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Srotaswini

UGC CARE Listed Biennial Bilingual Research Journal
Vol - V, 2020-21

Joint Editors

Dr. Jyotirekha Hazarika
Pallwabee Duarah



J.B. COLLEGE WOMEN CELL

J.B. COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), JORHAT, ASSAM, INDIA



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শ্রোতস্বিনী

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Vol - V

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পঞ্চম সংখ্যা

২০২০-২১

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Dr. Jyotirekha Hazarika

Pallwabee Duarah

যুটীয়া সম্পাদক

ড° জ্যোতিৰেখা হাজৰিকা

পল্লবী দূৱৰা



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Editorial...

On behalf of the Editorial Board of the Journal “Srotaswini”, we are glad to present Volume - V, of this journal. “Srotaswini” is a Peer-Reviewed Biennial Bilingual Research Journal published under the aegis of Jagannath Barooah College Women Cell which aims to provide a space to disseminate multidisciplinary academic research centering on women-related issues. Jagannath Barooah College is a premier institution of higher education located in Jorhat, a city with a rich cultural heritage and a glorious historical background in the upper part of the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam. The college was established in the year 1930. After 92 years of its glorious existence, it has become the hub for educational excellence, fostering its vision and mission in tune with the objectives of Higher Education of the nation.

The journal “Srotaswini” was published in the year 2013, exclusively to publish academic research papers and articles related to women’s issues. Since its inception, it has been publishing relevant articles related to the condition and status of women, recovering women’s history and writings with a view to empowering them. Each issue of “Srotaswini” deals with a particular broad theme along with sub-themes. The main theme for this issue is “SHAPING NORTH-EAST INDIA: WOMEN’S ROLE, SPACE, AND PERSPECTIVES”.

It is a matter of pride for all of us that, the journal is now getting indexed in **UGC-CARE (Consortium for Academic and Research Ethics)**. We have been able to reach this stage through the constant support of our college authority, editorial board members, members of the J.B. College women cell, authors/contributors, and reviewers of the journal. We go through a rigorous process of double-blind

review along with the screening of plagiarism of each manuscript received by the journal for publication, in order to maintain academic standards, ethics, and integrity.

We are confident that this issue of our journal “Srotaswini” includes some of the best and most stimulating articles related to women, which includes Women’s Education, Women in art, culture, sports, governance, entrepreneurship, the role of women in agriculture, income-generating activities, family health maintenance, traditional knowledge of women, the health status of women, violence on women and discussion or criticism of Government Schemes and Policies for Girl Child and Women Empowerment and female characters in literature, etc. We congratulate all the contributors whose research papers are published in this Issue.

We wish to express our thanks to the Principal, J.B. College (Autonomous), editorial board members, members of the J.B. College women cell, authors/contributors, and reviewers of the journal for their continued support and immense help in breathing life into these pages.

Jyoti Rekha Hazarika
Pallwabee Duarah
Editors

সম্পাদনাৰ মেজৰপৰা...

ছাঁ-পোহৰৰ বাটেৰে উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলৰ নাৰীসমাজ

ভাৰতৰ উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চল ভাষা-সাহিত্য-সংস্কৃতিৰ যাদুঘৰ। ইতিহাসে ঢুকি নোপোৱা কালৰেপৰা এই ভূ-খণ্ডলৈ বিভিন্ন প্ৰজাতিৰ মানুহ আহি সমন্বয়ৰ মাজেৰে এক যৌগিক সংস্কৃতিৰ সৃষ্টি কৰিছে। আৰ্য-আৰ্যভিন্ন লোকৰ সাংস্কৃতিক সমাহৰণেৰে সুসমৃদ্ধ এই ভূখণ্ডত পুৰুষৰ সমান্তৰালভাৱে নাৰীয়ে প্ৰায় উনবিংশ শতিকাৰ শেষলৈকে আৰ্থ-সামাজিক, শৈক্ষিক, ৰাজনীতি কিম্বা বৌদ্ধিক দিশত এখোজৰপৰা দুখোজ অগ্ৰসৰ হ'ব নোৱৰাটো আছিল উল্লেখনীয় বিষয়। বিংশ শতিকাৰ মাজভাগৰপৰা শিক্ষাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত পূৰ্বৰেপৰা থকা লক্ষণৰেখাৰ কিছু শিথিলতাৰ বাবে অসমীয়া নাৰীয়ে উত্তৰণৰ পথত আগবাঢ়িলেও জনজাতীয় প্ৰেক্ষাপটত গৰিষ্ঠসংখ্যক নাৰীয়ে ঘৰুৱা কৰ্মৰ মাজতেই নিজকে আবদ্ধ কৰি ৰাখিছিল। সম্প্ৰতি বিশ্বায়নে আনি দিয়া পৰিবৰ্তন উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলৰ নাৰীৰ বাবে একপ্ৰকাৰ আশীৰ্বাদস্বৰূপ হৈ পৰিছে। অসমতকৈয়ো উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলৰ অন্য ৰাজ্যৰ স্ত্ৰী-শিক্ষাৰ অগ্ৰগতি চকুত পৰা। তথাপি এই কথা অনস্বীকাৰ্য যে, মেঘালয়ৰ মাতৃতান্ত্ৰিক সমাজত বসবাস কৰা নাৰীসমাজৰ অৰ্থনৈতিক ভেটি সবল হ'লেও পৰোক্ষভাৱে ইয়ো একপ্ৰকাৰ শোষণস্বৰূপ— কিয়নো ঘৰে-বাহিৰে সকলো ধৰণৰ কামৰ বোজা বহন কৰিবলগীয়া হয় নাৰীয়েই। 'ইমা মাৰ্কেট'ৰ দৰে মাতৃতান্ত্ৰিক বজাৰ আদিয়ে মণিপুৰৰ একাংশ নাৰীৰ অৰ্থনৈতিক স্বাৱলম্বিতাৰ সমান্তৰালভাৱে অন্য ক্ষেত্ৰসমূহত দেখা অ-সমতাও এক চিন্তনীয় বিষয়।

সততে প্ৰশ্ন হয়, সমসাময়িক লোকচক্ষুত নাৰীৰ সামগ্ৰিক স্থিতি কি? সামন্তযুগীয় শোষণ-শাসনে নিয়ন্ত্ৰণ কৰা সমাজ-ব্যৱস্থাত নাৰীৰ সৰ্বতোপ্ৰকাৰৰ উত্তৰণ আজিও সপোন হৈয়েই ৰৈছে। আৰ্থিক স্বাৱলম্বিতাৰে আগবঢ়া উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলৰ নাৰীসমাজ কিছু স্বতন্ত্ৰ হ'লেও এই স্বতন্ত্ৰতাৰ দৌৰ কিমান দূৰলৈকে ধাৱমান— সেয়া আজি ভাবি চাবলগীয়া বিষয়। পুৰুষ-নাৰীৰ সম অধিকাৰৰ প্ৰশ্ন বহুক্ষেত্ৰত এতিয়াও দূৰ পৰাহত। গ্ৰাম্য অৰ্থনীতিত নাৰীৰ অৱস্থান উন্নত নহ'লে এখন দেশৰ সৰ্বাংগীন উন্নতি অসম্ভৱ। অথচ গ্ৰামাঞ্চলত বসবাস কৰা সিংহভাগ নাৰীয়ে কৃষিক্ষেত্ৰতেই হওক, ক্ষুদ্ৰ উদ্যোগ বা কুটিৰশিল্পৰ ক্ষেত্ৰতেই হওক, প্ৰশিক্ষণপ্ৰাপ্ত নোহোৱাৰ বাবে অনেক সমস্যাৰ সৃষ্টি হৈছে। গ্ৰামাঞ্চলৰ বহু নাৰীয়ে ব্যক্তিগত পৰ্যায়ৰ বেংকৰপৰা অধিক সুতত ঋণ লৈ কৰ্মত কেতিয়াবা তিলমানো বিনিয়োগ নকৰাকৈ আৰু কেতিয়াবা আঁচনি নোহোৱাকৈ অধিক লাভৰ আশাত কম পৰিশ্ৰমতে ঋণৰ ধনৰাশি খটুৱাই মূৰকত ঋণ পৰিশোধ কৰিব নোৱাৰি পৰিয়াললৈ দুৰ্যোগ কঢ়িয়াই অনাৰ ঘটনা সততে পৰিলক্ষিত হৈছে। কোনো কোনোৱে এনে ঋণৰ ধন উচিত কৰ্মত নলগাই বিলাসী কৰ্মত প্ৰয়োগ কৰাৰ ফল অতি বিষময় হৈ পৰিছে। যি কৰ্মই নহওক লাগে, আধুনিকীকৰণ তথা যথাবিহিত ব্যৱস্থাবে সেই কৰ্মৰ বাণিজ্যিকীকৰণৰ ব্যৱস্থা নকৰিলে নগৰ-চহৰৰ

মহিলাই কোনোকালেই উচিত মূল্য নাপাব। তাৰ লগতে লাগিব কৰ্মৰ প্ৰতি নিষ্ঠা আৰু সততা। কাম নকৰিলে পেট নভৰে— আজি অসমৰ সহস্ৰ ক্ষুদ্ৰ আত্মসহায়ক গোটৰ ভূমিকা হ'ব লাগিব উৎসৰ্গীকৃত আৰু কৰ্মতৎপৰ।

জাতি-জনজাতি নিৰ্বিশেষে ভাৰতৰ উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলৰ, বিশেষকৈ গ্ৰামাঞ্চলত বসবাস কৰা নাৰীসমাজলৈ লক্ষ্য কৰিলে দেখা যায় গৰিষ্ঠসংখ্যক নাৰীয়ে এতিয়াও ঘৰুৱা কাম-কাজ, সন্তান প্ৰতিপালন, পানীয় প্ৰস্তুতকৰণ, ৰন্ধনশালা, পৰম্পৰাগত কৃষিকৰ্ম আদিৰ মাজতেই সময় পাৰ কৰিবলগীয়া হৈছে। জনগোষ্ঠীয় লোকসমাজত শৈশৱৰপৰাই কন্যা সন্তানক ঘৰৰ ভিতৰচ'ৰাৰ কৰ্মৰ শিক্ষা দিবলৈহে সাধাৰণতে প্ৰয়াস কৰা হয়। শৈক্ষিক দিশত ব্যুৎপত্তি লভি ন্যূনতমসংখ্যকেহে স্বাৱলম্বিতাৰ আদিপাঠ শিকিবলৈ সুযোগ পাইছে। কম বয়সতে বিবাহত আবদ্ধ হৈ বহু যুৱতীয়ে পেলাইছে এৰিছে শিক্ষা গ্ৰহণৰ অধিকাৰ। তাঁতশালত সপোনৰ ফুল বহা ভাৰতৰ উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলৰ নাৰীয়ে এতিয়াও ৰূপান্তৰৰ সমৰ্থতা ৰক্ষা কৰি বয়নশিল্পৰ উত্তৰণৰ মূলমন্ত্ৰ নজনাব বাবেও জীৱিকাৰ সঠিক বাট এটা কাটিবলৈ সমৰ্থ হ'ব পৰা নাই। অসম তথা ভাৰতৰ সাতোখন ৰাজ্যৰ সাজপাৰৰ বৰ্ণাঢ্য ৰং-ৰূপ-বৈশিষ্ট্যই বিশ্বৰ নাৰীসমাজক আকৰ্ষিত কৰিবলৈ এতিয়াও উপযুক্ত মঞ্চ পোৱা নাই।

কৌটিল্যৰ 'অৰ্থশাস্ত্ৰ'ত উল্লেখ আছে— "চক্ৰমেকং ন ৱৰ্ততে।" এটা চকাৰে যেনেকৈ ৰথ চলোৱা কাৰ্য অসম্ভৱ, ঠিক তেনেকৈ সমাজ নামৰ ৰথখন নাৰী অবিহনে কেৱল পুৰুষ নামৰ চকাৰে চলোৱাটো অসম্ভৱ কথা। বৈদিক যুগত পুৰুষৰ সমানে ঋষিত্ব অৰ্জন কৰি মন্ত্ৰদ্ৰষ্টা হ'বলৈ সক্ষম হোৱা কিয়দংশ নাৰী ঋষিয়ে যি মান্যতা লভিছিল সেয়া বিশ্বৰ ইতিহাসত বিৰল। তাৰমাজতেই 'মনু-সংহিতা'ত নাৰীৰ বাবে আঁকি দিয়া হ'ল এডাল লক্ষণৰেখা। জন্মৰপৰা বৃদ্ধাৱস্থালৈকে নাৰীৰ স্বতন্ত্ৰতাৰ বাধা আৰোপ কৰি নৱম অধ্যায়ৰ তৃতীয় শ্লোকত সন্নিৱিষ্ট হ'ল এই নিষেধাজ্ঞা :

“পিতা ৰক্ষতি কৌমাৰে ভৰ্ত্তা ৰক্ষতি যৌৱনে।

ৰক্ষতি স্থৰিৰে পুত্ৰা ন স্ত্ৰী স্বাতন্ত্ৰ্যমৰ্হতি।।” (৯.৩)

'মনু সংহিতা'ত নাৰীক অবলাৰূপে প্ৰোথিত কৰি পিতৃ, স্বামী আৰু পুত্ৰৰ অধীন কৰা ভাবনাৰ মুক্তি বিচাৰি সময় বাগৰিল। পৰিৱৰ্তনৰ ঘূৰ্ণী বতাহে নাৰীসমাজৰ মানসিকতাক এদিন স্পৰ্শ কৰিলেহি। সমগ্ৰ বিশ্বৰ প্ৰেক্ষাপটত নাৰীশক্তিয়ে সাৰ পালে। নাৰী-পুৰুষৰ শ্ৰমৰ অ-সম বিভাজন তথা অৰ্থনৈতিক বৈষম্যই নাৰীসমাজক জাগৰিত কৰিলে। লাহে লাহে সমগ্ৰ বিশ্বতে প্ৰশ্ন উঠিল লিংগ বৈষম্যৰ। সাম্যবাদী দৃষ্টিভংগীৰে স্ব-অধিকাৰ বিচাৰি নাৰী সোচ্চাৰ হ'ল। পুৰুষ-নাৰীৰ শ্ৰমৰ সমমৰ্যাদাৰ লগতে ভোটাধিকাৰৰ অধিকাৰ, শিক্ষাৰ অধিকাৰ, ৰাজনীতিৰ অধিকাৰ আদি সাংবিধানিক সকলো মৌলিক অধিকাৰ বিচাৰি সমগ্ৰ বিশ্বৰ শোষিত নাৰীসমাজ প্ৰতিবাদমুখৰ হৈ পৰিল। অগা-পিছাকৈ সলনি হ'ল ভাৰতৰ নাৰীসমাজৰ জীৱন পৰিক্ৰমা। ভাৰতৰ উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলকো পৰিৱৰ্তনৰ প্ৰথম কিৰণে স্পৰ্শ কৰিলেহি। মূলাগাভৰু, জয়মতী, কুৰংগনয়নী আদি মহীয়সী নাৰীৰ ত্যাগৰ মন্ত্ৰকে সাৰোগত কৰি গৌৰৱ অনুভৱ কৰা অসমীয়া নাৰীয়ে নিজক ন-কৈ মূল্যায়ন কৰাৰ বাবে উৎসাহী হৈ উঠিল। পদ্মপ্ৰিয়া আয়ে কাটি যোৱা প্ৰাচীন বাটটো মোকলাই উনবিংশ শতিকাৰ শেষ দশকৰপৰা বিংশ শতিকাৰ আদি পৰ্বত হাতত কলম তুলি ল'লে ধৰ্মেশ্বৰী দেৱী, নলিনীবালা দেৱী, যমুদেশ্বৰী শইকীয়া, আজলীতৰা নেওগ আদি মুষ্টিমেয় লেখিকাই। 'চিক' ভাঙি পুৰুষৰ সমান্তৰালভাৱে আসন ল'বলৈ উদাত্ত আহুন জনালে চন্দ্ৰপ্ৰভা শইকীয়ানীয়ে। 'ঘৰজেউতি'য়ে জাগ্ৰত কৰিলে নাৰীমুক্তিৰ চেতনা। কনকলতা, ভোগেশ্বৰী ফুকননী আদি স্বদেশপ্ৰেমৰ মন্ত্ৰত দীক্ষিত হোৱা নাৰীৰ চৰম ত্যাগে চকুলো সৰালে সকলোৰে। এদিন স্বাধীনতাৰ মুক্ত বতাহত ছাঁৰ মাজেৰে পোহৰৰ বাটটো চিনি উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলৰ নাৰীসমাজ অধিক জাগৰিত হ'ল। ভাষা-সাহিত্য-সংস্কৃতিকে মুখ্য কৰি সমাজ-ৰাজনীতি-অৰ্থনীতিত নাৰীয়ে বাট বুলিলে। ৰাজনীতিত নাৰীৰ স্থান সীমিত হ'লেও সাহিত্যত নাৰীকণ্ঠ বিংশ শতিকাৰ পঞ্চম দশকৰপৰা

আজিলৈকে অতিকৈ উচ্চ। ‘জ্ঞানপীঠ বঁটা’ৰপৰা ‘সাহিত্য অকাদেমি’ৰ বিভিন্ন বঁটাৰে ভাৰতৰ উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলৰ নাৰী আজি সন্মানিত হৈছে। শাৰীৰিক শ্ৰমৰপৰা অতি সম্প্ৰতি ‘ই-শ্ৰম’লৈকে যোগ্যতাৰ মাপকাঠীৰে নাৰীয়ে পঞ্জীয়ন কৰিব পৰা হৈছে। অনুষ্ঠান-প্ৰতিষ্ঠান, ঔদ্যোগিক, বাণিজ্য আদি বিভিন্ন ক্ষেত্ৰত নাৰী সংযুক্ত হৈছে শিক্ষা আৰু বুদ্ধিদীপ্ততাৰে।

এনেকৈয়ে উত্তৰণ আৰু প্ৰত্যাহ্বানৰ মাজেৰে উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলৰ নাৰীসমাজে একবিংশ শতিকাত খোজ থ’লেহি। তথাপি কিয় মন-আকাশৰপৰা আঁতৰা নাই দুৰ্ভাবনাৰ কলীয়া মেঘৰ ছাঁ? একবিংশ শতিকাৰ বিজ্ঞান, তথ্য আৰু প্ৰযুক্তিৰে উদ্ভৱিত গণতান্ত্ৰিক দেশ ভাৰতবৰ্ষত আজিও কিয় হয় নাৰী আৰু পুৰুষৰ অসমতাৰ দ্বন্দ্ব? শিক্ষাৰ সম্প্ৰসাৰণ আৰু আধুনিকীকৰণে আজি আমাৰ মানসিকতালৈ চূড়ান্ত পৰিৱৰ্তন আনিছে। তাৰ মাজতো নাৰীসমাজলৈ নামি অহা অনেক ঘটনা-পৰিঘটনাই আমাৰ মন-মগজু-বিবেকক বাৰুকৈয়ে জোঁকাৰি গৈছে। ডাইনী হত্যা, পাৰিবাৰিক হিংসা, পণ-অপহৰণ, ধৰ্ষণ-হত্যা আদি নিত্য-নৈমিত্তিক ঘটনাই ভাবিবলৈ আমাক ক্ষণে ক্ষণে বাধ্য কৰাইছে আমি প্ৰকৃততে কোনখন সমাজত বাস কৰিছোঁ? মনোৰমা দেৱী, নিৰ্ভয়াৰ কাণ্ডকে মুখ্য কৰি অলেখ অমানৱীয় কাণ্ডই আমাক কিয় কঁপাই তুলিছে? অকল্পনীয়ভাৱে অনেক আৰাল-বৃদ্ধ-বণিতাই কিয় আদৰ্শত হেৰুৱাবলগীয়া হৈছে জীৱন এই সভ্যসমাজৰে এচাম পশুপী মানুহৰ হাতত? সভ্য সমাজত কিয় নাৰী আজিও হাত সাৰিব পৰা নাই মানসিক নিৰ্যাতনৰ পাৰিৱৰ্তিতাপৰপৰা?

পুত্ৰ সন্তান থকা বহু পৰিয়ালত কন্যা সন্তানৰ বাবে সম্পত্তিৰ অধিকাৰ আজিও এক অসহনশীল বিষয়। নাৰীক ‘অৰ্ধ আকাশ’ৰ স’তে কৰা ৰিজনি তেনে পৰিয়ালৰ বাবে এক প্ৰকাৰ প্ৰহসন মাত্ৰ। লোকসমাজত বিবাহ আৰু যমালয়ক একে শাৰীতে থ’ব খোজা মানসিকতাৰ সলনি নহ’লে এচাম নাৰী সদায় মৰি মৰি জীয়াই থাকিব লাগিব— এয়া নিশ্চিত সত্য। শাৰীৰিক নিৰ্যাতনৰ চিন শৰীৰত দৃশ্যমান; কিন্তু আধুনিক জীৱনে পদে পদে দিয়া মানসিক নিৰ্যাতনৰ চিন প্ৰতিগৰাকী উচ্চ শিক্ষিত বা নিৰক্ষৰ নাৰীৰ হৃদয়ত ৰৈ যায়— যাক উপেক্ষা কৰিব নোৱাৰি মৰণপৰ্যন্ত।

স্বামী বিবেকানন্দই সঠিক কথাই কৈ গৈছে— “পূৰ্ণ স্বাস্থ্যই পূৰ্ণ নাৰীত্ব।” ঋগ্বেদৰ স্বতন্ত্ৰ, স্বাধীনমনা পূৰ্ণ ভাৰতীয় নাৰীৰ মানসিকতাত মধ্যযুগীয় সমাজে বান্ধি দিয়া নিয়মৰ অনতিক্ৰম্য প্ৰতিবন্ধকতা আৰু পুৰাতন নীতি-নিয়মৰ শৃংখল ভাঙি আজি কেইগৰাকী নাৰী আগবাঢ়িব পাৰিছে সেয়া লক্ষণীয় বিষয়। তথাপি আমি আগুৱাব লাগিব। মাংৰি ওৰাং, ৰাণী গাইডিনলু, ইৰম শৰ্মিলা, ইন্দিৰা মিৰি, টেমচুলা আও, মামং দাই, বিৰুৱালা ৰাভাৰ দৰে বহু নাৰীৰ জীৱন-কৰ্ম আৰু আদৰ্শৰদ্বাৰা উদ্বুদ্ধ হৈ সফল ব্যক্তিকপে নিজকে থিয় কৰাবলৈ ভাৰতৰ উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলৰ প্ৰতিগৰাকী নাৰীয়ে অহৰহ প্ৰয়াস কৰিবই লাগিব। ৰক্ষণশীলতাৰ বৃত্ত ভাঙি ওলাই আহিব লাগিব আজিৰ নাৰীসমাজ। শিক্ষানুষ্ঠানত ‘ৰাষ্ট্ৰীয় শিক্ষাৰ্থী বাহিনী’, ‘ৰাষ্ট্ৰীয় সমাজ সেৱা’ আদিত ছাত্ৰৰ অনুপাতে বাঢ়িব লাগিব ছাত্ৰীৰ সংখ্যা। নিজৰ জীৱনৰ সুৰক্ষাৰ সমান্তৰালভাৱে দেশৰ নিৰাপত্তা নাৰীয়ে নিজেই ল’ব পৰা হ’ব লাগিব। শৈক্ষিক অগ্ৰসৰতা হ’ব লাগিব প্ৰতিগৰাকী কন্যা সন্তানৰ বাবে জীৱনৰ মূলমন্ত্ৰ।

তথাপি মনৰ মাজত কিছু প্ৰশ্নই উকমুকাই। বিশ্বায়নে গৰকা একবিংশ শতিকাৰ দুটা দশক পাৰ হ’ল। কেৱল উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলতেই কিয়, সমগ্ৰ ভাৰতৰ পৰিপ্ৰেক্ষিতত পৰিয়ালত সিদ্ধান্ত গ্ৰহণ, অৰ্থনৈতিক অধিকাৰ আৰু ক্ষমতাৰ হস্তান্তৰকৰণ কৰাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত এতিয়াও পুৰুষ-নাৰীৰ মাজত মধ্যযুগীয় অসমতা পৰিলক্ষিত। চাৰি ভাগৰ এক শতাংশ নাৰীৰ আৰ্থিক সবলীকৰণে সমগ্ৰ নাৰী জাতিক প্ৰতিনিধিত্ব নকৰে— এই কথা দিনৰ পোহৰৰ দৰে সাঁচা কথা। সেয়েহে ভাৰতৰ সমগ্ৰ উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলৰ নাৰীৰ সৰ্বতোপ্ৰকাৰ উত্তৰণৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত কোন কোন কাৰকে মুখ্য ভূমিকা গ্ৰহণ কৰিব পাৰে, দ্বিতীয়তে, উত্তৰণ যদি হৈছে— সেই প্ৰগতিৰ অগ্ৰগতি কেনে? সমাজ-সাহিত্য-সংস্কৃতি, বিজ্ঞান-বাণিজ্য-ৰাজনীতি-অৰ্থনীতি তথা বৌদ্ধিক পৰিমণ্ডলত ভাৰতৰ উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলৰ নাৰী কৰ্মদক্ষতাৰে, সবলীকৰণেৰে, স্বাৱলম্বিতাৰে, অধ্যয়ন-বুদ্ধি-বৃত্তি-মেধাৰে বিকশিত হৈ

স্বতন্ত্র দৃষ্টিভংগীৰে জাগৰুৱক হৈ কিমানদূৰ আগবাঢ়িছে আৰু এই উত্তৰণৰ মাপকাঠী কি? সাংবিধানিক আইনগত ৰক্ষাকৰণ উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলৰ সকলো নাৰীয়ে পাইছেনে? পুৰণিকলীয়া ৰীতি-নীতি, ধ্যান-ধাৰণাৰপৰা মুক্ত হৈ, লিংগভিত্তিক বৈষম্যক নিলগাই থৈ আঠোখন ৰাজ্যৰ নাৰীয়ে মূৰ তুলি আকাশ চাব পাৰিছেনে? আজি একবিংশ শতিকাৰ তৃতীয় দশকৰ দুৱাৰ-ডলিত ভৰি থৈয়ো নাৰীৰ নিজা পৰিচয় কি? ইত্যাদি অনেক প্ৰশ্নৰ খতিয়ান লোৱাৰ লগতে মানসিক দাসত্বৰ শিকলি ছিঙি নাৰীৰ অন্তৰ্জগতক জাগৰিত কৰাৰ উদ্দেশ্য আগত লৈয়েই জগন্নাথ বৰুৱা মহাবিদ্যালয় মহিলা কোষৰদ্বাৰা প্ৰকাশিত আলোচনী ‘স্ৰোতস্বিনী’ৰ পঞ্চম সংখ্যাটি আগবঢ়োৱা হৈছে।

বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় অনুদান আয়োগৰ ‘Consortium for Academic & Research Ethics’ তালিকাত ইতিমধ্যে অন্তৰ্ভুক্ত হোৱা ‘স্ৰোতস্বিনী’— এই গৱেষণাধৰ্মী আলোচনীখনৰ এইবাৰৰ মূল বিষয় ধাৰ্য কৰা হৈছিল— ‘Shaping North-East India : Women’s Role, Space and Perspectives.’ উপবিষয় হিচাপে অসমকে ধৰি ভাৰতৰ উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলৰ নাৰীসমাজৰ আৰ্থ-সামাজিক উত্তৰণ কিম্বা অনগ্ৰসৰতা, উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলৰ নাৰী আৰু শিক্ষা; ভাষা-সাহিত্য-ৰাজনীতিত নাৰীৰ স্থান; চলচ্চিত্ৰ, কৃষি, বাণিজ্য, ক্ৰীড়া, ঔদ্যোগিক ক্ষেত্ৰ, বিজ্ঞান জগতত নাৰীৰ ভূমিকা; নাৰীৰ বাবে চৰকাৰী আঁচনি আৰু ইবোৰৰ বিভিন্ন দিশ; স্বাস্থ্যৰক্ষাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত নাৰীৰ ভূমিকা; নাৰীৰ অৰ্থনৈতিক স্বাধীনতা আৰু সম অধিকাৰৰ প্ৰসংগ; পৰম্পৰাগত জ্ঞান আৰু ইয়াৰ প্ৰয়োগ; প্ৰসিদ্ধ লেখকৰ ৰচনাত নাৰীৰ মূল্যায়ন, বিভিন্ন স্তৰত নাৰী শোষণ-বঞ্চনাৰ বলি হোৱাৰ কাৰণ আৰু প্ৰত্যাহ্বান আদি বিষয় সন্নিৱিষ্ট মুঠ ৩২টা প্ৰবন্ধ গৱেষণামূলক দৃষ্টিভংগীৰে উপস্থাপন কৰাৰ প্ৰয়াস কৰা হৈছে। আশাকৰোঁ পাঠকসমাজে এই গৱেষণামূলক লেখাখিনিৰ জৰিয়তে ভাবনাৰ দিগন্তত কিঞ্চিৎ হ’লেও বিচৰণ কৰিবলৈ সমৰ্থ হ’ব।

‘স্ৰোতস্বিনী’ৰ প্ৰবন্ধৰাশিৰ সকলো দিশ নিৰপেক্ষভাৱে বিচাৰ-বিশ্লেষণ কৰি যথা সময়ত আমালৈ প্ৰেৰণ কৰাৰ বাবে অন্তঃনিৰীক্ষক আৰু বহিঃনিৰীক্ষকসকললৈ কৃতজ্ঞতা জনালোঁ। প্ৰবন্ধলেখকসকলে যথাবিহিত নিৰীক্ষণ পদ্ধতিৰ মাধ্যমেৰে প্ৰবন্ধৰাশি আমালৈ প্ৰেৰণ কৰিছে। ইয়াৰ মাজতো থকা তথ্যবিভাটৰ বাবে লেখক দায়বদ্ধ হ’ব।

‘স্ৰোতস্বিনী’য়ে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় অনুদান আয়োগৰ ‘CARE’ তালিকাত অন্তৰ্ভুক্ত হোৱাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত বিশেষভাৱে উদ্যোগ লোৱা জগন্নাথ বৰুৱা মহাবিদ্যালয়ৰ মাননীয় অধ্যক্ষ ড° বিমল বৰা আৰু ‘মহিলা কোষ’ৰ সকলো বিষয়ববীয়া তথা সদস্যক আন্তৰিক ধন্যবাদ জ্ঞাপন কৰিলোঁ।

পৰিশেষত, “গাঁৱলীয়া বাটেৰে লুইতৰ ঘাটেৰে পৃথিৱী চাবলৈ ওলালি কোন? গাঁৱৰে সোণ, তয়ে হ’ব দেশৰে জিলিকা জোন” বুলি জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদ আগৰৱালাই গীতৰ মাজেদি আশা ব্যক্ত কৰাৰ দৰে ভাৰতৰ উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলৰ প্ৰতিগৰাকী ছোৱালী উচ্চ শিক্ষাৰে শিক্ষিত হৈ, দেশৰ জোন হৈ নিৰ্মল পোহৰ বিলাবলৈ সমৰ্থ হওক। প্ৰতিগৰাকী ছোৱালী কেৱল ‘নাৰী’ অভিধাতে সীমাবদ্ধ নহৈ একোগৰাকী ‘ব্যক্তি’লৈ ৰূপান্তৰিত হওক। আত্ম-মৰ্যাদাৰে নিজক চিনক। সমাজ তথা দেশক শুদ্ধভাৱে পৰিচালিত হোৱাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত আৰ্জিত শিক্ষা আৰু অভিজ্ঞতাৰে সহযোগিতা আগবঢ়াওক। আমি বিচাৰোঁ সমাজত লিংগ-বৈষম্যৰ সলনি লিংগগত সাম্য। আমি বিচাৰোঁ পিতৃতান্ত্ৰিক সমাজ ব্যৱস্থাত পুৰুষৰ সমভাৱে নাৰীৰ ‘ক্ষমতায়ন’। বিজ্ঞান মনস্কতাৰে, যুক্তিবাদী দৃষ্টিভংগীৰে সকলো ধৰণৰ অন্ধবিশ্বাসৰপৰা মুক্ত হৈ আহক পুৰুষ-নাৰী নিৰ্বিশেষে একেলগে যাত্ৰা কৰোঁ— এই যাত্ৰা হওক সৰ্বতোপ্ৰকাৰ উত্তৰণৰ...

জ্যোতিৰেখা হাজৰিকা

পল্লৱী দুৱৰা

যুটীয়া সম্পাদক, ‘স্ৰোতস্বিনী’

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English
Section



‘Negotiating Cultural Ecology : An Ecocritical Trajectory into Mamang Dai’s Poetry’

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Abstract :

Mamang Dai has been widely acclaimed as an ethnic poet, a poet of nature and a culturally conscious poet negotiating myth and history through memory for reclaiming the ancient roots/glorious and cultural past of the Adi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. However after the publication of her *The River Poems* (2004) and *MidSummer Survival Lyrics* (2014) critical attention has been shifted from her ethnic consciousness to her eco ethnic sensibility, eco philosophy and eco mysticism in the backdrop of deforestation, desertification, loss of pastoral landscape caused by the anthropocentric attitude of the modern and postmodern man/ civilization and consumer culture. In order to overcome the grave situation Eco critics, Ecologists, and Environmentalists have been persistently insisting on preservation of forests and pastoral landscape, animals and birds for restoring a healthy ecosystem based on the principle of ‘interconnectedness’ between man and nature, between biotic and abiotic elements. Together with Deep Ecology, Romantic Ecology and Biophilia, emphasis is now laid on ‘Cultural Ecology’ which points to adaptation and negotiation of culture and ecology so as to realize what Derrida calls ‘Entanglement’ between society and the surrounding environment. In the backdrop of the above, the present paper purports to situate the eco-sensibility of Mamang Dai and the application of the concept of cultural ecology to her poetry by analysing her poems selected from the two collections- *The River Poems* and *Midsummer Survival Lyrics*.

KeyWords : *Cultural Ecology, Ecological Awareness, Ecocritical Consciousness, Interconnectedness, Adi culture, Collective consciousness.*

Introduction :

Ecological awareness and eco-critical consciousness have been a subject of serious contemplation in Postcolonial discourse for more

than half a century, and their importance has been increasingly felt in the North Eastern part of India consisting of seven sister-states. Right from Verrier Elwin’s *Myths of the Northeast Frontier of*



India (1968), *The Art and Crafts of Nagaland* (1986), Sidney Endle's *The Kachari's*, P.R.T Gurdon's *The Khasis* (2012), H.O. Mawrie's *The Khasi Milieu* (1981), K. Brahma's *Aspects of the Social Customs of the Bodos* (1989), Lyall and Stock's *The Mikirs* (1908) to Sujata Min's *Ethics and Environment ; Theory and the Adi and Khasi practice* (2001), Dharamsing Teron's *Karbi Studies* (2011), A. Neville Watts *The Half Clad Tribals of Eastern India* (1970) and L.A. Waddell's *The Tribes of the Brahmaputra Valley* (1901), scholars have thrown sufficient light on the social, political, economic and cultural aspects of the tribal people of the Northeast of India. But, very few of them have attempted ecocritical/ecological study of the writings from the Northeast. There is no denying the fact that the region is rich in biodiversity, and constitutes a mosaic of many ethnic groups/tribes with their divergent beliefs, myths, traditions, customs and practices. Whereas some of these tribes have settled down by river banks or in plain areas, there are many more living in the lap of mountains and fountains and foothills officially labelled as 'plain tribes' and 'hill tribes' respectively. Some of these tribes like Bodo, Rabha, Mishing, Dimas, Karbi, Ao Naga, Khasi and Adi have strong and inevitable connection with nature and forest ecology.

Among the eco-conscious poets of the region, the names of Mamang Dai from Arunachal Pradesh, and Temsula Ao from Nagaland stand prominent. Temsula Ao's *Laburnum for my Head* is a powerful plea for protection of nature and environment, and through her "Laments for the Earth", she not only brings to the fore the

anthropocentric urge of the modern man for deforestation and eco-destruction under the influence of colonialism, modernization and industrialization but also connects, from the standpoint of eco-feminism, the oppression of women with the oppression of Nature at large. Mamang Dai, a celebrated poet of Arunachal Pradesh, too searches for her cultural roots through the protection and preservation of myths and rituals, faith and customs, animistic belief in forest ecology and eco-mystical art of living in close communion with Nature. The present paper purports to situate Mamang Dai's eco-centric sensibility with special emphasis on her leaning towards cultural ecology.

Born to the Adi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh, Mamang Dai is usually acclaimed as an ethnic poet, a nature poet and an eco-conscious poet evincing engaging interest in the sights and sounds, flora and fauna, mountains and rivers, weather and climate, season and environmental condition as a whole. To situate Dai as an eco-conscious writer on the basis of her prose and poetry-*The Legends of Pensam* (2006), *Midsummer Survival Lyrics* (2014) and *River Poems* (2004) is to negotiate Deep ecology with Romantic ecology, eco-philosophy and Cultural ecology in her literary oeuvre. In *Legends of Pensam* and *Midsummer Survival Lyrics*, one locates Dai's propensity for exploring spiritual connection with nature. The basis of Dai's eco mysticism is grounded upon her celebration of life and culture of Adi tribe in terms of peaceful co-existence, sense of togetherness and harmony which is strongly reminiscent of William Wordsworth's and Thomas Hardy's glorification



of rustic simplicity, belief-system and simple/ innocent way of life with utmost naturalness. Like Wordsworth, she nourishes a pantheistic belief that peace and happiness roll through everything and that the biotic and abiotic elements in ecosystem are all bound by the spiritual principle of ‘ interconnectedness’. In this connection, Margaret Ch.Zama in her book *Emerging Literature from Northeast India*(2013) aptly observes:

‘The pantheistic nature of her poems are but natural; being a practitioner of Donyi-polo, a traditional belief of Adi tribe to which she belongs, which upholds the union of life in rocks, rivers, hills, trees and all life’. (‘Summer Hill: IIAS Review, 14-1, No 2, 41)

Zama’s observation succinctly shows that Dai, like a romantic ecologist, celebrates life in terms of ‘inter connectedness’ and an inherent bond between the Adi people and nature bound by the coil of spirituality. In Dai’s eco philosophic vision, rivers sing, mountains speak; forests and fountains, water and tiger serve spiritual purpose in their own ways so that life goes on. This is the secret of eco- mysticism in her poetry, and her poem ‘Mystic Mountain’ bears true testimony to this fact. Dai’s metaphors are exclusively drawn from the world of nature, and are spiritually constructed with proto romantic zest to convey ecological contours of the landscape/environment in which Adi people do live with the bond of peaceful co-existence.

In an article under the title ‘The Nature of Faith and Worship among the Adis’, she writes that “ the great forest, mountain and the environment shaped the consciousness of the Adi

people”(2006). What Dai tends to mean here is that her ‘metaphors’ embody/signify the ‘collective consciousness’ of the people of Adi tribe in Arunachal Pradesh mixing myth and history with memory, culture and ecology/environment. ‘Mountain’ and ‘river’ are central symbols and rather extended metaphors and connect landscape with memory, history and the cultural past of the Adi people. Mountains serve as veritable vehicles through which Dai tends to reclaim her ‘ancestral root’ , history and culture. Mountain is mystified as the manifestation of the Divinity, as a sure solace in calamitous hours, as friend, philosopher and guide to the Adi community as a whole. Like Keats’ ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’, the mountain is the ‘sylvan historian’ who records the history, culture and ancestral glory of the Adis in the pages of cultural ecology. For instance, in her poem ‘Writing’ , Dai candidly conveys how in the uncanny and eco phobic situation of growling thunder, appearance and disappearance of Sun, the Mountain stands as their secured shelter and Saviour. She characterizes the Adi people as simple and innocent devotees of Nature which is signified by the ‘Mountain’ :

Thunder growls,
The sun appears and disappears,
Big land
We are small, solitary silhouettes
Trying to embrace the mountain
(*Midsummer Survival Lyrics 2*)

In the poem ‘The Voice of the Mountain’ Nature is increasingly personified like Wordsworth’s beloved goddess Nature. She is the epitome of ancestral Adi rituals and culture,



and as such a simple man from the village pays a visit to the Mountain as a sacred shrine and presents a 'fish' as a part of the Adi ritual and like a divine goddess the Mountain speaks and receives the offering. The purpose of cultural ecology stands vindicated here, as the 'fish' caught from the 'river' is offered to the Mountain goddess which is a part and parcel of Adi culture. The personified Mountain speaks:

I am an old man sipping the breeze
That is forever Young.
In my life I have lived many lives.
My voice is sea waves and mountain peaks,
In the transfer of symbols
I am the desert and the rain,
The wild bird that sets in the west,
the past that recreates itself.
(*Midsummer Survival Lyrics*, 29)

Like an 'old man' laden with maturity of experience, the Mountain is the eyewitness to the smiles and tears, trials and tribulations of the Adi people which is signified by 'desert and the rain'. As the custodian of their 'history and culture', the Mountain has become a part and parcel of their collective 'cultural consciousness' and 'collective memory' through which the history of a tribe/community/race is recreated in the present: 'the past that recreates itself.' The endearing attachment between Man and Nature and between Nature and human culture can be poignantly felt through the image of an 'old man sipping the breeze'. People come and go, but the Mountain as the timeless historian records their temporal history and stands 'forever young'. The 'Mountain' is mystically conceived of as the

embodiment of eternal life (my life) which has seen and experienced many a birth and death in the world of transitoriness- 'In my life I have lived many lives' (*Midsummer Survival Lyrics*, 29)

The Mountain has become the spirit of the land and it's youthful vigour can be situated through the breeze 'that is forever young', its timeless voice can be listened to through the perennial 'sea voices' and its fathomless nature can be realised through the 'mountain peaks' Behind her art of personification, Dai brings to the fore the animistic belief of the Adi culture. Nature provides a cultural space and the landscape/environment is permeated with an air of spirituality and supernatural glow. At the same time, a conducive ecological/environmental condition revives with the wings of memory and through the spirits of trees and voices of river, sea and mountain, the ancestral roots of the Adi people. The mountain speaks a language of silence which no human language can comprehend. In the poem 'An Obscure Place', the poet is not sure of their written past, and hence nothing is certain about the 'history of our race' except the mountains :

Nothing is certain These are mountains,
Oh! These are Mountains
We climbed every slope, we slept by the river
But do not speak of Victory yet.
(*Midsummer Survival Lyrics*, 18)

The ecological message is that mountains and rivers are fathomless; they can be loved and loved only, and hence the anthropocentric question of exercising victory/hegemony over nature does not arise at all. The poet laments that under the impact of colonialism, modernization and



industrialisation, people have not only blissfully forgotten their ancestral roots and cultural heritage, but also strained the cordial relationship with rivers and mountains, wilderness and forest ecology. While subscribing to the theory of Deep Ecology, Mamang Dai rejects anthropocentrism, capitalism, consumerism and the idea of nature as ‘ free lunch’, and supports the ecocentric view- of life— love of all lives, both human and non-human and mutual interaction between two species otherwise called ‘commensalism’ and ‘mutualism’. Ecology demands love of ‘economy of Nature’ that involves total relations of human and animal world, of one animal with another animals, of birds and plants, mountains, rivers, forests and fountains.

In *Midsummer Survival Lyrics*, she strongly argues that the mountainous environment being their homeland and the land of their ancestors as well, the question of crushing the mountains or deforesting the green landscape will be an onslaught on the history, ancestral glory and culture of the Adi people. Dai comes closer to the philosophy of ‘biophilia’ (love of all forms of life) when she calls upon her people to show their love and kindness for animals, birds, worms, insects and plants as well (53). In her poem, ‘Be careful how you cut that tree’, she denounces merciless deforestation which is a major cause of eco-destruction. She is well aware of the fact that deforestation and desertification not only lead to colossal loss of the balanced eco system inviting catastrophic changes in weather and climate, but also largely affects tribal rituals and cultural practices that are mostly dependent on forest resources - trees, plants, creepers, animals and

birds. At the same time, deforestation leads to destruction of landscape and decidedly affects the economic and cultural life of the tribal people. Nature being the fountain source of beauty, pristine purity and primeval innocence, deforestation withers their aesthetic alacrity and mutilates their creative imagination and natural way of life. Dai’s insistence on ‘mutualism’ is evident in the poem ‘Man and Brother’ wherein the poet calls upon the tiger-a born brother to human being according to Tribal belief-not to be merciless to human beings. Here, it is significant to note that trees are not only near and dear to tribal people, these are also permanent shelters to animals and birds. And by the same logic, massive deforestation brings about eco-destruction to both human and animal world and therefore the animals are bound to become merciless. The poet aptly appeals to the tiger: ‘My brother Oh! My brother/ have mercy for our destiny.’ (*Midsummer Survival Lyrics*, 51)

Dai’s ecocentric and compassionate attitude towards animals is strongly reminiscent of Shakuntala’s love for deer of the hermitage in Kalidasa’s *Abhijnana Sakuntalam* and the melancholic philosopher Jaques weeping over the wounded deer in Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*. In the mouth of Jaques, Shakespeare chastises the Senior Duke for their merciless killing of deer in their own dwelling place, And in much the same way, in Kalidasa’s *Abhijnana Sakuntalam*, the king of Hastinapura (Dushyanta) is prevented from deer- hunting in the Ashram environment by the hermits which vindicates the efficacy of forest ecology. At the same time, such an ecological



stance establishes Greg Garrad's viewpoint that animal study constitutes a significant factor in ecological discourse. Dai emphasizes peaceful existence of every species/organism on the ground that Nature provides food, shelter and sustenance to one and all, and that human beings, animals, birds, and other species should live like brothers in the same landscape with the bond of love and friendship: 'it is the state of mutual regard, a state of kinship'. (*Midsummer Survival Lyrics*, 44) Dai's negotiation between biotic and abiotic elements for the preservation of landscape and forest Ecology satisfactorily comes out in the poem "Man and brother" wherein one locates a happy coexistence of both the human and animal world:

The tiger runs swiftly from my father's house

Calling my name.

Brother ! Man Brother

Have mercy for our destiny.

(*Midsummer Survival Lyrics*. 44)

Being a sensitive and qualified poet, Mamang Dai is seriously aware of the dichotomy between ecocentrism and anthropocentrism, between rural ecology and urban ecology.

This is all the more evident from her novels *Stupid Cupid* (2009) and *The Black Hill* (2014). In the former novel, the central characters Adna and Mareb leave their native rural landscape in search of freedom. In the urban landscape of Delhi their dream remains unfulfilled and the novelist reclaims, through their unfulfilled dream, the efficacy of rural ecology and the ineffable bond of naturalness with Nature in contrast to the complex and busy life in the metropolis. In much the same way, her recent novel *The Black Hill*, with a mid

Nineteenth Century setting, draws a telling contrast between the pristine purity of Nature and the complexity / artificiality of the globalised and industrialised civilization epitomized by colonial forces. The intrusion of the East India company into the serene landscape of the Mishmee and Abor tribes of Mebo is stoutly opposed by the natives of the tribal villages, which vindicates Dai's powerful plea for protection of tribal culture and pure natural landscape from the onslaught of anthropocentric political and religious forces of colonization / modernization. The brave young man Kajinsha's desperate efforts to unite the tribal people against the British, reminiscent of Caliban's fight for freedom from the clutches of Prospero, the colonizer, is a brilliant historical representation of the native-tribal psychology for preservation of their territory and culture. *The Black Hill* symbolizes the tribal people/culture as against the aggrandizing ego of the 'white man'.

As a representative of the Adi community, Dai is essentially a poet of ethnic culture, and through her *River poems*, more predominantly through the central metaphors of 'river' and 'mountain', she tries tenaciously to reclaim, with the help of myth, memory and history, the ancestral glory and the glorious cultural past. With her characteristic romantic melancholy, she realizes that life is not a blissful pastoral idyll, and that her people are no dreamers ("No Dreamers"). They are rather 'foragers for a Destiny' ("Remembrance"). They do experience a painful reality and more often than not foresee an uncertain future in a mysterious universe under the dictates of an inscrutable destiny, while lifting their



eyes to the ‘invincible sky’. Yet, they love their land /landscape, ecology and culture – their rites and rituals, Popir dance and rhythmic presentation of ‘Phoning’ dance, and above all their practice of ‘Doni- polo’ which upholds a sacred traditional belief in the continuity of life in both biotic and abiotic forms of life.

Like the Mountain discussed above, Dai’s River is also increasingly personified, and the river embodies at once the myth, memory, history and culture of the people of Arunachal Pradesh in general, and of Adi community in particular. Like Langston Hughes’ famous poem ‘The Negro Speaks of the Rivers’, Dai speaks of a culturally conscious river- historian- ‘The river has a soul’. In the poem ‘Small Towns and the Rivers’, the poet adumbrates how the river’s soul coexists with human anxiety and despair of the innocent tribal people. Yet, nature and culture are intertwined, as the innocent tribals surrender to ‘river’ and ‘mountain’ with immaculate love and endearing attachment: ‘In small towns by the river / We all want to walk with gods’ (River Poems, 2004, lines 39-40). In the poem ‘Floating Island’, the poet makes a spiritually blessed big person (Virata Purusha) out of the Mountain that stretches down into the water of the river. The Mountain speaks and calls upon the inhabitants of foothills to take rest in Him: ‘Dear one, do not go away / Rest, on my shoulder’ (lines 4/5) It is in the lap of the mountain that a woman is found asleep ‘pressing her cheek on my pillow’ (lines 6-8) and ‘vivid with dreams’, whereas the ‘birds of summer are resting in her breast’ (lines 9-10). Dai’s art of naturalness in depicting the inviolable man-nature relationship

is strikingly notable indeed. Even as romantics like Rousseau and Wordsworth were averse to nature-culture relationship in the aftermath of the Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution, the relationship between nature and Culture of the tribal people stands incontrovertible.

The French philosopher Derrida tends to argue that the coexistence of Nature and Culture leads to a sound ecosystem, and separation of culture from nature leads to a deconstructive ecosystem. In his *Of Grammatology* (chapter titled ‘The End of The Book and the Beginning of Writing’), Derrida draws reference to Rousseau and hails Nature in high esteem by extolling her as the ‘great and sublime book’ (*Of Grammatology*, 18). Derrida further maintains that an ecocritical text should not show differentiation between nature and culture, and that it should emphasize nature culture ‘Entanglement’ without the imposition of the controversial questions of ‘hegemony’ and ‘subordination’. Viewed from a judicious ecocritical perspective, neither Nature nor Culture should dominate or think itself as superior or inferior. Both Nature and Culture should be bound by the bond of ‘Entanglement’ or ‘interwovenness’ so that the binary between ecocentrism and anthropocentrism will be dissolved for establishment of a sound ecosystem.

‘Cultural ecology’ is adaptation of culture to a specific environment and it was developed by Julian Steward (1955) in the 20th century. The concept is grounded upon the amicable affinity between Nature and human culture with a benevolent purpose and eco-human communion. Cultural ecology intends to realize a harmonious



relationship between society and the surrounding natural environment on the basis of ecological ethics or what Derrida calls ‘entanglement ‘ or ‘interconnectedness’. What is required therefore is a sound ecological thinking and ecological culture by setting aside the detrimental attitude of ‘dominance ‘ and ‘ subordination’. Like Environmental ethics, Cultural ecology necessitates ecological education and ecological upbringing to develop the idea of ecological culture. Here, one is reminded of Barry Commoner’s recommendation of ‘Four Laws of Ecology ‘ to curb anthropocentrism

as developed in his book *The Closing Circle: Nature, Man and Technology* (1971:29-42). Commoner’s emphasis on interconnectedness, nature as the reservoir of knowledge and as the greatest teacher, and non – interference of the human world in ecosystem by rejecting the idea of taking natural resources as ‘free-lunch’ are some of the cardinal ecological lessons that can be satisfactorily negotiated in Mamang Dai’s *River Poems and Midsummer Survival Lyrics* so as to vindicate the relevance of cultural ecology in the 21st Century.

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Women's Education as a Site of Self-formation: Understanding Indira Miri's *Moi Aru NEFA*

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Abstract :

Any reading of the history of Assamese women establishes that for women in Assam the assertion of their rights in the social sphere has been a tumultuous one where the domestic world was assigned as the space for women. The effort to establish themselves in the public realm was unarguably mediated by access to education in the late colonial times. The self-formation of women at such a juncture had to go through a socio-political conditioning where the individual self is inextricably linked to the public self. In an attempt to address this historical nature of women's self especially during the intervention of colonial modernity, this paper examines the way women's education as a site of identity-formation has been explored by the women autobiographers of Assam. The women speakers, as we argue in the paper, produce an image of themselves as public figures through stories developed around this site. A significant autobiographical text – *Moi aru NEFA* (I and NEFA, 2003) by Indira Miri – is studied to establish this point. The text is studied at the backdrop of the history of women's education in Assam till the nineteenth century. It emerges as an example of how the course of institutional education and a sense of real physical place become dominant sites for identity-formation. Indira Miri's particular interest in these two aspects makes her autobiography distinctive. Through a discussion on the attention of critics towards this field in historically situating the question of women in Assam it is argued that through a close scrutiny of the field of education Miri presents her public persona and simultaneously heralds the advent of newer sites of self- articulation for contemporary women.

Keywords : *Women's Education, Self-formation, Identity, Assam*

Introduction :

Any reading of the history of Assamese women establishes that for women in Assam the

assertion of their rights in the social sphere has been a tumultuous one where the domestic world



was assigned as the space for women. The self-formation of women at such a juncture had to go through a socio-political conditioning where the individual self is inextricably linked to the public self. In an attempt to address this historical nature of women's self especially during the intervention of colonial modernity, this paper examines the way women's education as a site of identity-formation has been explored by the women autobiographers of Assam. The women speakers, as we argue in the paper, produce an image of themselves as public figures through stories developed around this site. A significant autobiographical text – *Moi aru NEFA* (I and NEFA, 2003) by Indira Miri – is studied to establish this point.

Objectives:

The primary objective of this paper is to understand the self formation process of the women of Assam during the colonial period. Another objective is to understand the intricate relationship of private and public self which was continuously mediated by colonial modernity. How women's education acted as a site of identity-formation reflected in certain women autobiographies will also be another objective.

Materials and Methods:

Historical methodology has been used in writing this paper. In doing so mainly textual analysis of both autobiographical and other genre are done. The primary text that has been used in preparing this paper is by Indira Miri's *Moi aru NEFA* (I and NEFA, 2003)

Discussion:

Scholarly works on the growth of education in Assam have already established the fact that in

ancient Assam women did not receive institutional education. Preeti Baruah's essay "Assamar Strisikshar Itihasat Ebbhumuki" (A Glimpse into the History of Women's Education in Assam, 2002) makes a brief survey of women's education in Assam. She states that the Sanskrit *tolis* were meant for the caste Hindu boys where they studied Sanskrit language and literature alongside the holy texts. The number of girls receiving preliminary education in their homes was very less and they mostly belonged to the caste Hindu families and the elite section of the society. The religious scriptures and tales were their forte. The Neo-Vaishnavite movement of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries also did not do much to change the situation. During this period a few women like Padmapriya, the daughter of Gopal Aata, Bhubaneswari, the daughter of Harideva and Kanaklata, the grand daughter-in-law of Sankardeva could read the religious texts. Padmapriya is known to have written a few devotional songs. No historical record is found regarding these women attending educational institutions but it may be assumed that they learned to read and write because of the initiatives of their respective families. Institutional education was not considered necessary even for men during the pre-colonial times. Though colonial intervention in Assam in the nineteenth century changed the scenario drastically, yet, the East India Company also did not take much initiative to educate the people of Assam. Despite the emphasis of the Charter Act of 1833 on the Company's responsibility to implement the right to education as one of its moral duties and the suggestion of

granting one lakh rupees annually for the development of education, the situation did not change much on the ground. William Robinson's *A Descriptive Account of Assam* first published in 1841 throws light on the status of women and education in Assam. Robinson mentions that unlike Bengal where every village had a teacher, Assam did not have a provincial school in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. He also states the deplorable condition of women's education and laments that young girls were confined to the domestic life and were barred from the public domain.

With the arrival of the American Baptist Missionaries this deplorable state of women's education in Assam underwent a remarkable change. H.K. Barpujari states in his book *American Missionaries and North-East India (1836-1900 A.D)* (1986) that Rev. Nathan Brown and Oliver T. Cutter, accompanied by their families and with a printing press reached Sadiya on 23 March, 1836, heralding a new beginning in the history of Assam. Barpujari records that the earlier attempts to establish schools in the Garo Hills of Assam by David Scott in cooperation with Bishop Herber of Calcutta did not gain any success.

Thus, the missionary school established in Sadiya in 1836 became the first school to offer institutional education. Another school for girls was established by Mrs. Becker in 1841 at Sibsagar. However the Foreign Secretary's visit to Assam in 1850 brought a radical change in the policy. He stated before the Assam Mission that schools are not "a pre-requisite to the preaching of gospels

...and the demand for common schools will be met at no distant day... by the civil government" (Qtd in Barpujari xxxii). As a result of this concern, Barpujari records "These enrolment at the Sibsagar Girls' School dropped down to three in 1862 while in two schools at Gauhati to twelve which stood at one hundred and twelve in four schools in 1851" (xxxii). The missionaries also initiated the 'zenana schools' to encourage women's education but none of these initiatives proved to be long lasting. The East India Company expressed their concern towards women's education as late as 1858. As part of Wood's Despatch of 1854, women's education was prioritized and in 1859 the Despatch re-emphasised the matter. By the year 1879, eight girls' schools were established in Assam. Out of them, five schools were established in Kamrup, and one each in Darrang, Lakhimpur and Nowgong. The first primary school for girls was established in Sibsagar in 1860-61. The scenario gradually changed in subsequent times and formal education for girls became a priority for the government. However, the patriarchal society had its own reservation regarding the matter. Remarkable exceptions were made by persons like Anandaram Dhekial Phukan (1829-1859) who educated his wife at home and sent his daughter Padmavati to school at Nagaon and Gunabhiram Barua (1837-1894) who sent his daughter Swarnalata to the Bethune School in Calcutta at the age of nine in 1880. Preeti Barua mentions another girl Sarala Debi, the daughter of Uday Ram Das, who went with Swarnalata. Although these women did not record their stories, it is easily assumable that the act of going forward to receive formal education



itself was their initial step towards self-formation. With the course of time, this scenario changed and women's education gained momentum. By the beginning of the twentieth century women of Assam started going to schools within and outside the state. By the third decade of the twentieth century a significant number of girls started attending colleges outside the state and the same had been facilitated inside the state by the establishment of new colleges. The women community, however, responded to this significant development in diverse ways.

Rajabala Das' *Tinikuri Dah Basarar Smriti* (Reminiscences of Seventy Years, 1971) is the finest example of self-formation, where she establishes herself mostly as a public figure with emphasis on her works in the field of women's education. Born in Dibrugarh in 1893, she records the initial wavering about the necessity of education for a girl. And yet with the realisation that education can provide girls an access to the otherwise inaccessible public world, she not only strove to be educated but also fought to establish educational institutions for girls. Her autobiography gives a detailed record of a personal struggle in the field that she continued till the last years of her life. As she passed the matriculation examination in 1915 securing first division she records that it encouraged other parents in Dibrugarh to send their daughters to schools.

The narrative of women's education in Assam in the later decades of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century is also a narrative of self-formation within the limits of social custom and regulation. Tanika Sarkar in her study of the autobiography of

Rashsundari Debi talks about the importance of discovering newer sites of self-formation in the context of colonial India where "Absence of education was taken... as the basic lack that differentiated male and female capabilities" (103). The change in the picture also contributed to the proliferation of women's writing as Geraldine Forbes discusses in her work *Women in Modern India* (1996).

Aparna Mahanta in her work *Journey of Assamese Women* establishes the strong connection between the growth of women's education in Assam and their entry into literature. Nevertheless, she also points out the patriarchal society's reservation about the goal of educating women and which according to them, was to produce good mothers and happy homes. She states, "Two lines of thinking had emerged one upholding the anglicised version of the 'lady' skilled in the arts of the home and the other the Gandhian version of the 'Bharatiya Nari' loyal to the ideals of Sati- Savitri and the nationalist cause" (58).

It is in defiance to such aims of educating women, the early autobiographers present their stories as the stories of mobility in the outside world. The autobiographies by women like Rajabala Das, Nalinibala Devi and others illustrate the rise of education as one of the major domains where women could exercise and assert their selves.

Women's education did not just remain an offshoot of the nationalist projects of social reform in colonial India, but provided women with a sense of identity recognized in the outside world, hitherto inaccessible to them. Partha Chatterjee



refers to Laird and opines that a distant appeal to tradition called for an opposition to the opening of schools for women and the real threat was seen arrangement of women education by Christian missionaries which will not only led to conversion to Christianity but also expose Indian women to harmful western influences (628).

Such a narrative however, started losing ground when in the 1850s Indians themselves began to open schools for girls. Chatterjee refers to the achievements of women like Chandramukhi Bose (1860-1944) and Kadambini Ganguli (1861-1923) who took their B.A degrees from the University of Calcutta in 1883. He interprets this new zeal for education among the women of colonial India as their way of achieving ‘freedom’ in a new sense of the term. The search for freedom and the project of achieving ‘superiority’ by this new generation of women culminated in their participation in the field of education. In case of Rajabala Das and many of her contemporaries, it not only provided a sense of being but became a framework to define themselves. The newly educated women could claim a new definition of women’s duties as opposed to the notions of both the reformists and the Missionaries.

Following this trajectory Indira Miri’s autobiography *Moi Aru NEFA* can be understood as another contemporary woman’s effort to define herself through the paradigm of women’s education. The work presents her life as an educationist who explored the remotest parts of Assam in the mid-twentieth century and someone who dedicated her entire life to the cause of education. Her autobiography is basically a record

of the experiences gathered during her stay at the then NEFA (now Arunachal Pradesh) as an education officer. The North East Frontier Agency in 1947 (when Miri joined) included five hills districts namely Tirap, Mishimi (now Lohit), Abor (now Siang), Subansiri and Balipara (now Kameng). Her narrative includes a geographical and anthropological study of this place and its people. However, her focus is on the service she offered as an education officer to this part of Assam and the diversity of experiences gathered during her ten years’ stay. Born in 1910 Indira Miri spent her childhood at Shillong as her father Sonadhar Senapati worked there and since there was no Assamese medium school in Shillong, she was enrolled in a Bengali medium school. She narrates the beginning of her school days:

My far-sighted, learned father sent me to the Brahma Girls’ School at Calcutta at a very early age... my father realised it well that the school education at Calcutta will be better than that of Shillong... However, there was another special reason behind trying to educate me in such an early age. Despite being a man of his times, he considered women’s education as equally necessary to that of men... I studied in Calcutta from class IV onward and completing my B.A degree from the Scottish Church College of Calcutta, I returned to Shillong in 1932. To allow me to study in Scottish Church College (which was a boys’ college) during those days is another instance of my father’s progressive mind (my trans.; 7).

She mentions other girls from Assam who were enrolled at Scottish Church College around



that time. There were four Khasi girls – Silverine Swer, Beatrice Peu, Kelelida Kharsati and Helen Giri from Shillong, Miss Haima Kakoti from Dibrugarh, Halima Khatun from Shillong and Amalprabha Das. Commenting on the status of women's education in the 1930s she says:

My heart was filled with new hope and enthusiasm and more so because I got enrolled in a reputed Boys' College. ... it was only since the previous year that the college allowed girls to take admission. Therefore, only a few girls were there in the college. Only two girls were studying there when I joined the college (my trans.; 12).

She left Calcutta in 1931 and the next year she married Mahichandra Miri, a high ranking forest officer deputed to survey Kaziranga for the first time in the mid thirties. However, her husband died after seven years of marriage and she along with her three children came back to her father's home. She has not recorded the next four years of life from 1939-1943 and elaborated a new chapter of life from 1943 onward as she decides to rejoin institutional education. She writes:

Towards the end of 1943 I saw a notice in the newspaper that Madam Montessori will be conducting a six months training programme in Ahmadabad. I was not yet stable after attaining widowhood and the notice made me think that perhaps a change in place and nature of work might prove good for me. I applied for the programme and received a reply on time that I have been selected and the central government has offered a scholarship as well (my trans.; 25).

This enthusiasm of a woman going through a difficult phase of her life is indeed remarkable.

This resolve to prove and establish herself as independent in the patriarchal society is presented as the narrative core of the text. This act of tracing the growth of her public self evades the need to explore the inner world of her emotion. She provides no record of the emotional crisis that she was going through at that time. Rather, she actively participated in this training programme given by Madam Montessori, and learnt the various skills related to children's education. While coming back from Ahmadabad after completing the course successfully she stayed at Delhi for two weeks with her brother Mahendra Lal Das, the then Member of Parliament (MP). This proved to be another turning point in her life as she got selected for a scholarship to study abroad. With the support of her family members she started another important chapter of her life to pursue higher studies in London. She took admission in the B.Ed programme of Edinburgh University in 1945 and completed her B. Ed Degree in 1947. Her thesis for the programme was on "Factorial Analysis of 13- year old children".

This was another achievement for a widow and a mother of three children. The subsequent narration, free from any emotional and personal details is replete with this sense of accomplishment. This impassiveness of the speaker's voice is crucial because the record of an individual life is mostly silent about an important aspect of the life concerned. In fact, the act of writing the autobiography provides an occasion to recollect her achievements in the field of education as she writes:



After reaching home I took rest for a few days and one day met Walker Sahab, the Advisor of North East Frontier states. While I was in London he wrote me a letter asking for my willingness to work at NEFA. Although I replied positively I told him that NEFA is a very remote place, almost a no man's land. If he thinks that I as a woman can work there conveniently, I will certainly work there. He was glad that I met him and told me to prepare a plan for educating the children of NEFA. I submitted a plan hurriedly. After a few days I have been appointed as the chief education officer of NEFA (my trans.; 32).

The subsequent narration carefully records her professional life mostly at NEFA and briefly in some other places of Assam. Miri's self-narration becomes interesting for the way she makes the place a subject of study in the text. Her professional life at NEFA from 1947 to 1957 offers a record of the socio-economic conditions of the place during the period. The text is replete with anthropological records of the various tribes living there, their cultural practices and the central government's political intervention in the field of education. This elaborate narration also includes the diverse experiences of encouraging illiterate people to send their children to schools and the difficulties of implementing educational policies. It is interesting to note that such a detailed record of her days at NEFA make up the major part of the text and the later phases of her professional life are briefly passed over. She mentions that after leaving NEFA in 1957, she was appointed as the Principal of Post Graduate Teacher's Training Centre at Jorhat on the same day. She completed her term of service in this Centre

in 1968 and in the same year she took charge as the Principal of Banikanta Kakoti Bachelor's Training College in Guwahati. After leaving the college in 1983 she was appointed as the chairman of the social welfare department. Thus, she spent almost four decades of her life working in the sector of education and yet it is the time spent in NEFA that finds a special account in her self-narration. Her other services and work experience are mentioned briefly only in the last chapter. Nevertheless, she justifies the special attention towards her first job at NEFA:

I leave the task of assessing my work at NEFA to others. However, by my own evaluation I was successful. It gives me immense pleasure to remember that I could work for those people who lived an almost impossible life in such a remote place. I did my job with dedication, courage, enthusiasm, hope and with immense pleasure (my trans.; 54).

She records how she had to leave NEFA as a result of political interference in her work. The account of the backwardness of the place is set as a foil to her achievement as a female education officer at a time when living alone and working in a new and distant place was unthinkable for many women. She presents her accomplishment as a woman winning against such adversities. At the backdrop of her contemporary women's confinement to home she weaves her sense of accomplishment as the central motif of her narrative. Contrary to the understanding of women's personal narratives as stories of home and domestic life, these departures point towards the intersections of the public and the private as crucial in women's self-articulation. Donna C. Stanton reads such "conflicts



between the private and the public, the personal and the professional”(138) in autobiographies by women as necessary for assertion of an ‘I’ against the society’s view. She reads the medieval and nineteenth century Western women’s entry into the male-dominated site as responsible for such conflicts that finally led to the preferring of public performances over the personal. In case of the early women writers of Assam too such a choice stands justified. The public realm invariably becomes the centre of their self-narrations.

Malavika Karlekar’s article “Kadambini and the Bhadrak: Early Debates over Women’s Education in Bengal” (1986) analyses the way women’s education in Bengal affected the social structure. She says:

By the beginning of the twentieth century, while an increasing number of girls continued to go to primary school, their participation at the higher level was limited; at the same time, zenana education gained in popularity. There were a number of reasons for this uneven growth in girl’s education. (28)

The case of women’s education in early twentieth century Assam also resonated with that of Bengal. Assamese periodicals such as *Mou* (1886-87), *Banhi* (1909- 1945) and *Ghar-Jeuti* (1927-1931) had many articles written both by men and women on the kind of education to be imparted to women. The participation of the newly educated women in this debate is significant. A reading of the autobiographical accounts of women including that of Indira Miri points towards the fact that girls were generally sent to school till completion of the primary level but were rarely

encouraged for higher studies. Such a social disapproval for education of girls refers to diverse socio-cultural reasons. Two of the primary reasons pointed out by Karlekar are early marriage and refusal to send the girls to co-educational institutions and another crucial reason in case of Assam is the issue of caste. The girls from the upper caste were not just married off before attaining puberty, they also could not mix freely with girls belonging to lower caste families. It is remarkable that amidst such gender and caste based hindrances a few pioneering women not only educated themselves but worked hard for the development of women’s education in the state. Subsequently such major achievement of their lives dominated their self-fashioning primarily as formations of their collective selves. Owing to this education emerged as the major site of their self-articulation. It is regarding this changing dynamic of women’s education in modern India that Geraldine Forbes comments:

The first generation of educated women found a voice: they wrote about their lives and about the conditions of women. The second generation acted. They articulated the needs of women, critiqued their society and the foreign rulers, and developed their own institutions. (61)

Conclusion :

In the act of autobiography to unveil before the reader an image of the speaking self, formal education for women like Indira Miri paved the way to sketch her image as a woman of accomplishment. The undertones of such a site in women’s self-realization in Assam, however, started shifting as access to education for women



by the late twentieth century no longer remained difficult compared to that of the colonial times. Even then other issues related to women's education still remained an area of concern. The shift in the paradigm of women quite presumably led to the emergence of newer sites of self-articulation such as politics, performing arts and

others. Yet the prevalence of gendered perceptions of women's duties and responsibilities mediated through these fields time and again posit the necessity of women's self-formation as necessary to question and understand the interfaces of the public and private in the patriarchal set up of Assam.

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The Aesthetics of Growth of North-eastern Women: Retorts, Representations and Resemblances

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Abstract :

Aesthetics, in all its shades and hues, is always inadvertent and evasive, if not illusive. There are always manifestations and expressions which heighten its sensation, be it in literature or in the poetics of it. Whenever we talk about mankind as such, it can be said that it has always been a glaring testimony to all the kinds of developments witnessed till date beyond geographical demarcations. Historiography has been a vivid proof to all sorts of advents, be it enticing or repelling. The present-day literary scenario across the globe vindicates the staggering progress that women from the North-east have made when it comes to establishing themselves. The so called rise of women in general and women writers in particular from the north-east have well and truly shattered the notion of the North-east to be a relegated land. The various kinds of literary texts have had major impacts on the development of society. They have shaped civilizations, changed political systems and exposed injustice from time to time. On the other hand, the texts also become the repertoire of a detailed preview of human experience, allowing us to connect on basic levels of desires and emotions. The women writers, thus, bring us face to face with different shades of human nature through tragedy and romance, joy and sorrow, in epiphanies and denials, in moments of heroism, conflicts and crises. This paper scrutinises the inherent subtlety of aesthetics which echo the growth of the North-eastern Women. At the same time, the paper, thus, underpins the essential nuances and the associated concealed retorts which inevitably go behind the scene.

Keywords : *Aesthetics, Civilisation, Development, North-Eastern Women, Progress.*

Introduction :

“Writing, because it allows us to represent to ourselves our learning, our ways of making meaning, teaches us the most profound lesson about how we read, write, and use language, about what it means to know” (Zamel 481).

Martin Buber’s notable phrase “hallowing

the profane” both asserts and negates at the same time the poignancy of getting a particular group or a community masked. This very mask can be political, social, forced, self-imposed at times in a particular society. When it is the case with women, and women from an already under focussed geographical location, things become double



strenuous to cope with. Although Buber used the phrase in order to indicate the power of literature to bring to the fore something not generally visible, this phrase becomes aptly significant in the context of this research paper as it carries within itself the immediacy of the topic. Long gone are the days when a geographical land could be just shooed away considering its literary and cultural developments. Every nation, today, has come to its own in terms of projecting its culture, writers and societies without any kind of gender division in a drastic manner. Talking about writers and women, it has to be admitted that the so called backward land, the so called land of terror and insurgency, the so called underprivileged North-east in general, has produced glittering stars in the form of Tamsula Ao, Easterine Kire, Mamang Dai, Jahnabi Barua, Arupa Patangia Kalita, Monalisa Changkija and many others.

Gerda Lerner, the notable feminist critic, defined “feminist writing” as

(1) The awareness of women that they belong to a subordinate group and that, as members of such a group, they have suffered wrongs; (2) The recognition that their subordination is not natural, but societally determined; (3) The development of a sense of sisterhood; (4) the autonomous definition by women of their goals and strategies for changing their condition; and (5) the development of an alternate vision of the future. (274)

The above ideas are very much pivotal for the understanding of the process of development of something called as feminist writing. These ideas are clearly the key foundations on which lean the greater picture of female writings to be

precise. What is significant in the context of North-east is that it has produced writers from every part of it which meant that there is a show on display as far as literariness of the literary texts is concerned. North-eastern places are an amalgamation of different tribes, numerous ethnic religions and culture which make the places at once multifarious and heterogeneous. The texts which emanate out from places like Assam, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Kohima etc. always carry the flavour and the texture of the people and culture of the North-east to a great extent.

Objectives :

The following objectives will be envisaged for the research work:

- 1) To address the sense of growth of women from the North-east in the current literary and cultural scenario.
- 2) To portray that there are numerous untold resentments and inherent pains which go unnoticed in the final culmination of a startling female writer. To substantiate, writers like Easterine Kire have always focussed on the sense of an individual giving enormous primacy to the self in general.
- 3) To bring to the fore various ramifications of aesthetics and the associated subtlety connecting the rise of North-eastern female writers. This drives home the point that the journey of the rise of the females consists of a serenity, something to be proud of and take enormous pride in.

Materials and Methods :

The research is planned to be based on the following methods:



- 1) The research is primarily based on qualitative approach. It focuses on the general critical analysis of the development of the female writers from the North-east.
- 2) The research is descriptive in design. So, the descriptive outlook paved the way for bringing to the fore the objectives of the research.

Discussion :

The function of literature, in general, has always been one pertaining to the reflections of the people. Various literary texts have very vividly asserted themselves to be the carriers of the inherent intricacies of a particular society. As a perfect evidence, we have witnessed the fact that in the moments of utter misery, desperation, helplessness, tribulations, distress and agony, literature has always functioned as a loving, soothing comforter allaying our fears, anxieties, apprehensions, panics, confusions and dread caused by man-made or natural crises threatening the existence of human life. Ken Hyland defines the very act of writing as an “abstract, socially recognized ways of using language” (21). This definition reinforces the idea of aesthetics which is inherent in the process of writing. The numerous multifaceted literary texts which are written by the women from the North east very truly contain that sense of abstract flavour from various localities, tribes, cultures, etc. There is always the smooth flow of ideas which render an individual unconscious in terms of getting deeply immersed into a particular text thereby bringing in the aesthetics of a particular text.

Grewal and Caplan, in *Scattered Hegemonies*, very pertinently remarked regarding

the importance of different feminist associations making attempts in order to dismantle different so called constructed power structures by the male-dominated society in the following manner, “If feminist movements cannot understand the dynamics of these material conditions, they will be unable to construct an effective opposition to current economic and cultural hegemonies that are taking new global forms” (17). The North-eastern women, through their sheer rise to the forefront in the modern day literary circle, have not only perfectly dismantled the various labels of being ‘timid,’ ‘backward,’ ‘underdeveloped’ but also reinforced the view of global equality irrespective of gender to a great extent. There was a time when writing from the north-east was considered as a very important achievement as it was more often than not, a place associated with riots and conflicts. In such a context, different kinds of writing from the women of the land is surely an achievement of highest stature and magnitude. This might as well be an understatement because there is never any dearth of talent in the North-eastern lands. The lack of exposure, the so called push that sort of instils a kind of spark in an individual and the most important requisite of being recognised for a particular effort were the attributes that were visibly missing.

The rise of the North-eastern women has significantly helped in establishing something called as the writing by the females and also it has nullified the very process of representation which is generally associated with writing in a derogatory manner. In relation to women, it is more often than not the case that they get represented by males which then, sort of relegate the inherent immediacy of the very process of writing. Whenever a particular group



tries to represent its counterpart, there is inevitably the unseen presence of a sheer power-play which posits the other group to be somewhat inferior. This simultaneously helps in establishing the dominance of the presenter and at the same time, presents the represented group to be struggling to make a mark in the mainstream arena. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, the stalwart in the field of postcolonial studies, remarks in a very significant manner in the following lines regarding the duality of the process of representation of a particular group by the other- “Two senses of representation are being run together: representation as ‘speaking for,’ as in politics, and representation as ‘re-presentation,’ as in art or philosophy” (Spivak 28).

In the words of Ray B. West, “... it is best to view modern criticism as a house with many rooms, its occupants living in an uneasy but on the whole respectful relationship to each other. . . it is impossible and misleading to see it as a fixed belief or an organised crusade” (117). This apt remark by West drives home the point that criticism has emerged to be one of the diversified affairs of the modern day world with its branches being spread out in a drastic and all-encompassing manner. The women, from the North-east, as well have also very succinctly formed a part of the so called groove of modern day critical literary circle. Writers like Easterine Kire and texts like *Mari* and *When the River Sleeps* have earned tremendous repute of international significance. In such a context, what becomes of paramount importance is the delineation of the inherent process of analysis of the rise of the North-eastern women at a remarkable rate. It is not that the women from the North-east have suddenly emerged out of nowhere. There has

always been relentless toil and otherwise unseen strenuous efforts which has given way to the final product of the rise.

As far as the aesthetics of the growth of the North-eastern women is concerned, history provides ample evidence of the fact that there was not much to show for in the broader corpus of writing by the women from the North-east in the days gone by. But, with the advent of both time and development in the North-eastern region, there has been significant growth both in terms of female writers and literary texts. On one side, if there is the linear flow of thoughts and ideas in any novel or an article painting a sheer canvas of culture and tribe, then, on the other side, there is also the equal captivating representation of the multifaceted nuances of either the genius of the writer or the intricacies of the history of the land as such. The very fact that the different writings tend to hinge on whatever is present in front of the readers in the form of the society or the people more than anything really fictitious in nature makes the texts all the more gripping in nature. There is, then, an attractive display of linguistic play and rhetorical shrewdness which are on show which yet again heightens the inherent delicate thread of aesthetics. Rhetoric, in its rudimentary sense, according to Dawson is, “the art and study on the use of language with persuasive effect in any given field; as such, rhetoric connotes the art of trickery, a way of masquerading qualities and obscuring information” (11).

Discourse, in the context of an academic praxis, is second to none considering its use and prevalence. A lot of discursive practices of writings have made their presence felt in the modern day



world which have their inherent pros and cons. The rise of the North-eastern women to the fore at a rapid pace has, albeit slowly, widened the very idea of discourse to be all-inclusive in the current academic scenario. The nuances of the development of the North-eastern women very well find a place in the present debates and discussions of discursive circles which itself is a giant leap considering growth and development. In relation to the importance of discourse, Wittengenstein makes a very valid point in the following manner,

One thinks that one is tracing the outline of the thing's nature over and over again, and one is merely tracing round the frame through which we look at it. A picture held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably. (49)

Moving a step ahead, it can be stated that appropriation becomes a significant term in the field of discursive studies. To put theoretically, this term is an indispensable organ of Post-colonial studies. Every discursive writing very well contains the traces of "perspectives" be it social, institutional or authorial. So, self-expression gets curbed in the process of aligning with the social norms. The remark by Bruce Herzberg in this very context greatly substantiates the idea. He opines, "Use of the term discourse community testifies to the increasingly common assumption that discourse operates within conventions defined by communities, be they academic disciplines or social groups" (1).

Captivatingly enough, the presence of inherent differences between various women writers from the North-east makes them all the more enticing in their journey to establishing themselves.

If there is on one side Temsula Ao, who, through her mesmerising poems, has impressed every individual, there is also Jahnavi Barua on the other side, who, through her engulfing short stories, has showcased the different dimensions of the society and the native customs. Thus, the adherence to numerous categories of writing by these women from the North-east has clearly been an illustration of the attribute of vitality which these writers possess. There is, on the way, a whole new dimension of different ideas and meaning coming together which gets formed and counter-formed in the process of reading as the great Pramod K. Nayar would happily state, "We never arrive, we only travel along the path of meaning-making" (39).

Results :

As this particular research is not based on any kind of quantitative data, facts and statistical numbers, it does not consist of any kind of mathematical result to be proved and shown. However, there are also some glaring results in this research as well which are of tremendous importance. These results are basically the reiterations of the inherent aims and ideas of this research to trace the basic journey of the rise of the North-eastern women to the fore. One of the primary results which this research contains in it is that the basic journey of the rise of the women writers from the North-east is a greater testament to the changing scenario of the females in general of these places. As a proud Assamese, I can state that the position of the female writers in the present period is one of sheer respect and repute which would make the heart of any North-eastern swell with pride.

It is needless to say that the staggering growth of the women from the North-east in the current



scenario has been one of its kind which has definitely endured hardships of the highest magnitudes. So, another vital result which becomes evident in this regard is the presence of uncountable retorts and resentments on their way to becoming some of the most popular faces of the present academic scenario. The retorts and resentments could very well be the results of either the relegated state of the women or the result of the different kinds of the process of discrimination in the societies which basically acted according to the dictates of the male members. In the words of the Aboriginal Australian writer, Melissa Lukashenko, "... while feminism is a global movement with potential global applicability, political, regional and ethno-cultural factors can mean that feminist ideology is not appropriate for indigenous women" (21).

The above statement by Lukashenko very well sort of critically analyses the inherent predicaments which women from diverse cultural and racial background generally face. As a place of numerous ethnic, cultural and racial groups, the places of North-east have always been diverse in nature. In such a scenario, the adherence to a specific set of norms and prescribed guidelines to be labelled as "feminist ideology" could really appear to be something far-fetched. However, the presence of a veritable picture of ethnicity and racial colours alongside the presence of different kinds of female writers having their own set of geographical differences is another significant result which can be inferred from this research. This can also be attributed to the fact that the women living in the North-eastern regions never really need to follow any kind of strict dictate in order to keep the confined within the four walls of the house. Issues

related to sanctity, chastity etc. do not glaringly find a place in societies either of the Assamese or of the Nagas, for that matter which would keep them veiled and masked. There are numerous vegetable vendors, road-side workers and labourers, common household maids etc. who are seen in a rampant manner out in the open in the North-eastern lands. This liberty, in some way or the other, very easily paves the way for the writers of the North-east to carve out their own path of liberation.

Conclusion :

A success story to be easily proud of, the rise of the women from the North-eastern has put all the debates to rest that North-east has always been dominated by male writers like Aruni Kashyap, Ranju Hazarika, Robin S Ngangom etc. Delicate touch, be it in a text or in any kind of development, is always captivating and pleasing to the eye and the rise of the female North-eastern writer greatly reiterates this delicacy. There is a sense of aesthetic beauty in the entire journey of the rise of the females, a kind of beauty which is not forced upon but rather, it has been carved out and being placed in the literary vicinity with sheer attractiveness and enticing posture by themselves. One can as if feel the literary rise of the female North-eastern writers with the kind of texts and articles they produce which epitomise the soft flow of ideas without any kind of coarseness which might disturb the attainment of aesthetic pleasure to a great extent.

Moreover, what really makes the rise of the female North-eastern writers even more interesting is that these writers have very easily brushed aside the various ideas and connotations which are generally seen in the general understanding of

North-east. As goes without saying, the various ideas and the perceptions of the people are generally based on self-schemas which are again coloured by bogus and untrue understandings. This very idea has been well-remarked by the notable Mizorami activist, Margaret Chalthantluangi Zama in the lines below:

The term “North East” is a geographical, linguistic and ethnic stereotyping that clubs together these often misconstrued, misjudged and misunderstood eight states ... in the northeastern geographical periphery of the Indian union ... The

northeastern region, which accounts for 7.8 per cent of the total land space of the country, is different from the rest of India in almost every way — be it in terms of culture, tradition, language and ethnicity or of history, physicality, cuisine, dress and indeed, the very cosmology and ethos of life of the people here. This diversity is further reflected within the region itself — each state, and indeed, even each small region within the states, has its own distinct tradition, lore, music, myths, language and even cuisine, though separated by only a few kilometers in physical terms. (7-8)

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Role of Women Elected Representatives in Rural Self-Government: A Study of South Assam

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Abstract :

In India, Panchayats have been assigned with various rural development schemes to cause all round development in the rural areas and also to provide benefits of national growth to the weakest one of the society. This raises a question as to what extent the rural self-government is successful in India. It is evident that the success of rural self-government vary from state to state and there are multitude of factors operate behind the success or failure of rural self-government in the country. One of the key factors for the success of the rural body lies in the wider participation and involvement of women in the various activities of the local bodies. Keeping this in consideration the present study made an attempt to examine the participation and involvement of Women Elected Representatives (WERs) in the decision making process at the Gaon Sabha and Gaon Panchayat level. The Study is conducted in three districts of South Assam – Cachar, Hailakandi and Karimganj – covering forty two GPs and two hundred ten respondents. For the purpose of data collection an open ended interview schedule is administered. The study observed low level of involvement of the Women Elected Representatives at the decision making process at the lowest level. It is found that lack of initiatives towards capacity building, inadequate services, low level of empowerment of the marginalised groups particularly women and indifferent attitude towards the functioning of the Gaon Sabha are the serious challenges for the successful working of Panchayats.

Keywords: *Decision making process, Gaon Sbha, Gaon Panchayat, Participation, Self-government*

Introduction :

Generally, the concept of 'self-government' is associated with the local self government, which includes both rural and urban bodies. In India, this sort of governance at the village level was in

force for centuries and they enjoyed autonomy to regulate their own affairs. The idea of 'self-government' was tagged with the local level institutions only in 1882 when Lord Ripon adopted the policy of setting up both rural and



urban local bodies in India and since then the term 'self-government' is used in India in the context of local institutions covering both urban and rural areas. In the rural areas Panchayats are the institutions of self-government, which covers two broad aspects- democracy and development. Being a constituent of democratic process, Panchayat has created new opportunities for different social groups to take part in the decision making process as well as opened up new vistas for resolving social and economic problems faced by the varied communities. In the latter case also Panchayats have been assigned with various rural development schemes to cause all round development in the rural areas and also to provide benefits of national growth to the weakest one of the society. This raises a question as to what extent the rural self-government is successful in India.

