

History of Manipuri Language and Literature in Assam

Dr M. Ningamba Singha

(Abstract)

Manipuri language (also called *Meeteilon* and Meithei in Linguistic literature) is a direct descendent of the accumulation of Kuki Chin group of the Tibeto-Burman family of languages. Manipuri language is evolved out of traditional Meetei language, the speech of the politically dominant group in Manipur. The status of a language can be ascertained by its scripts. There is no denying fact that the Manipuris were acquainted with the art of writing having their own scripts. There are different views held by different scholars regarding the origin of the Manipuri scripts. Like other prominent language of India, Manipuri language has a scientific system of scripts. The use of the script was introduced in the state from early times and fact had also been exposed from the findings of coins, stone and metal inscriptions along with the writings on hand made paper. From the early time, the Manipuris in Assam speaks Manipuri as their mother tongue and used among themselves. The process is still continuing. Though, they used this language among themselves, they have bound to speak other language like Bengali, Assamese and Hindi etc in order to communicate with other communities in the state. So, the Manipuris in Barak Valley and Brahmaputra Valley used Bengali and Assamese as languages for communication with others communities respectively in the state. Therefore, a numbers of loan words from these two languages are entered into Manipuri language and now became a part and partial of the language.

The history of Manipuri literature can be traced back thousands of years with the flourishing of its civilization. Manipuri literature, based on language and style, may broadly be divided into five categories as (1) Pre-History Literature (Oral form of literature before 8th century), (2) Old period Literature (8th century to 1074 AD), (3) The early medieval period literature (1074-1709 AD), (4) The late medieval period literature (1709-1819 AD) and (5) The Modern period literature (1819 to 2015). Manipuri literature in Assam falls under the Modern period literature (1819 to 2015) of the Manipuri language. Though the western education was introduced in Assam during the 19th century, it was only in the 20th century, the Manipuris of Assam with full swing began to learn this system. With emergence those educated Manipuris, who learned their western education through Bengali and English Medium began to think for the upliftment of their own language and literature during that time. With the influence to those educated Manipuris and their enthusiasm led to the growth and development of their own language and literature was seen in the 20th century. Thus, in this paper tries to focus on the history of Manipuri language and literature in Assam, and further it deals with its status in the different phases are also discussed here.

Key word: Manipuri language, literature, status, the Manipuris, Assam.

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Introduction: Manipuri language (also called *Meeteilon* and Meithei in Linguistic literature) is a direct descendent of the accumulation of Kuki Chin group of the Tibeto-Burman family of languages. Manipuri language is evolved out of traditional Meetei language, the speech of the politically dominant group in Manipur. The status of a language can be ascertained by its scripts. Like other prominent language of India, Manipuri language has a scientific system of scripts. The use of the script was introduced in the state from early times and fact had also been exposed from the findings of coins, stone and metal inscriptions along with the writings on hand made paper. From the early time, the Manipuris in Assam speaks Manipuri as their mother tongue and used among themselves. The process is still continuing.

The history of Manipuri literature can be traced back thousands of years with the flourishing of its civilization. Manipuri literature, based on language and style, may broadly be divided into five categories as (1) Pre-History Literature (Oral form of literature before 8th century), (2) Old period Literature (8th century to 1074 AD), (3) The early medieval period literature (1074-1709 AD), (4) The late medieval period literature (1709-1819 AD) and (5) The Modern period literature (1819 to 2015). Manipuri literature in Assam falls under the Modern period literature (1819 to 2015) of the Manipuri language. Though the western education was introduced in Assam during the 19th century, it was only in the 20th century, the Manipuris of Assam with full swing began to learn this system. With emergence those educated Manipuris, who learned their western education through Bengali and English Medium began to think for the upliftment of their own language and literature during that time. With the influence to those educated Manipuris and their enthusiasm led to the growth and development of their own language and literature was seen in the 20th century.

Manipuri Language:

Manipuri language (also called *Meeteilon* and Meithei in Linguistic literature) is a direct descendent of the accumulation of Kuki Chin group of the Tibeto-Burman family of languages. *Meeteilon*, which etymologically means 'language of the Meeteis'. There are different views regarding to the origin of Manipuri language. According to some English scholars like Mr. Domant opined that it was brought from Bengal by 1700 A.D., while Mr. T. C. Hodson traced its introduction by Chinese migrants. According to him "the Meithei word *che*= Paper is of foreign and not of Indian origin."¹ According to R. K. Jhalajit Singh "the Manipuri script is a descendent of some form of Brahmi script."² According to Ch. Manihar Singh "that the Meitei script evolved out of Bramhi is quite evident and there are four sub-branches of Brahmi, two of which spread to North-East and North India. The Bengali script is one of those which spread to North-East by 1390 A. D. Other scripts are Oriya, Maithili, Assamese, Keithi Gujarat and Bihari in this group."³ The early Manipuri language is spoken by the people of those days recorded in the old manuscript or archaic Meetei bears testimony of different vocabularies having the same meanings.⁴

The Status of Manipuri Language:

There are different views held by different scholars regarding the origin of the Manipuri scripts. In the opinion of Mr. Damant "the old Manipuri alphabet was introduced from Bengal in



the reign of Charairongba, who flourished about 1700 A.D. There are no traces of the existence of writing in Manipur before that time.”⁵ On the basis of certain local traditions Mr. T.C. Hodson framed a Hypothesis that “the Manipuris acquired the art of writing from the Chinese, who came to Manipur about 1540 A.D.”⁶The above contentions of Mr. Damant and Mr. T.C. Hodson may be analyzed with reference to numismatic evidences available today. The coins of Wura Konthouba (568-658 A.D), Lairenba (1394-99A.D) containing archaic Manipuri script given valuable information about the introduction of Manipuri alphabet before the 6th century A.D. Epigraphically records and old Manuscripts available today suggested that Manipur is the cradle of civilization. This was evidences by the stone inscription written in Meetei script, which was discovered in different part of Manipur like Khoibu, Konthoujam Lairemma, Ngapurum Chingjin, Nigel, Leisangkhong and 1st Bn. Manipur Rifles etc.

Like other prominent language of India, Manipuri language has a scientific system of scripts. The use of the script was introduced in the state from early times and fact had also been exposed from the findings of coins, stone and metal inscriptions along with the writings on hand made paper. “In 11th and 12th century A.D many books were written on *agarbak* (bark of Agar tree) during the reign of King Khagemba (1547-1652 A.D).”⁷ During his reign, the Meeteis had learnt making paper and begun writing on them. According to *Cheitharol Kumbaba*, the royal chronicle of Manipur, many manuscripts were written during his reign in 1616 for learning. The Meetei script had been inscribed on coins as early as 6th and 7th centuries. The script was written on *agarbak* and indigenous papers by 11th and 16th centuries respectively. Inscriptions on stone, iron plate, brass and copper belonging to 16th and 17th centuries are found. Traces of Bengali/Assamese scripts have found their way in the manuscripts of the 18th and 19th centuries.⁸

From about quarter part of 18th century A.D Sanskrit and Bengali scripts began to replace Manipuri scripts slowly owing to the influence of Vaishnavism followed by King Garibniwas and later in the second half of the 19th century A.D her relations with Britishers and also due to absence of foundry and printing press in Meetei scripts. By about the early part of the 20th century A.D. Bengali script totally replaced the Meetei script. All common people began to learn the Bengali scripts while Meetei scripts were studied by the royal pundits and those who were interested in that field. A powerful movement for revival of traditional Meetei religion, language and culture started during the 1930s by Naoria Phulo in the Manipuri inhabited areas of Barak valley of Assam and it gradually reached Manipur in the 1940s. Thus, as a result of the Revivalist Movement, the Manipuris began to use their traditional old Manipuri script and the process is still continuing. The Government of Manipur has also taken keen interest for the upliftment of Manipuri script by introducing and recognized the 27 *Meetei Mayek* (Manipuri scripts) on 16th April 1980 according to Govt. order no-1/2/78-SS/E.-“The Governor, Manipur is pleased to approve the report submitted by the Meetei Mayek Expert Committee constituted vide Government order of even number dated 16th November, 1978 on the re-introduction of the study of Meitei Scripts numbering 27(Twenty seven) alphabets and its supplement(use of Lonsum, Cheitap-Cheikhei, Khudam & Cheising etc.) as per annexure as recommended by the Committee in the educational institutions in Manipur.”⁹The present officially approved script accommodates more sounds. It has 24 consonant letters, 3 independent vowel alphabets, 7



Cheitap (attachment) vowel alphabets and 1 consonant attachment alphabets, but lacks in tonal vowel alphabets.

The Status of Manipuri language in Assam:

From the early time, the Manipuris in Assam speaks Manipuri as their mother tongue and used among themselves. The process is still continuing. Though, they used this language among themselves, they have bound to speak other language like Bengali, Assamese and Hindi etc in order to communicate with other communities in the state. So, the Manipuris in Barak Valley and Brahmaputra Valley used Bengali and Assamese as languages for communication with others communities respectively in the state. It is seen differently due to their different settlement in the state. So, numbers of loan words from these two languages are entered into Manipuri language and now became a part and partial of the language. And also due to the adoption of Hindu religion or Vaishnavism by the Manipuris of Manipur and gradually its influence reached in during the early part of the 18th century, when king Garibniwas adopted Vaishnavism as a state religion in Manipur. And thus, more than 200 years, Manipuri language was completely dominated by both Bengali and Sanskrit language in Manipur and other Manipuris inhabited areas of India. Thus, the Manipuris in Assam interestingly began to use Bengali and Sanskrit languages in their day-to-day life activities. During that time, those people who speak these languages has given respectable position in the society. Gradually, the status of Manipuri language was declined during that time while all forms of rites and rituals activities are performed by Bengali and Sanskrit language. With the introduction of Western/Modern Education in Assam during 19th century, the Manipuris in Assam also began to send their children to the schools. During that time though, they send their children to the schools, the number was a very few. It was due to their lack of knowledge for Modern education during that time. In the late of the 19th century, though the Manipuris had faced different troubles, they started to send their children to the schools. And gradually during the 20th century the Manipuris in Assam started their education with Bengali as a medium of instruction in Barak valley and Assamese as a medium of instruction in Brahmaputra valley. During the first quarter of the 20th century, those groups of Manipuri educationist intellectuals from Assam who started their education in Bengali and Assamese now wanted to start the use Manipuri language as a Medium of Instruction in the schools of Assam.

