

Contribution of Birinchi Kumar Baruah to Assamese literature

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Abstract

Birinchi Kumar Baruah was a folklorist, scholar, novelist, playwright, historian, linguist, educationist, administrator of eminent 20th century literature of Assam, with both scholarly and creative pursuits. He was the pioneer in the study of folklore in North East India and contribution of Baruah to Assamese literature are significant, both as a novelist and as an early literary critic. He reflected the custom, culture of Assamese literature in his Novels. He had given a unique structure to Assamese Novel.

Introduction

Birinchi Kumar Baruah's father, Bijjoy Ram Baruah was in the postal service and later served at the Assam Secretariat at Shillong. Passing the matriculation examination with a First Division from Nowgong Govt. High School in 1928, Birinchi Kumar Baruah left for Kolkata to pursue higher studies. There he was admitted into Presidency College. In 1930, Baruah passed IA in First division and passed BA in 1932 with honours in Pali language. He was awarded the Ishan Scholarship for his outstanding performance by securing the first position in his BA examination. He is one of the few Ishan Scholars from Assam, till date. In 1934, he passed MA in

pali language from Calcutta University , again standing first in the University. Simultaneously, he studied law at Calcutta University. After completing his BA , Baruah also passed the ICS examination, but the British Government at that time did not appointed him as Administrative Officer on the ground that he could not ride horses. In 1935 , Calcutta University introduced Assamese in MA classes. Apart from teaching , he wrote a number of textbooks in Assamese for BA and MA classes of the University. After three years of teaching , he left Kolkata in 1938 and joined Cotton College as a lecturer. In 1946, Baruah left for England to obtain his Ph.D

Literary work

By the time he left for England , he had written several short stories, a short story of Assamese literature, perhaps one of the most important novels in modern Assamese literature, Jivanor Batot. His other significant novel written in 1955 , Seuji Pataar Kahini , is based on the life in a tea garden of Assam. In London, he studied at the school of Oriental and African studies under the London University and completed his thesis on the cultural history of Assam. He was awarded a Ph.D degree in 1948 , his thesis later published as A Cultural History of Assam, is now regarded as a milestone in Assamese historiography. When he visited the D.H.S.K. college at Dibrugarh and found that there was a scope for separate commerce college in the city. He suggested to the authorities of the D.H.S.K. college to

separate the commerce section of the college so as to form a full fledged commerce college. This was how the D.H.S.K. Commerce college was organised as a separate entity. Baruah was the winner of the Sahitya Academy Award for his book in Assamese titled Asomar Loka Sanskriti. He wrote many books in English, which were - A cultural history of Assam, Early Geography of Assam, Studies in Early Assamese literature, Modern Assamese literature, Sankaradeva, Vaishnava Saint of Assam. Temples and legends of Assam, History of Assamese Literature. His travel books were- Switzerland Bhraman, Professor Baruar Chithi. His one act play was Ebalat Naat. His books in Assamese -Kavya Aru Abhivyanjans, Asamiya Katha Sahitya, Asamiya Bhasa Aru Sanskriti, Asomar Loka Sanskriti. He wrote many books for children and text, which were- Bharat Buranji, Buranjir Katha. Through his books we can learn many new things about old Assamese society.

Conclusion

The growth of Assamese Literature is thankful to the Birinchi Kumar Baruah. He had very big contribution to the Assamese literature in the reformation of Assamese novels. He reflected Assamese custom, culture in his novels, which were like the mirror of Assamese society, village life. The Assamese race will always remember this author for his contribution. He had given a modern structure to the Assamese folk culture, literature. His death in his young age was a big loss to the Assamese culture, literature.

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