It is evident that the success of rural self-government vary from state to state and there are multitude of factors operate behind the success or failure of rural self-government in the country. One of the key factors for the success of the rural body lies in the wider participation and involvement of the women in the various activities of the local bodies and that is why since independence various committees such as the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee, the Ashoka Mehta Committee etc were constituted by the Government of India to involve women in the decision making process. However, the real boost for participation of women in Panchayats came through the Seventy Third Constitution Amendment Act, 1992, which has made provision for one-third reservation of seats for women, on the rotation basis to different constituencies in a

Panchayat. The Act further made provision for reservation of seats for the office of the Chairpersons in the Panchayats, Subsequently, reservation of seats for women at all levels was further increased to fifty percent (50%). The Government of Assam also initiated the process for wider participation of women in local bodies by passing the Assam Panchayat Act, 1994. However, to improve the situation further the Government of Assam has also increased the reservation of seats for women in rural local self bodies to 50% percent so that more and more women can take part in the decision making process and it is expected that this initiative will go a long way in empowering the women folk as well as bringing massive change in rural social setup. Keeping this in consideration the present study made an attempt to examine the participation and involvement of women Elected Representatives in the decision making process as well as in the developmental aspect of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).

Objectives :

- 1) To study the socio-economic and political status of the Women Elected Representatives in South Assam.
- 2) To find out the extent of participation of the Women Elected Representatives (WERs) in the decision making process in the rural local-self bodies particularly in the Gaon Sabha and Gaon Panchayat in South Assam.

Methodology :

The Study is confined in the Southern part of Assam which is considered as the remotest region of the country. The region comprises four districts, viz., Cachar, Hailakandi, Karimganj and Dima Hasao. In the present study three districts -

Cachar, Hailakandi and Karimganj – have been selected. As Dima Hasao district falls under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution and do not cover the provisions of the Assam Panchayat Act, the Study has excluded the district.

In the present study, two stage sampling technique is used for selecting the sample. At first, two development blocks from each district have been selected by using simple random sampling technique. Subsequently, 50% percent of the Gaon Panchayats (GPs) have been randomly selected from each selected development block. As WERs constitute 50% percent of the total seats, the present study included five elected women representatives from each GP. Thus, altogether 210 WERs have been selected for the study. Besides, the GP Secretaries, GP Presidents, Government Officials and Gaon Sabha members are further interacted so as to understand the extent of involvement of the WERs in the rural self governance. For the purpose of collecting data an open ended interview schedule has been administered. Data collected from the respondents are classified, tabulated and interpreted in order to meet the objectives of the study.

Data Analysis and Interpretation :

The implementation and operationalisation of the Panchayat Act in Assam has brought significant changes in rural life, particularly addressing the basic issues and problems relating to the communities at the grassroots level. The compulsory reservation of seats for woman is expected to change the socio-economic and political dynamics at the lowest level. Hence, it is become important to explore the socio-economic

and political status of the WERs, which would enable us to comprehend their role in the process of rural governance in the state.

(i) Socio-economic and political status of the WERs:

Table 1: Distribution of respondents on the basis of Age

Age Group	No. of respondents
21-40	148 (70%)
41-60	48 (23%)
Above 60	14 (7%)
Total	210 (100%)

Source: Field Survey

As per the provisions of the Panchayat Act the minimum age to contest election in any tier is fixed to 21 and this provides space to the young people to take part in the decision making process. From the above table it can be seen that 70 percent of the respondents belong to the age group of 21 to 40 years, which is followed by 23 percent from the age group of 41 to 60 years and the remaining 7 percent are above 60 years. It shows that middle aged persons are having keen interest in political matters and accordingly participating more in number in the activities of rural governance.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents on the basis of Religion

Religion	Result
Hindu	140 (67%)
Muslim	70 (33%)
Christian	--
Any other	--
Total	210 (100%)

Source: Field Survey

Table : 2 depicts that 67 percent of the respondents are from Hindu religion and 33 percent belong to Muslim religion. There were no elected representatives found from other religious groups. It is observed that the representations of the candidates in the GPs are determined according to their numerical strength in the constituency. It is noticed during the course of the study that the Hindu WERs are easily accessible and they freely responded to the questions, while the Muslim WERs were not able to freely interact and were guided by the male members of their family.

Table 3: Distribution of the respondents by Marital Status

Marital Status	Result
Married	155(74%)
Unmarried	55(26%)
Divorced/Widow	--
Total	210 (100%)

Source: Field Survey

Table : 3 evinces that married group constitute the highest representation (74%) in the rural local-self bodies followed by unmarried group (26%). This indicates that married people are more eager to participate in the decision making process as they are settled and having some interest in the social activities, while unmarried persons are getting more engaged in earning their livelihood by engaging in various economic activities. However, it is noticed that married women got the chance to be involved in the rural governance mainly due to the reservation opportunities provided by the Act.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents on the basis of Social Group

Social Group	Result
General	115 (55%)
SC	64 (30%)
ST	0 (0.0)
OBC	31 (15%)
Total	210 (100%)

Source: Field Survey

Social group is a means to know the social division as well as the status of the people. In the present study social group included respondents from General, Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBC). It is evident from the above table that General category of women representatives constitute the highest number (55%), followed by SCs (30%) and OBCs (15%). There are no candidates from ST Category as the sampled areas have negligible ST population. The representation of the candidates from various social groups depicts the participatory nature of the rural self-bodies, which is a healthy sign for the democratic system.

Table 5: Distribution of the respondents by Education

Educational Qualification	Result
Read up to Class X	147 (70%)
HSLC passed	36 (17%)
HS passed	27 (13%)
Graduation and above	----
Total	210 (100%)

Source: Field Survey

It is widely accepted that for the success of democracy education is the first and foremost criteria as it enables an individual to understand

the intricacies associated with the policy making process. In the case of rural governance elected representatives are required to shoulder huge responsibilities in terms of policy framing, directing, implementing etc and hence their educational qualification has become very significant. Keeping this in view respondents were asked to mention their educational qualification and it is found that 70 percent of them are having qualification up to Class X, followed by 17 percent who are just matriculate. The remaining 13 percent passed Higher Secondary and surprisingly no candidates were found as graduate. This indicates that qualified women are not interested to associate themselves with the rural administrative set up and getting themselves engaged in looking for jobs.

Table 6: Distribution of respondents on the basis of Type of House

Type of House	Result
Semi Pucca (Own house)	142 (68%)
Pucca (Own house)	65 (31%)
Rented House	03 (1%)
Total	210 (100%)

Source: Field Survey

Table 6 shows that 68% of the respondents reside in semi pucca house and 31% reside in pucca house. However, combining both the category 99% of them live in their own house, which clearly indicates that once people are settled in a particular place they are more interested to join in the political process than those who are yet to be settled. In the course of the study it is observed that the women GP Presidents are more affluent and they are residing in pucca houses and possess better household appliances than the GP members.

Table 7: Distribution of the respondents on the basis of Income

Income (per annum)	Result
Below Rs. 20,000/-	166 (79%)
Rs.20,001/- – 40,000/-	22 (10%)
Rs. 40,001/- – 60,000/-	12 (6%)
Rs. 60,001/- – 80,000/-	10 (5%)
Rs.80001/- – 100000/-	–
Above Rs. 100,000/-	–
Total	210 (100%)

Source: Field Survey

Table 7 highlights that 79 percent of the respondents have very nominal income, i.e. below Rs. 20000 per annum, followed by 10 percent who are having income of Rs. 20001-40000 per annum. It can be seen that 6 percent respondents' falls into the category of Rs. 40001-60000 and the remaining 5 percent are in a better position as they are failing under higher income group having income of Rs. 60001 to 80000. There were no candidates having income of more than Rs. 80000. It is observed in the course of the study that WERs are mostly depended on their family particularly the male members of the family. Having the advantage of the reservation facilities they got the chance to participate at the rural administrative set up.

Table 8 Distribution of the respondents by Land Holding

Acquiring Land	Result
Less than 1 acre	14 (7%)
1 acre – 5 acre	--
More than 5 acre	--
No land in name	196 (93%)
Total	210 (100%)

Source: Field Survey

Land is regarded as one of the important determinants of social and economic status of a person and hence questions are asked to the WERs about their land possession. It can be seen from the above table that only 7% of the respondents possess less than 1 acre of land in their name. The rest 93% do not possess any land in their name though their families have substantial land holding. This indicates that women elected representatives are in the rural self bodies due to the support extended by the family to take advantage of the reservation facilities.

Table 9: Involvement of WERs in Organisational activities

Involvement with SHG/Other social welfare organizations	Result
Yes	26 (12%)
No	184 (88%)
Total	210 (100%)

Source: Field Survey

It is very important for the women elected representatives to be associated with the various social as well as economic activities in the locality as their participation will motivate other women to come forward to join in the village development process. Keeping this in view they were asked to share their involvement with the Self-help groups or any other organizations working for the welfare of the people. Surprisingly, it is noticed that a significant number of women elected representatives (88%) have no connection with either SHGs or with any other social welfare organizations. They did not take any steps to motivate women from their respective areas to form SHG. In brief, their orientation towards promoting economic interest is very low.

Table 10: Distribution of the respondents by Political Affiliation

Political Parties	Result
Congress	53 (25%)
BJP	90 (43%)
AUDF	36 (17%)
Others	09 (4%)
Independent	22 (10%)
Total	210 (100%)

Source: Field Survey

In rural self government, the role of the political parties as well as the elected representatives is paramount. It is expected that they are to shoulder the responsibilities of rural development and also to make others capable and vigilant so that they can take advantage of the participatory management existed in the form of Gaon Sabha. Hence, respondents were asked to mention their political affiliation and it can be seen that majority of the respondents represent BJP (43%), followed by Congress (25%), AUDF (17%), Independent candidates (10%) and others (4%). In the course of interaction it has been found that some representatives who contested as Independent candidates actually applied for party tickets but being deprived of that they decided to contest on their own. It shows that in local self government confidence of the people are more on the political parties and for which the idea of party less democracy is gradually withering away.

ii) Participation of the WERs in the rural self-government (GS and GP level)

The issue of participation of women at the rural self government was not thoroughly focused

before the Seventy-third Constitution Amendment Act. This Act has widened the scope for participation of women at all levels so as to empower them socially, politically and economically. It has also been done to bring to a qualitative and quantitative change in politics. The Assam Panchayat Act has also made detailed provisions for participation of women at all the three tiers by keeping the seats reserved for them. This has significantly improved the level of participation of women in the rural self-government. Keeping this in consideration a set of questions was asked to the WERs and their responses are presented below.

Table 11: Reasons for contesting Election at the Panchayat level

Reasons	Result
Self-motivation	22 (10%)
Motivated by the Family members	145 (69%)
Involvement with the Political Party	33 (16%)
Welfare of women and locality	10 (5%)
Total	210 (100%)

Source: Field Survey

Table 11 reveals that a significant number of the representatives (69%) contested election at Panchayat level under the influence of family members, while influence of political party is minimal (16%). Factors like self-motivation and welfare of women and locality is having low level of concern to the WERs. It can be inferred from the available data that if reservation facilities are not being provided the women candidates would not have got the chance to participate in the management of the villages affairs.

Table 12: Participation of WERs at GS and GP Meeting

Participated		Not Participated		Total
69 (33%)		141 (67%)		210 (100%)
Hindu WERs	Muslim WERs	Hindu WERs	Muslim WERs	
54 (78%)	15 (22%)	86 (61%)	55 (39%)	

Source: Field Survey

Table 12 highlights a major gap among the WERs in terms of their participation at Gaon Sabha meeting. A significant number of the respondents i.e. 67% stated that they do not participate in Gaon Sabha Meetings and the remaining 33% expressed that they take part in all the meetings of the GS and GP. On further query it has been found that Hindu WERs (78%) are participating more in number than the Muslim WERs (22%). It is observed that Muslim WERs are not allowed to interact freely with the outsider and this indicates that it is just because of the reservation opportunities male members of their family pushed them into the system. Comparing to Muslim WERs, the Hindu WERs are allowed to interact freely and also participating more in number in both GS and GP level meetings. During the course of interaction it has been found that in most of the cases the activities of the WERs are controlled, monitored and supervised by the male members of their family. Being their nominees male members attend the meetings and also take decisions on their behalf. It is also found that the WERs are also reluctant and not so much interested in political matters and remain satisfied with their day to day activities at the family level.

Table 13: Understanding regarding GP Activities.

Matters	Result
Planning development activities for entire Panchayat.	56 (27%)
Implementation of development plan.	25 (12%)
Making budget for the planned activities.	22 (10%)
Don't know.	107 (51%)
Total	210 (100%)

Source: Field Survey

Table 13 evinces that a significant number of the respondents (51%) are not well versed with the activities of the GP. As they are not regularly attending the meetings of GP, they are not aware of the procedural matters pertaining to the functioning of the GP. During interaction all the respondents were asked about the specific functions of the GPs and it has been observed that they are not having any knowledge regarding the matters and this clearly indicates their low level of awareness towards the rural governance.

Table 14: Problem faced by the WERs in performing their responsibilities

Views of the Respondents
Domestic responsibilities
No opportunity to discuss the issues at the meetings of GS
No separate body for the meetings of women
Lack of knowledge about the functioning of the statutory bodies.

Source: Field Survey

From the above table it appears that WERs are facing variety of problems as regard to their

involvement in the working of the rural self bodies. It is due to their domestic responsibilities that they are reluctant to participate more in number in the meetings of GS and GP. At the same time they face it difficult to raise issues pertaining to the development of their respective wards as well as women related issues in the GS as it is always dominated by the males. It is a fact that there is no provision to conduct Mahila Ward Sabhas at the ward level and very often this act as a barrier for them to participate as they do not feel comfortable in the midst of male dominated rural set up.

Table 15: Participation in capacity building programmes

Programmes attended	Result
Attended Training programmes regarding working/functioning of the rural bodies.	54 (26%)
Not attended any training programmes.	148 (70%)
Don't know.	8 (4%)

Source: Field Survey

Table 15 highlights that a significant number of the respondents (70%) never attended any capacity building programmes regarding functioning of various rural bodies, while only 26 percent admitted that they attended such programmes. It is found that training programmes were conducted at the district level and state level but there was no adequate information provided to the respondents. Besides, it was not mandatory and the respondents did not feel it important to attend. It is also noticed that most of the candidates got elected on party lines but the political parties



also never organised any training programmes for the capacity building of the WERs. It can be seen that political parties have huge enthusiasm participating in elections and tries to get maximum seats in the Panchayats, but when it comes to the question of shouldering responsibilities to empower the elected representatives they have hardly shown any interest. Being the GP representatives the candidates have huge role to play as per the provisions of the Panchayat Acts and, therefore, they require proper guidance and training. But the study shows that political parties and other related Government bodies do not bother about developing skills among the WERs in order to improve the work culture of the GPs.

Suggestions and Conclusion :

On the basis of the aforementioned analysis and interpretation of the data and also field visit of a number of GPs of South Assam the following suggestions are put forwarded so as to increase the level of participation of women in the decision making process.

The study felt the need for some changes in the Panchayat Act to incorporate the provision for meetings of 'Mahila Sabhas' before conducting the meetings of GS so that WERs as well as other women members of the GS can freely interact regarding the development issues of the locality and the decisions of such meeting can be forwarded to the GS for further discussion and adoption.

Another important loophole in the existing system is the role of the nominees in the working of the rural bodies as it is evident from the survey that the WERs very often nominate one of the

male members of their family to look after her works, which seriously hinder the spirit of grassroots democracy. Therefore, such system is urgently required to be rectified by passing necessary laws, which will go a long way in empowering the WERs.

Efforts are urgently required to improve the capability of the WERs so that they can equally participate in planning, monitoring and evaluation process in the rural bodies. To do so compulsory training programmes are required. Such capacity building programmes will serve the purpose only when these are arranged at the lowest level. As the elected representatives of GPs are entrusted with more responsibilities there should be specific training programmes for them covering the important issues of rural governance. However, in all cases information relating to the conduct of training programmes has to be sent well-in-advance so that they can make necessary arrangements for participating in the programmes. It is equally important for the political parties to shoulder the responsibilities of enhancing capabilities of elected representatives through timely training and guidance. Mere distributing tickets and campaigning for the candidates are not enough. They are required to be trained to act as the agents of social change.

The aforementioned analysis has revealed that WERs are facing variety of constraints and these are needed to be addressed so that they become more focused and goal oriented. It is true that even after three decades of the operationalisation of grassroots democracy the rural self bodies are yet to become the real agents



of service delivery. Lack of initiatives towards capacity building, intervention of the nominees of the WERs at all levels, inadequate services, low level of empowerment of the marginalised groups particularly women and indifferent attitude towards the functions of the GS are posing serious

challenges for the successful working of Panchayats. The problems and necessary suggestion as mentioned above are required to be addressed early so that the spirit of providing socio-economic and political justice to the rural masses becomes a reality.

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Uses of Ethno Medicinal Plants by Tea Tribes of Assam for Women Reproductive Health: A case study among Adivasi Community of Tingrai Tea Belt Area of Tinsukia District, Assam

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Abstract :

“Use of plants and plant products for healing and curing different sorts of human diseases is a practice of thousand years. These types of information’s are available in Vedas and there are many such books available in traditional Indian medicine systems like “Sarak Samhita”, “Sushrut Samhita” etc. Lots of descriptions and references about use of herbal medicines related to women reproductive health are still not present in recorded form and which are being used by various ethnic and indigenous communities in India and across the globe. From October 2019 to February 2020 a survey was made among tea tribe (Adivasi) community of Assam in Tingrai tea belt area of Tinsukia district of Assam which is predominantly inhabited by them. It can be concluded that despite of Modern health care facility provided by tea garden management they consume and use lots of herbal medicines for various women reproductive health care due to their traditional and customary belief. It is very much important to explore and record these ethnobotanical information.

Key Words: *Infertility, Herbarium, Chemical elucidation, Ethnobotany.*

Introduction :

North East India is one of the mega biodiversity region is being declared as hot spots of biodiversity by World Conservation Union (WCU) and it comes under Indo Burma biogeographical realm (Mayer, 2000). Assam which is one of the eight north eastern states covering a geographical area of 78,438 sq. km and out of it

27826 sq. km is under forest cover (State forest report, 2003; FSI, Govt. of India). It supports diverse type of natural terrestrial and fresh water aquatic ecosystem like, a) Wet evergreen forest ecosystem, b) Semi evergreen forest ecosystem, c) Broadleaved deciduous forest ecosystem, d) Grassland ecosystem in riverian ecosystem, e) Lotic ecosystem and f) Lentic ecosystem. In en-



tire N.E. India there are more than 15000 recorded species flowering plants out of which + 3010 species are recorded from Assam (Chatterjee et. al. 2006). These recorded plant species are predominantly found in wild form and some are domesticated and cultivated with the aim of economic gain. Lots of these species are being used as ethno medicinal herbal drug by different tribes as customary medicine to cure different sorts of disorders of human as well as for cattle's. According to World Health Organisation report (2008), 80% of the people in developing nation use traditional medicine for health care (Sapam et. al. 2017). Ethno medicine systems are mainly used for cosmetological purpose, for getting pharmacologically active substances and for healthcare (Cox and Balick, 1994). When we focus on healthcare, Women health is a major dimension and point of interest because they face a lot of issues and problems in reproductive health during puberty, menstruation period, conceive child birth, menopause, old age and also mental health related disorders. From ages various communities across the globe use herbal ethno medicinal plants for treatment of this sort of disorders (Abraham, 1981; katiyae et. al., 2012) "Assam with a geographical location of 24°44' N to 27°45' N latitude and 89°41' E to 96°02' E longitude comprise of 14 plain tribes and 15 hill tribes (Department of Plain tribes and backward classes, govt of Assam, 2021). The tea tribe community which migrate to colonial Assam during 1860-1890 from Jarkhand, Odissa, Chittasgarh, West Bangle and Andhra Pradesh (Sharma 2012) are now inhabitant of Brahmaputra and Barak valley with a

population 6.5 million are called as Adivasi. They work as skill labour (both men and women) in tea gardens. With socioeconomic condition women health care is a major issue. Certain customary believes like early marriage of girl, lack of hygiene, malnutrition and lack of awareness and scientific approach leads them to various types of reproductive health related problems. But use of indigenous knowledge and herbal medicine system at local level practice by traditional herbal medicine practitioners and local people of the said community for certain gynaecological and women reproductive health related disorders found to be potential and interesting from pharmacological and ethno botanical point of view.

Objectives :

1. To present a list of species of different herbal medicinal plants used by tea tribe community of Tingrai tea belt area, Tinsukia district, Assam for reproductive health and different gynaecological disorders of women.

2. To Screen importance of these herbal plant species for modern day women health care management systems.

3. To contribute to the knowledge of the ethnomedicinal use of different plants and plant parts for proper documentation. "MATERIALS AND METHODS" AREA OF STUDY "The present study was carried out in three major tea gardens in Tingrai area (27°26'37" N and 95°35'38" E) of Tinsukia district of Assam. The total area cover of the studied area is 32 sq. km with domination of Adivasi people. Name and the population data of the three gardens are shown in table 1 below."

Table:-1

Sl. No.	Name of the garden	Approx. Population (as record received from garden hospital)
01	Bogapani Tea Estate	6875
02	Holonghabi Tea Estate	1650
03	Srikrishna Tea Estate	1100

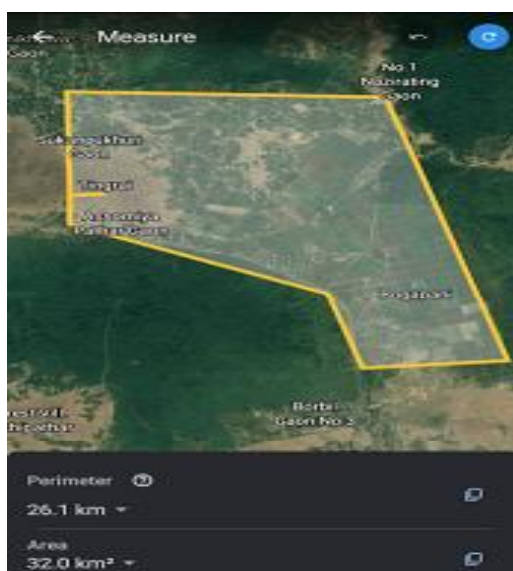


Fig1:-Map of studied area (Courtesy: Google Earth)

Methodology :

The study was designed including survey of the area and collecting information about herbal medicinal plants used by the community for women health through interview with local herbal medicine practitioner and also with the local people specially women whom considered as peer group. The data was collected for two months time during the October and November, 2021 with due permission from interviewee because of hesitation in sharing the information due to customary believe and gender constrains. During data collection,

certain parameters are considered like habitat, parts of the plant used, treatment protocol etc. Standard method is followed during collection of photo data and preparation of herbarium. Binomial names (scientific name), family, vernacular names and specific disorders where it is used are also recorded.

Discussions :

A total 21 species of plants are recorded with their parts used belongs to 17 different family. Some are been utilised alone and some are biosynthesized by mixing with parts of other plants



or ingredients to get the best result for healing and curing of the women gynaecological problems. 4 numbers of plants are reported to used against white discharge, 3 are used to treat puberty related disorder, 4 are used against uterus tumour, 2 are reported to used against infertility problems, 1 reported to use against mental anxiety during pregnancy, 3 species are reported to help in lactation, 1 help in menstrual irregularity and 3 are reported to heal the internal injury against after child birth. Most of these plants are collected by local herbal medicine practitioner from wild habitats but some of them are cultivated variety

also and most of them consumed orally but few are prescribe to use and apply externally also. Many times people hesitate to share their information's and experiences due to their customary belief. They receive these valuable traditional knowledge and information's about these potential bioresource orally from their elders which are not documented properly.

Results :

The data collected are recorded in tabular form with graphical representation of different parts used.

Table:-2

Sl No	Binomial name	Family	Vernacular name	Parts used	Disorders	Method of using
01	<i>Mimosa pudica</i> L	Mimosaceae	Lajuki-lata	Root	White discharge.	Root boiled with water and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of juice is taken orally in empty stomach daily for 7 to 15 days.
02	<i>Opuntia fiscus-indica</i> (L.) Mill.	Cactaceae	Sagor-phena	Stem (Phylloclad)	White discharge.	Sap is mixed with Palm sugar and raw cow milk and 1 tea spoon is taken orally for 7 days.
03	<i>Bambax ceiba</i> L.	Bombacaceae	Simolu	Bark	White discharge.	Sap is extracted from the bark and mixed with Palm sugar and 1 tea spoon taken orally till the problem cures.
04	<i>Brassica juncea</i> (L.) Czern.	Cruciferae	Lai-sak	Lai-sak	Delay in Puberty.	Seed grinded and applied externally in lower abdomen only once or twice.



Sl. No	Binomial name	Family	Vernacular name	Parts used	Disorders	Method of using
05	<i>Cynodon dactylon</i> (L.) Pers.	Poaceae	Dubori-bon	Leaf	Delay in Puberty & uterus tumour.	5 tea spoon of leaf sap taken orally twice daily before food for 7 days.
06	<i>Sesamum indicum</i> L.	Pedaliaceae	Til	Seed	Delay in Puberty & uterus tumour.	200gm of Seed mixed with 200gm jiggery boiled with 1 cup of water and water content reduced up to 1/4 taken orally twice daily before food till the problem cures.
07	<i>Saraca asoca</i> (Roxb.) Willd.	Caesalpiniaceae	Ashok	Bark	Bark	Bark is soaked in water and boiled to get the juice and 1 tea spoon is consumed orally at bed time after food till the problem cures.
08	<i>Musa balbisiana</i> Colla.	Musaceae	Bhim kol	Flower	Infertility problem and conception.	5-6 nos. of Raw flower is taken orally in empty stomach for after 7 days of menstrual cycle till the next menstrual cycle starts.
09	<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>capitata</i>	Brassicaceae	Bondha kobi	Leaf	Uterus tumour.	Leaf roasted with butter and rock salt and taken orally for 15 days. If problem not solved then it is repeated.
10	<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i> Mill.	Apiaceae	Sofguti or Guamori	Seed	Infertility problem.	Seed grinded and 1 tea spoon of grinded powder is mixed with 1 cup of cow milk to take orally for 1 month.



Sl. No	Binomial name	Family	Vernacular name	Parts used	Disorders	Method of using
11	<i>Ipomoea aquatica</i> Forssk.	Convolvulaceae	Kolmou sak	Leaf and stem	Helps in lactation after child birth and breast cancer.	Prepare soup by boiling or roasted and consume orally. Grinded leaf use to prepare paste and applied externally in breast region till the problem cures.
12	<i>Curcuma longa</i> L.	Zingiberaceae	Halodhi	Rhizom	Helps in lactation after child birth.	3 spoons of raw juice taken orally twice daily before food till the problem solved.
13	<i>Entada rheedii</i> Spreng.spp. <i>sinohimalensis</i> (Grierson & Long.) Panigrahi.	Mimosaceae	Ghila	Seed	Helps in lactation after child birth.	Seed grinded and powder is consumed orally with a cup of water or milk for 2 to 3 months.
14	<i>Bauhinia acuminata</i> L.	Caesalpiniaceae	Kanchan	Bark	Mental anxiety during pregnancy.	Bark is grinded with root of Bos (<i>Acoras calamus</i> Linn.) and applied externally in the whole body for 5 to 7 days.
15	<i>Acoras calamus</i> Linn.	Araceae	Bos	Root	Helps in reducing pain during menstruation period.	Paste of root mixed with garlic and taken orally. 1 table spoon is taken during the time of pain.
16	<i>Datura metel</i> L.	Solanaceae	Krishna Datura	Root	Helps in curing uterus disorders.	Paste of root applied externally in lower abdomen for minimum 15 days.



Sl. No	Binomial name	Family	Vernacular name	Parts used	Disorders	Method of using
17	<i>Pogostemon benghalensis</i> (Burn.f.) kuntze.	Lamiaceae	Sukloti	Leaf	Helps in curing uterus injuries during child birth.	Leaf is boiled with water to prepare juice or curry and taken orally for 7 to 15 days.
18	<i>Centella asiatica</i> (L.) Urb.	Apiaceae	Bor manimuni	Leaf and stem	Source of Iron which helps in building haemoglobin of the mother after child birth.	Sap of leaf can be consumed orally in raw format at a dose of 2-3 table spoons or in form of curry for 20 to 30 days.
19	<i>Hydrocotyle sibthorpioides</i> Lam.	Apiaceae	Saru manimuni	Leaf and stem	Source of Iron which helps in building haemoglobin of the mother after child birth.	Sap of leaf can be consumed orally in raw format at a dose of 2-3 table spoons or in form of curry for 20 to 30 days.
20	<i>Paederia foetida</i> L.	Rubiaceae	Bhedai lota or Bhabeli lota	Leaf	Source of Iron which helps in building haemoglobin of the mother after child birth helps in healing internal injuries.	Sap of leaf can be consumed orally or in the form of curry.
21	<i>Cheilocostus speciosus</i> (J. Konig) C. Specht.	Costaceae	Jomlakhuti	Stem	White discharge.	Stem boiled in water and ¼ cup of juice taken orally for 7 day.

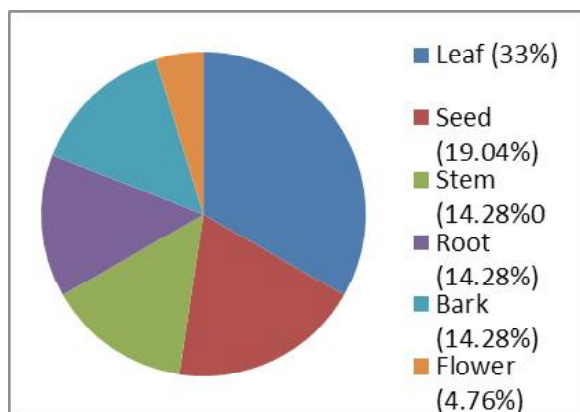


Fig 2: Percentage of different plant parts used.

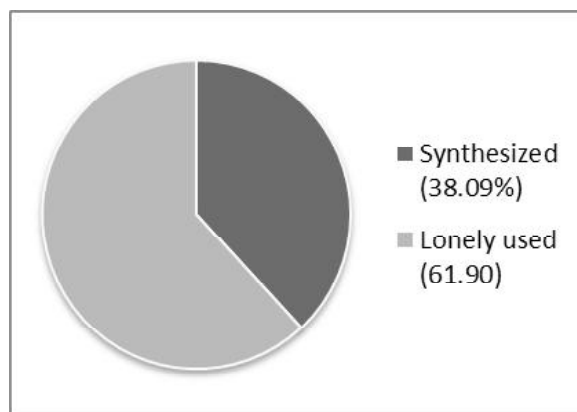


Fig 3: Percentage of drug used in Synthesized manner or in lonely manner.

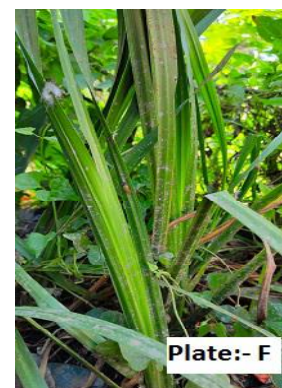


Plate A : *Ipomoea aquatica*. (Kolmou Sak). (Photograph: Own)

Plate B : *Pogostemon benghalensis* (Burn.f.) kuntze. (Sukloti). (Photograph: Own)

Plate C : *Bambax ceiba* L.(Simalu) (Photograph: Own)

Plate D : *Cheilocostus speciosus* (J. Konig) C. Specht. (Jomlakhuti) (Photograph: Own)

Plate E : *Entada rheedii* Spreng.spp. *sinohimalensis* (Grierson & Long.) Panigrahi.(Ghila)
(Photograph: Own)

Plate F : *Acoras calamus* Linn. (Bos) (Photograph: Own)



Conclusion :

The present study carried out tried to focus on various herbal medicine used by local herbal medicine practitioner of tea tribes Assam for issues relate to women reproductive health. Further chemical screening and elucidation, scientific trial and proper documentation of these potential herbal medicines is needed. However, a lot of information's already being lost due to lack of consciousness and scientific documentation. So, it is very necessary to make thorough scientific study of these data and protocol of their uses.

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Female Labour Force Participation in Agricultural Activities: An Analysis of Socio-Economic Survey of wetlands of Assam

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Abstract

Globally there are millions of women who are engaged in farming activities. However, the issue of recognition, absence of land rights, lack of information, and other socio-economic causes have always been acting as hurdles in women's workforce engagement. This paper is an attempt to explore the women's participation pattern in wetland-based activities and also to analyse the factors influencing their workforce participation decision. A comparative scenario of female's agriculture participation in two major wetlands of lower Assam namely Dhir beel and Urapad beel has been provided in this paper. Dhir beel is located in Dhubri district near Chapar town, whereas Urapad beel is situated in Goalpara district and is approximately 12 km away from the Goalpara town. The study found that females are more actively engaged in livestock rearing as compared to cropping and fishing activities. Further, female's participation decision has been assessed by a binary logistic regression model. The model indicates that education, marital status, household size, and help received at home play a significant role in their decision to participate in wetland-based agricultural activities.

Keywords: *Women, Wetland, Farming activities, Logit model.*

Introduction :

Historically speaking, women's work has often been regarded as unpaid one. They are expected to do household chores and take care of their family only. Women's work is by and large neglected or paid not as much as "men's work". For instance; in the United States, most women didn't work outside the home, and those working outside were mostly young and unmarried. This was

the scenario of the early twentieth century. Further, only twenty percent of the women have had access to gainful work. As per the Census Bureau, only five percent of married women were engaged in the workforce outside the home. The involvement of women in agricultural and allied activities is crucial and significant. Though, this involvement nature and extent varies across the regions. In agriculture, from planting to harvesting, women were mostly seen in



the activities like sowing, planting, irrigation, fertilizer and manure application, pesticide application, nursery management, harvesting, storing, etc. However, in some research, it was found that women were treated as less efficient crop producers by many policymakers (World Bank, 2001; Quisumbing, 1994). Further, evidence of the gender gap in agricultural activities has been indicated by several literatures. For instance; a study by Thapa, 2009 in Nepal showed that the productiveness of male workers was higher than that of female workers in agricultural activities. Moreover, a study on Nigeria and Uganda by Peterman et al. (2011) stated lower productivity of crops from the female-owned agricultural plots. But these studies have left out some important variable that affects the productivity gap. For example; a study by Quisumbing; (1996), stated that if the most productive lands are assigned to the males by themselves or have better access to inputs then it will no doubt cause a productivity gap between male and female crop producers. Further, rights to land by inheritance in many countries are generally weaker for women which might be an issue (Htun and Weldon, 2011). Therefore, many studies have revealed that lower productivity in crops is not because female are worse workers than male but due to the fact of gender differences in access to inputs, assets, land rights, markets, low-level bargaining power, etc. (Quisumbing, 1996; Rozelle et al., 2006; Croppenstedt et al., 2013; Kilic et al., 2013; Handschuch and Wollni, 2016). Additionally poverty status of many households improves with the economic contribution of women to the household resources. "Literature of Kaur and

Sharma, (1991); Unnevehr and Stanford, (1985); Agarwal, (1998) claimed that in Asian countries women, especially from rural areas, play a major role in agricultural activity but its relevance is yet to be reflected in policies. Women in Asian countries are capable of balancing both economic and domestic activities by working longer hours (Kabeer, 1994), where the average working hour of women is estimated at 13.2 hours in India (Kaur and Sharma, 1991). As per Census 2011, 65 percent of the total female workers in India are engaged in agriculture. In 2001, the female agricultural labourers were about 21 percent in 2001 and in 2011 it increased up to 23 percent. According to official statistics (National Sample Survey 68th round), in the rural areas, 59% of men work in agriculture, but the figures are 75% for women. The increased participation of females in agriculture indicates not only their increased reliance on agriculture but also their vital role in sustainable agricultural growth. Assam is mainly an agrarian state where women workers constitute a large majority of the workforce. Women in the state are mostly seen associated with agricultural activities like crop production, horticulture, tea plantation, livestock rearing, and fisheries floriculture, and so on. Approximately one-third of the women are involved in agriculture (Khan M.H., 2013). "This paper thus attempts to explore the female labour force participation in agriculture. Female participation pattern in wetland-based agricultural activities has been analysed.

Objectives :

- 1) To investigate the access of female workers to wetland resources and participation in



wetlands-based agriculture in comparison to men.

- 2) To analyse the factors influencing females' decision to participate in wetland-based activities.

Materials and Methods :

i. Sources of data :

The present study is mainly based on primary data. This study mainly focused on the households that were engaged in agricultural activities. Here agriculture includes crop production, fishing, and livestock rearing, etc. Data have been collected with the help of a structured interview schedule as well as focus group discussion.

ii. Area of the study :

Dhir beel and Urapad beel has been selected to conduct the study. In the 26.282°N latitude and 90.380°E longitude the Dhir beel is located near the Chapar town in Dhubri district. The beel boundary is shared between Kokrajhar and Dhubri districts. It covers an area of 497 hectares approximately. Urapad beel lies between the 25°15' N latitude and 90°14' E longitude. It is located 12 km away from Goalpara town. The beel covers an area of 795 hectares approximately.

iii. Sampling Procedure :

A multi-stage sampling method has been adopted to conduct the study. In the first stage, adjoining villages from each beel have been identified. From both the study areas, a total of fourteen sample villages have been selected. The second stage covers farming household data, which were gathered from the concerned village headman. The third stage includes the calculation of 284

households from Dhir beel and 288 households from Urapad beel through the Yamane formula (1967). At the fourth stage, an interview has been conducted using a structured interview schedule and focus group discussion. The study was conducted between January and December of 2019.

iv. Line of analysis :

For the first objective data has been analysed through descriptive statistics like tables, percentages, etc. For the second objective, a binary logit model has been applied. The dependent variable in this study is considered binary, which takes value 1 if the respondent (female) is currently working; and takes value 0 if the female is currently not working. More than one independent variable has been considered in the study therefore the model can be specified as-

Probability that a female is currently working = $P[x=1] = e^w / 1 + e^w = 1 / 1 + e^{-w}$

Where, W is a linear function of the independent variables. If $Y_1, Y_2, \dots, Y_n$ represent various characteristics of the household and female respondent, then "W" equation would be as follows:

$$W = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 Y_1 + \alpha_2 Y_2 + \dots + \alpha_n Y_n$$

Y_i = i^{th} Explanatory variables ($i = 1, 2, \dots, n$)

α_i = Parameters of the model ($i = 0, 1, 2, \dots, n$)

Further with a given set of characteristics the probability that a female is not currently working can be interpreted as-

$$P[x=0] = 1 - P[x=1] = e^{-w} / 1 + e^{-w} = 1 / 1 + e^w$$

The logit model thus postulates that the Probability of a female currently working = $1 / 1 + e^{-w}$.

$$W = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 Y_1 + \alpha_2 Y_2 + \dots + \alpha_n Y_n, \quad \text{the}$$

following interpretation holds for each of the coefficients.

Moreover, each α_i can be shown as: $\partial \log(\text{odds ratio}) / \partial y_i = -\alpha_i$, where odds ratio can be defined as: $P(\text{Female is currently in workforce}) / P(\text{Female not in workforce}) = e^{-w}$

The change in the logarithm of the odd ratio of the chance of a female working to not working is measured by α_i . Further, when y_j is increased by unit we can compute the continuous variables. The calculation of this change can be determined through: $\partial p / \partial y_j = A_j e^{-w} / (1 + e^{-w})^2$.

Where, $\alpha(A)$ shows the estimated logistic coefficient of each variable. The marginal effects were calculated for every independent variable. Table 1 shows the dependent and independent variables considered for the logit regression model.

Table 1: Dependent and independent variables for Binary Logit model

Variables	Description
Dependent Variables	
Female labour participation decision	1 if the female is working ; 0 otherwise
Independent variable	
Age	Age of the female respondent
Education	1 = Illiterate, 2 = primary, 3 - secondary, 4 = graduate & above
Marital Status	1 if married; 0 otherwise (unmarried/widowed)
Presence of children	No. of children (in numbers)
Family income	Total income of family members except for the female worker
Household size	Family size (in numbers)
Has help at home	1 if yes; 0 otherwise

Discussion and Results :

Table 2 represents the socio-economic characteristics of the farmers (household head) of Dhir beel and Urapad beel respectively. The table indicates that in the case of both the beels only 14.79 and 19.79 percentages were female-headed farming households. However, the majority of the farmers were male in both the study areas. In Dhir beel area most of the male and female farmers belong to the age group of 36 to 45. However, in Urapad beel most of the male farmers belong to the age group of 46 to 55, while most of the female farmers belong to the age group of 36 to 45.

Table 2: Farmer's socio-economic characteristics

Variables	Dhir beel (HH=284)		Urapad beel (HH=288)	
	Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage
A. Gender				
Male	242	85.21	231	80.21
Female	42	14.79	57	19.79
	Dhir beel		Urapad beel	
B. Age Group	Male	Female	Male	Female
25-35	34	8	28	7
36-45	80	20	73	40
46-55	68	14	75	10
56-65	47	-	37	-
65 and above	13	-	18	-
	Dhir beel		Urapad beel	
C. Educational level	Male	Female	Male	Female
Illiterate	29	20	30	23
Primary	88	12	97	25
Secondary	89	10	76	6
Graduation & above	36	-	28	3

Source: Authors own calculation based on survey data (HH=Household)



The farmers of Dhir beel and Urpad beel area were seen involved in mainly three types of wetland-based livelihood activities like cultivation; fishing and, livestock rearing, etc. Women's access and utilization of wetland-based activities in comparison to men are discussed below.

a) Womens access to wetland resources and participation in wetland based activities:

i. Cropping :

It was the main socio-economic activity in the study areas performed by both men and women. Cultivated crops included paddy, jute cabbage, cauliflower, brinjal, maize, sugarcane, tomato, potato, and chilli. Most of the main farmers were male, however, in terms of family labour number of females were larger than that of male. In the study areas, the total cultivated area by males has been found larger than the area cultivated by the female. It was found similar to the study of Rocheleau D. (1995) which shows that women have fewer land ownership rights than men in most societies across the globe. Women were mostly seen cultivating for household food security but men were seen focused mainly on commercial purposes. It was found similar to the study of Francis and Jahn 2001; Flintan 2003, who mentioned that women's role is confined to household maintenance, while men's role includes

markets, subsistence production, etc. Further, most of the men i.e. 79.91% in Dhir beel and 78.88% in Urpad beel reported that they have been utilizing these beels for income alone and the rest admitted to utilizing wetland resources for both income and food. On the other hand, about 68.71% (Dhir beel) and 69.82% (Urpad beel) of women admitted to utilizing wetland resources for food. This result indicates that income was the first priority for men while for women it was food. "Further, women had less access and control over cropping activities than men. In terms of main farmers, only 14.79 % (Dhir beel) and 19.79% (Urpad beel) were female farmers, whereas male farmers were 85.21% (Dhir beel) and 80.21% (Urpad beel) respectively. In the study areas most of the female members of the sampled households were seen doing different part-time cultivation activities; such as planting, carrying food for family members to fields, storing, cleaning after harvesting, etc. In the case of Dhir beel total main male farmers were 242 (85.21%) and the main female farmers were 42 (14.79%). On the other hand, there were 231 (80.21%) main male farmers and 57 (19.79%) main female farmers in Urpad beel area. "Table 5 shows the participation pattern of females and males in different types of works in cropping activities.

Table 3: Participation of Male and Female farmers in different cultivation activities

Types of works performed	Dhir Beel (In no.'s)				Urpad beel (In no.'s)			
	Male (HH) (n=242)	MFL	Female (HH) (n=42)	FFL	Male (HH) (n=231)	MFL	Female (HH) (n=57)	FFL
Ploughing	239	110	14	07	231	121	32	10
Clearing fileds	235	89	26	10	212	55	31	11
Planting/seeding	231	93	29	25	225	88	50	31
Marketing of products/ instruments	220	89	-	-	209	71	14	03
Watering of fileds	240	75	19	-	228	22	30	-
Harvesting	233	153	31	19	227	164	47	34
Selling of products	238	78	9	-	223	45	12	-

Source: Authors own calculation based on survey data (HH= household head, MFL= male family labour, FFL= female family labour)

The table indicates that the majority of the works in both the study areas were performed by male farmers. If we compare the working pattern of females of both the study areas, we can see that number of female participants in all the cultivation activities was higher in Urpad beel area. Further, in the case of marketing of products/instruments, the no. of female farmers of Dhir beel area was found nil; whereas in Urpad beel area 34 female farmers were engaged in the marketing of products/instruments. In the case of male family labour the maximum engagement was seen in harvesting activities in both areas. However, in the case of female family labour the maximum engagement was seen in Planting/seeding activities in Dhir beel and harvesting activities in Urpad beel area respectively.

ii. Fishing:

In the study areas of Dhir beel and Urpad

beel about 95 (33.45%) and 83 (28.82%) of households were involved in fishing. Fishing activities were seen as providing a good source of income to the households. This particular activity was mostly done by men in both the study areas. However, women's involvement was also prevalent in some of the sampled villages like Chakrasila pt I & II, Tintila of Dhir beel and Agia, Chamaguri, Gendera of Urpad beel. These villages mostly consist of tribal populations. Except for the above-mentioned villages, most of the farmers mentioned that fishing requires a lot of hardship that is why females usually do not prefer fishing activity unless necessary. In table 6, the participation pattern of males and females in different fishing activities are shown. In the table, the main male fisher (MMF) and main female fisher (MFF) include the household heads only.

Table 4: Participation of Male and Female farmers in different Fishing activities

Types of works performed	Dhir beel (In no.'s)				Urpada beel (In no.'s)			
	MMF (HH)	MFL	MFF (HH)	FFL	MMF (HH)	MFL	MFF (HH)	FFL
Fishing	85	58	15	-	61	53	22	02
Marketing	82	21	13	-	67	35	16	03
Cleaning of nets	35	23	36	35	55	21	28	11
Fish collection	45	27	39	39	41	20	42	18

Source: Authors own calculation based on survey data (HH= Household head, MMF= Main male fisher, MFL= Male family labour, MFF= Main female fisher, FFL= Female family fisher)

The table indicates that in both the study areas participation of female were quite less than that of male. In fishing, only 15 and 22 main female fishers and from Dhir beel and Urpada beel area were seen involved. Further, participation of female family labours was observed nil in fishing and marketing in Dhir beel area. The involvement of female in different fishing activities was seen more in the case of Urpada beel in comparison to Dhir beel. “iii. Livestock: Approximately 110 (38.73%) and 133 (46.18%) households in Dhir beel and Urpada beel area were engaged in livestock rearing activities. In this case, women

were seen playing a dominant role in both the study areas. In the study areas, livestock reared were mostly cow, goat, poultry and, pig. Most of the works associated with livestock rearing were performed by women, such as cleaning of livestock sheds, watering livestock, milking cows & goats, preparing dung cakes, collecting farmyard manure, feeding, fodder collection, egg collection, selling and preparing sheds for poultry’s incubation process, etc. Whereas men were seen in fodder collection, Cattle selling, repairing livestock sheds, etc. In comparison to cropping and fishing women’s access to livestock was observed more.

Table 5: Participation of Male and Female farmers in different Livestock rearing activities

Types of works performed	Dhir beel (In no.'s)				Urpada beel (In no.'s)			
	Male (HH)	MFL	Female (HH)	FFL	Male (HH)	MFL	Female (HH)	FFL
Cleaning of animal and sheds	21	10	40	29	18	07	47	19
Watering of cattle	28	08	39	22	34	11	33	20
Milking the animals	28	07	40	19	18	14	42	18
Fodder collection	23	33	30	10	13	10	38	08

	Dhir beel (In no.'s)				Urpada beel (In no.'s)			
Types of works performed	Male (HH)	MFL	Female (HH)	FFL	Male (HH)	MFL	Female (HH)	FFL
Preparing during cakes	05	-	40	13	-	-	47	19
Collection farm yard manure	26	-	37	17	16	-	17	10
Poultry shed making	78	19	33	19	89	23	39	10
Manure sell	35	15	14	-	44	20	20	-
Selling items	84	24	30	-	79	21	47	-

Source: Authors own calculation based on survey data (HH= household head, MFL= male family labour, FFL= female family labour)

b) Logit model :

Factors influencing females' decision to participate in wetland-based agricultural activities have been analysed through the binary logit model (Table 6). Results have been presented using marginal effect estimate, which

shows the probability of a female's participation decision. Apart from 42 (Dhir beel) and 57 (Urpada beel) main female farmers, spouses of main male farmers of the remaining households have been interviewed.

Table 6: Binary Logit model

Variables	Dhir beel (N=284)				Urpada beel (N=288)			
Participation decision of female labour	Marginal effects	Robust std. errors	Z	P> Z	Marginal effects	Robust std. errors	Z	P> Z
Age of the respondent	.0017634	.0011918	1.48	0.139	.0052052	.0013434	3.87	0.000***
Educational level	.0672425	.0218687	3.07	0.002***	.0362342	.0195278	1.86	0.064*
Marital status	-.0975697	.041568	-2.35	0.019***	-.3049945	.0181042	-16.85	0.000***
Presence of children	-.0347004	.0265066	-1.31	0.190	-.0194607	.018796	-1.04	0.300
Family income	-7.58e-08	8.38e-08	-0.19	0.365	-1.93e-07	1.93e-07	-1.00	0.317
Household size	-0.247319	.0121562	-2.03	0.042**	-.0018862	.0064784	-0.29	0.771
Has help at home	0.879524	0.454642	1.89	0.058**	.1169566	.0325495	3.59	0.000***
	Prob > chi² = 0.0000 Wald chi² (7) = 32.30 Log pseudo likelihood = -104.594 Pseudo R² = 0.1337				Prob > chi² = 0.0000 Wald chi² (7) = 69.95 Log pseudo likelihood = -77.287698 Pseudo R² = 0.5126			

Source: Survey data (***) Significant at the 1% level, ** Significant at the 5% level, * Significant at 10% level).

Table 6 represents the marginal effect estimation of factors influencing participation decision of females in wetland-based agricultural activities. The marginal effect of age is found positively significant at 1 percent in Urapad beel, which indicates that a female's decision to participate in wetland-based agricultural activities will increase by .0052052 percentage points as her age increases. Although the relation between age and decision to participate in Dhir beel area is positive but it does not have any significant impact on their choices. Education levels marginal effect shows that participation decision of female rises by .0672425 (Dhir beel) and .0362342 (Urapad beel) percentage points as the education level goes up, which are significant at 1 percent and 10 percent level. Educated females were more concerned about their self-employment and they had also greater scope in various jobs as compared to the uneducated ones. Over a decade females were overshadowed by the works of males and often treated as unpaid workers in almost every sector. However, education allows them to extend their horizon and over the years an increasing number of the female are taking part in farm activities also. This is evident from the study. However in the study areas, due to domestic responsibilities, most of the females were not interested in off-farm works. Females were more comfortable in farm works as they can simultaneously manage both farms as well as domestic works. Further, the off-farm works available in the study areas were mainly wage labour and, business. Female farmers reported that these works require more time as compared to

the farm works. Although off-farm jobs can give them a higher level of income despite they choose to perform farm works only. "The marginal effect of the marital status of females shows a negative relation between in both the study areas which specifies that their participation decision will reduce by -.0975697 (Dhir beel) and -.3049945 (Urapad beel) percentage points with increasing numbers of married women, which are significant at 1 percent level. The outcome indicates that with marriage, there comes a lot of household responsibilities so most of the females cannot manage to work outside their home even if they wish to. Further, the marginal effect of the presence of children in both the study areas shows a negative relation i.e. females' decision to participate will decrease with more numbers of children, however, it does not have any significant impact. The marginal effect of family income does not have any significant impact. Moreover, the marginal effect of household size indicates females' decision to participate in Dhir beel area will decrease by - 0.247319 percentage point (significant at 5 percent) as the size of the household increases. Households with more family members cannot afford to work outside their home as they have household responsibilities. It does not indicate any significant impact in Urapad beel area. Lastly, female members with help at home are more likely to participate in wetland-based agricultural activities. The marginal effect shows that their decision to participate will increase by 0.879524 (Dhir beel) and .0325495 (Urapad beel) percentage points as they get help at home, which are significant at 5 percent and 1 percent level respectively.



5. Conclusion

A study by Meinzen-Dick et al. (1997) suggests that differences faced by women while accessing natural assets can influence the use of natural assets in 4 ways- sustainability of the environment, efficient resource use, equity of asset distribution among users, and user's empowerment (mainly women). The principal reasons are the inherited cultural insights, beliefs, customs, or traditions from predecessors. In most societies, it is generally believed that God designed women to perform household duties and men to perform duties outside the household. Further, lack of opportunity and knowledge regarding natural assets are also the core reasons for the low participation rate of women in terms of access. In this study also a difference between resource access and use has been observed. The study found that land, fish, firewood were the resources that were primarily accessed by males, whereas female access was mainly seen in

livestock rearing activities. This shows limited access of women over wetland resources. Further binary logit model indicates that household size, presence of children acts as a hurdle in workforce participation. Education no doubt plays an important role in their participation decision. If they can get proper education with the skill development they will have more job opportunities and can have a better lifestyle. Further, if female can get some help domestically they can manage their time to participate in labour force. "The world we live in is still experiencing gender inequality, where women's rights are violated which plays a major role in holding back women around the world. Despite various concerns regarding gender equality, disparities remain to cover uneven rights to use to decision making, land, opportunities, resources, etc. Hence, a positive impact on social, economic, and environmental progress can be only realized with the involvement of women.

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Nurturing the 'Domestic' in the 'Nation': 'Joymati Utsav' and Sisterhood in Assam

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Abstract :

Women's reality, despite their presence and intervention in the public sphere, is confined largely to the private sphere or, at best, to its margins. An important field of study in this case is the colonial period in India. The reformist agenda was merely a platform for the colonizers and the colonized to justify their individual causes. It was not at all empowering for the women who were merely transferred from one kind of patriarchal structure to another until women became actively involved in the movement for their emancipation. In this context, the idea of women's community helps in thinking about women's empowerment through women working together, collaborating and making connections. In this paper I intend to establish that the community space from where women address other women integrates the 'domestic' and the 'national' in a way which contributes to a feminine perspective of the nation and its corollaries.

The paper examines a specific event in colonial Assam, Joymati Utsav or Joymati Festival celebrated by women of Assam celebrating the Ahom princess Joymati's sacrifice of her life in order to protect her husband, Gadapani, an Ahom prince who later ousts King Sulikphaa (Lora Roja). Though the Joymati festivals are celebrated till today in few parts of Upper Assam, this paper limits itself to an examination of records of speeches by women delivered on the occasion of Joymati Utsav in various towns of Assam found in *Ghar Jeuti* (1927-31), a magazine exclusively for women published from Sibsagar, Assam. Joymati Utsav, I argue creates an empowering 'community' space for women, thus, binding them into a sisterhood. This paper examines the origins of feminist consciousness, focusing on women's activities outside the home in colonial Assam, thereby also proving that such studies are necessary to formulate the origins of the women's movement in various localities.

Keywords: *Sisterhood, Joymati Utsav, Women's Community, Assamese Women, Colonial Assam.*



Introduction :

Mary Wollstonecraft in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) recognizing the issue of the public and private as a crucial point in the history of women, men, and the state notes that women have always been excluded from ‘civil existence.’ She further writes: “The mighty business of female life is to please, and restrained from entering into more important concerns by political and civil oppression, *sentiments become events*” (Wollstonecraft 183-84).

Though Wollstonecraft associates this with the view that the female mind was unable to grasp anything great, this idea may be read as providing an occasion for female experiences to become events by themselves. This last idea of “sentiments becoming events” is important in reading the activities of women in early twentieth century India. Women begin to participate outside the domestic sphere in a manner that allows their experiences to be matters of public importance: their personal sentiments become events that further became occasions to celebrate. These women as I argue use the domestic space as a platform from where they stage their fight for emancipation, at the same time extending full support to the nationalist agenda. At the same time, I have it in mind that women’s participation outside their ‘homes’ was a part of nationalist agenda to include women in the struggle for Indian independence with prescriptions on what women could do and could not do. Scholars like Partha Chatterjee (1989), Suruchi Thapar (1994), and Tanika Sarkar (1992) to name a few have written on the connection between women and nation in colonial contexts

with special reference to the Indian context. The attempt to reconcile the women’s movement with nationalism demanded a reaffirmation of patriarchy in the name of nationalism. The Indian nationalists were not necessarily in favor of social reform for women, or even their participation in politics, and tended to make contradictory demands on women in the name of formation of statehood. Interestingly, women accepted that the demands of the community were far more important than their own and they diverted their attention to the male dominated nationalist agendas at the cost of their movement on women’s rights. However, as women across the country extended full support to the nationalist agenda, they could fully access the civil space outside their homes to form communities of their own. Isolation and subordination thus gave way to organization and collaboration.

In this context the first celebration of Joymati Utsav in Upper Assam which was held on 6th April, 1914 on the banks of the Joysagar tank in Sivasagar, could be viewed as the beginning of a bonding and sisterhood in this part of the country. From 1923 onwards this festival became an all-Assam event. The Assam Mahila Samiti¹ established in 1926 also organized these festivals among women all over Assam. Gradually as these festivals came to be organized by the Sivasagar Mahila Samiti and other branches of the Assam Mahila Samiti, these celebrations became occasions not just to celebrate Joymati but rather to celebrate the spirit of Assamese womanhood that had the potential to change the course of history as is evident from Joymati’s example. *Ghar*



Jeuti,² which may be regarded as a mouthpiece of Sibsagar Mahila Sanmilani kept records of the various Joymati Utsavs regularly thus giving wider exposure to the Joymati celebrations. The records of the celebrations in Sibsagar and other towns of Assam are to be found in various issues of *Ghar Jeuti* from 1928 onwards. All activities were documented, with names of people who came from various places to attend them, and summaries made of discussions, speeches, and resolutions taken, etc. The paper takes into account select speeches by women on Joymati Utsavs recorded in *Ghar Jeuti* held at various places in the state examining those women's texts of the early twentieth century which explore the idea of an alternate 'space' for women in Assam (though the privileged upper and middle class women in particular) from where they actively participated in matters of social progress and nation building.

Inventing a civil/community space for women's active participation :

Joymati Utsav allows an interesting reading of Assamese society when a nascent consciousness among women could be witnessed with regard to notions of 'race' and 'community'. The article by the editors on the 16th Conference of Joymati Utsav noted that gradually it was taking the shape of Assam's national festival (spearheaded by women) moving beyond the limitations of the local (Kakoti and Chaliha 475). By the time the Joymati myth came to be established in Assamese public memory, women had already internalized the nationalist rhetoric of woman as the mothers of the nation. Aparna Mahanta traces the history of the construction of this myth to an article by Ratneshwar

Mahanta on Joymati and Gadapani published in *Jonaki*. He intended to portray the image of a self-sacrificing ideal Hindu woman (along similar lines as the nationalists) and "succeeded in creating a cultural icon that transcends his own nineteenth century bounded, and consequently narrow vision of feminine character to become one capable of serving the quite different needs of various actors in the historical scene such as emergent nationalism or the awakening consciousness of Assamese women in the first part of the twentieth century" (Mahanta 69-70).

For Joymati's love and supreme sacrifice for her husband and the country, folk accounts refer to her as a *Sati*. Gadapani as Gadadhar Singha (1681-1696) brought peace and prosperity back to the country after becoming the king in August 1681. After becoming king, Gadapani dispatched an army against the mughals, thus, recapturing Guwahati from the Mughals in August 1682. Though Joymati Kunwari belonged to a royal family, her open declaration of non-violent revolt against the tyrannical ruler is seen as nothing short of a symbol of self-sacrifice, passive resistance, kindness, friendship etc. in addition to her devoted service to her husband and family. Other writers too reproduced Joymati's story during the course of the early twentieth century. Padmanath Gohain Barua wrote a play titled *Joymati* in 1900. Lakshminath Bezbarua's *Joymati Kunwari* was written in 1915 and staged thereafter on various occasions. According to Aparna Mahanta in her *Journey of Assamese Women (1836-1937)*, Joymati festival allowed the figure of Joymati to be used as a "potent cultural



and literary symbol in the social and political life of the Assamese people in the nationalist movement”. (Mahanta 87) The importance of the Joymati cult to the people of Assam is evident from the fact that the first Assamese movie by Jyoti Prasad Agarwalla, *Joymati* was based on Bezbarua’s play (Barua and Lal 7)

Public Speaking versus Private Emotions: Developing the Joymati cult :

The speeches recorded in *Ghar Jeuti* that the paper takes into account celebrate women’s community and try to assimilate these communities into the growing nationalist project, which facilitated the growth of such communities and vice versa. Interestingly, these women speakers have internalized patriarchal structures in such a manner that without foregoing the traditional roles set for women, they tried to advocate for a space where women could carry out all her tasks and be a part of the ‘world’ outside the threshold of the ‘home’ as well.

Giribala Barua in her speech on the 15th Conference of Joymati Utsav in 1928 addresses all women who have gathered in Joydoul– to celebrate the spirit of resistance exhibited by ‘Sati Rajrani Joymati Kunwari’. She sees this celebration as offering a platform, which will induce new ways of self-learning in the minds of young women who will be a part of it every year (Ghar Jeuti 464-465). Participation in the Joymati Utsavs enabled women to form a community of their own thereby contributing to the overall feminist consciousness among women in Assam. These festivals allowed the women of Assam to reconstruct the civil/community space between the

‘home’ and the ‘world as one of strength, also enabling these women to participate in affairs outside their homes. She also interpreted Joymati and her life story as an example for women to follow and equip themselves with all tools necessary to lead a meaningful life. Barua of course does not challenge the traditional roles meant for men and women and urges that knowledge acquired on household chores, herbal medicines, agriculture, etc. will enable her to manage the domestic sphere properly thereby leaving the men free for work outside. She extends this to the larger context of the nation saying that: “This education is essential for our country now as it will enable women to allow their men folk to work outside the homes by taking care of the domestic sphere entirely. Otherwise it will be difficult to run families properly if only one person is burdened with all work” (Barua 464). Without challenging the traditional role of women, she talks about progressive women in other developed countries whom her women hearers should take as examples. Progress of the nation depends on such steps to be taken by women. Women should be educated not only in reading and in writing (which is just one part of education) but primarily should have the ability to cook, weave, etc (464-465). Weaving was (and still is) an essential part of the lives of Assamese women and this is a point which is taken up by many men and women in their writings and speeches including Giribala Barua, thereby asserting the need to preserve the integrity of the composite Assamese culture even as it comes into contact with ideas of modernity and change.



Similarly, Punyaprabha Das during the same Utsav regards that a nation's progress depends on her women, which is evident from actual events and written histories in the life of the nation. "Joymati sacrificed her life and when after her death her husband became the king a period of peace and progress was ushered in." She cites the example of Napoleon Bonaparte who once said that the strength of the French nation lies in her mothers. She recalls Joymati's bold step taken against the king in not divulging her husband's whereabouts and in not even thinking about her sons whom she left with her friend while walking out of her home with the king's soldiers (Das 469). The revival of the Joymati cult during the first half of the twentieth century in Assam was necessary to build the proper atmosphere for women's active participation in the freedom movement. It is both liberating and constricting. Tanika Sarkar writes about the sati being an adored nationalist symbol, her figure representing the moment of climax in expositions of Hindu nationalism (Sarkar 42). Joymati is seen as a sati who gives the highest proof of her devotion and chastity not by sitting on her dead husband's funeral pyre but by tolerating the tortures on her body inflicted by Lora Roja's men.

Satyagraha, Swaraj and Sisterhood

Joymati Utsav was a sentiment through which women glorified Joymati's resistance, sacrifice, and personal suffering, and it becomes a major event enabling women to come out and be a part of it. It subverts the elite-nationalist thought and at the same time provides for a historical opportunity for the political appropriation of women in a non-political space between the

'home' and the 'world'. In her presidential address in Sibsagar Joymati Utsav in the year 1931, Hemapraha Das equals Joymati's self-sacrifice with Gandhi's sacrifice and strong will power (Das 1139). In fact, the constant use of the term self-sacrifice reminds one of Gandhi's philosophies – passive resistance in the form of Satyagraha. Gandhi regarded the satyagrahi as one who has to lead an exemplary life, to set examples to others by their actions without imposing those actions on anybody, thereby doing away with criticism, contempt, hostility and eventual violence. If others do not follow their lead, they will be disappointed. In Gandhian terms, the satyagrahis need to regard this disappointment as partly being their own fault and mend their ways by inventing other means of setting an example (Bilgrami 4162).

Gandhi's non-violence (ahimsa) eulogises nurturing (primarily a womanly feature) as an important principle. He gives public visibility to all these qualities that have always been regarded as 'feminine'. His strong attachment to the charkha or the spinning wheel, the use of which would make India self-sufficient is also related to the idea of nurture, touch, and craft based ideal of work as against the machine-based one. This is also an aspect of the transformation – epistemological – between male and female ways of doing work, thinking about themselves, or even looking at the work. This image of the satyagrahi and the symbol of the spinning wheel are closely connected to the concept of sisterhood propounded by Gandhi in an important address to women of India in the form of a letter written to *Young India* on 11 August 1921:



The destiny of India is far safer in your hands than in the hands of a Government that has so exploited India's resources that she has lost faith in herself. At every one of women's meetings, I have asked for your blessings for the national effort, and I have done so in the belief that you are pure, simple, and godly enough to give them with effect. You can ensure the fruitfulness of your blessings by giving up your foreign cloth and during your spare hours ceaselessly spinning for the nation (Gandhi 78).

This was Gandhi's call to women to organize and form communities, which would in turn contribute to the strengthening of the national civil society that Gandhi was trying to form through his 'constructive programme' that he chiefly advocated in the Belgaum Conference in 1924. His constructive programme included his fasts for specific reasons (a powerful means by which he could pose as an exemplar within public visibility), suspension of all boycotts except the foreign cloth boycott etc. This necessarily allows a review of the emerging civil society as merely a result of a European encounter followed by a modernizing process. There was also an equally strong necessity to preserve indigenous Indian society from an out and out influence of modern civilization as it emerged in the West which Gandhi highlights in *Hind Swaraj* (1908). In this work Gandhi attacks the very notions of modernity and progress while talking about the ills of ever-increased mechanization and heavy industrialization which would disrupt the existing harmony of an agrarian society like India.

In this context Hemapra Das' presidential address (which I have already referred to in the previous section) may be mentioned, where she celebrates selflessness as an important quality that will take our country to new heights of excellence. Love for our country should not remain in words but our actions should demonstrate it. Recalling the great work that peasants were doing for the country, she said that others should help the peasants and work for their welfare especially in the lean season when they do not have their regular work to do. She says:

The number of peasants in our country is large. We owe our leisure time to the hard work that they do for us... If we neglect the peasants our country will suffer (Das 1138).

She said that they could help them by buying hand-woven materials from these women. She mentioned the efforts made by Dibrugarh Mahila Samiti that was engaged in selling hand woven dress materials and taking initiatives in selling the finished products by women of that region. By doing this, they could not only help the poor women but also contribute towards spreading love for swadeshi goods for which Gandhi was working. By 1928, khadi had acquired added importance as a powerful weapon in the programme of boycott of foreign cloth, which was to serve as the effective sanction behind the national demand and which Gandhi was determined to bring about with the assistance of mills. Weaving and swadeshi thereby become common strengths and resources based on which women bond with other women. Women's bonding is not only the



essence of sisterhood but is also necessary for women's empowerment.

In the presidential speech delivered in Baligaon Milan Mandir Joymati Utsav (the first of its kind in Baligaon) in the year 1931 Narayani Handique, the wife of philanthropist Radha Kanta Handique and a regular contributor to the journal, says:

Joymati was born in this mortal world with all qualities like kindness, devotion towards her husband, patience etc....Her action not only proves her devotion towards her husband but also displays love for her motherland and her own people whom she loved as much as her two sons. (Handique 1136)

She further spoke of the need to work for the welfare of the nation. Her appeal to young girls was:

Do not forget your duties and do not be afraid of hard work. All of you are bound to step into domestic lives in the near future. You are like Lakshmi. The welfare of the nation depends on you. Plead with your parents to give you the minimum education. Learn to read and write. At the same time, do not forget that the greatest skill that you can learn is the skill to run your household smoothly (1136).

These dictates, it may be argued, do not merely echo the prescriptions of the nationalist discourse that wanted the women to behave in a particular manner. We may arrive at a conclusion that an agrarian economy could progress by these means. Gandhi in *Hind Swaraj* wrote about his

own reservations regarding the impact of Western education on Indians. According to him, it ignores completely the ethical aspect of education and the need to integrate the individual within the collectively shared moral values of the community and instead cultivates "the pretension of learning many sciences" (Gandhi 75-80). At the same time, it needs to be noted that the writer participates in the "discourse of advice" that marked the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, the kind of education advocated by Narayani Handique for other women preserves the ethical aspect of education and will enable these women not to be confined in their homes but to be a participant in the social space outside their homes. In a way even while accepting these traditional roles, these women will be able to transform these roles in the manner Joymati did.

Conclusion :

Women's entry into the civil/public space through their activities led to a major intervention in the already established and ever expanding nationalist discourse which (is primarily) male dominated and patriarchal in its outlook. What is important in this regard is the formation of the collective spirit and a growing sisterhood which ensured empowerment and agency. Elizabeth Fox Genovese sees collectivity as an idea which "allowed these women to break out of their walls of silence and permitted them to forge a common language with which to express their hostility to the constraints of their lives" (Genovese 14). Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, sisterhood helped women to be less vulnerable economically, politically and socially. This



collective strength also disallowed segregation of space, and women became more and more visible in spite of various forms of patriarchal control, which sought to channelize and contain women's thoughts and actions. Women's thought and agency challenged the new patriarchies (which also control women's bodies and women) emerging out of Victorian sexual puritanism, Indian nationalist revivalism, and liberal reformism. It was therefore imperative for women to unite as a community in order to have 'agency'. In an article for an edited volume *Communities of Women*, I tried to locate female agency in the act of woman writing biography of another woman emphasizing that the formation of the collective spirit among women of Assam (or for that matter women of India) ensured better protection of their rights and privileges (Das 183). In a similar manner *Ghar Jeuti's* attempt to record the Joymati festivals and the speeches delivered by women and circulate those in print form is reflective of another small sisterhood creating through the acts of writing and publishing for the public sphere too.

Joymati Utsav enabled women to occupy a space between the 'home' and the 'world' and organize themselves as a community, which can be regarded as an initial step taken towards ensuring a space for women in the emerging civil society. Elizabeth Fox Genovese in her study on women's communities in Europe notes that the early activities done by women outside their homes were chiefly "exercises in community building" (Genovese 33-54). In this respect, community might better be understood as the opposite of individualism. These speeches,

where women address other women trying to build a civil/non-political solidarity based on common interests and goals, aim at not just emancipation for themselves but the attainment of swaraj and consequently, the formation of nation-state. The very fact that such a bonding developed around the celebration of the spirit of womanhood – Joymati symbolizing the inner strength, which every woman possesses in some form or the other – signifies that these women bonded with other women based on "shared strengths and resources". "It is this type of bonding that is the essence of Sisterhood" (hooks 46). Such a bonding definitely leads to a feminine perspective on the nation, one that does not dismiss the 'domestic' as trivial, instead, regards it as significant.

Notes :

The translations of original Assamese texts both primary and secondary are mine.

Notes :

1. Hemjyoti Medhi in her study on Assam Mahila Samiti (AMS) in late colonial Assam, associates the formation of the AMS in 1926 and its gradual extension "to the emergence of a nascent Asamiya public sphere" (Medhi 17). The role of AMS in beginning women's mobilization and agency in colonial Assam could not be denied.

2. Two women from Sibsagar Assam started their journey towards women's empowerment by editing a women's magazine, *Ghar Jeuti* (it was the first of its kind in Assam). Though this journal remained in circulation for five



years ie 1927-1931, it was able to reach out to its target readers and touch their daily lives. The women readers got an opportunity to learn about changes taking place in the public sphere all over India (as well as the rest of the world) and the

growing need to accommodate women in this sphere. They also read about the Western world and their progressive ideas and thus could relate to the fact that the Assamese society was still conservative in its outlook.

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Jonmoni D. Shira: Women, Christianity and Matrilineal tradition

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Abstract :

Jonmoni D. Shira, a popular poet among the Garos, traces women's oppression that plagued her generation and others before her in her poem "I, the Woman". Born after the advent of Christianity, Jonmoni is deeply entrenched in Christian doctrine. Jonmoni's situation of writing from within a matrilineal conditioning raises the question of how much Garo traditional matrilineal society was affected by the conversion project brought by the Christian missionaries. By the inclusion of "the" in the title, it is also indicative that the poem is meant to be read as the voice of all subjugated Garo women who had no means of voicing out their troubles. For Jonmoni, to be born as a woman is to be destined to misery. It is an unalterable fate that cannot be escaped. Her words echo the idea of biology as destiny that forms the foundation of gender relations in her society. This structural constraint implies women's marginal identity, her lack of means for negotiation and resistance. Jonmoni's motive in saying that she could not even propose to travel suggests the dangers and the inability of the women in her group to navigate the social space dominated by men. It also portrays women's inability to set goals or make choices. Lack of agency limits women's freedom and hampers empowerment. Jonmoni's poetry expresses this incapacitation of women through silencing. Silencing dislocates a woman's subjectivity in discursive practices as her experiences and voice are excluded. As she speaks as a colonized subject, her depiction of women's condition cannot be severed from the religious transformations that took place in her society. Therefore, what she portrays in the poem is the aftermath of religious conversion that has intensified the gender disparity practiced in her society.

Keywords : *Matrilineal, Garo, Feminist, Religion.*

Introduction :

Situated about twenty-eight kilometres from the first Garo church established in 1867 by Dr. Miles Bronson in Rajasimla, North Garo Hills, Jonmoni D. Shira's village Nishangram became the epicentre

of missionary activities after Rajasimla. By 1914, when Jonmoni D. Shira was born, Christian missionaries had already converted a major chunk of the Garo population. Dr. I.J. Stoddard, the first American Baptist Missionary to the Garos reached



Goalpara in 1867. But, four years before his arrival, Omed and Ramke Momin, the first Garo Christian converts were baptized in 1863(Carey 79). They were beneficiaries of the government school established by Captain Jenkins in 1843 at Goalpara. Their conversion came as a successful target in the establishment of the school, as the motive behind including Garo boys had been to impart western education and expand their missionary field. Jonmoni D. Shira was born forty decades later after the first conversion among the Garos took place. By then, missionaries had widened their field into the mountains of the present Garo Hills and numerous schools had already been established. Leaving behind tradition and orality, many Garos embraced Christianity and writing became a new cultural phenomena replacing the age old oral tradition of the tribe.

Born in 1914 in Nishangram in the North Garo Hills area, Jonmoni D. Shira was the fifth of the six children by her parents. Even though they were of modest means, her parents were interested in their children's education and enrolled them in schools. Jonmoni was the first girl from her village to pass from the Middle School. She passed her matriculation from Welsh Mission High School in Shillong in 1934(Marak). Jonmoni D. Shira was supported and sponsored by Miss Earn M. Rold, an American Baptist Missionary, in her Higher Secondary studies, then known as Intermediate of Arts, in Cotton College, Guwahati. Due to lack of financial resources, her relatives proposed to send her to Golaghat to teach in a mission school. But, another missionary, Miss Randall promised to sponsor her with books and fees if someone else stepped up to pay for the extra necessities.

Her relatives came to help Jonmoni and thereafter, she got another opportunity to pursue her graduation course in Cotton college.

Jonmoni became a part of the first group of Garo educated youths who were distantly severed from tradition and deeply rooted in Christianity. From her various associations like studying in Welsh Mission school or from her benefactors, Earn Rold and Miss Randall, it can be easily deduced that Christianity had a deep hold on Jonmoni. She became the voice of Garo women at a time when Garo men like Howard Denison W. Momin and Evelyn R. Marak, who were both poets in their own rights, dominated the literary circle. Most of Jonmoni's poems like "*Do.kru*"(Dove), "*Daisy*", "*Basako*" (When), "*Miksongani*" (Aim), "*Mikjumang A. gilsak*"(The World,a Nightmare) were published in the journal *A.chik Kurang* or "The Voice of the Garos", where her contemporaries also published their writings. Her poems that appear in the journal are patriotic in their theme or serves as an awakening call to other Garos to strive for wisdom. Caroline R. Marak classifies Jonmoni D. Shira as a 'New poet', a term she gives to a group of early twentieth century educated poets among the Garos(Marak). Deeply influenced by Christianity, these poets relied on themes of nativity, fall and redemption of mankind as the popular source of material for their poetry.

This paper tries to analyse Jonmoni D. Shira's poem "I, the Woman" as an attempt by the poet to depict the subordinate status of women. The poem was written to portray the oppression faced by women during Jonmoni's time and generations before her. For convenience, Caroline



R. Marak's translation of the poem in English will be used for analysis. Jonmoni's situation of writing from within a matrilineal conditioning raises the question of how much Garo traditional matrilineal society was affected by the conversion project brought by the Christian missionaries.

One of Jonmoni's most acknowledged poem is "*Anga Me.chik*" which has been translated by Caroline R. Marak as "I, the Woman". Jonmoni's "I, the Woman" is a poem through which she means to portray the condition of the womenfolk of the Garo tribe. "I, the Woman" can be read as Jonmoni's own voice against oppression and by the inclusion of "the" in the title, it is also indicative that the poem is meant to be read as the voice of all subjugated Garo women who had no means of voicing out their troubles. Here, Jonmoni as a woman voices out the injustices seemingly suffered by women even in a matrilineal society. She opens the poem with the lines:

"I am born a woman
To bear all kinds of woes,
Though I lament my misfortune
I cannot alter it". (Marak 118)

For Jonmoni, to be born as a woman is to be destined to misery. It is an unalterable fate that cannot be escaped. Her words echo the idea of biology as destiny that forms the foundation of gender relations in her society.

Her allusion to the biblical myth of 'original sin' indicates the influence of Christianity that greatly affected her and her society:

"Poor Eve committed a sin
Before the beginning of the world,
Bringing heavier burdens and anguish
Upon the woman". (Marak 118)

What follows from the myth of 'original sin' are the various interpretations that become essential to Christianity in its views on women. Right from Adam, who blamed Eve for having enticed him to eat the forbidden fruit, there originated a continuous blame upon the woman for having brought humankind's downfall. This notion of women as the harbinger of mankind's downfall spread along with colonialism and its project of conversion. The myth of the 'original sin' was also used by patriarchy as a tool in subjugating women. It imposed upon women the rites of repentance that could be completed by a lifelong servitude for the wrong she had done. The social and personal changes that conversion brought to the Garos are manifested in Jonmoni's words which reflect the acceptance of Christianity's view on women.

Although many considered Christianization as being favorable towards women's status in colonial India, it was seen that there was "a tendency toward a restrictive form of femininity" (Kent 9). This restrictions upon women by Christianity came as a result of glorification in women's purity and its associations with 'respectability'. But, gender roles and women's subjugation were not simply and easily imposed upon the colonized subjects. Rather, there were various tactics of coercion, appropriation and collusion that went into the making of the colonized subjects. In many instances of conversion, women's subjugation was just a continuation and extension of the already existing patriarchal operations in the society.

Considering her birth within a matrilineal tradition where the birth of a girl child is celebrated,



Jonmoni's lament on being born a woman may appear deceitful or inaccurate. But, by focusing on her position as a woman speaking from within a matrilineal culture that has been greatly transformed by Christianity throws light upon the fact that the patriarchal elements in the religion of the west had infiltrated the structural gender relations in Garo society. Jonmoni further explores the intensification of gender segregation that is played out in converted households:

“From birth, her strength is limited
Her face is lovely,
But she is taught
To be under the male domination”.

(Marak 118)

In the above lines, she also highlights how women's subordinate position is accomplished, i.e. by being taught what to do.

It might be asked how women's status in tradition differed from that of the new society converted to Christianity. To understand the workings of power in the Garo matrilineal system, a clearer picture of gender relations in traditional Garo society needs to be examined. It is written in *Some Culture of the Garos* and *Lost Garo Lands* by Mihir sangma, *Garo History Part I and II* by Jobang D. Marak, and *Bonepani Nokpante* by Simison Sangma, that matriliney and matrilocal residence was a strategic inception by the Garos to trace descent and lineage of the children in case of the father's death, which was frequent due to constant warfare with the neighbouring tribes. Mihir N Sangma writes in *Some culture of the Garos (A.chikrangni Mitam Dakbewalrang)* that people gathered in the Nokpante(men's hut) of

Bonepa and decided that daughters should stay home and their husbands should instead relocate to the wife's house. The youngest daughter, or any daughter the parents preferred, should instead inherit the property. The nephew of the girl's father would be chosen as husband for the girl. The Nokmaship(chieftain) would be acceded by the son-in-law (Sangma, 2010, p.31)(translation mine). Simison Sangma and Jobang D. Marak also writes similarly in their respective books. This rule was however, not mandatory in all scenarios. Men and women could still choose their own spouse as long as they belonged to separate clans.

The marriage system among the Garos require clan exogamy, but allows matrilateral cross cousin marriage. The matrilateral cross-cousin marriage grants that the prospective husband for a girl would be her maternal uncle's son or her father's nephew. In cases of cross-cousin marriages, it implied that matrilineal descent groups both require it's male and female members, phrased as 'interdependence of brother and sister'(Schneider 11). The brother depends upon the sister 'for the perpetuation of his descent line and the provision of an heir'(Schneider 11). This enables the brother, whether elder or younger, to ascertain rights over his sister and her sexuality, as it is through her that his lineage would be secured. Thus, men assume the role of the protector, caretaker, manager and authority over his sister and his maternal house too. Jonmoni is very vocal about the plight of Garo women who have to tolerate even younger male figure in the lines :



“From tender age
I have to live under man’s control,
At the slap of my younger brother
I weep loudly”.(Marak 118)

On a surface level, matrilineal residence obliges the ‘exchange of men’ as the man relocates to his wife’s house. But, rather than an ‘exchange of men’, it becomes a tactical exchange of property and women among men, as the succession is from male to male. If the wife is the daughter of a *Nokma*(chief), the chieftainship is normally passed on to the son-in-law. This chain of ‘exchange of men’ facilitates a cycle of male domination of one clan over the property and ownership of another clan. Women are hence, only regarded as custodians of property: “Women are dispossessed in their own homes by being reduced to ‘custodians’ of ‘tradition/culture/family honour and the accompanying baggage’ (Jain 74). Custodianship in reality consists of no real power, authority or agency and ‘domesticity is believed to consist of its own rewards’ (Jain 74). Similar to this idea, Simone de Beauvoir stated in *The Second Sex* that if a woman were an inheritor (either of her mother’s property or her father’s), “she would to an excessive degree transmit the wealth of her father’s family to that of her husband; so she is carefully excluded from the succession. But inversely, because she owns nothing, woman does not enjoy the dignity of being a person; she herself forms a part of the patrimony of a man: first of her father, then of her husband” (106).

Within the Garo matrilineal system, through male affines already organized prior to marriage, there would emerge ‘a coalition of in-marrying

managers acting on behalf of the descent group or their wives’ (Schneider 28). Therefore ‘the joint activity of the descent group is the management of the joint activity of another descent group’ (Schneider 28-29). The authoritative role of male members are henceforth transferred from male to male of the same clan whose relationship is that of an uncle and nephew before the marriage and later, father-in-law and son-in-law after the marriage. The male to male succession also indicates that positions of highest authority even within the matrilineal descent group is ordinarily vested in statuses occupied by men. However, even within this form of traditional system, it could still be noted that women would not have to fear about being displaced after marriage.

Jonmoni also portrays women’s lack of agency in her society in the lines :

“I cannot act as I please,
There’s not a day of happiness for me;
I cannot dream of Even proposing to travel”.
(Marak 118-119)

Women’s agency implies freedom in movement, ability to make choices, set goals and express opinions. Agency also implies women’s ability to move and participate in the public sphere. Other forms of agency manifests in “bargaining and negotiation, deception and manipulation, subversion and resistance as well as more intangible, cognitive processes of reflection and analysis” (Kabeer 438). Kabeer stated in “Three faces of agency in feminist economics: capabilities, empowerment and citizenship” that “The concept of human agency is central to a feminist analysis of livelihoods for two reasons. First, it is central



to the analysis of social inequality because it draws attention to the ways in which structural constraints shape the distribution of livelihood options available to differently positioned groups of men and women. And second, it is central to the social justice agenda because it is the human capacity for agency that drives the processes of structural transformation". Jonmoni shows that even in matrilineal societies, there is apparent curbing of women's agency which keeps her subordinated by limiting her space to that of the home and the garden without any real authoritative power. Women's activities are hence curtailed to reproduction in the family which is shown in the lines:

"Now I am a married woman,
My problems have multiplied;
It is now my duty
To suffer agony in bearing children".
(Marak 119)

Women's participation in production also takes place within the assigned spheres of the home and the field :

"In the early hours of the morning
I get up and cook
I spend the whole day
in the field.
I return home carrying a load
And then work at home". (Marak 120)

This structural constraint implies women's marginal identity, her lack of means for negotiation and resistance. Jonmoni's motive in saying that she could not even propose to travel suggests the dangers and the inability of the women in her group to navigate the social space dominated by men. It also portrays women's inability to set goals or

make choices. Lack of agency limits women's freedom and hampers empowerment.

Lack of agency also relatively signals lack of voice and resistance. Kate Millet opines in *Sexual Politics*(2000) that in their attempt towards a pseudoscientific unification of the cultural definition of masculinity and femininity with the genetic reality of male and female, psychoanalysts through the usage of jargon like "passivity", "low libido", "masochism", "narcissism", "undeveloped super ego", gave a new respectability to old myth of feminine "nature". By assigning such essentialist attributes to the woman, it could now be "said scientifically that women are inherently subservient, and males dominant, more strongly sexed and therefore entitled to sexually subjugate the female, who enjoys her oppression and deserves it, for she is by her very nature vain, stupid, and hardly better than barbarian, if she is human at all"(Millet 203). Jonmoni portrays this essentializing of women as stupid by nature :

"Yet I cannot
So much as open my mouth,
Fearing the retort,
Silence, you stupid woman!".(Marak 119)

The silencing of women as being stupid and unintelligent has always been a patriarchal manoeuvre to subdue women. It has been observed that "being silenced in one's own account of one's life is a kind of amputation that signals oppression" (Lugones and Spelman 19). Similarly, Meyers opines that "Silencing disables agency, for the alternative to articulating your own experience and your own goals in your own way is to live someone else's version of you—to inhabit their definition of



what you are like and their construal of what you think, feel, and want and consequently to find yourself enacting their story of how your life should go” (Meyers Chapter 1). Jonmoni’s poetry expresses this incapacitation of women through silencing. Silencing dislocates a woman’s subjectivity in discursive practices as her experiences and voice are excluded. Jonmoni as an educated woman expresses her desire to “open my mouth” but is silenced. Her disillusionment arises because she possesses knowledge and ideas but isn’t allowed to share and speak as she is a woman.

Jonmoni’s brutal attack upon men of her society ends in a severe denunciation, warning them of the fires of hell:

“You shall not always remain superior;
As a reward for your deeds
You will have no escape from hell.
You, men, therefore,
Beware....”. (Marak 120)

Jonmoni’s act of disparagement against men in her society is facilitated by western education. She is able to reap the benefits of the western education system and use it as a soapbox to step on to and reject certain forms of visible oppression and to declare judgement upon menfolk. Her denouncement of the menfolk stems from traditional as well as religious perspective, and both seem to offer an oppressive picture. Yet, it is noteworthy that as she speaks as a colonized subject, her depiction of women’s condition cannot be severed from the religious

transformations that took place in her society. Therefore, what she portrays in the poem is the aftermath of religious conversion that has intensified the gender disparity practiced in her society. Her experiences as a woman takes place within a rigidified gender structure.

