



THE ROLE OF THE MISSIONARIES TO THE ASSAMESE LITERATURE

**Rodali Sopun
Borgohain***

Research Scholar, Gauhati University. *Corresponding Author

**Kuhi Sopun
Borgohain**

Research Scholar, Cotton University.

ABSTRACT

Assam is a state in northeastern India, situated south of the eastern Himalaya along the Brahmaputra and Barak Valleys. The Role of Christian Missionary toward the development of Assamese language and development and adoption of the script is noted worthy. The Assamese society have had welcomed the Missionary in a positive way, and whatever achievement Assamese society did in terms of literature, language script. There is no deniability of the positive contribution being done by the Missionary during the early period, The Assamese society have had always been thankful the christian Missionary for their contribution. The Missionary were not only contributed to the development of Assamese language and literature, They help the Assamese literature to growth as like a big tree and they always help the Assamese people to educated and help them to share their feeling, thinking by 'Orunodoi' News paper.

KEYWORDS :**INTRODUCTION :**

Assamese literature is a one of the best literature of our world literature. Assamese literature progressed at its own place from the ancient period, passing through favourable stages of socio-cultural and political life of Assamese. Year of 1937 was the darkest period in the history of Assam, During the period Assam did not even live in an atmosphere conducive to thinking about Assamese language, literature or culture. The introduction of the Bengali language in the schools and court of Assam by the British. The advent of the Missionaries in Assam was blessing for the cause of Assamese language and literature. The Missionaries realized that the teaching of the christian religion had to be made available to the Assamese in their native language for the mission to be success. This is the reason why they worked so hard to re-establish Assamese language in Assam. The Missionaries wrote various type of books. They also wrote a dictionary in Assamese. The 'Orunodoi' was a popular media to reach out the Assamese. With the help of Missionaries educated Assamese started writing in the 'Orunodoi', trying to elevate Assamese literature and education among the Assamese. The Missionaries re-establish the Assamese language. With the help of Missionaries the British reintroduced the Assamese language in the schools and court of Assam in 1873. There is no doubt that the Missionaries act had a catalytic effect in bringing out Assamese language and literature to a modern age.

Role of the Missionaries to the Assamese Literature :

In the beginning, the British were interested in restoring law and order. Although the Assamese people felt secure under the British, but the British did not pay attention to the cause of Assamese language and literature. In March, 1836, The American Baptist Missionaries arrived Sodiya for their Christian Mission with goal to enter south west china. In Assam when the Missionaries wants their religion accept by people, then they learned and understood that the British tried to promote education in the Bengali language. Bengali was not the native language of the Assamese people and Assam. The Missionaries started to learn the Assamese language from the people and started opening schools at their Mission centers and devoted their time to prepare text books for the schools. After that the Missionaries published 'The Orunodoi', the first Assamese Journal (1846 from the Sibsagar Mission Press). This is a milestone in the history of Assamese literature, Dr. Nathan Brown was the first editor of the 'Orunodoi' from the beginning. The Orunodoi was published in two forms magazine and news paper. The 'Orunodoi' created a renaissance in Assamese literature. In this News paper covered local and foreign news and it included science, geography, machines, animals of the world, the starts, Religions, old Assamese manuscripts and christian teaching.

The period of Orunodoi, the Assamese people tried to know the modern world and modern literature. However we see a new style in the prose writing by the Missionaries and contemporary Assamese writers of their time. Dr. Nathan Brown made a complete translation of the New Testament and published it in 1848. He translated about sixty christian hymns into Assamese, and published substantial on christian

religion. His wife Mrs. Eliza Brown also contributed to Assamese literature. She wrote first Reading Book in Assamese which was published from Jaipur in 1842. She was also co-author of the book 'Gananar Kitap' with her husband Dr. Nathan Brown, which was published from Sibsagar in 1845. Dr. Miles Bronson wrote first Assamese dictionary published in 1867 which contained about 14,000 pure Assamese words. Nidhi Levi Fare well was a preacher, poet and translator. He contribution to the translation of the Bible into Assamese. Mr. A. K. Gurney was one of the good contributor. He edited the Orunodoi for several years. His important works in Assamese are- Alokeshi Besyar Katha, Kamini Kantar Charitra. His wife Mrs. Gurney, also translated a book in Assamese- Phulmoni Aru Karuna. William Ward was a poet and he translated a considerable number of christian hymns. Anglo-Assamese vocabulary by Mrs. S. R. Ward and Anglo-Assamese phrases by H. B. L cutter were useful books in the development of Assamese literature. There is no doubt the Missionaries opened the door to let Assamese literature into modern form, with the help of the Missionaries there were other non-christian Assamese writers who promoted Assamese literature by contributing to the Orunodoi. Anandaram Dhekial Phukan was one of the them. He wrote 'Asomia Lorar Mitra. Hemchandra Borua and Gunabhiram Boruah were pioneers in writing creative literature whose themes were social problems of the Assamese people. Earlier, the Missionaries published the old Buranjis. During that time Assamese religious literature come into light. During this period, the subject matters of Assamese literature are vivid literature, in the form of poetry, prose, drama, short stories, specific articles, life history and research-criticism were contributed by many established poets and writers. They developed their own different styles and therefore each contributed to the various essence of Assamese literature. After the Orunodoi, the Missionaries published a monthly magazine, the 'Dipti'. The Dipti was published with an aim propagate Christianity and the editor tried to include different topics as was done in Orunodoi. In Junaki era Dr. and Mrs. William E. writer wrote a novel in Assamese with the help of Hindu and Christian Assamese helpers. It was a novel which described how a happy family ended up in a pathetic situation because of the husband's addiction to alcohol. Two other books 'Balya Bondhu (1932) and 'Balya Sahasar (1940) were published by the Missionaries during Junaki era of Assam. The Missionaries role of Assam and literature was very valuable. They helped Assamese people to educated and they re-established our own language Assamese.

CONCLUSION :

The growth of Assamese literature is thankful to the Missionaries. Without them Assamese language would be destroyed by the Bengali language. The Missionaries helped the Assam and with the help of Missionaries Assamese literature revived and at present, a strong and beautiful literature amidst the world literatures. On 1836, Christian Missionaries came to Assam mainly to spread christian religion. But they saw that the official language, the rulers imposed is far different in comparing to the language inhabitants. They re-established Assamese language and they helped Assam.

REFERENCES

1. Barpujari, H. K. (1986) : The American Missionaries and North-East India. A Documentary study (1836-1900), Guwahati : Delhi Spectrum Publication.
2. Becker SDS, C. (1980) : History of the Catholic Mission in North-East India (1890-1915), Translated and Edited by G. Stadler SDB, S. Karotemrel SDB. Shillong : Firma KCM Pvt. Ltd.
3. Borua, B. K. (1988) : "Asamiy Bhasa aru Sangskriti", Journal Amporium.
4. Borgohain, H. (1993) : "Asomiya Sahityar Buronji", (Ed.), Guwahati, ABILAC
5. Sharma, S. (2006) : Asomiya Sahityar Samikhyatmak Ittibitto, Guwahati : Soumar Prokashan.