

Nagen Saikia, Editor of Books : A study

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Abstract : Nagen Saikia is one of the most prominent person to enrich the Assamese literature. Saikia's writings are the evidence of a true writer and a composer in him. His mastery over Assamese literature can be seen in his wide range of works, which marks him as Poet, Story writer, Novelist, Researcher, Critique, Travelogue writer, Biographer, Autobiographer, Opinion Maker etc. One of the most important fields that reflects Saikia's authoriality is 'Book Editing'. It is observed through study that he has very systematically placed the genre of book editing in Assamese literature, both scientifically and methodically. With the editing of 60 books so far, Saikia has enriched the world of book editing in Assamese. Amongst his works,- 'Axomiya Lipi Xomoshya'(1975), 'Adhyan Chakra'(1976), 'Abhinay Xekh Khel'(1985), 'Axomiya Golpo Koumudy'(2005), 'Adhunik Axomiya Kobita-Manjuri'(1985), 'Chandradhar Baruahar Gronthawali'(1975), 'Jotayu'(2003), 'Jonaki'(2001), 'Aaxam Bondhu'(1984), 'Bezbaruahar Rachanawali'(2010), Benudhar Sarma Rachanawali'(2014), 'Xeujiya Pator Maje Maje'(1956), 'Assam and the Assamese Mind'(1980), 'Prachi'(1997), etc are notable.

IndexTerms - Nagen Saikia, Editing, Historical, Preface, Prospicient.

I. INTRODUCTION

Editing of books is a deep and heavy responsibility. It is not limited to with the collection of some essays or articles and sending them to the press. It is a long process through which the job of book editing attains its glory which start right from selecting the draft to the editing of the draft, its emblishment and printing. Besides, an editor must acknowledge a reader's mind and the relevancy of the place of work while editing. The first and foremost condition of importance in editing of books is to provide an infinitesimal observation of the foolproofs in a book. The chief skill of an editor should be honesty and briskness, without which are cannot have an errorless and original sourced book. hence, a book-editor must be equally competent in major three directions; linguistically, subjectively, and technically to achieve a flow less and handsome outcome of book editing.

The profession of book editing in Assam is very old. Ramcharan Thakur, a biographer from the 'Charit' era is said to be the first Assamese book-editor. However, in later times, Kaliram Medhi started editing of books in Assamese literature in a proper scientific methodical way. After Kaliram Medhi, Maheshwar Neog's contribution towards the establishment of scientific and systematic book-editing is also very important. In later times, Nagen Saikia is seen to have taken this genre to further level. In this regard, Lilawati Saikia Bora opined- Nagen Saikia to be very well addressed as a poet, a novelist, a researcher, a storywriter, a scholar, is one of the most excellent book-editors of the twentieth century Assamese literature.

The subject matter of Nagen Saikia's edited books are diverse and universal. These books are said to have atoned the inadequacy in Assamese literature in a varied direction. He was inspired towards book-editing by the ideas of preservation of precious and ancient books, the fulfillment of academic deficitness, concern for heritage-conservation etc. He was also pushed forward by the strong sense of responsibility towards his own motherland, Assam. It is evident from the various works of Nagen Saikia that his chief concern was the holistic development of Assam's socio-culture and language and literature. The detailed 'Preface' enclosed with the books edited by Nagen Saikia reveals his deep study, critical review and research on the topic. The criticizingly written 'Preface' are seen to have not only endured the intellectual and social-history of Assamese literature, but also to have determined the steady movement and nature of it. The 'Prefaces' are very valuable, both academically and historically with the study of his edited books, Nagen Saikia's convention of editing of books can be very well characterized.

II. The editorial domain of Nagen Saikia

The literacy works by Nagen Saikia is mostly comprised of his editing of books. Because of his excellent grasp over Assamese language and literature, socio-cultural domain, the range of his edited books is sufficiently extensive. The study of the Prelude of Nagen Saikia's books reflect his motion towards life and livelihood. The main objective of all his works is to the Assamese people and their culture. In this regard he once wrote- "I write and edit book with all extreme responsibility towards our language and literature, community and culture". These thoughts within him has inspired him to continue his work of editing and made various provisions for himself. The subjects of his writings are varied and can be classified into 6 categories-

- a) Literature
- b) Cultural
- c) Linguistic
- d) Individual
- e) Social
- f) Institutional and Organizational

The books included in the above mentioned categories can be further sub-categorized into smaller specific classes. however by the nature of his editing of books, Nagen Saikia's books can be mainly classified into 2 categories-

- a) Primary Editing
- b) Afresh Editing

Primary editing includes the books completely edited by him and afresh editing includes those books previously edited by other and lately re-edited by him in order to pressure the essence of intellectuality and historicity of the books.

Nagen Saikia's another important field of book-editing comprises of the works done with the collective effort of various experienced and scholarly personalities from this field.