The hierarchical gender structure that she portrays is the result of Christianity’s patriarchal impact upon her society. Although traditional practices showed unequal gender relations in the form of transfer of power from one man to another, Christianity added to the subjugated status of women by assigning them the role of *femme fatale* or as the harbinger of death and downfall upon the human race, hence the silencing of women as ‘stupid’. Situating her position as a follower of Christianity, Jonmoni’s passive acceptance of women’s subordinate position can be considered the point where tradition and Christianity converges or meets. Christianity assigns essentialism to the genders. Traditional roles put women as subordinate in the material world whereas Christianity gives birth or assigns a reality to the core of gender. The Christian idea of women as *femme fatale* is absent in traditional culture and it plays a crucial role in women’s oppression in Garo society. The Christian idea that assigns a core to women further marginalizes them in the gender scale and acts as another stumbling block in the liberation of women, for liberation would firstly now require shaking off of the gender core assigned by Christianity.



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Women's Body as the Site of Violence: A Critical Reading of Tamsula Ao's Short Story "The Last Song."

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Abstract :

The Northeastern part of India is often perceived as conflict-afflicted with various insurgency and counter-insurgency movements. Indeed the region has witnessed many such conflicts in its long history that have left the civilians to live life amidst terror and disputes. However, the case of women has been different from men in this region. Under the same circumstances, the experience of women has been different from men. They are often subjected to gender-based violence which made them vulnerable both physically and psychologically. Women not only became victims but are also used as weapons at the time of conflict. Their bodies are targeted to afflict terror amidst the civilians. Tamsula Ao's writings often limn the terrors that have ruptured the lives of ordinary people particularly women. This paper is an attempt to see how the armed conflict in Nagaland took a patriarchal image in their misogynistic treatment of women with special reference to Tamsula Ao's short story "The Last Song" from the collection *These Hills Called Home*.

Keywords : *Northeast, Conflict, Violence, Women's body, Rape.*

Introduction :

The vulnerability of women and children transpires at the time of war and conflict. Owing to the rights and status of women in society, their access to the means of production, and their entry into education and employment, they are the ones who are placed at the receiving end. Though women's bodies become the site of violence that endure various kinds of physical and sexual abuse, its impact remain confined not only to the surface but pierces deep down the psychological sphere causing trauma often referred to as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (Gill 215). The harsh brutality of

the conflict-ridden states subjected them to triple jeopardy, that from the state, the militant, and within their homes. Preeti Gill in her acclaimed article "Women in the Time of Conflict: The case of Nagaland" states:

In situations of armed conflict, or what has come to be called 'low-intensity warfare', it is the vulnerability of the women that is multiplied hundred fold- each day becomes a struggle for survival against the tremendous odds. (213)

The northeast corner of India is often seen as a conflict-affected region and indeed the place witnessed conflict in various forms- armed conflict,



insurgency and counter-insurgency, colonial and post-colonial conflict, communal conflict, etc. A common belief among the people of the northeastern states, particularly Nagaland and Tripura, is how these states are different and thus distant and ignored by mainland India. Nagaland was a self-sufficient state and very loyal to their tribe until the foreign intrusion took place which gradually pushed and transformed the place into a space of power play. Nagaland, unlike the other northeastern states, has abstained itself from any kind of trading and economic activity and thus remained away from assimilating with mainland India. The sense of deep deprivation and exploitation by the center has induced in them a sense of being colonized by their people that finally gave birth to various secessionist movements. These movements brought the Indian Armed Forces into the scene to counter the insurgents. The birth of a strong notion of regionalism against the nationalistic attitude can be seen pervading these northeastern states. Moreover, the frequent occurrence of conflicts and its effects on civilians has prevented the region from developing to its full potential.

With conflict and war came the violence inflicted upon the vulnerable civilians including women and children. The rights of women and children are exposed to risk at the time of conflict because of their gender and age. With different roles came different challenges that the women have to overcome in a war zone region. At the time of conflict or war, the women who lost their husbands have to bear singlehandedly the upbringing of their children and the sole responsibility to feed the other vulnerable members of the family with liminal access to the

means of production. Outside the domestic sphere, some women even contributed leadership in their struggle for freedom but owing to gender biases they often end up becoming victims of rape and other physical and psychological abuses. The psychological trauma comes not only from the physical abuses but from the loss of family and children they incur from the conflicts that leave them with an open scar. Temsula Ao in her Preface to her collection of short stories *These Hills Called Home* writes:

For the victims the trauma goes beyond the realm of just the physical maiming and loss of life—their very humanity is assaulted and violated, and the onslaught leaves the survivors scarred both in mind and soul. (10)

From time immemorial women are used as symbols to signify cultures, nations, and even religions. Moreover, the honour of the tribe, clan, and family falls upon the conduct of their character. Thus attacking a woman indirectly means attacking the particular culture, religion, tribe, or family. Emphasis is mainly put on such extended relations to define a woman and the state of mind of the woman is ignored completely. The identity of a person undoubtedly stems from the societal relations one shares, but the inner self has equal contribution in forming one's identity and no person under any circumstance can be taken for granted because of their extended relationship with the outside world. When brutal hostilities are afflicted on a woman's body, it not only ruins the honour of that particular family, or clan, or village but equally ruptures the self.

Mamang Dai has rightly observed that Northeast is writing and is written about. The



whole conflict scenario has been sincerely dealt with by the writers of the northeast region. Through their writings, they try to find possible ways of reconciliation and attempt at improving the condition of women. Eminent writers like Dr. Homen Borgohain, Indira Goswami, Sanjoy Hazarika, Mitra Phukon, Temsula Ao, and many more writers have dedicated their efforts to depict the realities of this region along with other problems like migration and nation-building. These glaring issues taken by them did not remain confined within the pages of their writings but they have come out in-person to work and study the Northeast region along with attempts to empower the women. Ms. Preeti Gill, editor of *Zubaan*, and the author of *Troubled Zones: Women's Voices From the North East of India* and *The Memsahib's Logbook: Stories from the Tea Plantations of Assam and North Bengal* is one such writer dealing with the issues of women in conflict-ridden states of Nagaland and Tripura. Temsula Ao, another eminent writer who wrote poems, articles, and short stories on oral myth with a modern tone and the ill effects of war and conflict on the civilians particularly women, also came forward to paint the lives of the ordinary people that got entangled with the state's disputes. Her collection of short stories *These Hills Called Home: Stories From A War Zone* portrays how the hill people and the whole region exist on the periphery with frequent conflicts ravishing the land and how the lives of the ordinary people caught in the web of fear and trauma during the 1960s and 1970s when the various secessionist movements were emerging with the strong sense of separation from the mainland India. Temsula Ao has written in the Preface "Lest

we forget" to *These Hills Called Home*, how at the time of conflict "there are no winners, only victims and the result can be measured only in human terms" (10). Unlike some writers, Temsula Ao wrote without any anger or rage towards anybody. She did not take any side and solely focused on the common village people that resulted in her unprejudiced writing. Her narratives gave alternate histories which would provide counter-narratives to the larger historical canvas. The importance of her writings rest in her dealing with the psyche of the people in a conflict-ridden state. While some of her stories reflect the predominant engagement with the violent history of the region, her other stories echo the harmonious man-land relationship and the traditional way of life of the Naga people that try to capture and retrieve the memories in a fast-changing world.

There are some significant stories in the collection of ten stories book *These Hills Called Home* that place a different kind of focus on the female characters. These stories despite being placed at the backdrop of violence have a certain kind of humanness projected through the characters and their concern for the wellbeing of the others. Apart from this, a certain kind of ordinariness and normalcy is also worked upon by the author amidst the turbulence that transcends the violent narratives of the region. The characters are ordinary people living decent lives in the rural environment. This paper shall deal with one of her poignant tales "The Last Song." It is a story of a lonely widow Libeni and her beautiful daughter Apenyo. Through them, she presents the social reality, the plight of a widow, and how they suffer at a time of conflict and atrocities. Libeni did everything from working in



the field to weaving clothes to sustain their lives and to give her daughter better education. Life for Libeni became a lonely struggle for she had to earn her living and at the same time look after her small daughter. Her relatives occasionally helped her and encouraged her for second marriage but she chose to remain single and devoted herself to the well-being of her daughter. Being a single mother she suffered a lot but her daughter's goodness and achievement both in singing and education remained the source of joy and comfort for her. Libeni is a progressive woman and a mother who values her daughter's education and wisdom above everything else. Somehow they managed to bring their lives out of that hardship when a dreadful event shattered their lives for good. Till this time their vulnerability as women failed to consume them. They were strong enough to handle their lives amidst violence occurring at the backdrop. It was only on that particular day when the brutal hostility occurred at the church that revealed how vulnerable they were as women and having a body that becomes the site of rage, anger, and revenge.

The barbaric incident that took place on that congregation day described how the lives of the common village people get entangled and they are the ones on the receiving ends in a region pulled apart by the government forces and underground military groups. The dedication Sunday was ruptured by the government armed forces who doubted the village people's involvement with the underground groups and wanted to teach them a lesson. The armed forces here acted as the agents of patriarchy exercising their power on the women's bodies. After the soldiers surrounded the congregation the people were terrified. But Apenyo

stood where she was and started the solo song which the other followed. For the soldiers "it was an act of open defiance and proper retaliation has to be made" (Ao 27). Soon the congregation scattered to save their lives. But Apenyo, ignorant of the intensity of such hostilities, stayed still and sang her song wholeheartedly without any fear. But her mother who knew such occurrences called her to stop the song. But she was singing her heart out. Temsula Ao writes "She sang on, oblivious of the situation as if an unseen presence as guiding her." (27). The soldiers unable to stop her finally grabbed and raped her. Unable to silence her, the soldiers use rape as a tactic to silence the women whose act of singing the song threatened their phallic selves. When Libeni tried to rescue her she too was caught by a soldier and was raped. The other villagers were kicked, clubbed, and shot at by the soldiers. To ensure there would be no witnesses to their diabolic crime, the church along with its dead or dying was set on fire. The tragedy of Apenyo and Libeni represented susceptibility in times of conflict. A woman who is seen as a symbolic upholder of culture, tradition, and identity became the prime target to humiliate, terrorize and dishonor communities. Though Ao in this story has depicted the condition of small Naga village this can be taken as a replica of many other villages and parts of Naga home.

Rape committed by the armed forces left its mark in almost all the corners of the world. The sexual psychology or the orientation of the soldiers during chaos and conflict thus need to be taken into consideration. Though various factors are generally held responsible for rape, like social and cultural influences, the fundamental one is the



male libido that finally determines the main execution of that act. Various theories have been put forward by the thinkers to describe the factors responsible for wartime rape. Jonathan Gottschall, substantiating Susan Brownmiller's ideas about rape, has discussed one such influential theory which is called the strategic rape theory. According to this theory, the military soldiers to accomplish their larger objectives, use rape as a tactic; a tactic to suppress and dominate women (131). In the story, it is observed that the soldiers were planning a strategy to teach the village people a lesson as to what happens when they support the underground rebel force. The author writes: Unknown to them, a sinister plan was being hatched by the forces to demonstrate to the entire Naga people what happens when you 'betray' your own government. (Ao 26)

The villagers unaware of such plotting were busy doing their activities to celebrate the dedication of the new church building on Sunday. And when the day came and the time to just start the ceremony the soldier surrounded the crowd inside the church and started assaulting the people. Libeni and Apenyo were raped by the captain first and the soldiers later took their turn until Libeni was dead. The strategic rape theory however fails to explain the reason behind raping the victim repeatedly to death. This hints at the biological side of rape apart from the sociocultural factors. The biosocial theorists' views regarding wartime rape are based on their genetic functioning: "Man's structural capacity to rape and woman's corresponding structural vulnerability are as basic to the physiology of both our sexes as the primal act of sex itself (Brownmiller 13). It mainly brings

forth the biological functioning of the gender and is often identified with another theory known as the pressure cooker theory. The pressure cooker theory was also used by the feminist group to explain wartime rape that mainly focuses on biological drives. They believe that during war and conflict the soldiers get the scope to take out their irresistible libido directed by their misogynistic thought process because men have been conditioned to dominate women. This theory very well explains the soldiers raping the mother and daughter taking their turn. The soldiers at first planned to arrest the villagers for their support towards the underground forces but the act of defiance instigated the conditioning of the male sexual psychology to dominate and oppress women from time immemorial that can be considered as a systematic conspiracy to inflict violence on women. Jonathan Gottschall in his article "Explaining Wartime Rape" writes "rape in war is deemed a result of a conspiracy, not necessarily conscious but still systematic, of men to dominate and oppress women" (134). Another aspect put forward by this theory is how the young women who are at the peak of their physical attractiveness are mainly targeted. In this story, the captain first takes hold of Apenyo, the eighteenth-year-old girl. Her mother was raped when she tried to rescue her. Ao describes Apenyo as "Along with her singing voice, her beauty also blossomed as Apenyo approached her eighteenth birthday. Her natural beauty seemed to be enhanced by her enchanting voice, which earned her the nickname 'singing beauty' in the village" (29). The psychology behind rape is a combination of different factors- an act driven by the male libido, socio-cultural factor, anger, and rage, etc.,- and therefore a single theory cannot



solely explain the motive behind this vicious act. Thus lies the ambivalence of the soldiers who gets blurry in their reaction after the crime committed. In this story, the captain tried to erase the witness as he considered it a crime. The plan started strategically which was later followed by anger and rage and finally ended with the realization that it was a mistake and crime. The story mentions that the life of the captain after that incident changed. His life ended in an insanity asylum. The author writes: The captain happened to look back and seeing that there were witnesses to their despicable act, turned to his soldiers and ordered them to open fire on the people who were now lifting up the bodies of the two women. (Ao 29)

The simple plan of the soldiers to arrest the villagers turned into the vilest act when confronted with the slightest hint of protest and defiance. Post rape-murder again has multiple reasons. In this story, it seems the captain wanted to hide the crime and thus destroyed the witnesses. The barbarism involved killing of the innocent people who witnessed the heinous crime.

Another kind of conflict observed in the story is the conflict embedded in the transitional phase of the Naga village due to the intrusion and interaction with the foreign culture. In the story, the church played an important role in restructuring the village's social life. The church acted as the promoter of gender equality and the beholder of women's rights by giving women leadership positions based on their capacity, skill, and competency. In the story, we observe how the villagers are celebrating the dedication of a new church building that clearly shows how well the church has blended with the culture of this Naga

village. Moreover, the church as a religious institution has helped in binding the people together. Each one of the members came together contributing to the common fund of the church to re-construct the new church building. Re-construction of the church building from bamboo and thatch to tin and wood itself becomes symbolic of how it has consolidated its roots in the Naga village. The church was the sole conveyor of the changes sweeping the other parts of the world that includes thriving for gender equality. And these changes can be seen in Libeni who gave importance to her daughter's education at a time when a girl child was not encouraged to go to school. Their place was mainly in the agricultural field. Libeni tried to follow the middle path at the time of transition by inculcating in her daughter the best of both traditional and foreign culture. Libeni not only encouraged the education of her daughter but equally taught her traditional art and craft. And indeed Apenyo grows into an excellent weaver, sharp intellectually with an exquisite singing voice.

The vulnerability of women because of biological reasons often made them victims during conflict or no conflict circumstances both in the public and the private sphere. This tends to continue even after the death. In the story, the dead bodies of Apenyo and Libeni became a matter of debate as to whether they should be buried according to Christian norms or traditional Naga norms. Nagaland was in a state of transition and the conflict between rootedness and openness was still acting dividing the old and the new generation into two groups. The old traditional people, who, even though embraced Christianity, were still holding onto their traditional values that did not allow rape victims



to be buried in the village graveyard. Rape, as the cause of their death, was considered unnatural. To this, the young ones protested saying “How can you say that? They were members of our church and sang in the choir” (Ao 30). However, a compromise was reached after much debate that allowed the dead bodies to be buried just outside the village graveyard but without any headstone. Headstone signifies a lasting memorial of the family and history which has been denied to Apenyo and Libeni. Apenyo’s bravery remained unnoticed because of her loss of honour that continued even after their death. It’s an irony in the case of a woman who carries the burden of honour of one’s family, tribe, nation and gets thrown away by her very own people and community once she loses her honour. Thus the experience of women becomes very different from men. Apenyo, the eighteenth years

old girl who alone stood her ground exhibited bravery which remained unnoticed but the emphasis was rather put on their losing the honor for which they were denied the headstone after death.

But the purpose of the headstone was fulfilled by the storyteller who remembered the lost voice and memory of the brave girl and passed it to generations that followed. Temsula Ao and other northeast writers’ quintessential feature is their attempt to carry on these oral stories that captured the ethos of the traditional Naga village. By documenting the oral story of Apenyo and Libeni, along with other such stories, Ao has symbolically offered the headstone denied to them. She has given Apenyo’s last song a space to survive in her writings that will be remembered for years to come along with the brutalities the Naga people particularly women faced at the time of conflict.

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Ecocritical and Ecological Concerns in Literature by North East Indian Women: A Reading of Selected Poems of Mamang Dai

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Abstract :

Representations of nature and the environment have been prominent in literature and beyond since classical times. In the celebrated works of contemporary writers, the representation of nature to arouse ecological consciousness has found a significant space. The growing concerns regarding environmental issues has furthered the need for the representation of the same in literatures across the globe. The poetry from India's North East is rich in enshrining various aspects of the ecology of the region. The ecology of the native lands and search for identity, roots and exploring through the native culture formulate the major themes of poetry of the writers from this region. The mountains, the rivers, hills, flora, fauna are often celebrated in their poetry and a deep concern for the degradation of ecology is also touched upon at the same time. The love of nature is also exemplified in their writings by many poets. Mamang Dai, a prolific writer hailing from Arunachal Pradesh, born and brought up in the hills, is very deeply concerned and connected with ecology and nature. The theme of nature and a deep ecological concern is a recurring occurrence in her poetry as well as other fictional works. This paper, thus, is an attempt to study selected poems of Mamang Dai in the light of an ecocritical and an ecological perspective. The paper will also try to explore her ideas and ecological vision as a woman from the hills of North East India. The intricate relationship, shared by one's ancestral roots with one's identity and nature, is also explored through this paper.

Keywords : *Ecocriticism, Ecocritical literature, Deep Ecology, North East Indian literature, North East Indian Women, Identity*

Introduction :

Ecocriticism, as a school of literary criticism, has a much prominent role to play in the contemporary era. It cannot be argued that the

moral duties of literature include the need for reflecting contemporary issues. The growing concerns regarding environmental issues has furthered the need for the representation of the



same as well as nature in literatures across the globe. The 1960s saw the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, which led to a massive environmental movement in the 1980s, leading in turn to the rise of ecocriticism. Since then, it has been and continues to be an approach centred around nature, the environment and the earth. It calls for a study of literature and the environment from an interdisciplinary point of view, where literary scholars unearth eco-conscious representations in literary texts, in view of the global environmental crisis, to examine the various ways literature treats the subject of nature.

In the Indian literary scene, several writers have spectacularly portrayed nature in their celebrated works. It is important to mention here that while Ecocriticism tries to unearth the human-nature relationship in literary representations, Deep Ecology takes it a step further where "nature and other life forms are considered as valuable as human beings" (Singha 2). Coined in 1972 by Arne Naess, the phrase "Deep Ecology Movement" calls for a representation and understanding of the worth of all living forms on earth. According to Nayar, Deep Ecology proposes "a respect not only for all life forms but also towards landscapes such as rivers and mountains" (247). Such an ethic can be seen in the Indian literary scene in the literature created by women from North East India, specifically for the purpose of this paper, in the writings of Mamang Dai, a celebrated writer from Arunachal Pradesh, an ecological paradise. In her work, Dai calls for a deep respect for spectacular landscapes, bubbling rivers and streams, gushing waterfalls, vivid flowers, and the places she witnessed growing up in the embrace

of nature. She, however, also expresses her concern and laments about "the sorry state-of-affairs as regards the state of non-human lives" (Basumatary and Khiangte 2669) in contemporary times.

Objectives :

The aim of this paper is to read and analyse selected poems of Mamang Dai from an ecocritical and deep ecological perspective. The paper also aims to unearth and understand her ecological vision as a woman from North East India.

Analysis :

Dai, through her poetry, seeks to break the hierarchy wherein human beings are considered superior to other forms of life. She, like other members of her Adi tribal community, believes that human beings and other forms of life like animals, birds and trees including the rain, the clouds, the bats, etc. share a bond of kinship. In her poem "Birthplace" from *River Poems*, she writes:

We are the children of the rain
of the cloud woman,
brother to the stone and bat
in our cradle of bamboo and vine
in our long houses we slept,
and when morning came
we were refreshed. (Dai, lines 1-7)

Dai here advocates the idea that as long as human beings respected their kinship with the non-human nature, they were refreshed and had less anxiety.

The question of identity is also important here as it is intricately related to nature and the ecology of one's origin. Nature is a space whereby one can identify one's own identity. Dai's poem "An Obscure Place" clearly highlights the fact that



one can find one's ancestral roots even through the spirits of rivers, trees and mountains. "An Obscure Place" introduces us to the rich cultural heritage of Arunachal Pradesh, which is considered as obscure by many even today. The poem might also indicate the ongoing tensions of the sprawling violence due to the insurgency. It also describes the opposition between history and traditional stories, with a sense of alienation:

The history of our race begins with the place of stories

We do not know if the language we speak
Belong to a written past
Nothing is certain

There are mountains, oh! There are Mountains
We climbed every slope, we slept by the river
But we do not speak of victory yet.

The lines from "An Obscure Place" above imply that the mountains act as a symbol of the poet's ancestral roots wherein she desires and longs to go back to her roots.

Her sense of pride on being a woman from the hills is deeply reflected in her work where she describes the natural landscapes, their beauty and the fond memories of her past life in Arunachal Pradesh. In her descriptions of the natural bounty of her place, ecology is presented in a lively manner. In her poem "Rain (1)" from *River Poems*, she writes:

In the rain the camellias bloom.
The incense of pine
fills the senses again. (Dai 25)

Again, in "Lilies" from *River Poems*, she paints a vivid ecological sight that reflects the beauty of nature, giving us a sense of her deep respect for nature:

Where does tenderness linger?
Six white lilies stare at me
with pollen heavy eyes.
When the sullen wind blows
A bird sings. (Dai 72)

She beautifies and glorifies nature in her poems which reflect her deep love for nature and her deep ecological vision.

Another interesting feature of Dai's writing is the perfect blending of her poetry with the effect of Ecomysticism with the help of tribal folklore, folktales and myths. According to the tribal community, there is an age-old belief that the tiger and human beings are born brothers, which again reiterates the idea of the kinship between human beings and other forms of life. In her poem "Man and Brother" from her *Midsummer Survival Lyrics*, there is a beautiful description where a tiger pleads a hunter to have mercy on him, his brother: "The tiger runs swiftly from my father's house/ Calling my name/ Brother: Man brother/ Have mercy for our destiny!" (Dai 49). This description also serves as a plea from the animal world to the human world to have mercy on them and stop all the degradation and harm they cause. As the hunter realises that he is about to kill his own brother, the tiger, and as such the entire village has to pay penance for it later, he asks the tiger to leave: "Run swiftly then my brother / Oh, my brother/ have mercy for our destiny" (Dai 50). This description, again, might be a plea to the animal world to have mercy on the human race for all the destruction caused by the humans. The use of myth to express an ecological concern is very well presented here by Dai.



Another Ecomystical depiction is observed in another poem “Wild Birds” from *River Poems* where the human voice is made to think about birds, which are two different entities yet similar connections are drawn between them.

I thought you loved me.
How sad it is,
the spring sky,
the caresses of
mist and vapour
Why do wild birds cry? (Dai, lines 1-6)

Dai beautifully combines both love and Nature and brings them together in this poem.

Another important feature of Dai's poems is Animism. She tries to draw a close connection with the various elements from the natural world like trees, rivers, stones, etc. whereby they are ushered with life and are thereby considered to be animate. Her poems are a clear portrayal of the ecological elements as a true animist. The fact that she is a believer of Gods is very clear in the poem “The Balm of Time” from her collection *The Balm of Time*, where she writes that she believes in Gods and the spirits of the forest and the river. In the poem, she expresses her ecological concern and beliefs in the tribal pantheon of Gods, who are regarded as elements of nature. By glorifying nature as God, Dai also ushers in a sense of the supremacy of nature, giving it a divine pedestal. This idea is seen further in her poem “Small Towns and the River”, where she likens the small towns by the river to the dwelling place of the Gods: “In small towns by the river/ we all want to walk with the gods”.

In the poem “Birthplace”, animism is clearly depicted with the use of vivid natural images that animate the rain, the clouds and the bat. Animism

is also observed in the poem “The Voice of the Mountain” as can be seen in the extract below :

I know, I know these things
as rocks knows, burning in the sun's embrace,
about clouds, and sudden rain;
As I know a cloud is a cloud,
A cloud is this uncertain pulse that sits over my heart.
In the end the universe yields nothing
except a dream of permanence.
peace is a falsity
A moment of rest comes after long combat.

In her poetry, Dai also highlights the idea of interdependence between man and nature. Human beings often fail to acknowledge this interdependence, thus posing a threat to the non-human world. Dai's deep understanding of this interdependence shows her echoing similar sentiments to Rachel Carson who, in *Silent Spring*, writes that the web of life is made up of intricate relationships between the human and non-human world. In “Egret River” from *River Poems*, Dai writes: “Now I know/ The forest is my home/ the mist my breath” (Dai, lines 21-23). Dai considers the forest as the home of mankind, wherein human beings breathe the mist, which is true both literally and metaphorically. In “Be careful how you cut that tree” from her *Midsummer Survival Lyrics*, she explains how cutting a tree can lead to a change in climate, which portrays her understanding of the interdependence between man and nature, both scientifically and metaphorically. Referring to the trees as “priests” and “gods”, Dai shows how “the felling of a tree can have serious repercussions in the human world and man might not be able to recuperate from the aftermath” (Singha 7). She writes:



Be careful how you cut that tree.
 A dizzy blow can change the sunlight,
 Alter the snaking path of a breeze;
 Kill the ground with unexpected poison – heat
 these things are unpredictable. (Dai 64)

Dai's poetry also reflects her concern for the degradation of ecology. In the poem "The Sorrow of Women", she portrays the silent women whose voice is muted by the so-called male counterparts or the patriarchal society.

My love, what shall I do?
 I am thinking how I may lose you
 to war, and big issues
 more important than me.

 and they are taking about escape,
 and liberty, men and guns,
 ah! The urgency for survival.
 But what will do
 not knowing the sorrow of women.

Here, the narrative voice might be the voice of nature. For survival, the men have taken to arms. This anthropocentric portrayal clearly indicates the widening gap between man and the natural world. Humans have become so engrossed with deciding their own fates that they have failed to spare a minute to think about the natural world. This ultimately has resulted in widening the gap between the two, thereby leading to ecological crisis. Her subtle comparison between nature and the silent woman also presents ecofeminist concerns. Her ecofeminist stance continues in "The Voice of the Mountain" as she identifies herself with nature, portraying her bodily connections with it. It is a deep portrayal of the relationship between nature and the human body:

"I am the woman lost in translation/ who survives,
 with happiness to carry on/ I am the breath that
 opens the mouth of the canyon, the sunlight on
 the tips of trees; ... I am the sleep in the mind of
 the mountain."

In "The Voice of the Mountain", she also laments the destruction of the natural world as she believes that depletion of the natural world will lead to loss of one's identity. As such, in this quest for identity, it is one's sole responsibility to protect the natural world. The description goes likewise: The other day a young man arrived from the village Because he could not speak he brought a gift of fish from the land of rivers
 it seems such acts are repeated
 We live in territories forever ancient and new
 and as we speak in changing languages
 I also leave my spear learning by the tree
 and try to make a sign.

Here, she paints a picture of the intricate relationship shared by human being and nature. She portrays how human beings repeat acts of destruction, using and abusing natural resources in a selfish manner. Since the tribal communities of North East India are closely related to nature, such destruction of natural resources distorts their identities rooted so deep in the tribal soil. She, as such, mourns the destruction of the flora and fauna of her land.

Furthermore, the poet laments on the fact of losing one's faith with the advent of Christianity. She even describes the relationship shared by nature, native people and their identity which is almost in a deteriorating condition. The juxtaposition of "weeping" and "a waving grassland" in "An Obscure Place" is powerful here



as Dai uses nature to express her sorrow on the loss of faith, and in turn identity:

The world of strangers have led us into a mist
Deeper than one we left behind
Weeping like a waving grassland
Where the bones of our father are buried
Surrounded by thoughts of beauty.

In “Even in the Season of Chrysanthemums” from *Midsummer Survival Lyrics*, Dai juxtaposes the modern, crumbling, polluted, corrupted and commercialised world against the natural world of flora and fauna. She is distressed by the death and cruelty of the modern city. Even in a season where chrysanthemums are blooming, “the city is shocked, confused and has closely huddled together” (Wani 104).

In the poem “The Deification of Nature” from *Midsummer Survival Lyrics*, she describes the significance of mountains, trees and insects and that we need to respect and value their existence. She shares the belief of her tribal community that everything has life and any damage done to life brings in severe consequences. She challenges the destruction caused by modern man by felling trees and crushing mountains with explosives. She, thus, questions:

When we say our people believe that rocks and trees have life, what does it mean?

In this environment where we live and what we call our land, land of our ancestors, we cannot crush the mountains or tear off the green covering saying this is what is getting in the way of development. (Dai 53)

Dai, through her poetry, also touches on the idea of the encroachment of human beings into the natural habitat of flora and fauna. In “Midday Sun” from *Midsummer Survival Lyrics*, she

describes a rhinoceros struggling to find a resting place, and in turn questioning as to where is the “place of rivers and wet grass” (Dai 67). Similarly, in “The Face of the Tiger” from the same collection, she describes a team of hunters preparing for a tiger-hunt asking each other why the tiger was “moving into the territories of men” (Dai 48) and destroying their crops, unaware of the fact that their encroachment of the tiger’s natural habitat had pushed the tiger out into the open.

Dai also acknowledges the supreme power of Nature in her poetry as opposed to the modern idea of the supremacy of human beings over other natural forms. In her poem *Rivers* from *Midsummer Survival Lyrics*, she acknowledges the sublime power of rivers, writing that the rivers can do anything, including “capsize[ing] boats” (Dai 71). In “Writing”, Dai considers human beings as “small silhouettes” (Dai 2) when compared to the grand mountains. Dai’s philosophy, here, is similar to that of Arne Naess, a founding figure of the “Deep Ecology Movement”, who advocated the supremacy of natural forms like rivers and mountains: “From the mountains, we learn modesty; their size makes us feel small and humble, and so we participate in their greatness” (Naess 17).

Conclusion :

In conclusion, it can be said that Mamang Dai, through her poetry, has splendidly put forward her ecological vision as a woman from North East India. The numerous literary and metaphorical representations of nature in her poetry have established her as one of the major ecocritical and ecological writers of India. Nature is central in her poetry. Besides describing the bounty of



nature, she also touches on ecofeminist and ecological concerns. She also reveals the mystical quality of nature through ecomysticism. Her strong voice also exposes the selfishness of the modern capitalist world and expresses her deep ecological concern for the biodiversity of Arunachal Pradesh and the wider world. She believes in the supreme power of nature and like other members of her Adi tribe, she considers all entities of nature as sacred entities. Her poetry

seeks to break the hierarchy where human beings are at the top of the ladder and like other deep ecologists, she aims, through her poetry, to establish the value and worth of all creatures in nature. Her strong voice of protest, owing to her upbringing in the midst of nature, calls for a harmonious relationship amongst all species on earth. Dai's poetry is an attempt at reminding people that it is high time to change and avoid a looming ecological catastrophe.

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Indigenous Traditional Knowledge of the Women's of Kaibartta Community of Assam about the application of Phytoremedies in primary health care

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Abstract:

The northeastern region of India is blessed with a great variety of natural vegetation, some of which are used in traditional medicine to cure various sicknesses and diseases. It is an established fact that different ethnic communities of Assam possessed remarkably accurate knowledge about the medicinal use of the plants around them. An Ethnobotanical study was carried out in order to document the indigenous traditional knowledge about the application of ethnomedicinal plants by the women of the Kaibartta community of Sivasagar, Assam through questionnaires and direct field observation and has resulted in the documentation of various uses of the ethnomedicinal plants around them for curing several ailments of their family members. A total of 35 medicinal plants belonging to 28 families were recorded which are used by the women of the Kaibartta community of Assam, India against 17 different frequently occurring ailments. Biological activities of these recorded plants were also reported from available literature and found a positive correlation between the traditional knowledge and biological activities of the recorded plants, which validates the ITK of the women of the Kaibartta community of Assam about the application of phytoremedy against frequently occurring ailments of their family members.

Keywords : *ITK, Kaibartta, Ethnomedicinal plants, Assam.*

Introduction:

Women are considered as the promoters of overall family health. They play an important and vital role in maintaining overall family health as well as community health. The health habit of a family is strongly relying on the knowledge and contributions of women because they mostly plan and prepare the food for the family. Thus, their awareness of

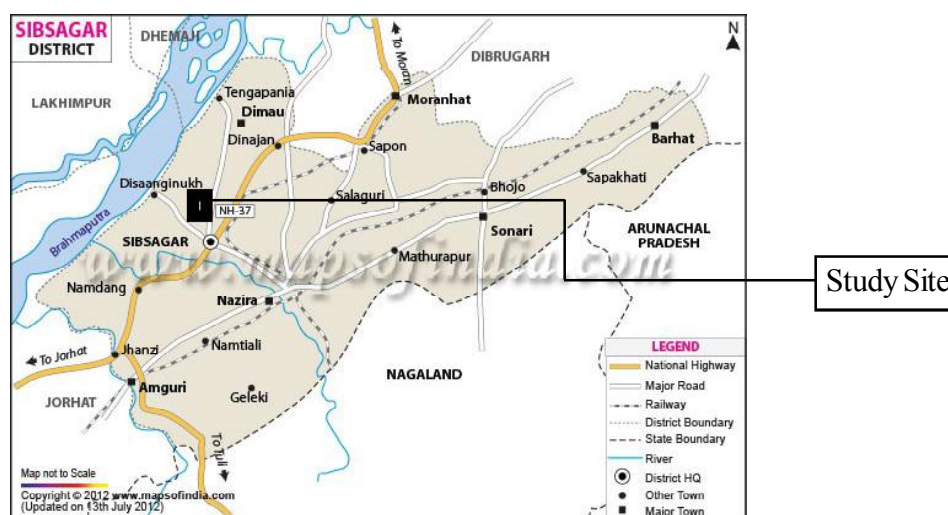
nutritious food and knowledge about the application of bioresources around them in primary health care can ensure the health and happiness of the family, especially in the developing countries, where a large section of people depends on traditional medicine for their primary healthcare in spite of having tremendous advancement in modern health care facilities and allopathic medicines.

The northeastern region of India is blessed with a great variety of natural vegetation, some of which are used in traditional medicine to cure various sicknesses and diseases. Ethnic women of Assam are very much aware of the application of plant resources in and around them as ethnomedicine for their family health care. They possessed remarkably accurate knowledge about the medicinal use of the plants around them. The Kaibarttas of Assam is one of the notable aboriginal Hindu inhabitants of Assam, traditionally engaged with fishing and cultivation. They are one of the sixteen Scheduled Castes of the state as per Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950.¹ Like all other ethnic tribes of Assam, the Kaibartta's has also long history and tradition of using their individual ethnomedicinal practice. They have tremendous faith, belief, and empathy for traditional herbs and have rich traditional knowledge about the application of Phyto remedies. In the present study women of the Kaibartta community from five villages of

Sivasagar district of Assam have been taken into consideration in order to evaluate their indigenous knowledge content regarding the application of Phyto remedies in family health management.

About the Study Area and Location:

The study was carried out in four villages of Sivasagar district of Assam viz. Akhoiphutia, Bambari, Kaibartta doloni, Charagua and Chaulkora gaon. Historic Sivasagar district of Assam is located at the southern bank of the Brahmaputra River and under the Upper Brahmaputra Valley agroclimatic zone of Assam, which is extended between 26.40° and 27.25° N latitudes and 94.25° and 95.25° E longitudes². It has an elevation of 86.6 mtrs. The average annual rainfall is 108.44 cm and temperature vary between 15°-35°C². Soil is alluvial and suitable for cultivation. The vegetation type of the study site is semi evergreen-deciduous forest and grassland. The main food crops cultivated are rice, wheat, mustard, pulses, potato, etc. and the main cash crops cultivated are jute, oilseeds, sugarcane cotton, etc.



Map showing study site (©<https://www.mapsofindia.com>. retrieved on 24th September, 2021)



Materials and Methods :

Evaluation and documentation of the indigenous traditional knowledge of the women of the Kaibartta community of Assam about the application of locally available ethnomedicinal plants against different frequently occurring diseases of family members was the principal aim of this study. The study was based on data collected in the course of fieldwork undertaken in five nos. of villages of Sivasagar District, Assam. The data were collected between February 2020 to July, 2021. Information on different ethnomedicinal plants used against common and frequent diseases was collected and documented. In order to collect direct information on the indigenous traditional knowledge about the application of phytoremedy against various diseases informal interview with the selected respondents of the target group was carried out with a semi-structured bilingual questionnaire in Assamese and English. The plant species used by the women of kaibartta community in various diseases were collected from the field and preserved in the form of herbarium sheets³. The herbarium sheets were identified following Flora of Assam⁴⁻⁵ and comparing them with the herbarium of the Department of Botany, J.B. College (Autonomous), Jorhat. A total of 91 women of 18 - 73years old were interviewed, of which 02 were key informants as they were traditional medical practitioners or herbalists locally known as Bezini or Kabiraj and the rest 89 were general informants. Respondents were selected purposively by using random sampling techniques.

Biological activities of the recorded plants have been recorded from available phytochemical, pharmaceutical and pharmacological literature.

Result and Discussion :

All total 35 medicinal plants belonging to 28 families used by the women of Kaibartta community of Assam, in 17 different frequently occurring ailments of their family members were recorded and documented. Plants used by the women of the Kaibartta community of the study site as phytomedicine are enumerated and arranged in an order having the botanical name, family name, local name in Assamese language, method of preparation of medicines with doses. Experimental data available on the biological activity of the plants are also mentioned immediately after each enumeration.

Cough, Cold, and Flu :

1. *Ocimum tenuiflorum* L, Lamiaceae, Kola Tulshi, about 25 – 30 leaves are mixed with a small quantity of ginger and grounded. Juice obtained is mixed with a spoonful of honey and half cup of lukewarm water and administered daily twice for 2 – 3 days: analgesic, antibacterial⁶
2. *Zingiber officinale* Roscoe, Zingiberaceae, Ada, Fresh rhizome juice mixed with a spoonful of honey and a half cup of lukewarm water and administered daily twice for 2-3 days: antioxidant, antimicrobial⁷
3. *Acorus calamus* L, Araceae, Boch, Fresh pieces of the rhizome is given to put on the neck of babies in form of the string so that they can inhale the aroma: antimicrobial⁸



Fever :

1. *Aloe vera* (L.) Burm.f. Miller, Liliaceae, Chalkuwari, Crushed leaf paste is applied on the forehead: anti-inflammatory, antiviral, antibacterial and antifungal⁹
2. *Azadirachta indica* A.Juss, Meliaceae, Mohaneem, Fresh leaves are boiled with water and water is given for the bath: antibacterial¹⁰, antifungal¹¹
3. *Curcuma caesia* Roxb, Zingiberaceae, Kola haldi, Rhizome decoction is given to consumed twice for 1-2 days: antioxidant and antimicrobial¹²
4. *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* L, Malvaceae, Jobaphul, Fresh leaves are crushed and applied on the forehead: antioxidant, antimicrobial, antiinflammatory¹³

Asthma :

1. *Justicia adhatoda* L, Acanthaceae, Titabahak, about 5 ml of leaves decoction is given for 2-3 days: bronchodilator and antiallergic activity¹⁴
2. *Acorus calamus* L, Araceae, Boch, about 5 ml juice of fresh rhizome is given with water for 3-5 days: antibacterial¹⁵, neuroprotective, antioxidant¹⁶
3. *Solanum indicum* L, Solanaceae, Tita bhekuri, about 5 ml of roots juice are given to eat once daily until cure: anti-hypersensitive¹⁷, anti-inflammatory¹⁸.

Skin diseases :

1. *Senna tora* (L.) Roxb, Leguminasae, Bon medelwa, Leaves paste is used externally on the affected areas of ringworm and eczema: antifungal¹⁹

2. *Azadirachta indica* A.Juss , Meliaceae, Mohaneem, the crude extract of the leaves is applied locally for 4-5 days to cure skin infections: antibacterial¹⁰, antifungal¹¹
3. *Flemingia strobilifera* (L.) W.T.Aiton, Dighloti, Fabaceae, Shrub, Leaf and flower paste is applied over the infected areas of ringworm infection: Antimicrobial²⁰
4. *Moringa oleifera* Lam., Moringaceae, Sajina, raw leaves paste is applied externally on wounds and infections: antifungal²¹

Measles and chickenpox :

1. *Azadirachta indica* A.Juss , Meliaceae, Neem, Leaves are put in the rooms in which child remains and also upon the doors, it is believed that they act as antiseptic and freshen the air which prevents infection of measles and chickenpox: antiviral²²
2. *Bambusa tulda* Roxb, Poaceae, Banh, processed bamboo shoot (Kharisha) fried with fish species *Clarius batratus* (Magur) and given to eat for wound healing due to measles: Bamboo shoot has healing capacity²³, The nutrient content in *Clarius batratus* has wound healing capacity²⁴
3. *Cajanus cajan* L, Leguminosae, Arhar, Leaves are crushed and used in the infected areas of Measles: antiviral²⁵

Cough :

1. *Zingiber officinale* Roscoe, Zingiberaceae, Ada, the fresh rhizome is crushed with sugarcane molasses and given orally: antiinflammatory and antinociceptive activities, muscle relaxant²⁶
2. *Ocimum sanctum* Linn, Lamiaceae, Tulsi, the crude extract of leaf is mixed with honey and given 3-4 times until cure: antibacterial²⁷



3. *Allium sativum* L, Liliaceae, bulbs are crushed and heated with mustard oil and is applied to chest, neck, back etc as a message to get relief from congestion of lungs: antimicrobial²⁸

Diarrhoea :

1. *Oxalis corniculata* L, Oxalidaceae, Sorutengesi. 5- 10 ml of the extracts of the whole plant is given twice daily for 7 days: antibacterial²⁹
2. *Carica papaya* L, Caricaceae, Amita, Unripe fruits are boiled and given; amoebicide³⁰ antiviral³¹
3. *Houttuynia cordata* Thunb., Saururaceae, Machandari, Decoction of the entire plant is given once daily for 2-3 days: anti Diarrheal³²

Dysentery :

1. *Psidium guajava* L, Myrtaceae, Madhuri-aam, 5-10 ml of fresh leaf juice mixed with equal amount of water and a small amount of rock candy or sugar candy is given 2-3 times daily for a week: antimicrobial³³
2. *Citrus medica* L, Rutaceae, Gul Nemu , 10 ml of fruit juice mixed with water and sugar is given 2-3 times daily until cured or a small amount of dried peel is also given to consume directly: antibacterial³⁴

Worm Infection :

1. *Carica papaya* L, Caricaceae, Amita, ripe fruits are given to eat: anthelmintic³⁵
2. *Annonas cosmos* Mill, Annonaceae, Matikothal , fresh fruits, and sometimes immature leaves are given to eat: anthelmintic³⁶

Jaundice :

1. *Musa paradisica* L, Musaceae, Athia kal, Ripened fruit of *Musa paradisica* are deep in water overnight with *Cicer arietinum*

(bootmah) and mixed with jiggery, and a cup of this juice is given for 5-7 days or until cure: antibacterial, antioxidant³⁷

2. *Cajanus cajan* (L.) Millsp, Fabaceae, Arhar dal, 5-10 ml leaf juice has given daily until cured: antibacterial³⁸ anti-inflammatory³⁹
3. *Kalanchoe pinnata*, (Lam.) Pers., Crassulaceae, Dupor tenga, 10 - 20 ml leaf juice are given daily two to three times for 6 - 7 days: anti-cancer, anti-inflammatory, diuretic and anti-microbial⁴⁰
4. *Phyllanthus niruri* L, Phyllanthaceae, Bhuiamlakhi, about 10 ml whole plant juice is administrated orally once daily for 3 days: antihapatitis⁴¹

High Blood Pressure :

1. *Melastoma malabathricum* (L) Smith, Melastomataceae, Phutkola, a decoction of leaves is used to reduce hypertension: antihypersensitive⁴²
2. *Andrographis paniculate* (Burm.f.) Nees,, Acanthaceae, Kalmegh, a small amount of leaves decoction are used to treat hypertension: antihypersensitive⁴³

Diabetes :

1. *Momordica charantia* L , Cucubitaceae, Kerela, About 10-20 ml fruit juice is given early morning in empty stomach until cure : antidiabetic⁴⁴
2. *Syzygium cumini* (L.) Skeels , Myrtaceae, Jamu. Seed powder about 1 teaspoonful is taken with water in the morning in an empty stomach and also in the evening before meals: antidiabetic⁴⁵
3. *Catharanthus roseus* (L.) G.Don , Apocynaceae, Nayantora, 10 – 20 ml leaf, and



flower juice are given orally in the empty stomach: antidiabetic⁴⁶

4. *Andrographis paniculate* (Burm.f.) Nees, Acanthaceae, Kalmegh, a small amount of leaves decoction is used to treat diabetes: antidiabetic⁴⁷

Tonsillitis :

1. *Leucas aspera* (Willd.) Link, Lamiaceae, 4-5 drops of the leaf juice are administered in nostrils: antioxidant and antibacterial⁴⁸

Enhance Fertility and Lactation in women :

1. *Asperagus racemosus* Willd, Liliaceae, Satmul, root decoction is given to women: hormonal and tonic like effect⁴⁹

Menstrual disorders :

1. *Curcuma longa* Linn., Zingiberaceae, Haldi, 5 gm of haldi powder are taken with lukewarm water after menses for 5-7 days: antioxidant, antibacterial⁵⁰
2. *Mimosa pudica* L, Mimosaceae, Lajuki bon, three spoonfuls of leaf juice is administered thrice daily for 2-3 days: antimicrobial⁵¹

Anemia :

1. *Spinacia oleracea* L, Amaranthaceae, Paleng, Leaves are cooked and consumed: antianemic⁵²

2. *Colocasia esculenta* (L.) Schott, Araceae, Kala kachu, young leaves with leaf base are taken as curry: antianemic⁵³

Conclusion:

During the present study, a total of 35 indigenous medicinal plants of 28 families were recorded and documented used against 17 commonly occurring ailments by the women of Kaibartta community of Assam. Nineteen of the recorded plants were herbs; seven were shrubs, six trees, and three climbers. The present study clearly indicates that the women of the Kaibartta community of Assam possess remarkable accurate indigenous knowledge about the application of ethnomedicinal plants around them against different common and frequently occurring ailments of their family members. Their Indigenous Traditional Knowledge (ITK) about the application of locally available ethnomedicinal plants in maintaining family health is also supported by available phytochemical and pharmacological literature, which clearly validates the rich traditional knowledge content of the women belonging to this community.

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Documenting the Chakma Women's Experiences : *From the Chittagong Hill Tracts to North-East Frontier Agency (Tracts)*

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Abstract :

The present article seeks to explore the issues and challenges faced by the Chakma women during their migration journey from the Chittagong Hill Tracts to the then North East Frontier Agency. The Chakmas are an ethno-religious minority group in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh who had encountered discrimination and displacement that contributed to their migration from their homeland. However, this article seeks to explore only the various issues and challenges faced by the Chakma women before their migration, during their course of migration journey and also in their post-settlement periods. The study is based on oral narratives shared by the women themselves who had encountered the displacement and migration. The study is an attempt to focus on the issues of women during cross-border migration and also their situations prior and *after the migration*.

Keywords: *Partition, Chakma, Cross-Border Migration, Experiences of women, Statelessness*

Introduction :

For more than 60 years, the Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh have been struggling to attain their citizenship rights. Ever since, their flight from the Chittagong Hill Tracts during the period between 1964-1969 and their subsequent resettlement in the then North-East Frontier Agency Tracts (NEFA), the Chakmas have been stranded between statelessness and citizens. Albeit, there have been varied narratives regarding their numbers in the present Arunachal Pradesh, however, now

an average number of 65,000 Chakmas are believed to inhabit in Arunachal Pradesh and this figure is used by both the Chakmas as well as by other researchers (Singh, 2010).

The Chakmas were displaced from their homeland in the CHT as result of the construction of the Kaptai Dam over the Karnafuli River. Moreover, being an ethno-religious minority in the East Pakistan the Chakmas were also victims of religious persecution and due to which the women had to face both sexual violence and forceful

marriage. In fact, drawing references from previous works as well as from our field work, we found that the apprehension among the Chakmas for the safety of women also fueled their flight from their homeland. Therefore, it is in this context, that the present paper seeks to explore the everyday lived experiences faced by the Chakma women prior to their migration, experiences of the women during their migration journey and the challenges faced after being settled in the then NEFA. Moreover, the paper is an attempt to study the nuanced experiences and challenges of women during migration and their life as stateless refugees.

Emphasizing on the specific experiences of women in refugee setting, various nuanced challenges that they face during their course of flight or even before their migration have formed an important space in the refugee study since the 1980s and 1990s notably after the second wave feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s (Ali, 2011). As regardless, of their race, place of origin, religion, and caste or even class women remain in a vulnerable condition especially when it comes in terms of political upheavals and resultant socio-economic changes. Women are susceptible to sexual abuse, physical health problems and even mental health problems during such situations (Kuoich, Wali and Scully 1992). The social and cultural norms of a given society also determines the vulnerability of the women depending upon how women are positioned in the social structure and later on that status in their own native society also influences in the host society. As immigrants as a whole are faced with innumerable problems ranging from decrease in political immunity,

unemployment, homelessness and deterioration in both physical and mental health, therefore, in such conflicting situation women often face more problems which are unique to their social status within both the native and host society. At present, women make fifty percent of any refugee, stateless or immigrant group. Among an estimated 244 million migrants and 19.6 million refugees globally about half of them are comprised of women.

A Historical Background of the Chakmas :

The migration of the Chakmas from their homeland at CHT can be attributed to various historical, political and socio-economic factors. As in the succeeding discussions we would see how following the end of the colonial era and the partition of the Indian sub-continent, victimization of the Chakmas in various forms emerged.

The declaration of Sir Cyril Radcliffe, the Chairman of the Bengal Boundary Commission on 16th August, 1947 to annex the CHT with East Pakistan was opposed by the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samiti (PCJS) (Singh 2010:33-35; Chakma, 2013:1-4; Talukdar 1988: 47). In fact, prior to the declaration of independence and demarcation of boundaries, the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samiti (PCJS) an association of the tribal people of CHT had begun to articulate their political future by discussing with the British Authority and the Congress High Command at the Shimla Conference in 1945 (Chakma, 2013:1). Similarly, a memorandum was submitted on 15th February, 1947 and initially Indian Leaders like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Sardar Ballav Bhai Patel had assured the PCJS leaderships that CHT would be included within India. Meanwhile, the PCJS leaderships



even had hoisted the Indian National Flag on 15th August, 1947 at Rangamati, on the basis of the Indian Independence Act of 1947. However, on 17th August, 1947 the PCJS were appraised that the CHT was included within the East Bengal Boundary i.e. in East Pakistan (Chakma, 2013: 5; Singh 2010). In context to this, the fate of CHT was changed as a consequent of the deal with the Sikhs regarding the partition of Punjab and which made Muslim majority district of Ferozpur in Punjab a part of India (Singh, 2010:35).

The Pakistan Govt. also took measures to integrate the Buddhist minority by sponsoring large number of Muslim Bengalis to migrate and settle in the CHT (Singh, 2010; Chakma, 2013). The racial and religious disparity between the immigrant Muslims and the ethnic Chakmas and the sponsored policy of the Government to settle the Bengali speaking Muslim population in CHT had caused ethnic tensions and conflicts leading to displacement of the Chakmas (Chakma, 2013; Weiner, 1993; Singh, 2010; Ghosh, 2016; Prasad, 2013). Simultaneously, the exploitation of natural resources of the CHT and subsequent policy of development of the region (construction of Kaptai dam) have also alienated the indigenous populace from their traditional dependent on the hills and natural resources for economic self-sustainability leading to systematic displacement of the people (Singh, 2010: 39-46).

Moreover, the construction of Kaptai Hydro Electric Project also added fuel to uproot the Chakmas from their homeland. The chronicle of marginalization, systematic persecution and displacement of the Chakmas had reached its summit when the Kaptai dam was constructed

between the period 1959-1963 sponsored by USAID and at an estimated amount of Rs. 2.4 million (Singh, 2010: 41-42). Furthermore, the victims of the catastrophe estimating more than 100,000 with again 90 percent of them being the Chakmas were not compensated and rehabilitated properly in contrast to about 8,000 Bengali settlers who also were displaced but were resettled in fertile land of the *Kasalong* tract (ibid). The Chakmas who were dependent on agriculture for their livelihood were affected due to loss of about 52,000 acres or nearly 40 percent of agricultural land of CHT as a result of flood caused by the Kaptai Dam (ibid). It is also pertinent to mention here that during the British period the CHT was declared as a 'totally excluded area' under the Government of India Act, 1935 (Singh 2010: 30; Paul and Biswas 2014:44). But the abolition of this provision in 1964 due to the passage of a constitutional amendment bill in 1963 had privileged the non-tribal Bengali Muslims to acquire land and settle in the CHT (Weiner, 1993: 1740). This had also facilitated the Pakistani regime to abolish the tribal police force that was constituted under the Chittagong Hill Tracts Frontier Police regulations of 1881 and the administration of the CHT was at large replaced by the Central Government. The demographic pattern of the CHT was changed due to increasing settlement of the Bengali Muslims and gradually the Chakmas became minority in their own land (Singh, 2010).

Thus, it is seen from the above discussion that the Chakmas in the CHT especially in the aftermath of 1947, had to undergo perpetual discrimination often emanating from the very ethos



and legacy of the 'two-nation' theory. Following this legacy the CHT which was a predominantly Non-Muslim region and constructed as a peripheral excluded area had to face paradigm shift within the new Pakistani regime from its peripheral status to identifying with the larger national identity (Singh, 2010). The abolition of the special status of the CHT in 1964 had not only affected their economy, but also their traditional social life as the CHT was made open to non-tribal Muslim Bengalis from the plain with whom they had many cultural differences (Ibid). Thus, the displacement of the Chakmas from the CHT in 1964 is rooted largely in the effects of partition of the Indian sub-continent.

These uprooted people mostly took refuge in India especially in the then NEFA. The Chakmas could not yield any political fruits in the post-colonial East- Pakistan and then in Bangladesh, though they enjoyed political autonomy to a large extent in the pre-colonial and colonial period (Talukdar, 1988; Patil and Trivedi, 2000). At first they were settled in the Miao sub-division of present Changlang district (previously it was in Tirap district). Later on, on the basis of the field work, it is found that in the nearby Diyun circle they were first settled in six blocks i.e. Moitripur, Gautampur, Shantipur, Jyotipur, Abhaipur and Dumpani by the Government of India. Gradually, from this blocks villages like Moitripur, Gautampur, Shantipur, Jyotipur 1 and 2, Abhaipur, Dumpani, Dumpathar, Rajnagar, Jyostnapur, Kamakhyapur, Mudoidip 1 and 2,, Udaipur 1,2 and 3, Modokonala and Shillongpara. Similarly, in the Miao sub-division, M-Pen 1 and 2 are

large Chakma villages where they were settled in consultation with Tinanong Mahajon (Singpho Headman), Pisila Kotoky (British interpreter from the Singpho community) and with other Singpho community leaders. Besides, a little further from the M-Pen area also the Chakmas were settled in the Dewan area. In the Dewan area too there are Chakma villages like Punya Bhumi 1 and 2, Debo puri 1 and 2, Brajapur 1 and 2, Nandakanan 1 and 2, Kamlapuri 1 and 2, Anandapur 1 and 2, Bodisotto 1 and 2.

Methodology :

The field work was conducted in the state of Arunachal Pradesh in October 2018, February-March 2019 and February 2020, the period in which we visited the Chakma settlements in the Diyun circle of Changlang district and Miao sub-division of Changlang district. In the Diyun region, we conducted field study in the villages of Jyotipur, Rajnagar, Jyostnapur and in the Maio region we conducted field study in the villages of M-Pen and Dewan area. In fact, the Chakmas were first settled in the Miao region way back in 1964 and now the Changlang district alone host more than 50,000 Chakma populations.

As the field is vast and so do the population, therefore, we have deliberately selected 30 women from the Chakma community who had the first hand experience of migration from the CHT to NEFA. We have applied snow-ball sampling and with the help of a gate-keeper we tried to identify and locate our interviewees.

Face-to-Face interviews were taken with the help of semi-structured interview schedule. As Assamese language is largely used as lingua-franca by almost all the ethnic groups of this region,



therefore, interviews and questions were asked in Assamese language.

Everyday life before migration :

While, even in their native homeland due to political instability like war, ethnic cleansing and other forms of violence women remain at high risk of exploitation economically and sexually pushing them to be physically and mentally traumatized. In many instances in the recent violence in the Middle East it is observed how the Islamic State has taken the women as sex slaves for their soldiers. Moreover, women are also used as human shields in such conflicting situations in war zones. To some even attacking or abusing the women caters their goal of subjugating the whole community as women are regarded as reproductive symbols. In fact, 1 in 5 refugees or displaced women are victims of sexual violence as published by UN report (UNESCO 2013). There are many nuances and dynamics where women become victims during their course of their flight from their native land to another alien land. As women play multiple roles as a wife, daughter, mother and even as bread earners, therefore, such multiple roles also sometimes displace from their specific space where they could enjoy their rights. To make an illustration, it can be said that as during the migration phase or as refugees in the host country, the whole community is faced with economic uncertainty, therefore, in many cases women gets menial jobs like to work as maids, cleaners, cook, babysitters etc more easily than men which dislocate her from her previous traditional role as a mother or wife. In context, to working migrant women, they comprise an estimated 72.7% in the labor force and at the

same time, migrant women encompass an estimated 73.4% as domestic workers (Ibid). In fact, in such occupational transition especially in case of women, their traditional roles in their native land only as a mother or daughter or wife gets conflict in their new settings which may even lead to intra-familial conflict. The husband or the male members may not accept their new occupational transition in contrast to their often traditional role as mothers or wives back in the native places. However, new demands especially in economics and financial terms to sustain the family may force the women in shifting their role. Thus, refugees from more conservative countries like Afghanistan, Iraq and other under developed countries face such shift in the comparatively more benign and democratic country like the Europe and North America.

Refugees at large are faced with traumatic situation due to their alienation from native place, families, friends and relatives with women more at risk in developing this traumatic condition provided they are single mother or separated from their husbands or widows. In a study by Deacon and Sullivan (2009) on refugee women from Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan, Somalia and Syria stated the vulnerability faced by single women in terms of accessing to available resources like employment, education and even welfare services because these women refugees in their host countries were dependent on their husband or other male members of the family. Moreover, ignorance of the English language was also an added lacuna that made the refugee women to debar from the employment and other facilities.

Moreover, another important challenges faced by refugee women is their physical and

mental health, as already being dislocated and alienated from the family members and also from their socio-cultural life, women face long term health issues in this regard. Simultaneously, as already highlighted above regarding the sexual exploitation that they may face during their course of long and often uncertain journey to an alien land, studies by Hynes and Cardozo (2000) also mentions about the vulnerability of refugee women to be sexually exploited by the security personals or even may face from their members also. Similarly, under such condition they may also face problems of malnutrition due to their inaccessibility to sufficient resources. These problems faced by the refuge women may have long term effects in their life even after settling in the host country (Ibid).

Thus, it is in this context that we in the present study have tried to explore on the experiences and challenges faced by the Chakma women in their flight to India. One of the most important reasons was atrocities on women, forceful marriages and even kidnapping of girls. The uncertainty hovering over the security of their women and girls juxtaposed with other reasons forced the Chakmas to take refuge in India. As also cited by Roe (1992) and Friedman (1992) that sexually abusing women not only devalue the cultural ethics of a group or community but it is also used as a means of imposing the political power upon the opponents. Consistence of sexual abuse and violence against women also sometimes reflect as a symbol of weakening the whole community because it hurts also the sentiments and identity of the men folk who wants their women to be protected from such violence and shame (Siemens 1988).

It is in this context that an interviewee shared her experiences

I never thought in my wildest dream that such a day will come to me... though I do not remember my exact age, but still as far as my memory goes I was in my 20s when I had to migrate with my husband leaving behind my other family members, my parents and my siblings. I was pregnant too but even then I walked more months and the sad part is that I had miscarriage. She further addedn:

However, it was safer than to be victim at the hands of those newly settled immigrants from the plains that forcefully married many of our Chakma girls... even kidnapping them or sexually abusing them.

Another woman narrated :

I had a younger sister who was first kidnapped on her way to school, then was forcibly married by the newly settled Bengali Muslim immigrants.... Such fear had forced my parents to leave our ancestral homeland.

The challenges and problems faced by the Chakma women as a result of violence perpetuated by the Bengali Muslim immigrants was an addition to the already submissive role that the women were facing within their own community.

In this context, a woman said :

One of my aunties got married to a Muslim man when she was still in her teenage. But she was ostracized both by the villagers and her family members. Under such circumstances, women were often victims both in their husband's house as they had to acquaint new cultural values and within their own community because of cultural taboos.



Another elderly woman said :

Even though a girl and a woman were forcefully married by the Muslim men, yet it becomes very difficult for such a girl or woman to get adjust in the new society or many a times it is also obscure whether they get their rightful place in the new society. On the contrary, they were also not accepted back in their family due to existing social and religious differences. Therefore, due to such reasons, besides the construction of the Kaptai Dam the Chakma elders of that time decided to migrate to India.

Following the above narratives shared by various women who were also witnesses of the atrocities being meted out to the women, we could see that how the Chakma women were victims not only at the hands of the other but also within their own community as a result of prevalent socio-cultural taboos. Indeed, as could be seen from the shared narratives that the confluence of both dynamics emanating from the 'other' and also from the constructed gendered biasness ingrained in a patriarchal society, the Chakma women had to face certain challenges not indifferent from the findings by Deacon and Sullivan (2009) discussed above. Moreover, due to the constructed gendered biasness and subaltern position of the Chakma society within the context of larger Muslim identity of the erstwhile East Pakistan, the Chakma women were positioned even at the bottom of such subaltern society due to prevalent gender hierarchy.

The Journey :

All of the interviewees that we interviewed had travelled from the CHT over land and most of them by foot, only exceptions were the elderly

and the children who were provided military trucks by the Indian Government. Therefore, even when they had embarked on the journey towards India crossing the border, they did not have the idea where they were heading or where they would settle. As narrated to us by the interviewee, they had to walk an average of 7 to 8 kms per day and then were given accommodation in the transit camps. Moreover, there were total 22 groups who had crossed the international border through the proper channel and each groups consisted an average of 250-400 members, however their number increased to nearly 1000 by the end. Hence, as women formed a formidable part of these migrant groups, therefore, we made an attempt to discern the challenges faced by the migrant women themselves from their own perspectives.

While embarking on such an uncertain journey, the women had to face various problems ranging from health concerns to death. Simultaneously, leaving their home, farm and relatives back at CHT, they also had to be alienated socially and emotionally from their roots along with their spatial alienation.

It is in this context, a woman said :

As my husband was a group leader he could not accompany me and I was left with other group members. There were separate camps for women and children and after reaching Demagri (Lushai Hills) women and elderly persons were taken in vehicles from one camp to another. But what still haunts me is the site of many elderly persons died on the mid way including many women and children. In each camp the number of the persons became less



and less as we moved the next day because many elderly persons and women died.

Another Chakma woman narrated :

There were many who suffered from diarrhea and malaria and due to lack of proper treatment they had to die. Those deceased persons did not even get proper cremation as the elderly women often had to travel alone in the vehicles and their other young family members had to walk. For the last time also their sons and daughters could not pay tribute to their parents under such conditions and often they were buried on mass grave or cremated with no rituals.

Adding to the health condition another woman said :

In the latter days those camps became more unhygienic as thousands of people stayed and many among them died in the camps succumbing to various ailments. Moreover, as the situation got worsen and people had to reach the destination within definite time, therefore, even the relatives of such ailed persons could hardly take care and had to left them in their own fate.

Again, narrating her experience of the health and hygiene scenario during their migration, a woman said :

Even when we migrated also there was uncertainty and insecurity for the girls and women because the camps were temporarily made and there were no proper bathrooms or toilets. I have been witness to many pregnant women dying in the midway and how their dead bodies were left sometimes by even tying to a piece of clothes or mat... they did not get proper cremation also.

Narrating her experiences of migration as a young girl, a woman said :

As a young girl, I faced lots of trouble as there was no security both in our native land and in our journey to India. I do not know what sin we or our forefathers did that still we are suffering the same hardships. Even in our native land also we were forced to leave thinking of ourselves and our future generation especially girls because those immigrant Muslims had kidnapped and even forcefully married off our beautiful girls, if anyone disagreed then they would rape and kill her. No one listened to our grievances and as a young girl back then I was also in constant fear of such atrocities.

However, another woman also recollected some unique experiences related to their journey :

Some were lucky to give birth despite hardships in the camps and even on the way also. And I can still remember that those who were born in the camps were named after the name of those places where they were born like there are two such women still in the Diyun whose name are 'Dholeswari' and 'Monochora' as they were born in Dholai and Monachora camps respectively.

Post-Migration Challenges

As discussed above, we have seen how the women had faced various challenges not only in their homeland but also during their migration journey to India. Again, on arriving to the then NEFA they were not devoid of any problems and in fact, based on our field work we found that in addition to economic hardships, they had also to



cope with new socio-cultural settings which in many ways had created a mental apprehension among them.

As a woman narrated :

After I reached in NEFA the most challenging factor was financial sustainability as we were refugees in a strange land. In comparison to our financial condition in the CHT here we faced with homelessness, statelessness and even poverty. Though I did not have the habit of cultivation but here the situation forced me to learn new things for survival and also for our future generation.

Another woman said :

To cope with the economic hardships I had to sell my traditional ornaments and that moment was more tragic as I felt the guilt of betraying my culture and tradition. Moreover, due to consistent economic hardships, for many years we even remained alienated from our social life like weaving, celebrating our traditional and religious festivals... such alienations have created psychological issues among us as we failed to maintain our previous social life.

However, despite surpassing half a century, the Chakmas are still engulfed with many issues and challenges, the important of which is the issue of citizenship. But as the present paper focuses only on the specific challenges and experiences of the Chakma women, therefore, we would limit our study only on the specific issues faced by the women, however, not completely alienating from the issue of citizenship. While, discussing the various issues of women, we were also appraised that young girls and women at present have to

face nuanced challenges regarding education and employment. Being deprived from the Indian citizenship status, the problem of attaining education and employment is a problem to all the Chakma populace, however; again the girls and the women are the worst victim. As the mother of three young teenage girls said :

Without education in this modern world, one cannot elevate one's socio-economic position. But as Chakmas are not recognized as Indian citizens, it becomes very difficult for the young Chakmas to attain education, let alone the issue of employment... and more specifically, under such circumstances of suspicion I feel scare to send my daughters to other places to attain education... We are helpless in this regard and want a way out for our economic upliftment...

Another woman said :

Being always regarded as foreigners or refugees by the host society, I feel not safe to send my daughters to other places... moreover; anti-social elements might take the advantage of our weak socio-economic condition and involve our girls in anti-social activities. As we have already faced such problems in the CHT and even though if any such incident happens then who would fight for our justice as we have already been framed as outsiders or involving in illegal activities by the host society.

Thus, under such circumstances a large number of Chakma girls and women remain deprived from one of the basic human rights of the modern world i.e. right to education resulting in economic dependency of the women on men. In an already challenging environment due to their



statelessness condition, the case of the Chakma women discussed above have again pushed them towards vulnerability situating them at the bottom of the social hierarchy not only within the larger social context but also within their own community. Moreover, again in the course of enrolling themselves in the electoral roll, the challenges that they face again unfold the same nuanced dynamics of subaltern society. In this regard, a young girl who have applied for her inclusion in the voters' list said :

As I attained the legal age to apply for voting I decided to come for re-verification of the documents to Miao. Because the condition of the road from Deban i.e. my home area is not good, I came walking almost 6-7 kms crossing the river. But the re-verification could not be completed within one day and I could not return back due to lack of transport facility. However, luckily, I had a friend who stays in a rented house and I stayed at her house. But unfortunately, my documents were not accepted.

Sharing her experiences, another girl said :

As the re-verification of documents happen only once in a year, therefore, people from all over the Changlang district come to Miao (Sub-divisional headquarter). The huge gathering at the office and the lack of proper arrangement makes it very difficult for all the people specifically the girls and the women... Lack of washrooms, waiting sheds, accommodation sums up to the already problems faced by the Chakma women.

Conclusion :

This field work and the findings throws light into the various issues that the Chakma women

have been facing since their stay in the CHT to their flight and latter settlement in the NEFA. There have been various studies on the Chakmas, however, those studies have specifically focused on their political situations like statelessness, refugee status and citizenship issues. In fact, the Chakma issue came to limelight once again when on 15th August, 2021 in his speech the Honorable CM of Arunachal Pradesh mentioned about the relocation of the Chakmas that have been residing since 1960s. Prior, to this also this issue have always dominated the state politics of Arunachal Pradesh leading to even clashes and conflicts in 2013 at Miao. Nevertheless, amidst all these macro socio-political issues, the issues related to Chakma women especially during their migration journey and living as stateless people have always been overlooked.

In the present paper, we have tried to focus on the nuanced experiences of the women categorizing on three different periods i.e. the everyday life before migration, the experiences encountered during the journey period and the post-migration challenges encountered by the women. In all these different period, we have observed that how the women have been struggling to find a space within the larger society. As discussed above, during the period before their migration, the women had to face various difficulties like sexual harassment, forceful marriage, kidnapping etc. Besides, the above dynamics, the Chakma women also had to face discrimination within their own society due to prevalent social taboos of inter-religious marriages. These reasons related to women also acted as catalyst in the flight of the Chakmas from the CHT



besides the construction of Kaptai dam. Again, during their migration journey, it has been observed that how the women and young girls had to face lots of trouble and challenges ranging from health and hygiene to even death. In fact, the elderly women and the pregnant women were the worst victims, due to lack of health facilities in the transit camps which had even led to the death of many elderly women without even proper cultural rituals being followed. Albeit, the Indian Government had provided facilities like health, transportation and even rations, yet these facilities could not reach out to the whole populace. The consequent of which could be observed from the experiences shared by the women and due to which many women had to face deaths. Moreover, from the above narratives, we can also draw conclusion that the Chakma women whether in the CHT or during their escapist journey to India had to face various challenges which even continued after their settlement in India as well. From the narratives shared by the women regarding their experiences after their settlement, it is seen that they had to struggle to adapt to their new socio-cultural setting and even had to sell their traditional assets to survive the challenging economic situation. Under such phenomenon, it had exerted impact even upon the traditional values and belief system of the Chakma society as they were forced

to alienate with their traditional assets. The experiences shared by the Chakma women regarding their deprivation from the right to education, presence of fear psychosis, vulnerable economic position have also highlighted new insights that require institutional attention besides the core issue of citizenship as described even by the civil bodies. Moreover, the specific problems that the Chakma women have been facing during the course of documents re-verifications for electoral enrollment also sheds light to the heterogeneous and fragmented nature of the whole Chakma problem. Therefore, in the light of the protracted Chakma issue centering basically on the question of their citizenship in Arunachal Pradesh, such subtle issues related to women, their memories of migration, challenges and their memories with their tradition and culture needs to be focused by the State and within the academia. Because often, such issues related specifically to women gets shadowed under the blanket of macro structural issues of citizenship or other political rights. In fact, the tendency of homogenizing the nuanced micro issues faced by the various social strata of the Chakma society should be relooked and accordingly specific treatment should be focused by the State, civil bodies and the leadership of the Chakma community.

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Resisting Stereotypes, Countering Violence—An Analytical Study of Selected Women Journalists of India's North-East

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Abstract

In spite of being rich in natural resources and ethnic culture and diversity, the Northeastern region of India has been trapped in a tangled mess of hostile internal politics, economic backwardness and the discriminatory policies of the central government. Many social scientists claim that the very concept of Northeast India is a colonial construct and its issues and problems are more heterogeneous than homogeneous. Unfortunately, these issues have not been addressed in appropriate ways, for which the region has been suffering from a set of perennial problems.

Media has a crucial role to play in addressing these issues in a result oriented approach. While the media faces real challenges, and is at the constant risk of facing the ire of the government and the miscreants, it is heartening to see that a number of women journalists have been working at the forefront to raise the voice of the people of Northeast and build up an atmosphere of constructive journalism. It is in this context of journalism and the burning issues of Northeast India that this paper proposes to make a study of the contributions of three women journalists from the print media of different generations from this region. These women journalists are, Sabita Goswami, Patricia Mukhim, and Binalakshmi Nepam. These journalists have bravely swam against the current in their pursuit to publish true information and thereby in creating a realistic picture of the region, devoid of any glorification or distortion.

Key words: *Journalism, Cultural prejudice, Stereotyping, Violence, Peace-building*

Introduction:

A baffling range of linguistic, ethnic and cultural diversity has lent North -East India the character of a miniature subcontinent, as components from Tibetan, Burmese, Aryan, Mongoloid and other streams of culture have built

up a great confluence here. Cartographically, this region appears to be precariously suspended from the map of India, while geologically it belongs to a hyper sensitive seismic zone –politically too it remains ever volatile and vulnerable. For though it became a part of the Indian State after 1947,



many issues had been left unresolved and in the following decades, this led to a series of violent inter and intra ethnic conflicts along with movements for separate and sovereign states. It is as true as the evocative picture of an idyllic landscape and a 'composite culture' that it outwardly presents.

A quick glance over the representative texts about the North- East first brings to our mind Hem Barua's *The Red River and the Blue Hill* (1954), in which Barua glorifies the history, cultural practices and natural scenery of Assam and its surrounding hills districts: "The main reason that Assam is little known outside i.e., in the rest of India is perhaps her remoteness from the centre of national life. She is known, outside her borders, mostly as a land of witchcraft and magic, animism and wild tribes. Here the hills are impenetrable and many, forests are luxuriant, rivers are numberless, and nature is prodigal." (Barua 3) Barua's purpose of writing the book was to present a happy picture of the North- East to the outside world and therefore, North East remains confined to tableaux and picture frames here.

It was Verrier Elwin who first resisted the Central Government's approach to the North Eastern people as museum specimens: "... the belief in the happy care free Noble Savage is a myth, except perhaps in the South Seas long ago. In NEFA at least the people had not enough food...their life was distracted by war, slavery and cruel punishments...the humanitarian ideals of a welfare state no longer permit the neglect of any section of people...And no one (least of all the scientist) wants to keep the tribal people as museum specimens for the benefit of science." (Elwin 47)

Elwin tried to break the myths around tribal lives and came up with suggestions for a practical approach to them so that they can live a life of dignity in a modern, democratic nation state. However, things moved in a very slow pace and in a bid to make themselves heard, almost all the small and big ethnic groups took up arms against the entire mechanism of the Government of India. In the context of this Gordian's knot situation of centre versus North-East, the media has a very important role to play, which can facilitate a positive interaction between the ends and both can work together for economic development of the region and political integrity of the state. Though the media (especially the print media) from this region was constantly blamed for misrepresenting the issues of the North-East on the national platform, it is observed that in recent years, the media has woken up to the cluttered scenario in the region and there has been a change of approach to the problems of discrimination, stereotyping, exotification and mythification of the North-East in the post-Independence India. The most important point to note here is that, a number of women journalists from this region have been working relentlessly in making people aware of the real situation and against making false reports pertaining to the political issues of North-East India.

Three women journalists from North-East are selected for this paper to highlight specific aspects of their contribution in shaping the true image of the region on the national and international platforms. These women journalists have shown deep understanding of the complex ethno-cultural-political texture of the region and have gone deeper into the problems to create awareness at



all levels – the government, the people, and the media. They have been doing it consistently instead of mythifying or glossing over the facts, which, otherwise, would have aggravated the situation. The women journalists selected for this study are, Sabita Goswami from Assam, Patricia Mukhim from Meghalaya and Binalakshmi Nepram from Manipur.

Objectives :

The objectives of this paper is to study

1) The contribution of the women journalists from the North-East in presenting the real situation of the region

2) How these journalists have protested all forms of violence

3) How these journalists have kept their professional ethics intact, even while working under multiple pressure

Materials and methods :

The methodology of this paper is investigative and analytical, based on the lives and works of the selected women journalists from the North-Eastern region of India. The materials used in this study are books, memoirs, journals (both print and the web)

Discussion :

The abovementioned North-East versus centre tussle is usually marked by “neglect narrative” (Dutta 178) and is further aggravated by insurgency and the insurgent groups’ links with the neighbouring foreign states. Noted journalist and conflict management activist Wasbir Hussain notes that the problem of insurgency has been boosted by cross border infiltration and “trans border linkages” (Hussain 110). Hussain further notes that “This region of 263,000 sq. kilometers

share a highly porous and sensitive frontier with unpredictable China, blow-hot-blow-cold Myanmar, semi-friendly Bangladesh and traditional ally Bhutan. That the region is indeed strategically located is seen by the fact that it shares a 4,500 kilometre-long international border with the four South Asian neighbours, but is connected to the Indian mainland by a tenuous 22 kilometre-long ‘Chicken’s Neck’-land corridor passing through Siliguri in the eastern state of West Bengal.” (Hussain 110)

No wonder, such a region marked by segregation and lost in internal strife would be stereotyped and misrepresented in the media and the mainstream mindset. Northeast India still hangs precariously on that (in) famous ‘chicken neck’, but in recent years, there seems to have been a change of attitude towards its people due to media’s new awareness regarding the cluttered realities of this part of India. Very significantly, many a number of women journalists from this region have been working relentlessly in bringing a change of perspective in handling the issues concerning North-East India. First, we can take up the contributions of Sabita Goswami in publishing eye witness reports in the national and international print media during the Assam Movement that shook Assam during the 1980s.

The issue of Assam Movement is one of the most highly contested topics of the history of Assam. On the one hand, it united the majority section of the Assamese society against the illegal infiltrators, and it divided the same society like never before. It divided the common people, it divided the intelligentsia, it separated the neighbours from neighbours, even it divided the families. While a



section of intellectuals lent unconditional support to the movement, another section voiced their opposition to it. It is in this context of some leftist scholars like Hiren Gohain's opposition to the movement, Nani Gopal Mahanta calls him "the staunchest critic of the Assam Agitation" (Mahanta 275-276). Mahanta rues over the fact that Hiren Gohain never tried to understand the cause that had fuelled the revolution, "It is really unfortunate that Professor Gohain could never appreciate the fact that immigration has remained the single most crucial factor for the identity threat of Assamese people since the dawn of colonial politics in Assam. For a smaller heterogeneous composite Assamese nationality, the immigration and ever-increasing cohesive and homogeneous Muslim population remain the single most important identity threat." (Mahanta 2021) Mahanta further states that the agitation had nothing to do with Hindu-Muslim or mandir-masjid issues and he is correct to a great extent. Yet, even without the leadership's intention, as Mahanta has pointed out, the agitation took a communal turn and became hostile to any settler coming from places like Bihar, Rajasthan, West Bengal, etc. The leaders lost control over many violent situations, as a result of which a number of conscious citizens (including intellectuals, journalists, etc.) withdrew their support to the movement.

Veteran journalist Sabita Goswami is remembered for the role she played during the Assam Movement days in fielding impartial reports to the BBC, *Blitz*, *India Today*, etc. Her grit, assertiveness and intelligence are proved in the success of her professional career. For, she remained unchallenged in her position in the highly competitive job of a journalist and she retired only

voluntarily as a professional journalist for the BBC and other important news agencies. In this age of glamour and self promotion, it is difficult to imagine that Goswami kept herself anonymous as the only woman field reporter in Assam for a long time, and nobody knew that she worked for the BBC. Her memoir *Man Gangar Tirat* (2017) shows her passion for journalism and also her belief in her work ethics. While almost all the local newspapers published reports in favour of the Movement either overtly or covertly, Sabita Goswami's reports were detached accounts of first hand experience, and perhaps, for this detachment, she remained the only reporter to the BBC from the region to cover the news of the movement. Her ideological and emotional detachment and her professionalism made her a reliable source of information for one of the world's most reputed broadcasting agencies.

Sabita Goswami covered some of the most gruesome incidents of violence during the Assam Movement; for instance, the massacres of Nellie and Chaulkhowa Chapori. Since the ideology of the Movement was non-violent and since it received mass support, many violent incidents (unleashed upon religious and linguistic minorities) went unreported. Sabita Goswami was one of the reporters to go to Nellie and other places and collect the first hand report herself. Journalist Sanjoy Hazarika mentions his journey to Nellie with Sabita Goswami and others, "On 20 February 1983, I travelled with four other journalists to Nellie. We represented different newspapers and news agencies: there was Nazmul Hasan of Reuters (later killed in a mine explosion in the Iran-Iraq conflict), Satish Jacob of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Anand Sahay



of *The Times of India* and Sabita Gosawmi of *Blitz*.” (Hazarika 49). Later on, in several interviews, she recounted the horrific experience of counting six hundred and seventy four dead bodies there.

Besides working as a reporter for the BBC, *The Daily* and *Blitz*, Sabita Goswami also published a weekly tabloid called *The North East Times*, which was a family venture. As she writes in her memoir, she tried to include news from all the seven Northeastern states. She recollects how, after collecting the news, she prepared the survey in three different ways for three different forums – while writing for the BBC, she had to be mindful of the international importance of a news, she had to change her style of presentation and perspective while writing for the national and the regional weeklies respectively. Though she does not mention the details of how she did this. Apart from that, Goswami also wrote for a news agency called ‘Agence France Presse’ (shortly AFP), a leading global news agency with its headquarters in Paris, which also happens to be the world’s oldest news agency; she wrote fortnightly ‘panorama’ for AFP on the texture of ethnic diversity of Assam and Northeast India and the socio-economic condition of the region.

Goswami’s memoir is a passionate recounting of her involvement in reporting the events of the movement; she also recalls how she made it a point to remain straightforward and matter-of-fact in her approach. She mentions that later on, when she covered some news from Manipur, the former chief minister of Manipur Rishang Keishing did not like her “aggressive straightforwardness”. (Goswami 101)

Patricia Mukhim is a senior journalist based in Shillong and currently she is the editor of *The Shillong Times*. Mukhim, has been playing a very significant role in raising the crucial issues concerning Northeast India and bringing them to the national platform. Mukhim has remained a severe critic of the prejudiced and discriminatory attitude of the central government and mainland Indians towards the people of North-East India. In her essay “Where is this North-east?” Mukhim offers a critical as well as an introspective analysis behind the causes of this discrimination along with the other unique problems faced by the North-Eastern states of India. First of all, Mukhim questions the myth of ‘Unity in Diversity’ on which the Indian nationhood is built. Mukhim notes the fact that the Northeastern region became a part of India only by force and not voluntarily. And those who got power in New Delhi continued to approach the North-Eastern region like colonizers. Therefore, Mukhim believes that the transfer of power in New Delhi did not bring any change to the people of Northeast India. Mukhim expresses her resentment over the imposed homogeneity over the inherently heterogeneous region. She also criticizes the common Indian people’s prejudice against the people of North-East India and how their prejudice is based on judging people by their looks.

However, Patricia Mukhim’s criticism is always double-pronged. For, while critiquing the general attitude of the people of India towards North-East India, she also throws some introspective glances into the problems of the region created by its own unique situation. For this, Mukhim’s is a well known voice against narrow nativism and reverse stereotyping. She



says that the Northeastern people are mostly insecure, for their history is shrouded in mystery, their travel history and travel routes are unknown. Their access to modern education is very recent and, as a result, in front of a people with the history of five thousand years, they feel inferior and insecure. In her article “Politics of Identity and Location”, Mukhim questions the way the people of North-east India treat outsiders and criticizes the Khasi Students’ Union, the self-styled guardian of the Khasi society, “And in this horrifyingly complex situation we have the non-tribals who have lived in the region for three to four generations and have contributed their mite to the local economy. In Meghalaya, in late 1970s, the Khasi Students’ Union – a body that is anything but student-like and has in its fold members who have either dropped out of school or are too long in the tooth to be considered students – launched an insidious attack on the Bengalis living in Shillong. Their reason for doing so is simplistic – the non-tribals are responsible for all the ills that afflict the Khasi society. So attractive was the slogan “Khasi by birth, Indian by accident” that the words were splattered across public walls in the city.” (Mukhim 2014)

What Shruti Pandalai comments regarding Mukhim’s stance on this outsider phobia of the Khasi people in particular and the indigenous population of North-East India in general is noteworthy, “The ‘othering’ of identities and perceptions, however, goes both ways and is not often reflected in the media discourse. In an eye-opener of a piece in *The Hindu*, Patricia Mukhim, the Editor of *The Shillong Times* questions eloquently that while the people from India’s

North East face severe discrimination in Delhi and elsewhere, has anyone asked how the northeast treats the ‘outsiders’? She makes a case for the unreported incidents of attacks and discrimination faced by non-tribals struggling to survive in the North East. It is a dismal picture, starkly different from the flattened construction of a homogenous North East that is repeatedly manufactured in our public consciousness.” (Pandalai 2014) Thus, Mukhim is not only averse to NCERT’s inclusion of chapters on this region as supplements, but also to the intolerance showed by the people of the region to the outsiders. The special quality that marks Patricia Mukhim’s journalism is that she comes out of her own frame to look at it from a distance. Mukhim is averse to the tendency to stereotype- either on the part of mainland India or on the part of North-East India.

Binalakshmi Nepram’s is a well known face in international forums for conflict management, and her essays, reports and research papers have received serious attention in the academia and the media in India and abroad. She has been carrying on her journalism and activism on multiple spheres, especially in peace- making in violence ridden Manipur, reporting on drug smuggling in Northeast India and protesting the stereotyping of Northeast India in national media or in central India. She writes in an article that like many young women from the Northeast India, she too became a target of racial and sexual abuse while she had been living in Delhi as an undergraduate student. In an interview to Apekshita Varshney Nepram tells that though she grew up in violence ridden Manipur, only her bitter experience of being abused as a *chinki* (Nepram 2019) motivated her to take up



activism seriously. Nepram has written four important books, namely, 1. South Asia's Fractured Frontier – Armed Conflict, Narcotics and Small Arms Proliferation in India's North-East, 2. Alien of Extraordinary Power: An Indigenous Woman Human Rights Defender from Manipur and Story of Activism, Exile and Survival, 3. Where are Our Women for Decision Making, and 4. Deepening Democracy, Diversity and Women's Rights in India.