The efforts to revive of Manipuri language and their indigenous religion were started in the early part of the 20th century under the leadership of Naoria Phulo. In order to revive and development of Manipuri language and literature in Assam, the works of Laningham Naoria Phulo can be regard as outstanding. On 18th January, 1928 on his way to Calcutta his highness Maharaja Chura Chand Singh of Manipur has taken rest at the Naoria Phulo's Amingaon official quarter. On this occasion, Naoria Phulo handed over a memorandum to the Maharaja that "initiative for introduction of Manipuri language and establishment of Manipuri Medium Schools in Assam by those people who love their Mother tongue, performing of our mother tongue in ritual activities and conversion of those Manipuris who learned their education in Bengali language to Manipuri Language."¹⁰ Naoria Phulo founded the universal religious institution on Saturday 12th April, 1930 on the auspicious day of Laikhundin lallup in serene

village Laishramkhun, Hailakandi (formerly Cachar), Assam with his followers in the name of 'Apokpa Marup' with an objective to revive and propagate the indigenous pre-Hindu Meetei religion and for the development of Meeteis culture, language and Mayek (script).

In the first half of the 20th century with efforts of the Manipuris in Assam started a movement for introduction of Manipuri language as a Medium of instruction in Assam. And during that time, the Constitution of India under Article, i.e.350A provides the Media of Instruction for Linguistic Minorities in their mother tongue at Primary Stage of education. To avail the facilities of Article 350A, TLF and other Educational Language Policies etc., the Manipuris in Assam also started their demand from early 1950s onwards. As a result of their demand Manipuri Language was introduced as a Medium of Instruction at L.P School Stage in 1956, then M. E School Stage in 1965 and up to H.S.L.C School Stage on the basis of experimental basis in 1979 and finally in the year 1984 under the Board of Secondary Education, Assam (SEBA) in Assam. Now Manipuri language has been recognized as a subject of Modern Indian Languages of India (MIL) by CBSE, Board of Secondary Education, Assam, Gauhati University, Guwahati, Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh and Assam University, Silchar. Manipuri language has been taught as a subject of MIL and Elective language up to the Graduate Level and as a MIL Language up to Post-graduate, M.Phil and Ph.D., apart from being a medium of instruction up to High School Leaving Certificate (H.S.L.C) in Assam.

The Status of Manipuri Literature in Assam:

The literature of a community is a part of their culture. The periods in the history of the literature of a community closely follow periods in the cultural history of that people. The case of the Manipuris is no exception.¹¹ Manipuri literature is the literature written in the Manipuri language (i.e-Meeteilon), including the literature composed in Manipuri language by the writers from Manipur, Assam, Tripura, Myanmar and Bangladesh. It is also known as Meetei Literature. The literature of Manipuri language composed of Poems, Prose, Short Stories, Novel and Drama etc.

The poem is a piece of writing in which the expression of feelings and ideas is given intensity by particular attention to diction (sometimes involving rhyme), rhythm and imagery. The poem as a whole is called poetry.¹² The Poetry is an imaginative awareness of experience expressed through meaning, sound and rhythmic language choices so as to evoke an emotional response. The Poetry has been known to employ meter and rhyme but this is by no means necessary. The Poetry is an ancient form that has gone through numerous and drastic reinvention over time. The very nature of the poetry as an authentic and individual mode of expression makes it nearly impossible to define.¹³ The Prose is a form of language grammatical structure and natural flow of speech rather than rhythmic structure (as in traditional poetry). While there are critical debates on the construction of prose, its simplicity and loosely defined structure have led to its adoption for use in the majority of spoken dialogue, factual discourse and both topical and fictional writing.¹⁴ The short story is a brief work of literature, usually written in short piece of fiction aiming at unity of characterization, theme and effect. Many attempts have been made to define the short story. But on a few points at least, the opinion of

most critics is unanimous. This does not imply that the literary form of the American short story can be set up in a rigid way.

It has undergone and will probably still undergo many changes as the literary taste and demands of the reading public also change in the course of time with new outlooks on life. There is a close connection between the short story and the poem as there is both a unique union of idea and structure. The short story is a piece of art that tries to give us a specified impression of the world we live in. It aims to produce a single narrative effect with the greatest economy of means and utmost emphasis.¹⁵ The Novel is an invented prose narrative of considerable length and a certain complexity that deals imaginatively with human experience, usually through a connected sequence of events involving a group of persons in a specific setting. Within its broad framework, the genre of the novel has encompassed an extensive range of types and styles: picaresque, epistolary, Gothic, romantic, realist, historical—to name only some of the more important ones.¹⁶ The Drama is a composition in prose or verse presenting in dialogue or pantomime a story involving conflict or contrast of character, especially one intended to be acted on the stage.¹⁷

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1. Naoria Phulo's time and after (1915-1950):

The foundation of the Modern Manipuri literature in Assam was laid by Naoria Phulo (1888-1941) in 1915, with the publication of his first Manipuri Translation book entitled '*Iningthau Harichandra*'. He is popularly known as the pioneer of the Modern Manipuri literature in Assam. He is also the pioneer of the Revivalist movement of the Manipuris. During his lifetime, he published more than 23 books.¹⁸ In this period, Naoria Phulo was the only person who produced a number of literatures in Assam and almost all the literature written by him was mainly based on the promotion of Manipuri language, scripture, religion and culture etc. So, this

period can be called as the Naoria Phulo's time in the history of Modern Manipuri literature in Assam. Most of the books written by Naoria Phulo were in the form of Translated essay, Poetry, Prose and Holy Scripture books etc.

