

**ASSAMESE NOVEL IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY****Anjali Basumatary**

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**ABSTRACT**

The Assamese Novel were born since in the late nineteenth century. The influence of the western literature is significantly distinguished in early periods of Assamese novel. Nearly hundred and thirty years ago in the 'Jonaki era', different Assamese novelist tried their hands in contributing to the creation of the Assamese Novel. Among those Padmanath Gohainbaruah, Laximinath Bezbarua, Rajanikanta Bordoloi was pioneer of the Assamese novel. Before independence, the main trend of Assamese novels was based on historical novel. After the 2nd World war and Independence of India, Assamese novel developed through various genres, especially the genre of social novels become very stronger. New genres of novel like political novel, biographical novel, detective novel, mystery novel, mythological novel, science fiction etc were also written after independence. In twenty first century, most of the novels have been written in the above mention categories, although the two strong genres have influence in the present Assamese novels, the first genre in genre of historical novel and second is the biographical novel. It is notable that contemporary Assamese novel reflects the various issue of Assamese society also. This paper is trying to discuss about present scenario of Assamese novel.

**Key words:** Novel, Assamese, trend, twenty-first century.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

In the first half of eighteenth century, Assamese novel went through dark period. After the arrival of American Baptist missionary Assamese Literature and Language significantly rose again. They had created a suitable environment to Assamese people to enhance their Literature and Language. The missionaries showed the path of western Literature to newly educated Assamese thinkers. In those times Calcutta was the capital for education to north eastern people. The new thinkers of Assamese Literature were getting the chance to get the light of western literature. This way Assamese novel began from the last decade of the eighteenth century. At the mean time the "Bhanumoti" by Padmanath Gohainbaruah and "Padmakumari" by Laxminath Bezbaruah was the first and the second Assamese novel in the last decade of Eighteenth Century. In the Starting period the Assamese novel were mainly enhanced by Padmanath Gohainbaruah, Laxminath Bezbaruah and Rajanikanta Bordoloi. Since 1930, mainly historical novels were written. And then Assamese novel were getting their variety by Daibochandra Talukdar, Dandinath Kalita, Birinchi kumar Baruah, Chiyad Abddul Malik, Birendra kumar Bhattacharya, Homen Borgohain, Mamoni raychom Goswami, Navakanta Baruah, Laxminandan Bora etc.

In the history of Assamese Novel, the 21st century has some significant characteristics. In this paper we will discuss about these characteristics and also, we will try to give idea of the new trend and tendencies of the development of Assamese novels.

**1.1 OBJECTIVE**

The objectives of this paper are given below: -

- Discuss about types of novels written in Assamese literature in the present time.
- Determining the current trends of the Assamese novels.

## 1.2 METHODOLOGY

The Method for the study is mostly analytical and based on secondary sources. Also, a descriptive approach has been adopted for this paper.

## 2. DISCUSSION

The Assamese Language is the one of the richest Language in Modern Indian Language family. Assamese literature has also played an important role in the development of Indian Literature. According to Birinchi Kumar Barua “The novel in Assamese came in the wake of the western system of education that was introduced by British Administration, and it drew its inspiration from literature of the west”. There are many novelists from Assam are already had shined in Indian Literature Scenario. Some of them are Birendra kumar Bhattacharya, Homen Borgohain, Mamani Roisom Goswami, Jogesh Das, Navakanta Baruah, Laxminandan Bora etc. the rich tradition also followed by new Assamese novelist also.

### 2.1 Recent Trends of Assamese Novel

The history of Assamese novels is already enhanced by various genre form its starting periods to twentieth century. In 21<sup>st</sup> century significantly novelist of Assamese literature are also written novel from different genre. But mainly historical and biographical novels are the main focus of all novelists among all. The novelists try to revisit the glorious Assam history. We can say novelist aspects had become quite developed in comparison to early period of Assamese historical novel. Novels that were published in 21<sup>st</sup> era also Changes the purpose and view point of composed novels.

There are many historical novels which were published in 21<sup>st</sup> period. Although the nature of some historical novels written in the twenty first century differ from the traditional historical novels from those who published in starting Assamese novel period. The historical novels written during this period can be divided in to mainly two parts according to their background.