While raising her voice against stereotyping of North-East India and writing about the political issues of the region in national and international media, Nepram has divided her work on two levels in her home state Manipur- one, rehabilitating the gun survivor women of the state and two, prevention of drug smuggling through Manipur. In her essay "Ethno-Nationalism in India's Northeast", she casts a deep insight into the intricate problems of this part of India which is summed up in this poignant statement, "While attempting to address conflict resolution measures in the Northeast, one should constantly keep in mind the "War within War" syndrome, so typical to the region. One tribe's "Freedom Fighter" becomes another tribe's "Terrorist Group". In a bid to assert that certain Kuki inhabited parts of Manipur State are 'Naga' territories in the 1990s, many Kukis were slaughtered by the Naga insurgents. Similarly, many Santhals were slaughtered in the Bodo dominated areas of Assam" (Nepram, *Order in Chaos*, 159) Being a survivor of gun-violence herself, Nepram has set up the "Women Gun Survivors' Network" of Manipur; these women are mostly surrendered militants or widows of militants. First of all, her

aim is to de-weaponise the Manipuri society, then to provide education and stability of life to the children of these women and also to give them a life of independence and dignity. Nepram is also Oxfam's consultant on narcotic drug abuse.

Findings and conclusion:

Shoma Chatterji, in her article "Indian Women in Journalism" notes that in spite of increasing participation of women in the media, it is predominantly a male occupied territory so far as decision making is concerned. From the above study of the three women journalists, namely, Sabita Goswami, Patricia Mukhim and Binalakshmi Nepram, from the North-Eastern region of India, we have found that these journalists have created their own space in the domain by choosing to make their solitary journeys in the field of journalism and have significantly contributed in shaping the right image of the region in the media. They have worked in different circumstances, on different platforms and for different media houses; but from their own individual positions they have recognized the multi-ethnic composition of the region and reiterated their view that violence is not the key to any solution. They have warned that ethnic clash, arms trade, guerilla warfare can only harm the people of this region, instead of guiding them towards development. They have resisted against xenophobia and cultural hegemony and have been working for a multi-cultural cohabitation and peace-building in the context of a cosmopolitan culture and a globalised economy. They have faced all challenges and have guided themselves by conscience and intuition rather than by trepidation and indecision. Certainly, they have



created a positive atmosphere in which India to resist prejudice, stereotyping and constructive journalism can thrive in North-East violence.

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Juxtaposition of Myth, Ethnicity and Religion: A Study of Mamang Dai's *River Poems*.

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Abstract :

Mamang Dai (1957-), the established; powerful voice from Arunachal Pradesh, chronicles through her literary creations the rich and antique cultural tradition of her motherland. Rooted deeply in her ethnic background, Dai has responded to issues arising out of conflicts in folk culture due to globalisation, colonisation etc. A true believer in Pantheistic Philosophy, Dai celebrates through her poems the animist tradition of her tribe, barely known to the world outside. Mamang Dai celebrates the ecological glory of her region in her poems. Most of the poems written by Mamang Dai have been studied from the perspective of eco-feminist awareness. However, the aim of this paper is to discuss how Mamang Dai's poetry is a wilful projection of the mythological origin, ethnic and religious practices of her own tribe with reference to some select poems included in *River Poems* (2004). It is interesting to note that Dai's poetry cannot be viewed in isolation leaving aside her tribal background. It is the revelation of not only her individual poetic self but the unexposed remote history of the people in general. Through juxtaposition of myth, ethnicity and religion, Dai attempts to foreground the exceptional, exotic and unique culture of the tribal community residing in the remotest corner of the country. This delineation can also be viewed as a form of survival strategy for preserving the indigenous culture from the external influences.

Key words: *Myth, Ethnicity, Pantheistic Philosophy.*

Introduction :

Mamang Dai is a well-known literary figure hailing from "the land of the rising sun", i.e. Arunachal Pradesh. Before entering into the literary field, Mamang Dai served as a journalist and activist who worked as a programme officer with World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) in the Eastern Himalayan Biodiversity Hotchpotch Programme. This notable writer chronicles the

unwritten history of her state through her literary works. The novels, short stories as well as the poems written by Mamang Dai made her a representative writer from the North-East. She has written novels like *The Legends of Pensam*, *Stupid Cupid*, *The Black Hill* etc. She authored the book *Arunachal Pradesh-The Hidden Land*. For her novel, *The Black Hill* she was awarded with the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award in

2017. Dai's poems were published in various Indian journals and in 2004, she brought out a collection of her poems entitled *River Poems*. Her other two collections of poetry include *The Balm of Time* and *Midsummer Survival Lyrics*. In recognition of her varied contribution in the field of literature and education, Mamang Dai is awarded with Padma Shri in 2011. In the poetry of Mamang Dai we find frequent use of myth, stating the ethnic origin and religious beliefs of the Adi tribe to which she belongs. The present study is an attempt to analyse how Mamang Dai juxtaposes myth, ethnicity and religion in her poetry with special reference to *River Poems*.

Objectives of the study :

1. To find out how Mamang Dai's poetry depicts the unwritten oral history of Adi Community.
2. To explore how the poems contained in *River Poems* are the replication of Pantheistic Philosophy and Donyi-Polo religion.
3. To explore if Dai's poems can be analyzed in terms of utopian views of the past or issues concerning human-nature conflict.

Methodology :

It will be a textual study of some select poems from *River Poems* using the basic concepts of ethnicity, myth and Donyi-Polo faith with the help of primary and secondary data available on the chosen text.

Before making an analysis of the chosen poems, it will be reasonable to explain in details the origin and reception of the terms Myth and Ethnicity and the practised religion of the Adi people. M.H. Abrams, in *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, defines Myth as follows: "Myth is one story, in a mythology- a system of

hereditary stories which were once believed to be true by a particular cultural group, and which served to explain (in terms of the intentions and actions of deities and other supernatural beings) why the world is as it is and things happen as they do, to provide a rationale for social customs and observances, and to establish the sanctions for the rules by which people conduct their lives" (122). Stories related to the origin of crops, animals, humans etc. form the subject matter of myths. Myths are generally related with the social rituals, religious ceremonies. Mamang Dai's poetry is full of stories related to her ethnic descent.

The Oxford Dictionary of Sociology defines Ethnicity as "Individuals who consider themselves, or are considered by others, to share common cultural characteristics that differentiate them from the other collectivities in a society, and from which they develop their distinctive behaviour, form and ethnic group." (Scott: 2014.p.221). Each ethnic group has its unique features which are identical in terms of their language, culture race etc.

From the official website of Government of Arunachal Pradesh, we have come to know about the religious practices of the Adi people. Here it is mentioned that though "Sedi-Melo is regarded as the creator,—they believe in and worship Donyi-Polo, the Sun-Moon duality. To them, Donyi-Polo is not the physical Sun and Moon but an unseen supreme power, which is omni-present, omniscient and omnipotent. On the other hand, the people also believe in the existence of numbers of spirits, which are both malevolent and benevolent." (<https://roing.nic.in/culture-heritage/adis/>, accessed on 2/11/2021)



Pantheism is basically a principle of religious philosophy extensively used by a group of poets of literature and philosophy who considers that God is all-pervading. Pantheists opine that the Universe (Nature) and God are indistinguishable. They don't believe in a supreme creator. The concept of pantheism appears in the works produced by different writers from different ages. Adi people believe in the union between Nature and Spirit. In Donyi-Polo, every element is seen as the replica of a worshipping deity.

This faith in Donyi Polo is similar to that of Pantheistic philosophy practised by writers like Goethe, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Emerson, Walt Whitman etc. All these writers ardently believe that God is identical with the real world. Coleridge's poem "Forst at Mid-night" can be referred in this case. Coleridge hopes a better future for his baby sleeping in a cradle specially amidst natural setting where she will be able to hear-

"The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
Of that eternal language, which thy God
Utters, who from eternity doth teach
Himself in all, and all things in himself."

(*Poems Old and New* 57)

Similar belief concerning God and nature is found in Whitman's "Song of Myself". This is the basic idea governing pantheistic philosophy. According to Encyclopedia Britannica, Pantheism is "The doctrine that the universe conceived of as a whole is God and, conversely that there is no God but the combined substances, forces and laws that are manifested in the existing universe" (Reese). The idea can be further explained with the help of Wordsworth's poetry. Wordsworth

gave life to all the objects of nature and made communication between them possible. He witnessed the presence of emotions, feelings amidst nature. He had a belief that each object of nature had a life of its own. As for example, we can refer to Wordsworth's famous poem "Lines written in Early Spring". In this particular poem every object of nature is described as a living being as indicated through the use of lines like 'the periwinkle trailed its wreaths' (10) and "every flower enjoys the air it breathes" (12) etc. The idea of Pantheism is implicitly contrary to oneness of God. Wordsworth in "Tintern Abbey" (*Poems Old and New* 45) holds the idea that nature is part of a divine presence which "rolls through all things" (105), indirectly suggesting that God and nature is identical with each other.

Mamang Dai, being a member of the Adi community is also a believer in Pantheistic philosophy. She is emotionally attached to her own region and her poetry depicts the ecological concern of the North East. As mentioned earlier, she was associated with organisations like WWF and Bio diversity conservation programme which might help in shaping her attitude towards nature. This close proximity with nature may be considered as another reason of her belief in Pantheism.

She viewed Nature and God as inseparable identities. According to Oshong Ering, the Adis recognize all things on earth such as, "[the] mountains and hills, the evergreen forest, the rushing rivers and rivulets, the animals and birds, the moving cloud and rain-fall, the shining objects in the sky" (35) as sacred unit. Mamang Dai once mentioned about this "world spirit" as follows:



“The traditional belief of the Adi community to which I belong is full of this union [between man and nature]. Everything has life—rocks, stones, rivers, hills, and all life is sacred. This is called Donyi-polo, literally meaning Donyi-sun and Polo-moon as the physical manifestation of a supreme deity, or what I like to interpret as “world spirit” (Singha3). This spirit is the basic strength of *River Poems*.

Discussion:

Mamang Dai is deeply rooted in her culture. Not only through her novels, but also through the poetic creations, Dai depicts the mythical origin as well as religious beliefs of her community. A close examination of some of the select poems from the chosen text reveals her deep concern and adherence towards her own culture. She is a pantheist at heart who views nature and humans as identical with each other. In her poetic world, natural objects speak, dance, mourn like that of human world.

River Poems, as a whole contains 51 poems. A close reading of these poems reveals the hidden treasure of the tribal community, specifically the Adi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh embedded in the form of songs, seasonal festivals, ritual rites etc. Apart from all these we also come across the religious beliefs of the Adi tribe and their ethnic origin. The tribes of Arunachal prefer to live in harmony with Nature. Nature is the source of their inspiration and respiration. They consider Nature as their benevolent mother. Mamang Dai is also a nature lover. Her ideas governing Nature stem from her adherence to the Donyi-Polo religion like other members of her community. Mamang Dai was born and

brought up in Pasighat amidst a pure natural setting. The mesmerizing beauty of her motherland is well known to all. The geography of the landscape is a source of inspiration for her poetic world.

In the poem, “The Missing Link”, Mamang Dai refers to the river as the “Vein of our lives” (11). It is scientifically proven that without veins, our body cannot operate as it carries blood to our heart. Life cannot be perceived in absence of blood and veins. Equating river with that of vein, Mamang Dai shows the impossibility of separating human from Nature. Both these entities are same. Again in “Small Towns and the River”, Dai mentions that, “The river has a soul.” (29). The very title of this poetry collection itself asserts how Dai is quite influenced by the forces of the river. Vilas Sarang rightly observes: “Indian English poets are ‘river poets.’ Poems on river abound,” (*Indian English Poetry* 13). This observation is quite applicable in case of the poetry of Mamang Dai.

Similar concept of attributing human qualities to natural objects is also evident in Dai’s another poem entitled “The Balm of Time”. This poem is an example how Dai mixes ethnic religion with pantheistic philosophy. Adis believe in a number of spirits as mentioned by Dai:

“Yes, I believe in gods.

In the forest faith of good and evil,

Spirits of the river,

and the dream world of the dawn.” (57)

In another stanza, she vividly describes how the tribal people live merrily in the bosom of Mother Nature. Every object of nature is seen comprehending the palpitation of human heart.



Dreaming in the treetops children hear voices.
 Whispering, the fatal wind appoints everything
 Staking a claim a twig or a fern
 Wil foretell destiny.
 The mountain knows
 How we pressed our hearts against its earth

 The sky wind knows
 How we grew flowers in fields of stone. (57)

In another poem, entitled “Sky Song”, evening is personified as a pharmaceutical scientist, capable of making medicines. Sometimes she calls it a doctor prescribing medicine for the patient (in the form of cloud). This identification of natural objects with human is a common feature found in the poetry of Mamang Dai. The poem “Birthplace” speaks about Dai’s sincere acknowledgement concerning her ethnic origin and belief in the indivisible unity of human being and the objects of nature.

We are the children of the rain
 of the cloud woman
 brother to the stone and bat
 in our cradle of bamboo and vine
 in our long houses we slept,
 and when morning came
 we were refreshed. (79)

Not only the Adis, other tribes residing in Arunachal Pradesh construct their houses using the locally available materials like bamboos, woods, canes, leaves etc. Normally, there is a big hall in each household for the purpose of sleeping and doing other daily activities.

This close proximity between man and nature is a recurrent theme in Dai’s poetry. Nature is like a kin for the Adi people. They are nurtured

by nature. The Mountains, the rivers, the forest all design the beliefs, rites and customs of the villages. In her poetry, she reflects the Arunachalee culture and traditions highlighting the glorious heritage. A keen explorer of heritage, she seems to be sentinel of traditional tribal values. She voices her emotions and feelings through the images and metaphors chosen mostly from nature. She reveals her beliefs in tribal faith through the poem “Rain”, where she speaks about the spirit of the Jungle:

In the sound of the rain
 Is contained
 All the spirit of the jungle.
 Living, breathing,
 Crushed, regenerative
 Dark, always watchful. (25)

It is mentioned earlier that the Adis believed in the existence of number of spirits and they constitute the very foundation of ethnic origin. Numerous poems contained in the chosen text reveals the mysterious past of the people of Arunachal Pradesh. The first poem of this anthology entitled “The Missing Link” bears the testimony of Arunachal Pradesh’s mysterious past. Here there is a line which mentions about the “Poisonous ritual” performed by the early people and the tribes living in caves. The poem is written before the advent of Christianity in Arunachal Pradesh, when Arunachal Pradesh was not separated from seven sisters. During those days people used to perform poisonous rituals wearing red robes. Again there is a reference to men and women dwelling in the caves and “guarding the hooded poison” (11), most probably the giant water bugs.

Although Arunachal Pradesh is the abode of many indigenous tribes and sub tribes, it is



surprising to note that each tribe is different from the other in terms of their language, religion and cultural practices. In fact, Arunachal Pradesh is a land of multifaceted cultural diversities. The traditional folk dances performed during various seasonal festivals form the basic culture of the Adis. They are very much conscious regarding the preservation of their own culture. This cultural consciousness and reliance is a part and parcel of their life. Due to colonisation, with the arrival of Christianity, there comes a threat to the native religion. So, the institutionalisation of indigenous religion has become an alternative for preserving their native culture. According to S. K. Chaudhuri, "The Adi was the first community in the state to institutionalise their indigenous religion and start a new reformist movement." (*Asian Ethnology* 261). Donyi-Poloism serves as a form of resistance for the Adi people against Christianity brought to the native land by the missionaries. That is why the tribal people who received Christianity are very conscious regarding the preservation of indigenous culture. According to K. S. Singh in *People of India*, "The Christian Tribals of the state have retained many of their beliefs and customs. Besides the major Christian festivals, they celebrate many of their tribal festivals as well." (45)

In *River Poems*, Mamang Dai frequently deals with subjects that are unique and specific to her own tribe. As for example, she composed poems like "Tapu", "Songs of Dancers", "Let No Tears", "Man and Brother" where we find the traditional cultural zest of the Adi people with all its dances, ritual rites and inherent faith in Pantheism. The Arunachalee Tapu dance and folk faith associated with it is described in the poem,

"Tapu". It is a type of dance performed during the time of community fencing. Nowadays, this is viewed as a "war dance" to banish malicious spirits. This Tapu dance is performed each year on 7th March to herald the season of shifting cultivation, during the festival of Aran. The dancers put the attire of a warrior in order to drive "The Spirit of fear into the dust" (43). It is necessary for all male members of a family to go hunting and staying in the jungle for a week.

In the remotest past, there was a belief concerning this dance. It was strongly believed that childless woman could also join the dances putting on male apparel in the hope of conceiving a son (43). The dancers, performing this dance seemed to be very cognisant regarding the preservation as well as transformation of their traditional knowledge and wisdom to the next generation:

Mark the sword
Mark the sound.
What are the words we will tell?
Our sons and daughters?
That dying is not so hard
If the image survives.
When the wind is young
Sow celebration.
seize the branch of lightning,
dress the thorn wood stem
for conception. (42)

With such intense feeling and great devotion to their traditional rituals, the Adi Tribe celebrate this Aran Festival and Tapu dance is a part of that celebration.

Apart from Aran, the Adis also celebrate the Solung festival with great enthusiasm and traditional fervour. The information gathered from the official



website of Directorate of Information and Public Relations, it has been mentioned that Solung is the most popular festival of the Adi people. The highlight of the festival is performing of religious Ponung dance performed by girls of the village for many days and nights. The poem, entitled “Song of the Dancers”, is a reference to the ritual ‘ponung’ dance of the Adi tribe. The ‘ponung’ dance is performed in anticipation of good harvest and welfare of the village community. The dance performance is led by a mythical figure called Miri, who remains at the centre. The girls made a circle holding each other by stretching their hands. Every evening, the Miri sings “Solung Abung”. He through his songs narrates the stories about the origin of man, animals and plants, the ancestry of the Adis. While dancing, the girls became aware of such stories. They danced till the story unfolds the mysterious origin related to the creation of crops and some ancestral animals like mithun:

We danced so long
We broke all our bracelets
To please a fancy.
In the dark I heard all your stories,
Listened to your songs,
In empty space dreaming desire
Vivid in the sun’s embrace
Once, our eyes beheld vast lakes of fire. (19)

There is a particular story associated with this ponung dance featuring mythological, figures like Doying Bote (one of the gods residing in heaven), “Kine Nane” etc. (<https://www.eastmojo.com/arunachal-pradesh/2020/09/01/arunachal-pradesh-harvest-festival-of-adi-tribe-solung-begins/>; accessed on 3/11/2021). The

story is amorous by nature and so after hearing such stories, the girls started “dreaming desire.”

Dai not only speaks of the traditional dance forms of her tribe through her poems. She also depicts in detail the funeral rites of the Adis through the creation of poems like “Let No Tears”. In this particular poem, we come to know about the customs performed by Adi people during funeral rites. They sang a kind of dirge which is sung in impromptu verse during funeral rites. In Adi language it is called “penges”. The childhood and youth memories associated with the dead person are recalled by singing such songs:

The women will return to tell stories.
The men will sit by you, strengthening,
Strengthening ties and talking....
A mother’s gaze embracing all grief
Will kindle the chanting. (46)

Chanting here refers to the song of lamentation called “penges”. Again there is a reference to the custom of fastening beads and sacred twine to the hair and wrist of relatives of the deceased in the poem. The last stanza of the poem illustrates this custom:

When the singing rises
Death itself will cease.
Blue beads in your hair will turn you
a boy again, whirling
the wild mountains to sleep. (46)

Another peculiar aspect of Dai’s poetry is her belief concerning man – tiger kinship. This is not her single assertion. When she speaks about such kind of kinship, she becomes the mouthpiece of her state, where killing of a tiger is considered as a serious crime. The poem describes a scene, where a hunter wanted to kill a tiger. To his



surprise, the tiger calling him as brother, asks for mercy and requested him to save his life;

“The tiger runs swiftly from my father’s house
Calling my name.

Brother! Man brother!

Have mercy for our destiny!”(50)

The hunter at last decided not to kill the tiger. There may be two reasons: Fear of punishment and the ultimate realisation to value the life of his sibling, as in Arunachal, men and tiger were considered as “born brothers.” (51)

Being an ardent nature-lover, Dai is not oblivious to the changes that is apparent in Nature now a days. Her poems also reflect the agonies as nature gets destroyed due to urbanisation and other external factors. As for example ,we can refer to the poems like “ Small Town and the Rivers” “Birthplace” and “ Remembrance”. In “Small Town and the River”, Dai shows how the river laments due to the emergence of a small town out of a rural landscape. As the river bears a soul as mentioned by the poet so the poet becomes nostalgic thinking about the bygone days :

“Sometimes, I think it holds its breath

Seeking the land of fish and stars.” (29)

This poem also throws light on the environmental issues through the use of words like “dry earth”. Here the poet makes her people aware of the changing environment and the need to tackle and challenge such issues.

In “Birthplace” also, similar issues are raised. As mentioned earlier, Nature is like a kin

for local people. There was a time, when no one disturbed them in their chosen isolated landscape. But with the arrival of intruders, the people suffered from identity crisis. There is a longing for their natural setting in the melancholic tone of the poem.

In “Remembrance” the speaker depicts the changing scenario of the forest and thereby brings forth the issues concerning survival of the natives. For her it is a mistake to expect a forever stagnant mode of survival. In all these poems, Dai delineated the anxiety of the local people arising out of foreign interference.

Conclusion :

From the above discussion, we can summarise that the chosen poems from Mamang Dai’s *River Poems* depict the indigenous culture of the Adi Tribe. Mythology, Ethnicity and Pantheistic philosophy are some of the important aspects delineated through these poems and there is a conscious attempt on the part of the poet to preserve the diverse traditions of her homeland. Most of the poems included in *River Poems* reverberates the ethnic and cultural faith of the Adi community alongside mythical background. The philosophy of Donyi-Polo, practised by the Adi People governs the basic principles of their lives. This nature-based philosophy is the promoter of harmonious balance among all life forms on Earth, both living and non-living. Apart from this, Dai’s poetry also records the numerous contaminations evident in nature resulting out of man-made activities.



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Food as a Gendered Text: An Analysis from Visual Media

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Abstract :

‘Food’, as a term, substantiates itself to be one of the words, having many discourses that attract the attention of many researchers. Food as a literal meaning or as many other novel incarnations of the word, can be understood, explain, connote, analyse and discuss with many perspectives. One such variation of the term is food as a gendered site. In this particular study, an attempt is being made to understand how androcentric language is associated with food as a cultural text. The entire study of this paper is done from the lens of feminist discourse and Cultural Studies perspective. Some YouTube videos of Topsy Bartender, a food vlog, are being considered as the text for the present study. The paper focuses on how androcentric language is used by the select food vlog along with the visual representations.

Key words- *Androcentrism, Food blogs, Lad culture, Topsy Bartender, Hegemonic Masculinity*

Introduction :

“So long as you have food in your mouth, you have solved all questions for the time being.”

-Franz Kafka.

Food, as a term, is important as well as familiar to everyone in this world. Academically also the term ‘food’ registered many significant studies around the world. Likewise, the term food, its different forms, variations, incarnations bagged many different works which are too significant for the societies to a meaningful progress. One of such discussion on food is the association of the concept of gender with it. In this context, the present study intends to refer to the term food porn which is already made a

significant position in the social as well as in the academic fields. In the social media platforms such as *facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter*, and others, #Food porn is on hype from the recent past. A brief analysis is being discussed in this paper to know the term and the concept associated with it.

Food as a Gendered Site: Using the Lens of Food porn

Food porn is a concept, which in a way revolutionized the idea of food, to understand how food is being used to sexualize and to make human bodies as market ready. Some popular definitions given by different scholars would help in realizing the nature of the term in brief.



Scholars like Ibrahim (2) who opined that the term Food porn is something that presented in a glamorized visual by stylizing in different ways and the camera lens make the work more presentable with the editing skills seduce the gaze of the viewers through digital platforms. Another group of scholars like Michael Jacobson, Probyn and many others, commented that food porn is something that refers to the food that is unhealthy. Again in the same light, the Dejmanee (429), has said that the suffice 'porn' is used in food porn to indicate the aesthetic of excess but not anyway associated with sexual porn. Again in the contrary to it Bourdain, said a different narrative, Food porn, the glorification of food as a substitute for sex. Thus, it can be said that food porn is something where food is presented in a glamorous way to seduce the viewers. The viewers' responses towards the presentation of glamourized food by gazing are carnal in nature. So, food porn is something which can be constructed by associating different meanings in it and as time passes the term food porn is also growing with novel associations. For instance, during the time of Covid-19 many novel meanings have been entered to the arena of food porn. Having said this, it has been tried to make a point that through this study, the concept is basically used to see how it carries an androcentric language. Thus the basic objective of this paper is to examine how food as a cultural text is a gendered site. The paper intends to look at how female body is represented through the concept of food porn, in general and in the select food blog, in particular.

To understand the available language of food porn some literatures have been discussed in this section. In the work of Erin Metz McDonnell

(257-262), it has been observed that he looks food porn from all the possible perspectives, such as food porn showcase as carnal pleasures as well as food art, very beautifully. In the particular part where McDonnell explains vividly the carnal pleasures employed in food porn, with the help of various videography techniques such as Zoom, frame, Orientation, Depth of the field where the essence of androcentric language is being seen.

Again, Ibrahim (1-12) discusses food porn as something food porn provides a space for democratizing desires for all but in this way of looking another question arise like democratic to what extend as most of the people in the countries like India are in hungry state lacking food to eat. So, this can be understood as language of the capitalist. Like this many works can be found where androcentric language can be found in the arena of food porn. Thus, for this paper to study food porn language following aims and objectives are being trying to address.

Aims and objectives :

- 1) To understand the androcentric language of food blogs.
- 2) To examine how female subjectivity is constructed through the establishment of such androcentric language used in food blogs.

Methods and Methodology :

As already discussed in the abstract itself, it would be a textual analysis and the text is the *YouTube* videos uploaded by the food vlog named *Tipsy Bartender*. The reason of selecting the videos of *Tipsy Bartender* as text is because in the videos, everything i.e. the foods, drinks along with the persons in the videos are presented in a glamorous way. Moreover, as the video's name



suggests ‘tipsy’ which means slight drunk generally implies to a girl and the act of drinking which is generally considered as ‘men’s space’. Therefore, as discussed by Berke (36-45), in an article that alcohol-related aggression has association with the traditional masculine gender norms.

To understand the androcentric language in the text, the concept of Lad Culture is being employed in this discussion. From the concept of Lad Culture the idea of Ladette and Homosociality is being discussed with importance.

Knowing the text: *Tipsy Bartender* :

Tipsy Bartender is an online video food Blog which features exotic drinks which is hosted by Skyy John with one other co-host in each episode. Skyy John, who is born in Nassau Bahamas, later moved to America, where he started his blogging business. John uploads his videos of *Tipsy Bartender* food vlogs videos in Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram. He prepares different drinks according to his ideas and sometimes he takes the requests from his audience too. He shoots his videos singly and sometimes with his co-host, which generally includes female host. Male hosts are also the part of the show. The main concern in selecting the particular blog is to observe and analyse the host John Skyy and his different co-hosts’ behaviour, attitude, use of language, approach. It is interesting to mention here that the entire atmosphere carries an androcentric representation which creates food as a site gendered space.

Lad Culture as the Icon of Androcentric Language :

Lad Culture is a British subculture which was initially associated with the British pop

movement. Lad Culture mostly signifies to the attitudes of middle and working class groups which believe in an anti-intellectual position and avoid sensitivity towards sexism, drinking, violence (Nelson pp.19-20). Nylund (9) in his works on Lad Culture very vividly explains lad Culture and basically, who is a lad. According to him, in 1990s “new lad” was an attempt to reassert hegemonic masculinity which has been felt lost by the concessions made to feminism. So, new kinds of masculinity arise. Though the idea of new lad is little bit old now, but for the present time, it can be seen in the magazines such as Maxim, FHM, and Loaded, and marked by a return to hegemonic masculine values of sexism, male, homophobia and homosociality. Moreover, the new lad or the lad culture include the nature like invest less time in work, drink, party, and watch sports; most importantly addressed and regard women as sexual objects.

Another interesting thing is that in lad culture women are treated as mere sexual objects but like the lads women also show some characteristics of lad culture and the female lad culture followers are called ‘Ladette’. In an article it is mentioned very clearly that who are Ladettes, in the following way by (“BBC NEWS”), “ladettes refer to the group of young women who behave in boisterous way and engage in heavy drinking sessions. The entering of the term Ladettes into

dictionary its being quite a time though its uses is very less as compared to its male version of the word i.e. ‘Lad’”.

***Tipsy Bartender* as an Icon of Lad Culture :**

Tipsy Bartender, the title of the blog itself suggests a category which belongs to the Lad



Culture and Skyy John himself a New Lad. Tippy, the literal meaning is “Slightly drunk” and Bartender is one who serves drinks in a bar. The Lad Culture which holds the ideas like anti-intellectual, non-sensitive towards sexism, violence and favouritism towards drinking (qtd. in Nelson 19-20). So, the title itself propagates the idea of drinking and asks to remain slightly drunk often and the food blogs itself deals with different types of drinks.

Food porn in Tippy Bartender: A Feminist Reading :

Tippy Bartender, like any other Food vlogs, does its own kind of Food Porn through its own creative ideas.

An Analysis of The videos of *Tippy bartender The Skull Eyeball Cocktail*

The video *The Skull Eyeball Cocktail* was published on youtube. In this video as uploaded by *Tippy Bartender* (“Tippy Bartender”) the co-host is again Nikki Limo who dressed up like a Unicorn. The image of the Unicorn in the video signifies connotations. In the popular culture, Unicorn is a creature who is very strong with magical powers, a combination of both feminine and masculine powers, this creature cannot be tamed by a man but a virgin, pure beautiful woman with her attractiveness can only tame the creature. This creature is very important for men, as men can gain his magical masculine powers from the creature, so, in some fantasy stories, virgin females are used to tame the creature (“Huffpost”)

In this video, Nikki Limo acts like a unicorn represents a mere enjoyable object only. Skyy John addresses Nikki Limo as “My twerking Unicorn. Go ahead unicorn, ohhhh!” (“Tippy

Bartender”). It is significant to observe how female subjectivity becomes a commodity along with the entire process of the preparation of alcohol. In reference to this idea is one thing can be said that the use of female bodies as sexual objects is not only done in the gaze of males but the women themselves present their identities as provocative bodies for the market.

Another prominent element of the videos of *Tippy Bartender* is the focus of camera lens on the hands of female hosts. Hand attractiveness an important role where faces does not have much roles. Some videos of *Tippy Bartender* that are uploaded in Instagram attract the attention of hands, particularly female hands. Every angle of the female’s body is first being glamorized then it sells with profitable price and hence the status quo is maintained.

The sexualisation of feminine hands is one of the main issues of the discussion. Our society is composed of different types of taboos regarding the sexual activity among human beings in different types of societies, but one thing is common that is “the obscene” or “the Sexual activity” is always guided by some taboos. So, these taboos lead the human beings’ unconscious mind a storehouse of a large amount of desired painful unfulfilled obscene. These desired painful unfulfilled obscene are shaped by various different factors, but here mainly concerned with two main factors— Patriarchal society and Capitalist system, which are the main driving force of today’s scenario.

The first thing is due to the fact that our society is ruled or dominated by patriarchal norms and the capitalist system (the profit earning system) our collective unconscious is shaped by these two



forces. The patriarchal system shapes our society to an androcentric structure, which always treats and internalizes its subjects (the humans) the non-males (women, transgender) as objects to earn pleasure out of it and they are the second class citizens to the society. Moreover, heterosexuality is considered to be the societal norm. Ultimately the combination of the taboos (which resulted in the repressed sexual desires in the unconscious) and the patriarchal-capitalist society outbursts the result in constructing female subjectivity by objectifying female body parts, as mentioned above, the Hand attractiveness. The direct access to female body is a taboo in the public. Thus some accessible female body parts are being represented as a whole and we can see how female body is commodified as erotic objects by the capitalist market. Employing Jung 's idea, individuals are the smallest unit of Collective unconscious, the individuals learned the collective taboo on sexuality, that it should suppressed in public and at the same time, there are some ways which are sexual in nature but not taboo. The episode of playing with hand attractiveness is one the many ways to satisfy the suppressed instincts which are sexual in nature. ("Collective Unconscious")

Hand attractiveness has different types of forms like manicure, polishing the nails, wearing rings, bracelets, nail art, the shape of the hands etc. Nail Polish and other hand art act as the most important element in human attractiveness, in the case of both masculine and feminine beauty, though feminine beauty has more association with hand attractiveness and nail art kind of concept. It is not only in recent times, rather from the ancient

world, different forms of nail art play an important role in regard to human beauty especially the feminine beauty. artificial nail polish colour is a modern time's invention, but the nail colouring art is not new. The class and status in the society can easily be understood by the nail colour shade, the lower class use lighter shades and the upper class use the brighter shade. Slowly and gradually as time passes nail colouring art advent as one of the most popular cosmetic items.

Nailgasm :

Basically, this part of the paper can be regarded as related to 'Nailgasm'. It is important to discuss what the term 'Nailgasm' means. Literally, Nailgasm(n.) means 1) The physical and emotional sensation experienced at the peak of excitement from the artistic treatment of nails, 2) Intense or unrestrained excitement resulting from the visual stimulation of such art, 3) A Global nail art obsession resulting in the uprising of innovative nail artists and nail savvy entrepreneurs worldwide ("Who Is Brass").

In most of the food blog videos whether in Instagram or YouTube by John Skyy, always tries to sexify the nails and nail arts of the females, which is also an important element of seducing with the drinks. In most of the videos the nail polish colour of the female co-host is match up with the background colour of the videos, so it can be a connotation of that the hands are also the part of the food i.e. the drinks. The sexification of the hands and internalizing the view of sexiness is nothing but the appropriating the male gaze as discussed by Laura Mulvey (395) in her essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema". As mentioned by Mulvey, both men as well as women



gaze the object of desire (here the female hands) from a heterosexual androcentric male

perspective. It is quite interesting that how male gaze is associated with the term nailgasm which of course is the combination of the two terms—nail and gaze.

Conclusion :

Carol J. Adams, in her book *Sexual Politics of Meat* (21-22) popularized the concept of Absent Referent as “Metaphorically, the absent referent can be anything whose original meaning is undercut as it is absorbed into a different hierarchy of meaning. The absent referent is both there and not there” for instance, when we utter the word “meat”, the actual meaning is undercut i.e. the animal from which the meat is derived as the animal is already dead, so, the meaning and the animal is absent but new meaning is born the “meat” – a form of food, origination is unknown,

it seems to fall from the sky (Adams 2015). The same story is also for the females and her body which is absent in our society, as it is only treated as an object (the object of pleasure). Appropriating this concept of absent referent in this context of the Tippy bartender; in the videos of Tippy bartender the female as subjective being is not there rather a companion to drinks’ is being showcased. To conclude it can be said that to understand the social, political, economic aspects of our society, it is important to know the existence and operation of the concept of food porn. It is very interesting that how food as a cultural text carries many connotations that can help us understanding the androcentric layers of social structures. Such cultural text can also help us knowing how female subjectivity is constructed in a society which is patriarchal in nature.

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Representation of Women in Tamsula Ao's *These Hills called Home: Stories from a War Zone*

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Abstract :

The representation of women in literary and cultural narratives has been on the line of either reinforcement or subversion of the essentialized notion of women as weak, docile and submissive. Tamsula Ao's collection of stories *These Hills called Home* is one such narrative which highlights and at the same time contests the images of women in popular discourse. In this fictional work, Tamsula Ao focuses on the plight of women in a patriarchal set-up. Set in the backdrop of Naga struggle for independence, most of the stories are about the changes brought about by the struggle to the lives of the ordinary Naga people, especially to women. The objective of the paper is to do a feminist reading of the text. It will aim at examining the issue of representation of women in the stories. The paper will argue that when there is an armed rebellion, women suffer the ultimate brunt. It will also argue that women can challenge status quo and reclaim agency from their limited space.

Key Words: *Patriarchy, Women, Agency.*

Introduction :

Tamsula Ao is a well known figure in literature from Northeast India. She is a poet, short story writer and an ethnographer. She has to her credit a good number of poetic works and two short story collections namely, *These Hills called Home: Stories from a War Zone* (2006) and *Laburnum for My Head* (2009). Her collection of short stories, *These Hills called Home* are set in the backdrop of Naga struggle for independence from Indian State. As Tamsula Ao states in the preface, *Lest We Forget*, "many of the stories in this collection have their genesis in the turbulent years of bloodshed and tears that make up the

history of the Nagas from the early fifties of the last century, and their demand for independence from the Indian State." (Ao x). The Naga struggle has its genesis in the early 50s when the process of nation building was gaining ground. After India became free from the colonial rule in 1947, it became expedient for the regime to initiate the process of political integration by bringing disparate regions and their people under the rule and control of Indian State. The idea of "one nation" that was developed flattening out regional, ethnic and cultural differences however didn't find favour with the northeastern tribes. They expressed their unwillingness to become a



part of the Indian nation-state. Independent by nature and governed by village democracy, these people were not ready to shift allegiance to a new regime, a new political dispensation. Moreover their secluded state from the mainland India never gave them the opportunity to participate in the freedom struggle and thus develop pan-Indian nationalism. They rebelled against the process of political integration by the Indian state. The Nagas were the most recalcitrant of these groups who refused to submit to the hegemony of the Indian government. To dominate the Nagas, the Indian State sent forces, who unleashed a reign of terror in the region in their attempt at quelling the rebellion. The Indian forces inflicted the most inhuman torture on them; they maimed and killed innocent people in a brazen display of their barbarity. They struck at the root of Naga socio-economic and political system and brought enormous changes in their traditional way of life.

The changes triggered in the lives of the ordinary Nagas by the armed rebellion and the consequent army operation to contain it, forms the backdrop of most of the stories of Temsula Ao's *These Hills called Home*. In her fictional rendering of the turbulent period of Naga history, the writer shows how the Naga people especially the women suffered at the hands of the security forces.

Objective :

The objective of the paper is to do a feminist reading of Temsula Ao's *These Hills called Home*. It will aim at examining the issue of representation of women in the stories by asking the following few questions:

1. What is the position of women in traditional Naga society?
2. How does the writer present the women characters in the short story collection?

Methodology :

Interpretative and analytical method has been used to prepare the research paper. While using the text as the primary source, it has used as secondary sources articles, reviews etc. related to the topic. Theories of race and gender have been used to bolster the arguments of the paper.

Analysis :

As has already been told, Temsula Ao's *These Hills called Home* are about the changes caused by the rebellion to the lives of the Naga people and their traditional way of living. In the 1950s the demand for independence of Nagaland was at its peak and had its resonance among the ordinary Nagas. The patriotic fervor swept the entire region and plunged the Naga people in to a struggle, the meaning of which they didn't even understand. The struggle for an independent homeland, however didn't find any favour with the Indian government and they sent forces to crush the struggle. The Indian forces adopted some ruthless measures in their attempt at tracing out the rebels. They severely punished the villagers to whom the militants belonged. Blaming them for harbouring the rebels, their houses were ransacked, the grain in their barns was burnt, they were herded into camps away from their villages and were kept in virtual imprisonment. This form of group incarceration called 'grouping' was the most humiliating and tormenting for the Naga people. The most horrific of all these punishments was the treatment meted out to women. The



security forces inflicted barbaric assaults on the women by molesting or raping them. As told in the story “The Jungle Major”, “numerous stories proliferated of women being molested by the security forces and the obstinate ones who refused to give information being severely beaten; not only that sometimes they would be hung upside down and subjected to unspeakable tortures like chilli powder being rammed into their genitals.” (Ao 3). The brutalization of Naga women is given a gut-wrenching account in the story “The Last Song”. It is the story of brutal rape and killing of Apenyo and her mother by the Indian army.

What the Indian army did to women was part of their strategy to terrorize the people and compel them to give information about the rebels. They used women as a tool in their fight against Naga insurgency. This shows how the Naga women were rendered utterly helpless and vulnerable by the ugly turn of events in the valley. In view of the plight of women during conflict situation it is pertinent to quote what Preeti Gill says in her introduction to the anthology of essays, *The Peripheral Centre: Voices from India's Northeast*

To say that women have faced violence in situations of conflict is to state the obvious but what it means in terms of the short term and long term impact is something that is still being studied and analysed. Women find themselves at the receiving end of violence on three fronts; from the state, the militants and a corresponding escalation of violence within their own homes (Gill 10).

Sanjoy Hazarika in his article “In Times of Conflict the Real Victims are Women” (In Preeti Gill 2010: 54-64) argues on a similar line when

he says that the women have to suffer the worst in conflict situation. He substantiates his argument by referring to two incidents-one, the Nellie massacre in 1983, and the killing of Manorama Devi of Manipur in 2004. In the first instance, armed and organized groups of tribal villagers attacked and brutally killed the inhabitants of a cluster of villages located near the sleepy town of Nellie of Nagaon district of Assam. More than 1700 people lost their lives in that ethnic carnage. The attackers were the members of the Tiwa tribe and the victims were the Bengali-speaking Muslims, referred to as Bangladeshis, that too pejoratively in the political lexicon of the region. Hazarika takes this as symbolic of the growing divides in Assam between settlers and the indigenous, between tribals and non tribals, between those of one religious faith and another. In an eyewitness account of the barbarity unleashed on that fateful day, Hazarika states that he counted 200 dead bodies of men, women and children on one patch of land on that particular day. To highlight the plight of women during such situations, he recounts his experience of recoiling in horror at the sight of a woman whose neck had been slashed from side to side with a machete.

The second incident relates to the killing of a young woman named Manorama Devi by Assam Rifles soldiers. She was reportedly a cadre of the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA), an extremist organization of Manipur. The cadre was picked up by the soldiers from her home in Imphal and shot dead as she was not giving them enough information about the leaders of the organization. The killing sparked outrage and thousands of Manipuris came out on the streets. They



demanding the repeal of AFSPA (Armed Forces Special Powers Act) under which the Assam Rifles conducted the operation. This Act has been in place in the Northeast for years. This is a draconian act which gives the security forces blanket powers of search, arrest and detention. Under the AFSPA there have been gross abuses of human rights in the Northeastern region. The protest especially the elderly women stripping themselves in front of the Assam Rifles garrison in Imphal rattled the then Manmohan Singh government at the centre. It formed a review committee of which Hazarika himself was a member and the committee recommended drastic measures to deal with the crisis created by the implementation of an unjust law, including the repeal of the existing legislation. However internal divisions within the government and the ranks of the army stalled the acceptance of the report.

Hazarika underlines the fact that in both the cases women were among the worst sufferers. He stresses on the need of sensitivity towards women's needs- the need of women for security in conflict-ridden areas, the need to ensure they get economic and social support to run their households and send children to school, especially if they are single mothers who have been widowed by the fighting or whose husbands or children are on the side of anti-State forces, and regrets that the State has totally failed them on these respects. Hazarika opines that to do justice to women in normal or conflict situations there should be more representation of women in peace talks that take place between the government and the insurgent groups. He refers to the Naga peace talks and says that in all the negotiations the discussants have

only been men in spite of the significant presence of organization like Naga Mothers Association in the socio-political life of Nagaland. He rues the fact that, "women have the greatest stake in peace but their presence in peace brokering is non-existent" (Hazarika, 64)." Hazarika calls upon the women groups of Northeast like Meira Paibis of Manipur and the Naga Mothers Association to be more assertive about their roles so that the many peace processes in the region can come to a sustainable conclusion.

The attitude and treatment of the soldiers towards Naga women had much to do with their frontier attitude. To the Indian government, the tribal of northeast constitute the most distant 'other', whose image in the colonial version as savage frontiersman didn't undergo substantial changes even in the postcolonial India. As told in the story "Soaba", "to the security forces the Naga tribes were a bunch of people so alien to them that for all they knew they could have come from a different planet" (Ao 13). The colonial paradigm came to stay through which the 'mainstream' India viewed the northeastern tribes. The national narrative written on the lines of privileged caste, religion and region excluded these people from its definition of 'Indians' and 'Indianness'. When these people protested against the hegemony of Indian government and claimed independence, there were attempts to quell the protest and 'indianize' them. The racial biasness against the tribes came to characterize and direct most of the policies of the government towards the rebellious Nagas. Finding them total strangers in terms of their racial features, the armed forces adopted the most oppressive measures to dominate the Nagas.



In such a situation, the condition of women can be easily imagined. The punishment of Naga women took the form of rape and torture in blatant violation of their honour and dignity. Here it is pertinent to quote what Uddipana Goswami says in her book *Conflict and Resolution*(2007)

For the Indian state the people of Northeast seem to have remained at the either end of the spectrum stretching between the noble savage and the naked brute. The exoticised, enigmatic noble savage can be tamed, but the naked brute understands only the language of violence. It is for this reason that the first response of the state towards any disturbance in the periphery has been the use of violence and coercion, the most disturbing manifestation of which has been the prolonged militarization in the Northeast. (Goswami 130-131)

It is however not the outsiders who maltreat Naga women. The Naga patriarchy is also not different in their attitude and treatment towards their women. Here it is pertinent to shed light on the position of women in the traditional Naga society. The Naga society has always been patriarchal and patrilineal with clear-cut and well-defined roles for men and women. While men play public roles, women are expected to remain confined to household activities. Structures of inequality in-built in traditional Naga society ensures that the mobility of women remains restricted to the domestic sphere. They are expected to be strong enough to take care of the household even in the absence of men. They have to be adept at one or the other traditional occupations like weaving or pot-making to economically support the family. Though expected

to be humble, obedient and subservient the Naga way of life also want its women to be strong, independent and resilient at the same time.

Temsula Ao in her article “Benevolent Subordination” (In Preeti Gill 2010: 100-107) analyses the social position of women in Naga society. She states that the Naga society is male-dominated where women have always lived in the periphery. She corroborates her statement by pointing to different power structures in Naga society which are dominated by men. She gives example of the Baptist Church. She says that though there are several women’s groups in Baptist churches their leader is not given the title of Pastor; she can be called an Associate Pastor, thereby signifying the subordination to the Pastor. The power structure within the church is an indicator of the perpetuation of male domination in Naga society in the matter of decision-making.

Temsula Ao says that such male attitudes have their origin in the state of affairs of a distant past in which men came to occupy superior status in the male-female dichotomy on practical grounds. Women accepted their subordination and this in turn, facilitated their exclusion from the decision-making seat-of-governance in society. Though the new system of governance introduced in the wake of Nagaland attaining its statehood, has facilitated the entry of women into the bastions of power, they have not been able to share equal space with their male counterparts. It is nothing but the male bias that has stood on their way. The male opposition based on the age-old prejudice about women’s inferiority and their economical positions has defeated their aspiration for equal political power. The writer says that there are women in ranks in



the present political dispensation, but here again they are playing subordinate roles, not as equals.

Temsula Ao makes a crucial observation regarding women's subordination. She says that the Naga women today are better positioned-conscious and assertive about their rights, many women are not free from male bias that is characteristic of traditional Naga society. In her words, "... Naga women no matter how well educated or highly placed in society suffer from remnants of this psychological 'trauma' of subordination, which in their grandmother's times might have seemed perfectly logical but which now appears to be a paradox within the modern, educated 'self'" (Ao 105).

Temsula Ao says that induction of women into institutions of power in minor capacities won't be empowering them in true sense of the term. To ensure their empowerment, there must be an overhauling of the system which has governed Naga society for centuries. She is of the opinion that the process must start with the women's belief in her own 'self'; to recognize that what she has been excluded from is her birth right as a Naga citizen. Only when women are equipped with such convictions, can any change in the political, economic, social status of Naga women be envisaged.

The attitude of Naga patriarchy towards women is amply illustrated through the fate of Imnala in the story, "The Night". Imnala is a simple village girl who falls prey to wily and mischievous designs of patriarchy. She becomes pregnant twice and both the times outside the wedlock-first by her suitor, who abandons her after making her pregnant and second by a married man. As the

news of Imnala getting pregnant by a married man spreads, the village folk condemns Imnala's family. The village council that tries the case holds the girl's family guilty. She is abused and censured, while the man who is equally responsible for the act is spared from any punishment by the council. This shows how the Naga justice system is tilted against women. It maintains double standard with regard to morality. When a strict moral code is enforced on women, men are allowed to take liberty with morality.

Women as helpless victims is however not the only representation of women in the collection of stories. A close reading of the stories reveals resilience and resistance of women who reclaim agency from their limited spaces. Temsula's women reflect the typical Naga spirit of not getting cowed down by hardships and remaining undaunted when faced with danger. The women may not take part in armed resistance or open protest but they do engage in subtle and seemingly innocuous resistance at an individual level. As James Scott says in his *Weapons of the weak: Everyday Acts of Peasant Resistance* (1985) resistance need not be always overt and collective struggle against power, it can be individual, disguised and everyday acts that challenge power at a micro level. We see Ao's characters challenging power structures from their own individual spaces in a subtle yet powerful manner.

In the story "The Jungle Major" we see khatila exhibiting extraordinary courage and presence of mind at the face of danger. Khatila's husband Punaba is an underground rebel who often comes to visit his wife secretly. The army gets to know about his visits and plans a secret



mission to arrest him. One morning he was staying at home with his wife. The army gets the wind of it and surrounds their house. However, Punaba escapes arrest and it became possible due to Khatila's presence of mind. Sensing danger to her husband Khatila instantly makes a plan. She talks loudly to her husband as if to her servant ordering him to fetch water and then sends him out right under the officer's nose. She puts on an unperturbed face while confronted by the army officers. As told by the narrator, "... the young captain looked somewhat surprised at her manner. Whereas he had expected to see a cowering woman, crazy with fear for her husband and herself, he was confronted by a disheveled but defiant person who displayed no agitation and seemed to be utterly oblivious to any danger." (Ao 6). Khatila's act of resistance stands in sharp contrast to images of Naga women as helpless victims in a set-up dominated by patriarchy.

In the story "The Potmaker", we find another voice of resistance in Arenla. Arenla is a pot maker. In traditional Naga society, the women are expected to learn the skill and pass it on to the next generation of women so that the tradition of pot making can be maintained. Arenla however decides against teaching her daughter the craft. It is because pottery involves a lot of pain and hard work and also because it is a low paying job. Arenla doesn't want her daughter to become a low-paid potmaker like herself. By refusing to teach her daughter the craft, Arenla dares to go against the dictates of Naga patriarchy. She protests gender division of labour in Naga society with hard and low-paying jobs like pot making allotted for women. Underscoring the insensitivity

and callousness of menfolk she says to her husband, "... you do not know how difficult it is to dig the clay from the hillside because you have never come there to help me saying that no man can be seen meddling in anything to do with pot making. It is woman's work." (Ao 58). As a woman in patriarchal Naga society Arenla has limitations that prevent her from openly voicing demands for better job or payment for women, but within her limited freedom she vociferously fights against her daughter having a similar fate as hers. Her firmness of decision is palpable when she says, "I shall not teach her this craft which has brought no joy to me and only a pittance for my troubles" (58).

Thus women characters of Ao are seen raising their voice against dominant power structures from their own limited spaces. Their acts of resistance are innocuous and through this the writer seems to be attempting a critique of the armed rebellion that ultimately results in chaos and anarchy. The Naga struggle for independence could be seen as male aggression in the male/female binary paradigm. The story "Soaba" can be referred to substantiate it. In the story we have a character called Imlichuba who is the leader of the 'flying squad', created by the government to fight against the rebels. He grows in power and position from his close association with the army and government officials. But power intoxicates him and has its deleterious effects on his character. He goes roughshod over his finer sentiments and brags about his masculine power and arrogance. He starts indulging in outrageous acts of moral aberration and this too in the presence of his wife, Imtila. It so happens that Imlichuba out of suspicion of spying against him kills Soaba, the homeless wanderer who



stays with him. He does this in a fit of passion, and after this act significant changes are seen in his behaviour. He loses his vigour and starts behaving like a mad man. This could be the result of his disillusionment with masculine ideology that advocates war and violence. That violence brings nothing but misery and suffering down upon Imlichuba and he starts losing his mental equilibrium. In this condition, Imtila offers her helping hand and care towards her husband which indicates the triumph of feminine peace over masculine violence. The disillusionment with war and its ideology is even directly stated by a character in the story “Shadows” as “When you have a gun in your hand, you cease to think like a normal human being” (85).

Conclusion :

While discussing the representation of women in the stories it is important to consider

the subject position of the author. Temsula Ao belongs to the Ao tribe of the Nagas and while depicting Naga customs and tradition, she draws mostly on the oral tradition of the Ao Nagas. Since there is a good number of Naga tribes and they have different customs and traditions, the question arises whether the writer has been able to do justice to other tribal customs and the experiences of women in those customs, while presenting a picture of Naga women. Moreover Temsula Ao is from an elitist educational background and therefore doubts are raised whether writers with such superior elitist gaze would be able to represent the plight of ordinary women. Despite this, as a woman writer Temsula Ao shows a great deal of sensitivity and understanding in the portrayal of women characters in her fictional work.

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Economic Independence of Elderly Females in North-East India: A Statistical Review

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Abstract :

It has been observed that the elderly populace of 60+ is increasing all over the world. Such increase in elderly population is also seen in the states of North-East. The percentage share of the elderly populace to the general population is projected to be 8.2% (8.8%) and 11.6% (12.7%) in 2021 and 2031 respectively for Assam (NE States). This study attempts to review the disparities in the state of economic independence of aged people among male-female and urban-rural population of the eight North-East states of India. Here we have identified that rural aged females of 60 years and above of Meghalaya state are more vulnerable in respect to economic dependence.

Keywords: *Aged people, State of Economic Independence, Male-Female and Urban-Rural Population, North-East States, Assam.*

Introduction :

In all over the world it has been observed that population of older population i.e 60 years and above is increasing. This is mainly due to increase in life expectancy. This increment in the 60+ populace is due to a decrement observed in the mortality rate. Another factor that accelerates this increment is the advancement of science and technology that cure many diseases which were considered to be deadly earlier. The increased life span of people results in low mortality and thus increases the proportion of the elder population in a country. A decrement in the fertility rate also increases the portion of the population of senior citizens in the total population of a country.

Globally the aged populace of 60+ is estimated to be increased by 56% from 2015 to

2030. It has also been projected that by 2050 the older population will be approximately 2.1 billion all over the world. Elderly women of 60+ contribute 54 % of the global populace in 2015 and is projected to be 53% by 2050. A very slight improvement is projected for the sex ratio of the older population of 60+ of 89 males per 100 females in 2050 as compared to 86 males per 100 females in 2015. It has also been noticed that urban elderly people of 60 years and above are increasing faster than their rural counterparts. All over the world, this number is increased by 68% and 25% in urban and rural areas respectively. (World Population Ageing, 2015)

In Asia, 56% of the elderly lived in 2015 which is estimated to be increased to 60% in 2030 and then to 62% in 2050. In this continent, a very



big increment of 106% for urban areas is observed whereas it is only 28% in rural areas between 2000-2015. (World Population Ageing, 2015)

In 2015, only five countries namely China, India, United States, Japan and Russia accounts for half of the elderly populace of 60+ of the world. In India, the number of older people is projected to be increased by 64% from 2015 to 2030. (World Population Ageing, 2015)

As a country, India is in a state of transition, moving from the younger to the older generation. In India, a 35.8% increase in the elderly population is observed in 2011-21 as compared to 12.4% in general population. It has been projected that 40.5% of elderly people will increase by 2031 as compared to 8.4% in the general population. The share of elderly females to that of the general population is projected to be 10.7% and 14% in 2021 and 2031 respectively which is higher as compared to 9.6% and 12.3% for males. The sex ratio of the elderly population of India is estimated to be 1065 females per 1000 males in 2021 and 1085 in 2031. Thus the females would seem to outnumber the males in this elderly age group of 60+. However, it is also clear that this portion of the elderly populace of India varies state wise, region wise etc. This kind of scenario is also observed in the states of north-east India. The percentage share of the elderly population to that of the general population is projected to be 8.2% (8.8%) and 11.6% (12.7%) in 2021 and 2031 respectively for Assam (NE States). (NSO, 2021).

Under this backdrop, we can see a steady increase in life expectancy among aged people across the world. Although it is a welcome change, we should not forget the fact that an increase in the

span of life does not necessarily mean a stable, healthy, morbidity and stress-free life. Aged people face many physical and mental complications. Not only health but other factors like state of economic independence will also influence life of 60+ people. As we know that a person's state of economic independence act as one of the important markers of mental and physical health. This also holds for elderly people of a place. Financial dependence will lead to many adverse effects on the overall health of the elder. Elders will feel neglected, which in turn increases frustration and despair. Economic dependence will automatically lead to a decrease in loss of authority and hence they will have no say on the key home issues. This kind of state also influences their relationship with family and society and their role as advisers.

A numbers of scholarly literature related to the broad area of the present work have been methodically consulted. A brief overview of the existing literature on the subject has been discussed below. Banerjee, 2021 studied the disparities in healthcare utilization among the senior citizen living in rural and urban areas of India and observed that economic status is acting as one of the factor as rural-urban inequality in assessing healthcare utilization. Muhammad et al., 2021 studied the association of the economic condition of the elderly with preference for living alone and found that economic factors along with health were a significant marker for elderly preference for living alone. Johnson et al., 2019 observed that the females were having a lower quality of life than the males among 60+ populace in Bengaluru South. Barua, et al., 2017 studied the morbidity pattern of elderly living in slums of Jorhat district of Assam. They observed



that lack of money was one of the factor for the elderly slums for not affording proper health care. Dutta, 2017 found that the socioeconomic conditions are affecting the life of the old women belonging to the middle and poor families in Siliguri town of West Bengal. Agarwal et al., 2016 observed the gender wise disparities in the life expectancy at age 60 in the 17 most populous states of India for 2011 using data set from the United Nations (2015) and the Government of India (2013 and 2015). They also felt that these differences in the sex divisions in the older population will increase the need for focused programs and policies. Alam et.al., 2015 observed that economic independence is a key factor in determining the well being of the elders. Siva Raju, 2011 in his study found that care received by the 60+ people of India varies according to their place of residence and gender. He also felt that India should focus not only on the quality of life of the elders but women elders in particular. Alam and Karan, 2011 observed that poverty was one of the determining factors in the health outcomes of the elderly population. It has been observed that economically independent elders have better health outcomes than economically dependent.

Although there are a number of works conducted on the aged population of India and her states, no systematic study have been found to be devoted to the status of elderly population of North-Eastern states with special focus on the elderly females. Hence it has become imperative to study the elderly people especially women of North-East region of India according to the state of their economic independence. The present study examines the status of elderly people aged 60+ according to the state of economic independence. The male-female and urban-rural

populations of eight North-Eastern states of India were taken as the study population.

Objectives :

The objective of the present study is:

1. To examine the disparities in the state of economic independence of aged people with gender over the eight states of North-East namely Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura and compares them to India.
2. To study the change in the percentage of economically fully dependent females for both rural and urban populace of 8 NE states and India between 2004 and 2017-18.
3. To explore this variation among the urban and rural aged population.

Data and Methods :

The data used in this paper is secondary taken from the National Sample Survey and Sample Registration System. The data used for computing association between state of economic independence and gender is taken from NSS 75th Round (July 2017-June 2018)-Social Consumption in India: Health. This association is studied by computing Chi square test.

Chi-Square test is given by

$$\chi^2 = \sum_i \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

Where O_i and E_i are the observed and expected values respectively.

The state of economic independence is taken as not dependent on others (ND), partially dependent on others (PD) and fully dependent on others (FD). The percentage change in economically fully dependent females over the years is taken from NSS 60th round and 75th round. The inequality in the length of life among

the aged people of Assam and India is studied by computing Gini Coefficient. Data used for computing the Gini coefficient is taken from abridged life tables (page no. 20 and 22) computed by Sample Registration System (SRS). But, life tables were constructed by sex and residence for India and only for bigger States/UTs till now. Hence the present study restricts the computation of the Gini coefficient only for Assam and India of 2014-18.

The following formula is used to compute the Gini coefficient for the population aged 60+. Here it is computed up to age 100.

$$G_{x/x} = 1 - \frac{\int_0^x \{l(t)\}^2 dt}{e(x/X) \{l(x)\}^2}$$

Where $e(x/X)$ is the temporary life expectancy and $l(x)$ is the number of survivors at

the beginning of the interval x . (Detail formula can be assessed from the work mentioned in appendix.) Gini coefficient lies between 0 and 1. It will take value zero if all die at the same age and one if one dies at very old age and others die in the same age. Thus zero means there is no inequality in the length of life and equal to one if there is maximum inequality.

The differences in the length of life among the male and female of 60+ aged people are also computed.

Karl Pearson's Correlation Coefficient formula is used to calculate the association between state of economic independence and expectation of life for 60+ population of Assam.

Discussion :

Based on the aforementioned data and methodology the present study constructed the requisite tables to discuss the findings.

Table1: Gender wise Urban-Rural Populace of 60 + according to their state of economic independence of eight NE States

State			ND	PD	FD	Chi Square Value
Arunachal Pradesh	Urban	M	69	16	16	39.55*
		F	28	56	16	
	Rural	M	28	41	31	9.33**
		F	12	42	46	
Assam	Urban	M	47	29	24	44.84**
		F	9	26	65	
	Rural	M	28	30	42	26.41**
		F	8	15	77	



State			ND	PD	FD	Chi Square Value
Manipur	Urban	M	46	40	14	31.38**
		F	18	34	48	
	Rural	M	37	40	24	8.23*
		F	19	55	26	
Meghalaya	Urban	M	74	9	18	27.45**
		F	40	8	53	
	Rural	M	49	18	33	69.24**
		F	0	19	81	
Mizoram	Urban	M	58	13	29	13.5**
		F	32	24	43	
	Rural	M	63	21	16	30.31**
		F	28	23	49	
Nagaland	Urban	M	38	24	38	39.17**
		F	3	28	69	
	Rural	M	53	43	4	67.17**
		F	5	60	35	
Sikkim	Urban	M	47	8	45	61.46**
		F	0	16	84	
	Rural	M	32	28	40	15.85**
		F	11	50	39	
Tripura	Urban	M	69	13	17	62.35**
		F	18	11	70	
	Rural	M	58	24	18	69.93**
		F	9	18	73	
India	Urban	M	57	19	24	52.26**
		F	11	21	68	
	Rural	M	48	25	27	41.27**
		F	10	24	66	

Source: NSS 75th Round (July 2017-June 2018)-Social Consumption in India: Health 7th column:
 Author computation from data. (** Significant)

The above table depicts the state of economic independence of 60 years and above for male and female population of urban and rural populace of eight Northeast states of India along with the nation. The data also reveals that rural females are more economically dependent. In this category, Meghalaya tops the list followed by Assam and Tripura. These figures are higher than its national figure. The other five states are below this national figure. From the sixth column, we observed the variation in the economically fully dependent among the states. This disparity is more prominent for females aged 60+. Except for the elderly urban population of Arunachal Pradesh, we observed very high economically fully

dependent females as to the males. This significant association can be seen in the chi-square value computed in the 7th column. The aforesaid table also depicts a higher economically fully dependent rural population for both genders as to its urban populace. Studies done by Swaminathan, et al., 2012 also observed the gender discrimination in the case of paid employment and the amount held among elders of India. Dreze and Srinivasan, 1995 also observed that elderly females economic status are not good. Capoor, 2008 saw that financial security is lacking among Indian aged females. Prakash, et al., 2004 also observed that elderly women are less financially independent than elderly men.

**Table2: Gini Value for the Male-Female and Combined,
Urban-Rural Population of Assam and India**

Region	Type of Population	Gender	Gini Value at age 60+	e ⁶⁰	Difference
India	Combined	Male	0.28	17.4	-1.5
		Female	0.3	18.9	
	Urban	Male	0.31	18.8	-1.2
		Female	0.32	20	
	Rural	Male	0.26	16.9	-1.6
		Female	0.29	17.6	
Assam	Combined	Male	0.27	16.5	-1.1
		Female	0.29	18.5	
	Urban	Male	0.34	20.5	0.8
		Female	0.26	17.6	
	Rural	Male	0.27	15.9	-1.3
		Female	0.25	17.2	

Source: SRS Based Abridged Life Tables 2014-18 (2020)

4th and 6th Column: Author computation from data

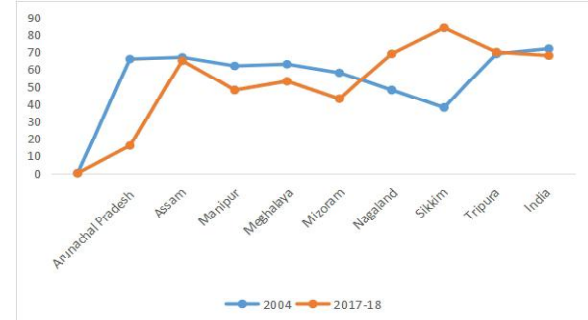
In table 2 Gini value for 60 years and above is computed for the urban-rural and male-female population of Assam and India. From the above table, we observed a slightly higher value of Gini for the female populace as compared to its male for India. However, a negligible large Gini coefficient is observed for the male population of Assam in comparison to females. A larger Gini value depicts a larger inequality in length of life. Thus Indian females have more disparities in their length of life as compared to females of Assam. A larger value of Gini is observed for the urban populace for both India and Assam. The 5th column of the above table is the expectation of life at age 60+ taken from SRS. For example, a figure of 15.9 shown in column 5 means on average after 60 years a person will live 15.9 years more. Here we see that elderly females lived longer than their male counterparts except for urban females of Assam. The difference in the male-female life expectancy at age 60 as shown in column 6 varies from -1.6 years to 0.8 years. This means Indian elderly females living in rural areas lives 1.6 years longer than their male counterparts and urban elderly females of Assam lives 0.8 years less than the males.

Table 3: Association between State of Economic Independence and Expectation of life for 60+ Population of Assam

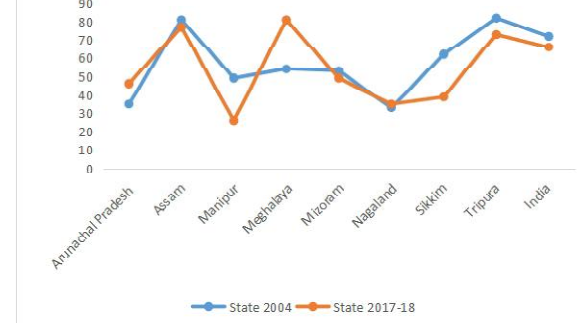
FD	24	65	42	77
ND	47	9	28	8
e^{60}	20.5	19.7	15.9	17.2
r1	-0.31			
r2	0.31			

As mentioned in methodology section we are restricted to compute association between state of economic independence and life expectancy only for the state of Assam. In table 3 r1 and r2 represents the correlation between FD and e^{60} and ND and e^{60} respectively. The negative value of r1 implies that increase of percentage of economically fully dependent will decrease the expectation of life at age 60 and vice versa. The positive r2 indicates that as the percentage of economically not dependent persons increase, the expectation of life at age 60 increases and vice versa. Thus state of economic independence will influence the expectation of life at age 60.

Graph 1: Percentage Change in economically fully dependent females for the urban populace of eight NE states and India between 2004 and 2017-18



Graph 2: Percentage Change in economically fully dependent females for rural populace of eight NE states and India between 2004 and 2017-18



Graph 1 and 2 shows the change in the percentage of economically fully dependent females for both rural and urban populace of eight NE states and India between 2004 and 2017-18. This percentage is decreasing over these two-periods among all the states except for Nagaland and Sikkim for its urban population. However, state Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya are experiencing a higher percentage of economically fully dependent rural females in 2017-18.

Conclusion :

The responsibility and care of a society can be discerned from the quality of life led by its senior citizens. As it has already been mentioned that the expectation of life of the elderly is being increased steadily across the world, it is therefore, high time to address the issues that hinders the elderly people to lead a quality life. It is pleasing to note that initial awareness in national and international levels has been seen in this regard. Although, the Government of India has undergone many policies to tackle the problems of the aged but it seems that these policies somehow failed to percolate to the needy.

In NE India, we have observed that the elders are increasing steadily but their increase is below the national average. This study also shows that aged females are more economically dependent

than males. The chi square value computed in Table1 statistically supports this result, indicating significant gender disparities in the state of economic independence. Though this dependency decreases over the years this decrement may not be considered satisfactory. Here we have identified that rural aged females of 60 years and above of Meghalaya state are more vulnerable. Thus we are encouraged to reassess the existing policies to address this kind of people and if needed introduce some more policies to improve their quality of life. The rural aged females of Meghalaya may be further stratified according to district wise or block wise or village wise and a small area may be first considered as a study area and implement the policies and study the outcomes. This may be considered as a model study and thus encourage one to implement such policies in other areas also.

The present study shows that the senior female population aged 60+ and above of North East India has not faced much hindrance in leading a good life till now in comparison to other parts of India. But time is changing rapidly and hence the policy makers should plan apposite policies to safeguard the interest of this section of society so that they can lead a happy, safe and comfortable life.

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Appendix :

Details about Gini Formula used in this study can be assessed from the paper in ‘Measurement of Health Inequality in India by computing Gini Coefficient’ published in Middle East Journal of Age and Ageing (ME-JAA) Vol.13, Issue 2, December 2016 PP 28-35 ISSN 1449-8677.



‘Beti Padhao’- A Reality or Fantasy! Reference to Northeast India

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Abstract :

Education for girls is a critical component in addressing prejudice and gender disparities. Understanding the current state of girls' education may point to developing a strategic solution to the country's persisting constraints. This paper aims to explore the status of 'Beti Padhao' in the northeastern states of India. The paper deals with eight northeastern states of India since not enough studies were done on the region. This study is based on secondary sources of data and descriptive. The status of female literacy in the northeastern region has been examined with the help of two indicators, i.e., literacy rate and gross enrolment rate. This study found that the females are catching up to males at all levels of education, but not by much; yet, the crucial fact is that the gap between males and females is expanding as education levels rise. The enrollment in elementary education (primary and upper primary) is higher in northeastern states. It might be justified by the Mid-day meal scheme and free education in schools that attract pupil to the school at the elementary level. Furthermore, the 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan' of the Indian government encourages students to attend school by making elementary education accessible and mandatory. Interestingly, dropout rates in northeastern states for girls in school education are higher than all Indian levels. With political will and better policy implementation, particularly emphasizing better economic opportunities and job creation, higher female enrolment could be achieved. The only requirement is the right intent, consistent and efficient execution of all initiatives. The New education policy might play a significant role in its ambitious goal.

Keywords : *Beti Padhao; Education; Literacy rate; Gross Enrolment Rate; North East India.*

Introduction :

For a long time, women in our culture have been subjected to discrimination and prejudice. They have been denied fundamental rights, the

most egregious of which is the right to be born. As a result, in certain sections of the country, a falling sex ratio is emerging, which is cause for considerable concern. Every person of India has



the right to equality under the Indian constitution (Article 14). It enshrines the general principles of equality before the law and bans unjustified discrimination among Indian citizens. Gender-based sex discrimination in the elimination of female children, on the other hand, is a violation of human rights and the right to life protected by the constitution.

Son preference and the burden of protecting female sexuality, low value of girl child, social evils such as dowry, rituals; gender-based sex selection, neglect of girl child resulting in higher mortality at younger ages, higher childhood mortality, female infanticide, lineage issues, patriarchal structure, old age security, the low sex ratio at birth are some of the reasons for consistently low levels of child sex ratio (BBBP report, 2015). Empowerment of women is one of the prime critical strategies for establishing a sphere of sustainable development. Sustainable development will be impossible to achieve without a more fair allocation of resources: current imbalances are heavily gendered (UN ECE Discussion paper, 2012). Promoting gender equality has two justifications. To begin with, gender equality—equal rights, opportunities, and responsibilities for men and women – is an issue of human rights and social justice. Furthermore secondly, that greater equality between women and men is also a precondition for (and effective indicator of) sustainable people-centered development. Women's and men's perspectives, interests, needs, and objectives must be considered a matter of social justice because they enrich the development processes.

For the last few decades, there is a continuous rise in awareness of the importance of

women's empowerment and obtaining gender parity through efforts that encourage social, economic, and political justice, as well as increased access to fundamental human rights, nutrition, health, and education. Women's and girls' disadvantages are a vital source of inequality. Women and girls are frequently discriminated against in education, health, and the labour market, with detrimental consequences for their liberties. Education for girls is a critical component in addressing prejudice and gender disparities. Understanding the current state of girls' education may point to developing a strategic solution to the country's persisting constraints. This paper tries to address some significant findings of India regarding girl education, particularly in the northeastern states.

Various researches have been conducted in India and around the world on the broad topic of girl education. This section of the paper contains some of the findings. Mahanta and Nayak (2013) examined the gap in enrolment ratio of classes I to V and VI-VII over 1999-2001 to 2009-10. The gap was highest in Assam (18.89) for class I to IV between 1999-2001 and lowest in Sikkim (0.84). Nevertheless, over time Assam performed better, and the gap became negative between 2009 and 2010. For the class VI to VII category, the gap in enrollment ratio was high in Assam between 1999 and 2001, but it became negative between 2009 and 2010. Das (2013) compared the status of women in the northeastern region to the rest of India using a variety of indicators, including female literacy, gross enrolment ratio, female workforce participation rate, dropout rates, female infant mortality, sex ratio, age at marriage, and women's



involvement in decision-making. Dhar (2015) used several indices to study gender inequality in northeast India and discovered that there is still a significant gender disparity in enrolment, which is particularly large in higher education. In comparison to men, women have a lower rate of enrollment in higher education. The study found that Assam, Meghalaya witnessed a somewhat higher enrolment ratio of girls at the primary level than boys based on the Economic Survey report (2012-13). Devi (2013) pointed out that the average dropout rate for girls in Assam has increased from 5.0 percent in 2009- 10 to 11.9 percent in 2011-12 at the primary level and from 13.5 percent in 2009-10 to 14.3 percent at the upper primary level. Deen (2014) found inter-state variation in gross enrollment ratio for higher education at the national level, and it stood for total, male and female 49.25%, 45.7%, and 60.56%, respectively.

Even though different studies have been conducted, there has yet to be a complete study of India's northeastern states and an examination of some of the region's most basic difficulties concerning girl education. The northeastern section of the country is distinct from the rest of the country in terms of geography, economics, climate, and politics. As a result, it deserves a thorough investigation, which this paper intended to do.

The rest of the paper is laid out as follows. Section 2 outlines the paper's objective, whereas section 3 describes the materials and methods employed in the study. The discussion and findings are presented in section 4, and section 5 concludes the paper.

Objective :

This paper aims to explore the status of 'Beti Padhao' in the northeastern states of India.

It explores the status and journey of girl education in India, particularly in the northeast Indian states.

Material and Methods :

The data used in the study are collected from various secondary sources like census reports of India, various educational reports of government, articles, and research papers. The literacy rate, the dropout rates, and the rank of the states in the gender gap in education were taken from the Census report, 2011; the level-wise enrolment in different educational levels and the gross enrolment rates are taken from the report of Educational Statistics at Glance, 2018. The gender gap at various educational levels is collected from the website of 'indiatat.com.'

The study primarily follows the descriptive research method. The status of female literacy in northeastern states has been examined with the help of two indicators, i.e., literacy rate and gross enrolment rate. These two indicators can be defined as follows-

Literacy rate: According to the Census of India 2011, literacy is defined as a person aged seven and up who can read and write in any language with understanding. The so-called Census literacy rate is the effective literacy rate, not the crude literacy rate.¹

Gross enrolment rate: Gross enrolment ratio is the total enrolment in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the eligible official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education in a given school year (Educational Statistics at a Glance, 2018: p 11). The term 'school-age population' refers to the age group population officially associated with the appropriate educational level.



Discussion and Results :

This section first discusses the status of girls' education at the national level of India with the help of trends in literacy rate and level-wise enrolment of girls at the different educational levels. The second part of this section analyses the northeastern scenario of girls' education, presenting various indicators of girls' education attainment, like literacy rate, gross enrolment of girls in the region, gender gap, and dropout rates of the girls at the different educational levels.

Status of Girls' Education at the national level :

According to the 2011 Census, India's overall literacy rate is 74.00 percent, with women's literacy at 65.46 percent. In 2001, the percentage of women who were literate in the country was 54.16 percent. The country's literacy rate has increased from 18.33 percent in 1951 to 74.00 percent in 2011, according to the 2011 census. Female literacy had similarly risen from 8.86% in 1951 to 65.46% in 2011. Table 1 shows the year-wise literacy rate of India.

Table 1. Literacy Rate in India

Census year	Males' literacy (percentage)	Females' literacy (percentage)
1951	27.2	8.9
1961	40.4	15.4
1971	46.0	22.0
1981	56.4	29.8
1991	64.1	39.8
2001	75.3	53.7
2011	80.9	64.6

Source: Census 2011, India

Though the literacy rate is a good indicator of education, considering some other data would be helpful to have a deeper insight. Table 2 shows the level-wise enrolment in school and higher education and provides a comparative picture between males and females.

Table 2. Level wise enrolment in different educational level

Level of education	Male in percentage	Female in percentage
Elementary	51.64	48.36
Secondary	52.49	47.51
Senior Secondary	52.56	47.43
Higher Education	53.76	46.23

Source: Educational Statistics at a Glance, 2018

At all levels of education, females are catching up to males, although not by much; yet, the essential aspect is that the gender gap is widening as education levels grow. Primary and upper primary education is included in elementary education, with females accounting for 48.20 percent and 48.63 percent of total enrollment. Females account for 48.6% of overall enrolment in higher education, according to All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2018-19, and the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for females in higher education is 26.4 percent, which is higher than the national GER for boys, which is 26.3 percent. In addition, the Gender Parity Index (GPI) has risen over the previous five years, rising from 0.92 in 2014-15 to 1 in 2018-19 (Public Information Bureau 2020).

In terms of the gross enrollment rate (GER) at various levels of education in India, girls

outnumber boys with a GER of 99.59 for girls and 94.53 for boys in elementary school. With a GER of 144.04 for girls in this level, Meghalaya is at the top of the list, while Andhra Pradesh is at the bottom with a GER of 83.11 for females.² In secondary school, India has a national average of 80.97 GER for girls and 79.16 GER for boys. With a GER of 126.14, Sikkim is at the top of the list for females, while Gujarat is at the bottom with a GER of 66.82. In senior secondary, Tamil Nadu ranks first among Indian states with a GER (female) of 90.60, while Bihar ranks worst with just a GER (female) of 36.66. Females have a lower GER (23.5) than males in higher education nationwide (25.4). At this level, Tamil Nadu leads the states with a GER (female) of 42.4, while Bihar ranks last with a GER (female) of 12.6. The Union territories, on the other

hand, are performing better, with Chandigarh topping the list with 70.4 GER for females.

Status of gross enrolment of girls in Northeast India :

In this conflict-ridden environment, women in northeast India have also undergone a positional shift from traditional homemakers and passive spectators to peacemakers and combatants (Choudhuri 2021). However, in specific ways, women in India's northeastern area excel their counterparts elsewhere in the nation in terms of mobility, life choices, personal space, and other factors (Choudhuri 2021). Table 3 shows the literacy status of females in the Northeastern states of India by displaying the state's rankings; only the states shown in bold are regarded to be in India's northeastern states, out of a total of 22.

Table 3. Female literacy and the gender gap in literacy rates

States/UTs of India	Rank in female literacy	Rank in the gender gap in literacy rate	States/UTs of India	Rank in female literacy	Rank in the gender gap in literacy rate
Kerala	1	2	Gujarat	12	14
Mizoram	2	3	Assam	13	9
Lakshadweep	3	5	Oissa	15	17
Tripura	4	7	Chhattisgarh	16	22
Andaman and Nikobar island	5	6	Madhya Pradesh	17	20
Goa	6	8	Andhra Pradesh	18	13
Nagaland	7	4	Arunachal Pradesh	19	11
Maharashtra	8	12	Uttar Pradesh	20	18
Meghalaya	9	1	Jammu and Kashmir	21	19
Manipur	10	10	Jharkhand	22	23
Uttarakhand	11	16	Bihar	23	24
			All India	14	15

Source: Census of India, 2011 (Provisional Data) and (Choudhuri, 2021).

In addition to the literacy rate and gender gap in literacy rates, several indicators demonstrate the status of education among girls, including gross enrolment rate and dropout rates.

Gross enrolment rate :

Gross enrolment rate is the total enrolment in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the eligible official

school-age population corresponding to the same level of education in a given school year (Educational Statistics at a Glance, 2018: p 11). The term 'school-age population' refers to the age group population officially associated with the appropriate educational level. Table 4 highlights the gross enrolment rate in girls of northeastern states of India.

Table 4. The gross enrolment rate in the northeastern state of India at different education level

States	Primary	Upper Primary	Secondary	Senior Secondary	Higher Education
Arunachal Pradesh	125.88	133.20	87.58	61.60	28.5
Assam	107.59	98.75	83.04	39.47	14.7
Manipur	132.90	132.94	92.52	64.81	33.1
Meghalaya	143.12	146.20	93.94	47.03	21.1
Mizoram	121.00	133.60	110.85	57.86	23.0
Nagaland	100.96	106.60	74.57	36.44	15.6
Sikkim	98.32	157.85	126.14	75.88	38.5
Tripura	108.36	130.33	120.91	41.53	14.0
All India	108.36	97.57	80.97	56.41	23.5

Source: Educational Statistics at a Glance, 2018

The enrollment in elementary education (primary and upper primary) is higher in northeastern states. It might be justified by the Mid-day meal scheme and free education in schools that attract pupils to the school at the elementary level. Furthermore, the '*Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*' of the Indian government encourages students to attend school by making elementary education accessible and mandatory.

Gender gap in high school and higher education in northeastern states :

In addition to understanding the state of the gross enrolment rate for girls, it is critical to comprehend the gender gap in the GER. This disparity will reflect the current state of girl empowerment via education and the remaining obstacles to achieving gender parity. The table below shows the gap in the northeastern states.

Table 5: Gender gap (GG) in GER in northeastern states of India

State	GG in class IX-X	GG in class XI-XII	GG in above class XII
Arunachal Pradesh	5.4	3.4	4.1
Assam	5.1	3.6	5.0
Manipur	3.4	6.9	3.4
Meghalaya	-0.9	-3.6	-1.6
Mizoram	-2.9	1.0	2.6
Nagaland	-2.1	1.6	1.8
Sikkim	-5.4	-1.9	5.7
Tripura	-0.3	6.9	3.6
India	8.2	6.1	3.2

Source: www.indiastat.com

Around the world, there is a significant gender difference in schooling, which can be attributed to a variety of intersecting identities. Poverty, geographic isolation, violence, disability, poor infrastructure, or belonging to a minority ethnolinguistic community are the most prominent reasons for the gender gap. According to the World Bank, parents in Africa, South Asia, and the Middle East are concerned about their daughters' safety as they travel to and from school (<https://p4hglobal.org/>). This could result from young girls being sexually harassed or assaulted on public transportation (data.unicef.org). Families have financial hardship due to a lack of free education, particularly at the higher levels. Boys and girls are both affected by a lack of income, but other variables at play keep more girls out of school. Gender equality is essential for eradicating

poverty and growing a country's economy. Women with more education are more likely to work in the traditional job market. As a result, they earn more considerable earnings, allowing them to pull themselves, their communities, and, ultimately, their countries out of poverty (worldbank.org).

As table 5 highlights, Meghalaya is performing well among the northeastern states, with a negative gender gap, which denotes more girls' enrolment over boys in education at all levels. It is seen that between IX to X class, all the northeastern states are doing well compared to the national gender gap. In the XI-XII level (i.e., the senior secondary level), six northeastern states, except Manipur and Tripura, are doing better than the national gap. However, in the case of above XII level, only two states are performing better than the national average, which indicates that the gender gap becomes wider at higher education level than the other lower educational level.

School dropout rates of girls :

A dropout is a student who leaves school before completing a school stage or at a non-terminal or intermediate point in a particular degree of education (Ministry of Human Resource Development). The high dropout rate is related to several situational factors and the resulting inequalities (Choudhuri 2021). These factors may include a combined family arrangement or the 'joint family system, traditional societies' cultural beliefs. It has been correctly observed that the neglect of women's interests is intimately linked to their exclusion from employment prospects, primary education, and property ownership (Sen, 2007). The following table shows the dropout of



the girl students from class I to class X in northeastern states of India.

Table 6. School dropout rates of girls in Northeastern states of India

State	School dropout rates of girls (percent)
Arunachal Pradesh	64.7
Assam	77.82
Manipur	55.71
Meghalaya	76.46
Mizoram	60.72
Nagaland	73.97
Sikkim	79.36
Tripura	62.34
All India	51.97

Source: Census of India 2011.

Table 6 highlights high dropout rates of northeastern states of India in comparison to the national average. Interestingly dropout rates in northeastern states for girls in school education level are higher than all India level. Dropout rates are high in Sikkim and low in Manipur among the northeastern states.

Conclusion :

This study looked into the level of female literacy in the northeastern states. Furthermore, a comparison of female literacy in the northeastern region to that of India has been attempted. In

northeastern states, enrolment in elementary (primary and upper primary) education is higher than in secondary and higher education in the rest of the country. Both the federal and state governments have recently expressed a desire to promote and support female involvement in all levels of education, notably higher education. The initiatives like 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan,' Right to Education Act (RTE), *Rashtriya Uchachatar Shiksha Abhiyan* (RUSA), Mid Day Meal, *Sukanya Samridhi Yojana*, *Arundhati Yojana* of Assam government, etc. are being taken to improve the performance in this direction. Though the North Eastern region had the advantage of having fewer societal barriers to female educational involvement before independence, the momentum and pace could not be sustained for various reasons, resulting in this dismal outcome. However, with political will and better policy implementation, we may reach the desired result of more female enrolment soon, focusing on better economic possibilities and job development. The sole criterion is that all initiatives be executed with the correct intent, consistency, and efficiency. The new education policy has a lofty ambition that is also timely. As a result of the renewed emphasis on the Act East Policy and the new industrial policy, demand for a better educated and trained workforce would increase. The moment is ripe to capitalize on the multiplier effects by stressing more gender equity in education at all levels.

End notes :

1. The literacy rate computed using the whole population in the denominator is now known as the 'crude literacy rate.' In contrast, the literacy rate derived using seven and above is known as the effective literacy rate.
2. The data provided are taken from the Educational Statistics at a Glance, 2018, published by Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of School Education & Literacy Statistics Division, Government of India. These data are available from pages number 48 to 53 in the report.

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Perception of Female Students over Select Factors Capable of Influencing Entrepreneurial Intention: An Empirical Study

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Abstract :

The growing participation of women in business and the slow increase of women owned enterprises have been noticed in different states of India. Entrepreneurship development has been given impetus in the recent past through the adoption of various policies and popularization of government sponsored schemes focusing women development. Women entrepreneurship development is relatively low in North Eastern Region of India as compared to western India or other advanced states of India. But the intention among the new generation female students of college and universities towards entrepreneurship as a career is not completely grim. There are both exogenous and endogenous factors capable of influencing entrepreneurial intention of college and university going female students of Silchar town of Assam. The study makes an assessment of the perception of college going female students about the personal and family factors capable of influencing entrepreneurial intention. Need for achievement, self-confidence and risk bearing capacity are found to be the three most triggering factors capable of generating entrepreneurial intention among the college going female students of Silchar town of Assam.

Keywords: *Self Confidence, Need for Achievement, Risk Bearing Capacity, Creativity, Family Support.*

Introduction :

Over the decades, the position of women in the society have been changed and for this, women put forward relentless efforts both individually and collectively in different ways. The prime objective of such struggles particularly after the adoption of new economic

policy by the Government of India is to establish self-reliance by women through economic independence (Sarania, 2015). In the last three decades, workforce participation rate of women has made tremendous strides in different sectors and entrepreneurship is no exception (Tiwari, 2017).



