



The Intellectual Setting of 20th-Century Assam: A Spotlight

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Abstract:

Assam came under British rule in India following the Treaty of Yandabu in 1826. The connection with the British and exposure to the English education system brought about an unprecedented change in the social and intellectual life of Assam, initiating a new era in Assamese literature known as the era of modern literature. The foundation for this era was laid in the mid-19th century, making it imperative to include the intellectual exercises and contributions of the 19th century when discussing the intellectual setting of 20th-century Assam.

There is scope for discussing the factors behind the creation of the intellectual milieu in 20th-century Assam, which will facilitate a better understanding of the learning, literary pursuits, and overall literary environment of that time. A robust intellectual environment requires significant hard work and rigor. Thus, the journey of Assamese literature towards modernity becomes essential to reiterate, particularly how it revived from the brink of extinction to regain its original status. The research paper titled "The Intellectual Setting of 20th-Century Assam: A Spotlight" was chosen to examine the factors that influenced Assamese literature and contributed to its strong and unwavering standing.

Key words:

Assam, Assamese, 20th Century, Intellectual.

Acknowledgement

Descriptive and analytical methods have been adopted to study the proposed topic. The National Library of India, Calcutta, Krishnakanta Handique Library, Guwahati University, Dr. Surya Kumar Bhuyan Library, Cotton University, Lakshminath Bezbarua Library, Dibrugarh University, Kamrup District Library, Bhaben Kumar Bora Library, Assam Jatiya Vidyalay, Noonmati, Guwahati, private libraries, events, and institutions were all involved in the study to gather resources to aid in various areas of the research.

Aim and Objective:

This paper aims to illustrate how Assamese literature embraced modernism through the intellectual setting of 20th-century Assam. The chosen topic, "The Intellectual Setting of 20th-Century Assam: A Spotlight," aims to discuss how Assamese literature has been able to establish its own strong position through the ages.

Methodology and Scope:

A descriptive methodology has been adopted for discussing the topic of this paper. While examining the intellectual setting of 20th-century Assam, the contributions of the 19th century have been incorporated as its precursor. The subjects pertaining to the creation of the intellectual setting in 19th and 20th century Assam are derived from write-ups published in magazines and journals, social institutions, discussions, meetings, and conversations. Additionally, the significant role played by the intellectual proposition of Kolkata in shaping the intellectual setting of Assam is explored.

Introduction:

Although Indian philosophy recognizes the continuity of time, Indian scholars have traditionally divided time into smaller units, such as seconds, minutes, fortnights, months, and years, to chronicle historical events. This division is not exclusive to India but is a practice worldwide, primarily for studying societies and cultures. Literature, being an integral part of culture, represents the intellectual exercise of humankind. Therefore, studying literature through time divisions such as years and centuries brings organization to the exploration. Thus, for this study, the keywords "20th century" are chosen, keeping in mind that the 20th century cannot be isolated from the preceding 19th and succeeding 21st centuries. It is crucial to understand that the groundwork for the 20th century was laid during the preceding 19th century. To comprehend the features and traits of the 20th century, it is necessary to consider the linkages and events that took place during the 19th century.

The 20th century can be aptly called the renaissance age in Assam's literary history. The Assamese people, burdened with the challenges of the eventful 19th century, took their first steps towards higher education after completing primary and middle school. Those who could afford it learned the alphabet, read their own literature, and even indulged in literature from distant lands. A significant development was the

establishment of firm grammar rules and a dictionary, solidifying the previously fluid state of the Assamese language at the crossroads. The continuous efforts of newspapers, magazines, language enthusiasts, and patriots played a vital role in enriching Assamese literature across various genres.

1.2 Intellectual Background :

The Assamese language and literature have frequently been able to develop their own shapes by taking on various forms. Since language is the source of literature, there are occasionally variations in its form and pattern. Particularly starting in the 19th century, the Assamese language was able to acquire a modern form.

Soon after the British took over Assam (1826), the socio-economic and intellectual history of Assam took a new path. Looking at the background of Assamese literature of the 20th century, the Jonaki era has a special role to play. As the British occupied Assam, some of the language's and literature's beneficial qualities also emerged. Although the Assamese people suffered a lot during the British occupation and rule, the British people unknowingly helped the Assamese language and literature to advance.

