

Summary of the Major Research project on
A Study on the History of Assamese Poetry (Charyapada to Arunodoi)

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0.0 Introduction:

Attempts have been made by a good no of scholars to chronicle the history of Assamese literature. The Scholars like Debendranath Bezbaroa, Dimbeswar Neog, Satyendranath Sharma, Maheswar Neog etc. have made some significant attempts to trace the history of Assamese literature. The institutions like Anundoram Borooah Institute of Language and Culture (ABILAC) have also attempted to write the history of Assamese literature with collective efforts of different scholars. In spite of all these attempts, a need is felt to write about the history of Assamese poetry in a specialized way for some valid reasons. The history of Assamese literature was started with the history of Assamese poetry. On the other hand, the poetical works of Assamese literature is spread throughout the ancient Kamrupa, which is now separated by boundaries of different states and nation. Therefore, to define the width of ancient Kamrupa, there is a need to seriously study the poetical works scattered in different places of ancient Kamrupa. It is to be noted that, due to lack of proper study, huge number of old Assamese poets are still missing in the pages of history of Assamese poetry and many of such poets are mistakenly recognized as Bengali poets. Therefore, serious research work to bring the unidentified or unrecognized Assamese poets and poetical works has valid potentiality. This is also to be noted that history of poetry doesn't mean mere history of poets and their works. Rather it carries some incredible evidences of the history of a society. Therefore this study is made to divulge different virgin areas of the history of Assamese poetry.

1.0 Origin of Research Problem:

1. Assamese poetry has a history of more than 1000 years. But no one has attempted to prepare a complete history of Assamese poetry.
2. Preparation of an intensive history of Assamese poetry is a challenging task, because numbers of manuscripts of Assamese poetry are lying unpublished in different parts of the country.
3. The language of Assamese poetry does not denote a simple language variety, but it carries the evidence of different changes that occurred in the history of language and also it carries evidences of variations according to geographical differences.
4. No one has attempted to prepare a complete bibliographical sketch of Assamese Poetry. Therefore it is easy to assume that numbers of Assamese poetic examples are yet to be discovered.

2.0 Interdisciplinary relevance:

1. The ancient Assamese poetry has been reflecting different religious view-points. So this study may help to study the development that occurred in the social history of the society.
2. The study may help to study the status of the different sections of people in different periods of Assamese Society
3. This study may open up some new field of study for socio-economic and historical study about Assamese Society in the light of poetry.

3.0 Significance:

1. The study will help to prepare a comprehensive history of Assamese poetry from 10th to first part of 19th century.
2. This will help to establish trend and tendencies reflected in different part of the history of Assamese poetry.

3. This study has significance in terms of its aim to establish the link between the social, political, and cultural changes that occurred in Assamese society in the light of Assamese poetry.

4.0 Potential contribution to knowledge in the field of social relevance or national importance:

1. This will help to get knowledge about different trends of Assamese Poetry originated during different stages of Assamese Society.
2. The study will unveil the contemporary social, economic and political history of Assam through the depiction in the poetry.
3. This study will help to increase the sense of integrity among the people of eastern India from the perspective of the wideness and acceptability of Assamese poetry throughout the region and greater part of Bangladesh.

5.0 Objectives:

1. To prepare a standard historical sketch of Assamese poetry from its inception to the first part of 19th century.
2. To prepare an authentic discussion about the significant poetic works of Assamese literature during the mentioned period.
3. To discuss about different poetic trends of Assamese poetry established during the mentioned period.
4. To find out the influence of contemporary Social, Political and Economic happenings, that influenced the Assamese poetry of the mentioned period.
6. To focus on the treasures of Assamese poetry of that period.

6.0 Methodology:

1. Field study was conducted to find out different rare manuscripts of Assamese poetry.
2. Historical and Analytical methods will be applied in preparation of the report.