After the adoption of structural adjustment programme by the Government of India in early 1990s, there has been an increased thrust on entrepreneurship and this has been extended further in the current millennium (Boruah and Rajkonwar, 2018; Mishra, 2015). There has been a growing realization about the saturation level of job creation in the public sector and keeping in view the alarming rate of population growth entrepreneurship development may be considered as the viable option for the millennials (Cicœlik, 2014). The spread of higher education and audiovisual media especially during the last three decades has created growing awareness among the people in general and young generation in particular. The new generation women are more conscious about their rights and they in order to attain economic independence are prepared to adopt entrepreneurial ventures if not successful to crack a job either in public or private sector (Mathur, Shukla and Kukreja, 2018).

Even in Assam, women of today are much different than their counterparts of yester decades. The outlook and attitude have been changed to a great extent and education has made a significant contribution in this regard (Borah, 2014). The progress of women in the educational front is quite visible not only in terms of growth of employment but in terms of results as well (Sharma, 2020). Cachar district, is the largest district of South Assam and Silchar, the district headquarter may easily be termed as educational hub of south Assam where participation of both genders in the sphere of education is quite impressive. The outcome is the changed outlook towards life and come out of the age-old traditions to grab the

opportunities for livelihood on the one hand and strong desire for achievement on the other. The female students of the present decade irrespective of their educational background are also prepared to accept the challenges of this career but in the absence of general entrepreneurial culture like western India, there are multiplicity of factors often influence the entrepreneurial intention of college going female students of Silchar town of Assam.

To understand individuals' career intentions, various models have been identified. One of the prominent models is 'Theory of Planned Behaviour', which is used to describe intentions of human being. Intention of a person guides the planned action of an anticipated outcome. In Entrepreneurship studies, intentions have been considered the best predictor of individual behaviour (Krueger and Brazeal, 2000). Entrepreneurial intentions may be said as the belief of an individual which can lead to forming a concept relating to business and hence making a career choice in entrepreneurship (Rai, Prasad and Murthy, 2017). Basically, it refers to the intentions of an individual in pursuing self-employment as a career option in future (Gelderen, Brand and Praag, 2008). The belief of a person is linked with his/her behaviour and intentions to perform can be well predicted using attitude towards the behaviour, their subjective norms and perceived behaviour control (Ajzen, 1991). Intentions of a person may be influenced by several factors. Personal factors or traits dominate one's state of mind and hence their activities. Personality traits of a person dictate his/her career choice since behaviour of an individual is dominated by his/her personality traits (Tran and Von, 2016). The quality



of a person as a determinant of intentions was well sought by many researchers from the past hence a separate approach of entrepreneurship has been developed named 'Trait approach'. The theory states that it is the specific characteristics or personal traits of an entrepreneur which enables them to generate new ideas and start new ventures (Karabulut, 2016).

Review of Literature :

Some literatures have been referred to which outlines some important traits of an entrepreneur that influences the intention of adopting entrepreneurship.

Biswas and Verma (2021) found that need for achievement, proactiveness, risk taking propensity had significant and positive influence on entrepreneurial intentions. Vodã and Florea (2021) found that need for achievement had higher influence on entrepreneurial intention. Yasir, Liren and Mehmood (2019) found that people with personality traits like need for achievement, risk-taking propensity and innovativeness had higher inclination to become an entrepreneur. Chaudhary (2017) revealed that tolerance for ambiguity, self-confidence and innovativeness had significant influence on entrepreneurial intention whereas need of achievement and propensity to take risk was found to be statistically insignificant. Owoseni (2014) found that self-efficacy and achievement motivation was found having some impact on entrepreneurial intention. Similar result was found in the study by Indarti and Kristiansen (2003). Yusof, Sandhu and Jain (2007) found positive and significant influence of risk taking and innovativeness, ambiguity and need for achievement on entrepreneurial inclination.

However, Nimeshi (2016) found that ambiguity had negative influence on entrepreneurial intention.

Some studies have also been conducted following some models developed by Ajzen (1991), Shapero (1982), Krueger, et al. (2000), Kolveriod, et al. (2006). Yamina & Mohammed (2019) identified positive influence of two major factors i.e., Perceived Desirability and Feasibility on entrepreneurial intention. 'Desire to work' was also found to contribute towards building entrepreneurial intention. Taha, Ramlan and Noor (2017) found attitude, subjective norm, behaviour control and entrepreneurship teaching methodology to have strong relationship with entrepreneurial intention.

Several studies have highlighted the relationship between gender and influence of perception on entrepreneurial endeavours (Camelo-ordaz, Diane-Gonzalez and Navarro, 2016). Studies on women's intention on entrepreneurship highlight a crucial aspect about social pressure on females. The stereotypes and the roles attached to them by the society poses a great hindrance to their growth and advancement in their career (Ferri, Ginesti and Spanò, 2018). Adil and Chakranarayan (2020) concluded that educational support, attitude, relational support and self confidence had positive and significant impact on intentions of students about entrepreneurship in Bahrain. It was revealed that relational support from parents in the form of financial, emotional or motivational can help females to pursue entrepreneurship as career. But Bhandari (2006) found that parents' employment or income was unrelated with entrepreneurial intention. Princitta (2018) found that factors

influencing entrepreneurial intentions were not related significantly to gender. However, Vineela (2018) found positive correlation between gender and entrepreneurial intention. Nisha (2013) inferred that female students had moderate to low level of entrepreneurial intention. Khan (2007) also found similar results regarding the levels of intentions among female students. Karthik (2019) concluded that female students showed greater entrepreneurial intentions as they had better awareness about business related information as the survey was done on students of Business Education background.

The above review of the past literatures described the personality factors as well as some relational issues that influence the entrepreneurial intentions of a person. Some of the major and dominant personal and family factors influencing the intentions of a person to pursue entrepreneurship as a career has been outlined in the study.

Objectives :

1. To study the perception of female students pursuing college education in Silchar town of Assam over the select factors capable of influencing entrepreneurial intention.
2. To compare the perception of female students under consideration over the select factors

capable of influencing entrepreneurial intention across their stream of education, religion and type of schooling.

Hypotheses of the Study :

1. The perception of college going female students over the select factors capable of influencing entrepreneurial intention varies across their stream of education.
2. The perception of college going female students over the select factors capable of influencing entrepreneurial intention varies across their religion.
3. The perception of college going female students over the select factors capable of influencing entrepreneurial intention varies across their school background.

Research Methodology :

To attain the objectives formulated for the study, various literatures have been reviewed and some factors (personal and family) capable of influencing entrepreneurial intention of female students pursuing college education have been identified and selected. A total of 22 components influencing the entrepreneurial intention have been identified which are then grouped under seven (7) factors. Table 1 reveals the factors so selected.

Table 1: Select factors capable of influencing entrepreneurial intention

Categories	Factors	Previous Research Works
Personal Factors	Self Confidence	Ashokan and Suresh (2012); Potishuk and Kratzer (2017)
	Need for Achievement	Rasli, Khan and Malekifar (2013); Ismail, Ahmad and Gadar (2012); Tan, Pham and Bui (2021)
	Risk Bearing Capacity	Uddin and Bose (2012); Asamani and Mensah (2013)
	Creativity	Amofah, Saladrighes and Akwaa-Sekyi (2020); Karabulut (2016)



Categories	Factors	Previous Research Works
Family Factors	Emotional support from family members	Denanyoh, Adjei and Nyemekye (2015); Altinay, Madanoglu and Danielea (2012)
	Financial support from family members	Benzing, Chu and Kara (2009); Manolova, Brush and Edelman (2008)
	Background of family	Khuong and Huu An (2016); Kristiansen and Indarti (2004)

Source: Extracted by Researchers from Literature

The requisite data has been collected using survey method. A structured questionnaire has been drafted with twenty-two number of components capable of influencing entrepreneurial intention and a five point rating scale has been employed. Population includes female students of colleges located at Silchar town of Assam. A total of 103 number of respondents have participated in the online survey. After a careful scrutiny, only 94 questionnaires are found to be in order and hence the effective sample size of the study is ninety-four (94).

Mean and standard deviation have been applied to assess the degree of influence of the select factors capable of influencing entrepreneurial intention of female students under consideration. Apart of these, relevant inferential statistics have also been used to analyze the procured data.

Scope of the Study :

1. The study focuses on the perception of female students pursuing three-year degree course in the provincialized colleges of Silchar town of Assam offering three streams (Arts, Commerce and Science) of education.
2. The study is based only on select factors influencing intention of female students relating to entrepreneurship.

Limitations of the Study :

1. Data collection is based on sample survey and thus sampling error cannot be completely avoided.
2. The study is confined to only 22 number of components grouped under seven factors.
3. The findings are based on the perception of respondents and the element of biasness cannot be totally ruled out.

Result and Discussion :

Table 2 depicts the profile of the respondents; college wise, stream wise, religion wise and schooling wise. A total of 94 respondents have been surveyed from three colleges of Silchar town of Assam. About 56.4% respondents were from Cachar College, 24.5% from Gurucharan College and 19.1% from Radhamadhab College. Stream wise the respondents were 35.1%, 34% and 30.9% from Arts, Commerce and Science stream. 83% respondents have a religious background of Hinduism whereas only 17% follow Islam as religion. Further table 2 also shows the schooling background of the respondents. 43.6% of the respondents have Government schooling till 10th standard whereas 56.4% respondents come from private schooling background.

Table 2: Profile of Respondents

College	Frequency	Percent
Cachar College	53	56.4
Gurucharan College	23	24.5
Radhamadhab College	18	19.1
Total	94	100.00
Stream	Frequency	Percent
Arts	33	35.1
Commerce	32	34.0
Science	29	30.9
Total	94	100.0
Religion	Frequency	Percent
Hinduism	78	83.0
Islam	16	17.0
Total	94	100.0
Schooling	Frequency	Percent
Govt. School	41	43.6
Private School	53	56.4
Total	94	100.00

Source: Field Survey

Table 3 portrays arithmetic mean, rank and SD of responses collected for the factors influencing entrepreneurial intention among female students. The mean values depict that 'Need for Achievement' is the highly rated factor followed by 'Self Confidence' and "Risk Bearing Capacity". 'Background of family' is found to be the least rated factor. The standard deviation value shows least deviation in the responses over the factor 'Need for

Achievement' whereas maximum deviation could be found in case of 'Financial support from family members'.

Table 3: Factors Capable of Influencing Entrepreneurial Intention of College Going Female Students

Factors	Mean	Rank	Std. Deviation
Self Confidence	4.0213	2	0.5122
Need for Achievement	4.0851	1	0.4816
Risk Bearing Capacity	3.9681	3	0.4936
Creativity	3.9539	5	0.4903
Emotional support from family members	3.9575	4	0.6226
Financial support from family members	3.7270	6	0.6683
Background of family	3.6596	7	0.6612

Source: Field Survey

It cannot be denied that education brings significant change in the formation of attitude. The stream of education is even more important since students of a particular stream are more exposed to a particular subject while others are not. The course curriculum sometimes dictates the decision of the students about their future course of action. The nature and type of subjects taught in a particular stream are totally different from that of other streams and it may affect the thought process of the students as well as formation of opinion. Thus, the responses of the girl students over the issue are categorized and compared to have an insight over the variation of responses of girl students belonging from different streams of education.

Table 4: Stream wise perceived influence of select factors on entrepreneurial intention

Factors	Stream	Mean	Std. Deviation	F Value	p Value
Self Confidence	Arts	3.879	0.600	2.187	.118
	Commerce	4.063	0.467		
	Science	4.138	0.423		
Need for Achievement	Arts	3.970	0.542	1.489	.231
	Commerce	4.156	0.432		
	Science	4.138	0.450		
Risk Bearing Capacity	Arts	3.848	0.573	.885	.416
	Commerce	4.063	0.381		
	Science	4.000	0.496		
Creativity	Arts	4.020	0.527	1.068	.348
	Commerce	3.750	0.406		
	Science	4.103	0.472		
Emotional support from family members	Arts	3.929	0.686	.057	.944
	Commerce	3.865	0.661		
	Science	4.092	0.487		
Financial support from family members	Arts	3.758	0.760	.140	.870
	Commerce	3.719	0.656		
	Science	3.701	0.587		
Background of family	Arts	3.707	0.807	.057	.944
	Commerce	3.646	0.633		
	Science	3.621	0.510		

Source: Field Survey

Table 4 depicts the mean value and standard deviation of stream wise perception of college going girls about the factors capable of influencing entrepreneurial intention. The difference in the values of mean across the stream of education is barely more than the scanty over almost all the factors. In case of girls studying

subjects of arts stream, the value of mean is highest for the factor 'Creativity' and as such this factor has been ranked first while the value of mean is the lowest for the factor 'Background of family' and accordingly the same has been ranked 7th out of seven factors considered in this study. In case of girls pursuing subjects of commerce

stream, the value of mean is highest for the factor 'Need for Achievement' and as such this factor has been ranked first while the value of mean is the lowest for the factor 'Background of family' and accordingly the same has been ranked 7th out of seven factors considered in this study. In case of girls having the background of science stream, the value of mean is highest for the factor 'Self Confidence' and 'Need for Achievement' and as such this factor has been ranked first while the value of mean is the lowest for the factor 'Background of family' and accordingly the same has been ranked 7th out of seven factors considered in this study.

One way ANOVA has also been employed to test the formulated hypothesis. Table 4 clearly portrays that the p-value is much higher than 0.05 in case of all the factors and hence it may be concluded that at 5% level of significance, there exists no significant difference in the perception of girl students under consideration. To put it

differently, at 5% level of significance the perception of girl students under consideration do not vary significantly across their stream of education over all the factors.

Religion, language and community also cannot be altogether ignored while choosing a career. The belief system of a human being irrespective of gender is often governed by family and cultural ethos generally originated from various demographic factors including religion. Cultural specificities are among other factors also influenced by religion and the attitude formation is also dependent upon this and it is especially reflected in the behaviour of those who spent their early life at home with all the members of their family. The variation in responses over any social issue may be observed when the respondents are categorized on the basis of religion and it is in this context the perception of girl students over the subject chosen for the present research work are compared on the basis of their religion.

Table 5: Religion wise perceived influence of select factors on entrepreneurial intention

Factors	Religion	Mean	Std. Deviation	t value	p value
Self Confidence	Hinduism	4.021	0.508	.004	.997
	Islam	4.021	0.551		
Need for Achievement	Hinduism	4.081	0.493	-.173	.863
	Islam	4.104	0.434		
Risk Bearing Capacity	Hinduism	3.949	0.487	-.839	.404
	Islam	4.063	0.528		
Creativity	Hinduism	3.944	0.502	-.411	.682
	Islam	4.000	0.439		
Emotional support from family members	Hinduism	3.983	0.610	.874	.384
	Islam	3.833	0.689		

Factors	Religion	Mean	Std. Deviation	t value	p value
Financial support from family members	Hinduism	3.735	0.682	.258	.797
	Islam	3.688	0.614		
Background of family	Hinduism	3.675	0.667	.504	.615
	Islam	3.583	0.650		

Source: Field Survey

Table 5 depicts the mean value and standard deviation of religion wise perception of college going girls about the factors capable of influencing entrepreneurial intention. The difference in the values across the religion is barely more than the meagre over all the factors. In case of girls of Hindu community and in case of girls having belief and faith on Islam, the value of mean is highest for the factor ‘Need for Achievement’ and as such this factor has been ranked first while the value of mean is the lowest for the factor ‘Background of family’ and accordingly the same has been ranked 7th out of seven factors considered in this study. The hypothesis has been tested by employing independent two sample t test. Since the p-value is higher than 0.05, as is shown in table 5, it may be concluded that over all the factors, the perception of girl students at

5% level of significance does not vary significantly across their religion.

The role of schooling cannot be ignored in attitude formation and probably its importance is almost equivalent with the quality of parenting and family environment in shaping the attitude of a person since a significant period of life is spent in school and naturally the influence of nature and type of schooling will have a deep rooted bearing in the attitude and is expected to reflect in the behaviour to a certain extent. Psychologists all over the world are also already in consensus that most of the human behaviour are learned behaviour. It is against this backdrop, responses of girl students have been categorized and compared on the basis of their schooling to have deeper understanding over the issue.

Table 6: Schooling wise perceived influence of select factors on entrepreneurial intention

Factors	Schooling	Mean	Std. Deviation	t value	p value
Self Confidence	Govt. School	3.927	0.570	-1.585	.116
	Private School	4.094	0.455		
Need for Achievement	Govt. School	4.033	0.552	-.931	.354
	Private School	4.126	0.420		
Risk Bearing Capacity	Govt. School	3.890	0.478	-1.351	.180
	Private School	4.028	0.502		



Factors	Schooling	Mean	Std. Deviation	t value	p value
Creativity	Govt. School	3.829	0.448	-2.213	.029
	Private School	4.050	0.504		
Emotional support from family members	Govt. School	3.805	0.667	-2.129	.036
	Private School	4.075	0.565		
Financial support from family members	Govt. School	3.732	0.692	.060	.952
	Private School	3.723	0.656		
Background of family	Govt. School	3.480	0.703	-2.377	.020
	Private School	3.799	0.597		

Source: Field Survey

Table 6 depicts the mean value and standard deviation of perception of college going girls having government and private schooling background about the factors capable of influencing entrepreneurial intention. The difference in the values of mean and standard deviation across the type of schooling is barely more than the scanty over a good number of factors. In case of girls hailing from the government school background, and in case of girls coming from the background of schools run and managed under private sector, the value of mean is highest for the factor 'Need for achievement' and as such this factor has been ranked first while the value of mean is the lowest for the factor 'Background of family' and 'Financial support from family members' in case of government school background students and private school background students respectively, and thus the same has been ranked 7th out of seven factors considered in this study. The hypothesis has been tested by employing independent two sample t test. Since the p value is higher than 0.05, as is shown in table 6 for the

factors 'Self Confidence', 'Need for Achievement', 'Risk Bearing Capacity' and 'Financial support from family members', it may be concluded that over these four factors, the perception of girl students at 5% level of significance does not vary significantly across their religion. But over the remaining three factors i.e., 'Creativity', 'Emotional support from family members' and 'Background of family', the perceptions of girl students having the background of government school and the perception of girl students having the background of private schools differ significantly at 5% level of significance as is evident from p-values in table 6.

Conclusion :

The study reveals that the most influential factor generating entrepreneurial intention is the 'Need for achievement'. 'Self-confidence', 'Risk bearing capacity' and 'Emotional support from family members' are the next three factors respectively triggering entrepreneurial intention. The perception of female students over all the select factors do not vary significantly across their



stream of education and religious beliefs. The perception of college going female students over the influence of factors (viz, 'Creativity', 'Emotional support from family members' and 'Background of family') on entrepreneurial intention differ significantly across their type of schooling. Although the Government has announced numerous schemes for women entrepreneurship development in the recent past

and has also provided boost for capturing the unexplored potentialities of the region through support and training, educated girls hardly get allured in the absence of entrepreneurial culture and congenial industrial environment. The 'Need for achievement' and 'Self-confidence' are the dominant factors capable of triggering the entrepreneurial intention of college going girls under consideration.

Scope for future research :

1. Future researchers may conduct similar type of study by considering additional micro level factors keeping in view the specific factors.
2. Research may also be carried out in future by including macro-economic factors and socio-cultural factors.
3. Researchers in future may also conduct similar type of study by enlarging the sample size and covering both rural and urban areas.
4. Similar type of research work may be carried out on female students of post-graduation level of different universities.

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Decoding the Cinema of Rajni Basumatary: Thematic Concerns and Perspectives

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Abstract :

Since its inception, filmmaking has been a male centric universe. In this masculine domain, women have had to struggle really hard to make their presence felt. However, with the improvement in their social status and access to education and technical skills, they are gradually coming out of the shadows to assert their cinematic craft and vision. The release of Suprabha Devi directed *Nayanmoni* in 1984 was a defining moment for women filmmakers from Assam. Since then women directors from Assam, have been a regular presence in North eastern film circuit, exploring themes as diverse as women's identity, child abuse, local culture and traditions, history, rural lives and livelihoods etc. Straddling the genres of both Art and Popular Cinema, women directors from North East have time and again proved their filmmaking skills and earned both commercial and critical acclaim. The main purpose behind the paper is to examine the cinema of prominent film maker from Assam, Rajni Basumatary. Basumatary films namely *Raag: The Rhythm of Love* (2014) and *Jwlwi: The Seed* (2019) are subjected to intense scrutiny to arrive at an understanding of its thematic concerns and critical perspectives. The exercise is taken to explore the multi faceted aspects of the movies in question. The study uses the research methodology of Textual Analysis in order to open up the text to the possibilities of multiple interpretations.

Keywords : *Women's cinema, Insurgency, Infidelity, Loss, Feminism.*

Introduction :

The overtly patriarchal structure of the film industry is well known. Cutting across geographical boundaries from Hollywood, Bollywood to even Regional Cinema, the business of movie making has largely been a male affair. With the predominance of men in every department of filmmaking from cinematography, screenplay writing, directing, editing, distribution and

marketing, arrival of women into this field has been belated. Multiple obstacles in the form of lack of access to education, skills, economic resources and societal perceptions of female incompetence, women have had to struggle really hard to break into this male bastion. However, with the growing stature of women in the society and increased enrolment of women in film schools, a marked increase in the number of female filmmakers has



been noted. The glass ceiling has been shattered with the infiltration of women into almost every aspect of filmmaking from script and content writing, production, direction etc. In the recent decades, women directed films have not only garnered attention for their sheer brilliance but collected many awards and recognition. Mention may be made of Katherine Bigelow's Oscar winner *The Hurt Locker* (2008), Mira Nair's *Salaam Bombay* (1988), *Monsoon Wedding* (2001), *The Namesake* (2006) and *Queen of Katwe* (2016), Deepa Mehta's *Fire* (1996), Nandita Das directed *Manto* (2018), Anusha Rizvi's *Peepali live* (2010) etc. In the Regional Cinema of the Northeast, Assam in particular, women filmmakers are privileged, enjoying an equal footing with their male counterparts. Greater gender diversity is visible with more and more women filmmakers getting drawn to the lure of moving pictures. A feminization of regional cinema is fast taking shape, thanks to the efforts of filmmakers like Manju Bora, Santwana Bordoloi, Suman Haripriya, Rajni Basumatary, Reema Borah, Bobby Sharma etc. Of these, the name of *Village Rockstars* (2017) fame Rima Das deserves a special mention for placing Assamese Cinema on the global map, as India's official entry to the Oscars in 2019. In Assam, the initiation of women into filmmaking began as early as 1984. "The journey of the female Assamese filmmaker began with Suprabha Devi in the 1980's, when she made the film *Nayanmoni* (Apple of the Eye, 1984), a family drama revolving around a widow mother and her two sons -Parag and Arup" (Baruah, 1). The female engagement in Northeastern cinema is also visible in other areas

like script writing, music direction, production etc. Most of the films are in fact cinematic adaptations of works by women writers. Santwana Bordoloi directed *Adaijya* is based on eminent writer Indira Goswami's famous novel *Dontal Hatir Uiyekhowa Haoda*. Likewise, Manju Bora directed Bodo film *Dau Huduni Methai* is based on the novel *Dau Hudur Gaan (Song of the Horned Owl)* by Rashmi Rekha Bora. Again, Bobby Sharma Baruah has directed, produced and scripted her movies like *Adomya*, *Sonar Baran Pakhi and Mishing*. Reputed singer Tarali Sharma has composed music for Manju Bora directed films like *Laaz*, *Akashitorar kothare*, *Basundara*, *Abhijatri* etc. Further films like *Village Rockstars*, *Bulbul Can Sing* have been directed, written, produced by Rima Das. Even the cinematography is hers. This goes to show how women are taking over all aspects of filmmaking and shown that their cinema making skills are no more suspect.

In the realm of Cinema from Assam, Rajni Basumatary is a name to reckon with. From a Boro family in Rangapara, Assam, Basumatary's love for the visual art of storytelling goes back to her childhood interest in story writing. Her first directorial attempt was making corporate films in 1995. Basumatary forayed into commercial cinema as screenplay writer and actor in 2004 with Assamese film *Anuraag* which was much appreciated for its bold theme of marital infidelity. The disruption of conjugal harmony brought by the protagonists' extra marital affair culminating in the homecoming of the estranged husband was the thematic core of the movie. After a ten year long lull, Basumatary returned to film making in



2014, shifting gears to directing a tale of love and longing, in *Raag: The Rhythm of Love*. Her latest release is the 2019 Bodo film *Jwlwi: The Seed*. Not only in the directorial craft, Basumatary has also proved her mettle in the field of acting with cameo appearances in Bollywood movies like *Mary kom*, *Shaukeens*, *III Smoking Barrels* and *Shuttlecock Boys* to her credit. *GoodBye* with Amitabh Bachchan is in the pipeline. Of these, her role as Mary Kom's mother Mangte Akham Kom in Priyanka Chopra starrer *Mary Kom* remains the most significant. As a filmmaker, Basumatary's forte lies in her linguistic expertise in both Bodo and Assamese allowing her to weave cinematic narratives in both the mediums. At a time when Bodo cinema is still in its nascent stage, Basumatary's effort is inspirational for aspiring filmmakers of Bodo cinema too.

Objective :

The main intent of my paper is to critically examine the cinema of prominent woman filmmaker from Assam, Rajni Basumatary with reference to two of her movies *Raag: The Rhythm of Love* and *Jwlwi: The Seed*. The paper seeks to examine the thematic concerns of the movies and their wider implications in the social context. Simultaneously, it also sheds light on how different tools of filmmaking add to the construction of meaning.

Methodology :

The methodological framework of textual analysis has been used here to explore the ideas embedded in the chosen film texts. Using textual analysis for film analysis involves watching the films in their entirety to discover the thematic concerns and critical perspectives. "When we perform

textual analysis on a text, we make an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of that text" (McKee, 1). Textual analysis works by uncovering the hidden meanings of a text. Meaning exists both at the primary denotative level and the secondary connotative level. 'Denotation is generally defined as the "literal" meaning of a sign; whereas the connotations are the socio-cultural or personal associations' (Chandler 141). In a film text, various tools from lighting, dialogue, camera angle to shot selection- all contribute to the construction of meaning. Using a viewer centric approach, textual analysis marks a shift from the producer to the consumer of a text as the meaning maker. Both the films are subjected to intense scrutiny, even if it involves multiple viewing, to elicit meanings about the text in general.

Discussion :

Basumatary's films are known for their feminist orientation in that they take a close look at the workings of the female heart that very often go unnoticed. A woman's quest for identity is at the heart of *Raag: The Rhythm of Love*. With Zerifa Wahid in the lead, *Raag* foregrounds the predicament of Radhika, trapped in a loveless marriage. The marital happiness of Radhika and Alok comes under strain with increasing work pressures on Alok. Boorish, uncaring and a workaholic, Alok can hardly spare time for Radhika or care about her emotional needs. His adamant refusal to start a family until his career takes off puts her motherhood dreams on hold. An accomplished musician, Radhika doesn't receive any moral support from Alok to pursue her musical dreams either. Alok's indifference



pushes Radhika into a state of shrieking loneliness. It is at this juncture, Radhika meets Iqbal, a painter and develops a bond strengthened by their mutual love for art. Radhika does her bit to bail Iqbal out of his financial crises by arranging an exhibition of his rare paintings, assisted in this humanitarian gesture by Partho, her admirer from college days. Meanwhile, the shocking disclosure of Alok's infidelity leaves Radhika totally shattered. All along, Alok has been in a relationship with his colleague Nandini, now pregnant with his unborn child. The climactic scene where Radhika and Partho perform a *Jugalbandi* on stage with Iqbal seated amongst the audience with a four year old girl generates a lot of curiosity. Nothing is revealed about Radhika's ultimate destiny. Whether Radhika walks out of Alok's life to start afresh remains only in the realm of speculation. Again, whether it is Iqbal or Partho who becomes a part of her journey remains unknown. Whether the repentant Alok is accepted by Radhika and given a second chance is deliberately left inconclusive. Basumatary remains tight lipped and non committal on these issues preferring instead to let the viewers draw their own conclusions. Textual analysis presupposes the absence of an authorial agency. It encourages the audience/reader freedom to interpret the cinematic text from his perspective generating in the process a plurality of meanings. Making sense of its ending is a privilege that Basumatary grants to the spectator. The plot device of leaving the film open ended is a stylistic novelty in the realm of Assamese Cinema and Basumatary deserves full credit for incorporating this stylistic innovation into Assamese cinema. In debunking the 'happily ever after' endings of

popular cinema and opening up the narrative to multiple interpretations, Rajni Basumatary endorses the modernist approach to cinema. Rajni's technique is reminiscent of Shavian discussion plays that see art not as mere consumption but active engagement. It makes an intellectual appeal and stimulates varied responses. And this is very true of *Raag* as well. The similarities with Ibsen's *A Doll's House* where the protagonist Nora shuts the door behind her husband Helmer who never valued her and walks away are also too conspicuous to be missed. The lack of closure is a calculated move on the part of the Director. And this is what works in Basumatary's favour. It is a risk well worth taking as the success of the film across theatres in major cities like Bangalore, Delhi and Guwahati bear ample witness to. Her debut movie as a writer *Anuraag* also touches upon the theme of marital conflicts. While *Anuraag* culminates with the restoration of marital bliss and stability by duly eliminating the other woman, *Raag: The Rhythm of Love* takes a different stance. Radhika returning to her husband is only one of the possibilities as the narrative does not rule out the prospect of Radhika walking out of his life and embarking on a new journey. While *Anuraag* consolidates the institution of marriage, *Raag: The Rhythm of Love* exposes its fragility.

As a filmmaker, Rajni Basumatary loves to reinvent herself, refusing to be bracketed within genres. In her next venture, *Jwlwi: The Seed*, Basumatary explores a theme strikingly different from *Raag*. Both the worlds of *Raag* and *Jwlwi* bear nothing in common other than their shared concern with women's suffering. The romanticised image of the designer Saree clad heroine of *Raag*



gives way to the simple and rustic village women engaged in the simple concerns of everyday life. The parks and posh city locales are replaced by village greens and cobbled roads. Rajni Basumatary seamlessly straddles these realms portraying both these worlds with a convincing intensity. The effortless ease with which Rajni depicts village and city comes from her mixed exposure to both rural and urban upbringing. Basumatary's films thus appeal to both the elite and the rural. The credibility of Basumatary art lies in her experimentation with cinematic form and content. If *Raag* was about love and betrayal, *Jwlwi* treats a subject with larger socio-political implications. Basumatary breaks new grounds by attempting the unexplored theme of insurgency on screen. Bollywood's experiment with insurgency driven movies is well known. Be it Kashmiri insurgency, the Khalistan movement, the LTTE militancy, Maoist struggle; Bollywood has shown it all in films as diverse as *Maachis*, *Madras cafe*, *Mission Kashmir* etc. However, the ten decade long Bodo insurgency has languished in obscurity. Basumatary's *Jwlwi: The Seed* fills up this void by reproducing on screen the horror of the Bodo unrest of the 90's. By highlighting the dark days of insurgency and draconian AFSPA (Armed Forces Special Powers Act), Basumatary invites public attention to an issue hitherto ignored by mainstream cinema.

Not only by treading on an unknown thematic terrain, but by investing it with feminist overtones, Rajni Basumatary challenges the prevailing cinematic representations in more ways than one. Insurgency narratives filtered through the masculine gaze are largely structured around

the conflict with the attendant paraphernalia of bombs and bullets. Ethnic nationalism and the right to self determination remain the prime focus of attention. However, the internal turmoil of women who are the worst victims of ethnic conflict hardly makes it to the screen. Basumatary breaks this cultural erasure by placing the untold stories and unheard voices in the cinematic domain. Speaking from the vantage point of her personal experience, Basumatary becomes her own story teller. In an interview to *The Wire*, Basumatary says "I have observed that during the separatist movement, it is the women who suffer the most. When a man becomes a fugitive in the eyes of law or loses his life, he would have seen it coming as it was his decision to join the armed struggle-whether due to genuine concerns for the oppressed or due to his misguided dreams. But the women are invariably left behind at home to fend for themselves-unprepared and caught off guard. Most of the time they are unskilled and untrained. They find themselves having to look after not only their children but also oftentimes their ageing in laws. These unimaginable hardships have broken yet made them strong; hopeless yet eternally hopeful for their better tomorrow. This fascinated me and made me write *Jwlwi* from the women's point of view."

She further adds "Being a victim myself, I thought no one could tell this story better than me. Of course, the story of *Jwlwi* is not exactly my family's story but the story of many households in the region in the last three decades. It was important for me to tell this story because there are not many mainstream films made on the subject. As I was directly affected, I thought that



no one could tell this story better than me. The film has also proven to be cathartic for me” (Basumatary). On a personal level, *Jwlwi* gives her a sense of emotional closure to the trauma of losing two of her nephews and coping with the sudden disappearance of her own brother.

The narrative of *Jwlwi: The Seed* relies on the connotative potential of visual motifs to highlight its key thematic concerns. The opening shot of an army truck patrolling the streets builds an atmosphere of uneasy calm and simmering tension, setting the tone for the grim proceedings. With its narrative focus firmly positioned on the struggles of a young widow, Alaari, *Jwlwi* effectively uses the cinematic tools of lighting, dialogue, shots and framing in the construction of meaning. Hardly, two or three scenes into the movie, a close up shot of a handful of freshly reaped grains appears suggesting the significance of the seed symbol in the narrative. Though at the primary level of signification, it refers to the seedlings that breed crops, at the deeper level, it conjures up the ideas of reproduction and continuity. After the premature death of both Alaari’s husband and son Erak, her grandson-Duimali is the sole surviving seed of her family tree. To preserve and nurture it for the continuity of her clan becomes her only reason to live. The shift in gender roles as an outcome of insurgency also constitutes a thematic subtext of the movie. Faced with livelihood challenges, Alaari assumes the traditionally masculine role of the provider and bread earner of the family. Shots of Alaari chopping firewood, selling the farm produce and hand woven garments, taking stock of the crop harvest are interspersed in the narrative to show how she

‘man’s up’ to meet the challenges. In this context, what Judith Butler says of gender roles appears pertinent. According to Butler, ‘gender is not something one is, it is something one does, an act, or more precisely, a sequence of acts, a verb rather than a noun, a “doing” rather than a “being”’ (Butler 25). Further, the societal construction of the single woman as sexually available and desiring constitutes is yet another subtext of the movie. Basumatary’s counters this view by showing how entirely baseless Mira’s suspicions of an illicit affair between her husband and widowed Alaari are. A play of shot reverse shot where the camera’s gaze alternates between close up shots of Alaari and her half built house aptly captures Alaari’s inner turmoil even as images from the past roll out. The flashback technique is used in the film as shots constantly alternate between the past and present to create the haunting sense of loss. Written codes like 1996 and 2014 used at the beginning and end of the movie give the viewer a sense of the passage of time. Within this span, the narrative keeps shifting back and forth in time. With the image of the half built house waiting completion for years as a consistent presence till the end, it becomes a character in itself. No more a mere concrete structure, it becomes a poignant reminder of Alaari’s economic hardships and death of dreams. Again, the film also throws light on the psychological impact of insurgency on young minds - a less explored area on screen. *Jwlwi: The Seed* scores on this point subtly depicting how his father’s death leaves Erak emotionally scarred for life. The army official’s sympathetic pat on his shoulder is jerked off by Erak who returns the former’s gesture with an angry glare. The semiotics



of body language here suggests the birth of the rebel in Erak and his disillusionment with the state machinery. Close up shots of books on Mao Zedong and Che Guevara on his table become visual cues of the growth of his revolutionary idealism and initiation into the underground outfit. *Mise en scene* or the art of 'putting together in a scene' (Lewis 55) in order to highlight a point of view also generates specific meanings in the text. The way Basumatary puts together the scene where her son Erak gives away the guitar to his friends is loaded with connotative significance. Shot in a single frame with Erak and his friends, it symbolises Erak giving up his musical dreams to meet the more pressing demands of liberation and autonomy of his land and its people. On the contrary, the pursuit of musical passions by his friends continues against the backdrop of violence holding out the promise of hope amidst hopelessness. The effective use of dialogue or rather the lack of it is the highlight of the movie. As Alaari's husband bleeds to death at the marketplace, Alaari screams and wails. But the director intentionally opts for the language of silence to articulate the entire scene. The audio is turned mute to capture the tragic intensity of the moment and create the maximum emotional impact. By removing the linguistic barrier between the screen and the spectator, the audience is encouraged to totally immerse in the moment. The clever use of lighting also enhances the effectiveness of the narrative. Low key lightening is used to dramatic effect to shoot the scenes indoors whereas the outdoor scenes are shot in broad daylight. As tension builds up, the lighting colour scheme also takes on darker tones.

Erak's flight from his home and the army takes place under the cover of darkness. The use of extremely low key lighting creates suspense and tension. During indoor shoots, lighting props like the lamps and the fireplace keep the surroundings submerged in partial darkness illuminating only the characters. In the ultimate analysis, the film remains a tribute to womanhood highlighting how Alaari overcomes multiple challenge with fortitude.

A slice of history captured in camera, the Bodo film appeals to a larger audience by its use of English subtitles as also the use of mobile projections and digital platform for screening. Beset with financial constraints, the business of filmmaking is lagging behind in Assam. However, to tide over this crisis and not compromise on the quality of her cinematic vision, Basumatary resorts to Crowd funding taking a cue from many of her contemporaries like Bhaskar Hazarika, Kenny Basumatary etc.

No wonder, the film has been hugely appreciated at various national and international film festivals winning Best Film (Other than Assamese) Prag Cine Award, Best Screenplay at the Sailadhar Baruah Memorial Film Award, Special Jury Mention for Direction at Guwahati International Film Festival, besides being the official selection to Indian Film Festival of Melbourne and Tehran International Cine Fest, to name only a few. By picking up a theme as formidable and demanding as insurgency for cinematic treatment and doing full justice to its execution, Rajni Basumatary has proven her credentials as a filmmaker and silenced critics who refuse to grant female filmmakers due recognition.



Conclusion :

In the realm of cinema from North East India, Rajni Basumatary has carved a niche for herself. Having proved her expertise in both commercial and Art House cinema; dabbling in content which is both serious and romantic; with an ability to draw the elite and rural folks alike across age groups young and old to the movie

theatres, what strikes us most about her craft is its versatility. With yet another Bodo movie *Gorai Pakhri (Wild Swans)* taking shape under her directorial vision, Rajni Basumatary has indeed emerged as a name to reckon with in regional cinema and an inspiration for those women all set to take the plunge into the fascinating world of movie making.

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Role of Financial Institutional Support For Women's Participation In Non-Farm Sector :A Case Study of Barak Valley in Assam

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Abstract :

Empowering women has been neglected for a long which is one of the most important factors and is now being discussed in nearly all developing countries. Lack of resources, poverty, low and/or unpaid labour in the agricultural sector among other factors, are the main problems for the underdevelopment of women in an economy. Economically empowering women is essential both to realize women's rights and to achieve broader development goals such as economic growth, poverty reduction, health, education and welfare. In today's world, there is an increasing trend of non-farm sectors contribution in the economy where it is observed that women are the predominant participants and contributors in this sector. Yet, the sector itself faces several constraints affecting the extent of its growth and development potential in the region. Though the percentage of female worker is increasing in the form of household industries and other workers as against cultivators, however, several barriers are there which needs to be highlighted to formulate the relevant policies towards better empowerment of women and its increasing participation of women in the non-farm sector of Barak valley. In Barak Valley too, women generally face many difficulties in participating in non-farm economic activities for which the government and non-government agencies should come forward with financial and other supports for the welfare of the women in the society.

Key Words: *Non-Farm Sector, Women Empowerment, Financial Institutions, Institutional Support, Non-Government Agencies.*

Introduction :

Historically the works of women have mostly been confined to the homestead due to culture, religion, and social restrictions. In a

complex society with gender bias, women have been the victims of religious prejudices, superstitions, oppression and various kinds of discrimination. However, with the change of the



socio-economic situation of the country, women are breaking through the traditional norms and coming forward to participate in economic and development activities outside their homestead. The role of women in different economic activities is important in determining their living standard, dependency burden and saving pattern in households. In today's world, in the strategies of both rural and urban inhabitants, though agriculture is the most inclusive growth sector of the Indian economy, yet it is observed that with time non-agriculture or non-farm income and employment opportunities have emerged. The non-farm sector is no longer residual but an emerging driver of economic development and transformation. However, while defining the non-farm sector (NFS), it is worth mentioning here that non-farm activity is used synonymously with non-agricultural activity. The non-farm sector includes all economic activities namely, household and non-household manufacturing, handicrafts, processing, repairs, construction, mining and quarrying, trade, etc. In other words, the non-farm sector may be defined as comprising all those activities associated with waged work or self-employment in income-generating activities (including income in-kind) that are not agricultural but which generate income (including remittances etc). Alike other parts of the country, Barak valley is also witnessing diversification from the agricultural sector to the non-farm sector which in turn, can pave the way for economic development. In rural and urban areas of Barak Valley, non-farm activities (NFS) have been part and parcel of the household economy in recent times and women are the predominant participants and contributors in this

sector. With its more significant potential of employment generation, the NFS can not only solve the unemployment problem but can also lead to the increased access of women to resources and employment opportunities, thereby empowering them. However, women generally face many difficulties in participating in non-farm economic activities for which the government and non-government agencies should come forward with financial and other supports for the welfare of the women in the society.

Objective :

Considering the important role played by women along with the financial obstacles or difficulties faced by them in non-farm sector, the present study aims to explore the significance of financial institutional support for women's participation in non-farm sector of Barak Valley.

Materials and Methods :

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Secondary data has been collected from different publications of Governmental agencies like Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Assam, Directorate of agriculture, etc., and also non-governmental agencies. Primary data is collected from sample survey. The data for the present study has been collected by using multi-stage random sampling method. Out of twenty seven blocks in the concerned study area (Cachar consisting of fifteen blocks, Karimganj having seven blocks and Hailakandi with five blocks), number of blocks has been selected in the ratio of 3:2:1 from Cachar, Karimganj, and Hailakandi districts purposively on the consideration of availability of both urban and rural population. Sample size of atleast 50

households has been surveyed from each selected block of Barak Valley from both urban and rural areas. That is, sufficient care has been taken to select samples equally distributed between urban and rural area. Total 315 sample household has been selected from both rural and urban areas of Barak Valley.

Discussion :

The role of financial institutional support for women's participation in non-farm sector of Barak valley in Assam is discussed under the following headings:

A. Review of Literature :

Financial literacy can empower women to develop a financial identity even with their household savings and help them access formal credit for gainful occupation, giving them economic freedom and power. As such, this section presents some of the reviews of studies that deal with the role of financial institutions in empowering women. Singh (1990), in this study, emphasised that over the performance of the rural credit institutions in the nineties, which are likely to be functioning in an ambience characterised by a pre-eminence of non-farm activities, a trend towards fragmentation within agriculture with the consequence of the emphasis on high value-added crops and increased diversification. As per Shivamaggi (1997), there is now a long-overdue focus on infrastructure development without which it is not possible to achieve and sustain higher growth rates of the Indian economy. This is a multi-dimensional and challenging task. Datta, 2003, in her study-From Development to Empowerment: The Self-Employed Women's Association in India, analysed the strategies that SEWA (Self-Employed Women's Association),

which was formed in 1972 in Ahmedabad and is located in the state of Gujarat in western India, has used to mobilise and empower self-employed women in India, using materials and data collected on a field visit in 1998. Deivam (2008) highlighted in this study that the empowerment of women through Self Help Groups (SHGs) would lead to benefits not only to the individual woman and women groups but also the families and community as a whole through collective action for development. The present article tries to analyse the efforts of Tamilnadu in making the Self Help Groups an identity of women empowerment. The Government of Tamilnadu directs self Help Groups in Tamilnadu through the Tamilnadu Women's Development Project known as MahalirThittam, Women Plan. Moodie (2008) argued that, rather than representing a new paradigm for women's empowerment, microcredit had become one of several possible platforms from which rural Rajasthani women articulate their concerns about caste, poverty, and the burden of raising daughters.

B. Profile of Barak Valley Region of Assam :

The Barak valley (also known as South Assam) mainly comprising three plain administrative districts of the State - namely Cachar, Karimganj, and Hailakandi has a total area of 6922 sq. km and is situated between Longitude 92° 15' and 93° 15' East and Latitude 24° 8' and 25° 8' North. Administratively, the Barak Valley region is composed of 27 Blocks. Cachar district owns 15 community development blocks, Karimganj 7 blocks while Hailakandi district comprises 5 blocks. The demographic profile of Barak Valley can thus be seen through the Census Report 2011 as shown in the following tabular form:

Table 1: Population by Area & Sex, Sex Ratio and Density of Population of Barak Valley

Name of the State/District	Area	Agricultural Labourers			Household Industries			Other Workers		
		Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
Assam	Total	15	13	21	4	2	8	47	48	43
	Rural	2	15	23	4	2	8	40	40	38
	Urban	2	2	3	4	2	8	92	93	86
Cachar	Total	11	11	14	4	2	11	65	65	65
	Rural	13	13	16	4	2	11	58	58	61
	Urban	1	1	1	2	2	6	95	96	92
Karimganj	Total	17	16	18	4	2	13	55	55	56
	Rural	18	18	20	5	2	14	51	51	53
	Urban	2	2	1	2	1	6	96	96	92
Hailakandi	Total	15	15	12	3	1	11	51	48	65
	Rural	16	16	13	3	1	11	48	44	63
	Urban	1	1	1	3	1	10	94	96	88
BV Total	Total	43	42	44	11	5	35	171	168	189
	Rural	47	47	49	12	5	36	157	153	177
	Urban	4	4	3	7	4	22	285	288	272

Source: Census 2011

It is observed from the table 1 that in terms of demographic profile, Cachar owns the largest share in respect of many characteristics like Population by Area, population density. The total female population is also more in Cachar followed by Karimganj and Hailakandi districts respectively.

C. Percentage Distribution of Non-Farm Workers in Barak Valley :

Distribution of non-farm workers both male and female in terms of percentages is depicted in

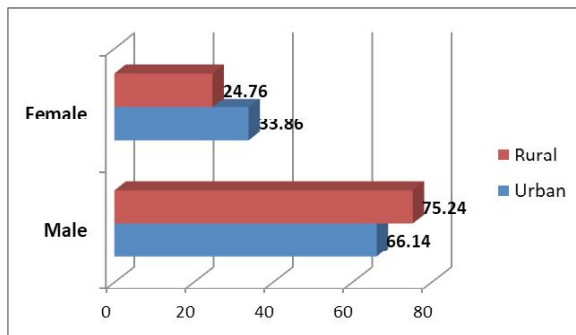
the following table 2 and accordingly represented graphically through figure 1.

Table 2: Percentage Share of Non-Farm Workers Population Barak Valley

Populatiobn	Barak Valley	
	Urban	Rural
Male	66.14	75.24
Female	33.86	24.76
Total	100	100

Source: Scholar's field survey, 2019

Graph 1 : Percentage Share of Non-Farm Workers



It is evident from table 2 and figure 1 that both male and female are participating in the non-farm sector of Barak Valley in a large number. In urban areas of the region, the male participation rate is 66.14 per cent, while 33.86 per cent of females are engaged in the non-farm sector. Similarly, in the rural areas of Barak Valley, 75.24 per cent of males and 24.76 per cent of females participate in the non-farm sector. This indicates that female participation as against male involvement in the non-farm sector is lower in both urban and rural areas of Barak Valley. However, the percentage of female workers in the non-farm sector is more in urban areas than that of rural areas in Barak Valley, which is 33.86 in urban areas and 24.76 in rural areas of Barak Valley. Moreover, compared to female workers, the percentage of male workers in the non-farm sector is more in rural areas than in urban regions in Barak Valley, which is 75.24 in rural areas and 66.14 per cent in urban areas of Barak Valley, respectively.

D. Financial Institutional Support :

Financial institutions play a pivotal role in every economy. They are regulated by a central

government organization for banking and non-banking financial institutions. These institutions help in bridging the gap between idle savings and investment and its borrowers, i.e., from net savers to net borrowers. There are a number of investment options available at the disposal of individuals as well as businesses. But in the current swift changing environment, it is very difficult to choose the best option. Almost all financial institutions (banking or non-banking) have an investment advisory desk that helps customers, investors, businesses to choose the best investment option available in the market according to their risk appetite and other factors, particularly to women entrepreneurs who are coming forward for investment. Financial institutions help small and medium scale enterprises set up themselves in their initial days of business. They provide long-term as well as short-term funds to these companies. The long-term fund helps them in the formation of capital, and short-term funds fulfill their day to day needs of working capital.

However, in Barak Valley, the financial requirements of modern businesses which operate in a highly competitive and ever-changing business environment are factors at play that hinder women from enabling them to run small and medium enterprises successfully. Readiness to give credit facilities to women entrepreneurs by lending institutions, as well as the amount of loan advanced, is determined by the value of collaterals, credit repayment records, the prevailing interest rates and the level of equity held in the accounts in the form of savings, which women account holders rarely possess. Hence, the lack of aggressive mobilization of business funds from financial

lending institutions resists the participation of women in non-farm activities of the Barak valley region. If we look at the trend of institutional

support in delivery of loans to both rural and urban women as obtained from financial institution in Barak Valley, the following observations is noticed.

Table 3: Extent of Financial Beneficiaries in Barak Valley

Population	Name of Schemes	Percentage of Beneficiaries in Urban Areas of Barak Valley		Percentage of Beneficiaries in Rural Areas of Barak Valley	
		Male (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
2010-11	PMEGP	89.53	10.47	95.35	4.65
2011-12	PMEGP	87.18	12.82	89.38	10.63
2012-13	PMEGP	76.97	23.03	87.61	12.39
2013-14	PMEGP	71.62	28.38	87.76	12.24
2014-15	PMEGP	78.73	21.27	87.6	12.4
2015-16	PMEGP	72.6	27.4	81.09	18.91
2016-17	PMEGP	73.19	26.81	90.24	9.76
2017-18	PMEGP, SVAYEJ	79.9	20.1	91.25	8.75
2019-20	PMEGP	85.07	14.93	85.9	14.1

Source: DICC Cachar, Karimganj, Hailakandi

Table 3 shows that the percentage of beneficiaries from the schemes as mentioned namely, PMEGP (Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme) and SVAYEJ (Swami Vivekananda Assam Youth Empowerment Yojana) varies for women in both the rural and urban areas of Barak Valley. The extent of financial support is more for

urban women than that of rural women through the figure is not encouraging when compared to male figures. The following ANOVA tables depict the variation in the extent of rural and urban financial beneficiaries. Here one way ANOVA test is done to see the variance in the extent of beneficiaries along with different dimensions.

Table 4: One Way ANOVA for comparison of Mean Numbers of Beneficiaries for Urban Male and Females

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	98841.8	1	98841.8	1.86	0.19	4.41
Within Groups	954169.4	18	53009.41			
Total	1053011	19				

Table 4 shows the one way ANOVA for comparison of mean numbers of beneficiaries for urban males and females. It is found from table 4 that financial support goes in favour of urban males in comparison to urban females.

Table 5: One Way ANOVA for comparison of Mean Numbers of Beneficiaries for Rural Male and Females

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	4112338	1	4112338	2.02	0.17	4.41
Within Groups	36710109	18	2039450			
Total	40822447	19				

Table 5 shows the one way ANOVA for comparison of mean numbers of beneficiaries for rural males and females. It is observed from table 5 that the financial support variation is there between rural males and females where rural males are again at better position than rural females.

Table 6: One Way ANOVA for comparison of Mean Numbers of Beneficiaries for Urban and Rural Females

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	20544.05	1	20544.05	0.97	0.34	4.41
Within Groups	379464.9	18	21081.38			
Total	400009	19				

Table 6 gives the one-way ANOVA to compare the mean numbers of beneficiaries for urban and rural females. Table 6 shows that the extent of financial support is more for urban women than that of rural women through the figure is not encouraging when compared to male figures.

In the respective analysis, it is observed that there is a significant difference in the extent of financial beneficiaries under different schemes implemented by the government, particularly the female beneficiaries, as against male beneficiaries and also between urban female beneficiaries as against of rural female beneficiaries.

The concept of community collateral has emerged as important in recent years. The self-help-groups (SHGs) present a viable mode of arranging community collaterals. The SHGs in addition to serving the needs of individual small-scale finances also resolve some specific problems associated with small-scale production of the non-farm sector. More precisely, in the era of globalisation, the Self-help group (SHG) has emerged and playing a vital role as a source of the micro-finance institution, which can pave the way for increased participation of women in the non-farm sector. Table 7 reveals that in 2017-18,



the number of women SHG constitutes 39.32 per cent in Barak Valley which is represented in the following table:

Table 7: District-wise Self-Help Group (SHG) in Barak Valley, 2017-18

District	No. of women SHG formed		No. of SHG provided with Revolving Fund	
	Target	Achievement	Target	Achievement
Cachar	196	473	260	587
Hailakandi	77	278	0	112
Karimganj	298	922	49	767
Assam	3418	4255	4514	6330
Barak Valley (%)	16.71	39.32	6.85	23.16

Source: Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Assam

The data in the table 7 shows that as against the target of 6.85 per cent regarding the number of SHG provided with the revolving fund, the achievement is 23.16 per cent, indicating a positive step towards women's financial accessibility.

Results :

It is evident from the field study that there is a significant difference in the area of financial beneficiaries under different schemes implemented by the Government, particularly, the female beneficiaries as against male beneficiaries and also between urban female beneficiaries as against of rural female beneficiaries in the region of Barak valley. The extent of financial support is more for urban women than that of rural women through the figure is not encouraging compared to male figures. Hence, financial inclusion as a method of offering banking and financial services to the women workforce is a priority in the region to promote and increase their participation in different

non-farm activities. From banking to investments and beyond, the options will become vast and varied for female workers through financial inclusion. Extending adequate financial support through formal financial institutions to women groups in the region may eliminate the various barriers providing economically priced financial services to them to be financially independent without depending on charity or other means of getting funds that are not sustainable. Despite significant advances in institutional inclusion for both men and women in recent years, women still lag behind in access and usage of financial products and services, thereby, urging for more institutional support for their sustainable participation in non-farm sector.

Conclusions :

Since women are moving out of the low productivity and non-remunerative agricultural sector, an increase in employment opportunities in the non-agricultural sector is necessitated, both in rural and urban areas. Today in the era of globalisation, the increase in women's workforce participation rate, particularly in the non-farm sector, is a matter of concern and has implications for their overall economic empowerment. There is an urgent need to increase decent work and productive employment with more opportunities for women in different sectors in the general and non-farm sector, in particular, thereby improving the employability of women so that they can reap the benefits of economic growth, thus entailing social and economic stability and socially-sustainable development. Efforts are needed to identify appropriate and effective institutional vehicles for developing non-farm sector policy and

interventions for creating employment opportunities for the women workforce. One of the most important roles of organizations and institutions would be to link the activities of women entrepreneurs in the non-farm sector with external markets and supply services. They (women) would become the driving force towards development,

develop a sense of shared ownership and become managers of their development initiatives. In this regard, sustainable financial institutions geared to better serving the needs of medium-, small-, and micro-enterprises including sound and efficient banking systems and capital markets play a significant role.

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Subalterns in the Anti-British Struggle: Analysing the contribution of Mangri Orang

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Abstract :

Many women played significant roles in the Anti- British Movement though their efforts to lead the movement were often overshadowed by men. However, women freedom fighters, who made their selfless sacrifices for the cause of the nation, did sometimes get attention in popular historical narratives, for their contributions towards the success of the Indian freedom struggle. There were several freedom fighters from the tea garden community who actively participated in the anti-British movement. In this paper, an attempt is made to study the contribution of Mangri Orang, a largely unsung freedom fighter of India from the Adivasi Tea Community, who gave her life for the cause of India's Independence movement. It is a historical truth that Mangri Orang, who also experienced sexual harassment in the hands of the British masters, was a martyr of the Non-Cooperation Movement in Assam. This paper is a historical analysis of the sacrifice of Mangri Orang who belonged to a subaltern section of the society. The research paper is also largely based on secondary data.

Keywords: *Anti-British movement, Adivasi Tea Community, sexual harassment, Women freedom fighters.*

Introduction :

The glorification of some personalities in India's freedom struggle is found extensively in the records of history. The historiography of India's freedom struggle is mostly filled with the narratives of the lives of the great leaders. It is also worthy to note that the freedom struggle against British colonial

hegemony gradually became a mass movement in India. In fact, common people such as peasants, tribals, students and women in large numbers sacrificed their lives for the cause of freeing the nation from the foreign rule. Interestingly, in both national and regional contexts, voices of common masses and their unclassified contribution in the anti-



British agitation have generally been neglected by elite class historian. But since 1980s, the *subaltern* school has attempted to rewrite and reconstruct the *history* of Indian National Movement. Subaltern Studies has asserted that the common people possess the ability to make history. It may be noted that subaltern scholars tried to rectify the elitist bias and started a trend of rewriting history with a perspective from below. In this context, Ranajit Guha has clearly stated that 'The subalterns had acted in history on their own, that is, independently of the elite; and their politics constituted an autonomous domain, for it neither originated from elite politics nor did its existence depend on the latter (Sengupta and Mishra 431; Guha 1982 1-8).

In Subaltern Studies, the special focus lies on the study of the subaltern and marginalized class and their contribution in the anti-British agitation. It is necessary to mention here that the British colonial rule faced a number of intense revolts from the country's indigenous groups. For instance, during the British colonial period, *Adivasi* communities of India fought against the British. In Chhotanagpur region, several resistance movements, which broke out *against the British* was mainly led by Adivasi communities. In Assam, the tea garden community also played a vital role in the anti-British agitation. Since the revolt of 1857, the tea garden workers had begun to fight for emancipation from the oppression of the British colonial rule. Similarly, in the non-cooperation movement of 1921-1922, the tea garden community actively participated for the cause of the nation. Many tea garden workers such as Arjun Ghatowar, Mangri Orang played an active role in

the Non-Cooperation movement. The present research paper mainly deals with the role of Mangri Orang, who was a freedom fighter belonging to the Adivasi tea garden community, and gave her life for India's Independence movement.

Objective :

Several women of Assam actively participated in the anti-British struggle. However, the main objective of the present paper is to analyze the contribution of Mangri Orang in the anti-British struggle. She was the first women martyr from Assam in India's freedom struggle. This paper presented in six sections has the prime objective of examining the existing sources and coming up with a historical narrative on Mangri Orang. The first section of paper is introduction, which is followed by the objective and the methodology section of the paper. The fourth section of the paper is devoted to discussion, which is followed by result and conclusion.

Methodology :

This paper is a historical analysis of the sacrifice of Mangri Orang who belonged to the subaltern section of the society. The research paper is largely based on secondary data which are being subjected to external and internal criticisms. Secondary data has been taken from different sources such as research books, journals, contemporary newspapers etc. It is a truism that even in the available literary sources on the India's freedom struggle, the contribution of subaltern characters like Mangri Orang have not been adequately represented. So, an attempt has been made to focus on the revolutionary personality of Mangri Orang by using secondary sources and eclectic logic of reasoning.



Discussion :

“When women, whom we call *abala nari* become *sabala nari*, all those who are helpless will also become powerful...” (Kishwar 1). Participation of women in the anti-British struggle was negligible in the first thirty years of the history of Indian National Congress (INC). However, the movement against the partition of Bengal province (1905) attracted the attention of women in different parts of India. But a new era of women emancipation began with the emergence of Annie Beasant, Bibi Amma and Sarojini Naidu in the arena of politics. Gradually, women from many parts of India participated in India’s freedom struggle against British imperialism. The involvement of women in the India’s freedom struggle was also an important aspect of the women’s movement. The Indian nationalists also felt that women’s active participation gave immense strength to India’s freedom struggle. Later on, it also helped them to achieve in practice many of the political rights for equality with men folk in the liberal democratic system.

It is also necessary to mention here that M.K. Gandhi inspired women to participate in India’s freedom struggle against the British rule. Kishwar in his research paper entitled “Gandhi on Women” has rightly stated as:

“...M.K. Gandhi treated women not as objects of reform and humanitarianism but as self conscious subjects who could, if they choose, become arbiters of their own destiny. In this way, M.K. Gandhi represents a crucial break from the attitude of many of the leaders of the Indian reform movement of the nineteenth century, who trended to see women as passive recipients of more

humane treatment through the efforts of enlightened male...” (Kishwar 1).

Although, a brief attempt has been made to highlight some aspects of women’s participation in the anti-British struggle this research paper seeks to bring into limelight the contribution of Mangri Orang, an Adivasi tea garden, women freedom fighter. Such an attempt is difficult to accomplish because among other reasons, the subalterns like Mangri Orang had no such historical importance in the elitist history where the bias invariably seeks to focus on the leaders of the movement rather than on the marginal characters. Her life and experience in the culture of providing labour for the growth of the tea plantation has not been the subject of history writing of India.

Mangri Orang was born in an Adivasi family of a remote village of Hazaribagh in present Jharkhand (Kurmi 40). It is a historical truth that the Adivasis for a long time were called ‘tribals’ because they belonged to various ‘tribes’ inhabiting the forest and hilly areas of the country. Although Mangri was born in a high clan family but she had to spend her days of childhood in poverty. After attaining puberty, Mangri Orang fell in love with Shomora, a young boy of a lower clan Adivasi family. She wanted to get married to him. But her father did not give any approval for the marriage. As a result, she got married to Shomora without any permission from home. At the same time, Mangri Orang and her husband met an *arakatti* agent or broker who was appointed to recruit the workers for working in the tea estates of Assam. It is necessary to mention that the labour force in the tea plantation of Assam was largely Adivasi tribal peasants who were



driven out of their landholdings and forced to migrate in search of livelihood into Assam.

Up to 1900, the total number of migrant Adivasi workers in Assam was around 7, 10,000. Similarly, 41 per cent of the 7, 10,000 adult workers were brought from Chotanagpur, while only 21 per cent workers were from the United Provinces (Behal 78). For recruitment of workers in the tea gardens of Assam, the Adivasi people were duped by the agents with false promise of prosperity that came for working in tea estates of Assam. Under such circumstances, Mangri Orang and her husband came to Assam. After arrival at the Rangapara depot of Assam, the newly wedded couple was sent to a tea garden of the present Sonitpur district. In the tea garden, they had to face all kinds of ill-treatment and oppression. Meanwhile, Mangri's husband Shomora died due to malaria leaving Mangri in an insecure and vulnerable state. After the death of her husband Shomora, Mangri Orang joined the same tea garden as a plantation worker and thus started her life bearing all kinds of difficulties as a worker living in the cramped labour lines.

During her period of misfortune, the white manager of the tea garden tried to develop intimacy with Mangri. Subsequently, the white manger forced her to develop an intimate physical relationship. As a result of their intimate relationship, Mangri Orang began to live in the manager's bungalow and became popularly known as Malati Mem (Memsahib). Subsequently, Mangri and her white partner raised three children; but Mangri was unfortunate enough to see her own children being given away by her partner to the Christian missionary (Kurmi 44). Subsequently, the white manger also left Mangri as

he had to join as a manager in another tea garden. It is mentioned in some accounts that Mangri Orang also lived as an intimate partner with two other British sahibs. In spite of her intimate relationship with those white sahibs, she did not find the desired happiness. Mangri Orang suffered from the merciless attitude of the respective white sahibs steeped as they were in Patriarchal mores. To overcome the complexities of that context, Mangri Orang developed addiction to drinking country liquor. She consumed the liquor excessively not thinking of her *physical* deterioration because she thought that she had already lost the beauty of her body.

Another narrative mentions that Mangri Orang was born in Sessa tea estate and subsequently lived at Lalmati in Tezpur. It is also asserted that she was sexually assaulted by the English Sahibs (Patar 39). Thus, it is interesting to note that Mangri Orang was a woman who was considered as a sexual object and was violated repeatedly by the colonial masters. There is no doubt the colonial power perceived the Indian native women as a sexed object from their inherent masculine standpoint.

In the meantime, after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, the common people of India became aware and also strongly believed that British colonial rulers wanted to put down Indian people by hook or by crook. In 1920, the famous Non-Cooperation movement was launched under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Assam also found herself in the hub of the movement. The leaders of Assam, who were influenced by Gandhian ideology, initiated the Non-Cooperation Movement with an organized attempt towards Hindu-Muslim unity (Baruah 533). The



Assamese women took an active role in the movement. Amiya Kumar Das, who was a leading Congress leader, wrote:

“.....The awakening that the Non-Cooperation Movement brought among Assamese women, Government’s pressive measure simply accelerated the same. On 9th December, 1921, a women meeting was held at the residence of Tarunram Phukan and fifty women left their kitchens and enrolled their name in the Volunteer list....”(Boruah 711-718)

In this movement, the tea garden workers played a key role in spreading political activities at various levels. The tea garden workers became more active from the beginning of 1921. In this context, labourers from the tea garden of the Brahmaputra valley and Surma valley left their garden works and participated in the anti-British campaign. In both the valleys, tea garden workers decided to boycott market places situated in the British tea gardens. In this regard, Guha expressed his view as:

“...free entry of the Congress volunteers into the tea plantations was necessary for the boycott movement. But the planters would not allow the Non-Cooperators to propagate *swadeshi* and temperance in the coolie lines or even in the tea garden bazaars. Under the circumstances, a direct clash between Non-Cooperators and planters was unavoidable. The only alternative for the Non-Cooperators was to boycott the tea garden *haats* and *bazaars*, and to establish new market places under popular control in their vicinity. This they did with great enthusiasm from April 1921..”(Guha 1977: 110).

Moreover, women of the tea garden community also actively participated in the movement. Many women took to the streets, led processions and held lectures and demonstrations which are seldom talked about. Hundreds of women in Tezpur voluntarily came forward to campaign against the foreign liquor and opium by campaigning house to house. During the period of the non-cooperation campaign in Tezpur of the undivided Darrang district, Mangri Orang, who herself was addicted to liquor, got a new life with the efforts of the congress volunteers and became also a part of the anti-liquor campaign.

With progress of the movement, the Congress volunteers started visiting the tea estates to propagate against foreign goods and liquor. Some of the tea garden labourers boldly helped the volunteers. Mungri or Malati Mem, a woman labourer of Lalmati tea garden of Tezpur also helped the volunteers carry out the prohibition work among the tea garden people. (Telegraph: 13.08.2004).

It is interesting to note that Mangri Orang, who was well known among the European tea planters and also respected by the workers of the tea estate, started the campaign which was eventually joined by the women who were abused and subjected to domestic violence. Mangri Orang had been projected as a campaigner in the anti-liquor movement despite her own addiction to that drink. Along with women volunteers, Mangri Orang vigorously agitated to shut down liquor shops in Tezpur. Amidst the protests, in the year of 1921, Mangri Orang had to give up her life in the hands of British government for the cause of the nation. “...Such an example was shown by Maungri alias Malatimem, a tea garden labour woman of Lalmati



tea garden of Darrang district, who laid down her life for the cause of the temperance Movement in 1921...” (Boruah 718; Sarmah 190).

Amiya Kumar Das, one of the leading Congress leaders of the Non-Cooperation movement, wrote in his autobiography *Jivan Smriti* that Mangri Orang could not live a long life. She sacrificed her life for the cause of the nation. Mangri was secretly murdered by the Britishers. (Das 1983) On the other hand, Wilfred Topno has said that Mangri Orang joined the anti-alcohol movement in the Tea Garden. She was killed during police firing at the agitation programme on 2nd April 1921 (Topno 85).

There is no doubt that her sacrifice for the cause of the nation inspired several women to join in the India’s freedom struggle against the British colonial rule. In this context, Mangri Orang truly became a subaltern voice that challenged the oppressive hegemony of the British rule.

Results :

The question as to how far the contribution of the subaltern voice like Mangri Orang alias Malati Mem could be justified for the cause of freedom struggle is very difficult to answer. Mangri Orang had a chequered life sharing a considerable part with the European Sahibs. It is quite possible that she developed an alienation from her masters which came out strongly during her participation in the Non Cooperation Movement. From this discussion, it can be clearly stated that the contribution of the subaltern class in India’s Independence Movement was significant but always unwritten. The denial of agency to the subaltern representatives like Mangri Orang alias Malati Mem, Durgi Bhumis

alias Durgi Mem and many other freedom fighters have resulted in ‘absences’ and ‘silences’ in history. It is perhaps more appropriate to highlight how such subaltern representatives like Mangri Orang maintain a legitimizing voice against the anti-British rule. There is no doubt that the identity of Mangri Orang alias Malati Mem in its totality was not in conformity with the composition of a normal ‘nationalist’ leader. It is also true that Mangri Orang alias Malati Mem was perhaps the first martyrs of the Non-Cooperation Movement in Assam.

The unfortunate thing is that the voice of Mangri Orang alias Malati Mem in the anti-British movement remains invisible. The subaltern voice of Mangri Orang has been excluded from the framework of the nation history of freedom struggle. It may be mentioned that the account “Who’s Who of Indian Martyrs”, which is a biographical document of the India’s freedom fighters who had sacrificed their lives for India’s Independence Movement and published by the Government of India in 1969, does not mention the subaltern representative Mangri Orang. This has not only underestimated the contribution of Mangri Orang but also erased the ‘historical truth’ from the mainstream history writing. The case of Mangri Orang may also be aptly appreciated from the perspective of Third World feminism, where the impact of caste, class, gender, sexuality and identity may be considered together.

Conclusion :

Unquestionably, the voice of the subaltern class has been neglected in history for a long time. In Assam, there were many women



freedom fighters who fought against the British colonialism but their presence has remained largely marginal in the dominant version of elitist history. That is the reason why there should be an attempt to rewrite a comprehensive national history of India and relocate the subaltern

subjects of colonial history in the proper place in the anti-colonial struggle. It can also be said that while going to reconstruct the history of colonial Assam, there is not only need to study the margins but also bring them back into the popular public domain.

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Status of Women Education in North East India

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Abstract :

Human capital influences economic growth and can contribute to the development of an economy. Investment in education especially in education of women leads to empowerment of women which acts as an important channel in attaining a stronger, more inclusive and more resilient growth. An educated woman not only serves her family in all aspects of life but also promotes prosperity and economic development of the country. The present study intends to analyse the status of women education in North East India and also attempts to examine the relationship between gender parity and economic growth. It is found that the status of women education in North East India is better in comparison with the national level. The gender parity in education is also found to be in favour of females but a comparative study on the status of women education among the states of North East India reveals that some states like Sikkim, Manipur and Mizoram are in a better position while some states like Assam and Tripura are at the bottom. The study also finds that gender parity and economic growth go in the same direction and with a higher magnitude towards higher education. Governmental strategy should be oriented in improving not only primary and secondary levels of education but also in increasing the enrolment of women at higher level of education especially in states like Assam, Tripura and Nagaland.

Key Words: *Women Education, Economic Growth, Gender Enrolment Ratio, Gender Parity Index, North East India.*

Introduction :

Economic growth encompasses a combination of different types of capital to produce goods and services among which human capital plays a key role. Human capital aids in developing an economy through the expansion of knowledge and skills of its people. Investing in such capital enriches the abilities and qualities of labor and

influences productivity which ultimately accelerates the production of economic output. Barro (2013) pointed out that growth rate of an economy can be linked with human capital. He specified that education, health and aspects of social capital comprises human capital and emphasised on education as a factor of growth. Education plays a very important role in human capital formation.



Human capital refers to both women and men. Policy planners and educationists have realised that women form an important section of the society and without promoting their education growth and development of the society cannot take place. Education creates various opportunities for women to participate in numerous fields of life. The association of educational attainments with consciousness of hygiene, progress in family health, child health, girl's education and general family welfare is well recognised. Women's earning capacity and the potential for empowerment are also increased when women become educated (Jabeen and Alam, 2009). In the present era when things are moving at a very fast pace along with the impact of globalisation touching each and every aspect of our life, women cannot be kept behind. The participation of women in the field of socio-economic development and for the comprehensive welfare of the human beings has become a 'necessity' and not merely a 'wish' or a 'desire'.

Education has been well accepted as a vital instrument of social transformation and economic development in any society. Hence, it is impossible to think of a pleasant development if women lag behind in terms of education. Many studies find a significant influence of female literacy on social and economic status of women. Education builds confidence in women and thus surges their aptitudes to deal with the different complications of her life as well as her family and her society. Educated women possess the mind-set of maintaining gender parity in the family in several aspects like education of their children, nutrition and many others. Education of women leads to empowerment of women which acts as an important channel in attaining a stronger, more

inclusive and more resilient growth. This realisation made the Government of India to introduce several schemes and policies to include women in its much hyped intensive development. The newest among it is "*Beti Bachao Beti Parhao*" which is targeted at protecting the daughters from social evils by creating awareness amongst the people and empowering them through education. Nevertheless, the female literacy rate in India is observed to be woefully lower than that of the male. As per 2011 Census, the literacy rate of women is 67.27 per cent as compared to 78.81 per cent of that of men.

Statement of the Problem :

The North East (NE) India encompasses eight states namely Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. Unlike the mainstream homogeneous culture, the region is multi-ethnic with mixed cultural background. The women of the region are perceived to be relatively much liberal than the rest of the country due to the dominance of tribal and indigenous cultures. People generally posit that both men and women of the region play equal role in different spheres of lives. But the question that arises is practically whether the women in NE India are enjoying same status as that of their male counterparts. As education of women acts as an important means of women empowerment by bringing about a positive attitudinal change in them, it becomes pertinent to examine whether women in NE get equal opportunities in the field of education. Thus, an attempt has been made in the present study to examine the status of women education in North East India and to compare the gender disparity in educational attainment between India's NE states



and the nation. Moreover, the advancement of any society is followed by the development of all members of the concerned society. But if half of its members are lagged behind, obviously it will stand as a hindrance to its development. The goals of growth and sustainable development can be achieved only by bringing equality between men and women through education. It is seen that the economic growth in the NE states is far below the national level. So, the present study also attempts to analyse the impact of education of women on the economic growth of the region.

Literature Review :

The association between gender inequality in education and growth examined by Dollar and Gatti (1999) confirmed that women education positively influences economic growth. Balatchandirane (2003) found that without substantive reduction in gender discrimination in education or eliminating it, no country in this world can attain considerable progress in modernisation, economic and otherwise. Sekhar (2007) examined the impact of educational programmes on the empowerment of women and found that though there is a significant impact on women, there is a wide disparity in educational attainment between male and female. The study further revealed that social discrimination, gender-based inequality, poor enrolment of girls in schools, economic exploitation, employing girl child in domestic tasks and high dropout rates are some of the factors for poor female literacy rate.

Hazra (2009) made a study on gender disparity in education and estimated from empirical evidence that countries that fail to provide

basic education to women are likely to countenance a huge cost in terms of lessened rates of reduction in fertility and foregone economic growth. The study suggests that gender parity in universal basic education is the only key to reduce both the structural factors and impacts of poverty. Bhat(2011) held the view that women education is the most effective tool to alter the status of a society. A recent study by Khan, Majeed and Sayeed (2020) observed that keeping apart the developments observed in women education, there have been various critical issues which have remained unaddressed. He opined that utmost attention and collaborative efforts are required from all stakeholders including government, NGO's, civil society etc. so as to improve the status of women in India in terms of education which ultimately can aid in achieving considerable economic development. Overall, the existing literature shows that investment in education of women is the key determinant of economic growth across time and countries.

Objectives :

The study intends to attain the following specified objectives -

1. To analyse the status of women education in North East India.
2. To examine the relationship between women education and economic growth.

Methodology :

The present study uses secondary data collected from Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), annual reports of All India School Education Survey (AISES) and various documents of the RBI, Government of India which include the Handbook of Statistics on Indian

States (2015-16, 2019-20), RBI Bulletin (various issues) and the Economic Survey (various issues).

To examine the status of women education in North East India, statistical tools like percentage tabulation, compound annual growth rate (CAGR) and One Sample test are used. The formula for CAGR between two time periods is given as

$$CAGR(t_0 t_n) = \left\{ \left(\frac{Y_{t_n}}{Y_{t_0}} \right)^{\frac{1}{t_n - t_0}} \right\} \times 100$$

Here t_n and t_0 denote last or final period and base or first period respectively.

The study employs Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) and Gender Parity Index (GPI) to analyse the status of North East women in the field of education. Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) represents the number of students enrolled in a given level of education regardless of age and is expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education. A high degree of participation is indicated by a high GER regardless of whether the pupils belong to the official age group or not (UNESCO Institute for Statistics). Gender Parity Index (GPI) is derived by dividing female GER to male GER. A GPI of 1 indicates parity between sexes. This index is released by UNESCO.

To check the disparity in women education between India's North East states and the nation One-Sample test is conducted. The test statistic used is given as below

$$t = \frac{\bar{X} - \mu_0}{s/\sqrt{n}}$$

Using the level of significance of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected if $|t|$ exceeds the table

value of t . Here, $\bar{X}$ denotes the mean GPI of India's North East states and μ_0 represents GPI of India. If null hypothesis is rejected then it implies that mean GPI of North East states is more than that of the nation.

To examine the relationship between women education and economic growth, Pearson correlation coefficient is estimated where GPI and Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) are used as indicators of women education and economic growth respectively.

Findings and Discussions:

Status of Women Education in North East India

In recent years, India has reportedly shown considerable improvement in women education. In 1991 female literacy rate was 39.3 per cent which went up to 53.7 per cent in 2001 and in 2011 female literacy reached 65.5 per cent. Along with improvements in literacy at national level, North East (NE) India has also witnessed a significant increase in participation of women at all levels of education as the CAGR 2019-20/2004-05 of GER is positive in almost all the states of NE India and at all levels of education except in Sikkim and Tripura at Lower Primary level and in Manipur at both Lower and Upper Primary levels. Regarding disparity in enrolment of education between male and female, it is seen that CAGR of GPI has shown a positive growth rate in almost all the states of North East India at all levels of education except for Sikkim at both Lower and Upper Primary levels. This implies that disparity is decreasing in all the NE states and it is decreasing at a faster rate in Senior Secondary and Higher Education.

Table 1: CAGR of GER and GPI

States/Cou- ntry	CAGR 2019-20/2004-05 of GER of Women					CAGR 2019-20/2004-05 of GPI				
	Lower Prim	Upper Prim	Sec	Senior Sec	Higher Edu	Lower Prim	Upper Prim	Sec	Senior Sec	Higher Edu
AP	0.20	1.58	2.21	2.76	13.54	0.86	1.45	2.15	3.33	2.53
Assam	0.73	2.45	3.73	6.78	7.15	0.31	1.05	2.22	3.17	2.19
Manipur	-0.47	-0.12	0.20	6.44	6.95	0.44	0.63	0.30	1.39	1.67
Meghalaya	0.72	2.38	4.57	4.73	5.67	0.00	0.17	0.81	1.58	2.35
Mizoram	0.74	1.49	2.38	5.52	5.67	0.39	0.06	0.08	0.93	2.71
Nagaland	0.62	1.81	5.28	5.48	9.64	0.37	0.60	0.67	0.99	2.09
Sikkim	-2.48	1.17	5.86	5.51	12.97	-0.46	-0.85	0.45	1.60	0.48
Tripura	-0.48	1.48	3.26	5.61	6.93	0.44	0.63	0.84	2.11	0.66
India	-0.06	2.08	3.44	4.88	5.06	0.45	0.93	1.48	1.69	2.23

Source: Author's Computation based on MHRD, Govt. of India.

The present status of women education is depicted in Table 2 where GER and GPI at all levels of education in 2019-20 is shown. It is observed that GER of women in all the NE states is higher in Lower Primary and lower in Higher Education. Among the NE states GER of women in Higher Education is highest in Sikkim (67.6) followed by Manipur (38.9) while it is lowest in Assam (17.2). GER of women in Senior Secondary is also found to be highest in Sikkim followed by Manipur and Mizoram while it is lowest in Assam. In case of Secondary education, Sikkim again occupies the top position followed by Mizoram. But when we look at the GER of women at Lower and Upper Primary levels it is observed that the position of Sikkim goes down and states like Assam,

Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura have greater enrolment than Sikkim.

It is seen from the table that in all the states of North East India and at all levels of education, the values of GPI are very close to 1 or equal to 1 or greater than 1. This implies that the disparity between male and female at all levels of education is negligible and that women in North East India are enjoying the same status as that of men and even more than the latter in some states. At Secondary and Senior Secondary levels it is seen that GPI is more than 1 in all the states of NE India except in Manipur (0.98) at Senior Secondary level. At Lower Primary and Upper Primary levels all the states have GPI value greater than 1 except in Mizoram (0.98) and Sikkim (0.92) at Lower Primary level (Table 2).

Table No 2: GER and GPI in 2019-20

States	GER of Women					GPI				
	Lower Prim	Upper Prime	Sec	Senior Sec	Higher Edu	Lower Prim	Upper Prime	Sec	Senior Sec	Higher Edu
AP	119.6	88.9	66.1	38.7	34.3	1.02	1.07	1.13	1.17	0.94
Assam	117.8	99	80.7	31.4	17.2	1.04	1.1	1.19	1.03	0.99
Manipur	138	89.8	74.5	56.5	38.9	1.03	1.04	1.03	0.98	1.03
Meghalaya	168.2	117.9	92	47.9	28	1.03	1.15	1.23	1.23	1.16
Mizoram	138.1	103.1	98.4	56.3	25.1	0.99	1	1.08	1.1	0.92
Nagaland	96.2	73.9	61.9	35.5	20.5	1.04	1.1	1.13	1.09	1.24
Sikkim	95.5	86.9	105.3	59.7	67.6	0.92	1.02	1.13	1.24	0.81
Tripura	118.7	95.6	92.6	41.9	18	1.03	1.04	1.07	1.06	0.8

Source: Author's Computation based on MHRD, Govt. of India.

Now, to check the disparity in the status of women education between India's NE states and the nation One-Sample test has been conducted, the result of which is shown in Table 3. Here comparison has been done for two time periods viz. 2004-05 and 2018-19. During 2004-05 the mean difference at all levels of education are found to be significant except at Lower Primary level. The mean differences are all positive which implies that the GPI of India's NE states are higher than the national level. Thus, during 2004-05, the status of

women in the field of education is higher than the national level. Now coming to the period 2018-19 it is found that the mean differences are significant only at three levels of education viz. Upper Primary; Secondary and Senior Secondary combined; and Primary to Senior Secondary levels. The results depict that in all these three levels, the mean differences are all positive which again shows that during 2018-19 also the status of women education in India's NE states still stands at a better position than that of the status in the nation.

Table 3 : One-Sample Test for comparing North East India's Average with National Average

Period	GPI at different levels	National Avg	North East Avg	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
During 2004-05	Lower Primary	0.95	0.97	0.04	0.02	1.08	0.31
	Upper Primary	0.88	0.99	0.11	0.11	3.02**	0.02
	Prim and Upper Prim	0.93	0.98	0.05	0.05	2.35**	0.05



Period	GPI at different levels	National Avg	North East Avg	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
During 2004-05	Sec and Senior Sec	0.79	0.93	0.10	0.14	4.28*	0.00
	Prim to Senior Sec	0.91	0.97	0.06	0.06	2.89**	0.02
	Higher Education	0.71	0.74	0.09	0.06	2.89**	0.02
During 2018-19	Lower Primary	1.02	1.01	0.04	-0.01	-0.5	0.62
	Upper Primary	1.02	1.07	0.05	0.04	2.57**	0.04
	Prim and Upper Prim	1.02	1.03	0.04	0.01	0.59	0.58
	Sec and Senior Sec	1.04	1.11	0.09	0.08	2.27***	0.06
	Prim to Senior Sec	0.67	0.99	0.16	0.32	5.78*	0.00
	Higher Education	1.01	0.99	0.16	-0.02	-0.43	0.68

Source: Author's Computation based on MHRD, Govt. of India. The parenthesis*, ** and *** denote significant at less than 1% level of significance, 5 % level of significance and 10 % level of significance respectively

Relationship between Women Education and Economic Growth in North East India:

During the study period the degree of association between SGDP and Gender Parity

Index at different levels of education is positive and significant. This implies a strong relationship between SGDP and gender parity in the North East states of India (Table 4).

Table 4: Correlation between SGDP and GPI at different levels of Education

Correlation with SGDP	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	Sig. (2-tailed)
Gender Parity Index at Lower Primary Level	0.3566*	0.00
Gender Parity Index at Upper Primary Level	0.6638*	0.00
Gender Parity Index up to Upper Primary Level	0.6804*	0.00
Gender Parity Index at Secondary and Senior Secondary Level	0.7553*	0.00
Gender Parity Index up to Senior Secondary Level	0.7910*	0.00
Gender Parity Index at Higher Education Level	0.9514*	0.00

Source: Author's Computation based on MHRD, Govt. of India. The parenthesis* denote significant at less than 1% level of significance.

Further it is observed from the table that at higher level of education the value of correlation coefficient is high. For example for primary level

the correlation coefficient is low, in case of upper primary and secondary levels it is high while for higher education the coefficient value is very high.



This implies that SGDP and gender parity goes in the same direction with a higher magnitude towards higher education.

Conclusion:

The present paper has examined the status of women in North East (NE) India at different levels of education and for this purpose different statistical tools have been used. The findings of the study reveal that at higher levels of education like Secondary, Senior Secondary and Higher Education, Sikkim stands at the top position followed by Manipur and Meghalaya while Assam has the lowest GER of women in Senior Secondary and Higher Education. At primary levels of education it is seen that GER of women is highest in Meghalaya followed by Mizoram while it is lowest in Nagaland. To check the disparity between men and women, GPI has been used and it is found that gender parity is in favour of women in almost all the states of North East India and at all levels of education. To examine the change in the status of women education, CAGR 2004-05/2019-20 of GER of women and GPI have been calculated and it is seen that at higher levels of education like Secondary, Senior Secondary and Higher Education, the growth rates are all positive which implies that the status of women at these levels of education have improved nevertheless at Primary level, some states like Manipur, Tripura and Sikkim have negative growth rates. To compare the gender parity in education between North East states and the nation, One-Sample test has been performed and the results depict that women in NE India are in a better

position than the overall women of the nation. The present study has also analysed the relation between women education and economic growth by estimating Pearson Correlation coefficient. The results depict that there exists a strong association between SGDP and gender parity in the NE states of India and both the factors move in the same direction. It is also observed that the higher the level of education a woman attains, the higher is the value of the correlation coefficient. Although the status of women in NE states of India is relatively better as compared to the national level in the field of education yet they are much below the top-ranked state like Kerala. Moreover the economic growth in India's North East states is much low compared to the other developed states of the country. As women education is positively related with economic growth and the magnitude of correlation is larger at higher levels of education, there is need to spread awareness amongst people about the benefits of the enrolment of women in higher education. Access of women to higher education should be one of the main strategies for North East India and this strategy without any doubt will generate intergenerational benefits. Governmental strategy should be oriented in involving women not only in primary and secondary education but also in increasing the enrolment of women at higher level of education especially in states like Assam, Tripura and Nagaland. Thus, the formation of human capital through investment in educational process especially of women remains a global responsibility for all individuals as well as for government.