- Historical novels written in background of the Ahom dynasty.
- Historical novels written in the background of the colonial period.

The Ahoms are one of the glorious kingdoms in not only Assam history but also in Indian history. In this context Sir Edward Gait give his opinion that “Early in the thirteenth century a band of hardy hill men wandered into the eastern extremity of the Brahmaputra Valley. Led by chance rather than by any deep-seated design, a quite unconscious of the fact that their descendants were destined to bring the whole valley under their rule and to set a limit of the eastward extension of the empire of the Mughal conquerors of India. These were the progenitors of Ahoms.”. They rule in Assam almost six hundred years. So, when Assamese novelist wants to look back to their history they go through the glorious years. The novelists try to throw light and reconstruct some of significant characters from those years. Some of them are Chandradhar Chamuas “Chaolung Sukapha: Saluinarpra Luitalo” (2005) and Puspa Gogoi’s “Chaowlung chaokapha” (2005) which are based upon the first Ahom king Shao-ka-pha life and history. Sukapha was the Pioneer and first king of Ahom kingdom in Assam. According to Edward Gait “That Sukapha was the leader

of the body of Shans who laid the foundation of the Ahom kingdom in Assam. Is a fact established, not only by the unanimous testimony of the Buranji, but also by universal and well-remembered tradition...". One another novel of Ila Borgohains "Pijou Gabharu" (2001) reflects upon Pijou Gabharus life and conflict. Illa Borgohains other three novels "Ramani Gabharu" (2002), "Kuranganayani" (2007), "Kritichandra" (2014) are based upon Ahom historical character serially Ramani Gabharu, Kuranga Nayani and Kritichandra. One of the most famous characters of Assam history was Jaymoti. In 21<sup>st</sup> century novelists attempted to write about her life, conflict and character. There are two novels about joymoti in this period. Those are Keshab Chandra Dakuas "Jerewngar Uchupani" (2009) and Juri bora Borgohains "Nang faa" (2010). In these all novels said above imagination and reconstruction are found in characterization. Such as the childhood of joymatis is indigenised by the novelist, the character of Pijou Gabharu is reconstructed by the novelist. It's notable that these novels highlighted about culture and society of the characters of that period. That's why they have theorised as historical novel and the readers also get the chance to face the period by writers' eye. In 21st century we also found some historical novel which are based upon not only a character but also some periodical time and situations. Some examples of them are Chandana Goswamis "Patkair ipare mor desh" (2009), Sujata Gohain Baruahs "Hasipatar Kothakota" (2011), Rumi Laskar Boras "Kalagni" (2017) etc. These novels were specially enlightened to a specific period or time of Ahom Kingdoms.

There are some historical novels which are found based on colonial history. British take charge from the Burmas in 1826 by Treaty of Yandaboo. They ruled in Assam till 1947. After that Assam was included in India. In 21st century some novelist written novel based on those colonial years in Assam. Those are Purabi Bormudois "Rupuwali noir Sonowali desh" (2001), Toilkkyia Bhatacharys "Ajak Junaki Porua" (2001), Dipak kumar Borkakotys "Udvashita Upokul" (2005), Linna Sarmas "Arnha Apranha" (2007), Bipul Kumar Baruas "Akash Sagar Aru Goomdhar" (2009), Dhruvajyoti Borahs "Aazar" (2017) etc. These novels are time and situation based historical novels. In these novels novelist mainly focused to reflect about the colonial crisis situation, changes to Assamese society in colonial area which came rapidly and it also reflects the social reality in 19th century Assam. The novels also reflect upon those people who try single handily or those people who tried in unit and awakening of Assamese people who tried to rebuild and motivated. In this Study area we have found some historical romance-based novel also. Great example of this genre is Sahitya Academi award winner "Deolangkhui" (2005) by Rita Choudhury. Not only Ahom Kingdom but also small kingdoms like chutiya, konch are also included in historical novel of this period. Like "Charisalr Gushni Tez" (2013) by Tulika Saikia, "Sadhyapurar Sunar Mekuri" (2014) by Dilip Bora, "Somar Nandini" by Juri Saikia (2015) (All three novels are based on Chutiya queen Sadhoni).

