What is Needed Most

Dr. Ananda Bormudoi

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The volume of Assamese literature has been steadily increasing in the three decades of the twenty first century. Many factors have contributed to this growth. This expansion, growth and development have made us all happy and sanguine but one need has been felt stronger than before. We need a group of young critics who will read and evaluate literature created so far in this century. Assamese literary criticism has never been very strong and we never had full-time critics. Literary criticism cannot be taken up as a career because our reading public is small. Our critics have always been part-time workers and they did something else for their livelihood. Even the historians of Assamese literature, who did most of the criticism chronologically in an organized way, were teachers who taught in schools, colleges and universities. In view of the increased volume of Assamese literature today, it will not be possible for a single individual to make an assessment. We need a group of young writers to do the job.

The fundamental assumptions to assess a work of art and literature are provided by theories. In Assamese, we donot have theories of our own. Just as we have taken literary forms like the novel and the short story from the west, we have taken the literary theories also for assessment of our literature. Literary criticism has become a part of the syllabuses of literature in colleges and universities and the theories are all from the west. But that is no problem as we have made them our own in the meantime like the literary forms. What we need is a group of young Assamese writers who will assess the body of literature and find out the trends and tendencies and achievements. They may put the noted literary works in a hierarchy.