

The History of Kokborok Novel: Kokborok Novel and it's Contribution in the Literature.

Dinesh Tripura¹, Tarpana Reang²

¹Guest lectural of BBM College, Agartala

²Guest lectural of Ambedkar College fatikroy

Abstract -- Kokborok literature is one of the popular literature of Tripura. Featuring the everyday lifestyle and culture of the Kokborok speaking community. Kokborok literature having lots of master pieces in the form of literature among that Kokborok Novel plays a very important rule. Novels are cannot be expressed orally. The first kokborok novel was written in the year 1954, it was written by Sudhanwa Debbarma. And the name of the novel is “Chethuang” which is based on the folkstory of the kokborok speaking community. For this he is known as the father of Kokborok novels. From 1954 to till 2025 14 Novelist have contributed mostly for kokborok Novels. And they have done excellent in the field of Kokborok Novels.

Keyword-- Kokborok, Kokborok Literature, Kokborok Novel, Evolution.

I. INTRODUCTION

Kokborok Literature is a combination of oral and written literature. Kokborok literature reflects the history, tradition, culture, folktales and folklores, identity, and cultural practices. Kokborok literature for centuries exists in oral form and the narratives. The development of the kokborok literature began from the 20th century and the first novel in kokborok was written in the year 1954. Kokborok Literature saw the emergence of the novel as a modern literary form much later than its rich oral traditions. Kokborok novels portray the social, cultural, political, and economic realities of the Indigenous communities of Tripura. They explore themes such as identity, tradition, language, land, migration, social change, gender and resistance while reflecting the everyday lives and aspirations of the Tripuri people. Although the number of Kokborok novels remains relatively limited compared with poetry and drama, the genre has grown steadily through the efforts of dedicated writers. Contemporary Kokborok novels play a significant role in preserving Indigenous history, documenting cultural transformations and strengthening the literary and linguistic identity of the Kokborok-speaking community. The growth of the Kokborok novel has been closely linked to the broader movement for the recognition and preservation of the Kokborok language and Indigenous identity.

Through fictional narratives, Kokborok novelists have portrayed issues such as cultural transformation, land and livelihood, migration, identity, gender relations, education and the impact of modernization on Indigenous life. These works not only capture the everyday experiences of the Tripuri people but also serve as important cultural documents that preserve collective memory, oral traditions, customs and worldviews. Although the tradition of novel writing in Kokborok is comparatively smaller than that of poetry and drama it has steadily expanded through the contributions of dedicated writers who have enriched the language with diverse themes and narrative techniques. Contemporary Kokborok novels increasingly engage with questions of social justice, cultural resilience and linguistic preservation while responding to the challenges faced by Indigenous communities in a rapidly changing world. As a result, the Kokborok novel has emerged as an important literary form that contributes to the development of Indigenous literature in Northeast India and offers valuable insights into the history, culture and aspirations of the Tripuri people.

II. METHODOLOGIES

This study on kokborok Novels adopts a qualitative research methodologies to know the evolution of Kokborok Novels. The methodologies includes as textual analysis, Thematic analysis, Historical and kultural approach. This study adopts a qualitative research methodology to examine selected Kokborok novels. It primarily employs textual analysis through close reading to interpret the themes, narrative structure, characterization, symbolism, language and literary techniques used in the texts. The research follows a descriptive, analytical and interpretative approach, aiming to understand how Kokborok novels represent the socio-cultural, historical and political realities of the Indigenous communities of Tripura. Special attention is given to themes such as identity, cultural heritage oral traditions, language preservation, resistance, gender, social transformation and the relationship between tradition and modernity.

The study also incorporates historical and cultural approaches to situate the novels within the broader historical and cultural context of Tripura, while a postcolonial perspective is used to examine questions of marginalization, Indigenous identity, cultural resistance and the assertion of linguistic and cultural rights. Where relevant, a gender perspective is applied to analyse the representation of women and changing gender roles within Tripuri society. The research is based on both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources consist of selected Kokborok novels, while the secondary sources include books, peer-reviewed journal articles, dissertations, literary criticism and historical documents related to Kokborok literature, Indigenous studies and Tripuri culture. By integrating these approaches, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the literary, cultural and social significance of Kokborok novels and their contribution to the preservation and development of Indigenous literature.

