

Indian Journal of Modern Research and Reviews

This Journal is a member of the '*Committee on Publication Ethics*'

Online ISSN:2584-184X



Research Article

Women in the Pages of the Medieval History of Assam- A Study

Dr. Pranjal Bhuyan

Associate Professor, Department of History, Tengakhat College, Dibrugarh, Assam, India

Corresponding Author: * Dr. Pranjal Bhuyan

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21503405>

Abstract

Ahoms ruled Assam for long six hundred years (1228-1826 AD) and contributed immensely to its culture, economy and society. The Ahoms were the first started the practice of writing history in Assam. The male characters figured in the history as the history was written under the patronage of the royal and the composer was usually a man. In the male-dominated social system, however, a few women were able to record their names on the pages of history with impeccable contributions. This paper attempts to highlight the life of some of the most important women who occupied the pages of history by glorifying the medieval period of Assam.

Manuscript Information

- **ISSN No:** 2584-184X
- **Received:** 07-06-2026
- **Accepted:** 16-07-2026
- **Published:** 23-07-2026
- **MRR:**4(7); 2026: 166-169
- **©2026, All Rights Reserved**
- **Plagiarism Checked:** Yes
- **Peer Review Process:** Yes

How to Cite this Article

Bhuyan P. Women in the Pages of the Medieval History of Assam- A Study. Indian J Mod Res Rev. 2026;4(7):166-169.

Access this Article Online



www.mrrjournal.in

KEYWORDS: Ahoms, History, Women

1. INTRODUCTION

Ahoms ruled Assam for long six hundred years (1228-1826 AD) and contributed immensely to its culture, economy and society. Women have occupied a respectable place in Assam and Indian social life since ancient times. But history shows less importance on it. Male characters were preferred in history mainly because, the history are being composed under the patronage of Kings and the writers were usually male. In the male dominated social system, however, a few women were able to record their name through their works. These women have unique contributions to Assamese culture. The tradition of keeping records and writing genealogical facts during the Ahom age created a type of historical writings known as Buranji, which are considered as the most important and reliable primary sources of constructing the history of Medieval Assam. This paper attempts to highlight the contributions of some women who occupies the pages of history by glorifying the view of Assamese people in the Middle Ages.

The first among the great Assamese woman to occupy the pages of history of Assam was Kamrupa's princess Amritprabha. It was mentioned in Kalhan's Rajtarangini that the King of Kashmir Meghvahan married Kamrupa's princess Amritprabha in the first century A.D. Amritprabha contributed significantly to the propagation of Buddhism in Kashmir. Amritprabha also built a Buddhist monastery known as Amrit Bhawan for the Buddhist monk in Kashmir. The ruins of Amrit Bhawan still exist in Kashmir.¹ S

2. METHODOLOGY

The method of this research paper is analytical and historical. For the purpose of the study, major sources of information are gathered from the Assamese Chronicles (Buranjis) biographical works of the Vaishnava saints of medieval Assam (charit puthi), epigraphic and archeological sources. Secondary sources in the form of articles published by different authors in different newspapers, periodicals, magazines, souvenir etc. and books are also be consulted to supplement the primary sources. In order to find out the women who occupy the pages of Medieval History of Assam, not only the available sources scrutinized carefully, but attempt has also been made to see things as objectively as possible.

2.0 Women Who Occupy the Pages of Medieval History of Assam

The Ahoms started the practice of writing history in Assam. At first male characters dominated the history but with the passage of time few great women managed to capture the pages of history with their own contributions. Some of the women who enriched medieval history are - Joymoti Konwari, Mula Gabharu, Chaw Sing Konwari, Ramani Gabharu, Phuleswari Konwari, Rajini Konwari, Ambika Konwari, Kuranganayani, Radha and Rukmini, etc.

2.01 Joymoti Konwari:

Joymoti is a renowned name of medieval Assam. Joymoti was the daughter of Laithepna Borgohain and wife of Ahom prince

Langi Gadapani alias Gadadhar Singha. She was brutally tortured to death by Ahom king Sulikpha alias Loraraja. The next decade of the Saraighat war was a period of darkness for the Ahom monarchy. At that time, the Ahom monarchy was in a state of chaos due to lack of efficient kings. Seven kings lost the throne in ten years due to inefficiency as well as the conspiratory activities of officers. Laluksola Barphukan took all the powers in his own by putting Sulikpha, a fourteen-year-old minor, on the Ahom throne. To retain his power Laluksola Barphukan married off his five-year-old daughter to fourteen-year-old Sulikpha. He took various measures to protect Sulikpha's political future. As a part of such system, Laluksola Barphukan ordered that every Ahom prince who is likely to be king in the future be either sentenced to death or to be mutilated. At that time, a prince named Langi Gadapani Konwar was upheld to be the next king, who was the son of king of Gobar of Tungkhungia clan. Gadapani left the capital and went into hiding on the advice of his wife Joymoti. Gadapani left Joymoti and his two sons Lai and Lesai under the shelter of mother Sidheswari. Sulikpha's troops caught Joymoti and punished her in the Jerenga field without finding Gadapani. Joymoti did not share any information of Gadapani with the royal officials even though she had to endure untold harassment. Joymoti died on 13th Chaitya of saka 1601 (1679 AD) after enduring untold torture for nearly fourteen days. Joymoti, who sacrificed her life by saving her husband's life thinking about the future security of the Ahom kingdom, will always be remembered in the pages of Assam history.

