“North East Indian Poetry: ‘Peace’ in Violence”

To discuss poetry written in North East India is an enormity of tasks. Firstly, to share commonalities from the different matrixes and cultures of the region; secondly, to pin point the major themes of the poets writing in different languages invested as they are with stark realities. However, if we posit a reductionist theory of their poetry, discovering only the violence that is prevalent in their poetry and the attendant brutalization of society we will be doing grave injustice to a body of work kneaded by cohesiveness, lyricism and a well ordered world of sanity. To complement this there also exists a group of English poets who share the Romanticism and mythopoeic vision of their vernacular counterparts.

These give to these poets a universal coherence, not an inchoate disorderliness, a world view where love matters; love in its many sided dimensions touching on immutable relationships. In many cases the love for the land and the love of intense relationship coalesce into vastness of images. These poets are imagistic, Romanticists; cannot forget their hills and valleys and the intrinsic beauties of their land now sullied and tarnished.

North East Indian poetry has a remarkable whole, and is marked by the kind of tension which generates all great poetry; it may be at one level the poetry of violence, of torpidity and fear but it is also the poetry of searching, soul searching for peace.

Among the poets who write in English there is the remarkable expression of mythology and folk-tales, whether in the poetry of Robin. S. Ngangom, Desmond. L. Kharmawphlang, Temsula Ao or Mamang Dai. The search for the past is no escapism; it is a hiatus, gripping and painful, between past and present. The myth of Nohkalikai for example pervades the bi-lingual poetry of the poets in Shillong. Even in Robin. S. Ngangom’s poetry there are such typical and mythological allusions- he has been living in Shillong for the last thirty years or so; but is originally of Manipuri descent.

There are two distinct categories of English poets in the region; some are domiciled there like Robin. S. Ngangom, Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih, Mamang Dai, Mona Zote, Nini Lungalang, Janica Pariat and Temsula Ao, while others such as: Anjum Hasan Nabina Das, Nitoo Das, Trisha Bora and Aruni Kashyap live outside the region.

However, where does one begin in a discussion or poetry in North East India written in a wide spectrum of languages: Assamese, Manipuri, Khasi, Kokborok, Bodo etc.? How does one classify them into a genre of poetry, or is there an urgency to do so? Often considered a homogeneous unit, North East India spells ‘notoriety’ of heterogeneity. We have Manipuri poets, writing in the Bengali dominated Barak Valley of Assam, for example.

Where is the ‘peace’ then we talked about? Is it in the hills, rivers and lakes or in the mountainous terrain of this beautiful part of the country? Landscaping the past and the present is a recurrent theme of these poets; images embedded in the natural landscape, there is quiescence and peace there, an antidote for all ills, suffering and violence.

Yet fears, ghostly apparitions and shadows are omnipresent. Thangjam Ibopishak the Manipuri poet says:
“… Volcano… you cannot erupt

Volcano, stay asleep…

Lava remain slumbering…”

(“Volcano You Cannot Erupt”)

Similarly in his trenchant poem “I Want to Be Killed by an Indian Bullet” there is layered irony but also rejection of the ideology of violence.

When Mamang Dai breaks into rapturous delight, there is peace in bewilderment:

“I hear the bewildered

cry of a deer

floating on the

waves of moonlight.”

(“Moonlight”)

Desmond. L. Kharmawphlang makes the myth of folklore an archetypal and enduring vision:

“I became a folktale…

I became a proverb…

I became a riddle.”

(“Last Night I dreamed”)

Dreams, visions enter the mindscape like haunting motifs and recurrently, obsessively. This is evident in Chandrakanta Murasingh’s ‘ancient’ love narrative: “The Stone Speaks in the Forest”. There is a myth-making capacity in this poem of a “golden deer” and a “broken heart”.

In Saratchand Thiyam’s poem: “Sister” there is a frantic plea:

“This rain has not yet let up

Don’t go out yet, sister…

Haven’t you heard this

Sound…”
Don’t you go at all.”

There is a predominating fear of violence, but at the end of the poem there is restoration of peace and equanimity. So long as ‘sister’ is safe; then there is peace.

The celebrated Assamese poet Harekrishna Deka, a former police officer, knows the story of violence and bullets only too well:

“… After dipping in
Blood the nightlong
How ruddy the
Morning she would
Be.”

(“Dawning”)

Yet, Kynpham. S. Nongkynrih who predominantly writes in English can envision the prophylactic of love in the midst of ethnic conflict:

‘Beloved Sundori,
Yesterday one of my people
Killed one of your people…

Through a fearful breeze
Please let your window open…”

(“Sundori”)

When Temsula Ao speaks lyrically in her poem: “Stone-People From Lungterok” there is an animated discovery and re-definition of the past. Past is history:

‘Lungterok, The six stones
Where the progenitors
And forebears
Of the stone-people
“Were born
Out of the womb
Of the earth.”

Poetry written in North East India can be analysed against the backdrop of ethnic violence and militancy/militarism, but it transcends such immediacy into an ideal world bereft of suffering:

“… When you leave
Your native hills
I can only speak
of lost times,
and of sorrow and blood.”

(“When You Do Not Return”, Robin S. Ngangom)

These “lost times” are the halcyon days of past. They are juxtaposed with “sorrow and blood” in almost a violent and forceful imagery. But the ‘lost times’ bring peace to the mind as a token of immutable love.

The North East Indian poets have an ambivalence, towards militarism, love for the land, ethnicity etc. but these are transcended into love: love for woman, love for the hills, ravines and deep gorges, precipitated by gushing waterfalls; in short love for the land. They are able to transmute the chaotic into the subliminal. That is, in the final analysis, the poetry of peace; out of disorderliness, an orderliness. Politics and love complement each other with lyrical utterances. The public and private voices mingle into rhapsody:

“You are very pretty,
Barak river!

… Barak river; when
your waters soothe
the fiery beat,
the desert smiles
quietly.”

(“Barak River You Are Beautiful”, Ilabanta Yumnam)
Disquiet transmuted into quiet. Beatific

(All references in this article are to Dancing Earth; Penguin Books, New Delhi, 2009)

Thangjam Ibopishak Singh

(India, 1948)
Thangjam Ibopishak Singh is among the leading and most popular poets of the Northeast of India. Based in Imphal, he writes in Manipuri, the language of the indigenous Meitei community. He has published six volumes of poetry, three of which earned him some of the most prestigious awards in the state including the Manipur State Kala Akademi Award in 1986, the Jamini Sunder Guha Gold Medal in 1989, the First Jananeta Irabot Award in 1997 and the Ashangbam Minaketan Memorial Award in 2005. Ibopishak also won the Sahitya Akademi Award for poetry in 1997. He teaches Manipuri at the GP Women’s College in Imphal.

The poems that appear in this edition have been translated into English by the noted poet, Robin Ngangom. They reveal a taste for satire which is savage and Swiftian. The vision is dark; the indictment of a region gripped by insurgency, terrorism, ethnic conflict and state brutality is corrosive and unrelenting.

Consider ‘The Land of the Half-Humans’, a bleak portrait of an irredeemably damaged society that spawns a race tragically unable to reconcile mind and body. This is the land of perpetual internal strife, where the head and body are constantly at odds with each other: “The earnings of the body’s sweat of six months, the six month-old head eats up with a vengeance.” The irony is laser sharp and unsparing.

In a brief conversation with poet Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih which accompanies this edition, the poet speaks of the recurrent preoccupations of his work. There is nature and death certainly, he acknowledges, but over and above all, there is Manipur – with the violence, fear, moral desiccation and political turmoil that besiege the state. As the poet wryly admits, “I’m always caught up in this issue.”

And yet, Ibopishak’s poetry is a dense and textured construct; images yield new resonances at successive readings. And so in his poem, ‘Dali, Hussain, or Odour of Dream, Colour of Wind’, the poet whips up a playful and memorable mix of the lyrical, the fantastic and the deliriously associative, with the familiar undertow of black humour.

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Norok Patal Pribhiv (This Earth is Hell), V.I. Publication, Imphal, 1985
Desmond L Kharmawphlang is Professor and Head of the Department of Cultural and Creative Studies. Desmond L. Kharmawphlang has published a number of books namely - Touchstone, a book of poems, Here, a book of poems, Ki Matti Byrshem (a collection of essays on Folkloristics) Narratives of North-East India I &II, Folklore in the Changing Times, Conference, Confluence: (a collection of essays), Attributes of Khasi Folklore, Khasi Folksongs and Tales, Orality and Beyond, Essays in Khasi Folkloristics, Folklore Imprints in Northeast India. Has also published various scholarly articles in national and international journals numbering about forty five. Participated and presented academic papers in thirty two national and international seminars. Participated, on sponsored invitation, in literary programmes in Switzerland, United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland, and Norway. Lectured at Western Oregon University, Oregon State University and Portland University, USA on a consultancy programme sponsored by the Institute of International Education, New York, USA. Was inducted as an Associate Member, Folk Fellows, an Association instituted by the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters. Serving as National Editorial Board member of the Journal of Indian Folklore Research, Mysore and is one of the four National Vice Presidents of the Indian Folklore Congress.

