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A BRIEF REVIEW ON THE CONTRIBUON OF “ARUNODOI” TO ASSAMESE LITERATURE

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Abstract

Assam has a rich tradition of culture and as well as literature. Though it is the inhabitant of various cast and tribes there is a specific unity among all the diversities. The people from various casts, tribes and traditions are basically connected with one main language called Assamese. The language Assamese is a developed and distinct branch of *MagadhiPrakrita* which is originated from Indo-Aryan Language groups. The language has its Rich trading of written literature from 10th century. The first instance the written Assamese language form is on the *Sarjyapada* of Buddha religion. After that the *PrahladCharitra* was written by *HemSaraswati* which is purely in Assamese form. In such way the Assamese language were grown up with the help of many Baishnav saint like Sankardeva, Madhabdeva etc. In 1826 the East India Company occupied Assam by the help of the treaty of Yandabo. In 1846 the Chirstian missionaries were published a magazine named “Arunodoi”. Arunodoi made a Drastic change on the Assamese literature. It has a great value on the basis of the modernization of Assamese language and its people. Actually at first **Arunodoi** open the door of western knowledge and thoughts to the Assamese people. In this article we want to analyze those contribution of **Arunodoi** to the Assamese language and as well as the Assamese society.

Methodology

In this Article We will used the descriptive method and analytical method where it needed. As a reference we

used the printed version of the *Arunodoi* and some secondary sources like books, article research papers etc.

INTRODUCTION

Arunodoi is the first Assamese magazine. This was printed from the Baptist Missionary printing press situated on the bank of Dikhowriver in Sibsagar District. *Arunodoi* was first published in 1846(January). "The *Arunodoi*, Monthly Paper, devoted to religion, science and general intelligence"- was the the punch line of the magazine. It continued to be published till 1879. First editor of this paper was Dr. Nathan Brown and then A.H. Den forth, Ms. Ward, Miles Bronson, A.K Gurney, Rev. Clerketc. took over the charge respectively. Though Christianity was the main aim of the paper, it also included various news related to current affairs, Science, astrology, history and also trivia. This paper created a new era to the Assamese literary world. Assamese people got to know about the western world, its civilization and the western thought through this paper for the first time. *Arunodoi* gave a new confidence to the Assamese literates to carry forward with Assamese dictionary , grammar and other essential parts of the language. This paper gave birth to some prominent Assamese authors like *AnandaramDhekialPhukan*, *HemchandraBaruah* and *NidhiLibaiPharowal*. The *Arunodoi* used a simple approach instead of borrowing words from other languages, removing complexity among various alphabets, mainly pronunciation oriented word construction etc. Though this effort was not accepted in the long run, but the *Arunodoi* opened the gate to the modern literacy in the Assam.

DISCUSSION

CHRISTIAN WRITTER OF ARUNODOI:

Arunodoi was mainly a product of Christianity movement. But the officials of American Baptist Mission

know that language and literature is the main thing to get connected with the indigenous Assamese people. Therefore firstly they focused to learnt the Assamese Language and then broadcast their religion to them. Language and literature is the most essential element to connect with people and convey their ideology. Apart from this it is to be said that most of the officials of American Baptist Missions were originally interested to the Language and culture. They wrote many books, articles and language skill related books like grammar, dictionary etc. The name of such missionaries are Nathan Brown, Miles Bronson, A K Gurney, Elija Brown, NidhiLibai Farwell etc. Here is a brief description about the mentioned authors of *Arunodoi-*

Nathan Brown- in 1836 Nathan Brown came to the Assam from America. At first he lived in Sadiya and by writing some useful textbooks he used to teach the children there. But for some reasons he get back to Joypur and in 1843 he moved back to Assam, Sibsagar Again. He published the Assamese translated version of “New Testament” As *NatunNiom in 1849 and KhristarBiboronAruHuvjatra in 1848.* Brown also wrote *JoseforKahiniAndJikhukhristorJiboni.* He also translated John Banion’s book *Prillgrim’s Progress AsJatrikorJatra.* Apart from this he had a great contribution on collecting and publishing some valuable Assamese books. He collected and published the *AsomBuronji* of *KashinathTamuliPhukan* and *BakulKayaosth’sGonitorPuthi.* The Most Crucial contribution of Nathan Brown is a book about Assamese grammar named Grammatical Notices of the Assamese Language.

