gangā a Bhāt returns from Kanchipur and recognises prince Sundar. Thus the suspicions are blown away and the formal marriage of Vidyā with Sundar is celebrated with great funfare.

The translation has been presented in broad-outline of the original. The events plot and the characters of the original work have been preserved as they were. The name 'Praharī' only has been changed to 'Chaukidār'.

'Satya Harishchandra', a drama written by Bhārtendu was published in 1876 by New Medical Hall Press, Benaras. It was perhaps meant for the children. There are two allegories named as 'Satya Harishchandra' by Rāmchandra and 'Chanda Kaushik' by Arya Kṣemeshwar that are based on the episode of king Hariśchandra. Bhārtendu's play is a translation of

\[10\] B. S. 'Vidyā Sundar' (Bhumikā), p-283.
none of these two, but it presents all the same the translation of some of the portions. It is a play based on legends. The subject-matter of the drama is structured on the famous story of Rājā Harisśchandra, who always spoke the truth. Indra is afraid of Harisśchandra, who never flinches from the truth and is famous for offering donations. He (Indra) grows jealous of the king, hearing his glorious acts of nobility. Nārad comes to meet Indra, but he is offended and thus beats a retreat, then comes Vishwāmitra and goaded by Indra, he promises to make the king taste the dust. At this very time the king and the queen are haunted by strange dreams. The queen dreams the king sitting sad with ashes besmeared all over his body, and her son Rohitāśhwa being bitten by a serpent. The king dreams that he has donated his whole kingdom to an old Brahmin in order to save 'Mahavidya'. On the basis of the dream, the king thinks to run the government as a servant of the anonymous Brahmin, who descended in his dream. Meanwhile, Vishwāmitra appears before the king and demands the kingdom donated to him (Vishwāmitra) along with a hefty, sum of ten thousand golden coins as 'Dakshina'. The king goes to Kashi to sell himself along with his family to pay Dakshina. He sells himself to a Dom and his wife, Šhaibyā to an Upādhyāy. Harishchandra is deputed to be a tax collector. He is charged with the duty of collecting tax on burning the dead bodies of the burning Ghat. His son Rohitāśhwa is bitten by a serpent and is declared dead. The mother Šhaibyā reaches the cremation ground with the dead body. Harishchandra is duty-bound to collect taxes for burning. Šhaibyā has no money to pay it and hence she is compelled to pay the tax in kind, by tearing off a portion of shroud covering the dead body. It appears to Viśnu that limits of patience have already been crossed. He appears before the king, showers benedictions over him and makes Rohitāśhwa alive. The kingdom is given back to Harishchandra and the repentant Indra comes to seek pardon.

12. B. S. 'Satya Harishchandra' (Bhūmicā), p-380.
Three basic elements are found in the dramas of Bhārtendu. Firstly, the basic structure of those dramas is Historical or legendary. In this category are placed 'Chandrāwali Nāṭikā' and 'Niśdevī'. The dramatist has expressed his political views behind the symbolical allegories, which brings out his sense of Patriotism. Bhārtendu has expressed his national pride in his allegorical writings like 'Bhārat Durdaśā' and 'Bhārat Janani'. He could not restrain himself of being ironical for removing contemporary ills besetting the society for he has thoroughly a social reformer. His ironical remarks on evils in society have been threaded up in the form of comics. He started writing these kinds of comics in Hindi literature and the fruits of his endeavours are 'Andher Nagari', 'Viśhashya Viśhamauṣhadham', 'Vaidikī Hīnsā Hīnsā Na Bhawati' and 'Prem Yogini'.

'Vaidikī Hīnsā Hīnsā Na Bhawati' was planned in the form of a comic in 1930 (V. S.). It is a voice of protest against sacrificing animals in the name of religions. There were many Pandits of Sañatan religious sect, who used to quench their earthly thirst in the name of sending others to paradise. Bhārtendu wishes to teach a hard-hitting lesson to those Pandits. The king as well as the priests are the parasites, who live on seeking blood of the society. This class of cheats has sanctified the sacrifice of animals, gambling, drinking and even sex. These have been called religious rīts simply to befool the common men. The ironical remarks against the shrewd Vaishnavits have been brought out through the statements of the Jester. The king and the minister vie with each other in printing up injustices on the people, all in the name of religion. The punishment on them are reflected in hell. While bidding adieu, Bhārtendu does not forget to tell Chitragupta that the man acting nobly in accordance with the customs of the British in their territory is very well rewarded with the title of 'Star of India's'. The dramatist has made Chitragupta say that the king consented readily to levy taxes on the subjects, but nothing of the sorts was thought about for the melioration of

13. B. S. 'Vaidikī Hīnsā Hīnsā Na Bhawati', p-316.
their life. Thus Bhārtendus has protested against the animal sacrifice, criticised the functioning of the British rule in India and in the same breath hurted jokes on the sympathisers of British rule.

'Prem Yogini' was written by Bhārtendu in 1932 (V.S). It was published in 'Hariśchandra Chandrika' under the caption of 'Portraiture of Kashi in outline or Two good and bad photographs', in 1874 A.D. The form in which it is available shows that it is incomplete. Its aim is to show Kashi in its true colours, totally as it is. It was the first experiment to brings in realism in Hindi drama.