Author: Saratchand Thiyam
Translators: Robin S Ngangom and Bijoykumar Tayenjam
Pages: 68
Year of Publication: 2014
Price: Rs 150

About the Author:
Saratchand Thiyam was born in 1961 in Imphal, Manipur. A poet and a travel writer, he has written five volumes of poetry in Manipuri and three travelogues. He received the Jamini Sundar Guha Gold Medal from the Manipuri Sahitya Parishad in 2002 and the Sahitya Akademi Award in 2006. His poems have been translated into many Indian and foreign languages. Outside of poetry, Saratchand Thiyam was a part of the Indian delegation at the World Peace Conference in Athens, Greece, which was organized by the World Peace Council in 2000.

About the Translators:
Robin S Ngangom is a bilingual poet and translator in English and Manipuri. His three books of poetry are *Words and the Silence* (published by Writers Workshop, India), *Time’s Crossroads* and *The Desire of Roots*. His poems and translations have appeared in several journals and anthologies such as *The Literary Review*, *Kavya Bharati*, *Dancing Earth: An Anthology of Poetry from North-East India* (Penguin) and *The Harper Collins Book of English Poetry* (HarperCollins). His awards include the Udaya Bharati National Award for Poetry and the Katha Award for translation.

Tayenjam Bijoykumar Singh is an engineer by profession and a bilingual writer by inclination. He writes short stories, poems and non-fiction in English and Manipuri. He also translates from Manipuri into English and vice versa. He has brought out two collections of short stories in Manipuri and a translation of Ratan Thiyam’s plays. He received the Katha Award for translation in 2005 and his story, ‘Mama, I’m Up Here’ won the Sulekha.com-Penguin online writing contest. He is currently vice-president of the North East Writers’ Forum (NEWF).

**Teaser:**

*A Bunch of Keys*

Today, a complaint is to be lodged.
If you don’t pay any attention to it
then I’ll take it
you’re very biased.
Keeping a bunch of keys in your hand
you don’t use it even-handedly.
Some have worn from overuse
some have rusted from sheer neglect.
We all are in working condition,
not a single one is out of order,
we all are your creations
that is why you’re called the Owner.
Since you have created us
treat us equally,
think deeply to realize
the true worth of each.
But this is not
what is happening today.
[tr. Bijoykumar Tayenjam]

**Sister**

The rain has not let up
Don’t go out yet, sister

Its only a semblance of afternoon.
After it decided to live in
With night, its paramour
This is no longer the afternoon we recognize.

Your umbrella alone will be useless, sister.
You will not be able to cover
Your body from the raindrops.
Haven’t you heard this sound
The commotion in every home
Of the still incoherent babies.

Don’t you go sister
This rain is only becoming harder
Don’t you go sister
Don’t you go.

Look sister, every courtyard
Has become
Mangarak Kanbi.

Sister, I won’t allow you to go
Every road is reverberating
With the deafening utterance of boots.

Hide inside the house, sister
Don’t you go at all.

*Mangarak Kanbi* - Mangarak Kanbi is the name of a gorge in Manipur. Early Meiteis used to throw the bodies of people who died of unnatural causes in Mangarak Kanbi.
(Translated from Manipuri by Robin S Ngangom)

Saratchand Thiyam

**Ten Poems**

1. **The Waves**

Waves rise.

Every surface is ever in turmoil,
waves upon waves
rush in silence.

Seas and oceans are
in motion eternal,
the crests hit and press
and embrace the barren face
of the hard and dry land.
The shores seek shelter
leaning against the concrete walls.

I see the hardy crests
toppling over those walls
and the change in my grandmother —
her face has slowly taken
the shape of the rough uneven waves.

The time is such
Sundays and Mondays
count for no more.

The huge crests have swallowed
many Buddha Purnimas
they had hidden Ids,
and untold Merry Christmases
and covered Krishna Janmas
and had taken away many Cheiraobas
beneath their wings.

Once she used to count
Sunday Monday Tuesday
and January February March —
her fingers that counted thus
are now occupied
with a walking stick.

The waves
silent or violent
lose no contact with the land
wet or dry.

The waves -
they are a journey endless
where there is not return.

2. My Sister

Strong is the rain still my sister
don't go out in such a hurry.

Darkness mingles with everything
it's daytime only in name —
since the moment he left behind
his father's house to live with
Night, his wife in her house
our Day is no more
his old good self.
Useless, useless is to think, my sister
you can protect yourself with
an umbrella and remain dry
in this downpour heavy and violent.

Loud is the sound you are listening to
but it's only the children playing
that had filled every room
with their clamour and twangy noise.

Now the rain is getting worse,
sister don't go, don't go, please don't go
look sister every courtyard is
now become a Mangarak Kanbi.

Clear is the sound you are listening to
now it's the sound of soldier's boots
that now ring everywhere
sister, don't you go out now.
It's quite certain you shouldn't go
hide sister, please, you must hide
somewhere inside safe and sound.

3. **Imphal**

1
They lament here
the golden ear-ringed kids

2
Imphal Dimapur Road Imphal Jiribam Road
nerves and arteries

3
Mini deserts
these flower pots
the water drops the little girls
sprinkle over these bonsaied trees
drops of tears
(these big fishes decoration pieces
and their momentary smiles)

4
Drunken foot-paths
now misbehave with pedestrians
5  Buses
one after another
from all sides arrive here
with bundles of dust
on their backs
clean dressed people and
people in soiled dresses
are daily mixed and kneaded
at the hands of Khwairamhand Keithel poor huts
unable to clothe themselves
feel so ashamed
they cover themselves
with large newspaper sheets

6  The flower basket is pretty
and full of flowers
on sale
devotees come to worship but they do not clap thrice
a deal is made for the flowers
and they take them somewhere

7  Fire
water
air
inseparable they are

8  A foreign tourist
kisses the broken rim
of a glass of tea
at a road-side tea stall

9  Rice
pulses
edible oil
salt
business profit buildings

10  Imphal the corruption of Yumphal

4. The Snowy Wilderness
Blackened people of dark country
come out to wallow
and play in the snowy wilderness.

These blackened people of the dark land
now have set out in search
of a land where light ever is
since they have known
that the onrush of light
that had illuminated the dark gorge
from time to time
was but the lightning.

A loud blast, reverberations
gelignite smoke shuts out everything
and the sky rubs vigorously
its two eyes. They become blood-shot.

Under the sky
amidst the smoke
the sound of gunfire rolls
on and on.

A boy lies fallen on the highway
covered with a white sheet,
his company but a swarm of flies
that plays on his body.

A tender girl uncovers him
her heavy tears drop the question
— were your dreams
about this white sheet?

The blackened people of this dark land
are scattered by the wind.
They are strewn here and there
white sheets cover them
on this wind swept floor.

These people, black
on a land, dark
still leave behind the dark gorge
for the snowy wilderness
crossing the expanse of the white sheet.
5. Soldiering, My Style

I see no way out of this besieged battlefield. Still there is a door left ajar — death calls me out through it, that is not my escape route so I must turn back so I must run away never to set my eyes upon him never to remember him and not to weaken myself. I will escape cutting away a way through the enemy. I am sure I have got my own kind of courage. But I do not understand why my old mother still keeps on looking down the path lantern in her worn hands till I come home. If life was not there in that narrow dark lane we would have been all alike. Now our hands are bound tight together on our backs and we go on fighting like dogs so the battle spreads out. The crown of banyan leaves on my head, the whirling storm throws down on the ground. Then why he crushed it all into pieces into his feet. As if not satisfied with just throwing down. Even as I hurry up to pull down the tall buildings that time is bound to destroy why do I weep, to look at the long hair of that charming little girl abruptly shorten by her aunt, and why my feet used to marching alone beat a retreat by themselves? Soldiering, fighting, my style — I have known it,
I will be felled on this battlefield.

6. Calcutta Calcutta My Calcutta

Black smoke
belched out through the muzzles
of giant factories
have ceilinged the vast
canopy of heaven.

Children that ought to play and gambol
arrive here to beg by the train windows
even before the dawn stirs.

Inside the hovels
by the railway platforms
children are trained
in singing and dancing
for artful begging
by their mothers.

Calcutta, your parks are peopled
by old people walking hand in hand
and flowers try to show their colours
everyday struggling against the onslaught
incense sticks.

Calcutta
to flee away from you is
to find open fields
converted into open toilets
populated by people of nature's dress
in horrible huts.

Though stunted in you growth, Calcutta
you never stop conceiving
the survivors in your abortions
peer through the windows
of orphanages
in countries throughout the world.

Yet Calcutta, people across the seven seas
throng your steps
crossing the hanging bridge
to hear the melody of Rabindra Sangeet
sweet pulsating alive.
Calcutta my Calcutta
this Calcutta is my real Calcutta
in the past or in the future
forever.