From the time the Ahoms requested the British to save the kingdom from the Moamaria, they defended the country and settled in Assam, when the Ahoms again sought the help of the Company Raj, from the time of the barbaric invasion of Mana (1817, 1811, 1821). At that time, the British were the Assamese people's protectors and well-wishers. As a result, the Assamese people embraced and trusted the British up until they learned the truth about them. They first included Lower Assam and then Upper Assam (during the reign of Purandar Singha) into the British Empire. With this, Assam came under central rule. Long before this, various parts of India had already come under the control of the British Empire. Due to the subjugation of Assam to central rule, The British, unknowingly and reluctantly, brought unity and political awareness among the people of Assam. As a result, this unity slowly posed a threat to the British. 1828 was Gomdhar Konwar's first rebellion against the British, while Piyoli Phukan's rebellion against the British in 1830—these did nothing to expel the British. Maniram Dewan (1806-1858) also requested the British to return the reins of upper Assam to Kandapeshwar Singh, but this request did not work, He started preparing for Sipahi Bidroh(Sepoy mutiny) and when the British got this news, Maniram Dewan was hanged (1858). Even after this, the people who endured the British rule and exploitation could not defeat the British despite many rebellions. The British suppressed these and tightened their rule.

Despite these measures against the British, there were some people who loved the British and admired their work who were able to win their favour. They made money by helping the British in their affairs and tried to act wisely because they also knew that the power of the British was much greater than that of the Assamese people, so life would not work if they did not work in their favour. So these people worked to make

money by oiling the British. The British were very clever, they went ahead wisely considering everything. They knew that if they could not please the people of Assam, they would not be able to stay here for long; therefore, they acted in a way that delighted the people which was also advantageous for them. They also needed the Ahom royal family or Leaders in their rule. They saw that there was no other powerful means of exploiting the people in Assam except land revenue. For this purpose, Assam was divided into six districts, each of which was again divided into mouzas, and the responsibility of each mouza was given to a mouzadar, tehsildar or chowdhary for the convenience of collection of rent. People from the noble families of Assam were appointed to these posts. This facilitated the British to bring these ancient elites closer to them and they became economically and socially reliant on the British. These old elite were the predecessors of the Assamese educated middle class and this system pioneered the education and enrichment of the language and literature of the Assamese people. Until Anandaram Dhekial Phukan (1829-1859) returned to Assam from Calcutta without completing his education and joined the post of Acting Munsif under the British, none of the people who held the posts of Chiramar, Sadramin Munsif etc. are known to have had English education except Jagyaraam.

The middle class was born out of the British's own social needs. Gradually, English education expanded. The people of Assam, filled with experience and seeing the actions of the British, realized that the rule of Assam was in the hands of the British and the future of Assam was the British. This realization brought them closer to the British. The British also appointed whomever they could to earn their work and gain their loyalty. This middle class played a major role in the modernization of the Assamese language, literature and culture. With the spread of Western education, the middle class gradually flourished. Their educated offspring contributed to the development of modern literature, language, and culture. The closer the nobility got to the British, the more they realized the need for English education. They were aware that learning English was necessary for their kids to be able to work, otherwise it would be difficult to obtain higher-paying positions without English education at that time. The British also paid special attention to education for their own benefit. The British emphasized the importance of teaching English but were not interested in establishing schools at first. However, the interest and efforts of the Assamese people gave importance to the establishment of schools and in June 1835 the Government approved the establishment of the first school in Guwahati at the initiative of the British with donations from the old elite. 1740.00 was donated by local interested people for the school. An important period in the history of Assam In late 1835, the first school with 58 students was opened in Guwahati and this was the Guwahati Seminary. The present Cotton Collegiate. This beginning gave education a new place in the history of Assam. In 1841, the second English school in Assam was established in Sivsagar.

