

# Saraighat Abhidhan: A Lexicographical Study

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## ABSTRACT:

*Dictionary is a store house of words of a certain language. In general, the term dictionary stands for the reference books those list the words of a language in alphabetical order and give their pronunciation, formation of words with different letters, meaning and etymology. It plays a vital role in preservation and growth of a language. The primary job of a dictionary is to indicate the correct spelling, pronunciation, visual and grammatical detail as well as various styles of using a word from different perspectives in spoken and written language. None but a dictionary can give us the detail information such as, the origin of a word, its source, development and present way of pronunciation. Dictionaries could be divided in three kinds based on their medium (printed and electronic), nature (general dictionary and specific dictionary) and utility (monolingual, bilingual and multilingual).*

*A general dictionary is a glossary where the words used (unused words are also included) by a certain linguistic community are compiled in a systematic way with their sounds, grammatical information, meanings, examples etc. Saraighat Abhidhan (শৰাইঘাট অভিধান), selected for this study is considered as a general dictionary published in 21<sup>st</sup> century (2011). Here is a lexicographical study on Saraighat Abhidhan. In this study 'Saraighat Abhidhan' has been the primary source while reference books have been used as secondary source to collect information. On the other hand, two methods have been used for analysing the data – Narrative approach, Analytical approach.*

**KEYWORD :** Dictionary, Lexicography, General Dictionary, Saraighat Abhidhan.

## 0.1 Introduction

A language is based upon words. Dictionary is a store house of words of a certain language. In general, the term dictionary stands for the reference books those list the words of a language in alphabetical order and give their pronunciation, formation of words with different letters, meaning and etymology. A dictionary also includes the synonyms and antonyms of a word. It plays a vital role in preservation and growth of a language. The primary job of a dictionary is to indicate the correct spelling, pronunciation, visual and grammatical detail as well as various styles of using a word from different perspectives in spoken and written language. None but a dictionary can give us the detail information such as, the origin of a word, its source, development and present way of pronunciation. Dictionaries could be divided in three kinds based on their medium (printed and electronic), nature (general dictionary and specific dictionary) and utility (monolingual, bilingual and multilingual).

Lexicography is an art. This art form directs the linguistic and technical aspects of designing a dictionary in scientific way giving major concern to the readers and their target studies. Rules followed while designing a dictionary are called lexicography. Here is a lexicographical study on Saraighat Abhidhan (শৰাইঘাট অভিধান).

### 0.1.1 History of Assamese Dictionary

History of Assamese Dictionary goes back to the year 1795 with Tengai Pandit's 'Baramra' (বৰঅম্ৰ) and Ramai Mohan's 'Latiamra' (লতাম্ৰ). Moreover Ruchinath Kamrupi's 'Sanskrit-Assami-Kamrupi Sabdakosh' (সংস্কৃত-আসামী-কামৰূপী শব্দকোষ)(1810), Jaduram Dekabaruah's 'Manuscript of Bengali Dictionary with Assamese Definition' and a portion of dictionary created by Anandaram Dhekial Phukan which was published in 'Arunudoi' in the year 1856, December issue paved the way of Dictionary making in Assam. However the history of writing pure Assamese dictionary had begun only in 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Miles Bronson's 'Asamiya Aru Engraji Abhidhan' (অসমীয়া আৰু ইংৰাজী অভিধান) is actually the torchbearer of dictionary making in Assam. Later on, many general {'Hemkosh' (হেমকোষ), 'Porhasaliya' (পড়াশালীয়া), 'Chandrakanta' (চন্দ্রকান্ত), in 20<sup>th</sup> century, 'Chalanta' (চলন্ত), 'Asamiya Jatiya Abhidhan' (অসমীয়া জাতীয় অভিধান) in 21<sup>st</sup> century etc.}, Specific Dictionary {'Brajawoli Bhaxar Byakaran Aru Abhidhan' (ব্ৰজাৱলী ভাষাৰ ব্যাকৰণ আৰু অভিধান), 'Darangi Sobdakosh' (দৰঙী শব্দকোষ) in 20<sup>th</sup> century, 'Baishnav Sobdakosh' (বৈষ্ণৱ শব্দকোষ), 'Samarthak Sobdakosh' (সমাৰ্থক শব্দকোষ) in 21<sup>st</sup> century etc.}, electronic Dictionary ['Pachim Asamiya Sobdakosh' (পশ্চিম অসমীয়া শব্দকোষ), 'Axomiya Software Abhidhan' (অসমীয়া চফটৱেৰে অভিধান) {first Assamese software dictionary}] and online dictionaries such as 'Xobdo' (শব্দ) and 'Axomi' (অসমী) have been published. Saraighat Abhidhan, selected for this study is considered as a general dictionary published in 21<sup>st</sup> century (2011).

