

# The Art of Expression: Analysing the Prose Style of Harekrishna Deka

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## ARTICLE INFO

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RECEIVED 08 FEBRUARY 2025

ACCEPTED 11 DECEMBER 2025

PUBLISHED 16 DECEMBER 2025

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## ABSTRACT

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This paper examines the prose style of Harekrishna Deka, a distinguished Assamese poet, storyteller, novelist, and critic. It explores the unique characteristics of his writing, including realism, psychological depth, and the interplay between poetry and prose. Deka's innovative storytelling techniques, use of symbolism and postmodern elements are analysed to highlight his contributions to Assamese literature. The study also delves into his descriptive memoirs, which draw heavily from his personal and professional experiences, adding layers of authenticity and introspection to his work. This comprehensive analysis affirms Deka's position as a pioneering figure who enriched Assamese literature through originality and experimentation.

### Keywords:

Storytelling, Harekrishna Deka, Poetry, Style, Memoirs.

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## INTRODUCTION

A writer's style reflects the uniqueness of their literary creation. Each writer's expression, depth of thought and creativity are reflected in their work, making literature a deeply personal and distinctive medium. An author's style is rooted in their approach to observing a subject and presenting it with originality to the reader. The term 'style' goes beyond an individual's writing or speech and can also signify the collective expression of a particular literary group or era, distinguishing one mode of expression from another. This diversity enriches literature through a variety of styles.

Middleton Murry defines style as 'the technique of expression' (Murry, *The Problem of Style*, 1961, p. 4). A writer's environment and innovation shape their style, granting their work a unique flavour. The skill, discretion, and personality of the writer are pivotal in crafting their style, which sets their creations apart. This discussion focuses on the prose style of Harekrishna Deka, a renowned poet, storyteller, novelist, and critic from Assam.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary aim of this research paper is to critically analyze the prose style of Harekrishna Deka, a prominent figure in Assamese literature, and to explore the key elements that define his creative writing. The paper seeks to highlight Deka's distinctive narrative techniques, thematic concerns, and the integration of his personal and professional experiences into his prose works.

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopts an analytical and descriptive approach to examine the content and context of Deka's stories. Secondary sources, including critical essays, historical analyses, and literary critiques, have been utilized to supplement the research.

## WORKS OF HAREKRISHNA DEKA

Harekrishna Deka is a prominent figure in Assamese literature, celebrated as a poet, storyteller, novelist and critic. He has significantly contributed to Assamese literature through his critical essays and creative works. Deka emerged as a noteworthy storyteller during the Ramdhenu era of Assamese literature in the late 1970s. He has enriched Assamese prose with innovative experiments in storytelling and novel writing. His works span various genres, including literary criticism, essays on contemporary issues, personal memoirs, and creative prose.

Deka's critical works, such as *Adhunikatabad aru Anyanya Prabandha* (1998), *Bikhyan aru Sandhan* (2000), *Drishti aru Srishti* (2006), and *Ei Samay* (2020), demonstrate his analytical prowess. His collections of short stories include *Prakritik aru Anyanya* (1985), *Madhusudanar Dalang* (1992), *Bandiyar* (1996), *Post Modern Athaba Galpo* (2001), *Mrityudanda* (2005), *Galpo aru Kalpa* (2009), and *Swarna Brishti* (2013). He received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1987 for his poetry collection *Aan Ejon*, the Katha Award in 1996, and the Assam Valley Literary Award in 2010 for his short story collection *Bandiyar*.

## PROSE STYLE OF HAREKRISHNA DEKA

Deka's prose demonstrates the skills of both a poet and a storyteller. In the writings of Harekrishna Deka, many childhood memories from the early stages of his life in Tinsukia are revealed. According to Deka, his career was a significant source of his creativity. He was selected for the Indian Police Service in 1968 and served in various high-ranking positions within the Police Service for thirty-five years. The experiences he gained during this period naturally influenced his poetry, stories, and other creative works. His prose contains references to several events he encountered throughout his service. Moreover, his writings reflect the difficult decisions he had to make in response to various contemporary challenges.

Deka openly discusses the needs, attitudes, and the establishment of a new democracy, as well as the ways in which force was utilized to address the issue of extremism through his relationship with extremists during his career. As a police officer, his professional mindset is clearly visible in his works. Despite his demanding career, Deka found time to engage in literary practice, successfully excelling in both fields.

### **REALISM AND PSYCHOLOGICAL INSIGHT**

The realism in Deka's stories is a hallmark of his creativity. His works often analyse and transform reality into compelling narratives. Drawing from his professional experiences, he had the opportunity to study the individual mind by observing different classes of people closely in different situations. So, there is a kind of nuanced analysis of the character in his creation. Through this, it is clearly expressed in the psychological story of the character as well as the eternal emotions and feelings of the people. For instance, in Bandiyar, he examines the impact of extremist organizations on society and the psyche of individuals. Through the story of Bandiyar, he paints a picture of how extremist organizations are affecting the various activities and society in the present society. Throughout the story, the aims of the extremist organization, their thinking and various actions are described.