The picture of the progress of modern education in the 19th century was as follows—

Primary Schools - 3534;

Number of students -1,03,541

Number of Government High Schools – 10

Number of students – 2411

Number of Government Aided High Schools – 5

Number of students - 935

Number of Private High Schools - 5

Number of students - 937

Number of Aided Middle English Schools – 56

The number of schools that did not get help was - 23

(Dev Goswami, Ranjit Kumar (eds.). History of Assamese Literature Volume V, 2015, p. 13)

The growth of higher education was not a concern for the British either. There was no support from the government when the first college was established in Assam. Murarichand College, Sylhet, established in 1892, was the first college in Assam, but Cotton College, Guwahati, established in 1901, was considered the first college in Assam after Sylhet seceded from Assam. (Previous book, p. 13)

Till 1947 the number of colleges in Assam was 15 secondary schools — 191, Middle English and Assamese 742 and primary schools 7574. (Aforementioned book, p. 13)

Before the establishment of such Societies in Assam, many conscious elite parents sent their children to Calcutta for higher education. Conscious parents arranged for their children to pursue higher education at least at their own expense for the sake of their children's future. But not everybody was able to pull it off.

Before the establishment of colleges in Assam, Anandaram Dhekial Phukan (1837-1894), Anandaram Barua (the first graduate of Assam), Gunabhiram Barua, Lambodar Bora (1860-1892), Jagannath Barua (1851-1907), Manik Chandra Barua (1851-1915), Kashinath Barua and Kaliram Das, Ramakant Das, Munsu Nachar Ahmed, Govind Bezbarua, Gangagobind Phukan, etc. went to Calcutta for higher education.

(Among these, Anandaram Dhekial Phukan is known to have returned to Assam without completing his education.) In addition, Lakshminath Bezbarua (1864-1938), Padmanath Gohani Barua (1871-1946), Chandra Kumar Agrawal (1867-1937), Hemchandra Goswami (1872-1946) and others went to Calcutta for higher education. These people who went to Calcutta not only received their education, but also took the warmth of literary practice there and brought it to Assamese literature. Additionally, they gained knowledge in the area of culture, and as a result, Assamese literature and culture were influenced. They studied Bengali-English literature and tried to give the reader a taste of innovation in their works

1.2.1 Magazines — Newspapers:

The purpose of the missionaries was to preach the religion of Christ and at the same time to awaken the converts and introduce them to the world of Christ. Therefore, the missionaries entered Assam and worked for the development of the Assamese language for the Assamese first to fulfill their objectives. The missionaries contributed significantly to the publication of the first Assamese magazine, Arunodoi, in 1846. The first editor of the magazine was Nathan Brown (1807-1886). A. H. Danforth (1842-1900), S. M. Whiting, Miles Bronson (1812-1883), William Ward, Bay Clark, Mrs. Susan R. Ward, A. K. Garney (1854–1910) are known to have been later editors of the magazine. From the very first issue of this magazine, this main mantra of "Arunodoi Gyanvandar - A Monthly Megazine devoted to Religion, Science and General Intelligence" mentioned in the Title Page, i.e. 'Arunodoi', a monthly magazine dedicated to religion, science and general intelligence, contributed to the creation of intellectual ideals for the Assamese.

The articles published in Arunodoi increased the knowledge of the people and made them interested, enthusiastic and curious. The writings published were of a variety of subjects—stories, novels, essays, travelogues, science stories, collected historical-non-historical narratives from home and abroad, fairy tales, dramas, astrology, religions, studies of nature, moral education, short-stories, biographies, tribal narratives, narrative poems, etc. which benefitted people widely. It is in this paper that 'Deodhai Assam Buronji': 'Old Assam History' and 'The History of Kamarup' used to be published (অসমীয়া সাহিত্যৰ সমীক্ষাত্মক ইতিবৃত্ত, page 250). The addition of images in the context along with the writings in Arunodoi attracted the reader.

After about 36 years of circulation, the newspaper ceased circulation in 1882. The printing press is also known to have been sold to The Assam Company in 1882. From the early seventies, the Arunodoi began to become weak and irregular. The newspaper was published under the name 'Arunodoi Newspaper ('অৰুণোদই সম্বাদপত্ৰ')' until 1850; 1851 This is only 'Arunodoi ('অৰুণোদই')' and since 1861 it has been 'Arunoday ('অৰুণোদয়')' due to the change in spelling and letter arrangement over time in assamese language.

Jonaki was born in 1889. Between the end of Arunodoi in 1882 and the birth of Jonaki in 1889, several magazines, both big and small, were published.