The books written by Naoria Phulo can be seen here. (1) *Iningthau Harichandra* (Essay on Translation, 1915), (2) *Ramgi Banabas* (Essay on Translation, 1916), (3) *Ramna Banabastagi Hallaklabada* (Essay on Translation, 1919), (4) *Sakok Thirengi machak* (Essay on Criticism, 1928), (5) *Yumlai Lairon* (Poem on Religion ritual, 1930), (6) *Meetei Yelhou Mayek* (Essay on holy Scripture, 1931), (7) *Sakok Thiren* (Essay on Philosophical Holy Scripture ,1931), (8) *Apokpa Mapugi Tungnapham* (Poem on Philosophical, 1931), (9) *Singtha Cheitharon* (Poem on Socio-religious ritual procedure, 1931), (10) *Chingu Lairembi* (Poem on Forest Goddess , 1931), (11) *Goura Dharma Chatlakpa Matang* (Essay on the Period of Meetei conversion to Vaishnavism, 1931), (12) *Haunabung Amasung Lanabung* (Poem on the Identification of the original home land of the Meeteis, 1932), (13) *Ningthouren Pamheiba* (Poem about king Pamheiba, 1932), (14) *Tengbanba Amashung Lainingthou Laibao* (Poem song on the Universe and God and the ideas behind the creation, 1933), (15) *Ahan Yathang* (Essay on Advice of the Guru, 1933), (16) *Konsen Turei Sengbagi Wari* (Poem written on Sanamahi god, 1934), (17) *Meetei Houbham Wari* (Essay on description of the origin of the Meeteis, 1934), (18) *Athoiba Seireng* (Poem on the special thing, 1935), (19) *Hourakpa Amasung Houbham* (Essay- poem on the evolution of the Universe, 1935), (20) *Tha-in-Nong-in* (Poem -song on the compersion of the way of couple life, 1936), (21) *Khuda Nipan* (Essay on the eight steps moment, 1936), (22) *Bamongi Matik* (Essay on the might of the Meetei Brahmins, 1937), (23) *Aigi Wareng* (Essay on own say, 1940).

2. The Post Independence period to late twenties (1951-1990):

After death of Naoria Phulo in the year 1941, the production of Modern Manipuri literature in Assam gradually began to decline due to the outbreak of Second World War (1939-1945). This decline in the production of Modern Manipuri literature in Assam was re-emerged after the Second World War period. With the impact of the Second World War and also after independence of India from British rule, new kinds of literatures began to flourish in India. This same kind of literatures had also seen among the literatures of the Manipuri writers in Assam.

The Poetry:

The Manipuri literatures of Assam after the independence of India were began to flourish starting with the poems, which were seen in the magazines like *Asha* (1951), *Panjen* (1952), *Meetei Leima* (1960), *Irat* (1961), *Cheijing* (1965), *Bijoya* (1966), *Sida-Mapau* (1967) and *Ikhoi* (1967) etc. The publication of poems in the form of books written by individuals or groups or editors can be seen after the 1960s. Among them to mention the some of the Poetry books are *Yaytin* (1960), *Apokpa Thauram Shereng* (1961) *Ashuppa Poirei Singtha Cheitharon* (1962), *Sidayai*(---), *Sida Paujel*(---), *Meetei Ima*(---) of Yenkhom Kamal, *Sanarik Machu* (1968) of Shagolshem Dhaval, *Kabita Kunja* (1969), *Kaiba Kunja* (1988) of Ngariyanbam Nabadip Singha, *Matam* (1968) of Keisham Birendra, L. T. K and Manhor Mayum Chandrakanta, *Pidonna Haijaba* (1969), *Ashangba Ithak* (1971), *Hangoi Khongbadashu Linga Hongbadashu* (1975), *Prajatantragi Numit Thorakle* (1979), *Amritagi Taibang* (1984), *Itihaski Tinshilaba*