7. Africa

Fissures

These wide fissures
had trapped and broken
many a leg unwary.

Numerous children flying kites
had been gobbled by these mouths.
Even the vultures and crows, birds of prey
had flown away to hear them cry.

Half-grown girls
one step into womanhood
the other still in childhood
tears into pieces their tattered dresses
munch on them heartily
to end what is endless.

A sombre fall out, a long procession
of hunger mad-people
their bodies unable to move
only their necks and eyes moving
look up at the aeroplanes overhead
waiting for air drops
of food parcels or bombs.

Shadows of young people
of what they used to be,
stand in groups by the fissures
the slice off their own ears
and munch on them tastily.

Innumerable gourmet tongues
are uprooted and stewed
on this vast African earth.

These fissures will be mended
one day with corpses upon corpses.
8. The Earth

Mother Earth!
The zoo in your bosom today
is slack in security.

The long rope you had been
preparing, twisting and twirling
for ages upon your thighs
has now been sucked
into the dark abyss.

Little birds
guardian of the skies
once flew in freedom
and came back to you.

The empty skies are today
filled with swarms
of iron monsters that escort
satellites, delivered without check
and they quarrel among themselves,
exhort to fight and
strike at one another -
for right of orbit
for feeding grounds
in the sky.

The flocks of birds
that once guarded
the independence of the skies
have flown down to you
with pieces of iron
captured in their beaks
for the hungry little ones, in
their nest, instead of fruits
fresh and cool.

9. Separation

Yet another day.

But the mother and her child
asleep on a cot yesternight
are today separated found,
tenants of different cots.

Fresh morning air rocks the screen of the unclosed ropy window. The child had stepped out with a single look behind at the perspiration drops on her forehead.

She is a mother, she starts looking for her suddenly lost child her only link to him the jingle of his bangles echoing near and far away.

Age starts covering all with many thick layers.

They are not united yet. The mother looks for her child - and the child continues the journey to find, the mother.

10. **A Shawl of Olive Green**

During my childhood.

Linthoi and I played dolls everyday, she clothed every doll with pieces of olive green and I took them out only to cover them with my choice golden clothes. The olive green pieces that I hid she searched out to cover our dolls and discarded the pieces of golden shawls.

We quarreled many times our long hair underwent a hard time.

Married now.

Linthoi and I have gone separate ways, have become mothers, too.
My hair, dancing on my hips
now reminds me of Linthoi ---
the wonderful figure
the ever glowing face,
her hair velvety
(And it trembled at my sight)
will be there unchanged.

Last meeting.

She was asleep inside a coffin,
her hair that trembled at my sight
was dishevelled, unbound ---
it wept as I extended my hands.
Her choice shawl of olive green
I tried to cover her with ---
but cover her I could not
a small boy stopped me,
said he, aunty, please don't.
This cloth olive green
was my mother's enemy
this colour destroyed her.

A dim vision comes to my eyes
of the pieces of cloth I hid
olive green in colour that she searched out
to cover the dolls with.

Translated by B.S. Rajkumar

Temsula Ao, possibly Nagaland's most eminent contemporary folklorist, academic and poet, writes, 'the inherent instability of any oral tradition needs no great. Abstract: Temsula Ao is a renowned poet, writer and ethnographer whose Her poem, Stone People from Lungterok is based an interesting. By Devastuti Sharma The poems of the Naga poet and writer, Temsula Ao, are quintessential examples of the ways in which women's writings.

Temsula Ao has published two short story collections. These Hills Called Home: The temsula ao poems short story collection consists of ten short stories and deals with insurgency in Nagaland fired by right to self-determination of the Naga people.
The later consists of eight short stories which have mythical as well as modern overtones. Temsula Ao poems you read and write in Assamese easily now?

How do you recall your association with Dr O. Hasselblad and his wife Mrs. Norma Hasselblad, the missionary couple serving at Christian Hospital, Jorhat in your childhood? Have you met them later in life? I recall my association with the Hasselblads with awe and gratitude because they were instrumental in sending me to Golaghat to complete my High School.

Yes, I did meet them later in when I went to the University of Minnesota on a Fulbright Fellowship and contacted them in California where they had settled in a Retirement Campus. They sponsored my tickets and I stayed with them for three days sharing our collective memories and exchanging family news about children and grandchildren.

I truly cherish those days as if I was back in the happier times temsula ao poems my life.

I have tried to give some account of my life temsula ao poems the boarding school at Golaghat in my memoir and it will not be possible for me to recount my experiences here because some have already been published. At the same time re-ordering memories is a tricky business where one is likely to give several interpretations to the same experience after the lapse of so many years.

Temsula Ao

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Temsula Ao during [New Delhi World Book Fair](https://www.ndlworldbookfair.com) in 2010

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Born</th>
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<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Poet, Ethnographer</td>
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[Sahitya Akademi Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sahitya_Akademi_Award) (2013) |

**Temsula Ao** is a poet, short story writer and ethnographer. She is a retired Professor of English in [North Eastern Hill University](https://www.nehu.ac.in) (NEHU), where she has taught since 1975.

In 2013, she received the [Sahitya Akademi Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sahitya_Akademi) for her short story collection, *Laburnum for My Head*, given by the [Sahitya Akademi](https://sahityakari.sahityaakademi.gov.in/), India's National Academy of Literature.

Biography
Temsula Ao was born in October 1945 at Jorhat, Assam. She matriculated from Ridgeway Girls' High School, Golaghat, Assam. She received her B.A with Distinction from Fazl Ali College, Mokokchung, Nagaland. She received her M.A in English from Gauhati University, Assam. From Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (presently English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad) she received her Post Graduate Diploma in the Teaching of English and PhD from NEHU. From 1992–97 she served as Director, North East Zone Cultural Centre, Dimapur on Deputation from NEHU, and was Fulbright Fellow to University of Minnesota 1985–86.

She received the honorary Padma Shri Award in 2007. She is the recipient of the Governor's Gold Medal 2009 from the government of Meghalaya. She is widely respected as one of the major literary voices in English to emerge from Northeast India along with Mitra Phukan and Mamang Dai.

Her works have been translated into German, French, Assamese, Bengali and Hindi.

Poetry

She has published five poetic works.

- *Songs that Tell* (1988),
- *Songs that Try to Say* (1992),
- *Songs of Many Moods* (1995),
- *Songs from Here and There* (2003),
- *Songs From The Other Life* (2007).

Her first two poetry collections were published from Writers Workshop, Kolkata. The third poetry collection was published by Kohima Sahitya Sabha and the fourth was published by North Eastern Hill University and the last one was by Grasswork Books, Pune.

Ethnography

When she was in the University of Minnesota as a Fulbright fellow, she came in contact with the Native Americans. She learned about their culture, heritage and especially their oral tradition. This exposure inspired her to record the oral tradition of her own community, Ao Naga. After returning from the University of Minnesota, she worked on the oral tradition for about twelve years. She collected the myths, folktales, folklore, rituals, law, custom, belief system. This ethnographic work was published in 1999 as the Ao-Naga oral tradition from Bhasha Publications, Baroda. This book is the most authentic document about the Ao-Naga community.

Short story


The former short story collection consists of ten short stories and deals with insurgency in Nagaland fired by right to self-determination of the Naga people.

The later consists of eight short stories which have mythical as well as modern overtones. The stories are sensitive, evocative and also powerful.

Literary criticism
She published a book of literary criticism *Henry James' Quest for an Ideal Heroine*. It was published in 1989 from Writers Workshop.

Arnab Jan Deka

Arnab Jan Deka is a novelist, short story writer, poet, playwright, screenwriter, documentary film director, columnist, TV actor, jurist, river engineer and eco-technocrat. He authored 131 fiction and non-fiction books (two of them being co-authored with British and American authors respectively) and edited 14 more books in English, Assamese, Hindi and Bengali. He was also editor of a journal and a newspaper. India Government’s official Academy of Letters Sahitya Academy incorporated his biography as one among the top Indian writers of the 20th Century in the End Century Edition of *Who's Who of Indian Writers 1999*. 'NE Live' listed him as one of the "Top 5 Contemporary Writers from Assam who have made it big outside the state also" which include such other literary stalwarts like Dr Indira Goswami, Homen Borgohain and Nirupama Borgohain, who "have not only contributed to the literary wealth of the state, they have also enlightened the world about the life and culture of Assam through their writing." In a critical literary essay 'New generation of storytellers' he has been described as one among "the bunch of most powerful storytellers" who "delved deep into the spiritual and intellectual heritage along the Brahmaputra valley, and also highlighted its environmental fragility."

He is the recipient of Assam Government's Publication Board Golden Jubilee Novel Award in 2006 for his classical novel *Bhaba Ananda Sambad* ('Tales of Bhabananda'). The Katha International Short Story Festival held in New Delhi in January, 2004, awarded him with the Katha-Goriyoshi Award for his short-story *Himalayan Mystic Meeting*. He is also a recipient of the Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray Memorial Award (Smarak Samman) 2010 in Calcutta, conferred upon him in recognition of his lifetime contributions to literature, art and scientific research.