7.0 Major findings of the Study:

1. During the stage which is identified as the proto stage of Assamese poetry, there was one common lingua franca among the citizens of the present Eastern India. This stage should not be considered as the early stage of any individual language like Assamese, Bengali, Odia or Maithili. Actually, this stage was a common proto stage of all these languages. Hence the poetries written during stage should be a common example of proto stage of all these languages.
2. The common language mentioned above (in point-1) of should be named as common lingua franca of Kamrupa. Because history proves that major areas covered by this common lingua franca was under the political umbrella of greater Kamrupa.
3. The poems which are identified as written in mixed languages were also composed in Kamrupa. The geographical proximity of Kamrupa and Gauda in later period establishes a concept of separate linguistic identity. But it should be kept in serious consideration that history is based on contemporary society, politics and geography only, it cannot be explained on the geography and politics of later period.
4. The study proved that the existing periodical divisions of Assamese Poetry consists some ambiguities. Therefore in this study, the periods of Assamese Poetry has been redefined as follows:
 - a. Proto Stage
 - b. Classical Period
 - i. 1st stage (13th 14th Century)
 - ii. 2nd Stage (15th-16th Century)
 - iii. Third Stage (17th –early part of 19th century)
 - c. Modern Period
 - i. 1st Stage (1846 to 1889)
 - ii. 2nd Stage (from Jonaki to Jayanti)
 - iii. 3rd Stage (1953 to 1980)
 - iv. 4th Stage (1980 onwards)

5. There is a scope of future research on the identity and habitation of the poets of the first stage of the classical PERIOD OF Assamese poetry. The poets of these stage inhabited in different western place from present Nagaon District. The old Assamese poetic tradition (which was Kamrupi at that time) was spread up to Karatowa river (a part of present Teesta river) and up to north Indian Ocean of Chattagram of West Bengal and Bangladesh.
6. It is revealed from this study that due to lack of proper research a major portion of old Assamese poetry has been included in the history of Bengali Poetry. It is easy to prove that the poems written in old Assamese or *Desi* form of Assamese language (local variation of Assamese language of western Kamrupa) are not discussed properly by the previous researchers and many such poems are excluded from the history of Assamese poetry till date.
7. There is a scope for further research on critical study on the literary contributions of some significant poets of the second stage of the classical period of Assamese poetry. Ananta Kandalli and Rama Saraswati are such examples.
8. The poetic works which follow the *Sakta* or *Chaitanya* sacts of Vaishnavism were not properly judged in the history of Assamese literature because of deliberations centered to the Assamese Vaisnavite Literatures. It is established from this study that there was a strong existence of Assamese poetry following the *Sakta* and earthly ideologies when the great personalities like Shankardeva and Madhavadeva was contributing in a leading way.
9. The kingdom of Kamrup-Kamata offered secular patronization to all the poets of the 1st phase of the classical age of Assamese poetry without considering the religious background of the poetic works. Also the internal evidences of the poetic works of the said age prove that there was an unopposed co-existence of all the cults of Hinduism like *Saiva*, *Sakta* and *Vaisnava*. Because of such liberty, the poets of this age could include quotes of admiration towards different clans of Hinduism in the same piece of poetic works.

10. The study on the history of Assamese poetry establishes that the trend of composing ideology base religious Assamese poems started from 15th century only. It may be because of the societal transformation from an objective stage to the religious ideological stage began on 15th century Assamese society.
11. The patronization of the Koch kingdom during the third phase of the classical stage of Assamese poetry was quite significant. This aspect was not elaborately discussed prior to this study. It is revealed from this study that the patronization of Koch king Harendranarayana was quite significant in creation of translation base Assamese poetry during the mentioned period. It is unfortunate that many poetic works of this stage has been labeled as Bengali poems.
12. In spite of brawny existence of the Vaisnavite tradition of Assamese poetry, there was a popular and influential tradition of Assamese poetry related to the entertaining Medias of folk tradition. The *Panchali* trends of poetic works are such evidences.
13. The Ahom Kingdom was the chief patroniser of *Sakta* and entertaining tradition of Assamese poetry. It did not patronize the Vaisnavite tradition of Assamese poetry without any hesitation. The Sakta tradition of Assamese poetry achieved full patronization from 17th century under the umbrella of Ahom Kingdom.
14. The evidences of the Assamese society covering different ages of Koch and Ahom kingdom are quite visible in the poetic works of the studied age.