The Second main wave of the Assamese novel of 21st century is Biographical Novel. Novelist try to whitened the life and history of some unique or popular character in Assamese society. Such as Eminent Assamese novelist Mamani Roysom Goswami enlightened a 'Tahsildar' namely "Theng phakhri in Thengfakri Tahsildar Tamor Taruwal" (2009). Amar jyoti Saikia wriiten a novel based on Maniram Dewans life in "1953 r Maniram Dewan" (2016). We can find

some more of these types of novels written in 21st century, those are “Hendan” (2011) by Keshav Chandra Dakuwa and “Mahanayak Lasit Borphukan” (2018) by Jagadendra Raichudhuri. These two novels based on Lachit Borphukan. Lachit Borphukan was great Character of Assam history. The eminent historian of Assam S. K. Bhuyan says that “Lachit Barphukan, the great hero of Assam was a contemporary of Shivaji Maharaja, and like latter stemmed the advance of Mogul imperialism in his land”. Some other important biographical novels are “Xhehi Apramadi” (2013) by Bipul kuamr Barua (Based on Madhva Kandli life); “Ajan Pir” by Jayanta Madhab bora (Based on Ajan pir), “Jdai kara daria par” by Jiban kalita (Based on Ajan pir) etc.

There are mythical novels trends also found in 21st century Assamese Novel. In these novels we find some characters which are originally belonging to Mahabharata, Ramayana and other Purana. Some examples of them are- “Syamantak Moni” (2001), “Jotha Doiba totha Joy” (2004), “Krishnabishnu Basudeva” (2007), and “Krishna Jadumoni” by Khrigeswar Bhuyan; “Bideh Nandini” (2009) by Dr Malini; “Gandhari” (2010) by Joyshree Goswami Mahanta; “Hari guna kahana njai” by Ratnottama Das Bikram; “Kunja Prithiwir Krishnapriya” (based on Radha) by Pallavi Deka Buzarbaruah. In these novels we found reconstruction and retelling.

We can distinguish some novels which was written in this period based on contemporary and recent history as like Assam movement, “Bhasa” movement, extremist movement and post independent Assamese society. Based on Assam Movement “Ei Xamoy Hei Xomoy” (2007), “Mahajiwanaar Aadharhila” by Rita Choudhury is significant.

“Utarkal” by Rudrani Sarma, “Mariyahula” by Jayanta Madhob Bora. “Kajirangar Belad” by Dilip Chndan, “Kalijar Aai” by Dilip Bora, “Sangkha Nninad” by Manalisha Saikaia, “Asttia” by Anamika Bora etc reflected our above-mentioned area. In this novel we find the contemporary and recent history. These Novels also reflect recent or near recent political and sociological issues.

Assamese novelist also tried some other trends to write out, like post modernism, regional based novel, social novel, mythological novel, campus novel etc. like “Dhuxaratar kabya” by Debabrat Bora, “Jatra” by Harekrishna Deka, “Jatadhari” by Prthana Saikia, (post modernism); “Bhuk” by Juri Bora Borgohain (social novel); “Tejimala Makar Sadhu” by Mridul Sarma (mythological novel); “Dibrugarh Biswabidyalaya Nandini” by Juri Boraborgohain, “Dibrugarh Biswabidyalayar KrishnaSurar Rang” by Bishwajyoti Sarmah, “Hriday Akhn Maha kabya” by Kishore Manjit Bora , “NL College” by Samujjal Saikia (campus novel).

Some recent issues like youth psychology, homosexuality, male prostitution are also found in this area. Like “Platformat etiya kunu Nai” by Parthona Saikia, “Sparkha” by Mamoni Mahanta, “jiglo” by Rasmirekha Bhuyan. Thus, novels introduce the Assamese reader to a new world.

### 3. CONCLUSION

As discussed above we can finally come to a conclusion about Assamese Novel in 21<sup>st</sup> century. Those are-

- Different types of Novels are written in this Period. But mostly Historical and Biographical novels were written in this period.

- The historical novels written during this period mainly divided in to two parts – a) Historical novels written in background of the Ahom dynasty and b) Historical novels written in the background of the colonial period.
- In Biographical novel the novelist mainly whitened the life and history of some unique or popular and character in Assamese society.
- Assamese novel had shown some regional character along with entire humanities problems and issues.

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