Manam (1987) of S. Brajeshore, *Shatlu Nang Penna* (1971) of Konsam Tonugopal, *Yatri Marup* (1972) of Naorem Samarjit Singha, *Wakhal Meira* (1974), *Punshi Ira* (1980), *Omchaknaba Meikhu* (1987) of Laitonjam Nilmani, *Wakhalgi Leikol* (1975) of S. Manikchand, *Minok Piranggi Mitkup Anidang* (1976), *Shabnamgi Marik Anitang* (1978), *Mukta Khujok Amadang* (1979), *Barak Tampakki Mahakaiba* (1980) of Kheiruddin Choudhury, *Anauba Leirang* (1977) of Irom Kalachand Meetei *Ikhoishu Hingli* (1978) of Yendrambam Anjon, *Eraokhol* (1978), *Uttonga Koopsugee Ametpee* (1980) of Y. Nayan, *Samnakhidraba* (1978) of Phuritshabam Biramani, *Wayelshanggi Atar Gulap* (1978) of Sanamacha, *Kunshuba Satabdi* (1979) of Abdus Sahid Choudhury, *Utki Mapei* (1978), *Magi Meichak* (1981) of Haurongbam Poriml, *Leirang* (1980) of M. Bhagirot, *Tengthakhol* (1980) of Gurunayum Mani Sharma, *Konjel* (1980), *Punshi Khongchat* (1983) of Ananta Sharma, *Meira* (1981), *Tayonnaringaida* (1983), *Kangleicha Pumba Haurashi* (1984) of T. Kulachandra, *Narakki Leirang* (1981) of Thaunajam Bihari, *Marei* (1981), *Yamuna Kapli* (1990) of Nongthongbam Indrakumar, *Ima Poknapham Lamdam Lamnungshi* (1981) of Chakpram Mohan Singha, *Lei Satlakhini Khoimu Illakhini* (1982), *Ikhaulangba* (1988) of Rajkumar Indrajit, *Minai Ama Phangbada Haraunaba Lamni* (1983) of Elabanta Yumnam, *Nong Nungshitna Humdoklaba Thabal* (1984), *Nonglei* (1985), *Haribola He Mantri*, *Haribola He Engineer* (1985), *Angangba Nungthil* (1986) of Thokcham Biswanath Singha, *Atiyada Mushuk Muba Chakthong Chaphu Paire* (1985) of Konthaujam Kalenjao, *Thengtharol* (1985), *Miraksida Eisu Pokshilare* (1987) of Sinam Menjor, *Mala Mala Leinungshi* (1986) of Naoroibam Dhananjoy, *Kumsigi Anauba Lanbau* (1986) of Khaidem Hira, *Sheidam Sheirol* (1987) of B.B Mutua, *Poktabi Ima Ayokpigi Tampakta* (1987) of Thokcham Anjana, *Shambal Shanggadabani* (1988) of Moirengjam Devo Singha, *Shaklotpise Shak Phonglani* (1988) of Naorem Nilkumar Singha, *Chengkhei Leipak Mashak Khangshi* (1989) of Manyanglambam Niladhaja Singha, *Thauna Phabi Kolo* (1989) of Khumongmayum Birendra and *Malangna Humkhrabsu Taibangna Lotkhrabashu* (1989) of Yumnam Kala etc.

Among the writers of the this period, the name of Yengkhom Kamal, Sagolshem Dhabal, Sougajam Brajeshore, Ngariyambam Nabadip Singha, Laitonjam Nilamani, Kheirudhin Choudhury, Sanamacha, Thokcham Biswanath, Abdus Shahid Choudhury, Naoroibam Dhananjoy, Haurongbam Porimol, Elabanta Yumnam, Thokcham Biswanath and T. Kulachandra can be mentioned.¹⁹

The Short story:

The short story is the product of modern literature. After the British rule in India and with the influence of the West, the emergence of short story in India was first seen in the Bengali literature. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-1894) and Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) are the pioneers of short stories in India. Rabindranath wrote short stories for nearly 15 years (1887-1903). He wrote about 100 short stories like *Postmaster*, *Kabuliwala* and *Hungry Stone* etc. He followed many techniques while writing short stories. His characters are of the peculiar type that the normal humans are exaggerated as abnormal ones. This is his specialty. He was not following anybody's style. He had an individual style of his own.²⁰ The short stories in Manipuri literature was first born in the *Yakairol* magazine. The first Manipuri short story entitled on *Ima Wa Tannaba* written by Khuting Tangkhul was seen in the first number of the second-year

publication of Yakairol Magazine (October, 1931). However, the short story of the Manipuri literature was becoming mature only after the Second World War period. During that time and after, a numerous number of short stories can be seen in the magazines and newspapers like *Yakairol*, *Lalit Manjuri Pratika*, *Tarun Manipur*, *Manipur Matam*, *Naharol* etc. Then gradually after the Second World War we have seen Manipuri short stories are available in the form of book. The Manipuri short story book entitled on *Leikkonungda* written by Rajkumar Sitaljit in year 1946 becomes the first among them. Thus, the flows of the short stories into the Manipuri literature were seen in the writings of Nilbir Shastri, Hijam Guno, Elangbam Dinamani, Chitresore, Birmani, Premchand, Saratchandra, Sonamani etc.²¹

During the period, a numerous number of short stories can be seen in the magazines like *Panjen* (1952), *Meetei Leima* (1960), *Irat* (1961), *Cheijing* (1965), *Bijoya* (1966), *Ikhoi* (1967), *Anauba Ichel* (1968) *Pantha* (1971), *Khorirol* (1978) and *Ichel* (1979) etc. Then gradually we have seen Manipuri short stories in Assam are available in the form of books. Thus, short story book entitled on *Asidasu Mi Hingngi* (1975) written by Sagolsem Dhabal becomes first among the Manipuri short stories books in Assam. The publication of short story books written by individuals or groups or editors can be seen after the 1970s. Among them to mention the some of the Short Story books are *Irolnungda* (1977) of Pukhrambam Kalachand, *Prithibi Nangsu Hingngu* (1980), *Manggi Chirang Tannaringei* (1981), *Leichin Nongphairakta* (1984) of Laitonjam Nilmani, *Warigi Wari* (1984), *Ningkhairakha Torbangi Saktam* (1986) of Haurongbam Amar, *Ingna Tapna Chelli Karakhal* (1985), *Asum Yengkhobada* (1986) of Naoroibam Dhananjay, *Sangbanaraba Aiyagi Makhada* (1986) of Sanasam Binod, *Amashung Wari Khara* (1986) of Sagolsem Dhabal, *Taramdai Numitkki Sana Ahingba* (1988) of *Lakhibabu*, *Leichilgi Ishei* (1988) of Thokcham Anjana and *Wari Shengga* (1988) of K Ibungohal etc.