Most of them have a short life span. Below is an overview of these magazines—

Assam Bilasini (1871-1883) Sri Sri Dattadev Goswami (ed.)

Assam Mihir (1872) (published in Bengali for one year from Guwahati)

Assam Darpan (1873-1875) (published from Darang)

Assam Deepika (1876) (published from Guwahati)

Chandroday (1876) (published from Dihing Satra)

Goalpara Hit-Sadhini (1876) (published from Goalpara)

Assam News (1882-1885) Hemchandra Barua (ed.)

Assam Bandhu (1885-1886) Gunabhiram Baruah (ed.)

Mou (1886-1887) Harinarayan Bora (ed.)

Assam Tara (1888-1890) Shridhar Barua (ed.)

The above magazines were published before jonaki's emergence and after Arunodoi was born, although among them Assam Vilasini; Assam News, Assam Bandhu and Mou seem to play an important role.

The Assamese language and literature have undergone significant change since the emerge of Arunodai in 1846. This time period, which saw the growth of Assamese language- literature-culture under the influence of Arunodai, is known as the "Arunodoi Era" (1846–1882).

It has already been mentioned that those who went to Calcutta for higher education were influenced by its literature and culture. In 1888, several members including Chandra Kumar Agrawala, Hemchandra Goswami and Lakshminath Bezbarua (Benudhar Rajkhowa, Padmanath Gohanibarua, Kankalal Barua, Ramakanta Barkakati, Ananda Chandra Agrawala, Lambodar Bora, Satya Nath Bora, Rajnikanta Bardoloi, Abdul Majid and all the other Assamese students present in Calcutta at that time) formed the 'Asomiya Bhasha Unnati Sadhini Sabha' (A. B. U. S. S.) in order to contribute to the literature and language of Assam. While these Assamese students were present in Calcutta, various programs and Societies of Bengali language, literature and culture had already created an intellectual atmosphere in Bengal. At that time, the children of Assam present there felt a responsibility to work for the betterment of the language, literature and culture of their country.

As a result, A.B.U.S.S. committee was born. As the introductory piece of A.B.U.S.S., In January 1889, Jonaki, a monthly magazine named Jonaki was published under the editorship of Chandrakumar Agarwala. Because of the unique contribution Jonaki, like Arunodai, made to the Assamese language, literature, and culture, this period is mostly referred to as the "Jonaki Era." A.B.U.S.S adopted plans to collect and publish old books, the use of Assamese language in educational Societies, the use of correct system instead of incorrect grammar and spelling, translation of excellent books from Sanskrit and other languages as well as adopted schemes to alleviate the shortage of other literature related books.

The need for a paper to reflect the policies of the newly established organisation paved the way for Jonaki's publication." (Dev Goswami, Ranjit Kumar (eds.). The History of Literature Volume V, 2015, p. 81.) There are conflicting accounts of when Jonaki was released in 1889 (January or February). However, Jonaki was first published in the month of Magh according to the Assamese month. Jonaki brought a wave of romanticism to Assamese literature for the first time. The first poem with all the characteristics of romanticism is Bon-kuwari by Chandrakumar Agarwala, which was published in the newspaper that started a new trend in Assamese literature. The first Assamese sonnet by Hemchandra Goswami—'Priyatmar Chithi'—was published in Jonaki. There are many people who have been involved in the development of Jonaki, including Lakshminath Bezbarua, Chandra Kumar Agrawala, Hemchandra Goswami, Debakant Barua, Kamalakanta Bhattacharya, Padmanath Gohaibarua, Satya Nath Bora, Kanaklal Barua, Anand Chandra Agarwal, Dharmeshwari Devi Baruani, Nalinibala Devi, Raghunath Chowdhury, Ambikagiri Raichowdhury, Jatindranath Duwara and others .