III. The objectives of Nagen Saikia's editing of books

One of the major objectives of editing of books by Nagen Saikia is the restoration of the 19th century Assam and Assamese language, literature, society and culture. The 19th century is an important period in Assam history. The foundation of the modernization in Assam witnessed in the 20th century and the mid 21st century was seen in the 19th century itself. The first attempt to the procreation of a modern Assam could be marked in the 19th century. Hence forced, realizing the intellectual and historical importance of the literary works of the 19th century, Nagen Saikia emphasized on the republication of the magazines, news papers and books from that period and remarked as-

The recorded documents of the 19th century can be provide as the information about the life spirit of Assam along with its language, culture and literature. Therefore, there is an urgent need of rise in the scientific study of each and every literacy worth from the past 19th century, also which is seen to progressive with time. It is undeniable that with these perspectives, there is also a strong need of preservation, collection and re-printing of the works from the 19th century. The preservation and valuation of the ancient books was the chief aim of Nagen Saikia's editing of books. With his sense of editing he has made an attempt to achieve and recover the valuable books for his successors which started decaying. He not only confirmed himself in editing the books, but tried to provide the actual subject matter and correct assessment to the readers. Commuting dearth of proper consciousness has resulted in the extinction of some important and valuable books he opined as the even before 41 years of Dimbeshwer Neog's death, most of his works has been lost due to the negligence of both governmental and non-governmental organizations. Because of these numerous worthless people from both the sectors, we have lost a number of important and works of such scholars.

Another chief aim of his editing of books is to provide an appropriate worth of their self sacrifices in the upliftment of their community and culture and to establish their works in a suitable place of excellence. therefore he not only confirmed himself to literature but also made his efforts to explore the fields and topics related to dance, music, acting, political etc and render them their position in Assamese literature. For instance, we can count on the name of Maniram Dewan. Speaking about his role in Assamese history Nagen Saikia opined-

In a short lifetime of 52 years Maniram Dewan has marked his importance in Assam history with his excellent competence over every field and left a glorious imprint of his skills, techniques, knowledge and talent.

To emphasize on the qualitative aspect of an essay was the main characteristics of Nagen saikia's editing of books. This is traceable from the fact that he included the works of unpopular writers in his writing if it contained the qualitative values. He many times ignored the quantitateness of the literary works and focused on the historic and live importance of it. The works of Shiva Khataniar is one of such kind and remarked about him as- Unpopular and almost unknown to 99.99% of people, Shiva Khataniar was a man of exhaustive study of his subject matters and basic perspectives made efforts in the portrayal of subtle picture in his works. He has written only seven articles in his 54 years of lifespan and all these seven articles holds the examples of his deep study about modern thoughts of humankind and its practices.

Moreover, in the editing of 'Prabandha Xanchayan', Nagen Saikia is seen to have given due importance on this aspect. Because of this fact, the inclusion of essays by less popular writers are highly evident in his works. And, in this way he has played his crucial role in Assamese literature by the editing of books.

IV. The characteristics of Nagen Saikia's works

One's personality is reflected through one's deeds. The presentation and the style of work varies from person to person. The works of Nagen Saikia in the field of editing can be characterized by certain specific aspects-

4.1 Elaborative prelude

One of the most important characteristics of Nagen Saikia's works is his edited books are so extensive that it could be punished as a book itself. There is no emotional surfeit seen in his critically written 'preludes'. Rather one can find all the factual and philosophical veriloquency in his writings.

4.2 Uncontaminated and True data provided:

Another vital characteristics o the works of Nagen Saikia is his efforts to provide the readers, true and discrete information about the edited book and its writer. It reveals his keenness towards the transparency of his works.

4.3 Detailed analysis of the Subject matter

Nagen Saikia presents to his readers a detailed analysis of the book in the 'Prelude' itself. The reader can gets a bird's eye view of the book from the 'Prelude' edited by him. The importance and the value of the book in the literature can be conceived by the discussion of the other related topics in the book by the editor.

4.4 Systematic Expression

The personality of an individual comes out through his works. Similarly the discipline followed by Nagen Saikia also get reflected through his works. His mastery was presenting the originality of the book in a decorous conventional outline without distancing from the root. This makes the book a belles lettres.

4.5 Conscious Orthographic Conjunction

To provide a consciously constructed works and sentences is another characteristics of Nagen Saikia's works. He is seen to be very responsible towards trend of autography in Assamese literature and it can be witnessed in his edited books.

4.6 Reservation of Objectives behind editing of books

Nagen Saikia clearly reveals his objectives of editing the books, prevailing circumstances, relevancy of the book, academic need and importance etc in the Prelude. Besides, he also mentions about the plan and program regarding the compilation and editing of the book. One can get the essence of his hard labour involved in his work.

4.7 Prospicient Concern

Foresightedness is also a characteristics of Nagen Saikia's edited books. Because of this quality, he has edited many books that gradually started to decay and he thus tried to preserve them.

4.8 Extensive discussion about the writer

Another feature of Nagen Saikia's work is to present an extensive discussion about the writer of the edited book, the original editor and the other important related persons. Also he makes effort to give the readers the elaborative picture about the writer's background and his relation with the contemporary world.

