

# Assamese Literature in New Media: An Introduction

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**How to cite this paper:** Jyotishman Das "Assamese Literature in New Media: An Introduction" Published in International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (ijtsrd), ISSN: 2456-6470, Volume-3 | Issue-4, June 2019, pp.1610-1612, URL: <https://www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd25162.pdf>



IJTSRD25162

## ABSTRACT

The role of the Internet among people's lives increased dramatically after the last decade of the nineteenth century. Nowadays Internet has an outstanding impact on each and every dimension of human society including literature. As a consequence of the impact of new media some new trend in literature emerged, a new era of literature based on new media developed and spread in a different way. After the invention of Unicode by Unicode consortium, the path of this new era is opened for the regional languages. New Software's are developed and content in regional language are able to occupy a place for their own on the internet including the Assamese Language. Assamese literature and culture deeply influenced by this movement from the beginning of the twenty-first century. This paper tries to give an overview of new media based Assamese Literature.

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**Keywords:** New Media, Assamese, Literature

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Modern Electronic Media based on the Internet are called New Media. Blog, Wikis, Electronic Magazine (E-Magazine), Social Media (Facebook, Whatsapp, Youtube, etc), etc. are the example of New Media. In his book 'The Church and New Media' Brandon Vogt defines new media as: 'New media most commonly refers to content available on demand through Internet, accessible on any digital device, usually containing interactive user feedback and creative participation.

Common examples of new media include websites such as online Newspaper, blogs, wikis, video games, and Social Media.' The invention of the Internet has a profound impact on each and every dimension of human Society including literature. As a consequence, a new Electronic era of literature has begun along with the print history of literature. After the invention of Unicode by Unicode consortium, the path of this new era is opened for the regional languages. New Software's were developed and content in Regional language is able to occupy a place for own on internet.

Assamese is an Eastern Indo-Aryan language spoken mainly in the Indian state of Assam. It is a recognized language of the Indian constitution. The literary heritage of the Assamese language can be traced back to the c. 9-10th century in the 'Charyapada', and 'Prahla Charit' written by Hem Saraswati in the 13th century was the earliest known poetic work in Assamese Literature. Assamese Script has also a strong heritage. The earliest form of evidence of Ancient Assamese script or Kamrupi script is found in the Charyapada and owes its origin to Brahmi script and developed into an independent script. But due to similarities with the Bengali Script, Bengali was mistakenly described as the script of Assamese language by different organization including The International Organization for Standardization (ISO). The two scripts share a large number of characters, some pronounced the same way, others denoting different sounds but they are not the same. After, ISO recommends renaming of Bengali script as 'Bengali-Assamese'. In Unicode's charts,

these shared forms are defined as Bengali Characters. Only a few characters exclusive to Assamese have listed 'additions for the Assamese'. That's why a legal demand for a separate slot for Assamese script in Unicode is going on.

### 1.1 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To explore the literary text of Assamese language in new media.
- To evaluate the importance and relevance of new media in Assamese literature.
- To find out the impact of new media on Assamese literature

### 1.2 METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on secondary data collected from different websites, blogs and articles. The paper is descriptive in nature.

## 2. ASSAMESE LITERATURE IN NEW MEDIA

After developing the different software and tools to write the Assamese language on the internet including Jahnabi Key Board by Utpal Phukan, Lachit keyboard by Mridul Kumar Sarmah, Rodali Keyboard, Xobdo Keyboard, and Google Indic Keyboard nowadays it is become very easy to write Assamese in New-Media using Unicode. As a consequence, a new era of Assamese Literature through New media has begun. This era is developed and spread in different way and various media. A brief introduction of these media and Assamese literature is given below:

## 2.1 E-VERSION OF PRINTED BOOKS

Nowadays a lot of electronic versions of Assamese books are available on the internet. Different digital library takes initiative to make an electronic version of the printed book. Assamese Books are available on the website of Digital Library of India (<http://www.dli.ernet.in>), website of Indian Institute of Technology (<http://www.iitg.ac.in>), Tezpur university website (<http://www.tezu.ernet.in/casms/archive.php>) etc. This initiative makes rare Assamese books available online.

## 2.2 E-BOOK

The first Assamese Book that is published on the internet is 'Miksijili' by Jatin Mipun(<http://www.miksijili.com>). The novel is about the Mising Tribe of Assam. After Miksijili the e-version of poetry book 'Xugandhi Pokhila' and 'Xaisor Pothar Manuh' by Hiren Bhattacharya, 'Mahakabyar Prothom Pat' by Bipuljyoti Saikia is published in the website <https://www.xophura.org>. 'Sopun Jivan' by Manuj Kumar Deka is the first Assamese novel which is published on the internet as a series.