The dram as starts with the scene on the cross-roads near the temple. Delay in the opening of the temple brings out many kinds of complaining shots from the gathering against the priests and the Honourary Magistrate. Supervising the affairs of the temple. Ostentation's and deceits carried on in the name of religion together with the conception as to what goes to make a man noble are being talked about. At ‘Gaibi-Eibi’ the brokers, Gangāputras, shop-keepers, Store-keepers and Jhuri Singh make plans and programmes to entangle and deceive the pilgrims. Jhuri Singh at once picks up a quarrel with the pilgrims speaking ill of Kashi. Sudhākar on Mughal Sarāi Railway Station details the glories of Kashi to a Pandit coming from a distant land and these enshrines in his heart a great curiosity to visit Kashi. In the scene named as ‘Ghiss Ghisadwij Kritya Vivartan’. A description of the people from South living in Kashi is presented. These people are shown deeply absorbed in eking out food and has his from the pilgrims and they suffer from sense of no scruples in dictating the scriptural rulings in accordance with the convenience of the devotees.

14. ibid, p-316.
15. 'B. S.' 'Prem Yogini' (Bhumikā), p-406.
16. 'B. S.' 'Prem Yogini'. p-415.
'Viṣhāṣya Viṣhamaūṣhadham' (V.S.1933), has the credit of being the first 'Bhān' in Hindi that was published by Bhārṭendu in 'Harishchandra Chandrikā' in 1876. 'Bhān' is a particular form of the drama, which consists of only one act and only one character presents the subject-matter by his oral and physical feats commingling there in irony, humour and music. The objectives of the drama are thereby made clear and vivid before the eyes of the audience.\(^\text{17}\)

The subject-matter of this 'Bhān' is historical. The king of Baroda, Malhār Rāo was compelled by the British to abdicate for this acts of adultery and licentiousness, Bhārṭendu has made this 'Bhān' the subject-matter of humour and irony. It consists of only one character named Bhandāchāryya. Bhandāchāryya compares the luxurious, dissolute and leisentious habit, of Malhār Rāo with that of Muhammad Shāh and Wājīd Āli Shāh. Commenting on the ways how India was brought under British Supremacy, Bhandāchāryya blurts out. Thank God! Those who came to India in 1599 in the garb of tradesman have soared to such a height of power that they flush out kings like files out of milk\(^\text{18}\). Bhārṭendu very often reminds of the fact that hey were the Indians who had conquered India for the British. The family of Malhār Rāo had stood always with the British while fighting the Indian Kings and Princes. Those very British rulers could not offered to the friendly even with Malhār Rāo, the traditional allies of the British. In the long end, Bhārṭendu has paid compliments to the British Rule and wished it a long life. But he has also expressed his dissatisfaction with British Rule, its flatterers and the puppet Indian Kings through out the main body-politic of the drama.

Written on the pattern of 'Ras' 'Śhī Chandrāwali' was published (1933 V.S.) in 'Harishchandra Chandrikā' in Par-4, Number 1-3 in 1876\(^\text{19}\). Bhārṭendu was himself a devotee of coupeld Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and was a devotee of 'Pusti-branch' of Ballava-Sect, infused pre-eminently with love

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\(^{17}\) 'Bhārṭendu Sāhitya', Rāṃgopāl Singh Chouhān, p-123.
\(^{18}\) 'B. S.' 'Viṣhāṣya Viṣhamaūṣhadham', p-420.
\(^{19}\) 'Bhārṭendu Sāhitya', Dr. Rāṃchandra Mīśhra, p-155.
towards the Lord. It was the aim of the writer to exhibit his devotion of the Lord in this play. The play has introduced a preface and a 'Vishakambhak' before the drama itself starts. Nārad and Sūkdev indulge themselves in discourses on aspects of worldliness and devotion. They come to praise the devotion of the Gopis Chandrāwalī is deeply devoted to Lord Kṛishna and she expresses the profundity of love with great sincerity, when asked by her girl-friends. She suffers from the pangs of separation from the Lord and while roaming about in the forest takes the moon for the Lover-Lord and dedicates to him her love-born feelings. She seeks the help from the wind, the bee, the goose and all others to lead her to her lover. Her girl-friends are deeply concerned with the pangs of separation agitating Chandrāwalī and plan to conjure up her meeting with Lord Kṛishna. Kṛishna enters into the parlour of Chandrāwalī in the guise of an ascetic. He is greatly touched with the plight of Chandrāwalī and her total absorption in divine love. Lastly, the meeting between the two is brought about.

'Bhārat Durdashā' is a drama bubbling with Bhārtendu's patriotism. The emotional fervour to take the combey out of the ruts of degradation reaches the climax in expressions, It is a tragic allegory published in 1875. Bhārtendu has called it an drama modelled on 'Ras' or 'Lasya' type of allegory. He presents there in the pitiable plight of a country grooping in darkness of disgrace and gives a clarion call to the countrymen to awaken and grid up their loins to save the motherland. The scenes presented enkindle compassionate wave in the heart of the audience.