III. NOVEL

The novel is one of the most significant and adaptable forms of literary expression, distinguished by its extended prose narrative and its ability to represent the complexities of human life, social relationships and cultural transformation. Although storytelling has existed since ancient civilizations through myths, epics and oral traditions, the novel emerged gradually as a distinct literary genre. Early prose narratives from ancient Greece, Rome, India and Japan contributed to its development, while works such as *The Tale of Genji* by Murasaki Shikibu demonstrated sophisticated characterisation and psychological depth long before the rise of the modern European novel. The modern novel took shape in Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, particularly with the publication of *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes, a work widely regarded as a turning point in the evolution of fictional prose. During the eighteenth century, novelists such as Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding established narrative techniques that emphasized realism, individual experience and social observation. By the nineteenth century, often described as the “Golden Age of the Novel,” writers including Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Leo Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoevsky expanded the scope of the genre by exploring class, morality, industrialisation, psychology and the changing structures of society. The twentieth century witnessed further innovation through modernist and postmodernist experiments in narrative form, language and perspective. Writers increasingly employed techniques such as stream of consciousness, fragmented narration, and multiple viewpoints to capture the complexities of modern existence.

In the contemporary period, the novel continues to evolve by engaging with themes of identity, migration, gender, postcoloniality, environmental concerns and technological change. Its capacity to reflect historical realities while imagining alternative possibilities has ensured its enduring relevance across cultures and languages. Thus, the history of the novel represents not only the development of a literary genre but also the changing intellectual, social and cultural landscapes of human civilisation. Its evolution demonstrates how literature continually adapts to new historical contexts while remaining a powerful medium for exploring individual and collective experiences.

IV. HISTORY OF THE KOKBOROK NOVEL

The history of the Kokborok novel is comparatively recent when compared to other Indian literary traditions. Although Kokborok possesses a rich oral heritage consisting of folktales, myths, legends, songs and proverbs, the development of the novel as a written literary genre began only in the second half of the twentieth century. The emergence of the novel was closely connected with the growth of written Kokborok literature, which gained momentum after the publication of early grammar books and dictionaries at the end of the nineteenth century. The establishment of literary organizations and magazines further encouraged creative writing in Kokborok and laid the foundation for prose fiction.

Pioneer of the Kokborok Novel

Sudhanwa Debbarma (1920–1999): Sudhanwa Debbarma is widely regarded as the father of the Kokborok novel. He played a pioneering role in modernizing Kokborok literature and introducing prose fiction.

1. *Chethuang*

Author: Sudhanwa Debbarma

First published: 1954 (serialized in Kwtal Kothoma)

Book edition: 2016

Publisher: Nabachandana Prakashani (book edition)

Chethuang is considered the earliest Kokborok novel. Although it first appeared as a serialized story in 1954, it was published as a complete book much later in 2016. The novel depicts the customs, beliefs, social life, and emotional world of the Tripuri people. It bridges oral storytelling traditions and modern written fiction, making it a landmark in Kokborok literary history.

2. *Hachuk Khurio* (Part I)

Author: Sudhanwa Debbarma

Publication Year: 1987



International Journal of Recent Development in Engineering and Technology
Website: www.ijrdet.com (ISSN 2347-6435 (Online) Volume 15, Issue 07, July 2026)

Publisher: Kokborok Sahitya Sabha and Sanskriti
Samsad

Hachuk Khurio is recognized as the first modern Kokborok novel published in book form. The novel portrays life in the hills of Tripura and explores themes of indigenous identity, poverty, social transformation, and attachment to ancestral land. It is considered a milestone in Kokborok literature because it established the novel as a mature literary genre.

3. *Hachuk Khurio (Part II)*

Author: Sudhanwa Debbarma

Publication Year: 1994

The second part continues the narrative by depicting changing socio-economic conditions, education, political awareness and cultural transformation among the Tripuri people. Together, both volumes provide a broad picture of indigenous society during a period of rapid change.

4. *Shyamlal Debbarma*

Khong

Publication Year: 1996

Khong is one of the earliest realistic Kokborok novels after *Hachuk Khurio*. It reflects social conflict, family relationships, changing values and the struggles of ordinary people. It demonstrates the growing maturity of Kokborok fiction through its realistic characterization and narrative style.

5. *Tongthai Naitugwi*

Publication Year: 2007

This novel deals with the aspirations of educated youth, identity, social mobility and the tensions between tradition and modernity. It reflects the changing social realities of Tripura in the twenty-first century.

6. *Nanda Kumar Debbarma*

Rung

Publication Year: 2001

Rung is an important contemporary Kokborok novel that examines indigenous identity, social relationships and cultural continuity. Because of its literary value, it has been included in university curricula and is frequently studied by students of Kokborok literature.

7. *Kunjabehari Debbarma*

Mwnakni Pohor

Publication Year: 2002

This novel portrays rural Tripuri society, emphasizing community values, family relationships and the preservation of traditional customs in the face of social change.

8. *Sunil Debbarma*

Langmani Rukungo

Publication Year: 2003

The novel addresses education, social awareness and the aspirations of younger generations while also highlighting the importance of preserving indigenous culture and language.

