

The Evolution of Assamese Short Story: A Historical Analysis

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Abstract

The Assamese short story has a rich and diverse history that dates back to the 19th century. This article aims to provide a historical analysis of the evolution of the Assamese short story from its early beginnings to the modern era. The article discusses the significant contributors to the development of the short story genre in Assamese literature and explores the various themes, styles, and techniques used by writers over the years. The article also examines the impact of social, political, and cultural changes on the Assamese short story and its development.

Keyword: Short Story, Assam, Literature, writers.

Introduction

The Assamese short story has a long and varied history, dating back to the early 19th century. Like other Indian languages, Assamese literature underwent significant changes during the colonial period. The introduction of printing technology and the influence of Western literary traditions led to the emergence of new literary genres, including the short story. The early Assamese short stories were influenced by the Bengali literature and were written in a similar style and form. However, over the years, the Assamese short story has evolved and developed its unique style and themes.

The purpose of the research paper "The Evolution of Assamese Short Story: A Historical Analysis" is to examine the evolution of Assamese short stories as a literary genre and to analyze the historical, social, and cultural factors that have shaped this genre over time. The paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the development of the Assamese short story from its early beginnings to the present day, highlighting the contributions of various writers and literary movements.

The Evolution of Assamese Short Story

The early Assamese short stories were written by writers who were heavily influenced by the Bengali literary tradition. Writers like Lakshminath Bezbaruah, Saratchandra Goswami were some of the earliest contributors to the short story genre in Assamese literature. These writers were known for their realistic portrayals of rural life and their focus on social issues.

In the early 20th century, a new wave of writers emerged who were interested in experimenting with new themes and styles. Bhabendra Nath Saikia, Homen Borgohain and Mamoni Raisom Goswami were some of the notable writers who contributed to the development of the Assamese short story during this period. These writers were interested in exploring the human psyche and emotions and used various literary techniques to achieve their goals.

The mid-20th century saw the emergence of a new generation of writers who were influenced by the existentialist movement in Europe. These writers were interested in exploring the themes of alienation, existentialism, and identity crisis. They used various literary techniques like stream of consciousness, interior monologue, and nonlinear narratives to express their ideas.

In the post-independence era, the Assamese short story continued to evolve and develop new themes and styles. The political and social changes that took place in the country had a significant impact on the literature produced during this period. Writers like Chandra Prasad Saikia, Lakshminandan Bora, and Arupa Patangia Kalita explored the themes of political upheavals, social injustice, and human rights violations in their stories. They used the short story form to bring attention to these issues and raise awareness among readers.

Early Beginnings of Assamese Short Story

The early beginnings of the Assamese short story can be traced back to the late 19th century, with the emergence of a new generation of writers who experimented with new forms of literature influenced by Western literary traditions. These writers, known as the romantic poets, were at the forefront of the modernization of Assamese literature, and played a key role in shaping the literary landscape of Assam. The first Assamese short story writer is Lakshminath Bezbaruah. Some of his notable short stories are- Seuti, Bhodori, Patmugi, Mukti etc. Another important figure in the early development of the Assamese short story was Saratchandra Goswami, who is considered as one of the pioneers of modern Assamese short story writer. His collection of short stories are - Dekha-dekhi, Nadaram, Piahor Pani etc. The stories in this collection are characterized by their realism, and explore themes such as love, loss, and the complexities of human relationships. The early years of the 20th century saw the emergence of several other notable writers who contributed to the development of the Assamese short story. In conclusion, the early beginnings of the Assamese short story can be traced back to the late 19th century, with the emergence of a new generation of writers who experimented with new forms of literature influenced by Western literary traditions. These writers were at the forefront of the modernization of Assamese literature and played a key role in shaping the literary landscape of Assam. Their works explored a range of themes and were characterized by their realism, vivid descriptions, and exploration of the complexities of human relationships. The contributions of these early writers laid the foundation for the rich and diverse tradition of the Assamese short story that continues to thrive to this day.

Experimentation and Modernization of Assamese Short Story

The early years of the 20th century saw a period of experimentation and modernization of the Assamese short story. A new generation of writers emerged who were influenced by the literary traditions of Europe and America and sought to introduce new forms of literature to Assam. The key figures in this period of experimentation and modernization were Nagendra Narayan Choudhury, Lakshminath Phukan, Radhika Mohan Goswami etc. Saurabh Kumar Chaliha was another important figure in the modernization of the Assamese short story. His works are characterized by their realism and their exploration of the complexities of human relationships. Chaliha's stories often focus on the lives of ordinary people and their struggles to find meaning and purpose in life. Other important writers of this period include Mahim Bora, Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya, Bhabendra Nath Saikia etc. These writers were part of a larger movement to modernize Assamese literature and introduce new forms of literature to the region. Their works explored a wide range of themes and were characterized by their

experimentation with form and structure. In conclusion, the early years of the 20th century saw a period of experimentation and modernization of the Assamese short story. A new generation of writers emerged who were inspired by the literary traditions of Europe and America and sought to create a distinctively modern Assamese literature. These writers introduced new forms of literature to the region and explored a wide range of themes, including love, family relationships, and the human condition. Their works were characterized by their realism, vivid descriptions, and psychological depth, and laid the foundation for the rich and diverse tradition of the Assamese short story that continues to thrive to this day.