The characters of the drama are symbolical, such as Bhārat, Bhāratduraiv, Nirlajjata, Ashā, Rog, Madirā, Alasya, Andhakār, Disloyalty, etc. These have been humanised on the tradition of symbolism. Bhārtendu suffers from a deep sense of frustration when he compares the golden past with the present state of inferiority and afflictions. He feels it is disgraceful to

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20. 'Bhartendu Sāhitya', Rāmgopāl Singh Chauhān, p-133.
surrender to the slavery of the 'Yavana' or to think that the British rule is an unending bliss. He has a vision to get back the shining Indian Consciousness lost centuries ago. All the rules turn out to be oppressors. The British rule also does not want to see Indian prosperous. Bhārtendu warns his country men, who seem to be fettered with chains of slavery and still lying in deep slumber and wants them to bring to their senses with his revolutionising admonitious. He cannot stand the robbing of country’s resources inspite of a facade of peace spread in the country. The price of the commodities soar up as the Indian foods are exported outside. It necessitates more and more taxes to the levied on the dumb. The condition of the country is so bad that one can’t afford to cast his eye upon it. In the words of the dramatist:

"अंग्रेजराज सुख साज सजे सब भारी।
पै धन बिदेश चलि जात इहै अति ख़बारी॥
ताहू पै महंगी काल रोग बिस्तारी।
दिन दिन दूरे दुःख ईस देत हा हा री॥
सबके ऊपर टिककस की आफत आई।
हा हा ! भारतदुर्दशा न देखी जाई॥

"22"

The British Rule feigns to have arranged the peace and prosperity of the country, but the moot point is that our resources are all being exported. On all these come the soaring prices and the havoc caused by the diseases. What kind of God there is, who goes on simply multiplying our sufferings everyday! Above all these has come the bane of tax-imposition. Surely the condition of Bhārat is intolerable. How can a man dare set his eyes on all these oppressions!

22. 'B. S.' Bhārat Durdaśā, p-461.
The dramatist wishes to bring about reforms to remove social evils. He feels that infighting, lassitude, superstition, ignorance and foolishness have pushed the country into a dork ditch of disgrace. The society is being ruined by the disintegrating forces of soaring prices, bribe-taking, untouchability, drinking, extravagances, litigation and running after changing fashions.

'Bhārat Janani' is an opera. According to Dr. Rāmchandra Mishra

"भारतजयनी " सन 1877 की दिसम्बर में "हरिशचन्द्र चंद्रि" में प्रकाशित मौलिक ओपेरा है । इसके माध्यम से भारतेन्द्र ने भारत जयनी की दीन-होन स्थिति, परमुखप्रेक्ष्य भावना, और पग-पग की विवशाताएँ सामाजिक को अवगत कराके उनमें देशोत्सव और राष्ट्रप्रेम की भावनाएँ उद्दीपत करने का प्रयास किया है। 23 "

Mother Bhārat has been shown sitting in the ruins in an extremely deplorable state. Her children lie quite unconscious under the spell of slumber. At that very time the goddesses of learning, power and prosperity (Saraswati, Durgā and Lakṣmī) descend down one by one tend try to infuse fiery spirit in them. But they fail in their attempts and return quite disappointed. The Mother India then begins in her own way to awaken her children, but they don't. At last she reminds her children of the glorious deeds of her children born in the past. It tones them up and they open their eyes. They like to have food but Mother-India has no food to offer. She implores Queen Victoria for help and makes her children also to do the same. At this moment an English officer came and rebukes her right and left, but a second one appears with the message of help. Lastly Patience comes to instruct Mother India and her children to try and better their own conditions.

‘Nildevi’ is a lyrical Historical allegory written in 1881. It is said that the few lines of quotation from a poem in English cited in the beginning is the foundation, the drama is based on. It is not mentioned where the lines have been quoted from. Surely it bears an imprint of patriotism echoing in ‘Nil Darpan’ of Bengali.

The problem discussed in ‘Nildevi’ is not female emancipation, but slavery of India. Muslim invasion on India has been shows to be the cause of this country’s degeneration. The Kshatriyas have been the epitomes of bravery and they have been thought to be the custodians of country’s security. Suryyadev Singh, the king of the Punjab is an independent sovereign. Abdur Sharif Khan comes to invade him. The invader has to lick the dush when they fight face is face in the battle field. At least Khan attacks the king under the cover of darkness at night and the king is taken a prisoner. He is verily tortured in the prison and is told to embrace Islam. But Suryya Dev remains firm and does not surrender to the enemy’s wishes. As a result he is murdered. The prince Somdev hears the news of king’s death with great dismay and wants to advance against the Muslims with a band of brave young men, but the Queen disfavors his proposal. She (Queen) is energised with the idea of, ‘dealing with the Devils with devilish weapons’ and enters into the camp of Sharif Khan as a dancing ‘Chandikâ’. She murders Khan in his camp and takes revenge on him for the murder of her husband.

‘Andher Nagari’ is a comic, Bhârtendu wrote for national theater association of a few Hindi speaking and Bengali speaking gentry in a short span of twenty four hours in 1881. It was staged on the same day on the historic Dasaswamedh ghat of Kasi. He wrote this comic keeping in view the oppression field by a Bihari Zamindar on his ryots.