The Novel:

In the realm of Novels, the book entitled on *Ibemhal* written by Sansam Binod in the year 1968 became the first Novel book of Manipuri literature in Assam. Though, we have seen first Novel in that year, the trends of Novel had already seen in 1963 in the issues of *Irat* magazine edited by Soram Babusana. In that magazine the novel entitled on *Ipom Haurakpa Ichelda* written by editor himself by using pen name Mema was able to seen regularly in its publications. The numerous numbers of Novel books are available during this epoch. To mention are *Ibemhal* (1968), *Chandrakanta Amasung Kalabati* (1978), *Pamjade Amuba Jatse* (1979) of Sanasam Binod, *Panthung* (1971) of Shapam Balav, *Kathokpa* (1976) of S. Brojeshore, *Kaukhraba Matamdo* (1977), *Lamhuknarabi Radha* (1978), *Naha Marup [Sebadol]* (1984) of L. Kalidas, *Ahingba Sana Pambi* (1977) of M. Kalachand, *Thamoi Paudam* (1978) of Santosh Singh, *Tamocha* (1979) of Samal Dagendro, *Malavika* (1981), *Haukhraba Manglantee Smriti* (1982) of L. Nilamani, *Wakhal* (1983) of Sagapam Birmohan, *Asumna Khunnai Asina Hingliba* (1984) of Pukhrambam Babu, *Eidi Laira Machani* (1986) of Kabrabam Nilkantha Singha, *Khubakka Khunamga* (1989) and *Ichegi Wari* (1990) of Koijam Jiten Singha etc.

The Drama:

Drama is the popular folk theatre of the Manipuris. It is known as *Shumangleela* in Manipuri language which means courtyard play. It is a popular theatre generally performed by a group of professional artists at *shumang* (courtyard) and other spacious places, surrounded by the audience. The origin of the *shumangleela* can be traced to a period as old as 1851 during the reign of Maharaja Chandrakriti in Manipur. In his time *shumangleela* performance consisted of only *phagi* (joke) without any story. Currently *shumangleela* theme covers a wide range of topics. During the reign of Maharaja Budhachandra in Manipur, the professional *shumangleela* groups of Manipur very actively conducted their shows in different parts of Meetei inhabited areas in Assam.²²

In Assam for the first time in the year 1918 '*Moirang Parva*' Drama shown at Silchar and the same was organized by Meitei Chatra Marup organization. Then regularly numbers of dramas were shown in the state by professional artists of Manipur and Assam organized under the different organizations. To mentioned are Harichandra drama (1919) *Mahabharat* (1928), *Ramayan* (1935), *Bon Parba* (1940), *Putra Parichai* (1946), [*Tambalnu, Mainu Pemcha* (1948)], [*Haurang Leishang Shafabi, Thaballei, Usman Thambal* (1950-51)], *Madhabi* (1956), *Bir Tikendrajit* [1958 at Leihauptokpi (Hailakandi) and Ranipur (Cachar)] *Sharat Purnima* (1960), *Kege Lamja* (1962), *Laibak* (1963), [*Laman, Hugi Polang* (1964)], *Yumleima* (1964), *Moiran Parva* [1966-67 at Hojai (Nagaon)], *Abhishap* (1967), and [*Poloida, B.A Tiba* (1973)] etc.²³

During this phase, we find more than 8 numbers of Drama books has already been produced from the state. To mentioned are *Shahi* (1976) of Naorem Chandra Mohan, *Angakpa Manglan* (1980) of Seram Madan, *Meiranbi* (1982), *Ithak Ireida Iraklabasu* (1984) of Laukham Mangi, *Inthoklabi* (1987) of P. Birhari, *Indruprabha* (1988) of Sanasam Binod and *Ibunggi Rumila* (1990) of Wayengbam Binod Kumar etc.

3. Late Twenties to 2015 (1991 to 2015).

The late twenties to till today is the most important phase in the history of Manipuri literature in Assam. During this period almost all sorts of said literature are began to blooming maturely. Unlike with the above-mentioned phases during this phase, a new group of youth taking active participation in the promotion and development of their own literature. Thus, able to produce with a new kind of literature by the mixture of both old and youth writers in their own specialized fields. During this phase a number of literary works like Poetry, Short story, Novel and Drama are produced.