9. *Atul Debbarma*

1980

Publication Year: 2006

This novel reflects the political and social atmosphere of Tripura during the 1980s, portraying conflict, identity and the experiences of indigenous communities during a period of significant transformation.

10. *Sefali Debbarma*

Lokhopoti

This is the first Novel written by Women in Kokborok.

Other important Contributors are:

Recent studies and literary surveys also mention the contributions of several other Kokborok novelists and fiction writers, including:

- Bijoy Debbarma
- Prabir Kumar Debbarma
- Chandramani Debbarma
- Kiran Debbarma
- Biswajit Debbarma
- Matilal Jamatia
- Andrew Debbarma

These writers have broadened the thematic range of Kokborok fiction by exploring issues such as gender, migration, education, ethnic identity, environmental concerns and the challenges of globalization. However, comprehensive bibliographic information for all of their novels is not yet available in publicly accessible records.

V. CONCLUSION

The evolution of the Kokborok novel marks a significant milestone in the development of Kokborok literature. Although the tradition of novel writing began relatively late compared with the rich oral heritage of the Kokborok-speaking community, it has grown steadily through the dedicated efforts of pioneering and contemporary writers.



Beginning with Sudhanwa Debbarma's *Chethuang* in 1954, Kokborok novels have evolved from adaptations of oral narratives and folklore to sophisticated literary works addressing complex social, cultural, political and historical realities. The contributions of writers such as Sudhanwa Debbarma, Shyamlal Debbarma, Nanda Kumar Debbarma, Kunja Bihari Debbarma, Sunil Debbarma, Atul Debbarma, Sefali Debbarma and many others have enriched Kokborok literature by expanding its thematic and stylistic dimensions. Their novels portray indigenous identity, language, culture, customs, land, education, gender relations, modernization, migration and resistance, thereby preserving the collective memory and lived experiences of the Tripuri people. These works not only entertain readers but also serve as valuable historical and cultural documents that safeguard the traditions and worldview of the Kokborok-speaking community. Despite its comparatively small corpus, the Kokborok novel has established itself as an important genre within the broader framework of Indigenous literature in Northeast India. It has strengthened the status of the Kokborok language, encouraged literary creativity and contributed to the preservation and promotion of Indigenous knowledge systems. The increasing participation of new writers, including women novelists, demonstrates the expanding scope and vitality of Kokborok fiction.

However, the study also reveals the need for greater scholarly attention to Kokborok novels. Many works remain difficult to access, several publications lack proper bibliographical documentation, and comprehensive literary criticism is still limited. There is an urgent need for systematic research, translation into other languages, digital archiving and republication of rare texts to ensure that this rich literary heritage reaches a wider readership.

In conclusion, the Kokborok novel has become a powerful medium for expressing the aspirations, struggles, and cultural resilience of the Tripuri people. Its continued growth not only enriches Kokborok literature but also makes an important contribution to Indian regional and Indigenous literatures. With sustained academic research, institutional support and literary preservation, the Kokborok novel will continue to flourish as a vital expression of the history, identity and cultural consciousness of the Kokborok-speaking community.

SWIMUK/RWKJAKMUNG (REFERENCE)

- [1] Debbarma, Sudhanwa -2026,Chethuwang, Nabachandana prakashani.
- [2] Debbarma, Sudhanwa -1987,Hachuk Khurio-I, Kokborok sahitya sanskriti samsad, Agartala.
- [3] Debbarma, Shyamlal-1996,Khong, Kokborok sahitya sanskriti samsad, Agartala.
- [4] Debbarma, Nanda Kumar-2001,Rung, Hachukni Khorang publisher, Agartala.
- [5] Debbarma,Sunil-2003,Langmani Rukungo, Kokborok sahitya samsad, Agartala.
- [6] Debbarma,Kunja Bihari-2002,mwnakni pohor, Hachukni Khorang Publisher, Agartala.
- [7] Debbarma, Bijoy -2008,Dholai twima Naro, Kokborok tei hukum mission, Tripura.
- [8] Debbarma, Sefali-2010,Lokhopoti, Language wing education department, TTAADC.
- [9] Debbarma,Atul-2005, 1980, Hachukni khorang publisher, Agartala.
- [10] Debbarma, Biplab-2025,Kokborok kok tei kokrwai chubachu bijap, Khumpui bijap karima nok, Agartala.
- [11] Debbarma, Dr.Biman & Rabindra-2025, Donidong, Kokborok sahitya Sabha, krishnanagar Agartala.
- [12] Devvarma, Naresh Chandra-2010, Kokborok bhasha sahityer kramabikash, nabachandra prakashani, Agartala.