'Andher Nagari' depicts the story of a Monk (Mahanha) with his two disciples, their names being Nārāyan Dās and Gobardhan Dās. These two proceed in two different directions for begging alms. Gobardhan Dās goes to the market and finds that every thing sells at a rupee a seer. He is besides himself with joy and buys sweets for the monk with whatever he had collected in begging. He makes the teacher aware of what he has seen in the city. The monk at once decides to flee away the place. But Gobardhan does not obey his teacher and sticks to the same Andher Nagari. Once a complainant approaches the king and prays for justice. His complaint goes to say that his goat got killed by the collapse of a wall of a shopkeeper. While meeting out justice, the king summons the shopkeeper, the mason, the man who white-washed the wall, water-man, the butcher and the shepherd and asks them to explain. They blame each other but shows his own self completely innocent. Lastly the king inflict capital punishment on the watchman (Kotwał) of the city. But the girdle of the rope meant for hanging was found somewhat more spacious and quite unsuitable for the slender throat of the Kotwał. The throat of Gobardhan was fat and fleshy quite be fitting for the spacious girdle of the hanging rope. Hence he is arrested and brought to be hanged. Gobardhan Dās then remembers what his teacher has warned against. Fortunately the monk comes to save Gobardhan Dās from being hanged. The king himself happily opts out to be hanged.

A few scenes of 'Sāti Pratāp' a lyrical allegory, which Bhārtendu began to write in 1941 (V.S.) were published in 'Hariśchandra Chandrika' in 1884 (A.D.). The death of Bhārtendu came in the way of its being complete. Rādhākṛishna Dās completed it sometimes after by writing its final three scenes27. The intention of the play-wright is to present before the Indian women, the ideal and chaste character of Sāvitrī. The attention of Bhārtendu had been drawn toward the fact that the males of the country were being enlightened with the glow of new learning but the same kind of new

27. ‘B. S.’ ‘Sāti Pratāp’ (Bhumikā), p-536.
consciousness must also be injected into the veins of the females as they are after all the fertile soil giving birth to new generations.

The subject-matter of the above said drama is the story of 'Sāvitrī-Satyavān' of legendary fame, in which Sāvitrī gets her dead husband revived with the prowess of her pure chastity. Sāvitrī wanders about in the forest with her girl-friends. Satyavān is charmed at the musical not sung by them. Satyavān is at once attracted to Sāvitrī. Satyavān requests her to accept his hospitality, which she turns down on the plea that she has no permission from her parents. Nārad comes to their help and he gets them married in the hermitage of Dyumatsen. The life-span of Satyavān had only one year to spare at that time. The messengers of Death came calling at the exact time. Sāvitrī rose to the occasion and got her husband revived by force of purity and chastity.

In addition to all these, Bhārtendu wrote a few comics imitating the modes set by Carton Razor in English. Among those are 'Sabai Jāti Gopāl Kī', 'Basant Pujā', 'Gyāti Vivekini Sabhā' and 'Sanda Bhandayoh Samvād', and compiled in his 'five comics'. According to Hemanta Sārmā, 'Sabai Jāti Gopāl Kī' was published in 'Harishchandra Magazine' on the 6th November, 1873.28 'Basant Pujā' was published in 'Harishchandra Magazine' on 7th April-May, 1874 A.D.29 'Gyāti Vivekini Sabhā' compiled in 'Prahasan Panchak' was published in 'Kavi Vachan Sudhā' on December 11, 1876.30 His unique comic creation 'Sanda Bhandayoh Samvād' was published in 'Vidyārthī' in Falgun, 1935 (V.S.)31

Bhārtendu had presented 'Śrī Rāmliḷā' on the pattern of 'Champu' in dramatic function of Rām Nagar and it was published for the first time by

28 'B. S.' 'Sabai Jāti Gopāl Kī' (Bhumikā), p-542.
29 'B. S.' 'Basant Pujā' (Bhumikā), p-544.
30 'B. S.' 'Gyāti Vivekini Sabhā' (Bhumikā), p-545.
31 'B. S.' 'Sanda Bhandayoh Samvād' (Bhumikā), p-547.
In addition to all these dramas, Bhārtendu had penned 'Nātak' an independent book on the art of drama. It was written on the basis of Sanskrit and English on dramatics. It was published by Medical Hall Press, Benaras in 1883 (A.D) 33.

3.2 THE DRAMAS OF BEZBAROĀ:

The greater part of working life of 'Sāhitya Rathī' Bezbaroā was spent outside Assam. He did not get enough time to develop the forms and art of drama. He still paid due attention to the forms of modern drama. He carved out a glorious niche in dramatic literature by writing successful plays from the point of view of stage-craft.

Assam enjoys a glorious tradition of medieval dramatic writings. Mahāpurush Śhankardev and Mādhabdev, their contemporaries and successors had produced dramas based primarily on legendary tales. The prevalence of dramatics in Bengali had come to play a greater role in the modern times. The translations of Bengali dramas in Assamese had attained greater currency, which set the mind of Bezbaroā a thinking. He was a true lover of his own tongue. Hence Bezbaroā and his contemporaries set out writing plays in Assamese.