He is the international chairman of the Indo-British environmental project Save the Brahmaputra River.

He was the youngest Indian radio playwright. His first radio-play *Mukti* ('Freedom') was broadcast by All India Radio in 1981 while he was a school student. His first authored book *Ephanki Rhode* ('A Stanza of Sunlight') was published in 1983.

His documentary film on saint-artist-littérateur Srimanta Sankardev had been publicly screened in several countries.

First Assamese co-author of Indo-British book of poetry

Arnab Jan Deka is the first creative writer in Assamese to have co-authored an Indo-British book of poetry, working with British poet and novelist Tess Joyce in 2009 to produce a book entitled *A Stanza of Sunlight on the Banks of Brahmaputra*. The book received wider international success, as many leading newspapers carried exclusive coverage on this publication. In a major critical writing in *The Book Review* journal, literary critic and poet N Kalyani describes its poetry in these words- "Poems have a spatial and temporal location and context and relevant and significant to that, yet they are also universal in their theme and substance and not restricted to a period of time making them obsolete or decrepit for another or a future time period." In the same essay, the critic’s admiration of Arnab Jan Deka’s poetry is made clear when she says - "And in *These Small Thoughts* Deka reveals what Umananda is, *A tiny river island amidst the mighty river Brahmaputra near the prehistoric city of Pragjyotishpur, known by its modern name Guwahati now*, in a way that brings the image so alive: *The tiny rivulet reflect a myriad of colour/The distant Umananda--a majestic aloof lily pad/The blackish..."
The cities dreaming of fleeced nomad/Besides the tidal marina.”[19] This book found a place of pride in the prestigious London Poetry Library, which is the first official recognition for an Assamese poet by the famous British institution devoted to poetry.[20]

His first book, *Ephanki Rhode* ('A Stanza of Sunlight'), published in 1983 while he was a minor school student of 10th standard, established him as a major poet and author in the Assamese language.[21][22] Prominent Indian writer Dr Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya discovered the young writer and officially brought the school-going teen-aged author into the intellectual limelight by writing a generous review of his first book and later days' creations.[6][23]

British poet Tess Joyce wrote an essay on his poetry in the literary journal published from London *Luit to Thames*, whose edited form[clarification needed] was also republished by *Art of Living Guide*, which is based in Barcelona, Spain. In her essay, Joyce states as follows—"Written during his high school years, Arnab's poems plunged the reader into further depths – into the midst of the universe itself and the riverine landscapes only served to increase the levels of complexity the narrator saw; we are left to realise that no-one is big enough to hold the universe and so: *Yet with no empty space left on the boat/the Universe sat quietly beside the reeds*. Imbibed with a sense of awe, the narrator’s desires for explanations disappeared – it was the poetry that satisfied him, hence: *On the bald head of the dusty earth/Ashwaklanta bestowed a stanza of sunlight.*"[12]

Short story writer

Arnab Jan Deka is a short story writer.[5][13] His short stories regularly appear in *Prantik* and *Goriyoshi*[1] and have been translated into English, Spanish, Bengali, Bodo and many other languages and published in literary journals and newspapers.[24][25] His well-known short stories include: *Prem Asambhav* ('Love Impossible'), *Hridoybotir Sondhan* ('Quest for Large-Hearted Magnanimity'), *Naareebaadar Narak* ('Hell of Feminism'), *Tumi Rituporna Tai Malala* ('She is Malala'), *Tinjoni Gawoliya Sowali* ('Three Village Girls'), Katha-Goriyoshi Award-winning short story *Himalayar Duporiya : Ankur-Tapaswi-Swarnakesbinge*('Himalayan Mystic Meeting'), *Mor Shoborit Dujon Spaniard*('Two Spaniards in My City'), *Nixiddho Nogorit Mei Lang*(Mei Lang in the Forbidden City), *Mexico Shoborit Ejoni Premika*(A Sweetheart in Mexico City), *Ejoni American Matri*(An American Mother), *Samudrik Akangkhat Ronga Nodi Neela Pabar*(Oceanic Aspirations of Red River Blue Hill).

His short-story collections include *Prem Asambhav*('Love Impossible')(2013), *Akarmat Ek Aabeli*('Suddenly An Afternoon') (2004), *Naareebaadar Narak*('Hell of Feminism')(1999) and *Mexico Shobore Ekjon Premika Abong Kayekta Golpo*(A Sweetheart in Mexico & other stories)(2009).[2] Leading English daily *The Assam Tribune* in its issue dated 28 January 2000 described Arnab Jan Deka's first story-book *Naareebaadar Narak* as follows- 'Whatever be the history and definition of feminism, Arnab Jan Deka has portrayed feminism in his latest book 'Naareebaadar Narak' (The Hell of Feminism) in a very unique way. Arnab Jan Deka writes as if he has already gone through the experiences of a woman. He has perhaps experienced the so called 'feminist world' more closely.'[24][25] According to a widely circulated Assamese daily *Asomiya Khabar*, this storybook was the bestseller among Assamese books in the year 1999.[23]

As a Novelist

Arnab Jan Deka is also a successful novelist.[5][13] His classical novel *Bhaba Ananda Sambad*('Tales of Bhabananda')(2007) won him the prestigious Assam Government Publication Board Golden Jubilee Novel Award in 2006. Another novel, *Childhood Dreams*(2010),[2] was a strong protest against the inhuman practice of child slaver prevalent in many countries and, at the same time, it also advocated children’s right to education. This novel was adapted in 2011 into a mini TV-series entitled *Soisobote*.
Dhemalite and was telecast over India Government-owned TV-channel Doordarshan.\[^2\] This televised version of his novel was produced by veteran film producer and actor Pramod Baruah and directed by Indian film actor and director Brojen Borah. His award-winning novel Bhaba Ananda Sambad, set against the backdrop of the educational and intellectual scenario of the post-independence Assam of the 1950s and 1960s, was loosely based on the eventful life of the Assamese economist and Anwabon-Ramdebhun Era littérateur Principal Bhabananda Deka. The novel depicted the highpoints of his life, which include the establishment of Assamese Departments in the Indian Constitutional body Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and Delhi University in the capital city of India in the late 1960s, apart from illustrating his lifelong mission of spreading the fruits of higher education amidst the poor of village dwellers in the entire Brahmaputra valley.\[^4\] This novel has been the subject of Doctoral Research for PhD in the Assamese Department of Dibrugarh University. His other published novels include Noisoclubot Bigotojoubona('A Post-youth Vamp in the Night Club')(2000), Astarambha Premor Béyali Joubon('Sun-setting Youth of Superficial Love')(1999), Hridoyor Dinîpî('The Heart's Diary')(2004) and Bhai Bhai('Band of Brothers')(children's novel)(2005).

**Columnist & Essayist**

Daily newspapers Dainik Asam, Dainik Janamkhumi, The Assam Tribune, Natun Dainik, Aji Assamese Daily, Dainik Batori Kakot, Amar Assam, Edinor Sangbad, News 30, Ami Assomor Janagan and weeklies-periodicals like Assam Bani, Sadin, Natun Samay, Agradoot, Prantik and Goriyoshi have regularly published essays and columns by Arnab Jan Deka from the early 1990s till 2016 on many issues of topical interest.\[^31\] His weekly column Dharabhasya ('Sayings of the Times'),\[^32\] published in the oldest Assamese daily Dainik Asam, has been acknowledged as a series of important essays on modern world's social issues giving new directions to public opinions.\[^[citation needed]\] This popular column started appearing in Sunday issues of Dainik Asam from 2 August 1998 onward. The title of the first instalment essay of this column was Ratnakarar Pitri-Matri aru Ajir Samaj('Ratnakar's Parents & Today's Society'), which illustrates the eternal conflict between materialism and morality.\[^[citation needed]\] His other columns include Satyar Xipîthi('Other side of the Truth') in 'Natun Samay', Ajir Chinta('Today's Thoughts') in 'Dainik Janamkhumi', Adhiboktar Diary('Advocate's Diary') in 'Aji' and Sangskriti Kotha('Talk about Culture') in 'Dainik Asam'. His penultimate weekly column Hridoyor Xonglap ('Dialogues of the Heart') was published in a newly launched Assamese daily, Dainik Batori Kakot, in 2006.\[^33\] His articles and research papers are regularly published in journals like Prantik, Goriyoshi and Assam Sahitya Sabha Patrika.\[^35\]

**First Assamese co-author of Indo-American joint memoir book**

In 2016 Arnab Jan Deka collaborated with American author Barbara Ann King on a memoir book project on American artist Sheryl Ann King, who died in a fatal accident that took place on 30 April 2015. The project succeeded in the shape of a book titled Our Sherry: A Tribute to Sheryl Ann King, which was published on 30 April 2016 commemorating 1st death anniversary of the departed artist. It was the first creative book collaboration between an Assamese and an American writer in the genre of Indo-American literature.\[^11\][^10]

**Film Director and Screenwriter**

Arnab Jan Deka directed several documentary films including Golden Jubilee of Assam Economics Research & Pioneer Assam Economist-Littérateur (2014) on the academic and research-oriented works of
the Assamese economist and literary stalwart Principal Bhabananda Deka. Creative personalities from three continents (Asia, Europe and North America) joined hands in the making of this film. Indonesia-based British author Tess Joyce was the co-screenwriter and narrator of the film. Hollywood screenwriter from Spain Claire Elizabeth Terry and American researcher Terri Stiffler also collaborated in finalising the screenplay of the film.