There are many magazines published after Jonaki that contributed to the world of Assamese literature. Some of them are –

<u>Name of the magazine</u>	<u>year</u>	<u>Editor</u>
Bijulee	1890	Krishnaprakash Duwara
Assam	1894- 1901	Kaliram Baruah
Assam Banti	1901	Mathura Mohan Baruah
Dipti	1905-1907	A. K. Garni
Usha	1907	Padmanath Gohainbaruah
Baahi	1909	Lakshminath Bezbaruah
Setona	1919- 1926	Ambikagiri Raichoudhury
Awahon	1929	Dinanath Sharma
Jayanti	1936-1949	Raghunath Choudhary
Surabhi	1940-1943	Raghunath Choudhary
Raamdhenu	1951	Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya
Manideep	1960-1969	Mahendra Borah

In the meantime, magazines like Assam Bandhu, Vishwabarta, Assam Herald, Assam Hitaishi, Janmabhoomi, Milan, Assam Sahitya Sabha Magazine, Assam Pradeepika, Bardaisila, Amar Desh, Assam Jahnabi, Na-Joon, Assam Raji, Swaraj, Pachowa, Amar Pratinidhi, Sadinia Navayug etc were published with a short life span. The first children's magazine in Assamese was Lara Bandhu published in 1888 under the editorship of Karunaviram Barua. In addition, children's magazines such as Akan, Moina, Arun, Pakhila, Parijat, Rangghar, Kachijon, Jonbai, Na-Jeuti, Saphura, Mou-Koh etc. were published. Among the publications for women, from Kunwari and Lakhim to Ghar Jeuti, which Kanaklata Chaliha served as editor of in 1928.

1.2.2 Social events, meetings :

Talking about the social events, meetings and committees of Assam, first of all, we have to talk about the 'Raj Mel' held for discussion among the people in general. This 'Raj mel', which started in the middle ages, is still prevalent in the villages. Problems in the society, people's problems, crimes, etc., are discussed in public meetings and a way to solve the problems.

Satra and Namghar ceremonies created by Shankardev became a special social event for the public. Namghars and Satras were the centres of religion and culture. Along with this, the Assamese language was nourished with songs, songs, dance and dramas. However, the arrival of the British in Assam and the arrival of some Bengalis put the Assamese language in crisis.

The introduction of Bengali language in schools and butchers and the practice of literature in Bengali language, while the publication of Arunoday in Assamese with the help of missionaries– these events made the educated middle class worried about the fluctuating condition of language and culture. As a result of this middle class standing up in an organized manner for the protection of Assamese language and culture, it gave birth to various meetings, committees and events in time.

In the meantime, 'Gyan-Vigyan Samiti' for the development of Assamese language, literature and culture; 'Assam Association' 'Assam Hitaishini Sabha'; 'Gyan-Pradayini Sabha' for the purpose of discussion and the advancement of scientific knowledge,; and the students who went to Calcutta to study again formed a programme called 'Assamese Students' Conference. Similarly, "The Assam Language Improvement Society" in Nagaon, 'Sarvajanik Sabha' in Jorhat, "Rayat Sabha" in Tezpur etc. were formed for various purposes.

Asomiya Bhasha Unnati Sadhini Sabha (A.B.U.S.S.), created in 1888 by the students studying in Calcutta at that time, was a special event that contributed primarily to the development of the language in order to promote and modernize Assamese language and literature. The journal Jonaki was born to make the purpose of this meeting a success.

The first two years of the 20th century were a particularly important period for the Assamese language, literature, education and society. In 1900, the Hemkosh Dictionary was published.

The education system in Assam had the opportunity to move forward with the cooperation of the Assamese middle class. Additionally, the middle class played a key role in advancing and disseminating English education. It was these middle-class people who were interested in building an English school with their own efforts, without waiting for the government's permission or patronage for higher education.

One of the comments made by Prafulla Mahanta on this issue is as follows:

In response to the demands of the Assamese middle class, the government approved the establishment of a college in Assam on June 20, 1900. On May 27, 1901, the Assamese middle class welcomed the 20th century with the establishment of 'Cotton College' in Guwahati. (Mahanta, Dr. Prafulla. *Asomia madhyanritto shrenir itihakh*, 2010, p. 830)

The first college in Assam was named after the British officer Henry Cotter, despite the fact that the British didn't want any colleges in Assam. At first, this name wasn't said. Cotton was first known as "Guwahati Government College" when it was established. However, on 26 May 1901, a public meeting in Guwahati decided to rename the Society as Cotton College in honor of Commissioner Henry Cotton. In 1902, the British Government renamed the Guwahati Government College as Cotton College in honor of this decision. Fredrick William Sudmerson took over as chairman. He himself taught English in college. The number of students in the first year was 77.