The dramas of Bezbaroā can be divided into two class: I) Historical and 2) Humourous. His historical plays are 'Chakradhwaj Singha', 'Jaymatī Kunwarī' and 'Bellimār'. Bezbaroā's humourous and comic dramas are: 'Litikāi', 'Pāchani' 'Nomāl' and 'Chikarpati-Nikarpati'.

32 'B. S.' 'Shri Rāmālīlā' (Bhumikā), p-551.
33 'B. S.' 'Nātak' (Bhumikā), p-555.
‘Litikāi’ is the first dramatic work of Bezbaroā. He wrote it down while sitting Eden Garden of Calcutta. It was published in the first issue of Calcutta-based ‘Jonaki’ in 1890.

Doubts are expressed that the story of ‘Litikāi’ is originally a Bengali one and so it has two versions, one in Assamese and the other in Bengali. But according to Dr. Prafulla Dutta Goswāmī, its story-elements have been taken from an Assamese folk-tale, ‘Seven Jadhā Mūrkhā’. The drama narrates the foolish acts of seven idiot brothers. Due to their foolishness, they are compelled to serve as servants in the house of Deoram. They make the life of Deoram intolerable with their acts of gross stupidity. His patience is stretched to the extreme when he has to lose his mother Subhadra along with another old woman. He skilfully sends the elder six brothers to the land of Death. But he is not successful in killing, Titāi, the youngest one. When Titai gets the scent that Deoram has killed his six elder brothers, he grows cautious. Deoram sends Titāi to his brother in law (sister’s husband) with a letter, writing there in that Titāi should be slain, there, Titāi opens the letter in the way and re-write it. He comes back to Deoram with his wife Mānikī, the sister of Deoram’s brother in-law, with whom Titai got married there. Deoram himself got entangled in the net he has spread for killing Titai.

Jatindra Nāth Goswāmī opines that the drama reflects some tendencies swimming in Don Quixote. The drama goes to prove that the man who thinks himself to be the wisest and cheats others for his own benefits comes out as the greatest lose in the long end.

Bezbaroā wrote ‘Pāchani’ as a drama in 1913. A story from South India seems as the basis. But Bezbaroā has redrawn it under an Assamese background.
Pachani is a simple soul, who delights in entertaining guests. He feels fully contented when he feeds his guests to their hearts content. But his wife is endowed with natural instincts diametrically opposite to her husband. Pachani always keeps himself waiting for some guests to come, but his wife's attempts are always confined to chase them out some how or other. Once the wife sets a guest running showing him the pestle of the husking wooden machine (Dheki Thora) while another was driven out with the help of her cat. Pachani's sense of hostility shows his pious nature. But the wife is made of stern stiff. When the guests run away, she admonishes her husband. She tells him to feed the animals instead, who remain grateful to the feeders, while the human beings forget it. Hence she brings a cat for her husband that can be treated as a guest. The cat is a useful animal that eats out the mice and benefits the family. She proposes to add a dog too, who will keep a strict watch over the house-hold. Now Pachani keeps himself fully engaged in feeding the cat and the dog feeling no need at all for the guests to come.

Bezbaroa dramatised the Assamese folk-tale ‘Nidhanīa’ in the form of ‘Nomal’ in 1913. The drama depicts the injustice superstitions, false glorification of caste and love for Bengali prevalent in the Vaishnav ‘Satras’ (monasteries) of Assam.

Naharphutukā goes to pay obeisance to the Satradhikār of Athiabāri on the occasion of the birth of his sixth issue with a request to name the baby. He is bewildered by the questions flung on him by the watchman, officer, etc and he has even to grease their palms with bribes for getting entry. The dramatist has taken recourse of humor and irony to paint the caste-glorification and corruption of these living in the ‘Satra’. Absurdities abounding there in have been brought out through the dialogues of Sadhurām Baruā. The dramatist throws an ironical remark on Satradhikār Bihangabiliās Dev, who tries his hand on writing dramas in Bengali instead of

38. ‘Lakṣminātha Bezbaroa Āru Asomiyā Aitityā, Prafulla Ch. Bhuyān, p-68.
writing ‘Bhāona’ (dramas in Assamese). Nāharphutukā returns home safe 
with ‘Nomal’, the name for his baby, but his stupidity transforms the name 
into ‘Nemel’. The altered name ‘Nemel’ brings to him afterwards many an 
afflictions and sufferings.

Bezbaroā wrote the drama ‘Chikarpati-Nikarpati’ in 1913. The story of 
two thieves, ‘Chikarpati’ and ‘Nikarpati’ has been presented here with great 
humour. The dramatist brings into light the corruption, dishonesty and 
carelessness, which had a great say even in judiciary of the time. He has 
come out immensely successful in expressing the absurdities introduced by 
the rulers.