Miles Bronson- Miles Bronson(1812–1883) was one of the first American Baptist missionaries who came to Sadiya and Jaipur in Assam, India. His mission was to preach about Christianity in these parts of the world. Since there were too many tribal people who knows only Assamese, he learnt Assamese and spent a lot of time among the tribal people. He also wrote number of books on those tribal people and their lives. The groundbreaking contribution of

Miles Bronson to the Assamese community is the Dictionary of Assamese. In 1867 he published the book and it contained 14000 of Assamese words. Since the dictionary is the key element of any Language so it is to be said that he made the pillar of the Assamese Language. Apart from this he translated many chapters from the holy Bible and wrote some other Articles.

A.K Gurney – A.K Gurney gave his first step in Assam in 1874. He edited the magazine *Arunodoi* for many years, translated New Testament from Hibu Language to the Assamese language. He also wrote *RoothAruJoseforKahini* (1881) *KaniBeheruwarKotha* (1878) *ElakeshiBeshyarKotha* (1877) and *KaminikantorCharitra* (1877). Garney Edited and published one more magazine named *Dipti* in 1905.

NidhiLibaiFarwel – NidhiLibaifarwell is originally an Assamese whose name is *NidhiramKeot*. In 1841 he baptized in Christian and changed his name to NidhiLibaifarwell. He was regular writer of *Arunodoi* magazine. He wrote many valueable article like *Binoy Boson, HorogorBiboron, NorokorBiboron, TirthorBiboron, hindustanorBuronjee* etc. In 1855 he published a book named *PadarthoVidyaSar*.

Apart from this EngrajiAsomiyaSabsokoshOf S.R ward and EngrajiAsomiyaSabdakosh Of Mrs. Katter are the two most valuable book of this time. Besides this Henri AruTeorLoguwa, AporimitasarorPorinam, JoseforKahini, AmerikaAbiskar, PanditAruDharmoprosar, 220 Ta Stutigeet, BibelorHadhu, RamgotirKahiniDharmikSoha, MauriSuwali, AfrikarKowar, Krishna AruKhirstorTulona, ApottiNakhok, SwarupAsroy, HubornorTul, NistarorUpay, SirtiAruProloy, Guru AhilAruTomakMatise, PaapKhemaPoaSuwali, Pabitra Avatar, DharamPuthirBiboron are the most valuable contribution of Arunodoi era.

NON CHRISTIAN WRITTER OF ARUNODOI

Apart from American Baptist missionaries there were many Assamese writer who wrote many valuable article on ArunodoiMagazine. They were not related the *Arunodoi* and Christian Missionaries group directly. Since there were only one magazine of Assamese language at that time so they had to write in that magazine. They were not in support of *Arunodoi*'s easy spelling system and raised their voice on it. In spite of that there were a vital role of non Christian writers to the *Arunodoi* era. Some renown writers of that era was-

AnandaramDhekialPhukan :(1829–1859) was one of the pioneers of Assamese literature in the Arunodoi. He joined in the literary revolution initiated by missionaries. He was remembered for his efforts in promoting Assamese language. He played a major role in replacing the Bengali language with the Assamese language as the official language in Assam.

AnandaramDhekialPhukan started his literary life at the age of 17. From then until his death his sole aim was the development of his land and its people. In 1847, Anandaram published *EnglandorBiwaran* in Arunodoi. In 1849, he published *AsomiyaLorarMitra* in two volumes which contained almost 400 pages. It is considered as one of the milestone of the Assamese literature. In 1853, when Moffat Mills came to Assam to review the economic condition, AnandaramDhekialPhukan presented him with a report written in lucid English describing the political and administrative situation of Assam, in-depth analysis of problems faced by the Assamese language and education system, and reasons and solutions to the poor economic condition of the Assamese people. He published another book, *A few remarks on Assamese language*, in English in 1855. In this book he discussed the independent criteria of the language and the grievous outcome of imposing Bengali as the official language in Assam. This book mentions about 62 religious books and 40 plays. In addition, he started working on two dictionaries (Assamese to English, English to Assamese) and sent some parts of these to Arunodoi but their fate remains unknown

Gunabhiram Barua (1837-1894) was a nineteenth century Indian intellectual from Assam who ushered in new ideas of social reform in the early years of colonial rule in Assam. He was deeply influenced by the progressive intellectual currents of the Bengal Renaissance.

