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The Assamese Novels with Meghalaya as Background: An Introductory Study

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ABSTRACT: The state Meghalaya is an important state located at the north-eastern region of India. The north-eastern region includes the eight states of India namely Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland and Sikkim. Earlier, Meghalaya was a part of Assam. But on 21st January, 1972, Meghalaya got the status of a separate state. The total population of Meghalaya is 37,72,453 as per the census of India in the year 2011. At present, there are a total of 11 districts in Meghalaya namely, West Jaintia Hills, East Jaintia Hills, East Khasi Hills, West Khasi Hills, South West Khasi Hills, Ribhoi, North Garo Hills, South Garo Hills, East Garo Hills, West Garo Hills and South West Garo Hills. From the population point of view, there are three major tribes in Meghalaya, namely, Khasi, Garo and Jaintia tribes. The Khasi tribes, Garo tribes and the Jaintia tribes have been residing in Khasi Hills, Garo Hills and Jaintia Hills respectively in Meghalaya with their unique identity of language and culture for a long ago.

I. DISCUSSION

In the history of 120 years of Assamese novels, a lot of novels are written as Meghalaya as their background. The socio-cultural life of the tribes of Meghalaya are well portrayed in all these novels. Specifically, the socio-cultural life of Khasi and Garo tribes as well as their residing locality of Khasi and Garo Hills are well described in all these novels. But most significantly, not a single novel is written on the Jaintia tribes and their residing locality of Jaintia Hills. The novels written on Meghalaya as their background are- *Simsangor duta paar* by Umakanta Sarma, *Simsang nodir haahi* by Swarna Bora, *Oo Khun Jonga* by Amulya Baruah, *Kaa Meikhar Ghor* by Tilottoma Mishra, *Nokme* by Minakshi Buragohain, *Crisenthimam Ajo Rongin* by Birinchi Kumar Bhattacharjya, *Neel-Nakhsatra* by Minakshi Buragohain, *Akonbindhir Xonporua* by Banti Sensua. In the present study, only those novels are covered which are published as a book in Assamese language. An attempt is being made in this research to make an explanatory study about the novels written in Assamese language upon Meghalaya as their background in a nutshell.

It is interesting that the state Meghalaya has the tradition of matriarchal society. Moreover, in the present context of research, it has been seen that much importance is emphasized upon the study of socio-cultural dimensions about the tribal community.

Out of the eight novels written in Assamese language in the background of Meghalaya, four have been written on the Garo Hills which are-

1. *Simsangor duta paar*
2. *Simsang nodir haahi*
3. *Nokme*
4. *Neel-Nakhsatra*.

The novel named *Simsangor duta paar* is the first Assamese novel written on the state Meghalaya. The main theme of this novel is the disturbance created by the West Pakistan army and evildoer in East Pakistan (presently Bangladesh) and due to which many people fled to India and especially West Bengal and North Eastern region.

The novel named *Simsang Nodir Haahi* is based on the initiative taken by a brave doctor to demolish the superstitious beliefs of the Garo tribes. In this novel, the socio-cultural picture of the Garo people is well explained.

The next novel named *Nokme* is on the theme of love between an Assamese boy from a plain area and a Garo girl from the Garo Hills area. In this novel, the clash between the hills and plains culture is shown.

In the novel *Neel-Nakhsatra*, the story of Garo terrorists is portrayed. In this novel, how the Garo terrorists abducted and killed the people of other parts of India who went to Meghalaya for doing different jobs and business are shown.

Apart from this, the other four novels are written on the Khasi Hills of Meghalaya which are-

1. *Kaa Meikhar Ghor*
2. *Oo Khun Jonga*
3. *Crisenthimam Ajo Rongin*



4. *Akonbindhir Xonporua*

The novel *Kaa Meikhar Ghor* shows how the British occupied Meghalaya by adopting unfair means. Moreover, it is also seen in this novel that how the people of Meghalaya protested against the British to get independence. Again, the novel depicts the socio-cultural dimensions of the khasi tribes.

The novel *Oo Khun Jonga* is a novel written on children. The relation between a child and a hen is the main theme of this novel. Moreover, the novel portrays the food habits, beliefs and the superstitions that exists among the khasi tribes. *Crisenthimam Ajo Rongin* is a novel written on the city of Shillong. The novel deeply focuses upon the romance between a khasi girl and an Assamese boy. Due to the difference in culture between the couple, the novel shows the problems created by such difference.

The novel *Akonbindhir Xonporua* is a campus novel written on the background of North Eastern Hills University (popularly known as NEHU). This novel is a unique one as it has no fixed plot of story. Rather, it shows a picture of cultural interactions when the teachers and students came across the university just after its formation.

II. CONCLUSION

Therefore, it can be concluded that further research can be carried out in this field in a large scale so that the cultural life of the tribes of Meghalaya, their assimilation problems with the plains and why almost 95% people of the state belongs to Christian Religion can be answered.

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