INTRODUCTION

The topic of this thesis is 'A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RAJA RAO AND BIRENDRA KUMAR BHATTACHARYYA WITH REFERENCE TO THEIR NOVELS'. Raja Rao occupies a distinct place in the realm of Indian writing in English. He has to his credit five novels and short story collections to his fictional corpus during his literary career. In the same way, Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya also occupies a significant place in the field of Assamese literature. As a prolific writer, he has added almost two dozen novels and many short stories to the fictional corpus. Though Raja Rao is not a prolific writer like Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya and both have written their novels in different languages viz. English and Assamese respectively, lot of similarities are noticeable in their art forms. The thesis is an attempt to make a comparative study of the two writers namely Raja Rao and Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya with reference to their novels. The thesis is an attempt to focus how these two writers, inspite of belonging to two different states of India and writing in two different languages, bear the similarity in their writings. In other words, how they show the resemblance of delineating Indian tradition as well as Indian culture in their novels. Since Indian literature, writing in different languages, reflect the Indianness, Indian sensibility, national integrity etc. the objective of the thesis is to show how this turns into reality, how Raja Rao and Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya show the oneness of the unity in outlook. The thesis is an attempt to study an area,
which has been left relatively unexplored by critics. The novels of Raja Rao and Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya have been subjected to such close scrutiny that it seems almost presumptions to try and study them further. Perhaps, no research work has been done yet either in Assam or in other states, which is a comparative study of these two writers. Though, many books have been published on the critical appreciation on Raja Rao and Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya and many research works done upon both the writers, it will perhaps be admitted by everyone that no comparative study of these two writers have been done yet. So the humble attempt is done to make a comparative study of these two writers.

This work has been done specifically for three reasons. The first is the fascination for the works of both these writers. Secondly, a growing realization that if these two writers were studied together, interesting light can be thrown upon different aspects. Thirdly, it is our personal feeling that Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya, though is a multifaceted personality and has written many significant novels like Raja Rao, yet, he has still been unacclaimed and unknown by most of the people outside in Assam. As an Indian writer, Raja Rao’s novels have got a wide response from the critics, though, despite of having the same internationalism in areas and outlook, the novels of Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya are very far to get that response from the critics. Though some analytical studies have been offered by some writers on his works, it is not enough. Perhaps, none can deny the fact that if Bhattacharyya had written his novels in English, he would have got more appreciation from the critics. The interesting fact is that both Raja Rao
and Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya were contemporary in the sense that both were born and brought up during the British reign in India and saw the freedom movement of India. Keeping this in mind, a comparative study of the novels of Raja Rao and Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya has been tried to make. Effort has been made in this thesis to study the novels of Raja Rao and Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya in order to show the similarity in depicting Indian society of their time. A detailed and painstaking study of the novels of Raja Rao and Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya unveils many similarities between these two novelists in different aspects.

It will be worthwhile to note that this thesis has not offered a detailed analysis of all the novels of Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya, since it is not possible within a limited scope of the research work. Therefore, some significant novels of Bhattacharyya are chosen for detailed analysis. However, a short glimpse of almost all of his novels has been offered. Moreover, a comparative outlook has been maintained, whenever tried to find out the similarities in the novels of both Raja Rao and Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya. Another thing is that since Bhattacharyya has written his novels in Assamese, so the important portions of his novels, as well as his sayings, that are referred to in the thesis, have been tried to translate in English with the effort of our own side, in keeping with the original meaning. The abbreviation of the word ‘translation’, i.e., ‘trans’ is written within bracket against the translated portions of Bhattacharyya’s novels and his sayings. In the process of translation, some Assamese words are transcreated with the hope of getting the original flavour.
The thesis has seven chapters. The main chapters are as follows:

Chapter-1 : Comparative Literature and its significance

Chapter-2 : Perspectives of Indian Literature

Chapter-3 : Raja Rao and his novels

Chapter-4 : Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya and his novels

Chapter-5 : Place of Raja Rao and Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya in Indian Literature

Chapter-6 : The common concerns of Raja Rao and Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya in their novels

Chapter-7 : Conclusion

Bibliography

The first chapter focuses the importance of comparative literature.

The second chapter has two divisions. The first division makes a short analysis of the nature of Indian literature. The second division makes a short analysis of the history of Indian writing in English. It also focuses the temperaments of the Indian writers in English.

The third chapter focuses about Raja Rao and his novels. In this chapter, the biography of Raja Rao and the short summary of his novels have been given.

The fourth chapter focuses about Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya and his novels. In this chapter, the biography of Bhattacharyya and the short summary of his novels have been given.
The fifth chapter analyses the place of Raja Rao and Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya in Indian literature.

The sixth chapter focuses the common concerns of the novels of Raja Rao and Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya. The common concerns of the novels of Rao and Bhattacharyya are shown in various aspects like - Political Consciousness, Gandhism, Mythical elements, Depiction of Casteism, Spiritualism, Religious sensibility, Women’s position, Traditions, Customs and Rituals, Folk- beliefs as well as Superstitious beliefs, Concept of love, Selection of the titles in the novels, Mode of expression. In other words, it can be said that the focus has been made upon the similarities in depicting the Indian society, in other words, Indianness by these two writers.

The concluding chapter is an evaluation of the comparison of the novels of Raja Rao and Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya.

At the end, a select bibliography is added.