### 0.2 Aspects of this study:

- The main aspect of this study is to discuss the new and innovative factors Saraighat Abhidhan has brought as a 21<sup>st</sup> century general dictionary.
- To discuss the way it has followed to explain the meaning and origin of a word from lexicographical point of view.
- To discuss how Saraighat Abhidhan has fulfilled the requirements of a dictionary at present time.
- To discuss the unique features Saraighat Abhidhan has included which are not found in any other general dictionary.

### 0.2 Methodology

Required data for this study have been taken from two sources –

- Primary source and
- Secondary source

Saraighat Abhidhan has been the primary source while Reference books has been used as secondary source to collect information. On the other hand, two methods have been used for analysing the data –

- Narrative approach
- Analytical approach

### 1.0 Saraighat Abhidhan as a general dictionary

A general dictionary is a glossary where the words used (unused words are also included) by a certain linguistic community are compiled in a systematic way with their sounds, grammatical information, meanings, examples etc. A dictionary also includes the unused words as well. A general dictionary plays an important role in preserving the words which are not very commonly used. When required it also includes pictures to explain

the meaning of a particular word. It is divided into three parts – first part, main part and the last part. A general dictionary can be monolingual, bilingual or multilingual.

By nature Saraighat Abhidhan written by Dinesh Chandra Goswami in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a general dictionary. It has included meaning of a word, its origin, grammatical information, definition of its meaning and explanation as well as some pictures and examples to give a clearer concept of the word. This is a bilingual dictionary where it is listed in a sequence like Assamese-Assamese-English. It has all three parts – first, main and the last.

In the first part, an instruction to the readers, explanation about the symbols used and a forward note of the chief editor have been included. In the instruction chapter a reader will get to know how the data have been presented in the main part without going through it. While explaining about the symbols introduction of the grammatical term and actual phonetic description have been included. From the forward note of the Chief Editor a brief idea about the dictionary could be generated.

Words are listed alphabetically in this dictionary and serial numbers are used while a word has two or more meanings. To make the meaning more clear Saraighat Abhidhan has relied on examples and pictures. With all the characteristics of a general dictionary it has included 12 additional chapters in the last part along with measurements, units, numbers, words to refer different relatives etc.

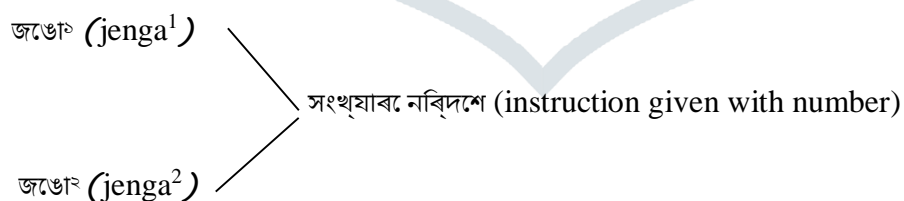
## 2.0 Lexicographical study of the Saraighat Abhidhan

