



## Depiction Of Milieu in Pita-Putra by Homen Borgohain

(Assamese Novel)

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Homen Borgohain (1932-2021) is an Assamese novelist, poet, critic and journalist. His novels deal with political and social themes. He is basically concerned with social realism. The novel Pita-Putra is the story of two generations and also of generation gap. Narrator has patterned the story in rural Assam and as we read the narration of the protagonist Sivnath we realize that it tells us something realistic about the philosophy of life.

Overall novel deals with the two worlds one is the world which we can see through our eyes and the other is inner world the world full of sentiments. The story continues with Protagonist Sivnath as how he reacts and analyses the events happening around him. But he could not execute his idealism into the action. The Author has illustrate however miseries in human life are common. But miseries caused by self-deception of individual are due to falseness attired by society.

The novel's milieu, or social background, unfolds in Mahghuli, a remote Assamese village. The year is 1947, and the first scene unfolds on August 14th, Independence Day. The protagonist, Sivnath, finds himself caught in a tide of memories, reliving the stark realities of life under British rule. Before 1947, farmers were forced to beg landholders for the right to till the soil. However, whispers of freedom ignited hope, promising a new life where they wouldn't need to grovel for work. Yet, a nagging worry lingered - what if the missing



tribesmen returned to reclaim their land? This conflicting hope and fear created a peculiar predicament for the villagers.

The concept of freedom from the British held diverse meanings for different societal classes. For the common people, like those in Sivnath's village, freedom was intertwined with tangible improvements in their daily lives. Concerns about finances, infrastructure, and basic amenities dominated their aspirations. The monsoon season, for example, transformed their roads into mud-churned nightmares, making life significantly harder. Consequently, their vision of freedom centered on practical changes, such as improved road construction, that directly addressed their struggles.

However, for individuals like Keshab Mandla, Reba Mahajan, and Biswa Hazarika, freedom presented a different opportunity. These individuals, belonging to a more prestigious class, saw freedom as a platform for personal ambition. They aspired to leverage the political vacuum created by independence to establish themselves as leaders within the Congress Party. Their focus wasn't on immediate improvements for the masses, but on securing positions of power and influence within the newly independent nation.

Among the fight for freedom, voices like fiery embers rose above the rest. These freedom fighters, envisioning a life beyond mere survival, declared, 'Our existence shouldn't be like pigs chained to hunger!' Their vision of freedom transcended political independence, delving into the heart of social ills like poverty, illiteracy, domestic violence, gender inequality, and the rampant caste system. They yearned for an India free from oppression, where education and opportunity empowered all.

With the British departure marking a major turning point, society began to shift. Lives changed, some for the better, others carrying unforeseen consequences. The ripples of this change touched even Sivnath's village, impacting him and his community in ways both anticipated and unexpected.

The promise of land reform sent a tremor through Mahghuli. Farmers accustomed to dependence on landlords, faced an uncertain future. As the prospect of owning land in the



jungle fringes loomed, his social standing, once tied to access to land, began to crumble. While the village buzzed with anticipation, apprehension gnawed at his heart.

However, change wasn't solely driven by external forces. Deep-rooted orthodoxies remained firmly entrenched. The threat of excommunication hung heavy, wielded against those who dared to deviate from traditions deemed 'lower caste.' This rigid adherence to outdated practices, while offering a semblance of stability, clashed with the ideals of a free society.

Amidst this transformation, From the physical landscape to the very fabric of thought, everything seemed in flux. The once familiar surroundings morphed, and individual minds grappled with the whirlwind of evolving social norms. While some embraced the possibilities, others clung to the familiar, fearing the unknown consequences of progress.

Modernity crept into Mahghuli in the guise of shops selling tea and pan, transforming into clandestine liquor dens by nightfall. This influx of alcohol ignited a firestorm, drawing young men into its addictive embrace. Gambling and brawls became commonplace, shattering the once-peaceful evenings once filled with the gentle hum of crickets. Radios filled the air with Hindi film melodies, disrupting the village's age-old serenity.

However, the euphoria of freedom masked a harsh reality. While the affluent saw their fortunes rise, the plight of the common man, particularly peasants, remained unchanged. In fact, their struggles intensified, especially when addiction gripped their families.

The novel's final scene leaves a haunting echo of unanswered questions. It paints a stark contrast between two paths embraced by young idealists yearning for a revolution against India's social ills: poverty, unemployment, inflation, casteism, and corruption. Somitra, a miner, embodies one path – joining the Naxalite movement, leading to his arrest and the destructive cycle of violence it perpetuates.

Yet, a glimmer of hope emerges with Kalinath's ascent to power after winning the 1972 elections. This alternative path, engaging in politics, begs the question: can it truly dismantle the deeply ingrained societal structures that both friends and countless others desperately want to change?



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The novel concludes with Somitra's poignant murmur, 'Both of us are prisoners. When will we be free?' This powerful question resonates long after the last page is turned, leaving the reader to ponder the actions and choices of India's youth as they navigate the complexities of attaining true freedom amidst a landscape of change and struggle.



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