He is the screenwriter and co-director along with Waesqurni Bora of an under-production full-length docu-feature biopic film on the singer-musician-filmmaker Dr Bhupen Hazarika titled Moi Eti Zazabor. He was the director of the first ever one-hour-long documentary film on medieval Assamese saint-philosopher-artist-littérateur Srimanta Sankardev made in the year 1996, which was screened in the USA and many other countries.

Apart from writing the entire scripts of his own documentary films including Assam Sahitya Sabha, Srimanta Sankardev, Golden Jubilee of Assam Economics Research & Pioneer Assam Economist-Littérateur, he has also collaborated in screen-writing for several popular TV series including Gauri Barman directed Chakrabehu(1996), Waesqurni Bora directed Kolijar Amothu(2008) and Brajen Borah directed Soisobote Dhemalite(2011).

Playwright

He is also a playwright of several radio and stage plays. His first radio play Mukti('Freedom') was broadcast by All India Radio, Guwahati Centre, in 1981, when he was a 9th standard school student. Mowamoriya Bidroh('Uprising of Mowamoriya Clan') was his only historical play based on a very critical phase of 18th century Kingdom of Kamrup or Assam. He wrote this drama in 1980 while he was a minor school student of 8th standard.

Actor in films, TV, stage and radio

He has also acted in several Assamese and English language TV series, stage plays, radio plays and short films including Character of an Artist based on a novel by Dr Mamon Raism Goswami(Indira Goswami). He played major roles in the TV series Kolijar Amothu, Soisobote Dhemalite and several others. He worked under film directors like Waesqurni Bora, Gauri Barman and Brojen Borah.

Radio programmer

He was a regular radio personality on All India Radio(AIR) during his childhood and adolescent years. He started his radio career in 1978 enacting the role of a language-student in India's longest-running language teaching radio-play series Hindi Sikshar Paath, and continued performing that role for eight years till 1985. In 1985, AIR offered him the first live broadcast opportunity of world news round-up called Biswa Sangbad for which he was a radio journalist collecting world news, news editor compiling and editing the news items and news reader. He also conducted a village field-research based rural documentary programme for radio titled Gaawe Gaawe in 1986, for which he had to travel around rural India to collect interviews of village-dwellers and also discovered rural musical talents like folk-singers and gave them a national audience by recording and broadcasting their music. He also regularly took part in radio talk shows and discussions on contemporary youth and young-adult related issues at several radio stations in Guwahati and Jorhat. Apart from writing his first radio-play Mukti('Freedom') as a ninth standard school student, which was first broadcast over radio in 1981, he was also a regular actor of many popular radio-plays in several languages including Assamese, Urdu and Hindi in the 1970s and 1980s. Some of his radio acting credits include Pratham Sakhyatkaar ('First Meet'), Kabach ('The Protective Body Shield')
River engineer of Indo-British environmental project

He is a river engineer engaged in the research on the environmental aspects of the Brahmaputra River, and presently heads the Indo-British campaign project Save the Brahmaputra River as its international chairman. Through this international project, he, together with his international coordinator Tess Joyce, has been highlighting the various environmental threats encountered by the river. He was the first river engineer in Assam to have exposed the plan of China to divert the course of the Brahmaputra river by building nine massive dams over it in Tibet. He has been working in research on the Brahmaputra river with guidance and support from river engineers, hydraulics experts, eco-technocrats, geo-scientists, environmentalists and scholars like Dr Constantin Aurel Stere (The Netherlands), Dr Wolfgang-Albert Fluegel (Germany), Dr Tue Kel Nielsen (Denmark), Natsuko Totsuka (Asian Development Bank, Japan), Gerrit Klaassen (The Netherlands) and Dr Yoshiyuki Imamura (UNESCO, Switzerland). His research collaborations for Brahmaputra river engineering and environmental impact study have received worldwide media support.

Eco-technocrat of Indo-American partnership project

He collaborated with American eco-technocrat Gwyndaf Jones from the Mechanical Engineering Department of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston, USA, to develop carbon-neutral eco-friendly technology for the benefit of working-class people. They have successfully developed a 3-Sprocket Chain System enhancing the capacity and efficiency of carbon-neutral tricycle-based eco-friendly passenger vehicles. Both Jones and Deka jointly conducted field trial of their prototype model with support from daily wage-earners, and received very positive feedback underlining the successful conclusion of this historic first project on eco-technology development between USA and India. This vehicle is targeted as a mass people-oriented public transport vehicle with zero carbon emission to lessen the day-to-day hardship of working-class people all over the world.

Journal and newspaper editor

He was the editor of an Assamese journal Gandbaar devoted to art, culture and poetry, while he was an undergraduate student of New Delhi's Sri Ram College of Commerce under Delhi University. Dr Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya and Chairman of India Government's top cultural body Sangeet Natak Academy Dr Bhupen Hazarika were the major literary contributors of Gandbaar from its inaugural issue published on India's Independence Day on 15 August 1987. He was also the founder editor of the first ever campus newspaper of North-East India entitled JEC News published from Jorhat in 1989. This bilingual newspaper was published in English and Assamese. Till the publication of this newspaper, no other University or academic institution in the entire Northeast India ever published any campus newspaper. Arnab Jan Deka's pioneering role as the first editor of a campus newspaper in the whole NE India was officially recognised during the golden jubilee of Assam Government-owned Jorhat Engineering College in 2010. As acknowledgement, JEC authorities honoured him by reviving his campus newspaper again after almost two decades in a new avatar with full official patronage.

Academic and research works
Arnab Jan Deka had successfully undertaken several important academic and research works, some of the most important works are as follows:

(1) He collaborated with Netherlands' Principal Prince Claus Laureate Dr Mamoni Raisom Goswami alias Indira Goswami and her mentor and founder of Assamese Department within the Modern Indian Languages Department of Delhi University Principal Bhabananda Deka in a historic academic mission to set up the Srimanta Sankardev Chair in that India Government's centrally-funded University. They managed to convince Delhi University authorities to agree to set up the Chair in the name of littérateur-philosopher-artist of Medieval Assam in its Modern Indian Languages(MIL) Department, and also persuaded the Chief Minister of Assam to announce a Corpus Fund for the Chair of a million Rupees. However, neither Principal Deka not Dr Goswami could see their joint dream of setting up the chair fulfilled during their lifetime. After the untimely death of both the towering Assamese literary stalwarts, Arnab Jan Deka has been single-handedly working through his charity foundations Axom Ratna Principal Bhabananda Deka Foundation, Srimanta Sankardev Antarjatik Pratishthan (International Foundation) and Arnab Jan Deka Foundation to fulfil the dreams of both the departed litterateurs. Top Indian daily newspaper The Times of India repeatedly interviewed him regarding his persistent singular efforts at establishing Sankardev Chair in Delhi University.

(2) He was nominated as Chief Editor of Katha Guru Charit English translation project by the Speaker of Assam Legislative Assembly in 1998. The project was envisioned to project the entire life and intellectual works of Assamese Medieval-age Saint-Philosopher-Poet-Littérateur-Artist Srimanta Sankardev in a comprehensive manner to the world academia.

(3) He also conducted Research on medieval age saint-littérateur-philosopher of Assam, India, Srimanta Sankardev's pioneering works on propagating ideas of Democracy, Fraternity and Equality, and authorship and enactment of several full-length Dramas in Assamese language in the 15th Century world, which may eventually establish him as one of the first few propagators of these modern concepts and first few Dramatists-contemporaries of William Shakespeare. He successfully edited the English biographical book Sreemanta Sankaradeva originally authored by renowned scholar Principal Bhabananda Deka, which incorporates invaluable English translations of some of Sankardev's major literary works including Kirtan Ghoxa and Borgeet. Second Edition of this valuable book is published in 2015, and critically acclaimed worldwide.

(4) He jointly undertook an Indo-British environmental project Save the Brahmaputra River in order to conduct extensive research and environmental audit on the serious environmental threats faced by this one of the world’s mightiest rivers.

(5) He collaborated with MIT, Boston, faculty-trainer Gwyndaf Jones in the first successfully executed Indo-American eco-friendly technology development project of 3 Sprocket Chain System for Tricycles in order to enhance the efficiency of carbon-neutral vehicles, in order to reduce global carbon footprint.