The Poetry:

As earlier mentioned, that this phase is most important for the Manipuri literature in Assam, a large numbers of poetry works are produced during the period. To mention the name of the some poets of the period are Sougaijam Brojeshore, Ngariyambam Nabadip, Sanamacha, Biren Laishram, Laitonjam Nilamani, Naoroibam Dhananjay, Oinam Nilkantha, Kheiruddin Choudhury, Abdus Sahid Choudhury, Kabrabam Nilkanta Singha, Elabanta Yumnam, Thokcham Biswanath, Naorem Bidyasagar, I S Thingom, Okram Mina, Laishram Mushindra, Khtrimayum Nabin, Dilip Mayengbam, Pukhrabam Noni, Oinam Usharani, Khaidem Hira, Haubam Gauro Singha, N D Hodamba, Khaidem Japan, Abdul Hamid, Laukham Nandakumar, Laukham Aton, Salam Tonu, Laurembam Joykanta, Thaudam Babatombi, Naorem Amuyaima

and Mei Bhagat etc. During this phase, the above mention poets had written a number of Poetry books. To mention the some of the Poetry books are *Ong Bishu* (1995), *Haugatlo Channabi Thong Hangdoklo* (2003), *Akhnaba Sheireng* (2004), *Sunitagi Ishei Tashi* (2004), *Lambi Ashida Nungsijei Poknafambu* (2005) of Saugaijam Brajeshore, *Kunjagi Lambida* (2006) of Ngariyambam Nabadip, *Khongjomnubi Taret* (1991), *Nongjuthagi Nongma* (1994), *Marik Amagi Layee* (1995), *Khonjel Thoktaba Wari* (1998) of Sanamacha, *Ngaijabani Thadoina Loi Karakpa* (1995), *Karigi Idom Kapkani* (1999), *Pari Imom Leitabara*(2002), *Shanau Inemcha Pamubi* (2010) of Biren Laisharam, *Nang Lei Oiyu* (1994), *Laiphadibi* (2005), *Hingminabagi Nungaiba* (2007) of Laitonjam Nilamani, *Innin* (1993), *Koloi Mingdi Tanthani* (1995) of Oinam Nilkantha, *Lamshoibigi Lamyaida* (2000), *Khaurangjaba* (2009) of Naoroibam Dhananjay, *Nongkhong Pareng Wangmada* (1999) of Kheiruddin Chaudhury, *Sanamachugi Ayuk* (1992), *Samudra Taretki Achikpa Thugaiduna* (2012) of Abdus Shahid Choudhury, *Khamkhare Piranglakta* (1993), *NingKabrabam Nilkanta Mayek* (2003) of Khaidem Hira, *Kabita Nongthang* (1996), *Miramlanda Lairamlen Khongchat* (2007) of Haubam Gauro Hari Singha, *Khamkhare Piranglakta* (1993), *Ningngamhauraba Khongchat* (2000), *Barak Turel Torbanda* (2002), *Maningtamle Prithibisida* (2003), *Santigi Leirang* (2004), *Karamna Hinggani* (2005), *Ei AmukPoklak-ee* (2006), *Ayukki Likla* (2008) of Kabrabam Nilkanta Singha, *Nungsit Sitli Una Lengli* (1992), *Meiwaikhraba Lamdam* (2003) of Elabanta Yumnam, *Oktabi Amashung Sabon* (1996) of Thokcham Biswanath, *Anauba Numitki Firal* (2003), *Khungang Amashung Refuge* (2011) of Naorem Bidyasagar, *Liklang* (1996), *Kunsuba Chahichagi Ithak Ipom* (2000), *Asheibagi Imaron* (2010) of I S Thingom, *Khangpokshangsida Amashung Atei Sheirengshung* (1993), *Ahinggi Thangmei* (1995), *Tengbanbda Minaigi Chithi* (1998) of Okram Mina, *Apomba Lei* (1996), *Amuba Innaphi* (1999) of Laishram Mushindra, *Mangal Ama Thibada* (1995), *Lanfamda Hingheidra Mrakta* (1996) of Khetrimayum Nabin, *Firal Amasung Uphul* (1995), *Prithibi Nanggi Naraibak* (1996) of Dilip Mayengbam, *Fijanggi Marumda* (1996), *Ahangba Mami* (1999) of Pukhrabam Noni, *Khongji Adugi Khonjelda* (1995), *Mangal Fangdriba Kuyomlakta* (2006) of Oinam Usharani, *Ei Nangbu Pamdare* (2003), *Manipuri Sheireng* (2006) of N D Hodamba, *Thamoi Leikondagi* (2010), *Barak Turel Ima* (2011) of Khaidem Japan, *Shakyeng Mingshenda* (2004), *Mi Hingli Mang Mangli* (2009) of Abdul Hamid, *Liri Hingba Ngaiba Ashiba Kaya* (1999), *Karamba Macugi Leino Mongfamda* (2009) of Laukham Nandakumar, *Wakhalgi Ithak Ipom* (1992), *Meitei Maichau* (2000) of Laukham Aton, *Pakhangba Yekpa Firal* (2008), *Lan Yaudaba Malem*(2009), *Lairen Matung Nga-Inba* (2011) of Laurembam Joykanta, *Wakhalgi Leirang* (2006) of Thaudam Babatombi, *Nong –ein Cekla* (2008), *Khonthang* (2013) of Naorem Amuyaima and Taaningde Basantagi Khonjel (2006), *Wathok* (2014) of Mei Bhagat etc. The most of the poets of this period in their works basically focused on the realism, democracism, socialism, romanticism and modernism etc.