2.02 Mulagabharu

Mulagabharu is also an exceptional woman shining in the history of Medieval Assam. Mulagabharu was the wife of Frachengmung Borgohain. During the reign of Suhungmung, Turbak Khan, a commander of the Sultan of Bengal invaded Assam in the year 1532 AD. Frachengmung died in the battle against Turbak Khan. When his wife Mulagabharu got the news of her husband's death she climbed on to the back of an elephant and fought against the soldiers of Sultan. Fighting valiantly, Mulagabharu laid down her life on the battlefield. Historian Surya Kumar Bhuyan narrates the story of Mulagabharu in this way - "The reason for Frachengmung's death was that he was unable to carry the armor clothes on his way to war. The armor clothes act as a shield and doesn't let any harm come to any person fighting in the battle field. This particular cloth is supposed to be prepared from scratch- from plucking cotton, spinning the cotton yarned and weaving it before sunrise. Therefore, in those times, wife of Assamese soldiers use to weave armor cloth overnight for their husbands going to war. As Frachengmung Borgohain couldn't wear the armor cloth to war, Mulagabharu decided to fight equally against the enemies along with her husband in the battle field.² Thus, for the sake of her motherland, Mulagabharu laid down her life and is been remembered in the history of Assam by fighting against the invading Turkish Muslims.

2.03. Chao-ching Konwori:

Chao-ching Konwori was the wife of Suklengmung alias Gorgoyan Raja. She was the princess of Nararajya. She was able to write letters with her feet.³ On her advice, her husband constructed forts (Gar) and built the new capital city of Gargaon. She played an instrumental role during the reign of her husband and is still remembered as a remarkable woman.

2.04. Raajani Kunwori:

Raajani Konwori, daughter of King Pratapdhvaj of Kamata, and wife of the Ahom king Sukhangpha was a political advisor of the Ahom kingdom for a long time. Along with her husband Sukhangpha, she played an active role during the reign of several Ahom kings, namely, Sukhrangpha, Sutupha, Tao Khyamthi and Sudangpha (also known as Bamuni Konwar). Following the death of King Sutupha, it was Raajani Konwori who helped maintain the rule of the kingdom through Burhagohain and Borgohain due to the absence of a capable heir to the Ahom throne.

2.05. Ramani Gabhoru:

In 1661/1662, the Ahom kingdom was attacked by Mughal commander Mir Jumla. The Mughals managed to capture the capital city Gargaon, thereby requiring King Jayadhwaj to sign an insulting treaty with the Mughals in the year 1663. According to the treaty, the Ahom king had to gift a large amount of gold and other materials to the then Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb. In addition, he also had to send his daughter Ramani Gabhoru to the Mughal harem.⁴ At that time, Ramani Gabhoru was just six years old. After staying for some time in the Mughal palace in Delhi, she was married to the emperor's third son, Sultan Azamtara in 1668. She converted to Islam and changed her name to Rehmat Bano Begum after marriage. This sacrificial act of hers for the sake of national security is seen as a great example of patriotism and courage.

2.06. Phooleswari Konwori:

Ahom king Siva Singha's wife, queen Phooleswari Konwori was the first Ahom queen to rule the Ahom kingdom. In the eighth year of Siva Singha's reign, the royal astrologer predicted a probability of 'chatrabhanga', meaning, the dismantling of the kingdom under the king's rule. Hence, according to the suggestion of the astrologer, the king stayed away from his royal duties and handed over the same to his queen. Phooleswari Konwori was given the title of 'Bor-Roja'. She came from a humble background before becoming the queen and later 'Bor-Roja'. As such, many historians are of the view that the weakening of the Ahom kingdom began with the arrogance and pride shown by Phooleswari after gaining the authority of the throne. However, history of Assam cannot deny the numerous welfare activities initiated by her. She became the first woman in Assam to establish a public school in the Ahom capital city Rangpur. It was known as 'Bor-Rojar Porhaxali'. In later times, Phooleswari School was set up in Sivasagar to honour her keen interest towards education. This school is a full-fledged school at the present time too. She was

behind the digging of the historical Gourisagar pond, constructed the Sivadol, Vishnudol and Devidol beside the pond.⁵ Under her patronage, Kabiraj Chakraborty authored 'Shakuntala', 'Sankhachur Bodh Kabya'; Ananta Acharya wrote 'Ananda Lahari' and Kabichandra Dwij wrote books named 'Kaamkumar Horon' and 'Dharma Puran'.