(6) He discovered an unheralded silent innovator Uddhab Bharali from Lakhimpur town in Assam, India, who invented many cheap Machines for handy domestic and commercial use including, Paddy Thrashing Machine, Mini Tea Processing Plant, Pomegranate Desseeder Machine, Artificial Workable Limbs for Accident Victims, Grass Cutting Machines etc.; and brought him and his innovations to the limelight for the very first time by writing about him both in Assamese and English in prominent daily newspapers Dainik Asam and Assam Express in 1995.

(7) He discovered and established the fact that pioneer Assamese filmmaker Jyotiprasad Agarwala is also the First Indian Filmmaker to have introduced and successfully used Dubbing Technology in his magnum opus first movie Joymoti (1935 film).

(8) He conducted research on Life and Works of several Assamese legendary literary and cultural
stalwarts including Dr Bhupen Hazarika, Principal Bhabananda Deka and Pradip Chaliha;

(9) He has conducted extensive research on the trail of first pioneering formal research, documentation and publication of books on the Economic Condition of Kingdom of Kamrup, Pragjyotisha and Assam, which eventually became a state in the Republic of India in the mid-20th Century, and also edited a book Ancient Heritage of Assam compiling research papers of several top scholars;

(10) He recovered, edited and published the historic first English book on Assamese language and literature meant for common readers of the world, which was originally authored by Principal Bhabananda Deka with his associates and officially released by the President of India Dr Zakir Hussain in New Delhi on 24 November 1968 on the occasion of the birth centenary of Assamese literary legend Sahityarathi Lakshminath Bezbaroa. [14]

Awards and honours

He is the recipient of Assam Government's Publication Board Golden Jubilee Novel Award in 2006 for his classic novel Bhaba Ananda Sambad ("Tales of Bhabananda"). This one-time prestigious Award was announced by the Education Minister of Assam on 31 December 2006, and subsequently handed over to him at a public ceremony at the Guwahati Book Fair on 10 January 2007.

Katha International Short Story Festival held in New Delhi in January, 2004, awarded him with Katha-Goriyoshi Award for his epoch-making short-story Himalayan Mystic Meeting for its skilful depiction of the essence of Indian heritage and how it blended with universal philosophy of life. [8] He was also honoured with the prestigious Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray Memorial Award in 2010 in the City of Joy Calcutta in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the world of literature, art and scientific research for over 35 years. [9]

India Government's official Academy of Letters Sahitya Academy recognized him as one of the top Indian writers of the 20th Century by incorporating his literary biography in the End Century Edition of the publication Who's Who of Indian Writers 1999. Age-wise, he was the youngest writer to be honoured by the top Indian literary body in the 20th century. [6]

Internationally renowned river scientist, author and hydraulics engineer Prof.(Dr.) Constantin Aurel Stere publicly acknowledged the global standing and repute earned by Arnab Jan Deka through his monumental works, in a speech delivered before a galaxy of intellectuals and media-persons at Guwahati Press Club. At the same programme held on 28 February 2015, Dr Stere officially launched Arnab Jan Deka's two latest English books Brahmaputra and Beyond: Linking Assam to the World and An Extraordinary Assamese Couple. [52]

Poet Jitendra Deka eulogized about him in a poem Ink and Jan (published in an e-magazine orunodoi.com) focussing on his multi-hued contributions in areas of extreme opposites like literature and technology in order to propagate the brighter side of his native land and native people of Assam to the outside world, and how he has become a shining flag-bearer for all the aspiring juniors to follow and emulate. [53]

Bibliography

English, Assamese, Hindi and Bengali books authored by Arnab Jan Deka from his first published book in 1983 up to the year 2015 are: [4]

Poetry
1. Ephanki Rhode (1983) – Assamese
5. Mor Soisob Koishhoror Kobita (2008) – Assamese
6. Mor Geeti Kobitar Prithibi (2008) – Assamese

**Novel**

11. Astarambha (1999) – Assamese
18. Good Times Bad Times (2012) – Assamese

**Short-story**

25. Prem Asambhav (2013) – Assamese
29. Mor Bideshi Bandhabi (2015) – Assamese
31. Duphori Gawor Niranjana Aita & other stories (2017) – Assamese

**Novelette**


**Biography**

35. Anya Ek Zazabor (1993) – Assamese
41. Bharotiyo Chitrotarokar Soite Moi (2008) – Assamese
42. Amar Amulya (2002)(Ed. Essay Collection) - Assamese
43. Mor Sinaki Bhupenda (2008) – Assamese
44. Ekmebodwitiyam Dr Bhabendra Nath Saikia (2005) – Assamese
45. Barnamoy Rupot Bhupen Hazarika (1993) – Assamese
46. Mor Porichita Biswabijoyi Abhinetri Seema Biswas (1995) – Assamese
47. Cinema Legend Kamal Haasan (1991) – Assamese
49. Bhupen Hazarikak Asomor Matiye Bhul Nubujeto! (1994) – Assamese
50. Mohajibon Sandhanir Sahacharjya (1998) – Assamese
51. Hridoyban Suhridor Smriti (2000) – Assamese
52. Smritir Dolichat Ananya Asomiya (2004) – Assamese
54. Diary Pristhat Kisu Sukhosmriti (2005) – Assamese
56. Bhupen Hazarika, Bhabananda Deko, Mamoni Raisom Goswami : 3 Jewels of Assam 3 Pathbreakers (Ed.)(2011) - English & Assamese
57. The Pioneer Economist (2014) - English

Radio & Stage Play

59. Mowamoriya Bidroh (1980) – Assamese Stage Play

Essay

63. Jibonor Barnamoy Roop-Ras (1999) – Assamese
64. Ekhon Nika Samajor Swapna (1999) – Assamese
65. Youth & Vision[6](1994) - English
68. Arokshir Choritra aru Dayitwa (2004) – Assamese
70. Mor Dristir Narce Swadhinota (2004) – Assamese
71. Challenges Towards the Medium of Free Speech (2004) – Assamese
73. Thoughts about Assam (2004) – Assamese
74. An Economic Manifesto for Assam (2004) – Assamese
75. My Views on Indian Politics & Democracy (2004) – Assamese
76. Glimpses on Indian Polity (2004) – Assamese
77. My thoughts on India (2004) – Assamese
78. Sakhyatkarot Ejon Mukhyamantri (2004) – Assamese
81. Mor Dristit Srimanta Sankardev (2004) – Assamese
82. Antarjatik Patabhumit Sankardev (2004) – Assamese

**Technology**

84. Diary of an Engineer (2005) – Assamese
85. Draft of Assam’s Development: An Engineer’s Perspective (2006) – Assamese
86. Handbook of Civil Engineer (2005) – Assamese

**Film & Television Script**

89. Chakrabehu (1996)- Assamese TV-series(scripted jointly with Gauri Barman)
90. Kolijar Amothu (2008)- Assamese TV-series(scripted jointly with Late Waesqurni Bora)
91. Soisobote Dhemalite (2010)- Assamese TV-series(scripted jointly with Brojen Borah)

**Cinema**

92. Chalachitrar Oscar (1998) – Assamese
95. Natun Tathyar Alokat: Bharotiy Chalachitrar Prokrito Batkotiya(1999)– Assamese
97. Asomiya Chalachitrar Ras Sandhan (1998) – Assamese
98. Asomiya Chalachitrar Unnayan: Mor Chinta Bhabona (1998) – Assamese
99. Mor Dristire Tholuwa Chalachitra: Kola aru Banijya (1999) – Assamese
102. Abismaraniya Chalachitrar Montage (1998) – Assamese
103. Desh-Bideshor Chalachitra (1998) – Assamese

**Travelogue**

104. Smaraniyo Bhromonor Dinlipi (2000) – Assamese
105. Dakshinor Hollywoodat Kisudin (2000) – Assamese

**Literary Issues**

108. Mor Koishoror Rachanabor (1998) – Assamese
111. Katha, Goriyoshi aru Moi (2004) – Assamese
115. Mor Nirbachito Sampadokiyo (1998) – Assamese
116. Mor Bibhinno Samoyik Rachana(1998) – Assamese

**Law**
118. Sadharon Rajor Babe Aain (2004) – Assamese

Miscellaneous

120. Sadharon Jyanor Bahaduri (2000) – Assamese Quiz based compilation
121. Sanskriti Katha (2000) – Assamese Essays on cultural round-up
122. My Encounter with People & Events (2000) – Assamese Cultural diary
125. Sakshatkarot Bhupen Hazarika (2000) – Assamese reminiscence

Environment

126. An Assamese-American Eco-Technology Partnership (2013)- English
127. Save the Brahmaputra River (2015)- English (co-authored with Tess Joyce)

Memoirs

128. Golden Years at Jorhat Engineering College (English) (2015)
131. Our Sherry : A Tribute to Sheryl Ann King (English) (coauthored with Barbara Ann King(USA))[14] (2016)