Bethāi and wife knock at the door of law praying justice for the theft of 
their water-pot. They fail even in getting their complaint recorded against the 
great thief. ‘Chikarpati’, rather they are shown the door with insults. This 
goes to prove how the big guns turn a deaf ear to the requests of the smaller 
fries. The king once announced that he would confer the title of ‘great thief’ 
on one who would be successful in stealing the ring from his finger. 
Chikarpati summons the help of Rangdai, the maidservant of the king and 
steals away the king’s ring (Śhrī - Anguthi). Obviously he is hailed as a ‘great 
thief’. The king seeks the assistance of Chikarpati for finding out a groom for 
his daughter. The resourceful thief steals away the prince of Dingānagar with 
the help of his great fellow-thief ‘Nikarpati’. He despatches the prince of 
Dingānaga to Chikunpur where he is married to the princes.

Bezbaroā has focussed on weakness and faults of the Assamese with 
the help of his humourous comics. But taking recourse to humour is not a 
proper tool for enkindling consciousness and awakening national pride in to 
the hearts of people. It needs to portray in living colours the glorious stones 
of the nation and make the people take pride in them. Hence Bezbaroā got 
inclined towards writing historical dramas as he matured. He has himself
remarked thus regarding the ideals and characteristics of the historical
dramas in the Preface to his 'Belimār':

'I think that the historical dramas are meant to show
the historical events in true forms and colours without
bringing any attractions in them. As far as practicable the
characters should be clothed in reality as they were. The life
should be breathed into dead events and should be made
congenial to the spirit it the age of is shown in. The real
actors playing the role of historical figures are gist like
apparels wore within threads of many colours.' 39

Bezbaroa wrote 'Chakradhwaj Singha' in 1915 its story has been
taken from 'Sharāighātar Yuddha' penned by Pandit Hem Chandra Goswāmī
(Published in) magazine named ('Usha')40. The dramatist Ras clearly stated
his views in 'Preface' that his principal aim here is to present the glorious
historical events on the stage.

'My principal aim in writing this drama has been to
present the past glories of Assam in dramatic form before the
present generations, not to earn reputation for myself.' 41

There were two expeditions under the command of Lāchit Barphukan
against the Mughals when Chakradhwaj Singha was on the throne. The first
one carried on against Syed Chānā and Syed Firoz. The battles fought in
'Bānhbārī' and 'Kājalimukh' were crowned with success, and Guwahati was
freed from the occupation of the Mughals42. The Mughal Commander,
Rāmsingh invaded Assam with a large army thereafter. This battle brings to
the force the patriotism and bravery of Lāchit Barphukan. He did not excuse

39 Bezbaroā Granthañawa. ‘Belimār’, (Bhumikā), p-1175.
40 B.G., p-1093.
41 B.G. ‘Chakardhwaj Singha’, (Bhumikā), p-1093.
42 Asomiya Nāṭya-Sāhitya, Satyendranāth Sarmā, p-213.
even his own maternal uncle who was found sloth in preparing for the front
war. Inspite of his ill-health, he bagged a thundering victory over the
Mughals.

Bezbaroā has admitted in the ‘Preface’ to the drama that the
characters of Priyārām (the brave son of Barphukan) and Gajpuriyā (the
friend of Priyārām) are moulded on the models imitated from Shakespeare’s
Falstaff his friends and Prince Henry.43

Bezbaroā wrote ‘Jaymati Kunwarī’ in 1915. In it one portrayed the
patriotism and devotion to her husband brave Assamese, woman Jaymati
showed at the time of a great crisis in her life. The dramatist has admitted
that he has been slightly influenced by ‘Shāh Jāhān’ a drama written by
Dwijendra Lāl Ray.

No admixture of historical borrowings can be found in this drama,
Jaymati. No doubt Piyar of ‘Shāh Jāhān’ has lengthened her shadow over
Jaymati, in the beginnings:

“jaymati nātto burūžir miḩilī nōhovā dār bīchārīlē pōva nejāy।
.................................nāṭkār āagādōkhalīt ḍiḍēntrałāl rāyār “shāhjāhān”
nāṭkār pīyārār cōn “jaymatīrī” uparāt sāmānñbahāvē pāričē,” 44

There was s standing tradition among the Ahoms that none with an
amputation could ascend the throne. Hence the ministers of the then king
‘Chulikaphā’ (La’ra Raja) devised strategies to get the Ahom princes
amputated in order to keeping the king continuing as he was. Under this
programme, a plan to amputate Gadāpāni, the husband of Jaymati was also
on the anvil. As soon as Jaymati got the scent of the plot, she advised her

43 B.G. ‘Chakradhwaj Singha’ (Bhūmikā), p-1093.
44 B. G. ‘Jaymati Kunwarī’ (Bhūmikā), p-1137.
husband to flee in the interests of protecting the nation and advised him to lunch an attack on king 'Chulikaphā' as and when time and situations permit. Gadāpāni at the outset rather hesitates, but the requests of his wife make him run away to Naga Hills. He happens to meet the mountainous girl, Ḍālimī, who falls intensely in love with him, though her love never descends down to physical level. She protects Gadāpāni and saves him from secret agents. On back home, 'Chulikaphā summons Jaymatī to the royal court to know the whereabouts of Gadāpāni. This annoys the king-mother and Bārgohāin and they advise the king not to do so. But the puppet king dancing to the tunes of Būrāgohāin does not listen to their advice. Even the strict orders of the king do not make Jaymatī open her mouth. As a result, a severe punishment is inflicted on her in the open field called 'Jerengā'. Jaymatī does not even then give a clue to her husband's whereabouts. The tortures showered on her lead to her death and Gadāpāni makes a solemn promise to take revenge on devilish Chulikaphā.