With the above discussions, deduction can be made that in the field of book editing, the convention and norms followed by Nagen Saikia is one of a kind, which has established him as one of best book editors in Assamese literature.

V. Academic importance of the edited-books

The word 'academic' means anything related to the field of education. There is always an implicit academic objective in the edited books of Nagen Saikia. His main focus lies on making the edited book a resource for anykind of further researches on the related topic. His editing of books with reference to educational field can be classified into two categories-

- a) Direct editing
- b) Indirect Editing

The editing of 'Text books' is related to his direct editing of books. The responsibility of the editor of the text books is much more than that of an editor of other books. It is very necessary for an editor of the text books to have sufficient knowledge on the subject and the language to be used in the editing the book, that is easily understood by the pupils. Besides the editor must put emphasis on the adaptability of the 'Preface' of the text books by the learners.

The text book edited by Nagen Saikia are good examples of such kind of responsible editing. 'Axomiya Golpo-Koumedy', 'Snatok Kobita-Soyon', 'Adhunik Axomiya Kobita-Manjuri', are some of these books. The 'Prefaces' included in these books are enriched with philosophy and facts. Since the editor must incorporate some real lessons, he must draft it through some representative essays related to growth and evaluation of the topic. In this reference, 'Adhunik Axomiya Kobita-Manjuri' can be cited as an example, where the editor has precisely discussed about the evolution of modern Assamese poetry to deliver an absolute picture on the subject matter. For this he has Spotlighthed poems of Nabakanta Baruah to Harekrishna Deka, which includes poems of different stages of Assamese poetry. Nagen Saikia has given distinct definitions of modernization, its character signs, the changes it brought to the world of poetry and with reference discuss about the ideas and thoughts of the Assamese poets. With his ingenuous and lucid choice of words, Nagen Saikia has made it easy and fascinating for the learners to apprehend such intricated subject matters.

The books edited by Nagen Saikia are indirectly related to the academic sector are 'Axam Bondhu', 'Jonaki', 'Grammatical Notes of the Assamese Language', 'Maniram Dewan Buranji', 'Bibek Ratna', 'Bezbaruah Rasanawali',

Dimbeswar Neog Rasanawali' etc are notable ones. Inspired by the academic importance of these books, Nagen Saikia moved forward in the field of book editing. He remarked about it as -The precious literacy works of the versatile scholar, Dimbeswar Baruah(Birth:August,1899;22 Xaon, Death 12 November 1966; 1881 Saka era) are rare, the importance and relevance of his writings in Assamese literature study, research works is undeniable. The long and descriptive 'Prefaces' of the books not only present a linguistic, literary, social and psychological picture. Hence, the study of language and literature without those 'prefaces' are said to be incomplete. These prefaces are the result of his strong intellectual sense which helps in descriptive study and extensive research and are extremely valuable.

VI. Historical importance of the edited books

The historical sense of Nagen Saikia can be marked as one of his varied characteristics of book-editing. Inspired and motivated by this strong sense, his journey towards editing and preservation of books could be observed. His remarks in this regard is notable-The principal root of our personal and public life is buried under our lost historical pasts. It is important for us to identify our past to built a strong future. This remark ascertains his responsibilities towards his society and community.

The preface of the edited books of Nagen Saikia can be historically classified into two ways- firstly, on the emphasis laid upon the building of 19th historical record and secondly, it emphasised on the correct valuation of the literary works of the writers who have enriched the Assamese literature to a great extent. It is traceable from study that 19th century newspapers, magazines, books have gained a certain place in his works. The prefaces of those books shows the picture of the 19th century society and its norms and culture. The notes included in the footnote marks the prefaces more significant. The data and information in the prefaces are always accurate and mutual which reveals Nagen Saikia's responsible and research oriented mind.

The historical values of the 'prefaces' written by Nagen Saikia about the people, writers and their magnificent literary works are unacknowledgeable. Speaking about the collection and preservation of the wittings of his predecessors, he remarked- Realising the fact that identity can be preserved by the accumulation, compilation and editing of the works of our seniors, I look up to editing of books. Hence, he caused himself from hastily taking any and every book for editing and concentrated on the books which were necessary for academic and social upliftment of the society. Also the objectively analysed and written 'prefaces' by Nagen Saikia played a vital role in considering the writers and their social background by the future generation. Considering the editing of books as a responsibility Nagen Saikia singlehandedly edited 58 books till date which is undoubtedly a great contribution towards the field of book-editing in Assamese literature.

VII. Conclusion

From the above discussion, it can be concluded the role of Nagen Saikia in providing an expedition to Assamese book-editing is very significant. The elongated 'prefaces' of his edited books will considerably help in the growth and evolution by reflecting the manner and story of Assamese language, literature intellectual practice, appropriate thinking and decent aptitude can be sensed from the books edited by him.Nagen Saikia has thus accomplished to fulfill the prolonged inadequacy, by parallely editing some significant books and writing various experimental, research oriented and creative masterpieces in Assamese language and literature.

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