The Short story:

The late Twenties century to till today can be considered as a very significant era in history of Manipuri Short story in Assam. During this era, numerous literary personnel had not only penned short story but also penned varieties of literature by creating brightness and glories to the said literature. This period can be assumed as the mature stage of Manipuri Short story in

Assam. Numerous numbers of short story books are produced in this period. To mention the names of some Short story writer of the period are Subram, Kosam Binod Bihari, Laitonjam Nilamani, Nina Devi, Keisham Bidyapati, Laishram Tarnikanta, Naorem Rajen, Sanasam Binod, N. Dhanajoy, Ch. Bidut Kumar, Keisham Manglemba, I. S Tinggom, Kunjalal Yendrembam etc. During this phase, the above mention writers had written a number of short story books. To mention the some of the Short story books are *Lamhuknaraba Punshi* (1996), *Masha Charabadi Kamdauni* (1997), *Mamal Piraroidraba Wakat* (1998), *Kunukhongi Shamdagi Hingnaba Lan* (2000), *Imadi Charam Yaurakle* (2009) of Subram, *Jaribon Babu* (1993), *Hanuman Mamei Konlo* (1994), *Thong Lonshinkhraba Yum* (1999), *Nungshi Khudol* (2010) of Kosam Binod Bihari, *Amangba Nong* (1996), *Haidokpinu Ikaijei* (1999), *Kishi Kihaudraba Kundo Pareng* (2009) of Laitonjam Nilamani, *Meiranbi* (1994), *Tera Pambina Tengthari* (1996), *Itihaski Leimaigi Marumda* (1998), *Bonsai* (2011) of Nina Devi, *Ishuna Shaba Jagoido* (1993), *Matamgi Ichel* (2006), *Korauhanbagi Mangaldi Leiri* (2010) of Keisham Bidyapati, *Nungshiba Haibashi Nesha Amani/Natte* (2002) of Laishram Tarnikanta, *Wari Oikhraba Wari* (1998), *Lai Mangda Mntri* (2011) of Naorem Rajen, *Panthou Ipana Mawng-tee* (2011) of Sanasam Binod, *Iingna Tapana Chelli Katakhal Turel* (1996) of N. Dhanajoy, *Mapuroiba Ama Leirambadudi* (2011) of Ch. Bidut Kumar, *Khamba*(2001), *Engineer Ongbi Thaballei*(1999) of Keisham Manglemba, *Maheishangi Wangmadashu* (2006) of I. S Tinggom, *Ei Busu Amuktang Hinghanbiyu* (1998) of Kunjalal Yendrembam. The most of the writers in their short stories try to focus on the issues like political issue, identical issue, social issue, corruptions, down-trodden issue, characterization issue and other issues etc are seen in their works.

The Novel:

Unlike the poetry and short story, the most of the Manipuri writers in Assam are not so much interested in writing novels. So, there numbers are less. However, there are numerous numbers of Novel books are available during this period. To mention them are *Chinhaulare Napada* (1999), *Rag Darbari* (2011) of Oinam Nilkantha, *Pandam Amagi Mangan* (2011), *Korouhanbagee Mangalna Jeirakpada*(2014) of Ashem Mani Singha, *Mira Mem Shaheb* (2003) of Subram, *Shaktam* (1991) of Koijam Jiten, *Nirupama* (1993) of Birmohan Keisham, *Maharani Indruprabha*(2013) of Kbrabam Nilkanta Singha, *Sabina* (2000) of Ahamad Hussain, *Dharma*(1991) of Nongthongbam Amola, *Apaibi Nongi Mamida*(2001) of R K Shanau, *Eidi Manglabani* (2009) of Thokcham Gauramani etc. The following **table-1** shows the total numbers of books/Magazines produced form Assam till 2015.

Table-1

The total Numbers of Manipuri books/Magazines produced form Assam (1915-2015)

Period	Poetry	Short Story	Prose	Novel	Drama	Travelogue	Translations	Magazines/ Newspapers	Total
1915-1950	12	-	15	-	-	-	3	1	31
1951-1990	46	13	23	8	10	2	3	36	141
1991-2015	158	53	94	13	15	7	21	23	384
Total	226	66	132	21	25	9	27	60	556

(Source: Keisham Babu Singha: *Barak Tampakki Manipuri Aibashingi Khudolshing*&Author)

Conclusion:

From above discussion we came to conclude that from the early time, the Manipuris in Assam speaks Manipuri as their mother tongue and used among themselves. The process is still continuing. The language and literature of a community is a part of their culture. The periods in the history of the literature of a community closely follow periods in the cultural history of that people. The case of the Manipuris is no exception. Manipuri literature is the literature written in the Manipuri language, including literature composed in Manipuri language by writers from Manipur, Assam, Tripura, Myanmar and Bangladesh. The literature of Manipuri language composed of Poems, Prose, Short Stories, Novel and Drama etc. Till today the writers of the Manipuris of Assam has produced a total number of books belonging to 226 Poetry, 66 Short Story, 132 Prose, 21 Novel, 25 Drama, 9 Travelogue and 26 Translations etc.

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