### **CONNECTION BETWEEN POETRY AND STORIES**

Deka's stories often mirror the suggestive qualities of his poetry. He himself acknowledged this connection, stating that his poetry contains elements of storytelling, while his stories reflect poetic nuances. His stories and poems share thematic and stylistic similarities, revealing a seamless interplay between the two forms. The expression of poetry in prose is one of the characteristics of his prose style. In most of his stories like Prakritik, Jiban aru Kola, poetry has taken a beating. For example:

*Segun gosborot notun seujia pat olaise. Saraiboror kisir-misir arambha hoise. Botahot eta notun amej. Si gharalai obhoti ahote dekhile garir futa oloa tripalkhan botahot potpotkoi potakar dore kopise. (Ptakritik)*

*Kothar khirikikhan teo khuli dile. Kothato he andhakar. Bahirat jalmal rod. Ekajali rod luti-bagar*

*khai kothatoloi xomai ahil. (Jiban aru Kola)*

## **MULTI-DIMENSIONALITY AND POSTMODERN TECHNIQUES**

Deka's stories exhibit multi-dimensionality, allowing readers to interpret them from various perspectives. For example, *Mrityudanda* gains new meaning from its concluding notes, enriching the story's layers. Although the plot of the story is complete even if the above two parts are omitted, it is found that the story is incomplete without these two notes.

There is an expression of a postmodern consciousness in his prose. For example, in the story titled *Paniram Medhir Gopon Jiban*, the storyteller narrates the story with postmodernist tactics, avoiding the technique of telling stories traditionally. There is no specific story in the middle of the story. The story presents an unconventional theme through the novelty of the presentation style and fragmented images of scattered incidents.

## **MEMOIRS**

Deka's memoirs are rich in descriptive prose, recounting personal experiences with vivid detail. He has published stories from different periods of his personal life through a series of memoirs published in the pages of *Satsari* magazine. The reader is able to feel the same amount of time in his life through the narration of the various stories of his childhood reflected in these memoirs. It is in the real-life events revealed in the memoirs that there is a glimpse of how a lot of the author's prose was inspired by the events of reality. Especially in the midst of his stories such as *Judhishthirar Galpa Likhibo Nuwari Kio*, *Bilambita Lai* the writer's childhood life is revealed to be a reality. The description of the game of 'patka-patki' published in this story, the various scenes of reading, he has narrated exactly in the story based on his personal life.

## **STYLISTIC FEATURES**

### **Word Selection**

Deka's prose is notable for its precise word choice, often incorporating homely expressions and occasionally Hindi or English words to suit the theme. For example, the Hindi words such as *Khod Khusi, Las, Gum, Hathiar, Kheyal-Khuchi*, etc. There are different types of adjectival forms used in his sentences like, *Dhakdhakia kapur pindhi, Chikchikia cyclet tilinga bajai... Finfinia gari*, etc.

There are different applications of word choice in his prose. Some stories use different types of homely expressions according to the theme. According to the theme and environment of the story. For example- *Phishing-Fasang, Khes-Khesani, Khakaramukuti (Bhuku), Baujal-Baujal, Ghatan-Moton, Tiptaiyar, Langledia, Thaokte, Dokhkan, Giz-Giz, Furut Furut*, etc.

### **Sentence Structure**

Deka's prose uses varied sentence lengths and structures, blending Hindi and English phrases when necessary. Conversational language and dramatic endings are recurrent features, enhancing the relatability and impact of his stories. For example, "Khabar samatkar, kintu bapu, tumi just life suru korisahe, etiai nam pokabor hoa nai he." (Gua-Madrid)

He tried to apply the spoken language in prose. For example: "Duorai naoriyak xudhile, eifale karubak dekhisila neki he bapu? Kiba siyar-bakhar xunisilane?" Naoriyai kole, "Nai diyok sir. Ekhan gari nami ohar agotei habapai. Xidike jawar xabda xunsilu dok." (Jiban aru Kola)

### **Symbolism and Imagery**

Symbols and imagery are integral to Deka's prose. His use of symbolism can be seen in stories such as *Xaap, Jiban aru Kola*. For example, the title of the story of *Xaap* is originally used by him as a symbol. Similarly, in the story of *Bandiyar*, the fishing bird symbolizes captivity, reflecting the constrained lives of the characters. Such symbolism enriches his narratives, adding layers of meaning.

### **Humor**

Deka's stories, like *Judhishthirar Galpa Likhibo Nuwari Kio*, often include humor,

reflecting social commentary with a light-hearted touch. The comical presentation style is a distinctive feature of his prose. In the midst of this story, he seems to have deliberately attempted to create humour. Such as: *Tar pitridatta nam eta asil. Jihetu xeito nam paharanir garbhaloi gaise, tak aru xoworanir bukuloi anar prayajon nai.*

## **CONCLUSION**

Harekrishna Deka, a versatile figure in the realm of creative writing, has made significant contributions to Assamese literature, not only as a writer but also as a discerning critic. His works are deeply connected to life, with his short stories often reflecting the complexities of both rural and urban experiences. Deka's narratives, which focus on the lives of ordinary people, are characterized by simplicity and a reflective depiction of daily life. He stands out as one of the most accomplished storytellers, with a particular emphasis on portraying the lives of the lower and middle classes. According to Imran Hussain in *Rupantarar Gaidya* (p. 23), "The depth of his sense of life, meticulous observations, skill in environmental storytelling, and accuracy in character portrayal make his stories compelling."

Moreover, Deka's stories often address pressing social, political, and economic issues, reflecting the dynamics of contemporary life. His works critically explore themes such as social responsibility, value conflicts, and the complexities hidden behind religious rituals. The influence of his professional experiences is evident in his writing, where he skillfully presents pressing social issues with precision and insight. In addition to his narrative prowess, Deka's works exhibit a unity of storytelling spirit, dramatic presentation, and narrative technique. His innovative approach to storytelling, meticulous character studies, and integration of social and political themes make his prose both distinctive and impactful. By seamlessly blending poetic expression with clear narrative structure, Deka has established himself as a pioneer in Assamese literature, enriching its traditions and expanding its boundaries.



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