The first social drama of Assamese *Ramnavami* was written by Gunabhiram Barua in 1857 and published as a book in 1870. Gunabhiram is also remembered as a historian and biographer. In 1887 he published an *Assam Buranjee*, *Kathin Shobdor Rohasya Bakhya* is a humorous work by Barua, published posthumously in 1912. Gunabhiram Barua published and edited the short-lived but hugely influential literary journal *Assam-Bandhu* (1885-1886).

Hemchandra Barua was a prominent writer, social activist of Assam. He was the compiler of the first exhaustive Assamese dictionary *Hemkosha*, where spellings based on Sanskrit were first introduced. It was the second dictionary of the Assamese language which was published in 1900 after his death. Some of his other works are - 'Ôxômiya Byakôrôn' (1859), 'Adipath' (1873), 'Pathmala' (1882), 'Ôxômiyalôrarbyakôrôn' (1886). These four books were recognized as text books for schools at that time. Besides this he also wrote 'Pôrhaxôliya Ôbhidhan' (1892), 'Bahirêôngsông, bhitêrêkûwabhatûri', 'Kaniyar Kirttôn' (1861), 'Xasthyêrêkhyabagabhalêrakhibêrupay' (Way to health) (translated), 'Assamese Marriage System'

All the above mentioned writers were worth mentioned person for the growth and development of the Assamese literature. They all were worked hard to give the Assamese literature a new dimension. And this all were possible through Arunodoi magazine mainly. Therefore we have to be grateful for the literary work published through Arunodoi. I already mentioned that Arunodoi was the gateway of all the western thought and culture. Because of that there were many reforms came to the Assamese Society and its education system through the Arunodoi

also. The main Contribution of Arunodoi can be mentioned as follows-

- It can be said that Arunodoi revive the almost ended Assamese language from a crucial situation. They helped to re established the Assamese language as a medium of learning and governance by fighting with the government. They worked hard to established the peculiarity of the Assamese language and tried to convinced the importance of mother language for basic education of Assamese people.
- Grammar and Dictionary which is the key role for any language, they published that types of books to strengthen the basic structure of the Assamese language.
- They were the first who published a magazine in Assamese language. And through this they opened the door of western knowledge and thoughts to the Assamese People.
- They collect some very precious Assamese old book and publish it through their missionary press. Now these are the most valuable gems of Assamese literature for whom all Assamese people can be proud.
- Arunodoi Enrich the word Stock of Assamese language by creating some new words with the help of English Word and some other foreign words. Apart from that some Assamese word which was going to be defunct, they take it again and inspire the use of those words.
- Arunodoi magazine has created some prominent author of Assamese language like GunabhiramBarua, HemchandraBarua, AnandaramDhekialPhukon etc. they are like a blessings for the growth and development of the Assamese language and the community also.
- Only through Arunodoi Assamese people found a new idea of wider world. Geography, History, Education, Science and technology, new invention of science these all were introduced to Assamese people only through Arunodoi firstly.
- The learning of English literature has started through the missionaries for the first time. And through this language modernity comes to the Assamese society. With the help of that modern thought the new genre of literature is

introduced in a basic form for the first time in Assamese language.

- Before Arunodoi starts the main subject of the Assamese language was religion centric and daily life related. But from the Arunodoi era Assamese literature has earned the capacity to express the feelings and desire of common people through literary works. Of course it has to be accept that religious thought was also one of the part of Arunodoi magazine, Yet there were many more for which Assamese people have to be grateful forever.

CONCLUSION

In the history of growth and development of Assamese language and literature there is great impact of Arunodoi Magazine. This magazine give a new extent to the people of Assam and its literature. Though their prime aim was to preaching the Christian religion to the Assamese people, they knew full well that Language is the main thing to get connected with people and convey their ideology. Therefore at first they learnt the Assamese language and then they try to broadcast their ideology by the help of the literature. In such way Assamese people and its literature were mostly benefitted. They gave a new way of thinking to the Assamese people, new knowledge and new structure to the literature of Assamese. Only because of Arunodoi, The Assamese literature was formed in a modern way. In 1813 the first printed book was published in Assamese font only because of the missionaries related with Arunodoi. For these whole reasons The First magazine of Assamese literature Arunodoi be remembered by the each and every people of Assamese community.

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