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Status of Women in Assam : A district wise analysis

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Abstract :

Gender is determined by various factors including social, cultural, religious, political beliefs, norms, rules and laws of a society. Hence the concept of gender differs from society to society and even within a society the concept changes according to the change in time. Depending on the beliefs and norms of a society the differences and inequality are set between male and female. This inequality between male and female if persists for long, leads to the deprivation of women rights in a society. As a result, the status of women in society deteriorates gradually and to regain the rights women have to fight with their circumstances. This, in turns, develops the concept of women empowerment. In order to examine the status of women, social status, educational attainment, economic, political participation and health status of women works as fundamental factors. This is the reason why, in this paper, these factors are taken into account to understand the status of women in Assam. The paper seeks to calculate the inter district variation in the status of women in Assam and tries to identify the districts with highest women status and lowest women status in Assam. A self constructed index has been developed to measure the status of women in Assam. For the purpose of constructing the index a total of twelve indicators have been selected. After calculating the normalized value for each indicator, weights are calculated by applying Factor Loadings and Eigen Values from Principal Component Analysis (PCA). It is observed from the index value that only five districts of Assam have crossed the value 0.5. Hence these five districts have medium level of women status. Other districts have low status of women as the index value is below 0.5. Hence there prevails inter district variations of women status in Assam. Results of this cross-sectional study of the district wise data of Assam depicts that the status of women in the society is not high. It indicates a serious need to do further research on how to increase women engagement in the democratic decentralization process beginning from the community level in Assam, thereby, finding routes for higher women participation and women empowerment in the state.

Keywords: *Women, Status, Indicator.*



Introduction :

Sex makes the physical difference between male and female at the time of birth. But the gender is determined by various factors including social, cultural, religious, political beliefs, norms, rules and laws of a society. Hence the concept of gender differs from society to society and even within a society the concept changes according to the change in time. Depending on the beliefs and norms of a society the differences and inequality are set between male and female. This inequality between male and female if persists for long, leads to the deprivation of women rights in a society. As a result, the status of women in society deteriorates gradually and to regain the rights women have to fight with their circumstances. This, in turns, develops the concept of women empowerment.

Most of the countries of the world have promised to celebrate equality and justice for the status of women. In 1979 United Nations approved Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (UNDP, 1995). UNDP mentioned that development is impossible without gender equality. Gender equality and women empowerment became the fifth goal of Millennium Development Goals. The government of India too promises equality of women in its constitution itself. In this regard article 14, 15, 15 (3), 16, 39 (a), 39 (b), 39 (c) and 42 can be mentioned. In order to examine the status of women, social status, educational attainment, economic, political participation and health status of women works as fundamental factors. This is the reason why, in this paper, these factors are taken into

account to understand the status of women in Assam.

Conceptual Framework :

Social Status :

Most of the East Asian countries where higher level of female education, greater economic participation of women exist, they are also facing low sex ratio of female against male. To reduce inequality in the society the government of India is adopting various schemes in five year plans to guarantee the equality of right of each and every person irrespective of their sex, caste and religion. The sixth five year plan is a milestone in this regard which has shifted the concept of development of women to the welfare of women. The Constitution of India along with ensuring the equal right of women as men provides additional power to states to implement law in favor of women discrimination (Seth, 2001). Article 15 (3) can be mentioned in this regard. The government is adopting girl specific schemes to empower the girl child in the country. Some of these are Sable, Scheme for Adolescent girl, Integrated Child Development services (1975), District primary education Programme (1994), National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (Mid Day Meal Scheme, 1995), Reproductive and Child Health Programme (1996), Balika Samriddhi Yojana (1997), Jan Shikshan Sansthan (1998), Sarba Shiksha Abhiyan (2002), Integrated Child Protection Scheme (2009) (Report, MosPI, n.d.). These provisions aim at protection and development of girl child, advancement, development and empowerment of women and also the reservation of political seats of women by thirty three percent.



The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that more than one third of women worldwide (some 35 percent) experience gender based violence over the course of their lives. This ranges from about 37 percent in women in the WHO African, Eastern Mediterranean, and South East Asia regions to 23 percent in the high income region and 25 percent in the European and Western Pacific Region (Executive Summary, 2015).

Educational Status :

Education is a milestone of women empowerment (Channawar, 2016). But most of the girls are deprived off attaining schools and are forced to do household works. In India the literacy rate for women has increased from 8.86% in 1951 to 64.63% in 2011 against 72.98% male literacy in 2011 (Census, 2011). As educating a girl is associated with more opportunity cost of care taking their household work so the poor parents withdraw their girl child from schools and are unable to attain the secondary schools (Rihani, n.d).

Economic Status :

Women become the most deprived section of the society in spite of their significant contribution to the society. Women do more hours of work per day in comparison with their male counterpart. But most of their work is unpaid or underpaid as they are engaged mostly in non marketed household caretaking work (Donahoe, 1999). As a result the share of women worker in the formal labour force is very low. In the year 2011 only 25.5% of women were in the labour force against 53.3% male labour force (MoSPI, 2012). If the women in the society are

properly paid then their contribution to the economy will be more than men in the society. To increase the economic growth rate women participation should be encouraged by reducing gender discrimination (Esteve-Volart, 2004). Women participation in employment reduces gender inequality and increase decision making power by promoting women empowerment (Desai and Jain, 1994).

Political Status :

Women can become a part of the decision making process if they participate on voting process, become member of political parties, can take active part in the political meetings, can contest in the election and become a political leader. Political participation involves the right to vote, the right to compete, the right to stand for candidacy, and their position as campaigners and the members of the legislature (Varghese, 2020).

Health Status :

Health of women is a vital issue. Maternal mortality rate (MMR) and infant mortality rate (IMR) of girl child are becoming rising concerns in India in recent years. Among all the Indian states except Tripura for all other states the female IMR is more than male.

Objectives of the Study :

The study seeks to,

1. Calculate the inter district variation in the status of women in Assam.
2. Identify the districts with highest women status and lowest women status in Assam.

Materials and Methods :

The study is based on the inter district variation in the status of women in Assam. Data

has been collected from secondary sources including Human Development Report (Assam, 2013), Election Commission and others. Assam has a total of thirty three districts. Some of the districts are newly created; hence relevant data are not available for these districts. Hence data relating to different issues of women have been collected for 27 districts of Assam for the year 2013 and election data for the year 2016.

A self constructed index has been developed to measure the status of women in Assam. For the purpose of constructing the index a total of twelve indicators have been selected. The indicators are sex ratio, child sex ratio (0-6 years), percentage of married women in the districts, crime rate against women, female literacy rate, percentage of female with above secondary schooling, female share of wage, labour force participation rate, female voting outturn, elected number of female member in assembly election of Assam for the year 2016, IMR among female and MMR. The crime against women is the total of crime of rape, kidnapping and abduction, dowry deaths, assault with intent to outrage modesty cruelty by husband and his relatives throughout the period concern,

The indicators have been further regrouped into five indicators namely social status (SS=sex ratio, child sex ratio (0-6 years), percentage of married women in the districts, crime rate against women), education status (EDS=female literacy rate, percentage of female with above secondary schooling), economic status (ECS=female share of wage, labour force participation rate), political status (PS=Female

voting outturn, elected number of female member in assembly election of Assam), health status (HS=IMR among female, MMR). After that, best and worst values for all the indicators have been calculated. Out of all the indicators some are positive indicators and some are negative indicators. For example crime rate against women, IMR among female, MMR are negative indicators and rest are positive indicators. For the negative indicators higher value means lower status of women in a society. As there are some positive and some negative indicators for the index, hence normalisation of value is required for further calculation purpose. For normalisation purpose following formula is,

$$NVi = 1 - \left[\frac{\{Best\ Xi - Observed\ Xi\}}{\{Best\ Xi - Worst\ Xi\}} \right]$$

Where,

NVi= Normalized Value for the 'ith' district

Best Xi= Best value among the values of the indicator concerned

Worst Xi= Worst value among the values of the indicator concerned

Observed Xi = Particular value of the indicator for which normalized value is constructed

After calculating the normalized value for each indicator, weights are calculated by applying Factor Loadings and Eigen Values from Principal Component Analysis (PCA).

Results and Discussion :

The result (Annexure-I) depicts that only for three districts like Cachar (1013), Sonitpur (1000) and Tinsukia (1012) the sex ratio is in favour of women. For other districts the number of female per thousand of male is less. For

twelve states the child sex ratio in favour of the female child and for rest of the districts it is against female child. The child sex ratio is even less than the sex ratio for that time period. It means that the sex ratio of these districts will become even low for these districts in near future. Again the child sex ratio is as low as 500 in the district Baksa. It is not a good sign for the status of women in the society. While the percentage of married women in the society is low in most of the districts of the states, the crime rate against women is very high. The reported case of crime against women is the highest in Nagaon district (1654) and lowest in Baksa district (18) for a single year. The reported crime against women is more than hundred for all other districts of the state in a single year. In addition to this various unreported cases are against women in the society that it decreases the status of women in the society.

In case of educational attainment the percentage of literate women is very less in most of the districts of the State. Even half of the female

population of the state are unable to attain their education up to the secondary levels of schooling. Only for the Kamrup metro district the female literacy rate is 85.97%. The labour force participation rate of women is also very low in each of the districts. Only for two districts like Goalpara and Dibrugarh the labour force participation rate of women has crossed twenty five percent.

The number of female participating in the active politics in India is very less. Assam got her first female elected assembly member as Late Usha Borthakur in the first election of 1952. In 2016 Assembly election the number increases to six. The number of elected women for the state assembly is highest (14) in the year 2011.

The IMR is highest in Kokrajhar and Darrang (71) and lowest in Barpeta. Again MMR is highest in Udalguri (597) and lowest in Karbi Anglong district (53). Other districts have values in between. The following table represents the component matrix and Eigen values by using PCA.

Table: Results for indicators by using PCA

1. Social Status Indicator	Eigen Value = 1.44 Eigen Value = 1.172			
Component Matrix(a)	Component		Component x Eigen Value	
	1	2	1	2
Sex Ratio	-0.015	0.787	0.0216	0.922364
Child Sex Ratio	0.25	-0.687	0.36	0.80516
% of Married Women	0.844	-0.057	1.21536	0.05977



Crime Against Women	0.815	0.278	1.1736	0.325816
Extraction Method : Principal Component Analysis			$\Sigma = 4.88367$	
1. Component extracted.				
2. Education status indicators	Eigen Value = 1.338			
Component Matrix(a)	Component	Component x Eigen Value		
	1			
Female Literacy Rate	0.818	1.094484		
% of Female with above Secondary School	0.818	1.094484		
Extraction Method : Principal Component Analysis			$\Sigma = 2.188968$	
1. Component extracted				
3. Economic status Indicator	Eigen Value = 1.732			
Component Matrix(a)	Component	Component x Eigen Value		
	1			
Female share of Wage	0.931	1.612492		
Labour force participation of Women	0.931	1.612492		
Extraction Method : Principal Component Analysis			$\Sigma = 3.224984$	
1. Component extracted				
4. Political status Indicator	Eigen Value = 1.102			
Component Matrix(a)	Component	Component x Eigen Value		
	1			
Female voting outturn	0.742	0.817684		
Female representative in Assembly	0.742	0.817684		
Extraction Method : Principal Component Analysis			$\Sigma = 1.635368$	



1 Component extracted				
5. Health status Indicator	Eigen Value = 1.276			
Component Matrix(a)	Component		Component x Eigen Value	
	1			
Infant Mortality Rate	0.799		1.019524	
Maternal Mortality Rate	0.799		1.019524	
Extraction Method : Principal Component Analysis			$\sum = 2.039048$	
1 Component extracted				
Final Index	Eigen Value = 1.662 Eigen Value = 1.265			
Component Matrix(a)	Component		Component X Eigen Value	
	1	2	3	4
Social Status Indicator	-0.368	0.559	0.61162	0.707155
Education Status Indicator	0.76	0.397	0.46483	0.280733
Economic Status Indicator	0.735	-0.189	0.34165	0.05306
Political Status Indicator	-0.205	0.801	0.070038	0.0425
Health Status Indicator	-0.606	-0.343	0.94244	0.014577
Extraction Method : Principal Component Analysis			$\sum = 2.628583$	

The weights have been determined by following the procedure as the Eigen Value of the health status indicator (2.039048) is multiplied with the extracted component column (0.799 and 0.799). These multiplied values have been considered as weights for each variable (such as IMR = 1.019524, MMR = 1.019524). These weights are then multiplied with each normalized values of the concerned columns. For the social status indicator which has two Eigen value of more than one first Eigen value has been multiplied with the first column of component matrix and the second

Eigen value has been multiplied with the second column of component matrix, after that the final weight is the sum of all the individual weights.

For calculating the index value of individual indicators such as social status indicator, education status indicator, economic status indicator, political status indicator and health status indicator the following formula has been used.

$$I = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n X_i \left[\sum_{j=1}^n |L_{ij}| \cdot E_j \right]}{\sum_{i=1}^n \left[\sum_{j=1}^n |L_{ij}| \cdot E_j \right]}$$



Where,

I = Index,

X_i = the i^{th} Indicator;

L_{ij} = the factor loading value of the i^{th} variable on the j^{th} factor;

E_j = the Eigen value of the j^{th} factor

For example, by using the above formula for the first district i.e. Baksa the health status indicator has been constructed as follows.

$$\text{Health Status Indicator} = (0.756757 \times 1.019524 + 0.284926471 \times 1.019524 + 1.966672) / 2.039048 = 0.520842$$

Like that for each value of the indicators all the individual five indicators have been constructed. After constructing the individual indicators in the next step these indicators are considered as variables. The PCA has been run on these data thereafter. Then the ultimate index has been created for each of the districts. The results are presented in the annexure. Index value < 0.5 means low status of women status, $0.5 < \text{Index value} < 0.8$ means medium level of women status and Index value > 0.8 means high level of women status.

It is observed from the index value that Nagaon district occupies the first rank in case of status of women with highest index value of 0.591587. The second district is Kamrup Metro

(0.568915). Baksa district occupies the last position in the index rank (0.249838). It is observed that only five districts of Assam have crossed the index value 0.5. Hence these five districts have medium level of women status. Other districts have low status of women as the index value is below 0.5. Hence inter-district variations in the status of women in Assam are observed in this study.

Conclusion :

The empirical evidence shows that the women are lagging behind men in every sphere of life. It starts from the differences in the sex ratio at birth, continues to the attainment of education, differences in economic right, leading to the political right and decision making power. Hence there is need to study the status of women in Assam to understand their right in different aspects of life including attainment of social, educational, political and economic status. Results of this cross-sectional study of the district wise data of Assam depicts that the status of women in the society is not high. It indicates a serious need to do further research on how to increase women engagement in the democratic decentralization process beginning from the community level in Assam, thereby, finding routes for higher women participation and women empowerment in the state.

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Changing Landscape and Changing Gender Roles - Case of a Tribal Village in Assam

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Abstract :

Developmental activities are indispensable for the growth and prosperity of the nation. Such activities, by way of land acquisition change the land use pattern of the place thereby changing the landscape. Landscapes on the other hand are also reflections of social values, beliefs and attitudes. A change in the physical landscape also changes the socio-cultural attitude of the landscape. Based on both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, this study attempts to understand the relationship between a changing landscape and the changing gender roles of a tribal society. This study is based on a tribal village named Dulia Gaon, located in Dibrugarh district of Assam and inhabited by the Sonowal Kachari tribe. It is an attempt to understand as to how the construction of the NH 37 Dibrugarh-Tinsukia bypass and the rehabilitation of a new village in the grazing ground of Dulia Gaon, has altered the physical landscape of the village. It further attempts to understand as to how the changing physical landscape impacts the gender roles and relations of the Sonowal Kachari tribe of Dulia Gaon. Using both primary and secondary data, this paper seeks to contend that the changing landscape of the village has not only altered the economic opportunities of the village but has also impacted the economic participation of women. These changes in the economic participation of men and women have resulted in the public-private dichotomy of space thereby further resulting in a more gendered landscape.

Keywords: *landscape change, gender roles, developmental activities, Dulia Gaon, gendered landscape, public-private dichotomy.*

Introduction

Landscape is a complex term. Depending on the subject and the multitude of perspectives, landscape may offer different definitions for different studies (Tkáčová, et. al. 66). However, there is no denying the fact that it is essentially a

geographical concept due to its connotations of space which can be physical as well as abstract (Mitchell 95); (Cosgrove 4). From the geographical perspective, landscape is the combination of both the physical or natural attributes of the environment as well as the socio-



cultural attributes of the human society. Both the natural and social attributes are so intertwined that alterations in one also calls for definite alterations in the other (Sauer 111); (Jones and Daugstad 271); (Jones 14); (Greider and Garkovich 7); (Jones 23); (Bujanda 19); (Crang 1972); (Enache & Craciun 310). The constant changes in the physical landscape subsequently alter the social attitude, cultural ethos and the collective identity of the community concerned. On the other hand, these social attributes of the human society also possess the potency of altering the physical landscape of a particular region. Hence it can be seen that there is an intrinsic reciprocal relationship between culture and landscape (Nassauer 89).

Gender is a social construct. It refers to the characteristics of masculinity and femininity. An individual's identity as a woman, man, boy or a girl is assigned by the society based on the roles that these sexes are expected to perform (Butler 21). It is the society that assigns various norms and behaviours to an individual based on the sex the individual is born with. It is thus deeply embedded in our institutions. However, gender as a social construct is not static. It changes over society, space and time.

The relationship between gender and landscape is complex and multidimensional (Villamor, G.B. et al. 64). Landscapes are not merely geographic spaces. In fact, landscapes are concrete public statements (Rapoport 86); (Nassauer 92) that reflects the cultural values of the society. Hence, like gender, landscapes are also socially constructed and are based on diverse cultural attitudes and individual perceptions of everyday life (Villamor, G.B. et al. 64).

However, landscapes are not always passive. Apart from providing a platform that reflects the socio-cultural values of a particular society, landscapes also play an active role in the construction of social identities. For instance, changing land use patterns, altering resource bases and transforming physical environments may play an active role in altering the existing social relations and cultural values. Thus, a changing physical landscape can act as an active agent responsible for changing the gender roles and relations of a society.

This paper is an attempt to understand how the changing physical landscape of a tribal village is altering the gender roles of that particular society. It attempts to explore the agents that are responsible in changing the physical landscape of the village and tries to analyze how the changing physical landscape in turn is changing the gender roles of the study area.

Study area :

This study is based on a tribal village named Dulia Gaon. It is located in Dibrugarh district of Assam, in the North Eastern region of India. This village is situated approximately 10 kms from the district headquarter of Dibrugarh and has a total area of 1.72 sq kms. It has a total population of 1400 persons. Housing a total of 212 households, Dulia Gaon is entirely inhabited by the Sonowal Kachari tribe. The rationale behind selecting this village as the study area is the fact that major developmental activities have been at play in this village. As such it provides a potent ground in understanding how the developmental activities are changing the landscape of this tribal village of Assam. Subsequently, the study area also provides

the platform in understanding how the changing landscape is responsible in altering the existing gender roles of the Sonowal Kacharis inhabiting the village.

Sonowal Kachari Tribe of Assam :

Sonowal kachari is a major tribal group of Assam. It is a branch of the Bodo Kachari tribe of Assam (Barooah 2). However, unlike the Bodo Kacharis, the Sonowal Kacharis are mostly concentrated in the upper parts of Assam. They are predominantly inhabitants of Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Sibsagar, Jorhat, Golaghat, Dhemaji and North Lakhimpur districts of Assam (ibid). They are also found to inhabit parts of Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland (Saikia et al. 130). Although agriculture is the primary economic activity of the Sonowal Kachari tribe, yet it is one of the largest tribal groups of Assam with a high literacy rate (ibid). Sonowal Kachari societies are often marked by their egalitarian status. Their social life is based on principles of co-operation and co-existence where class and gender disparities are non-existent (Barooah 8).

Methodological approaches :

This study is based on both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. It is mostly based on primary data. However, secondary data sources were also consulted. Attempts have been made to correlate the qualitative outcomes with quantitative inputs so as to derive greater accuracy. In order to understand the experiences, attitudes and perspectives of the respondents, focus group discussions, in depth personal interviews and open ended interviews were organized.

In addition to these, questionnaires were also used to collect various data. In order to know the developmental activities in the study area, detailed field observation was conducted for this study. Besides, various secondary sources like Government documents and websites of various ministries were also looked upon to know about the developmental activities. Primary data collected from the Lot Mandal Office Dibrugarh, the village headman, from the respondents, and also the content analysis of the village map and the personal survey of the study area were used to explore the geographical changes brought about by the developmental activities.

Changing Landscape :

Post independence, India has been undertaking various developmental activities like the construction of roads, railways, bridges, industries, factories, dams, etc. These developmental activities are aimed for the development of the entire nation and are often termed as affirmative actions (Pandey and Rout 89). Developmental projects or activities have a direct relationship with landscape transformation. They are in fact one of the most important anthropogenic causes that initiate the process of landscape transformations. By way of land-acquisition, these developmental activities bring many changes in the land-use pattern of the place where such developmental activities are taking place. In addition to changes in the land-use pattern, the developmental activities also change the settlement pattern and the infrastructural layout of the affected area. As such, developmental activities directly change the physical features of the landscape (Tkáčová, et al. 72).

Agents of Change :

The major developmental activity that has taken place in Dulia Gaon is the construction of the Dibrugarh-Tinsukia bypass road. This project forms the foremost agent of landscape transformation in the study area. The Dibrugarh-Tinsukia bypass is a part of the National Highway 37. It is 15.446 km long (Source: M/o Road Transport & Highways) and has been conceived to boost road connectivity for Dibrugarh – Tinsukia region. Tinsukia is the northernmost district of Assam and is a major industrial town of the state. This highway project has been constructed at a cost of rupees 96.84 crores (Source: M/o Road Transport & Highways). It has been constructed under the aegis of Special Accelerated Road Development Programme in North East (SARDP-NE).

With an objective of infrastructural development in the North Eastern Region of India, the Government of India has assigned the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways with the task of developing the road transport and highway system of the region and the responsibility of its supervision have been entrusted under the Ministry of DONER (Development of North Eastern Region). Special attention is being paid to the development of NHs in the North-Eastern Region. This is being done in order to open the region for a more balanced development at the backdrop of the region's underdeveloped and marginalized status. The Dibrugarh-Tinsukia road bypass is also one such project of the ministry.

In addition to the construction of road transport network, rehabilitation of a new village

in the study area's grazing ground has also acted as a major agent of landscape transformation in Dulia Gaon. The establishment of Brahmaputra Cracker and Polymer Limited (BCPL), a petrochemical industry, in a neighboring village of Dulia Gaon, has resulted in the rehabilitation of a new village in the study area. The new village has been rehabilitated on Dulia Gaon's grazing ground.

Land acquisition & Change in land use pattern :

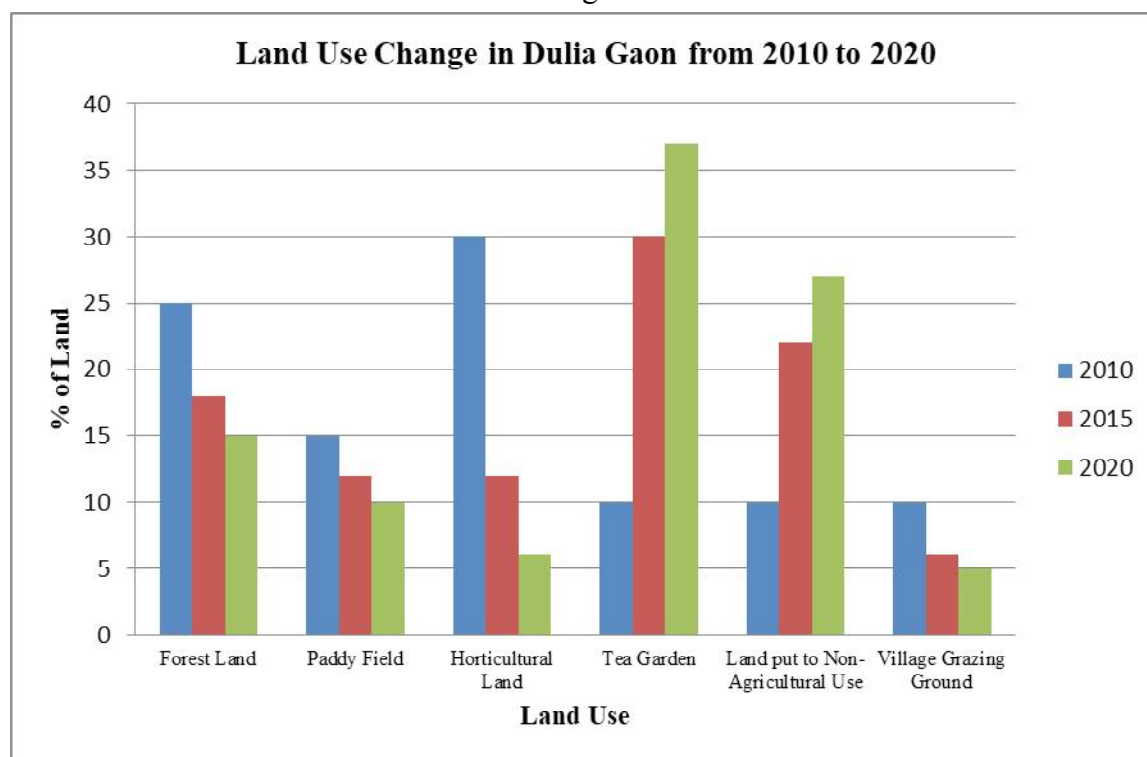
The aforementioned developmental activities, by way of land acquisition, have led to a major change in the land use pattern of Dulia Gaon. Land use is the varied utilization of all surface areas, both built up area and vacant land at a particular point of time and space (Mandal 42). It is an ever changing phenomenon. The following table shows land acquisition for the two projects in Dulia Gaon:

Land acquired for bypass construction	0.0709 sq. kms.
Land acquired for the rehabilitation of the new village	0.04016 sq. kms.
Total area of Dulia Gaon	1.72 Sq. kms.
Total land area acquired by the developmental activities	0.11106 Sq. kms.
Current area of Dulia Gaon	1.60894 sq. kms.

Source: Primary data collected from the field.

Due to the massive land acquisition in Dulia Gaon for the developmental projects, the land use pattern of the village has also undergone a major shift. The following figure shows the changing trend in land use pattern of Dulia Gaon:

Figure 1:



Source: Primary data

From the above figure it can be seen that the land use pattern of the study area has been changing in the given period. In the year 2010 the village had a total of 30% of the land under various horticultural use. These included the cultivation of various seasonal vegetables. However, this percentage has been reduced to just 6% in the year 2020. In 2020, the highest percentage of land use has been recorded in Tea Garden which is 37 %. Similarly, forest land and paddy fields have been reduced from 25% and 15% respectively in 2010 to 15 % and 10% respectively in 2020. The same trend can also be noticed in the case of the village grazing ground. In 2010 whereas the share of village grazing ground was 10% of the total land area of the village, in the year of 2020 the

share has been reduced to 5% only. The most important pattern that can be noticed from the above figure is the percentage of land put to various non-agricultural uses. In 2010 while the percentage of such land was only 10%, in 2020 this percentage has been increased to 27% of the total land area of the village.

The trend of land use pattern that can be noticed from the data reveals that there has been a steady shift from an agrarian to a more non-agrarian land use. This shift to a more non-agrarian land use pattern implies a subsequent change in the socio-economic practices of the community.

Changing Gender roles

‘Gender roles’ refer to the different activities ascribed to individuals based on their sexual

differences. Woman, man, boy or a girl is expected to act, behave and conduct themselves in different ways. The society thus assigns different roles to different individuals based upon their sexes. Such social expectations are different from one culture to another. Hence, like gender, the concept of 'gender role' is also essentially a social construct. It is socially determined and is based on a society's values, beliefs and culture (Blackstone 335).

In addition to this, gender roles are also never static. As a society progresses with time, gender roles also change along with the society's progression. Gender roles thus, change over time and space and are a product of the interactions between individuals and the environment (ibid).

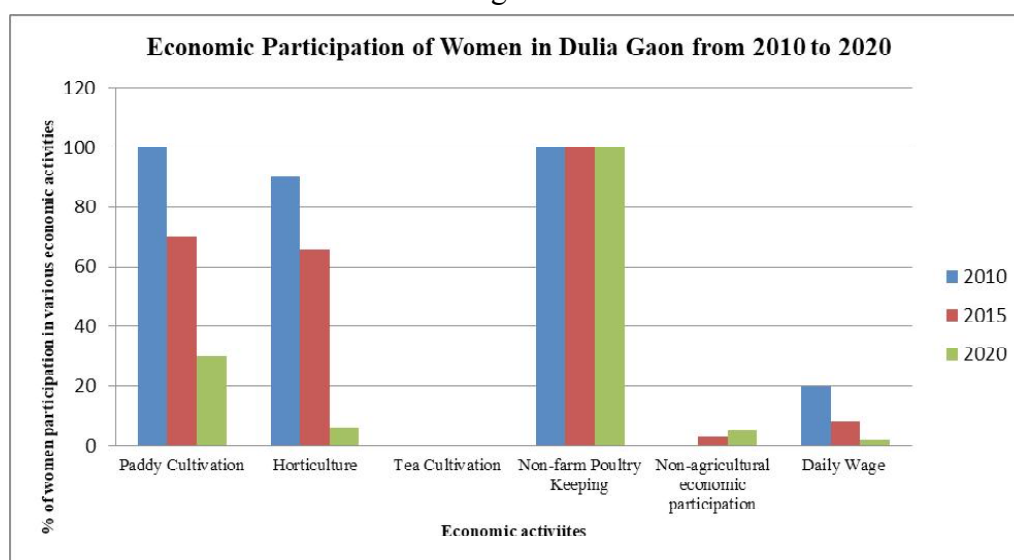
Economic participation

The changing land use pattern of Dulia Gaon implies a changing pattern in the economic participation of the Sonowal Kacharis inhabiting the village. The reducing paddy fields and the diminishing horticultural lands in the village refers

to the fact that the indigenous economic practices of paddy and vegetable cultivation have been slowly replaced by more non-indigenous economic practices. Figure 1 reveals that tea cultivation in Dulia Gaon has seen a fast increase.

With 37% of the total land area of the village already being converted to tea cultivation, Dulia Gaon today is more engaged with the cultivation of this commercial crop. Tea is a cash crop and its cultivation requires an organized labour, higher dependence on technology which also implies more consumption of power, greater use of fertilizers and pesticides, a sophisticated industrial unit and a better availability of transport system. Naturally tea cultivation requires more capital than the cultivation of paddy or seasonal vegetables. The fast change in the economic practices of Dulia Gaon has also ushered in a change in the economic participation of men and women of the village. The following figure shows the economic participation of women in Dulia Gaon across times.

Figure 2:



Source: Primary data

Figure 2 reveals that there has been a change in the participation of women in Dulia Gaon under various economic activities from 2010 to 2020. It can be seen from the table that the percentage of women participation in paddy cultivation has been decreasing from 100% in 2010 to 30% in 2020. Focus group discussion with the women of the village revealed that their decreasing participation in paddy cultivation can be attributed to the decreasing paddy fields owing to land acquisition for the construction of the bypass. The rapid decrease of women participation in horticultural activities, from 90% in 2010 to as low as 6% in 2020, can also be attributed to the fact of decreasing land availability due to the developmental activities. However, it can be seen from the above figure that participation of women in non-farm poultry keeping, an economic activity that is practiced within the homestead land, has consistently remained the same. Focus group discussion with the women of the village revealed that the practice of keeping poultry was primarily for family consumption. However, with the larger demand for poultry, from the nearby town, it has slowly grown into a household business for many families. Data shows the active participation of women in rearing of such non-farm poultry in all the three years of 2010, 2015 and 2020.

From figure 1, it can be seen that tea cultivation in the village has seen a rapid increase. With 37% of the total land area being devoted to the cultivation of tea, it can be implied that tea cultivation is rapidly replacing the other agrarian activities. However, figure 2 reveals that 0% of women are engaged in tea cultivation across the

years. Personal interviews and focus group discussions with both men and women in the village revealed that since tea cultivation requires greater expertise in its production and maintenance, it is the male members of the family who are regarded efficient in generating more profit from tea cultivation.

Since tea cultivation is dependent on a larger and sophisticated infrastructural nexus, it requires greater mobility, larger market accessibility and advanced knowledge of institutional finance management. In-depth interviews with the women respondents revealed that their poor infrastructural accessibility like market and financial institutions, limits them in the active participation in tea cultivation.

In addition to the above economic activities, it can also be seen that in 2010 60% of the women in the village participated in various daily wage earning activities within the village. This percentage reduced to 12% in 2015 and in 2020 it further reduced to 2% only. The main factors attributed to the rapid decrease of women participation in daily wage earning activities were cited as higher family income generation from tea gardens and employment of the male members in BCPL as contractual labourers. Primary data also revealed that most men of the village worked as daily wage earners in Dibrugarh town.

From figure 2 it can be seen that the percentage of land put to non-agricultural use has been increasing in the village. On the contrary, percentage of women participation in non-agricultural activities has seen only a slow and negligible increase over the years. Figure 2 also shows that women participation in non-farm



economic activities in 2010 has been nil. Whereas, in 2015 a slight increase in the percentage of women participation in non-farm activities was recorded (03%). Finally in 2020 this percentage increased to 05%.

Therefore, the corollary between increasing non-agricultural land use and lesser women participation in non-farm activities reveal that women of the village are yet to adapt to the changing economic opportunities of the changing landscape.

Findings: Public-private dichotomy and the production of a gendered landscape :

From the above discussion it can be discerned that the changing landscape of Dulia Gaon has been changing the economic practices of the Sonowal kachari tribe inhabiting the village. The changing economic practices subsequently have been changing the economic participation of both men and women in the village. The new pattern of women economic participation reveals that they are mostly associated with work that does not involve greater and wider mobility. They are engaged in work that is either based on their neighborhood or that which can be done in their homestead land. Hence, they are mostly seen to be active in spaces that are more private.

On the other hand, work that demands greater mobility has been associated with the active participation of men. Greater participation of men can be seen in activities that are more public. These include working as daily wage earners in the nearby town, working in BCPL, engaging in various market based activities and in all other activities that require larger participation in public spaces.

The indigenous paddy cultivation and horticultural activities demanded the equal participation of both man and women in the village. In addition to this, Sonowal Kacharis are an egalitarian society where both men and women enjoy equal social status (Barooah 8). Their social structure and cultural practices are reflected on their landscapes. As a tribal society, they are often identified with landscapes that are gender egalitarian. Men and women in such societies have equal accessibility to resources and enjoy equal mobility and freedom. However, the changing landscape of the village has disrupted the gender egalitarian economic activities thereby producing a dichotomy in the spatiality of economic participation of men and women. Data reveals, while women of the village are increasingly involved with work in private spaces, men are largely involved with work that has to do with the public spaces. As a result, a rapid dichotomy of spaces has been constructed between public and private space.

Private denotes all activities that are related with the domestic sphere of everyday life. They are mostly associated with activities that are worked upon within the four walls of the house. Public on the other hand denotes all activities that are worked upon outside of the four walls of the house. Such activities include business, markets, politics, governance, etc. They denote power, patriarchy and dominance. Public-private dichotomies create hierarchical patterns in the society and are often responsible in assigning an inferior position to women. Drawing from the above discourse, it can be put forth that the creation of the public-private dichotomy has



altered the gender egalitarian landscape to a more gendered landscape.

Conclusion :

Developmental activities are indispensable for the development of the nation. While there is an ever increasing demand for such activities, attention must also be drawn to the fact that the fruits of such activities do not fall equally on all sections of the society. In this case study it can be seen that such developmental activities, by way of land acquisition have altered the landscape of the study area. Changing landscape changes the socio-economic structure of the society. Such changes also change the gender roles and relations. Since activities form the essence of a place (Karacor, 2016), places are often identified by the everyday activities of life. As such, the shift in gender roles and relations are also symbolized and embedded on the landscape.

Tribal societies are often regarded as gender neutral and egalitarian societies. Their landscapes

reflect their cultural values and beliefs. Their landscapes are gender egalitarian landscapes where mobility and freedom in the access to resources are not inhibited on the basis of sexual differences. However, the changing landscape has been changing such equations to a more public-private dichotomy of space. Such dichotomies of space on the other hand can be held accountable in the production of a more gendered landscape. Gendered landscapes are often responsible in producing gender discrimination in both public and private spheres of life.

Therefore, policies of development should be supplemented by policies that foster gender equality and equal accessibility of resources. Planners should be sensitive while framing such policies so as to avoid disrupting the social fabric of the indigenous societies and must give special attention to the fact that developmental activities should bring prosperity and development to all sections of the society.

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অসমীয়া বিভাগ



অসমত ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক চিন্তা-চৰ্চাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত অসমীয়া মহিলা লেখকৰ স্থিতি

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সাৰাংশ :

ভাষা হৈছে, মানুহে মনৰ ভাব পূৰ্ণাংগ ৰূপত প্ৰকাশ কৰিবলৈ ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা এক প্ৰণালী— যাৰ জৰিয়তে মানুহে নিজ চিন্তা-চেতনাৰ বহিঃপ্ৰকাশ ঘটায়। খ্ৰীঃ পূঃ ৬-৫ শতিকাত ভাৰতবৰ্ষত পাণিনিৰ হাতত ভাষাৰ বিজ্ঞানসন্মত চিন্তা-চৰ্চাৰ আৰম্ভণি ঘটিছিল। পাণিনিৰ 'অষ্টাধ্যায়ী' ব্যাকৰণৰ মাজত ভাষাৰ এটা বিজ্ঞানসন্মত আৰু শৃংখলাবদ্ধ বিশ্লেষণ দাঙি ধৰিবলৈ চেষ্টা কৰিছিল। গ্ৰীক দাৰ্শনিক প্লেটো-এৰিষ্টটলৰ সময়তেই পাশ্চাত্যত ভাষা সম্পৰ্কে চিন্তা-চৰ্চা চলিছিল যদিও বিংশ শতিকাৰ দ্বিতীয় দশকৰপৰাহে প্ৰকৃত অৰ্থত আধুনিক ভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ শূভ আৰম্ভণি ঘটে। অসমত ভাষা অধ্যয়নৰ পৰম্পৰা তুলনামূলকভাৱে অৰ্বাচীন। ১৭৯৫ খ্ৰীষ্টাব্দত স্বৰ্গদেউ গৌৰীনাথ সিংহৰ নিৰ্দেশত টেঙাই পণ্ডিতখ্যাত ব্যক্তিয়ে 'বৰ অশ্ব-লতি অশ্ব' প্ৰণয়ন কৰাৰপৰাই অসমত অভিধান চৰ্চাৰ শূভাৰম্ভ ঘটে যদিও ব্ৰিটিছৰ হাততহে প্ৰথম অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ চৰ্চা হয় বুলি ক'ব পাৰি। অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ ব্যাকৰণৰ সূত্ৰপাত ১৮৩৯ চনত প্ৰকাশিত ইংৰাজী ভাষাত লিখা William Robinson-ৰ 'A Grammar of the Assamese Language' গ্ৰন্থখনৰ জৰিয়তে হয় যদিও সম্পূৰ্ণ অসমীয়া ভাষাত লিখা অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ প্ৰথমখন ব্যাকৰণ হ'ল হেমচন্দ্ৰ বৰুৱাৰ 'অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ ব্যাকৰণ'। এই ব্যাকৰণখন প্ৰকাশ হয় ১৮৫৯ চনত। ঊনবিংশ শতিকাৰপৰা অসমত ভাষা-চৰ্চাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনে মূৰ দাঙি উঠে যদিও যথার্থতে ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক দৃষ্টিভংগীৰে কৰা ভাষাৰ অধ্যয়ন বুলিলে আমি ১৯৪১ চনত প্ৰকাশিত বাণীকান্ত কাকতিৰ গৱেষণা গ্ৰন্থ 'Assamese, Its Formation and Development' গ্ৰন্থখনকহে বুজো। পৰৱৰ্তী সময়ত বিভিন্নজন পণ্ডিত, গৱেষকে ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক দৃষ্টিভংগীৰে অসমীয়া, অসম তথা উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চল আৰু ভাৰতবৰ্ষৰ বিভিন্ন ভাষা সম্পৰ্কে চৰ্চা কৰি আহিছে। অসমৰ মহিলা ভাষাচৰ্চাকাৰী বুলি ক'বলৈ গ'লে খুবসম্ভৱ পোনপ্ৰথমে চন্দ্ৰপ্ৰভা চৌধুৰীৰ কথাই ক'ব লাগিব। ১৯৭৪ চনতে চন্দ্ৰপ্ৰভা চৌধুৰীয়ে বিদ্যালয়ৰ ছাত্ৰ-ছাত্ৰীৰ উপযোগীকৈ লিখি উলিওৱা 'অসমীয়া ভাষা সাৰথি ব্যাকৰণ'— এই সম্ভৱতঃ অসমীয়া মহিলাই প্ৰণয়ন কৰা প্ৰথম ভাষাবিষয়ক পুথি। ঊনবিংশ শতিকাৰ আশীৰ দশকৰপৰা ভাষাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনত প্ৰায় নিয়মিতভাৱে চৰ্চা কৰি থকা পোনপ্ৰথমেই উল্লেখ কৰিবলগীয়া মহিলা ভাষা-চৰ্চাকাৰী হৈছে লীলাৱতী শইকীয়া বৰা। ভাষা আৰু সাহিত্য দুয়োটা ক্ষেত্ৰতে চৰ্চা কৰা লীলাৱতী শইকীয়া বৰাই 'THE RAMAYANA OF MADHAVA KANDALI : A LINGUISTIC STUDY' বিষয়ত গৱেষণা কৰি ১৯৮৬ চনত ডক্টৰেট উপাধি লাভ কৰে আৰু ভাষা বিষয়ত কাম কৰি এই সন্মান লাভ কৰা তেওঁৰেই প্ৰথম অসমীয়া মহিলা। পৰৱৰ্তী সময়ত অসমীয়া ভাষা, অসমৰ তথা উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলৰ ভাষা আৰু ভাৰতবৰ্ষৰ ভাষা সম্পৰ্কে অসমৰ মহিলা ভাষাচৰ্চাকাৰীসকলে বিজ্ঞানসন্মত অধ্যয়নেৰে নতুন নতুন দিশত বাট মুকলি কৰি আহিছে আৰু সম্প্ৰতি সেই ধাৰা অব্যাহত হৈ আছে।

বীজ শব্দ : ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক চিন্তা-চৰ্চা, মহিলা ভাষাচৰ্চাকাৰী।

১.০ অৱতৰণিকা :

ভাষা হৈছে মানুহৰ শ্ৰেষ্ঠতম সম্পদ। যিবোৰ বিশিষ্টতাৰ বাবে মানুহক জীৱশ্ৰেষ্ঠ বুলি গণ্য কৰা হয়, সেইসমূহৰ ভিতৰত ভাষা অন্যতম। মানুহে মনৰ ভাব পূৰ্ণাংগ ৰূপত প্ৰকাশ কৰিবলৈ ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা ই এক প্ৰণালী, যাৰ জৰিয়তে মানুহে নিজ চিন্তা-চেতনাৰ বহিঃপ্ৰকাশ ঘটায়। সেয়ে যি জাতিৰ ভাষা, সাহিত্য আৰু সংস্কৃতি চহকী তেনে জাতিয়ে বিশ্বত নিজ মহত্ব আৰু গৌৰৱ প্ৰতিষ্ঠা কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হয়। পৃথিৱীত প্ৰচলিত ভাষাসমূহৰ উৎপত্তি, গঠন আৰু বিকাশ, সেইসমূহৰ সময়ে সময়ে হোৱা পৰিৱৰ্তন আদিৰ সম্পৰ্কে জানিবলৈ মানুহ আগ্ৰহী হৈ আহিছে আৰু তাৰে ফলস্বৰূপে প্ৰাচীন কালৰেপৰাই ভাষাবিষয়ক বিভিন্ন চিন্তা-চৰ্চা চলি আহিছে। এনেদৰে কৰা চিন্তা-চৰ্চাৰপৰাই ভাষাৰ বিজ্ঞানসন্মত আৰু প্ৰণালীবদ্ধ অধ্যয়ন আৰম্ভ হয়, যাক অসমীয়াত ‘ভাষাবিজ্ঞান’ বুলি জনা যায়। বাক্যস্থৰদ্বাৰা উচ্চাৰিত ধ্বনিসমূহৰ সংযোগত ৰূপ গঠন কৰা হয় আৰু ৰূপসমূহৰ সংযোগত অৰ্থযুক্ত বাক্য গঠন কৰি মানুহে মনৰ ভাব প্ৰকাশ কৰে। ভাষাবিজ্ঞানত ধ্বনি, ৰূপ, শব্দাৰ্থ আৰু বাক্য— এই চাৰিওটা স্তৰৰ প্ৰণালীবদ্ধ আৰু পুংখানুপুংখ বিশ্লেষণ কৰাৰ লগতে ভাষাসমূহৰ আভ্যন্তৰীণ আৰু বাহ্যিক গঠন, সময়ে সময়ে হোৱা ভাষাৰ পৰিৱৰ্তন, ভাষাৰ ব্যৱহাৰ, ভাষাৰ বিভিন্ন ৰূপ, ভাষাৰ লগত ভাষাৰ আৰু অন্য বিবিধ বিষয়ৰ সম্বন্ধ, ভাষা অধ্যয়নৰ প্ৰণালী আদি বহু দিশ ভাষাবিজ্ঞানত সামৰি লৈ বিশ্লেষণ আগবঢ়োৱা হয়। খ্ৰীঃ পূঃ ৬-৫ শতিকাত প্ৰাচ্যত তথা ভাৰতবৰ্ষত পাণিনিৰ হাতত ভাষাৰ বিজ্ঞানসন্মত চিন্তা-চৰ্চাৰ আৰম্ভণি ঘটিছিল। পাণিনিৰ ‘অষ্টাধ্যায়ী’ ব্যাকৰণৰ মাজত ভাষাৰ এটা বিজ্ঞানসন্মত আৰু শৃংখলাবদ্ধ বিশ্লেষণ দাঙি ধৰিবলৈ চেষ্টা কৰিছিল।^১ গ্ৰীক দাৰ্শনিক প্লেটো-এৰিষ্টটলৰ সময়তেই পাশ্চাত্যত ভাষা সম্পৰ্কে চিন্তা-চৰ্চা চলিছিল যদিও বিংশ শতিকাৰ দ্বিতীয় দশকৰপৰাহে প্ৰকৃত অৰ্থত আধুনিক ভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ শূভ আৰম্ভণি ঘটে বুলি ক’ব পাৰি।

১.১ অধ্যয়নৰ উদ্দেশ্য আৰু গুৰুত্ব :

অসমত ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক চিন্তা-চৰ্চাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত অসমীয়া মহিলা লেখকৰ স্থিতি বিচাৰ কৰি চোৱাই বিষয়-অধ্যয়নৰ মূল উদ্দেশ্য। অসমৰ ভাষা অধ্যয়নৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনলৈ লক্ষ্য কৰিলে দেখা যায়, পুৰুষ ভাষাচৰ্চাকাৰীসকলৰ তুলনাত মহিলাসকলে

বহু পলমকৈহে এই ক্ষেত্ৰখনত প্ৰৱেশ কৰা পৰিলক্ষিত হয়। তথাপি বৰ্তমান সময়লৈ লক্ষ্য কৰিলে এই ক্ষেত্ৰখনত অসমীয়া মহিলা ভাষা-চৰ্চাকাৰীসকলে এক গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ ভূমিকা পালন কৰি থকা দেখিবলৈ পোৱা গৈছে। ব্যাকৰণ-চৰ্চাৰপৰা আৰম্ভ কৰি অভিধান প্ৰণয়ন, লিপিৰ অধ্যয়ন, জনগোষ্ঠীয় ভাষাৰ অধ্যয়ন আদি ভাষা অধ্যয়নৰ প্ৰায় সকলো ক্ষেত্ৰতে অসমীয়া মহিলাই লক্ষণীয়ভাৱে চৰ্চা কৰি আহিছে আৰু এই দিশসমূহ পোহৰলৈ অনাৰ গুৰুত্ব অনুভৱ কৰিয়েই এই বিষয়টি আলোচনাৰ বাবে নিৰ্বাচন কৰি লোৱা হৈছে।

১.২ অধ্যয়নৰ পদ্ধতি আৰু পৰিসৰ :

বৰ্ণনাত্মক পদ্ধতিৰে বিষয়টি অধ্যয়ন কৰাৰ প্ৰয়াস কৰা হৈছে। অধ্যয়নৰ পৰিসৰ হিচাপে আৰম্ভণিৰেপৰা বৰ্তমানলৈকে যিসকল অসমীয়া মহিলাই ভাষা-চৰ্চা কৰি আহিছে সেই সকলোকে এই আলোচনাৰ আওতালৈ অনাৰ যথাসম্ভৱ প্ৰয়াস কৰা হৈছে। অৱশ্যে অপ্ৰকাশিত ৰচনা সকলোকে সাঙুৰি ল’ব পৰা হোৱা নাই।

২.০ অসমত ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক চিন্তা-চৰ্চাৰ সাধাৰণ আভাস :

আধুনিক কালত ভাষাবিজ্ঞান বুলিলে যি অৰ্থত বুজা যায়, তেনে অধ্যয়নৰ পৰম্পৰা অসমত তুলনামূলকভাৱে অৰ্বাচীন।^২ যদিওবা ১৭৯৫ চনত টেঙাই পণ্ডিতে গৌৰীনাথ সিংহৰ পৃষ্ঠপোষকতাত ‘বৰ অস্ম আৰু ফুল অস্ম বা লতি অস্ম’ ৰচনা (পৰৱৰ্তী সময়ত বৰ অস্মখন কোচবিহাৰৰ কৈলাশচন্দ্ৰ বসুৰপৰা পণ্ডিত হেমচন্দ্ৰ গোস্বামীয়ে সংগ্ৰহ কৰে আৰু লতি অস্মখন শিৱসাগৰৰ আঁঠে দেওধাই গাঁৱৰ নন্দলাল ফুকনৰ ঘৰৰপৰা সূৰ্যকুমাৰ ভূঞাই সংগ্ৰহ কৰিছিল বুলি হেমচন্দ্ৰ গোস্বামীৰ Descriptive Catalogue of Assamese Manuscripts, ১৯৩০ চনত প্ৰকাশিত গ্ৰন্থখনৰপৰা জানিব পাৰি।) কৰাৰপৰাই অসমত অভিধান চৰ্চাৰ শূভ আৰম্ভণি ঘটে; কিন্তু ব্ৰিটিছৰ হাততহে প্ৰকৃত অৰ্থত প্ৰথম অসমীয়া ভাষা-চৰ্চাৰ সূত্ৰপাত হয় বুলি ক’ব পাৰি। অৱশ্যে এই চৰ্চা আছিল সম্পূৰ্ণভাৱে ব্ৰিটিছে প্ৰশাসনীয় কাম-কাজ সুচাৰুৰূপে পৰিচালনা কৰিবৰ নিমিত্তেহে। তথাপি অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ প্ৰথমখন ব্যাকৰণ বুলি ক’বলৈ গ’লে, ১৮৩৯ চনত প্ৰকাশিত ইংৰাজী ভাষাত লিখা William Robinson-ৰ ‘A Grammar of the Assamese Language’ গ্ৰন্থখনৰ কথাই ক’ব লাগিব। পৰৱৰ্তী সময়ত

মিছনেবিসকলৰ প্ৰচেষ্টাত ১৯৪৬ চনত প্ৰথম অসমীয়া মাহেকীয়া সংবাদপত্ৰ 'অৰুনোদই' প্ৰকাশ পায় আৰু ১৯৪৮ চনত অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ দ্বিতীয়খন ব্যাকৰণ ড° নাথান ব্ৰাউনৰ 'Grammatical Notices on Assamese Language' প্ৰকাশ পায়। অসমীয়া ভাষাত লিখা অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ প্ৰথমখন ব্যাকৰণ হ'ল হেমচন্দ্ৰ বৰুৱাৰ 'অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ ব্যাকৰণ'। এই ব্যাকৰণখন প্ৰকাশ হয় ১৮৫৯ চনত। ইয়াৰ পাছৰেপৰা অসমীয়া ভাষা আৰু অসমৰ ভাষা সম্পৰ্কে বিভিন্নজনে চৰ্চা চলাই আহিছে। এইক্ষেত্ৰত ক্ৰমে, লোকনাথ শৰ্মা, দেৱানন্দ ভৰালি, সত্যনাথ বৰা, কালিৰাম মেধিৰ নাম বিশেষভাৱে উল্লেখনীয়। দৰাচলতে ক'বলৈ গ'লে, ঊনবিংশ শতিকাৰপৰা অসমত ভাষা-চৰ্চাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনে মূৰ দাঙি উঠে যদিও যথার্থতে ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক দৃষ্টিভংগীৰে কৰা ভাষাৰ অধ্যয়ন বুলিলে ১৯৪১ চনত প্ৰকাশিত বাণীকান্ত কাকতিৰ গৱেষণা গ্ৰন্থ 'Assamese, Its Formation and Development' গ্ৰন্থখনৰ কথা ক'ব লাগিব। পৰৱৰ্তী সময়ত বিভিন্নজন পণ্ডিত, গৱেষকে ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক দৃষ্টিভংগীৰে অসমীয়া, অসম তথা উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলৰ আৰু ভাৰতবৰ্ষৰ বিভিন্ন ভাষা সম্পৰ্কে চৰ্চা চলাই আহিছে। সম্প্ৰতি সেই ক্ষেত্ৰখনলৈ মন কৰিলে দেখা যায়, ভাষা সম্পৰ্কীয় বিবিধ তত্ত্বৰ প্ৰয়োগেৰে ভাষাৰ আলোচকসকলে অসমত ভাষাৰ অধ্যয়নৰ নতুন নতুন দিশ মুকলি কৰিছে।

৩.০ অসমত ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক চিন্তা-চৰ্চাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত অসমীয়া মহিলা-লেখকৰ অৱদান :

অসমত এতিয়ালৈকে যিসকল ভাষাবিদে ভাষাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনত কাম কৰি আহিছে সেইসকললৈ মন কৰিলে, পুৰুষ ভাষাবিদ আৰু ভাষা অধ্যয়নকাৰীসকলৰ তুলনাত মহিলা ভাষা-চিন্তাবিদসকলে এই ক্ষেত্ৰখনত বহু পলমকৈহে চৰ্চা আৰম্ভ কৰা পৰিলক্ষিত হয়। অৱশ্যে বৰ্তমান সময়ত এইসকল মহিলা ভাষা-চিন্তকে নিৰন্তৰভাৱে উল্লিখিত ক্ষেত্ৰখনত নিজ কৰ্তব্য আৰু দায়িত্ব গুৰুতৰ সহকাৰে পালন কৰি আছে। অসমৰ মহিলা ভাষা-চৰ্চাকাৰী বুলি ক'বলৈ গ'লে খুবসম্ভৱ পোনপ্ৰথমে চন্দ্ৰপ্ৰভা চৌধুৰীৰ কথাই ক'ব লাগিব। ১৯৭৪ চনতে চন্দ্ৰপ্ৰভা চৌধুৰীয়ে বিদ্যালয়ৰ ছাত্ৰ-ছাত্ৰীৰ উপযোগীকৈ লিখি উলিওৱা 'অসমীয়া ভাষা সাৰথি ব্যাকৰণ' শীৰ্ষক গ্ৰন্থখনেই সম্ভৱতঃ অসমীয়া

মহিলাই প্ৰণয়ন কৰা প্ৰথম ভাষাবিষয়ক পুথি। ইয়াৰ পিছতে নাম ল'ব পাৰি ভুবনেশ্বৰী বৈশ্যৰ। তেওঁৰ 'প্ৰাকৃত ভাষা পৰিচয়' (১৯৭৫) শিক্ষার্থীৰ প্ৰয়োজনীয়তালৈ লক্ষ্য কৰি প্ৰণয়ন কৰা ভাষা বিষয়ক গ্ৰন্থ। এইসমূহ সম্পূৰ্ণ ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক দৃষ্টিভংগীৰে লেখা নহ'লেও ভাষা চৰ্চাৰ দিশত অসমীয়া মহিলা ভাষাচৰ্চাকাৰী বুলি ক'বলৈ যাওঁতে এওঁলোক প্ৰাতঃস্মৰণীয় হৈ ৰ'ব।

ঊনবিংশ শতিকাৰ আশীৰ দশকৰপৰা ভাষাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনত প্ৰায় নিয়মিতভাৱে চৰ্চা কৰি থকা পোনপ্ৰথমেই উল্লেখ কৰিবলগীয়া মহিলা ভাষা-চৰ্চাকাৰী হৈছে লীলাৱতী শইকীয়া বৰা। ভাষা আৰু সাহিত্য দুয়োটা ক্ষেত্ৰতে চৰ্চা কৰা লীলাৱতী শইকীয়া বৰাই 'THE RAMAYANA OF MADHAVA KANDALI : A LINGUISTIC STUDY' বিষয়ত গৱেষণা কৰি ১৯৮৬ চনত ডক্টৰেট উপাধি লাভ কৰে আৰু ভাষা বিষয়ত কাম কৰি এই সন্মান লাভ কৰা তেওঁৰেই প্ৰথম অসমীয়া মহিলা। তেওঁৰ ভাষাবিষয়ক মৌলিক গ্ৰন্থ তিনিখন। সেয়া ক্ৰমে— 'মাধৱ কন্দলিৰ ৰামায়ণৰ ভাষা' (১৯৯৩), 'সংস্কৃত-পালি-প্ৰাকৃত আৰু অসমীয়া ব্যাকৰণ' (২০০২), 'অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ ৰূপতত্ত্ব' (২০০৬) 'অসমীয়া ব্যাকৰণ আৰু ব্যৱহাৰ' (২০১৬)।

লীলাৱতী শইকীয়া বৰাৰ পিছতে ভাষা আৰু সাহিত্য দুয়ো ক্ষেত্ৰত চৰ্চা কৰা তথা ভাষাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত একনিষ্ঠভাৱে লাগি থকা আন এগৰাকী ভাষাবিদ দীপ্তি ফুকন পাটগিৰি। নব্বৈৰ দশকতেই 'AN ANALYSIS OF THE ASSAMESE VERB SYSTEM : A HISTORICAL STUDY' বিষয়ত গৱেষণা কৰি ১৯৮৯ খ্ৰীষ্টাব্দত ডক্টৰেট উপাধি লাভ কৰা দীপ্তি ফুকন পাটগিৰিয়ে সাম্প্ৰতিক সময়লৈকে ভাষাবিষয়ক কেইবাখনো মূল্যবান গ্ৰন্থ লিখি উলিয়ায়। অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ উপৰি বাংলা, উড়িয়া, নেপালী আদি ভাষাতো দখল থকা পাটগিৰিৰ মৌলিক গ্ৰন্থকেইখন হৈছে— 'ভাষাতত্ত্ব' (১৯৯১), 'মধ্যযুগৰ অসমীয়া ভাষা-সাহিত্যৰ ৰেঙণি' (১৯৯৭), 'আধুনিক অসমীয়া ব্যাকৰণ' (১৯৯৯), 'মধ্যযুগৰ অসমীয়া ব্যাকৰণ' (১৯৯৯), 'আধুনিক অসমীয়া গদ্য' (২০০৩), 'অসমীয়া, বাংলা আৰু উড়িয়া ভাষা তুলনামূলক অধ্যয়ন' (২০০৪) 'SOME ASPECTS ON LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS' (২০১০)। এইকেইখনৰ



উপৰি লীলাৱতী শইকীয়া বৰাৰ সৈতে একেলগে সম্পাদনা কৰা গ্ৰন্থ ‘ভাষা-জিজ্ঞাসা’ (২০০২)। ‘অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ উপভাষা’ (২০০৭), ‘উপভাষা আৰু অসমৰ ভাষা-উপভাষা’ (২০১০) তেওঁৰদ্বাৰা সম্পাদিত অন্য দুখন ভাষাবিষয়ক উল্লেখযোগ্য গ্ৰন্থ।

ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক দৃষ্টিভংগীৰে উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলৰ ভাষাসমূহৰ অধ্যয়ন কৰি থকা অন্য এগৰাকী উল্লেখযোগ্য মহিলা ভাষা-চৰ্চাকাৰী অৰ্পণা কোঁৱৰ। ‘THE KARBI PEOPLE AND THEIR LANGUAGE: A CRITICAL STUDY’ বিষয়ত গৱেষণা কৰি ডক্টৰেট উপাধি লাভ কৰা অৰ্পণা কোঁৱৰৰ ভাষাবিষয়ক গ্ৰন্থ— ‘ভাষা-সাহিত্যৰ অধ্যয়ন’ (১৯৯৫), ‘ভাষা-সাহিত্যৰ বিবিধ চিন্তা’ (১৯৯৭), ভাষাবিজ্ঞান উপক্ৰমণিকা (২০০২), প্ৰাচীন অসমীয়া গদ্যশৈলী (২০০৪), KARBI: THE PEOPLE AND THE LANGUAGE (২০০৩) ‘অসমীয়া ভাষা চিন্তন’ (২০১৫), ‘অসমত ভাষাৰ অধ্যয়ন’ (২০২০), ‘অসমৰ ভাষাৰ বিশ্লেষণাত্মক অধ্যয়ন’ (২০২০) আদিয়ে অসমত ভাষাৰ চিন্তা-চৰ্চাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনত বিশেষভাৱে বৰঙণি আগবঢ়াইছে। উল্লিখিত গ্ৰন্থকেইখনৰ উপৰি অৰ্পণা কোঁৱৰ আৰু অনুৰাধা শৰ্মাৰদ্বাৰা সংকলিত আৰু সম্পাদিত ‘ভাষাবিজ্ঞান পাৰিভাষিক কোষ’ (২০০৮) এনে এখন গ্ৰন্থ, যিখনে এতিয়ালৈকে অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ পাৰিভাষিক শব্দাৱলী প্ৰয়োগৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত একক আৰু অনবদ্য ৰূপত কাম কৰি আছে।

জ্যোতিৰেখা হাজৰিকা অসমৰ অন্য এগৰাকী জনপ্ৰিয় সাহিত্যিক, যিগৰাকীয়ে সাহিত্য-চৰ্চাৰ সমান্তৰালভাৱে ভাষাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনতো কাম কৰি আহিছে। ‘অসমৰ তিব্বত-বৰ্মী ভাষাৰ অধ্যয়নৰ ইতিহাস’ বিষয়ত গৱেষণা কৰি ২০১০ চনত ডক্টৰেট উপাধি লাভ কৰা হাজৰিকাৰ ভাষাবিষয়ক গ্ৰন্থকেইখন হৈছে— ‘অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ অধ্যয়ন’ (১৯৯৭, যুটীয়াভাৱে), ‘আধুনিক অসমীয়া ৰচনা— ব্যাকৰণৰ সৈতে’ (২০১২, যুটীয়াভাৱে), ‘জনসম্পৰ্ক আৰু ব্যৱহাৰিক অসমীয়া ভাষা’ (২০১২, যুটীয়াভাৱে), ‘মাধ্যমিক অসমীয়া ৰচনা— ব্যাকৰণৰ সৈতে’ (২০১২, যুটীয়াভাৱে), ‘অসমৰ ভাষা-সাহিত্য-সংস্কৃতিৰ ৰেঙণি’ (২০১৪), ‘অসমীয়া লিপি আৰু অসমৰ জনজাতীয় ভাষাৰ লিপি’ (২০১৮), ‘দেউৰী ভাষা-সাহিত্যৰ অধ্যয়ন’ (২০২১)। ইয়াৰ উপৰি তেওঁ সম্পাদনা কৰা ‘ব্ৰহ্মপুত্ৰ উপত্যকাৰ টাই জনগোষ্ঠী : ভাষা-সমাজ-সংস্কৃতি’ (২০১৫),

‘অসমৰ তিব্বত-বৰ্মীমূলীয় জনগোষ্ঠী : ভাষা-সমাজ-সংস্কৃতি’ (২০১৬) দুখন উল্লেখযোগ্য গ্ৰন্থ, য’ত বিশেষভাৱে অসমত প্ৰচলিত টাইমূলীয় আৰু তিব্বত-বৰ্মীমূলীয় ভাষাৰ অধ্যয়ন কৰা হৈছে। তদুপৰি সত্যনাথ বৰাৰ ‘বহল ব্যাকৰণ’ৰ সম্পাদনা (২০১৩)ৰ লগতে ‘মিৰি দুয়ান’ (শোনাৰাম মিৰি মহৰি, মিচিং ভাষাৰ প্ৰথমখন গ্ৰন্থৰ উদ্ধাৰ, সংকলন আৰু সম্পাদনা, ২০১৩) উল্লেখযোগ্য কৰ্ম। উল্লেখ্য যে, হাজৰিকাই সম্পাদনা কৰা ‘অসম সাহিত্য সভা পত্ৰিকা’ (২০১১-১২)ৰ অসম সাহিত্য সভাৰ লিডু অধিৱেশনৰ বিশেষ সংখ্যা (যট্ৰস্তুতিম বৰ্ষ, চতুৰ্থ সংখ্যা, মাৰ্চ-এপ্ৰিল-মে’ : ২০১২)টি ‘জনজাতীয় ভাষা বিশেষ সংখ্যা’ হিচাপে প্ৰকাশ পাইছিল।

‘ভাৰতীয় আৰ্যভাষাৰ পৰম্পৰাত উদ্ভৱকালীন অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ গঠন’ বিষয়ত গৱেষণা কৰি ডক্টৰেট উপাধি লাভ কৰা সুবাসনা মহন্তৰ ‘উদ্ভৱকালীন অসমীয়া ভাষা’ (২০০৩) গ্ৰন্থখন অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ অধ্যয়নৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনলৈ আগবঢ়োৱা বিশেষ অৱদান।

বয়সত প্ৰবীণ হ’লেও শেহতীয়াকৈ ভাষা চৰ্চাত নিমগ্ন হোৱা পুষ্পা গগৈয়ে ‘ভাৰতীয় আৰ্য ভাষা’ (২০০৭) আৰু ‘ভাষা-বীথিকা’ (২০০৭) শীৰ্ষক দুখন গ্ৰন্থ প্ৰণয়ন কৰি থৈ গৈছে। প্ৰথমখন গ্ৰন্থত ভাৰতীয় আৰ্য ভাষাৰ ঐতিহাসিক বা বংশানুক্ৰমিক স্তৰ বিবৃত হৈছে। দ্বিতীয়খন গ্ৰন্থত অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ মূল সম্পৰ্কে আলোচিত হৈছে।

ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক দৃষ্টিভংগীৰে অধ্যয়ন কৰা আন এগৰাকী মহিলা গৱেষক তথা ভাষা-চৰ্চাকাৰী অনুৰাধা শৰ্মাৰ ‘বাণীকান্ত কাকতি : জীৱন আৰু কৃতি’ (২০০৯), ‘শৈলী আৰু শৈলীবিজ্ঞান’ (২০১০), ‘সমাজ আৰু ভাষা সমাজভাষাবিজ্ঞান পৰিচয়’ (২০১৬), ‘ভাষাবিজ্ঞান আৰু অসমীয়া ভাষা’ (২০২০) আদি উল্লেখযোগ্য ভাষাসম্পৰ্কীয় গ্ৰন্থ। অসমীয়া ভাষা সম্পৰ্কে পোনপ্ৰথমবাৰৰ বাবে সম্পূৰ্ণ বিজ্ঞানভিত্তিকভাৱে অধ্যয়ন কৰা অসম তথা সমগ্ৰ ভাৰতবৰ্ষৰে উল্লেখযোগ্য ভাষাবিদ বাণীকান্তকাকতিৰ জীৱন আৰু কৃতি সম্পৰ্কে গৱেষণা কৰি ডক্টৰেট উপাধি লাভ কৰি শৰ্মায়ে গৱেষক হিচাপে নিজ বুদ্ধিমত্তা আৰু পাণ্ডিত্যৰ পৰিচয় বহন কৰি আহিছে।

বিভা ভৰালী আৰু প্ৰণতি শৰ্মা গোস্বামীৰদ্বাৰা ৰচিত ‘ভাষা সাহিত্যৰ শোভা’ (২০০৭) গ্ৰন্থত ভাষাবিষয়ক

বহুকেইটা প্ৰবন্ধ সন্নিবিষ্ট হৈছে। বিভা ভৰালী আৰু বনানি চক্ৰৱৰ্তীৰদ্বাৰা সম্পাদিত ‘অসমৰ ভাষা’ (২০১৩) এখন লেখত ল’বলগীয়া গ্ৰন্থ, য’ত অসমত প্ৰচলিত বিভিন্ন ভাষা-পৰিয়ালৰ ভাষাসমূহৰ জৰীপৰ লগতে সেই ভাষাসমূহৰ বিস্তৃত বিৱৰণ বিভিন্ন লেখকে আগবঢ়াইছে। বিভা ভৰালী আৰু কল্পনা তালুকদাৰৰদ্বাৰা সম্পাদিত ‘গোৱালপৰীয়া উপভাষা : ৰূপ-বৈচিত্ৰ্য’ (২০১২) এনে এখন গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ গ্ৰন্থ, যিখন গ্ৰন্থত ১৩ জন লেখকে সম্পূৰ্ণ ক্ষেত্ৰভিত্তিক অধ্যয়নৰ জৰিয়তে গোৱালপৰীয়া উপভাষাৰ ধ্বনিতাত্ত্বিক, ৰূপতাত্ত্বিক, বাক্যগঠন প্ৰণালী সম্পৰ্কে বিভিন্ন দিশৰ বিশ্লেষণ কৰাৰ উপৰি গোৱালপৰীয়া উপভাষাৰো স্থানীয় ৰূপ ‘উজেনি’ (উজানী) সম্পৰ্কে ভাষাতাত্ত্বিক অধ্যয়ন কৰিছে।

প্ৰণীতা দেৱীৰ ‘গাৰো ভাষাৰ মৌলিক বিচাৰ’ (২০০৫), ‘ভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ জিলিকনি’ (২০০৭) অন্য দুখন গ্ৰন্থ; ইয়াৰে প্ৰথমখনত অসম তথা উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলত প্ৰচলিত গাৰো ভাষা সম্পৰ্কে ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক অধ্যয়ন কৰিছে আৰু দ্বিতীয়খনত ভাষাবিজ্ঞান সম্পৰ্কীয় তত্ত্বসমূহ অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ উদাহৰণসহ আলোচনা আগবঢ়াইছে।

ইয়াৰ পিছতে নাম ল’বলগীয়া অন্য এগৰাকী মহিলা ভাষা চৰ্চাকাৰী হৈছে চম্পাকলি তালুকদাৰ। তেওঁৰ ‘ভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ ইতিহাস’ (২০১৪) গ্ৰন্থখনত ভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ তত্ত্বকথা, পাশ্চাত্যত ভাষাবিজ্ঞান চৰ্চা, ভাৰতবৰ্ষত ভাষাবিজ্ঞান চৰ্চা আৰু অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক চৰ্চা আদি মুঠ চাৰিটা অধ্যায়ত সামৰি ভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ বিবিধ তাত্ত্বিক দিশ আলোচনা কৰি ক্ৰমে পাশ্চাত্যত, ভাৰতবৰ্ষত আৰু অসমতনো কেনে ধৰণেৰে ভাষাৰ ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক চৰ্চা হৈছে সেইসম্পৰ্কে বিশদ আলোচনা আগবঢ়াইছে। ভেদাত্মক বিশ্লেষণেৰে ‘অসমীয়া আৰু মৈথিলী ভাষাৰ বিৰোধমূলক বিশ্লেষণ (ধ্বনি আৰু ৰূপ প্ৰসংগ)’ (২০২১) গ্ৰন্থ ৰচনাৰে দীপামণি হালৈয়ে ভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ এই ধাৰাটিত এক নতুন মাত্ৰা প্ৰদান কৰিছে। এইসকল মহিলা ভাষা-চৰ্চাকাৰীৰ উপৰি আৰু বহু অসমীয়া মহিলাই ভাৰতবৰ্ষত প্ৰচলিত বিভিন্ন ভাষা সম্পৰ্কে অধ্যয়ন কৰি আছে অথবা তেওঁলোকৰ বিভিন্ন ভাষাবিষয়ক লেখা, প্ৰবন্ধ প্ৰকাশিত হৈছে সেইসমূহে ভাষাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনত নতুন নতুন দিশৰ সংযোজন ঘটাইছে। উদাহৰণস্বৰূপে, মলিনা দেৱী ৰাভাৰ ‘ৰাভা ভাষা আৰু সাহিত্য’

গ্ৰন্থখনৰ কথাই ক’ব পাৰি। তদুপৰি ৰাভা ভাষা শিকনৰ হাতপুথি হিচাপে অনুপমা ৰাভাই লিখি উলিওৱা ‘ৰাভা ভাষাৰ ভাষাতাত্ত্বিক অধ্যয়ন’ (২০১৭) গ্ৰন্থখনৰ কথা ক’ব পাৰি— য’ত ৰাভা ভাষাৰ ধ্বনি, ৰূপ, বাক্য, শব্দসম্ভাৰৰ লগতে বিভিন্ন পৰিস্থিতিত ৰাভা ভাষাত কথোপকথন কৰিবলৈ প্ৰয়োজন হোৱা শব্দ, বাক্যৰ নমুনা সন্নিবিষ্ট কৰিছে। গ্ৰন্থখনে ৰাভা ভাষা শিকাৰুসকলৰ বাবে হাতপুথি হিচাপে কাম কৰি আছে।

৪.০ ব্যাকৰণ সম্পৰ্কীয় চিন্তা-চৰ্চাত অসমীয়া মহিলা লেখকৰ ভূমিকা :

ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক চিন্তা-চৰ্চাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত অসমীয়া মহিলা লেখকে সৰ্বপ্ৰথম ব্যাকৰণ সম্পৰ্কীয় চিন্তা-চৰ্চাৰ মাজেৰেই ভূমুকি মৰা দেখিবলৈ পোৱা যায়। ১৯৭৪ চনতে চন্দ্ৰপ্ৰভা চৌধুৰীয়ে বিদ্যালয়ৰ ছাত্ৰ-ছাত্ৰীৰ উপযোগীকৈ লিখি উলিওৱা ‘অসমীয়া ভাষা সাৰথি ব্যাকৰণ’-এই সম্ভৱতঃ অসমীয়া মহিলাই প্ৰণয়ন কৰা প্ৰথম ভাষাবিষয়ক পুথি। ইয়াৰ পিছত দীৰ্ঘ দিন বিৰতিৰ মূৰত দীপ্তি ফুকন পাটগিৰিৰ ‘আধুনিক অসমীয়া ব্যাকৰণ’ (১৯৯৯) আৰু ‘মধ্যযুগৰ অসমীয়া ব্যাকৰণ’ (১৯৯৯) প্ৰকাশ হৈ ওলায়। ইয়াৰে প্ৰথমখন ব্যাকৰণত প্ৰণেতাি অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ ব্যাকৰণগত দিশসমূহক সামৰি মুঠ ওঠৰটা অধ্যায় বিভাজন কৰিছে। ব্যাকৰণৰ সংজ্ঞাৰপৰা আৰম্ভ কৰি অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ কথিত আৰু লিখিত ৰূপৰ ধাৰণা আৰু বিশ্লেষণৰ লগতে বৰ্ণ আৰু ধ্বনিৰ পৰিচয়, গত আৰু যত্নবিধিৰ প্ৰণালী, পদ প্ৰকৰণৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত— বিশেষ্য, বিশেষণ, সৰ্বনাম, ক্ৰিয়া, অব্যয়, লিংগ, বচন, সমাস, কাৰক আৰু শব্দ-বিভক্তি, শব্দগঠনৰ বিবিধ প্ৰত্যয়, অনুকাৰ, অনুৰূপ শব্দৰ আলোচনা কৰাৰ পাছত পৰ্যায়ক্ৰমে অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ বাক্যগঠন প্ৰণালী, জতুৰা ঠাঁচ আৰু খণ্ডবাক্য, ফকৰা-যোজনা, প্ৰবচন, পটন্ত্ৰ, অসমীয়া ছন্দ, অলংকাৰ আৰু ব্যাকৰণখনৰ পৰিশিষ্টত অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ উৎপত্তি আৰু ক্ৰমবিকাশ সম্পৰ্কে আলোচনা আগবঢ়াইছে। ব্যাকৰণৰ অন্তৰ্গত প্ৰায় গোটেইকেইটা দিশকে সাঙুৰি লৈ আলোচনা আগবঢ়োৱা উল্লিখিত ব্যাকৰণখনত আধুনিক অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ গাঁথনিক স্বৰূপটো প্ৰকাশিত হৈছে।^৭

‘মধ্যযুগৰ অসমীয়া ব্যাকৰণ’ দীপ্তি ফুকন পাটগিৰিৰ অন্য এখন লেখত ল’বলগীয়া ব্যাকৰণ— যিখনে অসমীয়া ব্যাকৰণ-চৰ্চাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনক বিশেষভাৱে অৰিহণা আগবঢ়াইছে বুলি ক’ব পাৰি। যদিও ১৮৩৯ চনতেই পোনপ্ৰথম ৰবিন্সন

চাহাৰে ইংৰাজী ভাষাত অসমীয়া ব্যাকৰণ চৰ্চাৰ সূত্ৰপাত ঘটায় আৰু পৰৱৰ্তী সময়ত নাথান ব্ৰাউনকে ধৰি হেমচন্দ্ৰ বৰুৱা, আনন্দৰাম ঢেকিয়াল ফুকন, সত্যনাথ বৰা আদিৰপৰা সাম্প্ৰতিক সময়লৈকে বহুকেইজন ভাষাচিন্তকে অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ ব্যাকৰণ প্ৰণয়ন কৰি উলিয়াইছে; কিন্তু মধ্য যুগৰ অসমীয়া ভাষা অথবা প্ৰাচীন অসমীয়া ভাষাটোক প্ৰতিনিধিত্ব কৰিব পৰা ব্যাকৰণ প্ৰণয়ন হৈছে বুলি ক'ব নোৱাৰি। ফুকন পাটগিৰি 'মধ্য যুগৰ অসমীয়া ব্যাকৰণ'খনত বিশেষভাৱে মধ্য যুগত ৰচিত বিবিধ সাহিত্য যেনে— অংকীয়া নাট, চৰিত পুথি, বুৰঞ্জী সাহিত্য, ব্যৱহাৰিক সাহিত্য, কথা ৰামায়ণ আদিক কেন্দ্ৰ কৰি অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ মূল, বৰ্ণ, ধ্বনি, গুণবিধি, যত্নবিধি, সন্ধি, বিশেষ্য, বিশেষণ, কাৰক আৰু শব্দবিভক্তি, লিংগ, বচন, সমাস, শব্দগঠনমূলক প্ৰত্যয়, বাক্যৰ গঠন আদি দিশসমূহক সাঙুৰি লৈ ব্যাকৰণখন প্ৰণয়ন কৰিছে। ব্যাকৰণখনে অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ পূৰ্বকালীন ৰূপটোক উদ্ভাসিত কৰাত সহায়ক ভূমিকা পালন কৰিব পাৰে আৰু তাতেই ব্যাকৰণখনৰ প্ৰধান গুৰুত্ব।

মান্য অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ প্ৰায়োগিক ৰূপটোৰ গাঁথনিক বিশ্লেষণ দাঙি ধৰি লীলাৱতী শইকীয়া বৰাই প্ৰণয়ন কৰা 'অসমীয়া ব্যাকৰণ আৰু ব্যৱহাৰ' এখন উল্লেখযোগ্য ব্যাকৰণ।

'সংস্কৃত-পালি-প্ৰাকৃত আৰু অসমীয়া ব্যাকৰণ' ভাৰতীয় আৰ্যভাষাৰ ক্ৰমবিৱৰ্তন আৰু বিকাশৰ বিভিন্ন স্তৰ সাঙুৰি তুলনামূলক আলোচনা কৰা লীলাৱতী শইকীয়া বৰাৰ অন্য এখন লেখত ল'বলগীয়া ব্যাকৰণ। গ্ৰন্থখনৰ উপক্ৰমণিকাত ভাৰতীয় ক্ৰমবিৱৰ্তন সম্পৰ্কে আলোচনা আগবঢ়াই মুঠ আঠটা অধ্যায়ত মূল আলোচনা অন্তৰ্ভুক্ত কৰিছে। সংস্কৃত-পালি-প্ৰাকৃত আৰু অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ স্বৰধ্বনি, স্বৰধ্বনিৰ গুণ, বৃদ্ধি আৰু সম্প্ৰসাৰণ, সংস্কৃত, পালি-প্ৰাকৃত আৰু অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ ব্যঞ্জন ধ্বনি, সংস্কৃত সংযুক্ত ব্যঞ্জনৰ পালি-প্ৰাকৃতত পৰিৱৰ্তন, সংস্কৃত, পালি-প্ৰাকৃত আৰু অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ সন্ধি, সংস্কৃত, পালি-প্ৰাকৃত আৰু অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ শব্দৰূপ, সংস্কৃত, পালি-প্ৰাকৃত আৰু অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ ধাতুৰূপ, সংস্কৃত, পালি-প্ৰাকৃত আৰু অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ গৌণ ধাতুৰূপ আদি মূলতঃ ব্যাকৰণৰ অন্তৰ্গত আঠটা বিষয়ৰ বিস্তৃত তুলনামূলক আলোচনাৰ জৰিয়তে ভাৰতীয় আৰ্যভাষাৰ বিকশিত স্তৰসমূহৰ ভাষিক বিশেষত্বসমূহ স্পষ্ট কৰি দেখুৱাইছে। ভাৰতীয় আৰ্যভাষাৰ

তুলনামূলক আলোচনাৰ দিশত ব্যাকৰণখনৰ গুৰুত্ব বিশেষভাৱে মনকৰিবলগীয়া।

ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক দৃষ্টিভংগীৰে অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ ৰূপতাত্ত্বিক দিশত বিশদ বিশ্লেষণ আগবঢ়োৱা 'অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ ৰূপতত্ত্ব' লীলাৱতী শইকীয়া বৰাৰ এখন উল্লেখযোগ্য ব্যাকৰণ। মুঠ তেৰটা অধ্যায়ত বিভক্ত গ্ৰন্থখনৰ প্ৰথম অধ্যায়ত ৰূপতত্ত্বৰ এটি সাধাৰণ পৰিচয় দাঙি ধৰি ক্ৰমে, অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ সৰ্গ, ইয়াৰ শ্ৰেণীবিভাজন আৰু প্ৰয়োগ, শব্দ, শব্দৰ শ্ৰেণীবিভাজন আৰু গঠন, শব্দ-সাধন প্ৰক্ৰিয়া, পদ, পদৰ শ্ৰেণীবিভাগ আৰু সম্বন্ধবাচক শব্দ, নামপদৰ বচন, নামপদৰ লিংগ, নিৰ্দিষ্টতাবাচক, অনিৰ্দিষ্টতাবাচক, সম্বোধনাত্মক আৰু অন্যান্য সৰ্গ, কাৰক আৰু শব্দ-বিভক্তি, বিশেষণ আৰু ক্ৰিয়া-বিশেষণ, সৰ্বনাম, ক্ৰিয়াপদ, অব্যয় আৰু অনুপদক সাঙুৰি অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ পৰ্যাপ্ত উদাহৰণসহ সহজ-সৰল ভাষাত ছাত্ৰ-ছাত্ৰী তথা গৱেষকসকলৰ উপযোগীকৈ অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ ৰূপতত্ত্বৰ পূৰ্ণাংগ আলোচনা গ্ৰন্থখনত আগবঢ়াইছে। তদুপৰি পৰিশিষ্টত 'অসমীয়া আখৰ জোঁটনি' সম্পৰ্কে এটা অতি গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ পৰ্যালোচনা আগবঢ়াইছে। অসমীয়া ৰূপতত্ত্বৰ দিশত এনে স্পষ্ট আৰু বিতং আলোচনা কৰা ব্যাকৰণ অসমীয়া ভাষাত দ্বিতীয় এখন আছে বুলি ক'ব নোৱাৰি। নিঃসন্দেহে লীলাৱতী শইকীয়া বৰাৰ ব্যাকৰণখনে অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক চৰ্চাত উল্লেখযোগ্য ভূমিকা গ্ৰহণ কৰি আছে।

১৯৯৭ চনত আইম্যাথাং গোহাঁইৰ 'Elementary Tai-Primer (টাই ভাষাৰ প্ৰাথমিক পাঠ ব্যাকৰণৰ সৈতে)' গ্ৰন্থখন প্ৰকাশ পায়। ব্যাকৰণখনৰ আদি পাঠটো টাই ভাষাৰ পৰিচয় দি টাইমূলীয়া ভাষাৰ স্বৰ আৰু ব্যঞ্জন চিহ্নসমূহৰ উল্লেখ কৰিছে। তদুপৰি টাই ভাষাৰ সুৰ, স্বৰান্ত শব্দ, ব্যঞ্জনান্ত শব্দ, পদ প্ৰকৰণ, বিশেষ্য, বিশেষণ, সৰ্বনাম, ক্ৰিয়া, ক্ৰিয়া বিশেষণ, লিংগ, বচন, কাৰক, প্ৰত্যয় আদিৰ আলোচনা কৰিছে। ব্যাকৰণখনিৰ শেষ ভাগত টাই ভাষাৰ সাধাৰণ কথোপকথন, নিচুকনি গীত, নীতি বচন, সাঁথৰ, গল্প আদি লোক সাহিত্যৰ বিবিধ নমুনা সংযোজন কৰিছে। গ্ৰন্থখনি মুঠ চল্লিশটা ভাগত ভাগ কৰি ব্যাকৰণৰ বিবিধ দিশৰ আলোচনা আগবঢ়াইছে। টাই ভাষাৰ প্ৰাথমিক পাঠ শিকাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত ব্যাকৰণখনৰ গুৰুত্ব আছে।

সত্যনাথ বৰাৰ 'বহল ব্যাকৰণ' (২০২৫)খন পুনৰ সংকলিত কৰি সম্পাদনা কৰি উলিয়ায় জ্যোতিৰেখা হাজৰিকাই।

‘বুক হ’ম’ প্ৰকাশনে প্ৰকাশ কৰা এই সম্পাদিত ৰূপটি সম্পাদকে পাঠসমীক্ষাৰ জৰিয়তে গ্ৰন্থখনৰ প্ৰথম সংস্কৰণৰ আধাৰত প্ৰকাশ কৰাৰ লগতে বৰ্তমানৰ আখৰ-জোঁটনিৰ স’তে মূলৰ পৰিলক্ষিত পাৰ্থক্যসমূহ ফহিয়াই দেখুৱাইছে। জ্যোতিৰেখা হাজৰিকাই ড° অমল ৰাজখোৱাৰ সৈতে যুটীয়াভাৱে যুগুত কৰা ‘আধুনিক অসমীয়া ৰচনা (২০১২) আৰু ড° অমল ৰাজখোৱা, ড° কৃষ্ণ কুমাৰ মিশ্ৰ, ড° হেম বৰাৰ সৈতে লিখা ‘মাধ্যমিক অসমীয়া ৰচনা’ (২০১৩)ত বিশেষভাৱে ছাত্ৰ-ছাত্ৰীৰ উপযোগীকৈ বহু ৰচনা চয়ন কৰাৰ লগতে অসমীয়া ব্যাকৰণৰ সবিশেষ বিদ্যার্থীৰ বোধগম্য হোৱা ভাষাৰে সংযোগ কৰিছে।

৫.০ অভিধান সম্পৰ্কীয় চিন্তা-চৰ্চাত অসমীয়া মহিলাৰ ভূমিকা :