2.07. Ambika Konwori:

After the death of Phooleswari Konwori, her sister and another wife of King Siva Singha, Ambika Konwori was entrusted with the title of 'Bor-Roja'. It was under her instructions the Sivadol, Vishnudol and Devidol were constructed along with the Sivasagar pond.⁶ Sukumar Borkaith composed the 'Hasti Vidyarnab', a book about the medical treatment of elephants, under her patronage. The illustrated book includes a picture of Ambika Konwori and Siva Singha together.

2.08. Kuranga Nayani:

Kuranga Nayani is another significant woman of medieval period in the history of Assam. She was a princess from Manipur. She was married to Ahom king Rajeswar Singha as a sign of friendship with her father King Jai Singha. After the demise of Rajeswar Singha, during the reign of Lakshmi Singha, the Moamariya rebellion took place and Moamariyas captured the Ahom throne. Ramakanta, a leader of the rebellion became the king and Ragh Moran took the title of 'Borbaruah'. Ragh Borbaruah forcefully made Kuranga Nayani his wife. She played an instrumental role in helping the Ahoms to reclaim their throne. The Ahom soldiers arrived at Ragh Borbaruah's place in the disguise of a Bihu Husori group. When Borbaruah bowed down to the Husori group, Kurang Nayani killed him with her sword thus bringing an end to the Moamariya rule.⁷

2.09. Radha and Rukmini:

Radha and Rukmini were the wives of Naharkhora, one of the leaders of the Moamariya rebellion. Both of them fought with great courage and bravery against the Ahoms. "Due to their remarkable war tactics and bravery, the Ahom soldiers believed that they possessed divine powers. The Ahoms thought that Radha and Rukmini were able to stop bullets just by the loose ends of their clothes. When the Ahom throne was reclaimed from the Moamariyas, both these valiant ladies were killed by their enemy troops".⁸

2.10. Maju Aideu:

Maju Aideu was the sister of Chandrakanta Singha. It was due to her skills that her brother handed over the responsibility of Naoxolia Phukan (concerned with supervision of the naval army). She was the supervisor of six thousand workers engaged in building and repairing boats. After the arrival of British rulers in Assam, Maju Aideu was assigned the position of Mouzadar of the Naduaar region.⁹

3. CONCLUSION

Thus, there are many Assamese women who made their marks in history in the largely patriarchal society of the region. Apart

from the women discussed in this paper, Nangboklo Gabhoru, the daughter of Ahom king Suhungmung, Queen Chandraprobha, the wife of Kachari king, Taamradhwaj, Ahom princess Hemo Aideu were significant. These women too enriched the state of Assam through their contributions in different aspects. As such, these women remain memorable for the history of Assam.

REFERENCES

1. Bhuyan SK. Axom Buranjir Kotha. Guwahati: Bani Mandir; 2010. p. 193.
2. Bhuyan SK. Axom Buranjir Kotha. Guwahati: Bani Mandir; 2010. p. 193.
3. Bhuyan SK. Axom Buranjir Kotha. Guwahati: Bani Mandir; 2010. p. 194.
4. Barua H, Bhuyan SK, editors. Asom Buranji. Guwahati: Bani Mandir; 2010. p. 47.
5. Bhuyan SK. Tunkhungia Buranji. Guwahati: Bani Mandir; 2010. p. 38; Bhuyan SK. Saatsori Axom Buranji. Guwahati: Bani Mandir; 2014. p. 109.
6. Bhuyan SK. Tunkhungia Buranji. Guwahati: Bani Mandir; 2010. p. 38.
7. Bhuyan SK. Tunkhungia Buranji. Guwahati: Bani Mandir; 2010. p. 69.
8. Bhuyan SK. Axom Buranjir Kotha. Guwahati: Bani Mandir; 2010. p. 199.
9. Bhuyan SK. Axom Buranjir Kotha. Guwahati: Bani Mandir; 2010. p. 200.

Creative Commons License

This article is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution–Non-commercial–No Derivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) License. This license permits users to copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for non-commercial purposes only, provided that appropriate credit is given to the original author(s) and the source. No modifications, adaptations, or derivative works are permitted.

About the Author



Dr. Pranjal Bhuyan is an Associate Professor in the Department of History at Tengakhat College, Dibrugarh, Assam, India. Dr. Bhuyan specializes in Indian history, particularly the history and culture of Assam, with research interests in regional historiography, socio-cultural studies, and historical traditions. Dr. Bhuyan has contributed to academic research through teaching, publications, and scholarly activities.