The establishment of Cotton College marked the beginning of higher education in Assam. The middle class also demanded the establishment of universities in Assam. The idea began in 1917, but it took a long time to become effective. The Assamese middle class held meetings in various parts of Assam and influenced the establishment of universities.

In 1935, a proposal was made to the Assam Management Assembly to establish a university. After many meetings and meetings, the work of establishing the University proceeded and finally the Governor approved the Guwahati University Bill on 15 October 1947 and work began on 1 January.

In the 20th century, the education system of Assam benefited and with it the contribution of writers and literary figures to the Assamese language and literature. The knowledge of the Assamese people increased under the influence of the British from before independence. In the post-independence period, articles on various subjects began to be published. From the Raamdheni Era, Assamese literature became closely

associated with Western art, literature and philosophy. This was followed by many articles on Eastern and Western knowledge and science in other magazines such as Manidip, Amaar Pratinidhi, etc.

Jonaki, published in the late nineteenth century, enriched the Assamese literary world for the twentieth century. Starting from Jonaki to other subsequent publications, they also played an important role in keeping the trend of Assamese literature flowing in the twentieth century. On the other hand, Western-influenced works began to gain ground in Assam and Assamese literature. Western thoughts and literary impressions took root in poetry and prose, and the modern era began in Assamese literature.

The Assam Sahitya Sabha has made a significant contribution to the intellectual development of Assam in the 20th century. The first session of the Assam Sahitya Sabha was held in Shivsagar in 1917 and was presided over by Padmanath Gohanibarua. Initially, the meeting was formed by a few civilized and educated people. Although initially it had few members, gradually the educated community became members of the Society. The Assam Sahitya Sabha paid special attention to the development of the Assamese language and literature at the same time. The first session of the meeting determined its objective to be “the comprehensive development of the Assamese language and literature”. The Assam Sahitya Sabha consciously tried to distance itself from the national liberation struggle although it has made invaluable contributions to the Assamese language and literature. The Society placed special emphasis on the promotion of the Assamese language, literature, culture and the preservation of old literature. The Society made continuous endeavours for the development and upliftment of Assamese language, literature and culture.

The objectives of the Society were as follows —

1. Compilation and publication of dictionaries and grammars.
2. Research in ancient literature.
3. An attempt to write books on the subjects that are lacking in literature.
4. Publishing good books of poor writers.
5. Scholarships for the education of pure old painting. Scholarships for music and visual arts education.
6. Publication of a journal of the Society.
7. Any other kind of effort for the advancement of literature. (Previous book, p. 374)

The first notable work of the Society was the compilation and publication of the 'Chandrakanta Abhidhan'. The dictionary was published by the Sahitya Sabha in 1933. The editor was – Debeswar Chaliha. There was an executive committee of the Society. From time to time, the committee itself took initiatives of the meeting. Therefore, the dictionary was published under the supervision of Deveshwar Chaliha, who was the Secretary of the Executive Committee from 1930-34. The later edition of this dictionary has been published by the Gauhati University since 1962.

1.3 Conclusion :

During the British rule from 1772 to 1911, Calcutta was made their capital and its development accelerated. The British East India Company established many institutions, colleges, universities and hospitals in Calcutta. Calcutta developed rapidly in the nineteenth century and created a strong educational environment in the region. There were no such facilities in Assam and students from Assam flocked to Calcutta. During that time, Calcutta advanced not only in education but also in literature and culture.

Calcutta has played an important role in advancing the educational atmosphere of India. The Western model of education in India began from Calcutta. Many schools and colleges were established in Calcutta at that time under the initiative of missionaries and social reformers. Sir William Jones initiated the Asiatic Society in 1784. In addition, many notable names including Raja Rammohan Roy (1772-1833), David Hare (1775-1842), Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891), Shashibhushan Chatterjee (1863-1922) and William Kerrey (1761-1834) emphasized the Western model of education and played a pioneering role in establishing schools and colleges in Calcutta. Fort William College was established in Calcutta in 1800, founded by Richard Wellesley (1760-1842). In 1817, the Hindu College was established. In 1818, Serampore College was established in Serampore, West Bengal, through the efforts of William Kerrey. One school after another was established in West Bengal through the efforts of the British Company and missionaries. At a time when all decisions for women were made by men and no one paid attention to women's education, John Bethune (1801-1851) established the first school for Indian girls in West Bengal in 1849 to raise awareness of women's education, which was converted to Bethune College in 1879. The Calcutta Medical College, known as the oldest medical school in Asia, was established in 1835.