অসমত অভিধান চৰ্চাৰ ইতিহাস বিচাৰ কৰিবলৈ হ’লে গোঁৰীনাথ সিংহৰ পৃষ্ঠপোষকতাত ১৭৯৫ চনত টেঙাই পণ্ডিত খ্যাত ব্যক্তিয়ে প্ৰণয়ন কৰা ‘বৰ অস্ৰ আৰু ফুল অস্ৰ বা লতি অস্ৰ’ৰ কাষ চাপিব লাগিব (পৰৱৰ্তী সময়ত ‘বৰ অস্ৰ’খন কোচবিহাৰৰ কৈলাশচন্দ্ৰ বসুৰপৰা পণ্ডিত হেমচন্দ্ৰ গোস্বামীয়ে আৰু ‘লতি অস্ৰ’খন শিৱসাগৰৰ আঁঠৈ দেওধাই গাঁৱৰ নন্দলাল ফুকনৰ ঘৰৰপৰা সূৰ্যকুমাৰ ভূঞাই সংগ্ৰহ কৰিছিল বুলি হেমচন্দ্ৰ গোস্বামীৰ ১৯৩০ চনত প্ৰকাশিত 'Descriptive Catalogue of Assamese Manuscripts' নামৰ গ্ৰন্থখনৰপৰা জানিবপৰা যায়।)। অৰ্থাৎ অষ্টাদশ শতিকাৰ শেষ ভাগত অসমত অভিধান চৰ্চাৰ বীজ ৰোপণ হয় যদিও দৰাচলতে ঊনবিংশ শতিকাৰপৰাহে অসমত প্ৰকৃত অৰ্থত অভিধান চৰ্চা হোৱা পৰিলক্ষিত হয়। সাধাৰণভাৱে অভিধান বুলিলে যি বুজা যায়, তেনে বিশেষত্বসমূহ স্বৰূপাৰ্থত নাথাকিলেও অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ প্ৰথম ছপা অভিধান বুলি ক’লে মাইল্‌ছ ব্ৰাণ্ডনৰ ‘অচমিয়া ইংৰাজী অভিধান’-খনৰ কথাই জনা যায়। পৰৱৰ্তী সময়ত অসমত অভিধান চৰ্চাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখন বহুদূৰ আগুৱাই গ’লেও এইক্ষেত্ৰত অসমৰ মহিলা অভিধান-চৰ্চাকাৰীসকল বৰ বেছি আগুৱাই অহা পৰিলক্ষিত নহয়।

১৯৯৮ চনত কাছেমা খাতুনৰ ‘গোৱালপৰীয়া অভিধান’ প্ৰকাশ পায়। অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ গোৱালপৰীয়া ঔপভাষিক ৰূপৰ এইখনেই প্ৰথম শব্দকোষ। ইয়াত অবিভক্ত গোৱালপাৰা জিলাৰ লোকসকলৰ মাজত প্ৰচলিত শব্দসমূহ

বৰ্ণানুগ্ৰহ অনুসৰি সজাই সেইসমূহৰ অৰ্থ মান্য অসমীয়াত দিয়া হৈছে। অভিধানখনৰ পাতনিত গোৱালপৰীয়া উপভাষাৰ ধ্বনিগত আৰু ৰূপগত দিশত থকা বিশেষত্বসমূহ চমুকৈ দাঙি ধৰিছে। ‘গোৱালপৰীয়া অভিধান’ দৰাচলতে এখন একভাষিক শব্দকোষ।

২০০১ চনত উৰ্মিলা বৰুৱাই সম্পাদনা কৰা ‘চয়নিকা’ নামেৰে এখন পৌৰাণিক প্ৰসঙ্গকোষ প্ৰকাশ হৈ ওলায়। ইয়াত শাস্ত্ৰ, কাব্য, উপাখ্যান আদিত সংগীতৰ লগত জড়িত শব্দৰ অৰ্থ আৰু সংগীতজ্ঞৰ চমু জীৱন দাঙি ধৰা দেখিবলৈ পোৱা গৈছে।

ডিমাছা ভাষা-সমাজ-সংস্কৃতিৰ উৎকৰ্ষৰ হকে কাম কৰা এগৰাকী মহিলা হ’ল নিৰুপমা হুগজেৰ। তেওঁৰ ডিমাছা-অসমীয়া অভিধান ‘ডিমাছা গ্ৰাউণ্ডেন’ শীৰ্ষক অভিধানখন প্ৰকাশ পায় ২০০৫ চনত। অভিধানখনত ডিমাছা শব্দৰ অসমীয়া অৰ্থ সন্নিবিষ্ট কৰিছে। এই অভিধানখন ডিমাছা ভাষা শিকাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত অসমীয়া লোকসকলৰ সহায়ক গ্ৰন্থ হিচাপে পৰিগণিত হৈছে। দৰাচলতে এইখনক অভিধানৰ সলনি কোষ বুলিহে আখ্যা দিব পাৰি।

‘ভাষাবিজ্ঞান পাৰিভাষিক কোষ’ অপৰ্ণা কোঁৱৰ আৰু অনুৰাধা শৰ্মাৰ সম্পাদনাত ২০০৮ চনত প্ৰকাশ হৈ ওলায়। এই কোষখনত ভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ লগত জড়িত শব্দবোৰৰ পৰিভাষা আৰু সংজ্ঞা দাঙি ধৰিছে। উল্লেখনীয় যে, অসমীয়া ভাষাত প্ৰকাশিত ভাষাবিজ্ঞানবিষয়ক পাৰিভাষিক কোষ এইখনেই এতিয়ালৈকে প্ৰথম আৰু অদ্বিতীয়। গ্ৰন্থখনৰ ঐতিহাসিক আৰু ব্যৱহাৰিক মূল্য যথেষ্ট। অপৰ্ণা কোঁৱৰে সম্পাদনা কৰা ‘অভিধানতত্ত্ব’ গ্ৰন্থখনৰো বিশেষ গুৰুত্ব আছে। এই গ্ৰন্থখনত অভিধান প্ৰণয়ন আৰু অভিধানতত্ত্বৰ কাৰিকৰী দিশ সম্পৰ্কীয় লেখাৰ লগতে অভিধান প্ৰণয়নৰ কেইবাটাও আৰ্হি সন্নিবিষ্ট হৈছে।

‘শৰাইঘাট অভিধান’ (২০১১)-ৰ যুটীয়া সহযোগী সম্পাদক হিচাপে বিশিষ্ট লেখক ৰূপশ্ৰী গোস্বামীয়ে এক মহৎ কৰ্ম সম্পাদন কৰিছে। কৰবী গগৈয়ে ‘অসমীয়া অভিধানৰ ডেৰশ বছৰ আৰু আধুনিক অভিধান প্ৰণেতাৰ সন্মুখত প্ৰত্যাহ্বান’ (২০১১) বিষয়ে ইতিমধ্যে গৱেষণাকৰ্ম সম্পন্ন কৰিছে।

৬.০ ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক চিন্তা-চৰ্চাত অসমীয়া মহিলাৰ ভূমিকা :

ভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ অধ্যয়নত অসমৰ যিকেইগৰাকী গৱেষক-পণ্ডিতে নিৰলসভাৱে চৰ্চা চলাই আছে সেইসকলৰ ভিতৰত দীপ্তি

ফুকন পাটগিৰি অন্যতম। তেওঁৰদ্বাৰা ৰচিত আৰু সম্পাদিত কেইবাখনো গ্ৰন্থৰ মাধ্যমেৰে ভাষাক আধুনিক বিজ্ঞানসন্মত দৃষ্টিভংগীৰে অধ্যয়ন তথা আলোচনা কৰা দেখিবলৈ পোৱা গৈছে। তেওঁৰ প্ৰথম প্ৰকাশিত গ্ৰন্থ হৈছে, 'ভাষাতত্ত্ব'। 'Linguistics' শব্দৰ অসমীয়া প্ৰতিশব্দ হিচাপে তেওঁ 'ভাষাতত্ত্ব' শব্দটো গ্ৰন্থখনত ব্যৱহাৰ কৰিছে। ঘাইকৈ ভাষাৰ তাত্ত্বিক দিশ আৰু পৃথিৱীৰ বিভিন্ন ভাষা পৰিয়াল আৰু ভাষা সম্পৰ্কে আলোচনা কৰা গ্ৰন্থখনত ক্ৰমে, ভাষা, ভাষাতত্ত্ব, ভাষাতত্ত্বৰ ইতিহাস, ভাষাতত্ত্বৰ শাখা আৰু প্ৰশাখা, পৃথিৱীৰ ভাষা পৰিয়াল, ইন্দো-ইউৰোপীয় ভাষা-পৰিয়াল, ভাৰতৰ বিভিন্ন ভাষা, উপভাষাতত্ত্ব, অৰ্থতত্ত্ব, ভাষাৰ ভেদ আৰু ভাষাতত্ত্বৰ আনুষংগিক পৰিচয় আদিকে ধৰি মুঠ নটা অধ্যায়ত বিভাজন কৰি আলোচনা আগবঢ়াইছে। ভাষা অধ্যয়নৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত গ্ৰন্থখনে ছাত্ৰ আৰু শিক্ষকসমাজৰ লগতে সাধাৰণ পাঠুৱৈৰ বাবেও সহায়ক ভূমিকা পালন কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে, কিয়নো ইয়াৰ আগতে অসমীয়া ভাষাত এনে গ্ৰন্থ প্ৰকাশ হোৱা বৰ বেছি পৰিলক্ষিত নহয়।

'অসমীয়া, বাংলা আৰু উড়িয়া ভাষা (তুলনামূলক অধ্যয়ন)' দীপ্তি ফুকন পাটগিৰিৰ অন্য এখন গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ গ্ৰন্থ, যিখন অসমীয়া ভাষাত প্ৰকাশ হৈ ওলোৱা ভাষাৰ তুলনামূলক অধ্যয়নৰ প্ৰথম গ্ৰন্থ। আধুনিক ভাৰতীয় আৰ্যভাষাবোৰৰ ভিতৰত অসমীয়া, বাংলা আৰু উড়িয়া ভাষাই বিশেষ সমৃদ্ধি লাভ কৰিছে। একেমূলীয় ভাষা হোৱাৰ হেতু তিনিওটা ভাষাতে কিছুমান উমৈহতীয়া সাদৃশ্য পৰিলক্ষিত হয় আৰু ভিন্ ভিন্ অঞ্চলক কেন্দ্ৰ কৰি বিকাশ লাভ কৰাৰ বাবে আৰু বিভিন্ন কাৰণবশতঃ ভাষাসমূহত স্বকীয় ভাষাগত বৈশিষ্ট্যই গঢ় লৈ উঠা দেখিবলৈ পোৱা যায়। তুলনামূলক অধ্যয়নৰ জৰিয়তে ভাষাকেইটাৰ মাজত থকা পাৰস্পৰিক সম্পৰ্ক নিৰ্ণয় কৰাৰ লগতে পৃথক বৈশিষ্ট্যসমূহ দেখুৱাই দিয়াতো সহায় কৰাৰ কথা গ্ৰন্থকাৰে গ্ৰন্থখনৰ 'আগকথা'ত উল্লেখ কৰিছে। চাৰিটা অধ্যায়ত বিভাজন কৰি প্ৰথম অধ্যায়ত অসমীয়া, বাংলা আৰু উড়িয়া ভাষাৰ চমু বুৰঞ্জীৰ লগতে তিনিওটা ভাষাৰ উপভাষা, দ্বিতীয় অধ্যায়ত অসমীয়া, বাংলা আৰু উড়িয়া ভাষাৰ ধ্বনিতত্ত্ব আৰু সিহঁতৰ মাজত তুলনা, তৃতীয় অধ্যায়ত তিনিওটা ভাষাৰ গঠনমূলক প্ৰত্যয়, সৰ্বনাম, বিশেষণ, বচন, লিংগ, কাৰক আৰু শব্দ বিভক্তি, নিৰ্দিষ্টতাচাক প্ৰত্যয়, দ্বিৰুক্তিচাকতা, সম্বন্ধবাচক শব্দ, ক্ৰিয়া আৰু সেইসমূহৰ তুলনামূলক অধ্যয়ন কৰিছে। চতুৰ্থ

অধ্যায়ত অসমীয়া, বাংলা আৰু উড়িয়া ভাষাৰ শব্দমালাৰ তালিকা প্ৰস্তুত কৰিছে। গ্ৰন্থখনে তুলনামূলক অধ্যয়নৰ প্ৰায়োগিক ক্ষেত্ৰখনত বিশেষ মাত্ৰা প্ৰদান কৰাৰ লগতে গ্ৰন্থখনৰ ঐতিহাসিক গুৰুত্বও মনকৰিবলগীয়া।

'SOME ASPECTS ON LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS' গ্ৰন্থখন পাটগিৰিৰ যোজ্জাটা ভাষাবিষয়ক গৱেষণামূলক প্ৰবন্ধৰ একত্ৰ সংকলন। গ্ৰন্থখনত 'Reduplicated Word in Assamese', 'Deuri Community : Their Language and Culture', 'Redplication in Assamese and Nepali', 'Use of Gender in Assamese and Oriya', 'Tense System of Assamese, Bengali and Oriya', 'Onomatopoeic Words in Assamese and Rabha : A Study', 'Vowel Phonemes of Assamese and Malayalam : A Study', 'Assamese Passive Construction', 'A Critical Study of the Verb of Katha-Gurucarit', 'Gender System of Boro and Rabha', 'Plural Suffixes in Assamese and Oriya', 'Vowel Phonemes in Assamese and Oriya', 'Kinship Terms In Assamese And Oriya (A Comparative Study)', 'Negation in Assamese and Karbi : A Comparative Study', 'Onomatopoeic And Echo Words in Assamese'— এইসমূহ প্ৰবন্ধৰ মাজেদি ইন্দো-ইউৰোপীয় ভাষা-পৰিয়ালৰ অসমীয়া, বাংলা, উড়িয়া, মালয়ালম আৰু নেপালী ভাষা আৰু চীন-তিব্বতীয় ভাষা-পৰিয়ালৰ বৰো, ৰাভা, দেউৰী, কাৰ্বি ভাষাৰ বিভিন্ন দিশৰ ঘাইকৈ তুলনামূলক বিশ্লেষণ আগবঢ়াইছে। তদুপৰি গ্ৰন্থখনিৰ প্ৰত্যেকটো প্ৰবন্ধই একো একোটা গৱেষণামূলক প্ৰবন্ধ। গ্ৰন্থখন ভাষা অধ্যয়নৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনত যথেষ্ট গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ।

সাম্প্ৰতিক সময়ত ভাষা আৰু ভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ অধ্যয়নত নিৰলসভাৱে চৰ্চা কৰি থকা অন্য এগৰাকী ভাষাচিন্তক হৈছে অপৰ্ণা কোঁৱৰ। তেওঁৰ প্ৰথমখন গ্ৰন্থ 'ভাষা-সাহিত্যৰ অধ্যয়ন'ৰ বিষয়বস্তুক ক্ৰমে ভাষা, গদ্যশৈলী আৰু বাক্যবিন্যাস— এই তিনিটা খণ্ডত ভাগ কৰি আলোচনা আগবঢ়াইছে। ভাষাবিজ্ঞান : এক বিস্তৃত পৰিচয়, ভাষাৰ অধ্যয়ন, অসমীয়া ভাষাত ব্যাকৰণ

ৰচনাৰ প্ৰাসংগিক চিন্তা, অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ প্ৰত্যয়, অসমৰ তিব্বতবৰ্মীয় ভাষা : এটি পৰিচয়, থলুৱা জনজাতীয় ভাষালৈ অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ অৱদান আদি প্ৰবন্ধকেইটা ভাষা খণ্ডৰ অন্তৰ্গত। গদ্যশৈলী আৰু বাক্যবিন্যাস, ভট্টদেৱৰ গদ্যশৈলী আৰু বাক্যবিন্যাস, কথাগুৰু চতিৰ গদ্যশৈলী আৰু বাক্যবিন্যাস, সুকুমাৰ মহন্তৰ ঘৰত পোৱা অসম বুৰঞ্জীৰ গদ্যশৈলী আৰু বাক্যবিন্যাস বাকী দুটা খণ্ডৰ অন্তৰ্গত।

‘ভাষা-সাহিত্যৰ বিবিধ চিন্তা’ অৰ্পণা কোঁৱৰৰ আন এখন উল্লেখযোগ্য প্ৰবন্ধ সংকলন, য’ত দহটা প্ৰবন্ধ সংকলিত হৈছে আৰু তাৰ ভিতৰত আঠটা প্ৰবন্ধই ভাষাবিষয়ক। অসমীয়া ভাষা : জন্ম আৰু বিকাশ, নাথান ব্ৰাউন : অসমীয়া ব্যাকৰণ, উদ্ভৱ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলৰ ভাষা : ভাষিক বৈশিষ্ট্য, অসমীয়া আৰু কাৰ্বি ভাষা : এটি তুলনাত্মক অধ্যয়ন, দ্বিভাষিত্ব : অসমৰ জনজাতিসকল, উপভাষা-বিজ্ঞান : অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ উপভাষাসমূহৰ স্বৰূপ, সমাজ-ভাষাবিজ্ঞান : অসমীয়া ভাষা, মধ্যযুগৰ অসমীয়া গদ্যশৈলী : বিকাশ আৰু তুলনা আদি প্ৰবন্ধকেইটাই গ্ৰন্থখনক এটা অনবদ্য মাত্ৰা প্ৰদান কৰিছে। যদিও উল্লিখিত গ্ৰন্থখন সম্পূৰ্ণৰূপে ভাষাকেন্দ্ৰিক নহয়, তথাপি গ্ৰন্থকেইখনত সন্নিবিষ্ট ভাষাবিজ্ঞানবিষয়ক প্ৰবন্ধকেইটাৰ জৰিয়তে প্ৰবন্ধকাৰে ভাষাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনত নতুন ধৰণেৰে চিন্তা কৰাৰ বাবে গৱেষকসকলক বাট মুকলাই দিছে।

অৰ্পণা কোঁৱৰৰ ভাষাবিজ্ঞানবিষয়ক চিন্তাৰ ফচল হিচাপে ভাষাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনত অন্য এখন গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ গ্ৰন্থ হৈছে— ‘ভাষাবিজ্ঞান উপক্ৰমণিকা’। ভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনলৈ আগমন ঘটানতুন দিশসমূহলৈ লক্ষ্য ৰাখি ৰচনা কৰা উল্লিখিত গ্ৰন্থখনত মুঠ বাৰটা অধ্যায় সন্নিবিষ্ট হৈছে। সেয়া যথাক্ৰমে— ভাষাৰ তাৎপৰ্য, ভাষা অধ্যয়নৰ প্ৰয়োজনীয়তা, ভাষা-চৰ্চা আৰু অধ্যয়নৰ ইতিহাস, ভাষাতত্ত্ব, ভাষাবিজ্ঞান, ব্যাকৰণ, ভাষাবিজ্ঞান একপ্ৰকাৰৰ বিজ্ঞান, ভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ পৰিধি, ধ্বনিবিজ্ঞান, ধ্বনিতত্ত্ব, বৰ্ণবিজ্ঞান, ৰূপতত্ত্ব, বাক্যতত্ত্ব, অৰ্থতত্ত্ব, ভাষাৰ বৰ্গীকৰণ আৰু পৃথিৱীৰ ভাষা পৰিয়াল, ভাষাৰ পৰিৱৰ্তন। লেখকৰ মতে গ্ৰন্থখন বিশেষকৈ ছাত্ৰ-ছাত্ৰীৰ প্ৰতি লক্ষ্য কৰি লিখা; কিন্তু অসমত ভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ চৰ্চা কৰাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত কোঁৱৰৰ ‘ভাষাবিজ্ঞান উপক্ৰমণিকা’ গ্ৰন্থখনে তাৎপৰ্যপূৰ্ণ ভূমিকা গ্ৰহণ কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে। ভাষা এটাৰ সম্পূৰ্ণ জ্ঞান আয়ত্ত কৰিবলৈ হ’লে ভাষাৰ

উদ্ভৱ, বিকাশ, গঠনৰীতি, শব্দসম্ভাৰ, বাক্যগঠন সম্পৰ্কে খৰচি মাৰি যে অধ্যয়ন কৰিব লাগে আৰু সেই কথা গ্ৰন্থখনৰ ‘আগকথা’ত গ্ৰন্থকাৰে উল্লেখ কৰিছে। সেয়েহে তেওঁ ভাষাৰ উপাদান, বৈশিষ্ট্য, ভাষা সৃষ্টিৰ সূত্ৰসমূহ নিৰ্ণয় কৰি ভাষা অধ্যয়নৰ কাৰণ আৰু অধ্যয়নৰ পদ্ধতিসমূহ কেনেধৰণৰ হ’ব পাৰে, ভাষাৰ লগত অন্যান্য বিষয়ৰ সম্পৰ্ক কেনেধৰণৰ, প্ৰাচ্য আৰু পাশ্চাত্যত কেনেধৰণেৰে ভাষাৰ চৰ্চা হৈছে, ভাষাতত্ত্ব, ভাষাবিজ্ঞান আৰু ব্যাকৰণৰ স্বকীয় ধাৰণা সম্পৰ্কে, ভাষাৰ অধ্যয়নক বিজ্ঞানসন্মত বুলি কোৱাৰ কাৰণ, ভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ পৰিধি আৰু প্ৰকাৰ আদি গোটেই কথাবোৰ উল্লিখিত গ্ৰন্থখনত ফঁহিয়াই আলোচনা কৰি যথাসম্ভৱ সহজ-সৰলকৈ উপস্থাপন কৰিছে। ‘ভাষাবিজ্ঞান উপক্ৰমণিকা’ ভাষাৰ গৱেষকসকলৰ বাবেও নিঃসন্দেহে এখন প্ৰয়োজনীয় গ্ৰন্থ।

LBSCJ!;!UI F!QFP QMF!BOE !UI F!MBO. HVBHF† অৰ্পণা কোঁৱৰৰ গৱেষণামূলক এখন উল্লেখযোগ্য গ্ৰন্থ; য’ত অসমৰ এটা উল্লেখনীয় জনগোষ্ঠী ‘কাৰ্বি’সকলৰ জীৱন আৰু সংস্কৃতিৰপৰা আৰম্ভ কৰি কাৰ্বি ভাষা আৰু উপভাষা, কাৰ্বি ভাষাৰ ধ্বনিতাত্ত্বিক দিশৰ অন্তৰ্গত স্বৰ, ব্যঞ্জন, ৰূপতাত্ত্বিক দিশৰ অন্তৰ্গত বিশেষ্য, বিশেষণ, সৰ্বনাম, ক্ৰিয়া, ক্ৰিয়া বিশেষণ, কাৰ্বি শব্দসম্ভাৰ আৰু কাৰ্বি ভাষাৰ বাক্যৰ গঠন পদ্ধতি সম্পৰ্কে গ্ৰন্থকাৰে সম্পূৰ্ণ ক্ষেত্ৰ অধ্যয়নৰ ভিত্তিত কাৰ্বি জনগোষ্ঠীক অধ্যয়ন কৰিছে। অসমত প্ৰচলিত তিব্বতবৰ্মীয় শাখাৰ কাৰ্বি ভাষিক গোষ্ঠীটোৰ পৰিচয় পোৱাৰ লগতে তেওঁলোকৰ ভাষাৰ সম্যক ধাৰণা লাভ কৰাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত গ্ৰন্থখনে নিৰ্ণায়ক ভূমিকা গ্ৰহণ কৰিব পাৰে। কোঁৱৰৰ এই অধ্যয়নে ভাষাচিন্তাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনত অনবদ্য অৰিহণা আগবঢ়াবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে।

‘অসমীয়া ভাষা-চিন্তন’ অৰ্পণা কোঁৱৰৰ অন্য এখন ভাষাবিষয়ক গ্ৰন্থ, য’ত ভাষাৰ তাত্ত্বিক দিশক ভিত্তি কৰি অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ বিশ্লেষণ কৰা হৈছে। সম্পূৰ্ণ বিশ্লেষণাত্মক পদ্ধতিৰে আলোচনা কৰা ‘অসমীয়া ভাষা-চিন্তন’ গ্ৰন্থখনত অধ্যায় বিভাজন নকৰি প্ৰবন্ধকাৰে প্ৰস্তুত কৰা সৰ্বমুঠ নটা প্ৰবন্ধৰ শীৰ্ষক ক্ৰমে— অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ ধ্বনিতাত্ত্বিক বিশ্লেষণ, অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ সৰ্গ, অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ শব্দসাধন-প্ৰক্ৰিয়া, অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ ক্ৰিয়াপদ : গঠন আৰু প্ৰকাৰ, অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ বাক্যতাত্ত্বিক বিশ্লেষণ, অসমীয়া ভাষাত আৰ্যভিন্ন ভাষাৰ উপাদান, আৰ্যভিন্ন

ভাষাত অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ উপাদান, অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ উচ্চাৰণ বিধি, অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ আখৰ জেঁটনি : সমস্যা আৰু সমাধান। আধুনিক ভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ দৃষ্টিভংগীৰে অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ ধ্বনিতাত্ত্বিক, ৰূপতাত্ত্বিক, বাক্যতাত্ত্বিক দিশত বিশ্লেষণ, অসমীয়া আৰু আৰ্যভিন্ন ভাষাৰ আদান-প্ৰদান তথা অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ উচ্চাৰণ আৰু আখৰ জেঁটনিৰ বিষয়ে পুংখানুপুংখভাৱে কৰা বিশ্লেষণে গ্ৰন্থখনে বিশেষ মূল্য প্ৰদান কৰিছে। কেৱল অসমীয়া ভাষাবিষয়ক ছাত্ৰ-গৱেষক-শিক্ষককে নহয়, গ্ৰন্থখনে ভাষা সম্পৰ্কে থকা যিকোনো আগ্ৰহী লোককে নতুন তথা বিজ্ঞানসন্মত দৃষ্টিভংগীৰে ভাষাৰ অধ্যয়নৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত এক সঠিক নিৰ্দেশনা দিয়াত সহায়ক ভূমিকা পালন কৰিব পাৰে।

উল্লিখিত গ্ৰন্থকেইখনৰ উপৰি ২০২০ চনত প্ৰকাশিত অৰ্পণা কোঁৱৰৰ ‘অসমত ভাষাৰ অধ্যয়ন’ আৰু ‘অসমৰ ভাষাৰ বিশ্লেষণাত্মক অধ্যয়ন’ শীৰ্ষক গ্ৰন্থ দুখন বিশেষভাৱে উল্লেখযোগ্য। কিয়নো, এই গ্ৰন্থ দুখনত অসমত অতীজৰেপৰা বৰ্তমান সময়লৈকে কেনেদৰে ভাষা সম্পৰ্কে চিন্তা চৰ্চা চলি আহিছে তাৰ বিস্তৃত বৰ্ণনাৰ লগতে অসমৰ ভাষাসমূহৰ বিশ্লেষণাত্মক আলোচনা পোৱা যায়। প্ৰথমখন গ্ৰন্থত গ্ৰন্থকাৰে মুঠ আঠটা অধ্যায়ত বিষয় বিভাজন কৰিছে। প্ৰথম অধ্যায়ত অসমৰ ভাষা, ভাষিক স্থিতি, ভাষাৰ চিন্তা-চৰ্চাৰ ইতিহাস আৰু প্ৰয়োজনীয়তা সম্পৰ্কে আলোচনা আগবঢ়াইছে। পৰৱৰ্তী অধ্যায়সমূহত ক্ৰমে, অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ ব্যাকৰণ-চৰ্চাৰ গতিধাৰা, অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ অভিধান-চৰ্চাৰ গতি-প্ৰকৃতি, অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ ভাষাতাত্ত্বিক আৰু ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক-চৰ্চা, অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ উপভাষাৰ অধ্যয়ন, অসমত টাইমূলীয় ভাষাৰ অধ্যয়ন, অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ সমগোষ্ঠীয় আৰু বিষমগোষ্ঠীয় ভাষাৰ তুলনামূলক আৰু বৈপৰীত্যমূলক ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক অধ্যয়ন আৰু পৰিশিষ্টত সাম্প্ৰতিক ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক অধ্যয়নৰ ধাৰা : অসমত ইয়াৰ চিন্তা-চৰ্চা আৰু সম্ভাৱনীয়তা আৰু একবিংশ শতিকাত অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক-চৰ্চা শীৰ্ষক আলোচনাৰে অসমত এতিয়ালৈকে হোৱা ভাষাৰ অধ্যয়নৰ পুংখানুপুংখ বৰ্ণনা দাঙি ধৰিছে। অসমত বিভিন্ন দৃষ্টিকোণেৰে হোৱা ভাষাৰ অধ্যয়ন সম্পৰ্কে এইখনেই এতিয়ালৈকে প্ৰকাশিত এনে এখন গ্ৰন্থ, যাক আমি ‘অসমত ভাষা অধ্যয়নৰ ইতিহাস’ বুলি আখ্যা দিব পাৰোঁ। গতিকে গ্ৰন্থখনৰ ব্যৱহাৰিক আৰু ঐতিহাসিক মূল্য যথেষ্ট।

‘অসমৰ ভাষাৰ বিশ্লেষণাত্মক অধ্যয়ন’ শীৰ্ষক গ্ৰন্থখনত অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ লগতে অসমত প্ৰচলিত তিব্বত-বৰ্মী আৰু টাইমূলীয় ভাষাসমূহৰ বিস্তৃত আলোচনা সন্নিৱিষ্ট হৈছে।

অসমৰ ভাষা-সাহিত্যৰ পথাৰখনত স্বকীয় চিন্তাৰে বাট দেখুওৱা অন্য এগৰাকী মহিলা ভাষাচৰ্চাকাৰী জ্যোতিৰেখা হাজৰিকা। ঘাইকৈ জনগোষ্ঠীয় ভাষা-চৰ্চাকে মুখ্য হিচাপে লৈ অধ্যয়ন কৰা এইগৰাকী গৱেষকৰ ‘অসমৰ ভাষা-সাহিত্য-সংস্কৃতিৰ ৰেঙনি’ এখন উল্লেখযোগ্য গ্ৰন্থ। মুঠ তিনিটা খণ্ডত বিভক্ত গ্ৰন্থখনত সন্নিৱিষ্ট ভাষাবিষয়ক ১০ টা প্ৰবন্ধ সন্নিৱিষ্ট হৈছে। ইবিলাকৰ ভিতৰত ‘অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ উৎপত্তি আৰু বিকাশৰ ইতিহাস’, ‘মধ্য ভাৰতীয় আৰ্যভাষাৰ সৈতে অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ সম্পৰ্ক বিচাৰ’, ‘অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ ধ্বনি আৰু বৰ্ণ’, ‘অসমীয়া ভাষাত তিব্বত-বৰ্মী উপাদান’, ‘ড’ বাণীকান্ত কাকতি আৰু অসমৰ তিব্বত-বৰ্মী ভাষাৰ অধ্যয়ন’ আদি প্ৰবন্ধৰ বিদ্যায়তনিক প্ৰয়োজনীয়তা মন কৰিবলগীয়া।

জ্যোতিৰেখা হাজৰিকাৰ অন্য এখন বিশেষভাৱে উল্লেখযোগ্য গ্ৰন্থ হৈছে— ‘অসমীয়া লিপি আৰু অসমৰ জনজাতীয় ভাষাৰ লিপি’। মুঠ ছটা অধ্যায়ত বিভক্ত গ্ৰন্থখনৰ প্ৰথম অধ্যায়ত, লিপিৰ ক্ৰমবিকাশৰ ইতিহাস; দ্বিতীয় অধ্যায়ত, অসমীয়া লিপিৰ উদ্ভৱ আৰু ক্ৰমবিকাশৰ ইতিহাস; তৃতীয় অধ্যায়ত, অসমৰ জনজাতীয় ভাষাত অসমীয়া আৰু ৰোমান লিপিৰ প্ৰয়োগ : সুবিধা-অসুবিধা; চতুৰ্থ অধ্যায়ত, অসমৰ জনজাতীয় ভাষাত লিপি গ্ৰহণৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত আনুষ্ঠানিক পদক্ষেপ; পঞ্চম অধ্যায়ত, অসমৰ জনজাতীয় ভাষা ক্ৰমে— কাৰ্বি, তিৱা, দেউৰী, মিচিং ভাষাৰ লিপি সমস্যা আৰু লিপি গ্ৰহণৰ ইতিহাস আৰু ষষ্ঠ অধ্যায়ত, অসমৰ জনজাতীয় ভাষা— কাৰ্বি, তিৱা, দেউৰী, মিচিং ভাষাৰ লিপি : বৰ্ণনাত্মক অধ্যয়নক সামৰি অসমীয়া লিপি আৰু অসমৰ জনজাতীয় ভাষাৰ লিপি সম্পৰ্কে বিশদ বিশ্লেষণ আগবঢ়াইছে। উল্লিখিত গ্ৰন্থখনে নিঃসন্দেহে অসমৰ ভাষা আৰু লিপিৰ অধ্যয়নত গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ ভূমিকা পালন কৰিছে। তদুপৰি উল্লেখযোগ্য যে, জ্যোতিৰেখা হাজৰিকাৰ আগতে অসমৰ ভাষা-চৰ্চাকাৰীসকলে জনজাতিসকলৰ লিপি সম্পৰ্কে ক’তো এনে বিতং চৰ্চা কৰা পৰিলক্ষিত হোৱা নাই। সেয়েহে গ্ৰন্থখনৰ ঐতিহাসিক মূল্যও মনকৰিবলগীয়া।

‘দেউৰী ভাষা-সাহিত্যৰ অধ্যয়ন’ (২০২১) জ্যোতিৰেখা হাজৰিকাৰ অন্য এখন ভাষাবিষয়ক গ্ৰন্থ; য’ত চীন-তিব্বতীয় ভাষা পৰিয়ালৰ তিব্বত-বৰ্মী শাখাৰ অসমত প্ৰচলিত দেউৰী ভাষাৰ প্ৰকাশিত সমলসমূহ একত্ৰিত কৰি ভাষিক বৈশিষ্ট্য-নিৰূপক পুথিসমূহৰ বিচাৰ-বিশ্লেষণৰ জৰিয়তে ভাষাটোৰ সাম্প্ৰতিক অগ্ৰগতিৰ খতিয়ান দাঙি ধৰিছে। গ্ৰন্থখনৰ প্ৰস্তাৱনাত চীন-তিব্বতীয় ভাষা পৰিয়ালৰ চমু পৰিচিতি দি অসমৰ তিব্বত-বৰ্মী জনগোষ্ঠীৰ এটা চমু পৰিচয় আৰু তাৰ লগতে দেউৰী জনগোষ্ঠীৰো এটা সাধাৰণ পৰিচয় দিছে। দুটা খণ্ডত বিভক্ত গ্ৰন্থখনৰ প্ৰথম খণ্ডত ছটা অধ্যায় ক্ৰমে, দেউৰী ভাষাৰ অধ্যয়নৰ ৰূপৰেখা, দেউৰী ভাষাৰ ব্যাকৰণ, দেউৰী ভাষাৰ অভিধান, দেউৰী ভাষাৰ ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক চৰ্চাৰ ৰূপৰেখাৰ অন্তৰ্গত ধ্বনিতত্ত্ব, ৰূপতত্ত্ব, বাক্যবিন্যাস, দেউৰী আৰু অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ নিৰ্দিষ্টতাৰ বাচক প্ৰত্যয়ৰ তুলনা, দেউৰী ভাষাৰ লিপি গ্ৰহণৰ সংক্ষিপ্ত ইতিহাস, দেউৰী ভাষাৰ সামগ্ৰিক বিশেষত্ব আৰু দ্বিতীয় খণ্ডত দেউৰী ভাষাৰ লিখিত সাহিত্যৰ অধ্যয়নক সামৰি বৰ্ণনামূলক আলোচনা আগবঢ়াইছে। গ্ৰন্থখনে দেউৰী ভাষা-সাহিত্যৰ লিখিত সমলৰ উপযুক্ত সন্ধান দিয়াৰ উপৰি ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক চৰ্চাৰ জৰিয়তে হোৱা ভাষাটোৰ ভাষিক বিশেষত্বসমূহৰো বিৱৰণ দাঙি ধৰিছে। অসমত প্ৰচলিত ভাষিক জনগোষ্ঠী এটাৰ এনে অধ্যয়নেৰে প্ৰকাশিত গ্ৰন্থ জ্যোতিৰেখা হাজৰিকাৰ পূৰ্বে কোনো মহিলা ভাষা-চৰ্চাকাৰীয়ে কৰা পৰিলক্ষিত নহয়। গ্ৰন্থখনৰ সামাজিক আৰু বিদ্যায়তনিক মূল্য যথেষ্ট।

অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ পূৰ্ণাংগ ইতিহাসৰ আধাৰশিলাস্বৰূপ উদ্ভৱকালৰ অসমীয়া ভাষা সম্পৰ্কে বিতং আলোচনা কৰি অসমীয়া ভাষা-চৰ্চাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনলৈ বিশেষভাৱে বৰঙণি আগবঢ়োৱা সুবাসনা মহন্তৰ ‘উদ্ভৱকালীন অসমীয়া ভাষা’ গ্ৰন্থখন অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ এখন লেখত ল’বলগীয়া উৎকৃষ্ট গ্ৰন্থ। গ্ৰন্থখনত প্ৰাচীন অসমীয়া, মধ্য যুগৰ অসমীয়া আৰু বিংশ শতিকাৰ মান্য অসমীয়া সাহিত্য আৰু বিভিন্ন উপভাষাত সংৰক্ষিত ধ্বনি, ৰূপ, শব্দ আদিৰ ওপৰত নিৰ্ভৰ কৰি আৰু পূৰ্বকালিক বিভিন্ন লিখিত পাঠ সামগ্ৰীৰ আধাৰত উদ্ভৱকালীন অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ সম্ভাৱ্য ৰূপ নিৰূপণ কৰা হৈছে আৰু ভাৰতীয় আৰ্যভাষাৰ পৰম্পৰাত ইবিলাকৰ বিকাশৰ ক্ৰম বিচৰা হৈছে বুলি গ্ৰন্থকাৰে

গ্ৰন্থখনৰ প্ৰাক্কথনত উল্লেখ কৰিছে মুঠ নটা অধ্যায়ত বিভক্ত গ্ৰন্থখনিৰ অৱতৰণিকা তথা প্ৰথম অধ্যায়ত ‘অসমীয়া ভাষা’ আৰু ‘অসম’ শব্দৰ প্ৰচলন, অসমলৈ আৰ্য প্ৰব্ৰজন আৰু ভাৰতীয় আৰ্যভাষাৰ প্ৰচলন, আৰ্যপূৰ্ব অসমৰ ভাষাগত স্থিতি, অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ ইতিহাস আৰু আৰু উদ্ভৱকালীন অসমীয়া ভাষা, উদ্ভৱকালীন অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ সময়সীমা আৰু উপাদান, সময়সীমা নিৰ্দ্ধাৰণৰ সমস্যা আৰু ভিত্তি, উদ্ভৱকালীন অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ উপাদান, ভাষাতাত্ত্বিক আৰু ঐতিহাসিক ভিত্তিক সামৰি লৈছে। দ্বিতীয় অধ্যায়ৰ পৰা অষ্টম অধ্যায়লৈ ক্ৰমে, উদ্ভৱকালীন অসমীয়া ভাষা আৰু প্ৰাচীন কামৰূপীয়া লেখাৱলীৰ ভাষা, উদ্ভৱকালীন অসমীয়া ভাষা আৰু প্ৰত্ন-নব্য ভাৰতীয় আৰ্যভাষাৰ স্বৰূপ, উদ্ভৱকালীন অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ ধ্বনিতত্ত্ব, উদ্ভৱকালীন অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ শব্দভাণ্ডাৰ, উদ্ভৱকালীন অসমীয়া ভাষা আৰু পৰৱৰ্তীকালৰ অসমীয়া ভাষা, উদ্ভৱকালীন অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ ৰূপতত্ত্বত প্ৰত্ন-আৰ্য উপাদানৰ বিস্তৃত বিশ্লেষণ আগবঢ়াইনৱম অধ্যায় উপসংহাৰত মূল অধ্যায়সমূহৰ সংক্ষিপ্ত-সাৰ আগবঢ়াই স্বকীয় মত প্ৰকাশ কৰিছে। উদ্ভৱকালীন অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ অধ্যয়নে কেৱল অসমীয়া ভাষাৰে নহয়, পূব ভাৰতৰ আধুনিক আৰ্যভাষাসমূহৰ উদ্ভৱকালৰ সামগ্ৰিক চিত্ৰ এখনো দাঙি ধৰাত সহায়ক ভূমিকা গ্ৰহণ কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে। সেয়েহে গ্ৰন্থখন কেৱল অসমীয়া ভাষাৰে নহয় ভাৰতীয় আৰ্যভাষাৰ অধ্যয়নৰ বাবেই সমল যোগানকাৰী এখন নিৰ্ভৰযোগ্য গ্ৰন্থ আৰু অসম আৰু অসমীয়া ভাষা-চৰ্চাত এইখন মাইলৰ খুঁটি বুলি ক’ব পাৰি।

ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক চিন্তা-চৰ্চাৰে অসমীয়া ভাষা অধ্যয়নৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনত নতুন দিশৰ সংযোজন ঘটোৱা অন্য এগৰাকী গৱেষক হৈছে অনুৰাধা শৰ্মা। এইক্ষেত্ৰত তেওঁৰ লেখত ল’বলগীয়া এখন গ্ৰন্থ হৈছে— ‘শৈলী আৰু শৈলীবিজ্ঞান’। বিংশ শতিকাৰ মাজভাগত ইউৰোপ আৰু আমেৰিকাত শৈলীবিজ্ঞানৰ বিভিন্ন তাত্ত্বিক আৰু প্ৰায়োগিক দিশ সম্পৰ্কে আলোচনাৰ সূত্ৰপাত ঘটে আৰু সেই চিন্তাৰ আঁত ধৰিয়েই একবিংশ শতিকাৰ এই সম্পৰ্কে চিন্তা কৰিবলৈ এটা নতুন পথৰ সন্ধান দিয়ে। ইয়াৰ আগতে শৈলী আৰু শৈলীবিজ্ঞান সম্পৰ্কে যি অধ্যয়ন হৈছিল সেয়া নিচেই চালুকীয়া অৱস্থাত আছিল আৰু সেয়া মাথোন দুই/এটা প্ৰবন্ধৰ মাজতে সীমাবদ্ধ আছিল। শৰ্মাই তাত্ত্বিক আৰু

প্ৰায়োগিক দুয়ো দিশতে বিশ্লেষণ আগবঢ়াই অসমীয়া ভাষাবিজ্ঞান-চৰ্চাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনত এক নতুন মাত্ৰা প্ৰদান কৰে। গ্ৰন্থখনৰ মূল বিষয়-সূচীত শৈলী আৰু শৈলীবিজ্ঞান, ভাৰতীয় আৰু পাশ্চাত্য প্ৰেক্ষাপটত শৈলী চৰ্চা, শৈলীবিজ্ঞান : প্ৰসঙ্গ আৰু ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক প্ৰেক্ষাপট, সমাজ ভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ প্ৰেক্ষাপটত শৈলী প্ৰসঙ্গ, অনুবাদত শৈলীসমস্যা— এইকেইটা দিশৰ তাত্ত্বিক বিশ্লেষণ আগবঢ়াইছে। ইয়াৰ লগতে পৰিশিষ্টত বৰগীতৰ শব্দ আৰু ধ্বনিসজ্জাত গীতি-নিপুণতা, লক্ষ্মীনাথ বেজবৰুৱাৰ কবিতা আৰু গীতৰ শৈলী, বাণীকান্ত কাকতিৰ ৰচনাসৈলীৰ প্ৰায়োগিক বিশ্লেষণ দাঙি ধৰিছে। শৈলী আৰু শৈলীবিজ্ঞান সম্পৰ্কে অসমীয়া ভাষাত লিখা প্ৰথম গ্ৰন্থ হিচাপে গ্ৰন্থখনৰ ঐতিহাসিক গুৰুত্ব থকাৰ উপৰি বিষয় আৰু বিশ্লেষণে ভাষা আৰু সাহিত্য দুয়ো ক্ষেত্ৰতে নতুন মাত্ৰা প্ৰদান কৰি সমালোচক-গৱেষকসকলৰ বাবে বিদ্যায়তনিক গুৰুত্বও বহন কৰিছে।

‘সমাজ আৰু ভাষা সমাজভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ পৰিচয়’ অনুৰাধা শৰ্মাৰ অন্য এখন ভাষাবিজ্ঞান সম্পৰ্কীয় গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ গ্ৰন্থ। ভাষা সমাজক কেন্দ্ৰ কৰি গঢ় লৈ উঠে আৰু স্বাভাৱিকতেই সমাজভেদে ভাষাৰ ৰূপটোলৈও পৰিৱৰ্তন আহে। সমাজৰ প্ৰেক্ষাপটত ভাষিক বৈচিত্ৰ্যৰ বিষয়টোৱে আলোচকসকলৰ দৃষ্টি আকৰ্ষণ কৰাৰপৰাই সম্ভৱৰ দৰ্শকত এইবিষয়টোৱে ব্যাপ্তি লাভ কৰে।^১ অসমীয়া ভাষাত সমাজভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ তাত্ত্বিক দিশসমূহক ভিত্তিকৰি অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ উদাহৰণেৰে শৰ্মাই প্ৰস্তুত কৰি উলিওৱা উল্লিখিত গ্ৰন্থখন ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক চিন্তা-চৰ্চাৰে ফচল। চাৰিটা অধ্যায়ত বিভক্ত গ্ৰন্থখনত সমাজভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ সংজ্ঞা আৰু পৰিসৰ, সামাজিক ভাষাৰূপ, ভাষাৰূপৰ বিভিন্নতা, ভাষা আৰু ৰাজনীতি— এইকেইটা দিশত বিস্তৃতভাৱে তাত্ত্বিক আৰু প্ৰায়োগিক বিশ্লেষণ আগবঢ়াইছে। নিঃসন্দেহে এই গ্ৰন্থখন আৰু গ্ৰন্থকাৰ অসমীয়া ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক চৰ্চাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত বিশেষ সংযোজন।

প্ৰণীতা দেৱীৰ ‘ভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ জিলিকনি’ গ্ৰন্থখন অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ ভাষাবিজ্ঞান সম্পৰ্কীয় প্ৰাথমিক গ্ৰন্থ বুলি ক’ব পাৰি। গ্ৰন্থখনপ্ৰথম অধ্যায়ত ভাষাৰ পৰিচয় দিবলৈ যাওঁতে ভাষা কি, ভাষাৰ বৈশিষ্ট্য, ভাষাৰ উৎপত্তি, ভাষাৰ ভিন ভিন ৰূপ, উপভাষা, ব্যক্তিভাষা, পৰিস্থিতি নিৰ্ধাৰক ভাষা, পিজন বা মিশ্ৰিত ভাষা, ক্ৰেওল, গুপ্তভাষা, অপভাষা, ডাইগ্লছীয়া, ভাষাৰ শ্ৰেণীবিভাজন, ইন্দো-ইউৰোপীয় ভাষা পৰিয়াল, ছেমীয়-হামীয়

পৰিয়াল, ইউৰাল-আল্টাই পৰিয়াল, চীন-তিব্বতীয় ভাষা-পৰিয়াল, দ্ৰাবিড়ীয় ভাষা পৰিয়াল, অষ্ট্ৰিক ভাষা পৰিয়াল, ককেছীয় ভাষা পৰিয়াল, এফ্ৰিমো ভাষা পৰিয়াল, আমেৰিকাৰ ভাষা পৰিয়াল, অষ্ট্ৰেলিয়াৰ ভাষা পৰিয়াল, এছিয়াৰ উত্তৰ-পূব সীমান্তীয় ভাষা পৰিয়াল আৰু ইবিলাকৰ বৈশিষ্ট্যসমূহ সন্নিবিষ্ট কৰিছে। দ্বিতীয় অধ্যায়ত ভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ পৰিচয়ত ভাষা বিজ্ঞানৰ সংজ্ঞাৰ লগতে ভাষাবিজ্ঞানক বিজ্ঞান হিচাপে ধৰাৰ কাৰণ, ভাষাতত্ত্ব আৰু ভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ সম্পৰ্ক, ভাষা বিজ্ঞানৰ ইতিহাস, প্ৰাচ্য আৰু পাশ্চাত্য ধাৰাৰ আলোচনা কৰিছে। তৃতীয় অধ্যায়ত, ভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ বিভিন্ন শাখাসমূহৰ বিষয়ে, চতুৰ্থ অধ্যায়ত ভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ পৰিসৰত ভাষা আৰু যোগাযোগ, ভাষা বিশ্লেষণৰ বিভিন্ন স্তৰসমূহৰ আলোচনা কৰি অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ উদাহৰণসহ বিশ্লেষণ আগবঢ়াইছে। পঞ্চম অধ্যায়ত ভাষাৰ পৰিৱৰ্তনৰ বিভিন্ন ধৰণসমূহৰ বিশ্লেষণ কৰিছে।

‘Assamese and Maithili Verb-system : A Comparative Study’ শীৰ্ষক বিষয়ত গৱেষণা কৰি ডক্টৰেট উপাধি লাভ কৰা দীপামণি হালৈ মহন্তই বিৰোধমূলক ভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ আধাৰত একেমূলৰপৰা উদ্ভূত ভাষা ক্ৰমে, অসমীয়া আৰু মৈথিলী ভাষাৰ ধ্বনিগত আৰু ৰূপগত বিশেষত্বসমূহ দেখুৱাই ‘অসমীয়া আৰু মৈথিলী ভাষাৰ বিৰোধমূলক বিশ্লেষণ (ধ্বনি আৰু ৰূপ প্ৰসংগ)’ শীৰ্ষক গ্ৰন্থ প্ৰকাশ কৰি উলিয়ায় ২০২১ বৰ্ষত। মুঠ সাতটা অধ্যায়ত বিভক্ত গ্ৰন্থখনিত গ্ৰন্থকাৰে প্ৰথম অধ্যায়ত অসমীয়া আৰু মৈথিলী ভাষাৰ ধ্বনিৰ বিচাৰ কৰি বিভাজ্য আৰু অবিভাজ্য ধ্বনিসমূহৰ বৰ্ণনা আৰু তুলনাৰ মাজেৰে বিৰোধ দেখুৱাইছে। দ্বিতীয় অধ্যায়ত, প্ৰাকৃতিৰ সংজ্ঞা আৰু প্ৰকাৰ নিৰ্দেশ কৰি অসমীয়া আৰু মৈথিলী ভাষাৰ প্ৰাকৃতি সম্পৰ্কে বিশদ বিশ্লেষণ আগবঢ়াইছে। তৃতীয় অধ্যায়ত, শব্দ : প্ৰকাৰ আৰু গঠনত অসমীয়া আৰু মৈথিলী ভাষাৰ তৎসম শব্দ, অৰ্দ্ধতৎসম শব্দ, তদ্ভৱ শব্দ, দেশী শব্দ, বিদেশী শব্দ আৰু ভাৰতৰ আন ভাষাৰ শব্দ, দুয়োটা ভাষাৰ মৌলিক শব্দ, সাধিত শব্দসমূহৰ বিভিন্ন ৰূপসমূহৰ বিশদ বিশ্লেষণ কৰি ভাষা দুটাৰ শব্দসমূহৰ তুলনামূলক আলোচনা দাঙি ধৰিছে। চতুৰ্থ অধ্যায় অসমীয়া আৰু মৈথিলী ভাষাৰ নামপদত দুয়োটা ভাষাৰ ক্ৰমে সম্বন্ধবাচক নামপদৰ আলোচনা আৰু তুলনা, বিশেষ্য পদৰ আলোচনা আৰু তুলনা, বিশেষণ পদৰ আলোচনা আৰু তুলনা, সৰ্বনামৰ আলোচনা আৰু তুলনা, সংখ্যাবাচক শব্দৰ



আলোচনা আৰু তুলনাৰ বিস্তৃত বিশ্লেষণ আগবঢ়াইছে। পঞ্চম অধ্যায়ত, নামপদৰ কাৰক, বচন আৰু লিংগত অসমীয়া আৰু মৈথিলী ভাষাৰ কাৰক আৰু বিভক্তিৰ আলোচনা আৰু তুলনা কৰি দেখুৱাইছে। তদুপৰি এই অধ্যায়তেই, ভাষা দুটাত ব্যৱহৃত নামপদৰ বচন আৰু লিংগ নিৰ্ণয় কৰি বচন আৰু লিংগৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত দেখিবলৈ পোৱা সাদৃশ্য আৰু পাৰ্থক্যসমূহ দেখুৱাই তুলনামূলক আলোচনা আগবঢ়াইছে। ষষ্ঠ অধ্যায়ত অসমীয়া আৰু মৈথিলী ভাষাৰ ক্ৰিয়াপদ্ধতিত ভাষা দুটাৰ ধাতুৰ আলোচনাসহ তুলনা, ক্ৰিয়াৰ কাল আৰু দশাৰ আলোচনা আৰু তুলনা, ক্ৰিয়াৰ ভাবৰ আলোচনা আৰু তুলনাৰ লগতে অসমীয়া আৰু মৈথিলী ভাষাৰ ক্ৰিয়া সম্পৰ্কে পুংখানুপুংখ বিশ্লেষণ আগবঢ়াইছে। গ্ৰন্থখনৰ শেষৰটো অধ্যায়ত, অসমীয়া আৰু মৈথিলী ভাষাৰ অব্যয় সম্পৰ্কে আলোচনা কৰি দুয়োটা ভাষাৰ অব্যয়ৰ তুলনা দাঙি ধৰিছে। সম্পূৰ্ণ গৱেষণাধৰ্মী বিশ্লেষণৰ জৰিয়তে একে মূলৰপৰা উদ্ভৱ হোৱা অসমীয়া আৰু মৈথিলী ভাষাৰ ধ্বনিগত আৰু ৰূপগত দিশসমূহক বিৰোধমূলক দৃষ্টিভংগীৰে আলোচনা কৰি অসমীয়া ভাষাত গ্ৰন্থ ৰূপ দিয়া এইখনেই প্ৰথম গ্ৰন্থ। গ্ৰন্থখনে আধুনিক ভাষাবিজ্ঞান চৰ্চাকাৰীসকলক নতুন দিশৰ নিৰ্দেশনা দিছেবুলি নিঃসন্দেহকৈ ব'পাৰি।

উল্লিখিত লেখক আৰু গ্ৰন্থসমূহৰ জৰিয়তে আমি দেখিবলৈ পাবোঁ যে, বিংশ শতিকাৰ আশীৰ দশকৰপৰাহে প্ৰকৃতাৰ্থত অসমত ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক চিন্তা-চৰ্চাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত অসমীয়া মহিলাসকলে বিশেষভাৱে ভূমিকা পালন কৰি আহিছে। সম্প্ৰতি দেখা গৈছে অসমৰ বহু মহিলা গৱেষকে ভাৰতবৰ্ষৰ বিভিন্ন ভাষা সম্পৰ্কে গৱেষণা কৰি ডক্টৰেট উপাধি লাভ কৰিছে আৰু বহুজনে ভাষা সম্পৰ্কীয় গৱেষণামূলক বিবিধ প্ৰবন্ধ তথা আলোচনাৰ জৰিয়তে নতুন নতুন তথ্য উলিয়াবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে আৰু তেওঁলোকৰ কৰ্মৰাজিয়ে ভাষাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনক চহকী কৰি তুলিছে। ভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ বিভিন্ন দৃষ্টিভংগীৰে অধ্যয়ন কৰাসকলৰ ভিতৰত থাওকতে কেইগৰাকীমান গৱেষক আৰু তেওঁলোকৰ গৱেষণা-গ্ৰন্থসমূহ তলত দিয়া হ'ল :

তুলনামূলক পদ্ধতিৰে কৰা ভাষাৰ গৱেষণা ক্ৰমে, ভামতী দেৱীৰ 'Comparative Study of Assamese and Hindi Verbs' (১৯৯১), অঞ্জনা চৌধুৰীৰ 'Structures of Assamese and Garo : A Comparative Study' (১৯৯৫), মেৰী পূজাৰীৰ 'Aspects of Assamese and

Tai-Phake : A Contrastive Study' (১৯৯৭), মায়াস্মী গোস্বামীৰ 'চৰ্যাপদ আৰু অসমীয়া ভাষা : এটি তুলনামূলক অধ্যয়ন' (১৯৯৯), শতৰূপা দত্ত মজুমদাৰৰ 'A Contrastive Study of Study of Reduplicated Structure in Assamese, Bengali and Odia' (২০০১), অনিতা বাৰ্মা (তামুলী)ৰ 'Sound Patterns of English and Assamese' (২০০২), ৰীণাৰাণী বৰদলৈৰ 'মাধৱ কন্দলী আৰু কৃতিবাসী ৰামায়ণৰ ভাষাৰ তুলনামূলক অধ্যয়ন' (২০০৫), স্বৰ্ণপ্ৰভা চৈন্যৰীৰ 'Boro and Garo : A Comparative Linguistic Analysis' (২০০৫), মনালিছা বৰাৰ 'অসমীয়া আৰু বাংলা ভাষাৰ ধ্বন্যাত্মক শব্দ : এটি তুলনামূলক অধ্যয়ন' (২০০৭), নৱনীতা কলিতাৰ 'অসমীয়া আৰু বঙলাৰ শব্দ গঠন প্ৰক্ৰিয়া' (২০০৯), অঞ্জলি চুতীয়া শইকীয়াৰ 'টুৰুং আৰু চিংফৌ ভাষাৰ এটি তুলনামূলক অধ্যয়ন' (২০০৯), ইন্দুপ্ৰভা দেৱীৰ 'অসমীয়া আৰু নেপালী ভাষাৰ ৰূপতত্ত্ব : এক তুলনামূলক অধ্যয়ন' (২০০৯)

বৰ্ণনাত্মক দৃষ্টিভংগীৰে কৰা গৱেষণা ক্ৰমে, সুবাসনা মহন্তৰ 'ভাৰতীয় আৰ্য ভাষাৰ পৰম্পৰাত উদ্ভৱকালীন অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ গঠন' (খ্ৰীষ্টীয় পঞ্চম শতিকাৰ পৰা ত্ৰয়োদশ শতিকাৰ শেষলৈ) (২০০০), মামনি বৰাৰ 'প্ৰাক-শংকৰী যুগৰ অসমীয়া সাহিত্যৰ ক্ৰিয়াপদ' (২০০০), মধুমিতা চেতিয়াৰ 'টাই খাময়াং ভাষা : বৰ্ণনাত্মক অধ্যয়ন' (২০১৬), ঐতিহাসিক দৃষ্টিভংগীৰে কৰা গৱেষণা হিচাপে চম্পাকলি তালুকদাৰৰ 'অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক চৰ্চা : এক ঐতিহাসিক বিচাৰ' (২০০৮), সংগীতা হাজৰিকাৰ 'অসমত ভাষা অধ্যয়নৰ ইতিহাস' (১৯৯৮), নিভা দাসৰ 'বুৰঞ্জীৰ শব্দমালা : উৎস আৰু ক্ৰমবিকাশ' (২০১১), মৌচুমী ৰেখা খাউণ্ডৰ 'মিচিং আৰু দেউৰী ভাষাৰ লগত অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ আদান-প্ৰদান' (২০১৯) আদি।

অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ উপভাষা আৰু স্থানীয় উপভাষা সম্পৰ্কে আৰু সমাজ ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক দৃষ্টিভংগীৰে গৱেষণা কৰি ডক্টৰেট উপাধি লাভ কৰা কেইগৰাকীমান গৱেষক আৰু তেওঁলোকৰ গৱেষণা গ্ৰন্থ হৈছে— অনিমা চৌধুৰীৰ 'Goalparia Dialect : A Critical Study' (১৯৯২), দীপালী ওজাৰ 'A Study of Barpeta Dialect' (১৯৯৫), অনুপমা বৰ্মনৰ 'ছয়গাঁও আৰু নলবাৰীৰ কথিত অসমীয়া ভাষা

ঃ এটি তুলনামূলক অধ্যয়ন' (১৯৯৪), বিনীতা বৰুৱাৰ 'শিৱসাগৰৰ উপভাষা : এক সমাজ ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক অধ্যয়ন (১৯৯৯), বিভাৰাণী পাঠকৰ বৃহত্তৰ সৰ্থেবাৰী অঞ্চলৰ কথিত অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ এক ভাষাতাত্ত্বিক অধ্যয়ন' (২০০০), বিভা ভৰালীৰ 'কামৰূপী উপভাষাৰ স্থানীয় ৰূপসমূহৰ এক তুলনামূলক অধ্যয়ন' (২০০০), মাজনী দাসৰ 'শোণিতপুৰ আৰু লক্ষীমপুৰ জিলাৰ আহোম সম্প্ৰদায়ৰ লোকসকলৰ সমাজ ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক বিশ্লেষণ' (২০০২), বনলতা কলিতাৰ 'পূব কামৰূপ অঞ্চলৰ কথিত কথিত অসমীয়া ভাষা : এটি অধ্যয়ন' (২০০৪), অজন্তা চুতীয়াৰ 'যোৰহাট মৰিয়নি অঞ্চলৰ চাহ বাগিচাৰ কথিত অসমীয়া ভাষা' (২০০৭), বেবীমণি গগৈৰ 'ধেমাজি জিলাৰ কথিত অসমীয়া ভাষা : এক সমাজভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক অধ্যয়ন' (২০১১) আদি।

অসমৰ জনগোষ্ঠীয় ভাষা সম্পৰ্কে গৱেষণা কৰি কেইবাগৰাকী গৱেষকে ডক্টৰেট ডিগ্ৰী লাভ কৰিছে। তাৰ ভিতৰত অপৰ্ণা কোঁৱৰ, প্ৰেমলতা শৰ্মা, সংগীতা শইকীয়া, অঞ্জলি চুতীয়া শইকীয়া, জ্যোতিৰেখা হাজৰিকা, ৰণু গগৈ, নৰমী গগৈ, মৌচুমীৰেখা খাউণ্ড, মহাশ্বেতা দেৱী আদি প্ৰধান।

সাহিত্যৰ ভাষা সম্পৰ্কে কৰা গৱেষণাৰ ভিতৰত অমিয়া ভৰালী মহন্তৰ 'ৰাম সৰস্বতীৰ ৰচনাৱলীৰ ভাষাতাত্ত্বিক বিশ্লেষণ' (১৯৯৫), গায়ত্ৰী দেৱী গোস্বামীৰ 'শঙ্কৰী যুগৰ অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ ভাষাতাত্ত্বিক বিশ্লেষণ' (১৪৯০-১৭০০ খ্ৰী.) (১৯৯৭), চিত্ৰা দুৱৰাৰ 'মাধৱ কন্দলিৰ ৰামায়ণৰ ক্ৰিয়া' (১৯৯৭), জোনালী দেৱীৰ 'উনবিংশ শতিকাৰ অসমীয়া ভাষা : এটি সমীক্ষা (১৮৩৬-১৯০১ খ্ৰী.)' (২০০২), মিনাক্ষী দত্ত বৰ্মনৰ 'চৰিত পুথিৰ ভাষাত ক্ৰিয়াৰ গঠন' (২০০৩), ৰুমী চৌধুৰীৰ 'বড়ুচণ্ডী দাসৰ শ্ৰীকৃষ্ণ কীৰ্ত্তনৰ ভাষাতাত্ত্বিক অধ্যয়ন' (২০০৫), দীপা পাটগিৰি দাসৰ 'অনন্ত কন্দলিৰ কাব্য : এটি ভাষাতাত্ত্বিক বিশ্লেষণ' (২০০৭), দীপাঞ্জলি দাস গোস্বামীৰ 'সুকবি নাৰায়ণদেৱৰ বিৰচিত পদ্মা-পুৰাণৰ ভাষাতাত্ত্বিক বিশ্লেষণ' (২০০৮), বৰ্ণালী বৰঠাকুৰৰ 'লক্ষ্মীনাথ বেজবৰুৱাৰ গদ্যশৈলী : এটি বিশ্লেষণাত্মক অধ্যয়ন' (২০০৮) আদি।

আধুনিক ভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ তাত্ত্বিক দিশক ভিত্তি কৰি গৱেষণা কৰা ৰুণিমা চৌধুৰীৰ 'Anaphora in Assamese : A GB Exposition' (২০০১), মধুমিতা বৰবৰাৰ

'Complimentiser in Assamese Implications for Second Language Acquisition' (২০০১), কৰৱী মহন্তৰ 'অসমীয়া বাক্যতত্ত্ব' (২০১৩) উল্লেখযোগ্য গৱেষণা কৰ্ম।

সমাজ-ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গীৰে কৰা গৱেষণা জেনমণি গগৈৰ 'টাইসকলৰ সম্বন্ধবাচক শব্দাৱলী : সমাজ-ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক অধ্যয়ন' (২০১৭), বৈপৰীত্যমূলক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গীৰে কৰা পাপুমণি হাজৰিকাৰ 'অসমীয়া আৰু নেপালী ভাষা : এক বৈপৰীত্যমূলক অধ্যয়ন (অসমত কথিত নেপালী ভাষাৰ বিশেষ উল্লেখনেৰে)' (২০২০) ভাষাবিষয়ক অন্য এখন গৱেষণা গ্ৰন্থ য'ত একে ভাষা পৰিয়ালৰপৰা উদ্ভূত অসমীয়া আৰু নেপালী ভাষাৰ ধ্বনিতাত্ত্বিক, ৰূপতাত্ত্বিক, বাক্যতাত্ত্বিক আৰু শব্দার্থতত্ত্ব কেওটি দিশক সাঙুৰি ভাষা দুটাৰ বৈপৰীত্যমূলক অধ্যয়ন কৰিছে।

উল্লিখিত গৱেষক-গ্ৰন্থ-গ্ৰন্থকাৰসকলৰ উপৰি আমাৰ আলোচনাত বাদ পৰি যোৱা আৰু মহিলা ভাষা-চৰ্চাকাৰী আছে, যিসকলে একান্তভাৱে তেওঁলোকৰ কৰ্মত মনোনিৱেশ কৰি আছে আৰু সেইসমূহ বিভিন্ন গ্ৰন্থ, আলোচনী, পত্ৰিকাৰ মাজত প্ৰকাশিত হৈ আহিছে। তদুপৰি এম. ফিল. ডিগ্ৰীৰ বাবেও বহু গৱেষকৰ জৰিয়তে ভাষাবিষয়ক ভালেমান ক্ষুদ্ৰ গৱেষণা গ্ৰন্থ প্ৰস্তুত কৰা হৈছে, যিসমূহত বিভিন্ন দিশৰ ভাষাতাত্ত্বিক সমল অন্তৰ্ভুক্ত হৈ আছে। প্ৰসংগক্ৰমে তিলোত্তমা ভৰালী, গায়ত্ৰী দেৱী গোস্বামী, লখিমী গোস্বামী, চিত্ৰা বৰগোহাঁই, মামনি বৰা, সংগীতা শৰ্মা, চিত্ৰা দুৱৰা, অঞ্জলি চুতীয়া শইকীয়া, সবিতা বৈশ্য বৰুৱা, মঞ্জু দেৱী, সোণামণি বৰা, উৰ্মিলা দেৱী, ৰূপলেখা দেৱী, প্ৰমোদা দেৱী, বিনীতা বৰুৱা, ৰজিতা কলিতা মৰল, চুমী কলিতা, ঋতুপৰ্ণা বুঢ়াগোহাঞি, জয়ন্তী পাংগিং, হিৰিম্পা শইকীয়া, মৃদুলা দাস, স্নেহা গগৈ আদি মহিলা ভাষাৰ আলোচকৰ নাম ল'ব পাৰি। অসমত মহিলাসকলে ভাষা-চৰ্চা কৰাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়কেইখনৰ বৰঙণি বিশেষভাৱে উল্লেখযোগ্য। তদুপৰি কামৰূপ অনুসন্ধান সমিতি, অসম সাহিত্য সভা, আনন্দৰাম বৰুৱা ভাষা-কলা-সংস্কৃতি সংস্থা আদি অনুষ্ঠান আৰু সংস্থাৰপৰা সময়ে সময়ে ওলোৱা বিভিন্ন গৱেষণামূলক গ্ৰন্থ, পত্ৰিকা, আলোচনী তথা এইসমূহে অনুষ্ঠিত কৰা সন্মিলন, আলোচনা চক্ৰ, লেখক শিবিৰ আদিৰ মাজেৰেও অসমীয়া মহিলা ভাষা-চৰ্চাকাৰীসকলে বিভিন্ন দিশেৰে ভাষাৰ চৰ্চা কৰি

অহা পৰিলক্ষিত হৈছে। উপেন ৰাভা হাকচামে ইতিমধ্যে তেওঁৰ ‘প্ৰবন্ধ-চানেকি’ শীৰ্ষক গ্ৰন্থত লিখা ‘মহিলা পণ্ডিতসকলৰ বৈয়াকৰণিক আৰু ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক চিন্তা-চৰ্চা (ড° লীলাৱতী শইকীয়া বৰাৰ বিশেষ উল্লিখনসহ)’ প্ৰবন্ধত অসমৰ মহিলা ভাষাবিদসকলৰ বিষয়ে আলোচনা আগবঢ়াইছে।

৭.০ উপসংহাৰ :

এটা কথা স্পষ্ট যে, ভাষাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনলৈ অসমৰ মহিলা লেখকৰ কিয়দংশই তেওঁলোকৰ নিৰলস সাধনাৰ জৰিয়তে অতুলনীয় অৱদান আগবঢ়াই আহিছে আৰু বহু নতুন দিশক

উন্মোচন কৰি নতুন গৱেষকসকলক অধ্যয়নৰ বাবে বাট মুকলি কৰি দিছে। তথাপি অসমৰ ভাষা, উপভাষাতত্ত্ব, নৃতাত্ত্বিক ভাষাবিজ্ঞান, প্ৰায়োগিক ভাষাবিজ্ঞান, বৈপৰীত্যমূলক ভাষাবিজ্ঞান, মনো ভাষাবিজ্ঞান, শৈলীবিজ্ঞান আৰু সমাজ-ভাষাবৈজ্ঞানিক দৃষ্টিভংগীৰে কৰা গৱেষণাৰ লগতে বিপন্ন হ’বলৈ ধৰা অসমৰ জনজাতীয় ভাষাৰ বিষয়ে গৱেষণা কৰিবলৈ এতিয়াও দুই এগৰাকীৰ বাদে মহিলা লেখকসকল আগ্ৰহেৰে আগবাঢ়ি নহাটো চিন্তনীয় বিষয়। আশাকৰো এই দিশত আগহীসকলে মনোনিৱেশ কৰিব।

প্ৰসংগ-সূত্ৰ :

১. কোঁৱৰ, অৰ্পণা, ‘অসমত ভাষাৰ অধ্যয়ন’, পৃ. ২৪৭-২৪৮
২. তালুকদাৰ, চম্পাকলি, ‘ভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ ইতিহাস’, পৃ. ১০৯
৩. কোঁৱৰ, অৰ্পণা ‘অসমত ভাষাৰ অধ্যয়ন’, পৃ. ১৩৪
৪. শৰ্মা, অনুৰাধা, ‘সমাজ আৰু ভাষা সমাজভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ পৰিচয়’, পৃ. প্ৰাক্কথন

সহায়ক গ্ৰন্থ :

- কাকতি, বাণীকান্ত (২০০২); *অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ গঠন আৰু বিকাশ*, (হাজৰিকা, বিশ্বেশ্বৰৰ অনু.); গুৱাহাটী, বীণা লাইব্ৰেৰী (মূল লেখকৰ প্ৰথম প্ৰকাশ : ১৯৪১)
- কোঁৱৰ, অৰ্পণা (২০০২); *ভাষাবিজ্ঞান উপক্ৰমণিকা*; ডিব্ৰুগড় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় : অসমীয়া বিভাগ
- কোঁৱৰ, অৰ্পণা (২০২০); *অসমত ভাষাৰ অধ্যয়ন*, যোৰহাট : অসম সাহিত্য সভা
- তালুকদাৰ, চম্পাকলি (২০১৪); *ভাষাবিজ্ঞানৰ ইতিহাস*, গুৱাহাটী : মণি-মাণিক প্ৰকাশ
- ফুকন পাটগিৰি, দীপ্তি (১৯৯১); *ভাষাতত্ত্ব*; ডিব্ৰুগড়, গুৱাহাটী : বনলতা
- ফুকন পাটগিৰি, দীপ্তি (সম্পা.) (১৯৯৬); *ভাষাতত্ত্বৰ বিচিত্ৰ কথা*; বোকাখাত : অসম সাহিত্য সভাৰ দ্বি-যুগ্মতম অধিবেশন।
- ফুকন পাটগিৰি, দীপ্তি (২০০৪); *অসমীয়া, বাংলা আৰু উড়িয়া ভাষা (তুলনামূলক অধ্যয়ন)*; গুৱাহাটী : বনলতা।
- শইকীয়া বৰা, লীলাৱতী (২০০৬); *অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ ৰূপতত্ত্ব*; গুৱাহাটী : বনলতা।
- হাকচাম, উপেন ৰাভা (২০১৯); *প্ৰবন্ধ চানেকি*; গুৱাহাটী : জ্যোতি প্ৰকাশন।
- হাজৰিকা, জ্যোতিৰেখা (২০১৯); *অসমীয়া লিপি আৰু অসমৰ জনজাতীয় ভাষাৰ লিপি*, সৰস্বতী প্ৰকাশন, গোলাঘাট
- হাজৰিকা, জ্যোতিৰেখা (২০২১); *দেউৰী ভাষা-সাহিত্যৰ অধ্যয়নৰ ইতিহাস*, সৰস্বতী প্ৰকাশন, গোলাঘাট।

নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাত লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰতিফলন : এক বিশ্লেষণাত্মক অধ্যয়ন

গীতিমণি হাটীমূৰীয়া

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সাৰাংশ :

অসমীয়া সাহিত্যৰ এক অনতম বিধা কবিতাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনত মহিলা কবিসকলেও নিগাজি আসন লাভ কৰি গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ অৱদান আগবঢ়াই আহিছে। অসমীয়া মহিলা কবিসকলৰ ভিতৰত নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈ অন্যতম। নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাই অসমীয়া কাব্যক্ষেত্ৰত বিশেষ স্থান অধিকাৰ কৰি আছে। কবি নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাৰ মাজেৰে বিবিধ প্ৰসংগৰ প্ৰকাশ ঘটা দেখা যায়। ইয়াৰ ভিতৰত লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰতিফলন এক অন্যতম দিশ। লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰতিফলনে নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাক সুকীয়া বিশেষত্ব আৰু নতুনত্ব প্ৰদান কৰা দেখা যায়। লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰতি থকা শ্ৰদ্ধা আৰু আন্তৰিকতাই কবিক লোক-জীৱনৰ কাষ চপাই নিয়াৰ লগতে তেওঁৰ কবিতাৰ জৰিয়তে আন্তঃপ্ৰাঞ্জলিক যোগসূত্ৰ স্থাপন কৰাৰ প্ৰয়াস পৰিলক্ষিত হয়। কবিয়ে আধুনিক জীৱনৰ সমস্যা, দুখ-যন্ত্ৰণা, অন্যা-অবিচাৰৰ প্ৰতিবাদ কৰিবলৈ, সৰল লোক-জীৱনৰ মাদকতা উপলব্ধি কৰিবলৈ, লোক-জীৱনৰ বিবিধ উপাদানৰ সহায় লোৱা দেখা যায়। কবিৰ কবিতাত লোক-জীৱন এক বিশিষ্ট দিশ। লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰতিফলনে সামাজিক-সাংস্কৃতিক জীৱনশৈলীৰ স্বৰূপ নিৰ্মাণ কৰাতো ভূমিকা গ্ৰহণ কৰিছে। কবিয়ে সমাজ জীৱনৰ চিন্তা আৰু আদৰ্শৰ কেন্দ্ৰ হিচাপে লোক-জীৱনৰ সমলসমূহ ব্যৱহাৰ কৰি আধুনিক মানুহৰ সামাজিক সত্তাক উপলব্ধি কৰাৰো যত্ন কৰিছে। লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰতিফলনে নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাক সমাজ অধ্যয়নৰ দিশ মুকলি কৰাৰ লগতে সৰল লোক-জীৱনৰ চিন্তা আৰু আদৰ্শৰ অভিব্যক্তি প্ৰকাশতো সহায় কৰিছে। গতিকে ক'ব পাৰি আধুনিক অসমীয়া কাব্যক্ষেত্ৰক বিশিষ্টতা প্ৰদান কৰা মহিলা কবি নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাত লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰতিফলন এক গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ অধ্যয়নীয় দিশ।

বীজ শব্দ : কবিতা, লোক-জীৱন, সমাজ, প্ৰতিফলন, উপাদান, সমল, কাব্যক্ষেত্ৰ।

প্ৰস্তাৱনা :

কবিতা মানুহৰ অনুভূতি প্ৰকাশৰ এক মাধ্যম। মানৱ মনৰ বিবিধ অনুভূতিয়ে শব্দৰ মাধ্যমেৰে ৰূপ লাভ কৰি কবিতা সৃষ্টিত অৰিহণা যোগায়। নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাৰে লোক-জীৱনৰ স্পষ্ট প্ৰতিফলন ঘটিছে। লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰকাশে জাতিৰ সাংস্কৃতিক চেতনা, চিন্তা, অনুভৱ আৰু কল্পনাৰ বহিঃপ্ৰকাশ ঘটিছে। লোক-জীৱনৰ সাংস্কৃতিক চেতনাই নতুনৰ লগত সংযোগ ঘটি কবিৰ কবিতাৰ মূল পাঠক নতুন আয়তন প্ৰদান কৰাৰ লগতে কবিতাৰে নগৰ আৰু গাঁৱৰ মাজত একতা স্থাপন কৰিছে। নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ

কবিতা গাঁও আৰু পথাৰমুখী হোৱাই নহয়, তেওঁৰ কবিতাৰে বিভিন্ন জনগোষ্ঠীৰ দুখ-দুৰ্দশা আৰু সাংস্কৃতিক বৈশিষ্ট্যকো সামৰি লৈছে। কবিৰ কবিতাত লোক-জীৱনৰ অন্তৰ্গত আচাৰ-অনুষ্ঠান, শিল্পকলা, খাদ্যাভ্যাস, ৰীতি-নীতি, বিশ্বাস, সাজপাৰ, আ-অলংকাৰ আদি দিশসমূহৰ প্ৰতিফলন ঘটিছে। নাঙল-ফুৰলিৰ পৰা তাঁতশাললৈকে, বিহুৱানখনৰ পৰা বিহাখনলৈকে পুষ্পিতা গাভৰুৰ ৰূপ বৰ্ণনাৰপৰা কাছদি, খাৰলিলৈকে লোক-জীৱনত প্ৰচলিত, ব্যৱহৃত সমলে নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাত ঠাই পাইছে। গ্ৰাম্য জীৱনৰ সতেজ বৰ্ণনা, পৰম্পৰা তথা লোক-সংস্কৃতিৰ প্ৰতি শ্ৰদ্ধাশীল



মনোভাৱ আদিও প্ৰসংগক্ৰমে কবিতাৰে প্ৰকাশ পাইছে আৰু অসমীয়া কবিতাৰ সৌষ্ঠৱ বৃদ্ধি কৰিছে।

নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাৰে লোককলা, লোকসংগীত আদিক পৰীক্ষামূলকভাৱে উপস্থাপন কৰা দেখা যায়। কবিয়ে লোক-জীৱন আৰু লোকপৰম্পৰাক গভীৰভাৱে বুজি লৈ লোক-সংস্কৃতিক জীয়াই ৰখাৰ কৌশল গ্ৰহণ কৰিছে। অসমীয়া কবিতাৰে লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰসংগ প্ৰজন্মৰপৰা প্ৰজন্মলৈ হস্তান্তৰিত হৈছে। লোক-জীৱনক আধাৰ কৰি কবিতাৰ জৰিয়তে আন্তঃপ্ৰাজ্ঞিক যোগসূত্ৰ স্থাপন কৰিছে কবিয়ে। পুৰণি সাধুকথা বা কাহিনী এটাৰ কথিত ৰূপ এটাই লিখিত ৰূপ লাভ কৰাৰ পাছত সাধুকথাটোৰ বিষয়গত দিশ একে থাকিলেও তাৰ প্ৰকাশভংগী সলনি হয়। কবিতাৰে সাধুকথা বা কাহিনী এটা উপস্থাপন কৰোঁতে সমাজৰ লোকমনৰ চিন্তা, আশা, আকাংক্ষা, বিশ্বাস, অন্ধবিশ্বাস, ভ্ৰম্ৰতা আদিৰ সন্মিলিত ৰূপ হিচাপে প্ৰকাশিত হৈছে।

নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাত লোক-জীৱনৰ উপস্থাপনে পৰম্পৰাক প্ৰতিপালন কৰাৰ লগতে অতীত আৰু বৰ্তমানৰ মাজত সম্পৰ্ক স্থাপন কৰি অসমীয়া কবিতালৈ গতিশীলতা কঢ়িয়াই আনিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে।

অধ্যয়নৰ উদ্দেশ্য আৰু গুৰুত্ব :

- লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰতিফলনে নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাক কেনেদৰে বিশিষ্টতা প্ৰদান কৰিছে সেই সম্পৰ্কে অধ্যয়ন কৰাৰ উদ্দেশ্যে বিষয়টো নিৰ্বাচন কৰা হৈছে।
- সাহিত্যৰ অন্ত্যম প্ৰশাখা কবিতাৰ মাজেৰে প্ৰতিফলিত লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰসংগই নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাৰ বিষয়বস্তু নিৰ্মাণত কেনেধৰণে সহায় কৰিছে সেই বিষয়ে অধ্যয়ন কৰাৰ উদ্দেশ্যে আলোচনা-পত্ৰখন প্ৰস্তুত কৰা হৈছে।
- লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰতিফলনে নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাৰ প্ৰকাশভংগীলৈ অনা পৰিৱৰ্তন আৰু বিশিষ্টতা সম্পৰ্কে আলোচনা কৰাৰ উদ্দেশ্যে বিষয়টো অধ্যয়ন কৰা হৈছে।
- লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰসংগ ব্যৱহাৰে নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাৰ প্ৰেক্ষাপট নিৰ্মাণত কেনেধৰণে সহায় কৰিছে সেই সম্পৰ্কে অধ্যয়ন কৰাৰ উদ্দেশ্যে আলোচনা-পত্ৰখন প্ৰস্তুত কৰা হৈছে।

গুৰুত্ব :

অসমৰ লোক-জীৱনক প্ৰতিনিধিত্ব কৰি নতুনত্ব আৰু বিশেষত্ব প্ৰদান কৰাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাত লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰতিফলন : এক বিশ্লেষণাত্মক অধ্যয়ন শীৰ্ষক বিষয়টো অধ্যয়নৰ যথেষ্ট গুৰুত্ব আছে। নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাত লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰসংগ ব্যৱহাৰে কবিতালৈ অনা পৰিৱৰ্তন, লোকসমাজ সংস্কৃতিৰ পুনৰনিৰ্মাণ আদিৰ বিশ্লেষণত বিষয়টো অধ্যয়নৰ গুৰুত্ব আছে। নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাত লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰতিফলনৰ প্ৰসংগ বিচাৰৰ প্ৰাসংগিকতাত বিষয়টো অধ্যয়নৰ গুৰুত্ব নিহিত হৈ আছে।

অধ্যয়নৰ পদ্ধতি :

নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাত লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰতিফলন : এক বিশ্লেষণাত্মক অধ্যয়ন শীৰ্ষক আলোচনা পত্ৰখনৰ অধ্যয়নৰ পদ্ধতি হিচাপে প্ৰধানকৈ বিশ্লেষণাত্মক আৰু বৰ্ণনাত্মক পদ্ধতিৰ প্ৰয়োগ কৰা হৈছে। বিশ্লেষণাত্মক পদ্ধতিৰ জৰিয়তে অসমীয়া কবিতাৰ ধাৰা আৰু অসমীয়া কবিতাত লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰতিফলন কেনেদৰে ঘটিছে সেই সম্পৰ্কে অধ্যয়ন কৰা হৈছে। লোক-সংস্কৃতিৰ প্ৰসংগ অধ্যয়ন কৰোঁতে প্ৰাপ্ত তথ্যসমূহ বৰ্ণনা আৰু আলোচনাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত বৰ্ণনাত্মক পদ্ধতিৰ ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা হৈছে।

অধ্যয়নৰ পৰিসৰ :

আলোচনা-পত্ৰখনৰ পৰিসৰত নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাত লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰতিফলন সম্পৰ্কে অধ্যয়ন কৰা হৈছে। লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰতিফলনৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠান, লোকশিল্প, আচাৰ-নীতি, লোকবিশ্বাস, লোক-সাজপাৰ আৰু লোকবিশ্বাসৰ প্ৰসংগ সামৰি লোৱা হৈছে।

নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাত লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰতিফলন :

সাহিত্যৰ এক অন্যতম বিভাগ হ'ল কবিতা। সৃষ্টিশীল সাহিত্য কবিতাৰ মাজেৰে বিবিধ বিষয় আৰু প্ৰসংগই ঠাই পায়। নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাৰ মাজেৰেও আধুনিক জীৱনৰ বিভিন্ন প্ৰসংগ, অভিজ্ঞতা, সমাজ বাস্তৱতা, বিজ্ঞানৰ আৱিষ্কাৰ আদিৰ সমান্তৰালভাৱে লোক-জীৱনৰ বিভিন্ন উপাদানেও কবিতা সৃষ্টিৰ আঁৰত দৰকাৰী ভূমিকা গ্ৰহণ কৰা দেখা যায়। নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাত মৌখিক সাহিত্য, ভৌতিক-সংস্কৃতি, সামাজিক লোকাচাৰ, লোক পৰিৱেশ্য কলাসমূহে এক সুকীয়া স্থান লাভ কৰিছে। কবিৰ কবিতাত লোক-জীৱনৰ

প্ৰকাশে জাতিৰ সাংস্কৃতিক চেতনা, চিন্তা, অনুভৱ আৰু কল্পনাৰো বৰ্হিপ্ৰকাশ ঘটাইছে। লোক-জীৱনৰ সাংস্কৃতিক চেতনাই নতুনৰ লগত সংযোগ ঘটি নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাৰ মূল পাঠক নতুন আয়তন প্ৰদান কৰিছে।