Edited Books, Journal, Newspaper

133. JEC News (English-Assamese bilingual campus newspaper) (1989)
134. Mor Kobita (Author-Principal Bhabananda Deka)(Assamese) (2007)
135. Last Testament of Principal Bhabananda Deka(English) (2009)
136. Iron Man of Assam Bishnuram Medhi (Author-Principal Bhabananda Deka)(English) (2010)
137. Dharmatatva (Author-Principal Bhabananda Deka)(Assamese) (2012)
138. 5 Centuries of Assam Economy (Author-Principal Bhabananda Deka)(Assamese) (2013)
139. From the Pages of Awahon-Ramdhenu (Author-Principal Bhabananda Deka)(Assamese) (2013)
140. Assamese Language-Literature & Sahityarathi Lakshminath Bezbaroa (Author-Principal Bhabananda Deka, Dr Parikshit Hazarika, Upendra Nath Goswami, Prabhat Chandra Sarma)(English) (2014)
142. An Extraordinary Assamese Couple[22] (English) (2015)
143. Sreemanta Sankaradeva (Author-Prof. Bhabananda Deka) (English) (2015)
146. Sankardeva's Kirtan Ghosa by Principal Bhabananda Deka (English) (2016)
149. North-East India's Hajong Tribe : Society & Culture (Author-Principal Bhabananda Deka) (2017)

Filmography
## Documentaries & Feature Films

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Assam Sahitya Sabha</td>
<td>Director, Screenwriter</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Priyojon</td>
<td>Actor, Dubbing Artiste, Production Coordinator, Media Coordinator</td>
<td>Assamese</td>
<td>2 hours 30 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Guru Pranati</td>
<td>Director, Narrator</td>
<td>Assamese</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Srimanta Sankardev</td>
<td>Director, Screenwriter, Producer</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Land Encroachment &amp; Urban Flooding : Case Study of a Guwahati Street</td>
<td>Director, Screenwriter, Narrator, Cinematographer, Editor, Producer</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Farewell, My Lady! : Homage to Ugandan Diplomat &amp; First Indian Lady Film Choreographer Priyamvada Patel Hazarika</td>
<td>Director, Screenwriter, Cinematographer, Editor, Producer</td>
<td>Silent</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Principal Bhabananda Deka : Portrait of an Extraordinary Indian</td>
<td>Director, Screenwriter, Producer</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Under-production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Moi Eti Zazabor : Docu-feature Biopic on legendary singer-musician Dr Bhupen Hazarika</td>
<td>Director, Screenwriter, Actor, Narrator</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Under-production</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## TV Series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Channel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Chakrabehu</td>
<td>Screenwriter, Chief Assistant Director</td>
<td>Gauri Barman</td>
<td>Assamese</td>
<td>Doordarshan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Kolijar Amothu</td>
<td>Actor, Screenwriter</td>
<td>Late Waesqurni Bora</td>
<td>Assamese</td>
<td>Doordarshan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Radio Programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Programme Title</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Radio Centre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1978-85</td>
<td>Hindi Sikshar Paath</td>
<td>Plays on language teaching</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Hindi &amp; Assamese (bilingual)</td>
<td>AIR, Guwahati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Yuva Piri aur Fashion</td>
<td>Discussion on Youth</td>
<td>Panelist</td>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>AIR, Guwahati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Biswa Sangbad</td>
<td>World news live broadcast</td>
<td>Radio Journalist, News Editor, News Reader</td>
<td>Assamese</td>
<td>AIR, Guwahati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Gaawe Gaawe</td>
<td>Rural documentary</td>
<td>Interviewer, Sound-recordist, Scriptwriter, Narrator</td>
<td>Assamese</td>
<td>AIR, Guwahati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Drug Addiction among Youth</td>
<td>Talks</td>
<td>Writer, Broadcaster</td>
<td>Assamese</td>
<td>AIR, Jorhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Analysis of Technical Education Scenario in Assam</td>
<td>Talks</td>
<td>Writer, Broadcaster</td>
<td>Assamese</td>
<td>AIR, Jorhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>25 years of first book of Arnab Jan Deka</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Interviewed by RJ Pahee</td>
<td>Assamese</td>
<td>Big 92.7 FM</td>
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### Radio Actor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Radio-play Title</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Radio Centre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Character of an Artist</td>
<td>Actor</td>
<td>Brojen Borah</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Soisobote Dhemalite (Childhood Dreams)</td>
<td>Original Storywriter, Screenwriter, Actor</td>
<td>Brojen Borah</td>
<td>Assamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Programme</td>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>TV channel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978-85</td>
<td>Hindi Sikshar Paath</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Hindi-Assamese (bilingual)</td>
<td>AIR, Guwahati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Kabach</td>
<td>King Suhung Mung</td>
<td>Assamese</td>
<td>AIR, Guwahati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Pratham Sakshatkaar</td>
<td>Colonel Anthony</td>
<td>Assamese</td>
<td>AIR, Guwahati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Maitree</td>
<td>Dipak</td>
<td>Assamese</td>
<td>AIR, Guwahati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Mukti</td>
<td>Ranjan</td>
<td>Assamese</td>
<td>AIR, Guwahati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Idd Mubarak</td>
<td>Salim</td>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>AIR, Guwahati</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TV Programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>TV channel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Meeting Chief Minister, Assam</td>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>Assamese</td>
<td>Guwahati Doordarshan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Interview with Social Welfare Minister</td>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Assamese</td>
<td>Guwahati Doordarshan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Interview with 'Bandit Queen' lead actress Seema Biswas</td>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Assamese</td>
<td>Guwahati Doordarshan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Discussion on Cyber Crime</td>
<td>Panelist</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>News Live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Interview on Late Waesqurni Bora</td>
<td>Interviewed by TV reporter</td>
<td>Assamese</td>
<td>DY365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Discussion on the book A Stanza of Sunlight on the Banks of Brahmaputra</td>
<td>Co-panelist with Tess Joyce (England)</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>NETV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Discussion on Future of Assamese Cinema</td>
<td>Panelist</td>
<td>Assamese</td>
<td>NETV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Interview on Late Dr Bhupen Hazarika</td>
<td>Interviewed by TV reporter</td>
<td>Assamese</td>
<td>News Live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Discussion on Property Inheritance of Late Dr Bhupen Hazarika</td>
<td>Panelist</td>
<td>Assamese</td>
<td>NETV</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Awards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Association</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Award</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Katha International Short Story Festival</td>
<td>New Delhi</td>
<td>All India Katha-Goriyoshi Award</td>
<td>Himalayan Mystic Meeting (short story)</td>
<td>Won</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Assam Government Publication Board</td>
<td>Guwahati</td>
<td>Golden Jubilee Novel Award</td>
<td>Bhaba Ananda Sambad (novel)</td>
<td>Won</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Academy of Bengali Poetry</td>
<td>Calcutta</td>
<td>Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray Memorial Award</td>
<td>Lifetime Contribution to Literature, Art &amp; Scientific Research</td>
<td>Won</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Mitra Phukan

Assamese: is an Indian author who writes in English. She is also a translator and columnist.

**The Collector's Wife**

She is the author of *The Collector's Wife* (2005), a novel set against the Assam Agitation of the 1970s and 80s. *The Collector's Wife* was the one of the first generation novels in English written by an Assamese writer to be published by an international house. She is one of the most prominent literary voices in English from North-East India.
She has written several books for children, and won the UNICEF-CBT award for children's writing for her book *Mamoni’s Adventure* (1986). She regularly contributes to *The Assam Tribune*, and is a prominent member of the North East Writers' Forum.

Mitra Phukan is also a trained classical vocalist and writes regularly on music.

She lives in Guwahati, Assam.

**Works**

- *Mamoni’s Adventures* (1986, Children's Book Trust)
- *The Biratpur Adventure* (1994, Children's Book Trust)
- *Terrorist Camp Adventure* (2003, Scholastic)
- *A Monsoon of Music* (2011, Zubaan/Penguin)
- *Guwahati Gaze* (Bhabani Publishers, 2013)
- *Blossoms in the Graveyard* (2016, Niyogi Publishers)
- *A Full Night’s Thievery* (2016, Speaking Tiger)

**READER REVIEW: THE COLLECTOR'S WIFE BY MITRA PHUKAN**

- She is enveloped in loneliness. The lush greenery and the overpowering stench of death are all around her. Mrs Rukmini Bezboruah belongs to the elite class in the provincial town of Parbarpuri. She is the wife of the District Collector, lives in a spacious bungalow on a hill, she is a well-educated part-time college lecturer, she has loving in-laws…yet, she has a strong sense of being incomplete…of not being…happy.

- Set in the turbulence of an insurgency and protest-ridden Assam, the book gives Rukmini a ringside view of the abduction and killings by the extremists. Her husband Siddharth is seldom home and is constantly busy with the burgeoning workload at the administrative level. Rukmini's desire to have a child is met with a barrenness of passion in bed. A chance meeting with a tyre salesman, Manoj Mohanty, their blooming friendship and an inevitable moment of physical tenderness bring colour and joy to Rukmini’s life for the first time in almost a decade. But the horrors to which she was but a mute viewer quickly seep into her life as Siddharth and Manoj both get pulled into the web of the terrorist violence.