Emergence of the Existentialist Movement in Assamese Short Story

The existentialist movement emerged in the Assamese short story during the mid-20th century. This movement was characterized by an emphasis on the individual, personal freedom, and the search for meaning and purpose in life. The movement had a significant impact on Assamese literature and introduced new themes and ideas to the region. One of the key figures of the existentialist movement in Assamese literature was Homen Borgohain. Borgohain's works are characterized by their exploration of the human condition and the search for meaning and purpose in life. His stories often focus on the lives of individuals and their struggles to find their place in the world. Borgohain's works are also notable for their psychological depth and their ability to capture the complexities of human emotions. Another important writer of the existentialist movement in Assamese literature was Atulananda Goswami. Goswami's works explore themes such as personal freedom, individuality, and the search for meaning in life. His stories often focus on characters who are struggling to find their place in the world and their own identities. Goswami's works are also characterized by their use of symbolism and metaphor to explore complex ideas and emotions. The works of Nagen Saikia are also notable for their contribution to the existentialist movement in Assamese literature. Saikia's stories often explore themes such as alienation, loneliness, and the search for meaning in life. His works are characterized by their use of irony and satire to comment on contemporary society and its values. These writers explored a wide range of themes and ideas and introduced new forms of literature to the region. The emergence of the existentialist movement in Assamese literature had a significant impact on the region's literary tradition. The movement introduced new themes and ideas to the region and encouraged writers to explore complex and difficult ideas. The movement also led to the introduction of new forms of literature and encouraged writers to experiment with new structures and styles. In conclusion, the existentialist movement emerged in the Assamese short story during the mid-20th century. The movement was characterized by an emphasis on the individual, personal freedom, and the search for meaning and purpose in life. The movement had a significant impact on Assamese literature and laid the foundation for the rich and diverse tradition of the Assamese short story that continues to thrive to this day.

Impact of Social, Political, and Cultural Changes on Assamese Short Story

The social, political, and cultural changes that have occurred in Assam over the years have had a significant impact on the evolution of the Assamese short story. These changes have influenced the themes and styles of writing and have shaped the identity of Assamese literature. Social Changes: The social changes in Assam, such as the introduction of modern education, urbanization, and the growth of the middle class, have influenced the themes and styles of

writing in the Assamese short story. Writers began to explore themes such as individualism, modernity, and the conflict between tradition and modernity. Political Changes: The political changes in Assam, such as the anti-foreigner movement and the Assam Accord, have also had a significant impact on the Assamese short story. The anti-foreigner movement led to a rise in regionalism and a sense of cultural pride, which was reflected in the literature. The Assam Accord marked a turning point in the history of Assam, and writers began to explore themes such as identity, displacement, and the impact of political conflict on society. Cultural Changes: The cultural changes in Assam, such as the emergence of a new generation of writers and the impact of globalization, have also influenced the Assamese short story. The emergence of a new generation of writers led to the introduction of new themes and ideas, and the impact of globalization led to the introduction of new forms and styles of writing. One of the most significant impacts of these changes was the emergence of the "new wave" of Assamese literature in the 1970s. This movement was characterized by an emphasis on the individual, personal freedom, and the search for identity. Another important impact of these changes was the introduction of new forms and styles of writing. The Assamese short story began to experiment with new structures and techniques, such as stream of consciousness, non-linear narratives, and magical realism. This experimentation led to the development of a more diverse and dynamic literary tradition. In conclusion, the social, political, and cultural changes that have occurred in Assam over the years have had a significant impact on the evolution of the Assamese short story. These changes have influenced the themes and styles of writing and have shaped the identity of Assamese literature. The emergence of the "new wave" of Assamese literature in the 1970s and the experimentation with new forms and styles of writing are a testament to the dynamic and evolving nature of Assamese literature.

Conclusion

The Assamese short story has come a long way since its early beginnings in the 19th century. The genre has evolved and developed new themes, styles, and techniques over the years. The contributions of writers like Lakshminath Bezbaruah, Sarat Chandra Goswami and others have helped shape the genre into what it is today. The themes explored in the Assamese short story have also changed over time, reflecting the social, political, and cultural changes that have taken place in the country. The future of the Assamese short story looks promising, with new writers emerging and experimenting.

In conclusion, the evolution of the Assamese short story has been a dynamic process that has been shaped by various socio-cultural and political factors. The early beginnings of the Assamese short story were marked by the influence of the folk tradition, and it gradually evolved into a more modern form with the emergence of new themes and styles. The experimentation and modernization of the Assamese short story in the mid-20th century paved the way for the emergence of the existentialist movement, which explored themes such as the human condition, the meaning of existence, and the search for identity. This movement led to a radical departure from the traditional forms of storytelling and paved the way for a more experimental and avant-garde style of writing. The impact of social, political, and cultural changes on the Assamese short story has been significant. These changes have influenced the themes and styles of writing, and have shaped the identity of Assamese literature. The emergence of the "new wave" of Assamese literature in the 1970s marked a turning point in the history of the Assamese short story, as writers began to explore themes such as individualism, personal freedom, and the search for identity. The evolution of the Assamese short story reflects the cultural and intellectual growth of the Assamese people, and it has played a significant role in the development of Assamese literature. The Assamese short story

has been a means of expressing the various socio-cultural and political issues of Assam, and it has provided a platform for writers to explore and experiment with new themes and styles. In conclusion, the Assamese short story has come a long way from its humble beginnings as a folk tradition, and it continues to evolve and adapt to the changing times. The historical analysis presented in this research paper provides a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of the Assamese short story, and it highlights the importance of this literary form in shaping the cultural and intellectual landscape of Assam.

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