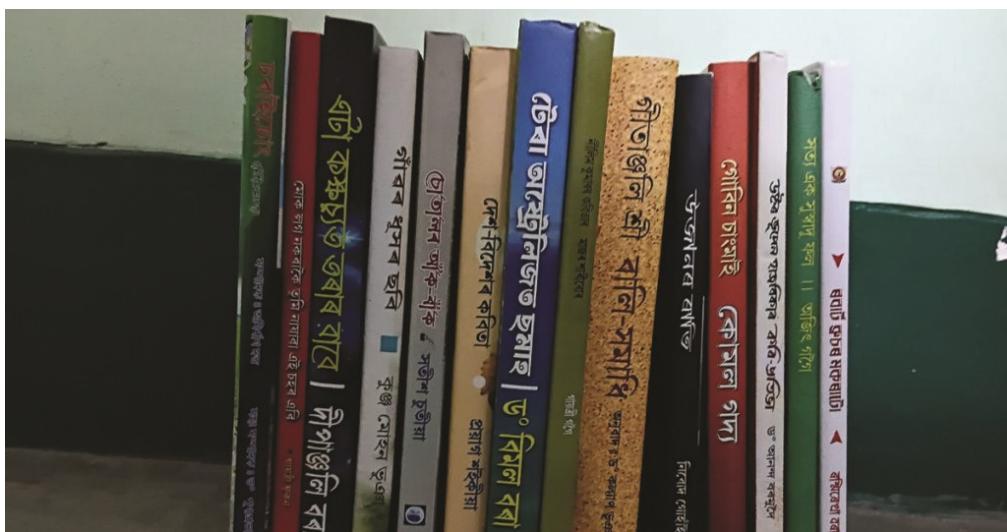


The Need of Assamese Literary Critics

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At the time of the book fairs in Assam, a large number of books are generally released. At other times also books are released at different places of Assam. It is a good sign that more and more new writers are coming up and they are all contributing to the development of Assamese literature. Though the readership is declining, the number of writers has been steadily increasing. This growth rate need not be alarming for us as the writers are contributing to Assamese literature, but there is a problem somewhere else. Does anybody know how many books were published in Assamese in 2025? Has anybody recorded which books have been written during the year?

The newspapers and magazines publish book reviews and that informs the readers of books newly published but the reviewers cannot review all the books published. A quarter of the twenty first century is already over and a very large number of books in Assamese have been written during this period. Nobody can tell us even the exact number of the different genres of creative literature of this period, let alone their assessment. No history of Assamese literature has been written on this period.

When a new writer writes a novel or publishes a collection of short stories or poems in Assamese, his target audience is the Assamese readers. The writer can reach them only when the book is reviewed and brought to the notice of the readers. All new writers and their books, however, do not have this advantage. Many books and their authors may go unnoticed. But who will do the job of bringing new writers, who publish books on their own, to the notice of the reading public? We need literary critics for that. In Assamese literature, there are no full time literary critics. One cannot earn a livelihood even by writing novels or short stories and the question of a person earning a livelihood by writing literary criticism does not arise.

There was a time when profound scholars with commitment to Assamese literature and culture could write history of Assamese literature singlehanded. Data collection has now become easier than those days. Writers who have been writing and publishing books on their own should also think of keeping a record of their publications and an all inclusive history of Assamese literature.