This trend in the development of educational institutions in West Bengal continues. Various schools, colleges and institutions in various subjects refreshed the educational environment in West Bengal. The educational culture of West Bengal attracted students from other parts of India and this educational culture has contributed significantly to the advancement of educational culture elsewhere.

Assamese students went to Calcutta for higher education and were exposed to the academic society in Calcutta, new ideas and concepts and later, this had an impact on Assamese society and literature. After the University of Calcutta made Assamese a subject of postgraduate education, students who wanted to pursue higher studies in Assamese language and literature flocked to the University of Calcutta as there was no university for higher education in Assam at that time. The Assamese students living in Calcutta were attracted to the methods, meetings, libraries, etc. adopted by Calcutta for the development of language and literature and concentrated on thinking for the development of the Assamese language and literature. 'Asomiya Sahityar Saneki', an illustration of about one and a half thousand years old Assamese language, literature and culture, is a remarkable book of the early 19th century, which contains a description of the literature written in the Assamese language from the beginning. When Ashutosh Mukherjee was the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Calcutta, he emphasized the study of Indian provincial languages, literature and culture for higher education at the university. In March 1918, Ashutosh Mukherjee came to Guwahati as a member of the Commission of the University of Calcutta and held discussions with the educated and pioneers of Assam of that time with the aim of including Assamese in the postgraduate level. After discussions, the then Commissioner of the Assam Valley, P.R.T. Gordon introduced his colleague Hemchandra Goswami to Mukherjee as the right person for the job. Goswami took over the responsibility at Mukherjee's request. He enthusiastically cooperated in the efforts of Ashutosh Mukherjee to select Assamese for postgraduate studies at the university. Goswami prepared a plan called 'Asomiya Sahityar Saneki' covering various aspects of the Assamese language and culture for about half a thousand years and submitted it to Mukherjee within a short period of time. Next came the problem of publication. There was not enough money to cover the cost of publication. At that time, Bholanath Barua, an Assamese based in Howrah, Calcutta, established himself by doing business with various companies in India and England. As Ashutosh Mukherjee was facing difficulties in proceeding with the plan, Hemchandra Goswami met Sadagar Bholanath Barua to discuss the matter. Knowing all this, Bholanath Barua expressed his interest in providing financial assistance for this work donated a total of Rs. 10,000 to the University of Calcutta. This assistance alleviated the financial crisis of the publication and preparations for printing were made at the University of Calcutta's own printing press. There are seven volumes of this book by Hemchandra Goswami. This is the first Assamese book to present illustrations of old Assamese literature and the literature contained in it shows that it is a student friendly book.

In the twentieth century, a special subject of scientific practice was research. Banikanta Kakati (1894-19052), Maheshwar Neog (1915-1995), Satyendranath Sharma (1916-1999), Dimbeswar Neog (1899-1966) and so many researchers have benefited the Assamese literature and the Assamese people through their research on the ancient heritage of Assam. Many scholars including Birinchi Kumar Barua(1908-1964), Praful Dutta Goswami (1919-1994), Dimbeswar Neog(1899-1966), Birendra Nath Dutta (1935-) have researched the

cultural life and religion of Assam. Proper research purposes of Assamese folk-culture and folk-literary traditions were introduced. The practice of culture also found a place in literature. This new atmosphere expanded the intellectual scope of Assam. Thought, literature and culture all expanded beyond their limited scope. The society received the touch of modernity.

Other reasons for the enrichment of Assamese literature in the twentieth century include the curriculum required for the newly established schools and colleges. Banikanta Kakati, Maheswar Neog, Satyendra Nath Sarma and many others have been involved in the development of the curriculum for the children of the time. Therefore, the curriculum of the necessary subjects for the students was developed by the writers of contemporary Assam. During this period, various important treatise of Assamese literature were published which enriched the repository of Assamese literature not only for students but also for others.



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