## 2.3 E-ARCHIVE

A lot of selected works of Assamese literature is preserved on the internet through different Archive as <https://www.assam.org>, <https://www.bhupenhazarika.com>, <https://www.xophura.org>, <https://www.sahityarathi.com>, <https://www.bkbtrust.in>, <https://www.indiragoswami.com>, <https://www.hkdeka.com>, <https://www.xophura.net>

## 2.4 E-PAPER

Most of the Newspaper in Assamese is available in e-version. Axomiyar Xukh Dukh (<https://www.xukhdukh.com>) is a Unicode-based daily Assamese daily published and edited by Ajay Lal Dutta.

## 2.5 SOCIAL NETWORKING SITE

The definition of Social Networking Sites is given by Hutchinson (2008) as "web sites that allow members to construct a public or semi-public profile and formally articulate their relationship to other users in a way that is visible to anyone who can access their file". Social Networking Sites have emerged as a platform for literary practice, especially through Facebook. Facebook has an important role to enrich Assamese literature on the internet. People write on their personal timeline and different literary groups and pages. A few of noteworthy groups are Axomiyat Kotha Botora (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/axomiyatkothabotora>), Bhaxa Xahitya Sanmiloni, Aami Axomiya, etc. A lot of Assamese poetry and folktales are available in audio format on Youtube.

## 2.6 BLOGS

A blog is a discussion or informational website published on the World Wide Web consisting of discrete, often informal diary-style text entries (posts). A few of noteworthy blog in Assamese are Himjyoti Talukdar's Moi aru Mur Prithibi(<https://www.himjyoti.com>), Ajay Lal Dutta's Lal Ink(<https://lal-ink.blogspot.com>), Santanu Kaushik Baruah's Tathya Biswa (<https://www.santanukaushik.blogspot.com>), etc.

## 2.7 WIKIS

A wiki is a knowledge base website on which users collaboratively modify content and structure directly from the web browser. Assamese Wikipedia and Vikaspedia are

the examples of the wiki available in the Assamese Language. In collaboration with Wikimedia Foundation, the Assamese version of Wikipedia launched on 2nd June 2012 by some enthusiast Assamese People. More than five thousand articles in Assamese available in Assamese Wikipedia. On the other hand, Vikaspedia is a web portal that has been developed as part of the national level initiative - India Development Gateway (InDG) in different Indian language, dedicated to providing information. It is a Government of India initiative and is executed by Centre for Development of Advanced Computing, Hyderabad. On the other hand, Vikaspedia is available in every recognized language including Assamese. Wikipedia and Vikaspedia played an important role in enriching the Assamese Language on the internet.

## 2.8 E-MAGAZINE

In the present scenario of Assamese Literature, the contribution of electronic Magazine is noteworthy. At first, the movement of the electronic magazine was limited to only English Language. After the invention of Unicode and Assamese software, the movement spreads to different regional language including Assamese. This new era of the electronic magazine in the Assamese language launched by Enajori(<https://www.enajori.com>) edited by Himjyoti Talukdar which was published in 13th March 2010. Enajori plays a significant role in Assamese electronic literature. After Enajori the journey is continued by several magazines, and one of the important magazines among them is Xahitya. Xahitya.org is a monthly magazine published by Asamiyat Katha Bitora facebook Group. Now more than thirty online Assamese Magazine and Journal published by different organization and groups. A few noteworthy among them are: Aai (<https://aai.ind.org>), ami axomiya ([www.amiaxomiya.com](http://www.amiaxomiya.com)), monikut ([www.monikut.wordpress.com](http://www.monikut.wordpress.com)), Xondhan([www.xondhan.com](http://www.xondhan.com)), Sristirjilingoni ([www.sristirjilingoni.wordpress.com](http://www.sristirjilingoni.wordpress.com)), Nilacharai ([www.nilacharai.com](http://www.nilacharai.com)), Projonmo ([www.projonmo.wordpress.com](http://www.projonmo.wordpress.com)), Mumbaichaneki ([www.mumbaichaneki.com](http://www.mumbaichaneki.com)) etc

## 3. CONCLUSION

We found some peculiar characteristics in the new media based Assamese Literature, which make the study of literature in New Media relevant. There is a lot of literary genres which have lack importance in print media but developed as an important literary trend in new media such as feelings writing, letter writing (Nila khamor Chithi), Prose-Poetry(Kotha-kobita), Sonnet, etc. Literature in New media reflected modern life, where people have no time for study. As a consequence, some new form of fiction such as flash fiction, micro-fiction, sudden fiction, postcard fiction, short short story, etc has emerged as a literary genre. 'Onugolpo'(micro-fiction), is a popular form of a short story which is mainly developed through new media in Assamese Literature. The term 'Onugolpo' is often reserved for stories which are less than three hundred words long. Most of the user of new media are belongs to teenagers, as a consequence new media has an important role among the new generation. They use different elements of new media for literary practice. This new media linked the expatriate Assamese people with Assamese literature through which they get a platform to practice literature. From the above discussions, it has been adroitly clear that a good number of Assamese texts available on the internet and based on new media an era of Assamese literature is developed.

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