- The author Mitra Phukan has skillfully weaved into the story’s fabric both joy and sadness to tug powerfully at the readers’ heartstrings. The plot is well crafted and the language is simple and smooth flowing. The author takes us through Rukmini’s life at a measured pace which allows the reader to fully understand her state of mind and at some level even connect to her.
This is the story of Rukmini who is married to the District Collector of a small town in Assam, and teaches English Literature in the local college. On the surface her life is settled and safe, living in the big, beautiful bungalow on the hill above the cremation ground, seemingly untouched by the toil and sufferings of the common folk below. Yet each time there is an ‘incident’ in the district, the fear and uncertainty that grips the town is reflected in her own life. The violent insurgency that grips Assam runs like a dark river through the novel and forms its backdrop. The Assam students’ agitation of the 1970s and 1980s that began as a movement for self-determination has grown into a full blown insurgency. Kidnappings, extortion and political instability are the order of the day. The issue of illegal migration from across the border has spread mistrust and bitterness among the people of the region and Rukmini’s world is pervaded by this ever-present threat of violence. The meaninglessness of it all, the complexities that divide ‘them’ and ‘us’ and the point at which the two merge are all explored in this powerful novel. The final dénouement is horrifying and yet true—for there can be no other ‘end’ to such a tale, where the personal is so densely interwoven with the political.

Easterine Kire

Easterine Kire is a poet and author who currently lives in northern Norway. The majority of her writings are based in the lived realities of the people in Nagaland in north-east India. Her motivation to write is summed up in this statement by her in an interview, "I felt we needed to create written Naga Literature. We have so much oral narratives but with oral dying out, it's all going to be lost." Apart from writing, she also performs Jazz poetry with her band Jazzpoesi.

Early life

Easterine Kire was born in March 1959 to an Angami Naga family in Nagaland, India. She did her schooling in Kohima. She did her undergraduate study in Shillong followed by a course in journalism in Delhi. She has a PhD in English literature from Savitribai Phule Pune University.

Writings

Easterine Kire published her first book of poetry in 1982 titled "Kelhoukevira". This was also first book of Naga poetry published in English. Her novel "A Naga Village Remembered" published in 2003 was the first novel by a Naga writer in English. Her second novel was "A Terrible Matriarchy" (2007) followed by "Mari" (2010) and "Bitter Wormwood" (2011). She has also written children's books, articles and essays. Her first children's book in English was published in 2011. Kire has also translated 200 oral poems from her native language.

"A Naga Village Remembered" is about a battle between the British forces and one Naga hamlet. "A Terrible Matriarchy" highlights the internal and social strife that grips Nagaland as a state in India. "Mari" is a novel based on the Japanese invasion of India in 1944 via Nagaland. It is a true story of a young mother who lost her fiancé in the war and made the decision to move ahead and live her life. This is an example of how Kire through her works has tried to bring to the fore the everyday lives of the people in Nagaland. "Bitter Wormwood", yet again brought out the human cost (effect on human lives) which was involved behind all the news that made the political headlines from the North-East.

Apart from bringing a focus on the vibrant Naga culture, Kire's work has also brought out the realities which have changed the lives of Naga women.

Awards and recognitions
In 2011, Easterine Kire was awarded the Governor's Medal for excellence in Naga literature. She was also awarded the Free Voice Award by Catalan PEN Barcelona. "Bitter Wormwood" was shortlisted for The Hindu Prize in 2013.

"A Terrible Matriarchy" was selected to be translated into UN languages. Furthermore, the books "A Terrible Matriarchy", "Mari", "Forest Song", "Naga Folktales Retold" and "A Naga Village Remembered" have been translated into German. In 2016, her "When the River Sleeps" was awarded The Hindu Literary Prize.

Summary

‘Easterine Kire brings to life for the first time the authentic voice of the Naga people amidst the horror of the war that overwhelmed their mountaintop home in 1944. It is a voice which has for too long been silent. In her vibrant telling of the story, Easterine shows just what it meant for Nagas to be refugees in their own homeland, their homes and livelihoods around them crushed by the weight of conflict and bloodshed, their families split up and separated forever.’ – Robert Lyman, military historian ‘Even if you haven’t read about or heard of the Battle of Kohima, which stopped the Japanese march into India, you will never forget the battle after reading this book. It is based on Mari’s living memory and a diary she kept during and after the war. Vic, Mari and Pat show by example that it is by living passionately and loving unreservedly that we give depth and meaning to the scattered events and accidents of our lives. Mari and the people around her love deeply, and that sees them through life and death.’ – Paulus Pimomo, Professor of English & Co-Director, African and Black Studies, Central Washington University ‘Easterine’s writings are pivoted on her yearning for truth and grace, enveloped at the same time in the existential human predicament. Her writings are aimed at all categories of readers: young and old, traditional and modern.’ – Dr A.J. Sebastian, Head, Department of English, Nagaland University I open the diary slowly. The childish scrawl of a young girl fills its pages, and as I read on, I am almost that girl again. Carefree, innocent, and oblivious to the way in which the war would change my life forever. I am drawn once again, irresistibly, into that mad whirl of living, dying and loving. That was the war I knew. I had thought then that life began at seventeen. And that life began in spring. And the world was green with the young green of new plants, the hills bathed with thin mist every evening and the nights velvet with the songs of Bing Crosby. How little I knew of life then. Kohima. 1944. The Japanese invade India, life changes overnight, and seventeen-year-old Mari O’Leary and her young sisters are evacuated from their home and separated from the rest of their family. Even as she pines for her fiance Vic, a soldier in the British army, Mari and her sisters are forced to run from village to village, camping in fields, eating herbs for food, seeking shelter or a trustworthy friend, until the madness has passed. A sensitive recounting of a true story, Mari is also the story of Kohima and its people. Easterine Kire brings alive a simpler time in a forgotten place that was ravaged by war before it was noticed by the rest of the world.

About the Author

Easterine Kire (Iralu) has written several books in English including three collections of poetry and short stories. Her first novel, A Naga Village Remembered, was the first-ever Naga novel to be published. Easterine has translated 200 oral poems from her native language, Tenyidie, into English. Her forthcoming books include Forest Song; a volume of spirit stories; and Bitter Wormwood, a novel on the Indo-Naga conflict. Easterine is founder and partner in a publishing house, Barkweaver, which gathers and publishes Naga folktales.
Review: 'Mari' is an engrossing tale of romance
'Mari' is a gentle love story set in the midst of violence of a forgotten battle for Kohima.

'Mari' is a gentle love story set in the midst of violence - the violence of a forgotten battle for Kohima.

It was a decisive battle that ended the Japanese invasion of India during World War II. It raged from April 4 to June 22, 1944, around the town of Kohima. Some of the fiercest fighting took place around the deputy commissioner's bungalow during the siege of Kohima. It came to be called the 'Battle of the Tennis Court' because it took place on the front lawns of the bungalow with British and Japanese soldiers digging trenches at both ends of the tennis court. The outnumbered allied soldiers were helped by the Naga villagers who acted as scouts and ammunition carriers. The siege lasted for two weeks till reinforcements arrived, but it took another two months to drive out the Japanese troops entrenched in the hills.

Easterine Kire relates the true story through her aunt Mari's memories and a diary she maintained during that momentous period. Kire paints a picture of the simple, easy-going life of the Nagas in the green, verdant countryside before they were engulfed in the life-changing war.

"Mari" is the story of a young Naga girl caught in the midst of the battle. Her family is dispersed as they are forced to leave their village home. Separated from her parents, Mari looks after her younger sisters. Through the weeks of the battle, the young girls move from one hiding to another to escape the Japanese soldiers. Short on food, they forage for herbs and greens in the forest and hide in cattle sheds.

Throughout this difficult time, 17-year-old Mari longs for her fiance, a British sergeant who is in the midst of the fighting in Kohima and is shot dead by a sniper just a day before the siege of Kohima is lifted.

Mari and her emaciated sisters return to Kohima, but the village has been destroyed in the artillery shelling: just three wooden posts are left standing in their house. The deputy commissioner suggests demolishing the ruined houses and building a new village, but the village elders are outraged. Levelling the houses would wipe out the old clan boundaries that are marked by the village walls and paths, and would lead to arguments and fights.

Eventually, the villagers are given timber and tin sheets as building material, and with some salvaged material from their broken houses, they rebuild their homes with each others' help. The villagers clear the land of the mortar shells, grenades and other debris. They grieve for their lost kin, but once the mourning period is over, further grieving is discouraged as "it will anger the spirits". It is the Angami way to rebuild life after a calamity.

When spring returns in the year later, new grass covers the craters in the fields and the trees sprout again. And Mari seeks to remake her life and travels to Chandigarh to study nursing.

It is an engrossing story of indomitable spirit which brings to life a forgotten period of history. As Easterine Kire writes, the book "is not just Mari's story. It is the story of Kohima and its people".

*Book: 'Mari'; Author: Easterine Kire; Publisher: Harper Collins; Pages: 171; Price: Rs.250*