### 2.1 First part

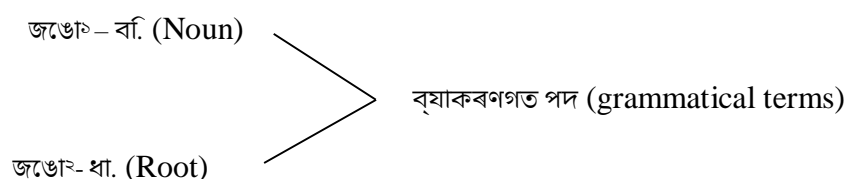
First part of the Saraighat Abhidhan includes all the features a general dictionary should include, such as, prologue, instruction to the readers, symbol analysis, grammatical instruction etc. Here is a discussion on the first part of the Saraighat Abhidhan.

#### 2.1.1 Instruction

Instruction to the readers is an important part included in the first part of Saraighat Abhidhan that helps a reader to understand what are the areas covered while collecting words and how the words have been listed with their meanings. Here it shows how the words have been listed with the help of numeric (numbers are written in superscripts) –



Instructions about the use of grammatical terms are also given (e.g. noun, pronoun, root word etc. are indicated).



In Saraighat Abhidhan the meaning of a word is given in two languages along with descriptions, examples and excerpts. For example –

জঙে-খা. ঠা জংে দা; জঙেবে বন্ধ কৰ্। to obstruct with theory branches.

২।মাছ গােট খাই থাকবিৰ বাবে বাঁহৰ জংে, মাছে খঙৰা পাতৰ গছৰ ডাল আদাি দাি “পথাৰৰ মূৰত কেইবাটাও পুখুৰী জঙেই খঙা” (লীলা গগট) to lay branches of bamboo in a pit for shattering fishes.

In the above examples more than one meaning is given as well as an effort to make it clear in English is also seen. On the other hand, examples are given to show the use of that particular word. In this dictionary name of various trees, animals and creatures have been included and as the instruction goes it has mentioned the English and scientific names as well. For example –

আমলখাি –বাি. এবধি বগৰীৰ নচিনা গুটি লগা গছ; এই গছৰ গুটি আমলখাি স্বাদ কহে। (a berry like fruit with a pungent taste, gooseberry)

English name – embolic myrobalan; (< সং. আমলক) – (Origin of the word is Sanskrit)

Scientific name – phyllanthus emblica

The instruction chapter carried by Saraighat Abhidhan gives an overall idea about the dictionary.

### 2.1.2 Analysis of symbol

In the first part of Saraighat Abhidhan, a list of symbols with analysis has been included. 38 symbols have been used in the dictionary. Along with grammatical terms the source language of a particular word is also mentioned with symbols.

### 2.1.3 Forward note of the Chief Editor

In the Forward note of the chief editor of Saraighat Abhidhan the rules have been discussed which are followed in terms of alphabetical order, scientific names, spellings and terminology. Form this part we can get a quick idea about the dictionary.

#### General rule of alphabetical order

1. Vowels from ‘অ’ (a) to ‘ঔ’ (Ou) and consonants from ‘ক’ (Ka) to ‘ক্খ’ (Khya) are arranged in proper sequence. ‘ক্খ’ has been listed as an individual letter whereas; no difference is shown between ‘য’ (Ja) and ‘য়’ (Ya).
2. Words with the nasal sound ঙ্ (Moon dot) are kept before the similar words without it. For example –  
চঁক – বাি. অকস্মাত খেোৱা ভয়। (Shock)  
চক – বাি. দীঘলীয়া চুঙা আকাৰৰ গাঁবুৰ দুইমূৰে লগেোৱা ঘূৰণীয়া বঙচঙীয়া কাপেোৰা।(long hollow cover made with colourful clothes to put on both the ends of a pillow)
3. Specific sounds such as ‘ং’ (Anuswar) and ‘ঃ’ (Bixorgo) have been placed after the vowels.
4. A user may not have prior ideas about the consonant ending signs and therefore such words are listed as usual considering as they are not consonant ending. To make it more user friendly both new and old styles of conjoined letters (*juktakshar* or two or more successive letters which represent a single phonological unit) have been included. For example – গু/ গা = গ (g) + (u) = gu

শু/ শা = শ (s,x) + (u) = su, xu

হু/ হাঁ = হ (h) + (u) = hu etc.

