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**AN ECOCRITICAL STUDY OF SOME RENOWNED PHYSICIAN-CUM-POETS OF ASSAM WITH
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO Dr. NILIM KUMAR AND Dr.PRANAY PHUKAN**

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ABSTRACT

The study of environment turns out to be a part of academic and non-academic discussions because environment is the source of all resources that provides basic facilities to live on. While giving an earth-centered approach to literature Assamese poets are not lagging behind. The Assamese poet Hiren Bhattacharyya wrote on men, land and culture of Assam coupled with a love for the motherland. Even people having science background are writing poems on nature and motherland and various developments relating to men and nature. This paper is an attempt to track various environment related developments and issues interspersed with the poetry of two physician-cum-poet namely Dr. Nilimkumar and Dr. Pranay Phukan.

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INTRODUCTION

Environment is concomitant to our existence; it is the endless source for us to live and to do any of our actions such as eating, playing, working, enjoying, walking, breathing, hearing and drinking. The standard of our existence counts on the quality and proper existence of our environment. Since the time immemorial, people could live according to the principles of nature dictated by nature and that endeared humans with the nature. However, with the expansion of human knowledge that resulted in rapid growth of science and technology tampered nature and indirectly bringing the wrath of nature to the world. Therefore, people across the universe are involving to withhold any developments that hamper our natural world because environment is the source of all resources that provides basic facilities to live on. Concentrating on such multitude of issues, many theoretical developments have been witnessed by the world. And eco-criticism is among such literary and cultural developments that may not be qualified to contribute to debates about problems in ecology, but they must nevertheless transgress the bounds of common disciplinary boundaries and develop their own 'ecological literacy' as far as possible. Eco-criticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment.

Many English poets invoked nature and immortalized it with astute wordings. William Wordsworth did it in the Romantic era, Tennyson involved the same in the Victorian era and many modern poets like Robert Graves, W.B.Yeats, Seamus Heaney, and Ted Hughes are among others to appraise the importance of

nature in human lives. Assamese poetry is not lagging behind to address the multitude of environment related issues. Poets like Dr. Nilim Kumar, Dr. Pranay Phukan are physician by profession but they wrote poetry simultaneously and pervaded apposite remarks on the issues related to human nature and its impact on physical environment.

An introduction to Dr. Nilim Kumar and Dr. Pranay Phukan

Dr. Pranay Phukan and Dr. Nilim Kumar are two well-known modern Assamese poets among others. They have discussed the modern developments in Assamese culture in particular and the world in general. In one of his books, Nilim Kumar wrote that reading and writing poetry give him more pleasure than his profession. Dr. Pranay Phukan balances his profession as a physician and a poet.

Objectives

The basic objectives of this paper are-

- i) to find out the importance of nature in the modern Assamese poets.
- ii) to explore whether a dearth in studying environment affects the culture of Assam.
- iii) to explore if the lack of an effective problem control measure to create a favorable world to live in where men and nature coexist in peace and harmony.

Review Literature

Quite a number of works have come out on the issue of environmental pollution and relation between man and nature. For instance, the author has consulted the following literature in the related arena-

- i) Greg Garrard in his book "Ecocriticism" has highlighted that "ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies."
- ii) In the essay "Nature as Ecology: Toward a More Constructive Ecocriticism", Ben Bunting says that Nature has never a meaning of its own as humans interpret it, live on it and pollute it.
- iii) In the essay "Ecocriticism-Understanding The Relationship Between Literature and Environment In Indian English Novels" highlights the close relationship between ecocriticism and literature.

Methodology

In this paper, the writer has adopted the descriptive research method. The text of Nilim Kumar's poetic volume "Narkashur" and Pranay Phukan's "Ekhanter Nijor Sote" serve as the primary source whereas various books and articles on ecocriticism and the two poets by a number of authors serve as the secondary source in the preparation of the paper.