'Belimār' was written by Bezbarōā in 1915. It means to depict how the glorious sovereign sun of Ahom regimes sinks down in the ocean of servility, crouching under the weight of civil-strife, self-interest and disbelief of one against the other. The drama presents three Burmese invasions on Assam. The dramatist has borrowed the story elements from 'Asom Buranji' of Rāy Gunābhīrām Baruāh Bāhādur and he has admitted it in the Preface.

The first three acts of 'Belimār' portrays the hopes, aspirations, the ways of functioning hatching of plots, weakness in characters and envy of the principal political personages, like Chandrakānat, Badan Chandra and Satrām. Satrām was brought on friendly terms with Chandrakānta with the help of the Prime Minister, Pūrnānanda Būrāgohāin. But he began to pour poisoning against Būrāgohāin into the ears of the King, Chandrakānta Singha. Truly speaking Chandrakānta was a very weak personality, given up to very

45. Sāhityarathī Lakṣmināth Bezbarōā, Jatindra Nāth Goswāmī, p-203.
46. B.G. 'Belimār' (Bhūmikā), p-1175.
many bad habits. When Pūrṇānanda comes to know of it, he exiles Satrām. A bloody strife erupts between Burāgohāin and Badan Chandra, the Governor at Guwahati. Sensing troubles, the daughter of Badan Chandra sends a letter to her father advising him to run away from Guwahati. Badan flies away to Burma and comes back to invade Assam with the Burmese army. Pūrṇānanda Burāgohāin sees no way out and commits suicide. Badan is installed as the Prime minister, but the king-mother cannot tolerate the presence of Burmese army on Assamese soil. She is prove to think that a man who can invade his mother land with the help of foreigners, can also sell it to them. Hence she hatches plot and gets Badan murdered. Purandar Singha is enthroned with the help of Ruchināth and Chandrakānta has to abdicate. The Burmese come to attack again and they reinstall Chandrakānta on the throne. The Burmese attack Assam for the third time and all kinds of tyranny and oppressions are piled up on the common people. Chandrakānta files away after which the British army comes to defeat the Burmese force.

Bezbaroa wrote five mini-dramas, out of which there were to be published in ‘Bānhī’, namely ‘Gadādhar Raṅgā’, ‘Bārematarā’ and ‘Ha-Ja-Ba-Ra-La’. The other two, ‘Hemlet’ and ‘Mongalā’ remained incomplete.

Bezbaroa’s dramatic creation, ‘Gadādhar Raṅgā’ is neither historical nor comic and hence he has called it a drawing room play. It was published in ‘Bānhī’ (9th Year, III-IV number) in 1840 (V.S.). It is considered to be the first one act play in Assamese.

While prince Gadāpānī was away in exile, a guest came to the house of Śhimolugurīa Baruā, a man immensely loyal to the Prince. The daughters of Baruā, Kamalā and Bimalā mistook the guest to be the prince and they received him with great honour. But the man was none but Gendhelā Bāyan.

the son of Dukhiram Medhi. Gendhelā was, however, greatly non-plussed at the hospitalibility shown to him. At that very moment there was a great hue and cry outside and both these sisters thought that soldiers under the orders of 'La'ra Raja' had come to arrest prince Gadāpāni, the guest in their house. Finding no way out, the sisters sent the guest hiding in their 'loom-house’. At long last a letter from Prince Gadāpānī was found in the custody of the guest and his real identity came in to open. The two sisters were greatly ashamed of their conduct.

Bezbaroā wrote a drama consisting of three acts, named as 'Bare matara’. It was published in 'Banhi' in its first number of 21st year.49

It is a social drama depicting how some people quite selfishly cheat others. Naranāth Hāzarikā goes to Delhi from Assam and turns out to be big contractor there. The life of Hāzarikā at the outset was full of sorrows and financial troubles. But he is a noble man. Satish as well as Gunanāth wants to take undue advantage of his large-heartedness. Gunanāth presents himself in Delhi in the house of Hāzarikā as his nephew (sister's son). But his trick comes to light when Hāzarikā's true nephew, Siddhināth comes to visit his uncle. However, Hāzarikā excuse Gunanāth and send him off with enough money in his pocket. Naranāth is kind-hearted and generous. He is shown to be speaking fluent and chaste Bengali that goes to prove his outlook to be somewhat cosmopolitan.

'Hu-Ja-Ba-Ra-La' is a social drama of Bezbaroā published in 'Banhi' (2nd year, 11th number, p1853 V.S.).50 It was published in a book form in 1931. It depicts how some men show themselves off, thinking that they have assumed immense greatness. He wants to show how western civilisation have played havoc with our behaviours and how do they exploit unwise persons taking undue advantage from them.