### Scientific names:

1. In the dictionary the recent and appropriate scientific names of the creatures and trees are been used. In case of trees and animals with numerous variants only one or two species have been included.
2. The dictionary has covered various foreign words as well as scientific and technical words which are commonly used in our day to day life.
3. For transcription the dictionary has taken help for ‘Asamiya Akhor Jutani Aru Lipyantar Paddhati’ (অসমীয়া আখৰ জে.টনি) and ‘Bijnan Abhidhan’ (বজ্জ্ঞান অভিধান). Moreover, it has taken reference from ‘Chalanta Abhidhan’ (চলন্ত অভিধান) published by the Government of Assam and ‘Chandrakanta Abhidhan’ (চন্দ্রকান্ত অভিধান) by Gauhati University.

### Spelling method :

1. This dictionary has followed ‘Chalanta Abhidhan’ and ‘Chandrakanta Abhidhan’ in terms of spelling. It has accepted the commonly used spellings accepted by other dictionaries.
2. For transcription it has followed the instruction as per ‘Asamiya Akhor Jutoni Aru Lipyantar Paddhati’ (অসমীয়া আখৰ জে.টনি আৰু লিপ্যন্তৰ পদ্ধতি). ‘Jya’sign (‘+য’) has been kept. For example – কাৰ্জ্য (Karjya), ধোৰ্জ্য (Dhoarjya), etc.
3. For convenient arrangement of letters, simplified version of words has been kept where two consonants were used earlier. For example – পৰ্বত, নৰ্মাগ etc.

### English analysis

1. English meanings are also given along with Assamese. E.g. – অকালৰ – বঁ. অসময় আৰুতৰা not in proper time or season; out of season.
2. Assamese phrases and idioms are also included.
3. More than five hundred pictures have been used in the dictionary.
4. In the additional chapter, various lists such as, terminology of administrative words, luminaries and galaxies, notes on the lives and achievements of a number of notable personalities of the world of different times, accounts, measurements, rule of proofreading etc. have been included.

## 2.2 Main part

Small unit structures, categorization, word sequence, meaning, origin, examples, grammatical info, pictures, phrases, scientific names, spelling method etc. are the significant elements of the main part of Saraighat Abhidhan.

### Small unit structures

1. Listings of word with all the detail info are segregated in 41 chapters as per the 41 letters, both vowels and consonants.
2. The first chapter of the dictionary is ‘অ’ (the first vowel) and the final chapter is ‘ক্ৰ’ (the last consonant).
3. Words with the nasal sound ‘ঁ’ (Moon dot) are kept before the similar words without it. For example –

আঁহ- বঁ. – ফল, গছ, মঙহ আদৰি ভতিৰত থকা সূতাৰ নচিনা অতি মৰ্হি সংযোগকাৰী বস্তু (fibre)।

আহ-ধা. – ওচৰলৈ আগমণ কৰ; ওচৰ চাপ (come)।

4. Words and their meaning and origin are given in bold in the dictionary while the examples are given in italics.
5. The last word of the page has been put as footer in every page of the dictionary.
6. Every page of the dictionary has been laid out in two columns and the words and info are included one after another.
7. Use of small bracket (), comma (,), semicolon (;), sequence number (1,2), Guillemet (>), hyphen (-) etc. could be seen in Saraighat Abhidhan. For example, as there are a number of meanings of the word ‘দ্বন্দ্ব’, (*dwanda*) its various meanings and details have been put with serial number 1,2,3 which are kept in order with the use of semicolon (P 503).