Ecocriticism and poetry of Nilim Kumar and Pranay Phukan:

Ecocriticism is the inter-disciplinary study of Ecology and literary criticism. To draw an analogy, ecocriticism concerns the relationship between literature and environment or how men's relationship with physical environment is manifested in literature. Ecocriticism started with Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring". Carson's book started with a fable stating a captivating description of nature to men with 'harmony' of humanity and nature co-existed. Soon the gusto was retrogressed and both became like apples and oranges. As he says:

"Then a strange blight crept over the area and everything began to change. Some evil spell had settled on the community: mysterious maladies swept the flocks of chickens; the cattle and sheep sickened and died. Everywhere was a shadow of death."

The first owner of mischief is, for Carson, were new organic pesticides such as aldrin and dieldrin that were used after the World War II and proved effective in debilitating the attack of pest insects. It is retrograde step to prohibit scientific developments in paddy fields but the power of retrieving a bad situation is missing that disheartened him. The book addressed the array of scientific evidence to show that this very success had encumbered upon the wildlife and constituted serious threat to human health.

A wide array of issues relating to men and physical environment addressed by two physician-cum-poets of Assam. Dr. Nilim Kumar and Dr. Pranay Phukan are physician by profession and they wrote poetry simultaneously and pervade apposite remarks on the issues related to environment and culture. Dr. Nilim Kumar portrayed both the bright and bleak sides of the development of science and technology on human lives.

“Will you taste Oxygen?”
The cylinder asked my father.
Trembling lips with throttle voice
My father had nothing to eat”
“From morning to evening sad tears
Ready to chisel me
But I am undone
O my mutual friend tell them adieu”.

(Translated from Assamese to English by the author of the research paper)

These lines are translation from Dr. Nilim Kumar’s “Oxygen Cylinder”. The poem testifies the role played by science and technology in human lives. His father was in the dead-bed and nothing to eat for him but the Oxygen Cylinder had given him the last resort. Here, Science has treated as the mutual friend of the poet’s father. But wearisome human activities on the world at large has whittled down his spirit and is writhed under pessimism. He is exasperated to witness the mad rush for instrumental values. His morning tea has become as dull as ditchwater and as bitter as gall. As he says:

“My morning tea has become bitter day by day...
Rigorous onslaughts, hellish deeds, outright villainy
Cover the morning newspaper
Henceforth morning tea, habitually, run through to sore”.

(Translated from Assamese to English by the author of the research paper)

Martin Heidegger inspired many eco-critics by his astute critical ingenuity. His thought is among the most astringent critiques of industrial modernity because it intersperses a poetic awe before the Earth’s being with a brutal deconstruction of the death-denying project of world mastery that we are taught to refer as ‘progress’. He opines that mere material existence is fundamentally different to a revelation of ‘being’. To ‘be’ is not just to exist, but to ‘show up’ or be disclosed, which requires human consciousness as the space, or ‘clearing’, in and through which it is disclosed. People have used wiles to ‘clear up’ or ‘show’ that made willful damage to the environment at large. Heidegger feels that people should refrain from running after nine days wonder, and should lead a life that will not wobble the ecology of our environment. But the tendency to show up or ‘clearing’, exorbitant run after fussy decorative instruments have created mayhems. Dr. Pranay Phukan is a physician-cum-poet has shown the incredulous nature of human beings that are incurring wrath of their own works as human values are getting less important. People are indisposed to go with delicate values and more interested to ‘show up’, and utter confusion ensued. As he says:

“Mobile and cars have become more valuable
Past hooligans are today’s cherished leader...”
“Now every child knows cast, creed and religion
None is obliged to show them wonders of nature”

(Sanrakhit Sklo Hridoy)

(Translated from Assamese to English by the author of the research paper)

He did not brood too much on the problems that constantly waffled at his ears but he was vigorous in his watchword, i.e. “Peace on Earth and goodwill to all”. As he says:

“Silence, the world is sleeping
Don’t break their sleep

Don't dismember"

(ChupThakHriday)

(Translated from Assamese to English by the author of the research paper)

Concluding Remark

From our above discussions, it has been adroitly clear that the paper emphasized the analysis of environmental problems in cultural as well as scientific terms, these terms are the result of an interaction between ecological knowledge of nature and its cultural inflections. While Nilim Kumar spoke both sides of modern technological developments, Pranay Phukan has chided the lack of humanitarian approach to the world at large.

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