49 B. G. 'Barematara', p-1080.
50 B.G. 'Hu Ja-Ba-Ra-La', p-1085.
Golokchandra Bora serves as the Headmaster of a High School and he is a famous litterateur as well. His wife is well-educated and is the secretary of ‘Women’s Association’. These two are too deeply absorbed in their own affairs, so much so that their maid-servant ‘Kanduri’ has to remind them of the necessity of having ‘Upanayan’ (Sacred-thread offering ceremony) of their son Tepu. There is a good mutual understanding between Golok and his wife, but Pitrām does not pull on well with his wife, Lalitā. In fact Lalitā loves a dog, which Pitrām cannot tolerate. He wants somehow to drive the dog away. Fortunately Golok’s ten years old son, Tepu comes to his aid. Taking some money from Pitrām, Tepu takes away the dog and hides it somewhere. Lalitā goes on indefinite fast and so Pitrām is compelled to request Tepu to bring the dog back. Many times Tepu extorts money from Pitrām as well as his wife on the plea of getting the dog back. At the long last, Tepu and his friend Molokā take a hefty sum from Pitrām and brings the dog back home. They come to think that there is no use in having education and labouring so hard for getting through tough B.A. and M.A. examinations, when the people like them having enough intelligence can earn unlimited wealth without educational qualifications.

Bezbarōā began translating Shakespeare’s ‘Hemlet’ in Assamese in 1893, but it could not be completed51. In the same way ‘Mangala’ another drama of Bezbarōā has come to light now, which is also incomplete52.

3.3 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE DRAMAS OF BHĀRTENDU AND BEZBAROĀ:

The comparative study of the dramas of Bhārtendu and Bezbaroā, brings into a sharp focus the glaring fact that both of them were dictated by the needs of the time to write dramas. The writing of dramas in Hindi and Assamese literatures was not so much current in those times. They had

52. B.G. ‘Mangalā’, p-1091.
before them only the Sanskrit and medieval dramatic traditions to fall back upon. The dramas were not being written that might have taken into considerations the modern tendencies visible in the waves of times. Bhārtendu and Bezbaroā had their fingers on the pulse of the age and fulfilled the needs. Therefore these two dramatists come to be recognised as the pioneers in the field and will be long remembered for their lofty literary creations.

Bezbaroā's dramas fall short in numbers when compared to Bhārtendu's. Not only that Bhārtendu wrote dramas on original theames, but he also presented translations and remodelled versions of the dramas of others. Bezbaroā on the other hand kept himself fully engaged principally with original ones. Bezbaroā had also tried his hand on translation of Shakespeare's 'Hemlet', but he left it unfinished. Bhārtendu successfully translated Shakespeare's 'Mercent of Venice' under the name of 'Durlobh Bandhu', which was enacted too with thumping applause.

Bezbaroā does not have to his credit the translations from Sanskrit or any other language, which Bhārtendu possesses in abundance. Translations or transformations of such Sanskrit dramas 'Dhananjay Vijay', 'Ratnāwali', 'Mudrārākṣas' and 'Karpūr Manjari' amply prove the point.

Medieval Assamese had a flourishing harvest of eminent dramas. Not only that Shankardev and Mādhabdev had enriched it with their 'Ankiya Nat' and 'Jhumuras', their contemporaries and successors had also added generously to it their own dramatic creations. This rich legacy had been bequeathed on Bezbaroā and so he made only the social life of Assam the running theme in his creations. He did not set his eyes on other topics than life, society, social and political environments prevailing at his times. This tendency is quite evident in Bhārtendu too, especially in his original dramas.
There is a marked resemblance in the writings of both Bhārtendu and Bezbaroā that they penned comics. They were very much conscious of religious superstitions, social evils and political turmoils their age was besieged with. They believed that these evils could be removed if they were attacked with the sharp edge of humour and irony. With these ends in view they look upon themselves the responsibility of writing comics. Bhārtendu's 'Andher Nagari'and Bezbaroā's 'Chikarpati-Nikarpati' are the examples to the point.

Bhārtendu find incisive salvos of criticism on British rule in India in his drama ‘Bhārat Jananī’, ‘Bhārat Durdasha’. Bezbaroā did never come in open against the British rather he tried to eulogise the past glories of Assam through his dramas instead. Such historical dramas as 'Chakradhwaj Singha', 'Jaymatī Kunwarī', and 'Belimār' turn but to be the vehicles of national pride and consciousness. Both of these dramatists passed their entire life in and India enslaved by the British rule. They departed from this world before independence dawned on Indian soil. Both nourished a solemn desire to see India freed from foreign rule. Both of them through the medium of drama tried to inspire their countrymen to shake off this shackles of slavery. Unlike Bezbaroā, who wrote historical dramas, Bhārtendu portrayed the pitiable plight of the country in his dramatic creations and tried to awaken the national spirit in his fellow-kings.

Bhārtendu and Bezbaroā are the path-finders and trend-setters in writing one-Act plays. They possessed adequate knowledge of English literature and were well versed in the art of writing one-Act plays. So they flagged off the journey of Assamese and Hindi dramas along with the one-Act plays on the tracks laid down by their hard efforts. The achievements of both these dramatists serve as lofty light-houses and must be recognised as such.