### Listings of word:

1. Meaning of a word is given in both Assamese and English languages as this is a bilingual dictionary. Scientific names of animals and trees are also included. Examples and quotes can be seen as well. For example – আমোল-মোল (sound) বৰ্ণি. (grammatical instruction) অতিসুগন্ধ; সুগন্ধৰে ভৰি পৰা (meaning) কতেকী ফুলৰ গন্ধত আমোল-মোল হৈ পৰিছে (example)। a strong fragrance (English meaning).
2. Three Sanskrit vowels ‘ঋ’, ‘ঌ’ and ‘ড’ have been included in the dictionary though it has clearly mentioned that there is no such use of these letters in Assamese.
3. Introduction of the consonants ‘ঙ’ (nga) and ‘ঞ’ (niyo) is given with a special mention that no Assamese word begins with these two letters.
4. Though earlier there was no Assamese word that began with ‘ৰ’ (Wo), now there are a lot of tribal words, foreign words and technical words have become a part of Assamese language. Example – বৰকম্বু (from Karbi language), ব’ল’কতৰ (from Dimasa language), ৰাট (technological word)

**Meaning of a word:** To give a clear meaning of the words Saraighat Abhidhan has used definition, synonym, examples and pictures. Example – ফচো (Owl) ঘূৰণীয়া চকু আৰু চপেটো মুখৰে এবিধ নশিচৰ চৰাই (definition – a night bird with flat face and round eyes); নহাঁতী চৰাই।

**Origin of a word:** The dictionary has mentioned about the origin or root of the words which are found in Assamese but not originally belong to this language. Example – গাজৰ্ণা (thunder) (সং. গৰ্জ্জন) (original Sanskrit) p 248. কুলী (Cuckoo) (তুৰ্কী. কুলী) (original Turkish) p 185

**Phrase:** Use of phrase is a notable significance of the Saraighat Abhidhan and it has played a vital role in preserving phrases in Assamese language. Example - গছৰ আগৰ সমান আয়ুস খ. (life as long as the tip of the tree) দীঘলীয়া আয়ুস। গছত গৰু উঠা খ. (as impossible as a cow climbing on a tree) অসম্ভৱ।

### 2.3 Last part

The last part of the Saraighat Abhidhan has been named as ‘Parixista’ (additional chapters) and divided into 12 parts. In these 12 parts, administrative terminology (e.g. Abandoner – পৰিত্যাগী, Absent – অনুপস্থিতি, অভাৱ, অবৰ্তমান), scientific terminology (e.g. biolith – জৈৱপ্ৰস্তুত, calculation area – গণনা অঞ্চল), list of 100 commonly misspelt words (correct spelling - অগমি, wrong spelling - অনমি), use of punctuation marks (e.g. Use of comma, quotes like, Copernicus said, “It is the earth that moves around the sun.”), signs of proofreading, practice of proofreading, Assamese numeric and positions (প্ৰথম - first, ১ম – 1st), Assamese words used for addressing people of various relationships (e.g. father’s father is the relationship and the word ‘ককা’ is the way

to address him), introductory lists, list of luminaries and galaxies, Greek letters and mathematical signs, numbers, units, measurements etc. have been included.

### 3.0 Conclusion

1. Saraighat Abhidhan is a general bilingual dictionary.
2. It has all three significant parts such as first, main and last parts.
3. Use of picture is a significant characteristic of Saraighat Abhidhan. Total 513 pictures have been included in the dictionary.
4. Inclusion of scientific name of trees, animals and other creatures is a notable feature of Saraighat Abhidhan.
5. It plays a vital role in preserving Assamese phrases.
6. Although no Assamese word begins with the letter 'ৱ' (Wo), a lot of tribal words, foreign words and technical words those have become a part of Assamese language are included in the dictionary.
7. The scientific terminology is playing a crucial role in the dictionary. Moreover, enclosure of administrative terminology, measurements, units, numeric etc. is a significant aspect of the dictionary.

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