লোক-জীৱনৰ বিবিধ দিশৰ পূৰ্ণ উপস্থাপনে কবিৰ কবিতাক সমৃদ্ধ কৰিছে। লোকসমাজত প্ৰচলিত আচাৰ-অনুষ্ঠান, শিল্পকলা, খাদ্যাভ্যাস, ৰীতি-নীতি, বিশ্বাস, সাজপাৰ, আ-অলংকাৰ, সা-সঁজুলি আদি বিষয়সমূহৰ প্ৰতিফলন ঘটিছে কবিৰ ভাৱৰ অনুসংগৰূপে। নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাৰে লোক-জীৱন আৰু আধুনিক জীৱনৰ মাজত সম্পৰ্ক স্থাপন হৈছে। গতিকে দেখা যায় নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাত লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰতিফলন সম্পৰ্কে অধ্যয়নৰ যথেষ্ট থল আছে। অধ্যয়নৰ জৰিয়তে লোক-জীৱনৰ অন্তৰ্গত উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠান, লোকশিল্প, আচাৰ-নীতি, লোকবিশ্বাস আৰু লোক-সাজপাৰৰ প্ৰতিফলনে নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাক কেনেধৰণৰ বৈশিষ্ট্য প্ৰদান কৰিছে সেই সম্পৰ্কে আলোচনা কৰাৰ প্ৰয়াস কৰা হ'ব।

উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠানৰ প্ৰতিফলন :

উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠান কোনো এটা জাতিৰ জাতীয় জীৱনৰ পৰিচায়ক। উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠানে লোকসমাজৰ জীৱনশৈলীৰ বৈশিষ্ট্য আৰু গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ দিশসমূহৰ প্ৰতিফলন ঘটায়। সমাজ একোখনৰ স্ব-বৈশিষ্ট্য নিৰূপণতো উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠানে তাৎপৰ্যপূৰ্ণ ভূমিকা পালন কৰে। নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাত লোক-জীৱনত প্ৰচলিত উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠানৰ অনেক দিশ প্ৰতিফলিত হৈছে। শ্ৰমজীৱী মানুহৰ জীৱন আৰু জীৱিকা, আশা-কল্পনাৰ পৰিচিত ছবিখন কবিৰ কবিতাৰে প্ৰকাশ পাইছে। লোক-জীৱনত প্ৰচলিত উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠানসমূহৰ মাজেৰে প্ৰকাশিত লোকমনৰ কল্পনা, মানৱতা, সহানুভূতি আদিক বাস্তৱ আধুনিক জীৱনৰ সাৰথি কৰি কবিয়ে কবিতাৰে ব্যাখ্যা কৰিছে।

লোক অনুষ্ঠানৰ প্ৰতি কবিৰ মনত সুপ্ত হৈ থকা শ্ৰদ্ধাশীল মনোভাৱৰ বৰ্হিপ্ৰকাশ ঘটিছে কবিতাৰ মাজেৰে। লোক-জীৱনত বিবাহ অনুষ্ঠানৰ গুৰুত্ব আৰু তাৎপৰ্য উল্লেখযোগ্য। নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাৰ মাজেৰে লোক-জীৱনত প্ৰচলিত বিবাহ অনুষ্ঠানৰ স্পষ্ট ছবিখন প্ৰকাশ পাইছে। অসমীয়া সমাজ জীৱনত পালিত তোলনী বিয়াৰ প্ৰসংগই আধুনিক জীৱনকো কেনেদৰে প্ৰভাৱিত কৰিছে তাৰে কথা কবিয়ে উল্লেখ কৰিছে—

বিহুৰ মাহ-হালধি সানি নতুনকৈ নোৱাই
তোলনী হ'ল প্ৰতিজনী গাভৰু। পুষ্পিতা হ'ল
কপউ ফুলেৰে। মুগাৰ মেখেলাৰ খচমচনি
উঠিল। (ইফালে পেঁপাৰ মাত, সিফালে
পেঁপাৰ মাত)... সিহঁতৰ গাত দেও লঙিল।^১

(যৌৱনমতী)

কবিৰ সৃষ্টিত তোলনী বিয়াৰ মাজেৰে নতুন জীৱনৰ হাবিয়াস প্ৰকাশ পাইছে। কবিয়ে লোকসমাজত আয়োজন কৰা তোলনী বিয়াৰ প্ৰসংগৰে লোক ঐতিহ্যক ৰোমন্থন কৰিছে।

নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ 'আইতা' কবিতাটিত লোক উৎসৱৰ প্ৰতিফলনে কবিতাটিৰ পঠনীয় গুণ বৃদ্ধি কৰিছে। 'আইতা' লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰধান চৰিত্ৰ। আইতা চৰিত্ৰটিৰ জৰিয়তে কবিয়ে আধুনিক জীৱনলৈ লোক-জীৱনৰ পৰা বুটলি অনা ঐতিহ্য, পৰম্পৰাৰ মূল্যায়ন কৰাৰ চেষ্টা কৰিছে। লোকসমাজত প্ৰচলিত বিভিন্ন অনুষ্ঠানৰ মূল পৰিচালক আইতাসকল। আধুনিক জীৱনতো 'আইতা' চৰিত্ৰৰ ভূমিকা পালন কৰে অভিজ্ঞ নাৰীসকলে। আইতাৰ কৰ্মস্পৃহা, সংস্কৃতি চেতনাৰ প্ৰসংগ প্ৰকাশ কৰোঁতে কবিয়ে তোলনী বিয়াৰ প্ৰসংগ, ভাওনা অনুষ্ঠানৰ প্ৰসংগ, বৰ বিয়াৰ প্ৰসংগ, পূজা-সেৱাৰ প্ৰসংগ আদি বৰ্ণনা কৰিছে—

গাঁৱৰ ভাওনা হোৱা
ধনবৰে ভাও লোৱা
দিনতেই পানী-দুনি আনি
উখল মাখলকৈ
পেহীটিৰ সতে গৈ
চিকৰ আঁৰত গৈ বহা
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আইথান, শিৱদ'ল
জল, থল ডাঙৰীয়া
সেৱা পূজা শাহু আইৰ বাকীকে নৰ'ল।^২

— (আইতা)

নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাত লোক-জীৱনত প্ৰচলিত উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠানৰ প্ৰসংগ স্পষ্ট। সময়ৰ দ্ৰুত পৰিৱৰ্তনৰ লগে লগে আধুনিক জীৱনশৈলীৰ পৰিৱৰ্তন ঘটিলেও কবিয়ে গ্ৰাম্য জীৱনৰ সৰলতাৰ মাজতহে সৃষ্টিৰ সমল বিচাৰি লৈছে। কবিয়ে মনত কঢ়িয়াই ফুৰা শংকা কবিতাৰ মাজেৰে প্ৰকাশ পাইছে।



লোক-জীৱনত পালন কৰা উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠানসমূহৰ পৰা আহৰণ কৰা সমলসমূহ কবিৰ সৃষ্টিৰ পুঁজিস্বৰূপ। কবিৰ কবিতাৰে লোক-জীৱনত প্ৰচলিত উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠানৰ অনেক প্ৰসংগ পোনপটীয়াকৈ ব্যৱহৃত হৈছে। এনে প্ৰসংগৰ ব্যৱহাৰে নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাৰ বিষয়বস্তুলৈ নতুনত্ব আনিছে আৰু এটা সুকীয়া ধাৰাৰ সৃষ্টি কৰিছে।

লোকশিল্পৰ প্ৰতিফলন :

লোক-জীৱনৰ বহুল ক্ষেত্ৰখনত লোকশিল্পৰ ভূমিকা গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ। লোকশিল্পই লোকমনৰ সৃজনী শক্তিৰ পৰিচয় দিয়ে। নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাৰে লোকশিল্পৰ প্ৰসংগ ব্যৱহাৰ হোৱা দেখা যায়। লোকশিল্প লোক-জীৱনৰ জীৱন-যাপন কলাৰপৰা সৃষ্টি অভিজ্ঞতা বা জ্ঞান।^১ লোকশিল্প সৃষ্টিমূলক লোকজ্ঞান। পৰম্পৰাগত শিক্ষা প্ৰক্ৰিয়াৰে লোকশিল্প এটা পুৰুষৰপৰা আন এটা পুৰুষলৈ প্ৰবাহিত হয়। নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাত লোক-জীৱনৰ অভিজ্ঞতাৰ ৰুচিসন্মত দৰ্শনীয় শিল্পৰ উপস্থাপনে অসমীয়া কবিতাৰ বিষয় আৰু ভাবক গভীৰতা প্ৰদান কৰা দেখা যায়।

নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাৰে প্ৰতিফলিত লোকশিল্পৰ অনুৰংগই আধুনিক সময়ৰ ৰেহৰূপৰ প্ৰকাশ ঘটায়। আধুনিক জীৱনশৈলীত লোকশিল্পৰ সৰলতা, শিল্পনিপুণতাৰ গুৰুত্ব কবিয়ে অনুভৱ কৰিছে। কবিয়ে আধুনিক জীৱন যন্ত্ৰণাক জয়ী কৰিবলৈ, জীৱনক সূক্ষ্মভাৱে নিৰীক্ষণ কৰিবলৈ লোকশিল্পৰ সৌন্দৰ্যচেতনা কবিতাৰে উন্মোচন কৰিছে। লোকশিল্পৰ অন্যতম অংগ তাঁতশালত শিপিনীয়ে ফুল বহাৰ লগত লোকশিল্পীৰ সৃজন দক্ষতা জড়িত হৈ থাকে। কবি নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাত লোকশিল্পৰ অনুৰংগৰ প্ৰতিফলন ঘটিছে—

গুণগুণিবোৰ ফুল হৈ ফুলিছিল
তাঁতশালত। ৰি-ৰিয়নিবোৰে তেজত
অকাই পকাই নামিছিল; উঠিছিল। এইটো
বতৰতে সিহঁতে পি খাব খুজিছিল
বাগী ধৰা ঋতুটো।^২ — (বাগী ধৰা ঋতুটো)

লোক-জীৱনৰ অভিজ্ঞতাৰ ৰুচিসন্মত দৰ্শনীয় শিল্পৰ উপস্থাপনে অসমীয়া কবিতাৰ বিষয় আৰু ভাবক গভীৰতা প্ৰদান কৰা দেখা যায়। কবি নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাৰে লোকশিল্পৰ প্ৰসংগ ব্যৱহাৰ হোৱা দেখা যায় এনেদৰে—

জীৱনৰ অন্য নাম

যন্ত্ৰণা।

টোম এটা সাজিবলৈও

বেতডাল, বাঁহডাল

তুলাব লাগে

মূৰ্তি এটা গঢ়িবলৈও

শিলডোখৰ কাটিব লাগে...^৩

লোকশিল্পই লোকমনৰ নিজা ৰূপ, বৈশিষ্ট্য উদ্ভৱপুৰুষলৈ সঞ্চিত কৰে। কবিয়ে পুনৰ কৈছে শিলত কটা মূৰ্তি এটাৰ কথা। শিলত কটা মূৰ্তিটোৱে লোক-ভাস্কৰ্যৰ নিদৰ্শন দাঙি ধৰিছে। আধুনিক জীৱনশৈলীত লোকশিল্পৰ এই সৰল শিল্পনিপুণতাৰ গুৰুত্ব কবিয়ে অনুভৱ কৰিছে। আধুনিক জীৱন যন্ত্ৰণাক জয়ী কৰিবলৈ, জীৱনক সূক্ষ্মভাৱে নিৰীক্ষণ কৰিবলৈ লোকশিল্পৰ সৌন্দৰ্যচেতনা, উপভোগ কৰাটো অতি দৰকাৰী। কবিৰ কবিতাৰে লোকশিল্পৰ প্ৰসংগ ব্যৱহাৰ হৈছে আধুনিক জীৱনত ব্যক্তিজীৱনৰ জৰাজীৰ্ণ অৱস্থাক কটাক্ষ কৰি।

আচাৰ-নীতিৰ প্ৰতিফলন :

লোক-জীৱন অনেক আচাৰনীতিৰ সমলকেन्द्र। প্ৰচলিত লোকবিশ্বাস, লোকধৰ্ম, অন্ধবিশ্বাস, ৰীতি-নীতিৰ আধাৰত পালন কৰা হয় আচাৰ-অনুষ্ঠানসমূহ। আচাৰনীতিৰ জৰিয়তে লোক-জীৱনৰ স্বৰূপ জানিব পাৰি। লোক-জীৱনত পালন কৰা আচাৰ-নীতিসমূহৰ গুৰুত্ব আৰু যুক্তিযুক্ততা বৰ্তমান সময়তো প্ৰযোজ্য। প্ৰাকৃতিক বিভিন্ন কাৰণত লোকমনত নানা প্ৰশ্ন, সন্দেহ, কৌতুহল, ভয়, সংকোচ আদিৰ সৃষ্টি হয় আৰু সেই প্ৰশ্ন, সন্দেহ, কৌতুহল, ভয়-সংকোচৰ যথাযোগ্য সন্তোষজনক উত্তৰ বা ব্যাখ্যা বিচাৰি নোপোৱাৰ ফলত কিছুমান আচাৰ-নীতি পালন কৰে লোকসমাজে। মানৱ সমাজত পৰম্পৰাগতভাৱে কিছুমান লোকবিশ্বাস মানি আহিছে। লোকাচাৰসমূহৰ মাজেৰে বিজ্ঞানসন্মত যুক্তিযুক্ততাও নথকা নহয়। লোক-সমাজত দৈনন্দিন জীৱনত জন্মৰপৰা মৃত্যুলৈকে কিছুমান লোকাচাৰ পালন কৰা হয়। এনে কিছুমান লোকাচাৰৰ লগত লোকবিশ্বাস জড়িত হৈ থাকে। অসমীয়া সমাজত প্ৰচলিত কেঁচুৱা জন্মিলে বাজ উলিওৱা বা সূৰ্য দেখুওৱা আদি লোকাচাৰৰ লগত লোকবিশ্বাসৰ সম্পৰ্ক গভীৰ। লোকাচাৰসমূহ জন্ম, মৃত্যু, বিবাহ আদিৰ লগত প্ৰধানভাৱে জড়িত।



নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাৰ মাজেৰে লোক-জীৱনত প্ৰচলিত বিভিন্ন আচাৰনীতিৰ প্ৰসংগ উপস্থাপন হৈছে। লোকসাহিত্যৰ অন্যতম অংগ লোক আচাৰনীতিৰ প্ৰসংগ ব্যৱহাৰ কৰি কবিয়ে অসমীয়া লোক-জীৱনৰ লগত আধুনিক জীৱনৰ সংযোজন ঘটাইছে। আধুনিক সমাজ জীৱনত লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰভাৱ গভীৰভাৱে অনুভৱ কৰি কবিয়ে পৰম্পৰা আৰু নতুনত্বৰ ভেটিত লোকাচাৰসমূহৰ উপস্থাপন কৰিছে। কবিতাৰে লোকাচাৰৰ প্ৰসংগ প্ৰয়োগৰদ্বাৰা সমাজৰ বাবে প্ৰয়োজনীয় বাৰ্তা প্ৰেৰণত কবি সফল হৈছে। তদুপৰি লোক আচাৰনীতিৰ উল্লেখ লোকপৰম্পৰাৰ অৱস্থান, গুৰুত্ব আৰু বাস্তৱ জীৱনত তাৰ প্ৰভাৱ সম্পৰ্কে জনাত সহায় কৰিছে। আধুনিক অসমীয়া কবিতা গণমাধ্যমৰো এক শাখা, এই গণমাধ্যমৰ জৰিয়তে কবিয়ে লোক-জীৱনক সুক্ষ্মভাৱে অধ্যয়ন কৰি আধুনিক চিন্তাৰে পুনৰ নতুন ৰূপত উপস্থাপন কৰিছে— যাৰ লগে লগে অসমীয়া লোক-সংস্কৃতিৰ সমলৰাজিৰ গুৰুত্ব আৰু সম্ভাৱনীয় দিশসমূহ স্পষ্ট হৈছে।

কবি নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাৰে লোকবিশ্বাসৰ প্ৰতিফলন ঘটিছে। লোকসমাজত চ'তৰ মাহত অহা বতাহ ধুমুহাক 'বৰদৈচিলা' নামেৰে অভিহিত কৰা হয়। 'বৰদৈচিলা'ই মাকৰ ঘৰলৈ যাওঁতে সকলো ধ্বংস কৰি থৈ যায় বুলি বিশ্বাস কৰা হয়। সেয়ে বৰদৈচিলাক সন্তুষ্ট কৰিবলৈ লোক-জীৱনত কিছুমান আচাৰনীতিৰ পালন কৰে। কবিয়ে 'বৰদৈচিলা'ক আধুনিক চিন্তাৰে উপস্থাপন কৰিছে এনেদৰে—

বৰদৈচিখলা
তোমাক বুলিছোঁ আই
তোমাক বুলিছোঁ বাই
মিনতি কৰিছোঁ
দুয়োহাত যুৰি
তোমাৰ খঙাল ল'ৰাটো
নিচুকাই দিয়া
নিচুকনি গীত গাই।^{১৬} — (বৰদৈচিখলা)

লোকবিশ্বাসৰ প্ৰতিফলন :

লোকবিশ্বাস লোক-জীৱনৰ এবাৰ নোৱৰা অংগ। সামাজিক লোক আচাৰ-অনুষ্ঠান বা লোকাচাৰৰ অন্যতম উপশ্ৰেণী লোকবিশ্বাস আৰু লোকধৰ্ম লোক-সংস্কৃতিৰ গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ উপাদান। পৃথিৱীৰ বিভিন্ন দেশত প্ৰচলিত আধুনিক

ধৰ্মৰ বুনীয়াদ হৈছে লোকধৰ্ম আৰু লোকধৰ্মৰো আধাৰ হৈছে লোকবিশ্বাস।^{১৭} লোকবিশ্বাসৰ লগত আচাৰ-অনুষ্ঠান, লোকধৰ্ম জড়িত। লোকসমাজত পৰম্পৰাগতভাৱে লোকবিশ্বাস আদি চলি আহিছে। লোকবিশ্বাসৰ মূল ভিত্তি হৈছে ধৰ্ম। লোকসমাজ বা আধুনিক সমাজ উভয়তে লোকবিশ্বাসৰ গুৰুত্ব দেখা যায়। নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাৰে স্পষ্ট ৰূপত লোকবিশ্বাসৰ প্ৰতিফলন ঘটা দেখা যায়।

লোকবিশ্বাসৰ মাজেৰে লোক-জীৱনৰ মনোজগত আৰু জীৱন-যাপনৰ আদৰ্শৰ পৰিচয় পোৱা যায়। লোক-জীৱনত প্ৰচলিত অনেক লোকবিশ্বাসৰ প্ৰসংগ নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাৰে প্ৰকাশ পাইছে—

কেনিও লৰিব নোৱাৰা
লৰচৰ কৰিব নোৱাৰা
মই শিলৰ মূৰ্তি হ'লো
ওঁঠত লাগি থকা
পাৰ্থনাৰ মন্ত্ৰটো

শব্দপ্ৰবাহত কেৱল ওপঙি ৰ'ল।^{১৮} — (বিষম প্ৰহৰ)

লোক-জীৱনত গভীৰভাৱে শিলপূজা, দেৱতাৰ পূজা, পাৰ্থনাৰে ভগৱানৰ কৃপাদৃষ্টি লাভ কৰাৰ চেষ্টা মানি চলা দেখা যায়। কবি নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাৰে লোকবিশ্বাসৰ এনে প্ৰসংগৰ প্ৰয়োগ ঘটিছে এনেদৰে—

ময়েই দেৱতা
ময়েই 'যন্ত্ৰ'
ময়েই 'বীজমন্ত্ৰ'
মোৰেই মাজত 'ভূ'
মোৰেই মাজত 'ভব'
মোৰ দেহতেই
নিছিগা ধাৰাৰে
প্ৰবাহিত হোৱা
আত্মা,
মই
অভিনৱ
তন্ত্ৰ।^{১৯}

— (পৰম চেতনা)

লোক-সাজপাৰৰ প্ৰতিফলন :

লোক-জীৱনক সমৃদ্ধ কৰা সমলসমূহৰ ভিতৰত অন্যতম হৈছে লোক-সাজপাৰ। লোক-সাজপাৰে লোক-

জীৱনৰ কলাত্মক দিশৰ পৰিচয় বহন কৰে। অসমীয়া লোক-জীৱনত সাজপাৰৰ এক বিশেষ মৰ্যাদা আছে। সাজপাৰৰ লগত লজ্জা নিবাৰণ, শিষ্টাচাৰ, ৰুচি, সামাজিক পৰিচয় আদি দিশ জড়িত হৈ থাকে। সাজপাৰৰ জৰিয়তে লোক-জীৱনৰ এখন বৰ্ণময় ছবি প্ৰকাশ পায়। লোক-জীৱনত সাজপাৰৰ এক বিশেষ গুৰুত্ব আৰু মৰ্যাদা আছে। কবিতাৰ মাজেৰে লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰসংগ উপস্থাপনত লোক-সাজপাৰৰ প্ৰসংগই গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ স্থান লাভ কৰিছে। অসমীয়া কবিতাত বিভিন্ন প্ৰসংগত সাজপাৰৰ উল্লেখ দেখা যায়। নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাত সাজপাৰৰ উপস্থাপনৰ জৰিয়তে আধুনিক জীৱনত লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰসংগ যে এবাৰ নোৱৰাকৈ সম্পৰ্কযুক্ত তাৰ ইংগিত দিয়ে। অসমীয়া লোক-সাজপাৰৰ ভিতৰত অন্যতম ফুলাম গামোচা, চুৰিয়া, চাপকন চোলা, ৰিহা-মেখেলা, পাটৰ মেখেলা, পাটৰ ৰিহা, খনীয়া কাপোৰ, এৰী চাদৰ, মুগাৰ সাজ আদি। নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাৰে লোক-সাজপাৰৰ প্ৰসংগ স্পষ্টৰূপত প্ৰকাশ পাইছে। অতীত সংযোগৰ ফলতহে আধুনিক কবিতাৰ কাব্যগুণ ৰুচিপূৰ্ণ হৈ উঠিছে। গতিকে আধুনিক জীৱনক নতুনত্ব প্ৰদান কৰা লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰসংগ সাহিত্যৰ ক্ষেত্ৰতো সদায়ে প্ৰযোজ্য। নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাও ইয়াৰ বাতীক্ৰম নহয়। তেওঁৰ কবিতাত লোক-সাজপাৰৰ প্ৰসংগ উপস্থাপন হৈছে এনেদৰে—

বগা ডাৱৰে
মূৰত পাগুৰি মাৰি
নটুৱা নাচ এটাৰ
আখৰা কৰিছে
গুৰু তিথিলে^{১০} — (আগ শৰৎ)

নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাৰে লোক-জীৱনত ব্যৱহৃত সাজপাৰৰ প্ৰসংগ সুন্দৰকৈ প্ৰকাশ পাইছে। কবিৰ কল্পনাত লোক-জীৱনৰ ভাওনা অনুষ্ঠানৰ প্ৰসংগই স্থান পাইছে। নটুৱা নাচৰ ভাৱৰীয়াই মূৰত বগা পাগুৰি মাৰি ভাওনা পৰিবেশন কৰাৰ কথা কবিয়ে কবিতাৰে প্ৰকাশ কৰিছে। কবিৰ অনেক কবিতাত লোক-সাজপাৰৰ প্ৰসংগই স্থান পাইছে। উদাহৰণস্বৰূপে —

দোকানৰ জাপভঙা
গামোচাৰ সুবাসত^{১১} — (কৰুণতম)

লোক আ-অলংকাৰৰ প্ৰতিফলন :

লোক-জীৱনত আ-অলংকাৰে গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ ভূমিকা গ্ৰহণ কৰি আহিছে। আ-অলংকাৰৰ মাজেৰে লোক-জীৱনৰ

শিল্পীসত্তাৰ পৰিচয় পাব পাৰি। অসমৰ লোক-জীৱনত বিবিধ প্ৰকাৰৰ আ-অলংকাৰৰ ব্যৱহাৰ হোৱা দেখা যায়। লোক-জীৱনৰ সাংস্কৃতিক সত্তাৰ মূল্যায়নত আ-অলংকাৰৰ ভূমিকা অন্যতম। লোক-সমাজত জীৱন ধাৰণৰ বাবে মূৰৰ ঘাম মাটিত পেলাই মানুহে শ্ৰম কৰে। সেই শ্ৰমৰ মাজতো স্বতঃস্ফূৰ্ত এক শিল্পচেতনা দেখা যায়। তাৰ ফলস্বৰূপে আ-অলংকাৰ সমূহৰ সৃষ্টি। আ-অলংকাৰসমূহ প্ৰস্তুত কৰাৰ কিছুমান নিৰ্মাণ কৌশল আছে। পৰম্পৰাগতভাৱে এই সৃষ্টিকৰ্ম লোক-জীৱনত প্ৰবাহিত হৈ আছে। লোক-জীৱনত আ-অলংকাৰৰ ব্যৱহাৰ বৰ্তমান সময়তো কম নাই; কিন্তু আৰ্থিক দুৰ্বলতাৰ বাবে ব্যয়বহুল মিনা কৰা বা বাখৰ খটোৱা অলংকাৰ ব্যৱহাৰ কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম নহয় বহুলোক, এনে পৰিপ্ৰেক্ষিতত সোণৰ আ-অলংকাৰ, মিনা কৰা বাখৰ খটোৱা অলংকাৰ আধুনিক সম্ভ্ৰান্ত ব্যক্তিৰ ঘৰতহে ব্যৱহাৰ কৰে। লোক-জীৱনত ব্যৱহৃত আ-অলংকাৰসমূহ বৰ্তমান সময়ত আধুনিক নগৰীয়া সমাজৰ সম্পদ হৈ পৰিছে। নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাত লোক আ-অলংকাৰৰ প্ৰসংগ ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা দেখা যায়। তেওঁ লোকসমাজৰ পৰা আঁতৰি যাব পৰা নাই। লোকসমাজৰ প্ৰতিটো উপাদানে কবিক আকৰ্ষণ কৰি থাকে। সেয়েহে আ-অলংকাৰৰ প্ৰসংগও কবিৰ কবিতাৰে উপস্থাপন কৰা দেখা গৈছে। পৰম্পৰাৰ সৈতে অতীত বৰ্তমান আৰু ভৱিষ্যতৰ সম্পৰ্ক জড়িত হৈ থাকে। পৰম্পৰাৰ মৃত্যু হ'ব নোৱাৰে, পৰিৱৰ্তন বা উদ্ভৱহে হয়। লোক-সংস্কৃতিও সেয়ে স্থবিৰ নহয়, ই সদায়ে প্ৰাসংগিক আৰু গতিশীল। লোক-সংস্কৃতিৰ অন্যতম উপাদান লোক আ-অলংকাৰৰ প্ৰসংগ নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাৰে ব্যৱহাৰ হৈছে এনেদৰে—

মই যোৱাটো বেলিৰ
বিহুৰ শপত
কণ্ঠে কণ্ঠে আঁৰি লোৱা সেই
ৰঙা পোৱালৰ মণি^{১২} — (ৰঙা পোৱালৰ মণি)

লোক-জীৱনত পোৱালমণিৰ গুৰুত্ব আছে। অসমীয়া গাভৰু আৰু বিহুৱতীৰ অতিকৈ আপোন অলংকাৰ পোৱালমণিৰ জোনবিৰি। কবি নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈয়ে সভ্যতা সংস্কৃতিৰ অন্যতম পথ নিৰ্দেশক লোক আ-অলংকাৰৰ প্ৰসংগৰ জৰিয়তে আধুনিক জীৱনৰ লগত লোক-জীৱনৰ সম্পৰ্ক স্থাপন কৰিছে।
সামৰণি :

কবিতাত লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰতিফলন এক বিশিষ্ট দিশ। নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাত লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰসংগ, যেনে—

উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠান, লোকশিল্প, আচাৰ-নীতি, লোকবিশ্বাস আৰু লোক-সাজপাৰৰ অনুৰূপ ব্যৱহৃত হোৱা দেখা যায়। গ্ৰাম্য জীৱনৰ জীৱন্ত আৰু পৰিচিত উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠান, লোকশিল্প, আচাৰ-নীতি, লোকবিশ্বাস আৰু লোক সাজপাৰৰ প্ৰসংগই অসমীয়া কবিতাক বিশেষত্ব দান কৰাৰ লগতে পাঠকৰ ওচৰ চপাই নিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে। অসমীয়া কবিতাত লোক-জীৱনৰ ভাবানুৰূপৰ প্ৰসংগই এক সম্ভাৱনাপূৰ্ণ ভৱিষ্যতৰ ইংগিত দিয়ে লোক-সংস্কৃতিৰ প্ৰচাৰ আৰু প্ৰসাৰৰ দিশত। বিজ্ঞান প্ৰযুক্তিবিদ্যাৰ চৰম উন্নতিয়ে মানুহক এখন সুলভ জগতৰ সন্ধান দিলেও মানুহৰ অন্তৰৰ তাগিদাক কেতিয়াও বিসৰ্জন দিব নোৱাৰে। সেয়ে সভ্যতাৰ সংকটে বিচ্ছিন্ন কৰা মানুহে কবিতাৰ যোগেদি লোক-জীৱনৰ সৰলতাক মানুহৰ মাজলৈ আদৰি আনে। নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাত আধুনিক চিন্তা আৰু মতামত প্ৰকাশত লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰসংগ নুই কৰিব নোৱাৰি।

সিদ্ধান্ত :

নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাত লোক-জীৱনৰ প্ৰতিফলন : এক বিশ্লেষণাত্মক অধ্যয়ন শীৰ্ষক

আলোচনাপত্ৰখনিৰ অধ্যয়নৰ অন্তত কেইটিমান সিদ্ধান্তত উপনীত হ'ব পৰা গ'ল—

- লোক-জীৱনৰ সমলযুক্ত সাৰ্থক আধুনিক অসমীয়া কবিতা কবি নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কলমেৰে সৃষ্টি হৈছে।
- লোকজীৱনৰ স্পৰ্শ থকা নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাত এক আকৰ্ষণ আৰু বিশেষত্ব পৰিলক্ষিত হয়। যিয়ে আধুনিক কবিতাৰ কঠিনতা আৰু জটিলতা হ্ৰাস কৰি পাঠকক কবিতাৰ সোৱাদ দিছে।
- নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰ কবিতাত লোক-জীৱনৰ অন্তৰ্গত উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠান, লোকশিল্প, আচাৰ-নীতি, লোকবিশ্বাস আৰু পাৰৰ প্ৰতিফলনে সমাজ চিন্তাৰ দিশসমূহ উন্মোচন কৰিছে।
- কবিয়ে কবিতাৰে কৌশলগতভাৱে লোক-জীৱনৰ সমল প্ৰয়োগ কৰি সামাজিক, শোষণ, নিপ্ৰেষণ, বঞ্চনাৰ আচল ৰূপটো উদ্ঘাটন কৰাত সফলতা লাভ কৰিছে বুলি ক'ব পাৰি।
- উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠান আৰু লোকশিল্পৰ প্ৰতিফলনৰ জৰিয়তে কবিয়ে নিজা দৃষ্টিভংগী আৰু অভিব্যক্তিৰে কবিতাক পুনৰ নিৰ্মাণ কৰিছে।

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**‘বৰ সাহাব ওংবী সানাতম্বী’ উপন্যাসত প্ৰতিফলিত মণিপুৰী নাৰীৰ সামাজিক স্থিতি****এন. তামনা সিংহ**সহকাৰী অধ্যাপক, অসমীয়া বিভাগ, চৰকাৰী আদৰ্শ মহাবিদ্যালয়, কাজিৰঙা
e-mail : tamna48@gmail.com**সাৰাংশ :**

সমাজ জীৱনৰ অন্যতম অংশীদাৰ হৈছে নাৰী। নাৰী অবিহনে পৃথিৱীৰ সকলো অস্তিত্বহীন, অসুঃসাৰশূন্য। বৈদিক যুগৰেপৰা ভাৰতীয় নাৰীৰ সামাজিক স্থান সম্পৰ্কে বিভিন্ন সমলৰপৰা জানিব পৰা গৈছে। অতীজৰে পৰা ভাৰতবৰ্ষৰ আন অংশৰ তুলনাত উত্তৰ-পূব অঞ্চলত নাৰীৰ স্থিতি কিছু উন্নত বুলি ঠাৱৰ কৰিব পৰা গৈছে। মহাভাৰতৰ দৰে মহাকাব্যত বৰ্ণিত হোৱা হিড়িম্বা, চিত্ৰাংগদা ইত্যাদি চৰিত্ৰবোৰে ইয়াৰ স্বাক্ষৰ বহন কৰে। উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলত নাৰীৰ সামাজিক স্থান পুৰুষৰ তুলনাত উচ্চ নাছিল যদিও সমাজনীতি, ৰাজনীতি, অর্থনীতি, শিক্ষা, সংস্কৃতি ইত্যাদি বহুক্ষেত্ৰত নাৰীয়ে বলিষ্ঠ ভূমিকা গ্ৰহণ কৰা দেখা গৈছে; কিন্তু পুৰুষতান্ত্ৰিক সমাজ ব্যৱস্থাত অতীজৰেপৰা নাৰীক প্ৰান্তীয় অথবা *marginal* হিচাপেই গণ্য কৰি অহা হৈছে। যিহেতু সাহিত্যক সমাজৰ দাপোণ আখ্যা দিয়া হয় সেয়েহে সাহিত্যৰ মাজৰে নাৰীৰ সামাজিক স্থিতি সম্পৰ্কেও ধাৰণা লাভ কৰিব পৰা যায়। আচলতে সত্য আৰু সুন্দৰৰ বোল সনা জীৱন অভিজ্ঞতাৰ প্ৰকাশেই সাহিত্য আৰু সাহিত্যৰ ফল্গুপ্ৰবাহৰ এটি বৰ্ণিত শাখা হৈছে উপন্যাস। উপন্যাসত চিত্ৰিত হয় সঁচা জীৱনৰ কলাত্মক ৰূপ। সেয়ে মণিপুৰী সমাজত নাৰীৰ সামাজিক স্থিতিৰ বিষয়ে অধ্যয়ন কৰিবলৈ আধুনিক মণিপুৰী সাহিত্যিক মহাৰাজকুমাৰী বিনোদিনী দেৱীৰ ‘বৰ চাহাব ওংবী সানাতম্বী’ উপন্যাসখন নিৰ্বাচন কৰা হৈছে। আলোচনাৰ বাবে নিৰ্বাচিত উপন্যাসখনৰ মূল চৰিত্ৰ সানাতম্বী মণিপুৰৰ জনমানসত কিংবদন্তি স্বৰূপ। নায়ক ‘মেচিন চাহাব’ আৰু নায়িকা সানাতম্বীৰ প্ৰণয় কাহিনীয়েই উপন্যাসখনৰ প্ৰধান উপজীৱী যদিও উপন্যাসখনৰপৰা মণিপুৰী সমাজ ব্যৱস্থাত নাৰীৰ স্থান সম্পৰ্কে এক আভাস পাব পাৰি।

বীজশব্দ : নাৰী, সমাজ, মণিপুৰী সমাজ, সামাজিক স্থিতি।**১.০০ প্ৰস্তাৱনা :**

নাৰী সমাজ জীৱনৰ অৰ্ধ আকাশ। সমাজত নাৰীৰ অৱদান পুৰুষতকৈ কোনো গুণে কম বুলিব নোৱাৰি। নাৰী অবিহনে সমাজ জীৱনৰ কথা ভাবিবই নোৱাৰি। সমাজৰ আদি পৰ্বত মানুহে নাৰীৰ নেতৃত্বতেই সমাজ পাতিছিল বুলি সামাজিক গৱেষকসকলে কয়। তদুপৰি বৰ্তমানো জীৱ জগতলৈ মন কৰিলেই জীৱ-জন্তুৰ সমাজখনো আমি নাৰীকেন্দ্ৰিক হোৱাই দেখা পাওঁ। সেয়ে আদিম অৱস্থাত নাৰীয়েই সামাজিক গুৰি বঠা ধৰাৰেই সম্ভাৱনাই অধিক। সি কি নহওক, নাৰী অবিহনে সমাজ জীৱন আধৰুৱা।

১.০১ বিষয়ৰ পৰিচয় :

মণিপুৰৰ আৰ্থ-সামাজিক ৰাজনৈতিক ইতিহাসত নাৰীৰ প্ৰচুৰ ভূমিকা আছে। অৰ্থনৈতিক দিশ বিশেষকৈ বস্ত্ৰ উদ্যোগ আৰু বজাৰবোৰ প্ৰায়েই মহিলাৰ হাতত আছে। সেয়ে মণিপুৰৰ ‘ইমা বজাৰ’ অৰ্থাৎ মহিলাৰ বজাৰ বিশ্ববিখ্যাত। সেই বজাৰত মাথোন মহিলাসকলেহে সামগ্ৰী বেচাৰ পৰম্পৰা প্ৰচলিত। তদুপৰি মণিপুৰৰ ৮০/৯০ শতাংশ বজাৰ-সমাৰ মহিলাই কৰে। ইয়াৰ উপৰি মণিপুৰৰ আৰ্থ-ৰাজনৈতিক ইতিহাসত স্বৰ্ণিল আখৰেৰে লিখা আছে ‘নুপী লাল’ অৰ্থাৎ নাৰী যুদ্ধ বা নাৰী বিদ্ৰোহৰ কথা। প্ৰথম ‘নুপী লাল’ যুদ্ধ সংঘটিত

হৈছিল ১৯০৪ চনত মণিপুৰৰ ব্ৰিটিছ গৱৰ্ণৰৰ বিৰুদ্ধে। ১৮৯১ চনত মণিপুৰ ব্ৰিটিছৰ অধীন হোৱাৰ পাছত ১৯০৪ চনত ব্ৰিটিছৰ ৰেচিডেন্স কোনো অজ্ঞাত লোকে জ্বলাই দিয়ে। সেই সময়ত ব্ৰিটিছ চৰকাৰে লাঞ্ছন প্ৰথাৰ যোগেদি মণিপুৰৰ পুৰুষসকলক বিনামূলীয়াকৈ ব্ৰিটিছৰ ৰেচিডেন্স পুনৰ পাতি দিব লাগিব বুলি চৰকাৰী নিৰ্দেশ দিয়ে। সেই নিৰ্দেশৰ বিৰুদ্ধে পুৰুষসকলে কৰা কোনো আৰ্জি বা প্ৰতিবাদ চৰকাৰে মানি নলৈ। ফলস্বৰূপে মহিলাসকল ওলাই আহি ব্ৰিটিছৰ এই সিদ্ধান্তৰ বিৰুদ্ধে আন্দোলন কৰে। তীব্ৰ আন্দোলনত ব্ৰিটিছে এই নিৰ্দেশ উঠাই লোৱাতহে আন্দোলন শাম কাটে।

ঠিক তেনেদৰে দ্বিতীয় বিশ্বযুদ্ধৰ বিভীষিকাৰ সময়ৰ লগতে খেতি-বাতি একো নোহোৱাৰ বাবে মণিপুৰত চাউল নাইকিয়া হৈছিল। তেনেতে ব্ৰিটিছে মাৰোৱাৰী বনিয়াৰ যোগেদি মণিপুৰৰপৰা মণিপুৰৰ বাহিৰলৈ ৰপ্তানি কাৰ্যত বাধা দি এনে কাম নকৰিবলৈ ব্ৰিটিছ চৰকাৰক মহিলাসকলে আৰ্জি কৰিছিল; কিন্তু ব্ৰিটিছে চতুৰ্থ অসম ৰাইফলছৰ সৈন্য মাতি মহিলাসকলক ইক্ষ্মলৰ টেলিফোন একচেঞ্জৰ ওচৰত বন্দুক-বয়নেটেৰে খুঁচি অত্যাচাৰ কৰি বিদ্ৰোহ দমন কৰিবলৈ চেষ্টা কৰে। আনকি ‘খুৰাইমন্দৰ’ বজাৰখনো এবছৰ ধৰি বন্ধ কৰি ৰাখে। শেষত ব্ৰিটিছ চৰকাৰে এই ৰপ্তানিৰ নিৰ্দেশ উঠাই লোৱাৰ পাছত আন্দোলন শাম কাটে। এনেদৰে মণিপুৰৰ সামাজিক আৰু ৰাজনৈতিক ইতিহাসত মহিলাই যুগে যুগে অগ্ৰণী ভূমিকা লৈ আহিছে। মণিপুৰী সাহিত্যৰ এগৰাকী শক্তিশালী কথাশিল্পী হৈছে মহাৰাজকুমাৰী বিনোদিনী দেৱী। সাহিত্য অকাডেমি বঁটাপ্ৰাপ্ত এই উপন্যাসখন তেওঁৰ অনবদ্য সৃষ্টি। এই আলোচনাত ‘বৰ চাহাব ওংবী সানাতম্বী’ উপন্যাসখনত প্ৰতিফলিত মণিপুৰী নাৰীৰ সামাজিক স্থিতি সম্পৰ্কে আলোচনা কৰা হৈছে। মূল মণিপুৰী উপন্যাস ‘বৰ চাহাব ওংবী সানাতম্বী’ৰ অসমীয়ালৈ অনুবাদ কৰোঁতে ‘সানাতম্বী’ শীৰ্ষকেৰেহে অনুবাদ কৰা হৈছে। এই আলোচনা অসমীয়া অনুবাদ সংস্কৰণৰ আধাৰত কৰা হৈছে।

১.০২ অধ্যয়নৰ উদ্দেশ্য আৰু গুৰুত্ব :

বৈদিক যুগত নাৰীসকল স্বাধীন আছিল, কিন্তু মনুৰ দিনত নাৰীয়ে পূৰ্বৰ স্বাধীনতা হেৰুৱায়। আধুনিক যুগত নাৰী শিক্ষাৰ প্ৰসাৰ, বিধৱা বিবাহৰ প্ৰচলন, নাৰী আত্মনিৰ্ভৰশীল হৈ উঠাত পূৰ্বৰ তুলনাত নাৰীসকলৰ মৰ্যাদা বহু পৰিমাণে বৃদ্ধি পাইছে; কিন্তু বৰ্তমানেও পুৰুষতান্ত্ৰিক সমাজখনত নাৰীক প্ৰান্তীয়

অৱস্থানত অৱস্থিত কৰোৱা হয়। সানাতম্বীৰ প্ৰণয় কাহিনীয়েই উপন্যাসখনৰ প্ৰধান উপজীৱ্য যদিও উপন্যাসখনৰপৰা মণিপুৰী সমাজ ব্যৱস্থাত নাৰীৰ স্থান কেনেধৰণৰ, তেওঁলোকে প্ৰাপ্য অধিকাৰসমূহ লাভ কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে নে নাই ইত্যাদি দিশসমূহৰ সম্পৰ্কে এক আভাস পাব পাৰি। আধুনিক মণিপুৰী সাহিত্যৰ এগৰাকী শক্তিশালী কথাশিল্পী মহাৰাজকুমাৰী বিনোদিনী দেৱীৰ দৃষ্টিত মণিপুৰত ব্ৰিটিছৰ শাসনকালত নাৰীৰ স্থিতি কেনেধৰণৰ আছিল সেই বিষয়ে পদ্ধতিগতভাৱে আলোচনা কৰাই এই অধ্যয়নৰ মুখ্য উদ্দেশ্য। ব্ৰিটিছৰ শাসনকালত মণিপুৰী নাৰীয়ে তেওঁলোকৰ মৌলিক অধিকাৰসমূহ লাভ কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে নে নাই আৰু তথাকথিত পুৰুষতান্ত্ৰিক সমাজখনত নাৰীৰ অৱস্থান কেনেধৰণৰ ইত্যাদি স্পৰ্শকাতৰ তথা অতি প্ৰয়োজনীয় বিষয়ৰ আলোচনাৰ বাবে বিষয়টোৱে গুৰুত্ব লাভ কৰিছে।

১.০৩ অধ্যয়নৰ পদ্ধতি :

মহাৰাজকুমাৰী বিনোদিনী দেৱীৰ ৰচনাসমূহত সাধাৰণতে মানবীয় অনুভূতিৰ পুনৰ মূল্যায়নৰ প্ৰচেষ্টা দেখিবলৈ পোৱা যায়। এই অধ্যয়নত ‘বৰ চাহাব ওংবী সানাতম্বী’ উপন্যাসত মণিপুৰী নাৰীৰ আৰ্থ-সামাজিক স্থিতি কেনেদৰে চিত্ৰায়িত কৰিছে সেয়া আলোচনা কৰিবলৈ প্ৰয়াস কৰোঁতে বৰ্ণনাত্মক আৰু বিশ্লেষণাত্মক পদ্ধতিৰ সহায় লোৱা হৈছে।

১.০৪ পূৰ্বকৃত কৰ্ম :

চি. এইচ. মনিহাৰ সিঙৰ A History of Manipuri Literature গ্ৰন্থত বৰ চাহাব ওংবী সানাতম্বী (বৰ চাহাবৰ পৰিণীতা সানাতম্বী) উপন্যাসৰ বিষয়ে সংক্ষিপ্তকৈ আলোচনা কৰিছে। ১৮৯১-১৯০৬ চনৰ সময়ছোৱাৰ মণিপুৰৰ ইতিহাসৰ পৰাধীন ৰজা চুড়াচান্দৰ জীয়াৰী সনাতম্বীৰ জীৱন গাথাৰ ভেটিত উপন্যাসখন ৰচিত হৈছে। সমালোচক মণিহাৰে কৈছে লেখিকাগৰাকী ৰাজপৰিয়ালৰ সদস্য সেয়ে ৰজাৰ পঞ্চম কন্যা, মৰমলগা অথচ দান্তিক সানাতম্বীৰ জীৱন চিত্ৰ অংকন কৰিবলৈ দোদুল্যমান পৰিস্থিতিত পৰিছে। ইতিমধ্যে মাণিকচান্দৰ সৈতে বিয়া হোৱা সানাতম্বী পুনৰ মণিপুৰৰ প্ৰথম পলিটিকেল এজেন্ট ‘মেচিন চাহাব’ৰ সৈতে বিয়া হয়। উপন্যাসখনৰ মূল নায়িকা সানাতম্বী সম্বন্ধত লেখিকাৰ পেহীয়েক (ইনেমাম্বী)। তাইৰ চৰিত্ৰ আৰু কাহিনী মণিপুৰৰ মানুহৰ বাবে ৰূপকথাৰ কাহিনীৰ



দৰে। ৰূপকথাৰ পৰীৰ দৰে জীৱনৰ আৰম্ভণি হোৱা সানাতম্বীৰ জীৱনৰ শেষছোৱা নান ঘাত-প্ৰতিঘাত, ক্ষত-বিক্ষত। সমাজে তেওঁক জাতিচ্যুত কৰিছিল। ল'ৰা-ছোৱালীবোৰে খেল-ধেমালি কৰোঁতেও গাইছিল—“সানাতম্বী গ'ল গ'ল, অধঃপতনে গ'ল।”

২.০০ মহাৰাজকুমাৰী বিনোদিনীদেৱীৰ বৰ চাহাব ওংবী সানাতম্বী উপন্যাসখনৰ চমু পৰিচয় :

২.০১ লেখকৰ পৰিচিতি :

১৯২২ চনৰ ৬ ফেব্ৰুৱাৰি তাৰিখে ইন্সফলত জন্মগ্ৰহণ কৰা মহাৰাজকুমাৰী বিনোদিনী দেৱী আধুনিক মণিপুৰী সাহিত্য জগতৰ এটি পৰিচিত নাম। তেওঁৰ পিতৃ আছিল ৰজা সুৰচন্দ্ৰ সিংহ। তেওঁ মণিপুৰ উপত্যকাৰ প্ৰথম স্নাতক আছিল। তেওঁ ছিলঙৰ পাইন মাউন্ট স্কুল, চেণ্ট মেৰিজ কলেজ, পশ্চিমবংগৰ বিদ্যাসাগৰ কলেজ, বিশ্বভাৰতী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ৰ শান্তি নিকেতনত অধ্যয়ন কৰিছিল। দ্বিতীয় বিশ্বযুদ্ধৰ সময়ত তেওঁ বংগদেশত আছিল। তেতিয়া শৰৎচন্দ্ৰ চেটাৰ্জী, বংকিম চন্দ্ৰ চেটাৰ্জী, ৰবীন্দ্ৰনাথ ঠাকুৰ, মাইকেল মধুসূদন দত্ত আদিৰ সান্নিধ্যলৈ আহে। দশম শ্ৰেণীত থাকোঁতে 'ইমাতেন' অৰ্থাৎ মাহীমাক শীৰ্ষক প্ৰথম গল্প ৰচনা কৰে। তেওঁ একেধাৰে গল্পকাৰ, ঔপন্যাসিক, নৃত্য-নাট্যকাৰ, চিত্ৰ নাট্যকাৰ, নাট্যকাৰ, ভ্ৰমণ সাহিত্যিক, গীতিকাৰ, প্ৰবন্ধকাৰ, চিনেমা-ডকুমেণ্টেৰিৰ Script writer, ভাস্কৰ্য শিল্পী ইত্যাদিও আছিল। বহুকেইখন বোলছবিতো তেওঁ অভিনয় কৰিছিল। তেওঁ ৮ খন আধুনিক চলচিত্ৰ আৰু ৪ খন তথ্যচিত্ৰৰ Script লিখিছিল। 'ইমাগী নিংথেম' শীৰ্ষক চলচিত্ৰই বিশ্বৰ চলচিত্ৰ জগতত ভাৰতৰ উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলক উজলাই তুলিছিল। এই চলচিত্ৰ Grand prix বঁটা প্ৰাপ্ত উত্তৰ-পূব ভাৰতৰ প্ৰথম চলচিত্ৰ। তদুপৰি ওলাংথাগী ৰাংমাদুসু (১৯৮০), সানাবী (১৯৯৫), অশংবা নোংজাবী, ইশানৌ, ৰাজৰ্ষি ভাগ্যচন্দ্ৰ, Sangai : Dancing deer of Manipur, Orchids of Manipur শীৰ্ষক চলচিত্ৰ আৰু কবুই লমজাও, লগটাক ইতা নৃত্যনাটিকা ৰচনা কৰে। তদুপৰি ৪০ খন ৰেডিঅ' নাট, ৫০-ৰো অধিক গীতৰ ৰচয়তা। এইগৰাকী লেখিকাই পদ্মশ্ৰী সন্মানৰ উপৰি ১৯৭৯ চনত 'বৰ চাহাব ওংবী সানাতম্বী' উপন্যাসৰ বাবে সাহিত্য অকাদেমি বঁটা লাভ কৰে। তেওঁ মণিপুৰ বিধান সভাৰ বিধায়িকাও আছিল। চি. এইচ. মনিহাৰ সিঙে A History of Manipuri Literature নামৰ গ্ৰন্থখনত তেওঁৰ লেখনৰীতিক প্ৰশংসা কৰি কৈছে, “she has a winning style of story-telling.”

২.০২ 'বৰ চাহাব ওংবী সানাতম্বী' উপন্যাসৰ পটভূমি :

এম. কে. বিনোদিনী দেৱীৰ 'বৰ চাহাব ওংবী সানাতম্বী' মণিপুৰৰ ইতিহাসৰ পটভূমিত ৰচিত আৰু ১৯৭৭ চনত প্ৰকাশিত উপন্যাস। ২৪ টা খণ্ডৰ মাজেৰে এই উপন্যাসখনৰ কাহিনীভাগে অগ্ৰগতি লাভ কৰিছে। উপন্যাসখনৰ কাহিনীৰ আধাৰ হৈছে ১৮৯১ চনত ইংৰাজে মণিপুৰ দখল কৰাৰপৰা ১৯০৬ চনলৈ প্ৰায় ডেৰ দশক কালৰ ঘটনা প্ৰবাহ। উপন্যাসখনৰ মূল চৰিত্ৰ সানাতম্বী মণিপুৰৰ জনমানসত কিংবদন্তি বা ৰূপকথাৰ কাহিনীৰ দৰে। নায়িকা সানাতম্বী পদচ্যুত ৰজা সুৰচন্দ্ৰ আৰু তেওঁৰ তৃতীয় ভাৰ্যা যশোমতীৰ নুমলীয়া কন্যা। মণিপুৰৰ ৰাজকীয় নথি 'চেথাৰোল কুন্সাবা' (Royal Chronicle) সানাতম্বী আৰু বৰ চাহাব মেচিন সম্পৰ্কত কিছু তথ্য পোৱা যায়।^১ তথ্যমতে ৫/১০/১৮৯২ তাৰিখে মণিপুৰৰ প্ৰথম পলিটিকেল এজেন্ট মেচিন চাহাবে (এইচ. মেকশ্বোৱেলক স্থানীয় মানুহৰ মুখত এনে নামেৰে পৰিচিত) সানাতম্বীক বিয়া পাতি ৰাজপ্ৰাসাদত ৰাখে। উপন্যাসখনৰ নায়ক মেচিন চাহাব আৰু সানাতম্বীৰ প্ৰণয় কাহিনীয়েই উপন্যাসখনৰ প্ৰধান উপজীব্য বিষয় তথাপি উপন্যাসখনৰ মাজত মণিপুৰৰ ৰাজকাৰেঙৰ ভিতৰুৱা ৰীতি-নীতি, ধৰ্ম-বিশ্বাস, অন্ধবিশ্বাস, সামাজিক ৰীতি-নীতি, কলা-সংস্কৃতি, খেল-ধেমালিৰ এক বিস্তৃত বিৱৰণ পোৱা যায়। উপন্যাসখনৰ নায়িকা সানাতম্বী ঔপন্যাসিকৰ সম্বন্ধত পেহীয়েক। উপন্যাসখন উজ্জ্বল কৰোঁতে অজানিতে যদি কিবা সামাজিক মৰ্যাদা লাঘৱ হৈছে তেন্তে তাৰ বাবে লেখিকাই ক্ষমা মাৰ্জনা বিচাৰিছে।

কাহিনীয়ে অগ্ৰগতি লাভ কৰিছে সানাতম্বী বেমাৰত পৰি শয্যাগত হৈ থকা অৱস্থাৰপৰা আৰু শেষ হৈছে তেওঁৰ মৃত্যুৰ বৰ্ণনাৰে। ৰাজকন্যা হিচাপে জীৱনৰ প্ৰথমছোৱা সময়ত আড়ম্বৰপূৰ্ণ জীৱন কটোৱা সানাতম্বীৰ বাকীছোৱা জীৱন নানা উত্থান-পতনেৰে বিষাদময় ৰূপত পৰিসমাপ্তি লাভ কৰিছিল। বিশেষকৈ ব্ৰিটিছসকলে মণিপুৰ অধিকাৰ কৰি সানাতম্বীৰ পিতৃ মহাৰাজ সুৰচন্দ্ৰক ক্ষমতাচ্যুত কৰাৰ পিছৰেপৰা এই উত্থান-পতনৰ আৰম্ভণি হৈছিল। ৰাজকন্যা হিচাপে সানাতম্বীয়ে ব্ৰিটিছে লোৱা কিছুমান সিদ্ধান্তক সহজে ল'ব পৰা নাছিল। এই সম্পৰ্কে তেওঁ সাহসেৰে প্ৰতিবাদ কৰিছিল; কিন্তু একে সময়তে তেওঁ আৰু মণিপুৰৰ মেকশ্বোৱেলৰ প্ৰণয়ৰ সম্পৰ্ক সৃষ্টি হৈছিল আৰু দুয়ো

বিবাহপাশত আবদ্ধ হৈছিল। ফিৰিঙ্গী চাহাবৰ সৈতে সম্পৰ্কলৈ অহাৰ বাবে তেওঁৰ জাত গৈছিল আৰু জনসাধাৰণৰ মাজতো এই সম্পৰ্ক চৰ্চা আৰম্ভ হৈছিল। সমাজৰ দৃষ্টিত তেওঁ হৈ পৰিছিল এলাগী।

৩.০০ বৰ চাহাব ওংবী সানাতন্বী উপন্যাসখনত প্ৰতিফলিত মণিপুৰী নাৰীৰ সামাজিক স্থিতি :

উপন্যাসখনত বৰ্ণিত ঘটনাবাজিৰ মাজেৰেই সেই সময়ৰ মণিপুৰৰ সমাজ ব্যৱস্থাত নাৰীৰ স্থিতি সম্পৰ্কে ধাৰণা কৰিব পাৰি। নাৰী কিমান পৰ্যায়লৈকে স্বাধীন, সেই সমাজ ব্যৱস্থাত আদৰ্শ নাৰীৰ সংজ্ঞা কেনেধৰণৰ ইত্যাদি দিশবোৰ উপন্যাসখনৰ মাজেৰে স্পষ্ট ৰূপত ফুটি উঠা পৰিলক্ষিত হৈছে।

দেখা গৈছে যে মণিপুৰৰ সেই সময়ৰ সমাজ ব্যৱস্থাত ৰাজ্যৰ মহাৰাণীগৰাকীৰ যথেষ্ট ক্ষমতা আছিল। শাসন ব্যৱস্থা পুৰুষপ্ৰধান হ'লেও মহাৰাণীৰ আদেশকো সকলোৱে সমীহ কৰি চলিছিল। তেওঁৰ আদেশ পালন কৰাতো দেশৰ সাধাৰণ প্ৰজাৰ লগতে ৰাজপৰিয়ালৰ আন সদস্যসকলৰো কৰ্তব্যস্বৰূপ আছিল। উদাহৰণস্বৰূপে,

“মেকশ্বোৱেলে প্ৰচলিত প্ৰথাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত মহাৰাণীৰ মতামতেই প্ৰথমতে লয়। তেওঁ জানে যে, প্ৰেমময়ী সাধাৰণ নাৰী নহয়, মণিপুৰৰ সুযোগ্যা মহাৰাণী।” (পৃ. ৬২) ৬

ৰাজমাও মহাৰাণী কুমুদিনীৰ আদেশ মৰ্মেই কম বয়সতে সানাতন্বীক নংমাইথম মাণিকচান্দলৈ বিয়া দিয়া হৈছিল— “মহাৰাণী কুমুদিনীয়ে আদৰৰ নাতি যুৱৰাজ সুৰচন্দ্ৰৰ ভাৰ্যা যশোমতীক মাতি নি ক'লে ...যশোমতী, ছোৱালীজনীক চকু দিবা। তাই গুৰু-গোসাঁইনমনা হৈছে। তুমি নিজে ধীৰ-স্থিৰ হ'লে নহ'ব। তাইকো নিয়ন্ত্ৰণ কৰিব লাগিব। তোমাৰ পুত্ৰ সন্তানো নাই। জ্যোতিবীয়েও কৈছে তাই উদ্ভট স্বভাৱৰ হ'ব বুলি। উপযুক্ত পাত্ৰ পালে সোনকালে তাইক মই গতাই দিব বিচাৰোঁ, তুমি কি কোৱা?... ”

সান'খামান্বীয়ে যি ভাল দেখে কৰক। তাত এই দাসীৰনো কি আপত্তি থাকিব পাৰে। ...আপোনাৰ সন্মতিয়েই মোৰ সন্মতি।” (পৃ. ৪)

ৰাজমাও কুমুদিনীয়ে নাৰালক পুত্ৰ চন্দ্ৰকীৰ্ত্তিৰ সিংহাসন সুৰক্ষিত কৰিবলৈ গ্ৰহণ কৰা পদক্ষেপসমূহৰপৰা সেই সময়ছোৱাৰ মণিপুৰৰ ৰাজতন্ত্ৰত নাৰীৰ বলিষ্ঠ ভূমিকাৰ উমান পোৱা যায়—

“এই বৃদ্ধা অৱস্থাতো তেওঁ বৰ্তমান ৰাজসিংহাসনত অধিষ্ঠিত পুত্ৰৰ আসন ভৱিষ্যতেও যাতে সুৰক্ষিত হৈ থাকে, আনকি নাতি-পুতিৰ দিনলৈকো অক্ষত ৰখাৰ চিন্তাত ব্ৰতী।” (পৃ. ৮)

“ৰাজদণ্ডৰ মূল চালিকা শক্তি মহাৰাণী কুমুদিনী।” (পৃ. ৮)

“স্বৰ্গীয় গভীৰ সিংহৰ ৰাজত্বকালৰপৰা পুত্ৰ চন্দ্ৰকীৰ্ত্তি দিনলৈকে মণিপুৰৰ ৰাজনীতি আৰু কূটনীতিৰ নেপথ্যৰ আঁৰৰ এইগৰাকী মহাৰাণী কুমুদিনী।” (পৃ. ৯)

আন কিছুমান বৰ্ণনাৰপৰাও মণিপুৰী নাৰীৰ সাহসিকতাৰ উমান পাব পাৰি—

“মহাৰাণী কুমুদিনীয়ে পুৰুষৰ বেশ পিন্ধি মূৰত পাগুৰি মাৰি শিশুসন্তান চন্দ্ৰকীৰ্ত্তিক লগত লৈ তংজেইমৰিল পথত ঘোঁৰা চেকুৰোৱাৰ ছবি।” (পৃ. ২৯)

“মণিপুৰৰ ৰাজকুমাৰীসকলৰ প্ৰত্যেকৰে ঘোঁৰাত উঠাৰ অভ্যাস আছে।” (পৃ. ৩৩)

এফালে ৰাজমাওক সকলোৱে সমীহ কৰিছিল যদিও মণিপুৰৰ ৰাজতন্ত্ৰত পুৰুষকহে যে প্ৰাধান্য দিয়া হৈছে, সেই কথাও উপন্যাসখনৰ কাহিনীত পৰিস্ফুট হয়—

“মই ৰাজপৰিয়ালৰ ৰাজকোঁৱৰ আৰু তুমি ৰাজকন্যাহে।”...তাই জীয়াৰীহে। কাংলাৰ ৰাজসিংহাসনৰ অধিকাৰ নাই।” (পৃ. ৫)

“গভীৰ নিশা মাতৃ যশোমতীয়ে মনে মনে কৈছিল— সানাতন্বী তুমি জীয়াৰী ছোৱালী, সেই কথা মনত ৰাখিবা। ” (পৃ. ৬)

নাৰীয়ে সকলো ক্ষেত্ৰত সন্ত্ৰম বজাই কাম কৰিবলগীয়া হৈছিল। বিশেষকৈ ৰাজপৰিয়ালৰ জীয়াৰী-বোৱাৰীসকল এই ক্ষেত্ৰত বেছি সাৱধান হ'বলগীয়া হৈছিল—

“নিলাজী ক'ৰবাৰ। পিতৃ হ'ল বুলিয়েই গাভৰু ছোৱালী এজনীয়ে এইদৰে নিৰ্ভজ্জভাৱে পুৰুষৰ আগত হাঁহেনে? বাকী মানুহবোৰে কি ভাবিব পাৰে। মূৰৰ চুলিকেই ডাল উভালি পেলাম, জনা নাই। মনত ৰাখিবি নিজ পিতৃ হ'লেও তেওঁ দেশৰ ৰজা।” (পৃ. ৮)

“...মহাৰাণী কুমুদিনীয়ে কাৰেঙৰ সকলো কুঁৱৰী, ৰাজকন্যাক থিয় কৰাই কিছুমান নিৰ্দেশ দিছে— মোৰ পুত্ৰবধূহঁত, নাতিনীহঁত শুনা— আনে আনি দিয়া ফুল লোৱা নিষেধ। আনকি কাৰেঙৰ চৌহদত ফুলা ফুল পৰ্যন্ত। নিজে তোলা ফুলহে ল'ব পাৰিবা।” (পৃ. ১৪)

“ৰাজকাৰেং আৰু গ্ৰাম্য সমাজৰ মাজত কিছু প্ৰভেদ আছে। গাঁৱত কোনো যুৱকে কোনো সুন্দৰী যুৱতীৰ তাঁতশালৰ কাষত ধোৱা হুপি হুপি বহি থাকিলেও দোষণীয় বুলি নধৰে। এই ৰাজকাৰেঙত সেয়া নীতিবিরুদ্ধ কথা।” (পৃ. ১৭)

ৰাজপৰিয়ালৰ মহিলাৰ সৈতে সাধাৰণ প্ৰজা বা বহিৰাগত লোকৰ প্ৰণয় নিষিদ্ধ আছিল। এনে কাৰ্যত জড়িতসকলক কঠোৰ শাস্তি প্ৰদান কৰা হৈছিল—

“সি ফান্দাংস্বানাক ভাল পায় আৰু ফান্দাংস্বানাইও তাক ভাল পায়। নিষিদ্ধ দেৱালখন পাৰ হৈ তাৰ ভিতৰলৈ সোমোৱা অনুচিত। এই অপকৰ্মৰ বাবে সি অপৰাধী।” (পৃ. ১৩)

“ফান্দাংস্বানৰ সৈতে মনৰ ভাব আদান-প্ৰদান কৰাৰ দোষত মেৰি শ্বেলুংবাক ৰাজকীয় গীত শিক্ষকৰ বাব আঁতৰাই ৰজাই বজাৰ, তিনিআলি, চাৰিআলিত বান্ধি ৰাজহুৱা শাস্তি প্ৰদান।” (পৃ. ১৩)

পৰম্পৰাগত সমাজ ব্যৱস্থাৰ বিপৰীতে সানাতম্বী আছিল যুক্তি, সততা, সাহস আৰু সম-অধিকাৰৰ প্ৰতীক। তাই নাৰী আৰু পুৰুষৰ মাজত থকা বিভেদৰ বিৰুদ্ধে প্ৰতিবাদ সাব্যস্ত কৰিছিল। সৰুকালৰপৰাই তাইৰ অন্তৰত থকা এই প্ৰতিবাদী সত্তাৰ উমান পোৱা যায়।

“তাক নামাৰিম কিয়? ল’ৰা হ’ল বুলিয়েই সি যি মন যায় তাকে কৰিব? মাৰিম, মই মাৰিমই।” (পৃ. ৬)

কাক যাত্ৰাৰ শোভাযাত্ৰাত তিৰোতাৰ স্থান নাই; কিন্তু ছোৱালী হৈও সানাতম্বীয়ে হাতীত উঠিবলৈ জেদ কৰাৰপৰা সানাতম্বীৰ বিপ্লৱী চেতনাৰ উমান পোৱা যায়—

“মইও ইধৌস্বানৰ লগত হাওদাত উঠিম। ...সি পুৰুষ হ’ল কি হ’ল? মই যে তাক পিটি পিটি ঘুঙুলা কৰি দিছোঁ। সি যদি হাওদাত উঠিব পাৰে মই কিয় নোৱাৰিম।” (পৃ. ২৩)

সানাতম্বী চৰিত্ৰৰ মাজেৰে মণিপুৰী ৰাজকন্যাৰ বিপ্লৱী চেতনা আৰু স্বদেশ প্ৰেমৰ নিদৰ্শন প্ৰতিফলিত হয়। পিতৃ সুৰচন্দ্ৰক সিংহাসনচ্যুত কৰাৰপৰাই সানাতম্বীয়ে অন্যায়ৰ বিৰুদ্ধে প্ৰতিবাদ সাব্যস্ত কৰা পৰিলক্ষিত হয়। ইয়াৰ মাজেৰেও সেই সময়ৰ মণিপুৰী নাৰীৰ স্বাভিমানৰ উমান পোৱা যায়—

“পাবুংস্বান’খাইকিয় মণিপুৰ ত্যাগ কৰিব লাগে? কাংলাৰ দৰবাৰ আনৰ হাতত এৰি দিবনে? সেয়া আপোনাৰ অধিকাৰ নহয়নে? ...পাবুংস্বান’খাৰ যোৱাৰ সিদ্ধান্তটো যদি স্থিৰ হৈছে

তেন্তে ময়ো বৰলাট চাহাবৰ লগত কথা পাতিবলৈ যাব খোজো।” (পৃ. ২৮-২৯)

“কাংলাৰ প্ৰৱেশদ্বাৰৰ পশু দুটা কিয় গুলীওৱা হ’ল? সেইটো তাৰ পৰা হুকুম লোৱা হৈছিলনেকি? পশু দুটা ভাঙি তোমালোকৰ কি লাভ হ’ল?” (পৃ. ৬৬)

“মেচিন, তোমাৰ হুকুম এতিয়াই বাতিল কৰা। সিহঁতক মুক্ত কৰি দিয়া। সিহঁত নিৰপৰাধী।” (পৃ. ১২২)

পুৰুষপ্ৰধান সমাজখনত নাৰী সদায় পুৰুষৰ অধীন হৈ অহা পৰিলক্ষিত হৈছে। বিশেষকৈ ক্ষমতা, অৰ্থ ইত্যাদি থকালৈকেহে নাৰীয়ে নিজৰ অধিকাৰ পাবলৈ সক্ষম হোৱা দেখা গৈছে। ক্ষমতাচ্যুত হ’লেই নাৰীক পুৰুষে নিজৰ হাতৰ মুঠিত ৰাখিবলৈ যত্ন কৰা দেখা গৈছে। উদাহৰণস্বৰূপে, মণিপুৰৰ শাসন ব্যৱস্থা ব্ৰিটিছৰ অধীন হোৱাৰ পাছত ৰাজকন্যাসকলৰ পূৰ্বৰ ক্ষমতা হ্ৰাস পাইছিল—

“ৰাজ আমোলত ৰাজকন্যাসকলৰ যি দান্তিকতা এতিয়া আৰু নচলিব। আমিও ইমান পৰি মৰা বিধৰ নহয়। তোমাৰ পেহীয়েৰা খাদইস্বানাক বিয়া কৰোৱা মানুহজনো আমাৰ বংশৰে। ৰাজকন্যা বুলি দস্তালি মৰাৰ কাৰণে পিঠি চিৰাচিৰ কৰি দিছিল। ...তোমাৰ দেউতাৰা এতিয়া ৰজা হৈ থকা নাই। এসময়ত আছিল। এচিয়া পদচ্যুত। যিহকে মন যায় তাকে কৰি ফুৰিলে পৰিণাম বেয়া হ’ব।” (পৃ. ৮৭)

“চিন্তিত হয়— কেনেকৈ পাচা-লইশ্বঙ অৰ্থাৎ গাভৰুমেলত গোচৰটো উঠে বুলি। মহাৰাণীক লৈ অকল মহিলাৰদ্বাৰা গঠিত এই লইশ্বঙত মহিলাৰ সমস্যা আৰু নাযাতা সম্পৰ্কীয় যিকোনো গোচৰ সুধি তাৰ বিচাৰ কৰে।” (পৃ. ৩৮)

মণিপুৰী মহিলাৰ সৈতে বহিৰাগত লোকৰ প্ৰণয় নিষিদ্ধ আছিল। এনে ঘটনা মণিপুৰী সমাজৰ প্ৰচলিত প্ৰথাৰ পৰিপন্থী। মেচিন চাহাবলৈ পলাই যোৱা বাবে সানাতম্বীৰ জাত গৈছিল।

“জাত-যোৱা, বৰচাহাবলৈ যোৱা সানাতম্বী।” (পৃ. ১১৫)

“তাই (সানাতম্বী) ফিৰিঙ্গীৰ ওচৰত জাত-যোৱা ৰাজকন্যা হৈ - অস্পৃশ্য।” (পৃ. ১০৯)

মণিপুৰী সমাজত এনে জাত যোৱাসকলৰ ঘৰত প্ৰৱেশ কৰা নিষেধ আছিল—

“যুৱতী খমদনস্বানাই মেকশ্বোনেলৰ চোলা আৰু টাইডালত ধৰি টানি আঁজুৰি হাৰাশাস্তি কৰে। অস্পৃশ্য ভিনিহিয়েকক চুই মেলি ঘৰলৈ গৈ কয়গৈ— ঘৰৰ ভিতৰলৈকে

সোমোৰা নাই, চোৰা-মেলাতো বাদেই। কথাখিনি কৈয়েই সকলোকে চুই দিয়ে।” (পৃ. ১০৩)

জাত যোৰা নাৰীসকল যিমানেই উচ্চ বংশৰ নহওক কিয়, সমাজৰ দৃষ্টিত তেওঁলোক অপৰাধী। সমাজত তেওঁলোকক কোনো স্থান দিয়া নহৈছিল—

“ব’হাগ মাহ। ৰাস্তাৰ দুয়োকাষে বৈ থকা জনতাৰ মাজেদি শ্বাগলন পথেৰে চাঙিত উঠাই সানাতশীৰ মৃতদেহ লৈ গৈ আছে। ...নিকট আত্মীয় বা বংশ পৰিয়ালৰ কোনো এজনেও কান্ধত ঘট লৈ চিতাৰ চাৰিওকাষে পৰিভ্ৰমণ নকৰিলে। কোনোবা অজাতিৰলোকে চিতাৰ জ্বলাই কৰ্তব্য সম্পাদন কৰিলে।” (পৃ. ১২৭)

ব্ৰিটিছৰ সংস্পৰ্শলৈ অহা নাৰীসকলৰ মাজত পশ্চিমৰ কিঞ্চিৎ প্ৰভাৱ পৰিলক্ষিত হয়—

“কেতিয়াবা মূৰত কেপ পিন্ধি পুৰুষক সাজেৰে প্ৰাতঃভ্ৰমণলৈ ওলায় সানাতশী...।” (পৃ. ১০৫)

চৰিত্ৰৰ নামৰ মাজত মণিপুৰী নাৰীৰ পৰিচয় আৰু নাৰী চৰিত্ৰ সম্বন্ধবাচক ৰূপ : উপন্যাসখনৰ নাৰী চৰিত্ৰসমূহ :

স্নাতোশী/সানাতোশী, মাইনু, আমুস্বানা, ফানদেংস্বানা, মাখাওস্বানা, স্নানাথাডাই, কৰোঙ্গস্বানা, সানামাইপাকাপী, থাবলস্বানা, ৰাজমাও মহাৰাণী কুমুদিনী, যশোমতী, প্ৰেমময়ী, লোকেশ্বৰী, চন্দ্ৰমুখী, তাম্ফাস্বানা, শ্বাৰিলেইমা, লৈচাওবী, পোৎস্বাবী, মৈৰঙ মাইবী, স্নানাইমা, লাইৰেণখশী ইত্যাদি।

নাৰী চৰিত্ৰ সম্বন্ধবাচক ৰূপ :

ইচেমশী : ৰাজপৰিয়ালৰ মানুহে বায়েকক কৰা সম্বোধন;

সানাইবেশ্বা : ৰাজকন্যাক জ্যেষ্ঠজনে কৰা সম্বোধন;

ইবেশ্বা : বয়সতকৈ সৰু মহিলাক কৰা সম্বোধন;

সান’খা মাম্মী : ৰাজমাও আইতা;

ইনেমশী তম্মী : সৰুপেই;

শ্বিজা লাইবেশ্বী : অপেশ্বৰী (ব্যঙ্গাৰ্থত ব্যৱহৃত);

ইমাম্মী : মাকক কৰা সম্বোধন;

খৌৰাণী : জ্যেষ্ঠা ব্ৰাহ্মণ মহিলাক কৰা সম্বোধন;

মজাইবেশ্বা : ৰাজকন্যাক কৰা সম্বোধন;

নুপী পালা : মহিলা নামতী দল;

ইনাম্মা : বৌ;

মাইবী : মহিলা পুৰোহিত;

ইমা : মা, আই, মহিলা ইত্যাদি।

মণিপুৰী নাৰীৰ সাজ-পোছাক আৰু আ-অলংকাৰ :

সেই সময়ৰ মণিপুৰৰ নাৰীসকলে পৰিধান কৰা সাজ-পোছাক আৰু আ-অলংকাৰ সম্বন্ধে আলোচনা কৰা হ’ল—

হিজ্জময়েক : মণিপুৰী ফানেক (মেখেলা)ৰ ফুলবিশেষ।

“হিজ্জময়েকৰ ফুল বহু ফানেক পিন্ধিছিল।” (পৃ. ২)

চেংহী : চাউল ধোৱা পানীৰ লগত বিভিন্ন বনৌষধি পাত সিজাই তৈয়াৰ কৰা পৰম্পৰাগত মূৰ ধোৱা উপকৰণ বিশেষ।

“আগদিনা মাইনুৱে সিজোৱা চেংহীৰে ধোৱা চুলিকোছাৰ পৰা মিশ্ৰিত স্নিগ্ধ গোন্ধে মেচিন চাহাবৰ মনত আউল লগালে। ...চেংহীৰে মূৰ ধুলে চাহাবৰ চুলি নপকে।” (পৃ. ২)

ফিগে ফানেক : পাটৰ মেখেলা

“তেজগোৰা গাৰ ৰঙলৈ চাই ক’লা পাৰিৰ মুগাৰ ফিগে ফানেক পিন্ধায়।” (পৃ. ২৬)

“ভেটফুল ৰঙীয়া ফানেকৰ মাজত সোণৰ কাম কৰা।” (পৃ. ২৬)

শ্বাই : পৰম্পৰাগত মণিপুৰী ছোৱালীৰ কেশ সজ্জা।

“তেতিয়ালৈকে সানাতশীৰ চুলিৰ শ্বাই দুবাৰমান কটা হৈছিল।” (পৃ. ২৬)

লেইৰুঙফী : মণিপুৰী জিম কাপোৰ।

“চ’ৰাঘৰৰ মজিয়াত ঢাৰি পাৰি তাৰ ওপৰত লেইৰুঙফী এখন পাৰি তাত সোণৰ অলংকাৰ, কাপোৰ-কানি সজাই থৈছে।” (পৃ. ২৬)

পংলই : ৰাসৰ গোপীয়ে পিন্ধা সাজ। বিয়াতো মণিপুৰী কইনাই পিন্ধে।

“সানাতশীয়ে ৰঙা পংলই আৰু ৰঙা মখমলৰ চোলা পিন্ধিছে।” (পৃ. ১১৭)

“সানাতশীয়ে পাতল নীলা ৰঙৰ ফানেক এখন বুকুত মেঠনি মাৰি পিন্ধিছে। (পৃ. ১০৭)

পাৰা ফী : অংগ বস্ত্ৰ।

“ক্লকবাত্ৰা বাহকক পাৰী ফীৰে পুৰস্কৃত কৰিব।” (পৃ. ২৩)

আ-অলংকাৰ আৰু সাজ-পোছাক :

“সোণৰ খাৰু, বজু, কুণ্ডল, বিধে বিধ হাড় আৰু বিধে বিধে কাংফুলি - পুংদুমপাৰেং, মৰৈপাৰেং, বকুলপাৰেং আদি। আঙঠিও বিধে বিধে— খইমাছম, লাইৰেণ মাখই আদি।” (পৃ. ২৬)

“আইতাকে দিয়া ডিঙিত চুটি হাৰ এডাল।”

“কাণত বাখৰ খটোৱা দেশীয় কাণফুলি।”

“ৰজনীগন্ধা ফুলৰ কুণ্ডল কাণত পিন্ধিছে।”

“খোপাত শংগ্ৰৈ ফুলৰ খোপা।”

“এখন কোনো সম্ভ্ৰান্ত মহিলাৰ গাত ফুল বহু চাদৰ আৰু লেছ থকা হাত দীঘল চোলা পৰিহিতা সুন্দৰী যুৱতী।” (পৃ. ১)

“গাঢ় নীলা ৰেচমী চোলা।” (পৃ. ২৬)

“সৰিয়হফুলীয়া চাদৰৰ মাজে মাজে মিহি তেজ-গোৰা ৰঙা ফুল।” (পৃ. ২৬)

৪.০০ উপসংহাৰ :

৪.০১ সামগ্ৰিক সিদ্ধান্ত :

মহাৰাজকুমাৰী বিনোদিনী দেৱী আধুনিক মণিপুৰী সাহিত্য জগতৰ এক বিশেষ নাম। তেওঁৰ ৰচনাই কাব্যগন্ধী গদ্যচয়ন, বৈচিত্ৰ্যপূৰ্ণ আংগিকৰ চমৎকাৰিত্বৰ সোৱাদ দিছে। তেওঁ বৰ্তমান কালৰ অন্যতম নিপুণ আৰু সাৰ্থক খনিকৰ। তেওঁ সমাজ জীৱনক নিচেই ওচৰৰপৰা পৰ্যবেক্ষণ কৰি বিভিন্ন স্থানীয় উপাদানৰ সংযোগেৰে সাহিত্য সৃষ্টি কৰিছে। এই আলোচনা-পত্ৰখনত ‘বৰ চাহাব ওংবী সানাতম্বী’ উপন্যাসত প্ৰতিফলিত মণিপুৰী নাৰীৰ সামাজিক স্থিতি সম্পৰ্কে অনুসন্ধান কৰিবলৈ চেষ্টা কৰা হ’ল। তেখেতৰ উপন্যাসখনত মণিপুৰী নাৰীৰ সামাজিক প্ৰতিচ্ছবি কেনেদৰে প্ৰতিফলিত হৈছে এই সম্পৰ্কীয় আলোচনাৰপৰা নিম্নলিখিত দিশসমূহ উদ্ঘাটন হ’ল—

১। মণিপুৰৰ সেইসময়ৰ সমাজব্যৱস্থাত ৰাজ্যৰ মহাৰাণীগৰাকীৰ যথেষ্ট ক্ষমতা আছিল। শাসন ব্যৱস্থা পুৰুষপ্ৰধান হ’লেও মহাৰাণীৰ আদেশকো সকলোৱে সমীহ কৰি চলিছিল। তেওঁৰ আদেশ পালন কৰাতো দেশৰ সাধাৰণ প্ৰজাৰ লগতে ৰাজপৰিয়ালৰ আন সদস্যসকলৰো কৰ্তব্যস্বৰূপ আছিল।

২। ৰাজমাও, মহাৰাণী, ৰাণী, ৰাজকন্যাসকলৰ দেশ ৰক্ষাৰ স্বার্থত গ্ৰহণ কৰা পদক্ষেপসমূহৰপৰা সেই সময়ছোৱাৰ মণিপুৰৰ ৰাজতন্ত্ৰত নাৰীৰ বলিষ্ঠ ভূমিকাৰ উমান পোৱা যায়।

৩। নাৰীয়ে সকলো ক্ষেত্ৰত সম্ভ্ৰম বজাই কাম কৰিবলগীয়া হৈছিল। বিশেষকৈ ৰাজপৰিয়ালৰ জীয়ৰী-বোৱাৰীসকল এই ক্ষেত্ৰত বেছি সাৱধান হ’বলগীয়া হৈছিল।

৪। পৰম্পৰাগত সমাজ ব্যৱস্থাৰ বিপৰীতে সানাতম্বী আছিল যুক্তি, সততা, সাহস আৰু সম-অধিকাৰৰ প্ৰতীক। তাই নাৰী আৰু পুৰুষৰ মাজত থকা বিভেদৰ বিৰুদ্ধে প্ৰতিবাদ সাব্যস্ত কৰিছিল। উপন্যাসখনত সৰুকালৰপৰাই তাইৰ অন্তৰত থকা এই প্ৰতিবাদী সত্তাৰ উমান পোৱা যায়।

৫। পুৰুষ প্ৰধান সমাজখনত নাৰী সদায় পুৰুষৰ অধীন হৈ অহা পৰিলক্ষিত হৈছে। বিশেষকৈ ক্ষমতা, অৰ্থ ইত্যাদি থকালৈকেহে নাৰীয়ে নিজৰ অধিকাৰ পাবলৈ সক্ষম হোৱা দেখা গৈছে। ক্ষমতাচ্যুত হ’লেই নাৰীক পুৰুষে নিজৰ হাতৰ মুঠিত ৰাখিবলৈ যত্ন কৰা দেখা গৈছে।

৬। মণিপুৰী মহিলাৰ সৈতে বহিৰাগত লোকৰ প্ৰণয় নিষিদ্ধ আছিল। এনে ঘটনা মণিপুৰী সমাজৰ প্ৰচলিত প্ৰথাৰ পৰিপন্থী। এনে কাৰ্যৰ লগত জড়িতসকলৰ জাত গৈছিল। এনে কাৰণতে ৰাজকন্যা তথা পলিটিকেল এজেন্টৰ পত্নী হোৱা সত্ত্বেও কোনো মণিপুৰী ৰাইজ তথা বংশৰ লোকসকল সানাতম্বীৰ মৃতদেহসংকাৰৰ লগত জড়িত নহ’ল।

৭। উপন্যাসখনৰপৰা সেই সময়ৰ মণিপুৰৰ নাৰীসকলে পৰিধান কৰা সাজ-পোছাক, আ-অলংকাৰ, খেল ধেমালি, সামাজিক আচাৰ-অনুষ্ঠান আদিৰ আভাস পোৱা যায়।



৪.০২ ভবিষ্যত অধ্যয়নৰ সম্ভাৱনীয়তা

যিহেতু সাহিত্যিক সমাজৰ দাপোণ আখ্যা দিয়া হয় সেয়েহে সাহিত্যত সমাজখনৰ লগত জড়িত বিভিন্ন দিশসমূহৰ প্ৰতিফলন ঘটে। মহাৰাজকুমাৰী বিনোদিনী দেৱীৰ 'বৰ চাহাব ওংবী সানাতম্বী' উপন্যাসত প্ৰতিফলিত মণিপুৰী নাৰীৰ সামাজিক স্থিতি- শীৰ্ষক

এই অধ্যয়নৰ যোগেদি উনবিংশ শতিকাৰ শেষ আৰু বিংশ শতিকাৰ আৰম্ভণিৰ সময়ছোৱাৰ মণিপুৰৰ সমাজখনত নাৰীৰ স্থিতি কেনেধৰণৰ, তেওঁলোকে প্ৰাপ্য অধিকাৰসমূহ লাভ কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে নে নাই ইত্যাদি দিশ সমূহৰ এটি আভাস পোৱা গ'ল। সেয়েহে এই আলোচনা ভৱিষ্যতে মণিপুৰী সমাজত নাৰীৰ স্থান সম্পৰ্কীয় অধ্যয়নৰ বাবে ফলপ্ৰসূ হ'ব।

প্ৰসংগ-টীকা :

১. মহেশ্বৰ নেওগ (সম্পা.), চন্দ্ৰকান্ত অভিধান, গুৱাহাটী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ১৯৮৮, পৃ. ১৩২

২. বৰুৱা প্ৰহ্লাদ, উপন্যাস, ১৯৮৩ খ্ৰী, পৃ. ১৩

৩. Ch. Manihar Singha, A History of Manipuri Literature, p. 272

৪. এল. ইবুঙোহল সিংহ আৰু এন. খেলচন্দ্ৰ সিংহ (সম্পা.), চৈথাৰোল কুস্বাবা, ১৯৮৯ পৃ. ৫১০, ৫১৯, ৫২৩, ৫২৪, ৫২৬, ৫৩১, ৫৩৩, ৫৪৬

৫. মহাৰাজকুমাৰী বিনোদিনী দেৱী (মূল), ইন্দ্ৰমণি ৰাজকুমাৰ (অনু.), সানাতম্বী, সাহিত্য অকাদেমি, ২০১২, এই গ্ৰন্থৰ পৰা ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা পৰৱৰ্তী উদ্ধৃতিসমূহ বৰুৱা, প্ৰহ্লাদ : উপন্যাস, বনলতা, ১৯৮৩ খ্ৰী. সিংহ, এল. ইবুঙোহল : চৈথাৰোল কুস্বাবা, মণিপুৰী সাহিত্য পৰিষদ, ইম্ফাল, ১৯৮৯ এন. খেলচন্দ্ৰ সিংহ (সম্পা.)

Singha, Ch. Manihar : A History of Manipuri Literature, Sahitya Akademi, 2003



ৰামধেনু যুগৰ মহিলা গল্পকাৰ

প্ৰাপ্তি ঠাকুৰ

সহযোগী অধ্যাপিকা, সৰুপথাৰ মহাবিদ্যালয়

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সাৰাংশ :

‘ৰামধেনু’ৰ জন্ম অসমীয়া সাহিত্যৰ বাবে এক উল্লেখযোগ্য ঘটনা। অসমীয়া চুটিগল্পৰ ক্ৰমবিকাশত ‘ৰামধেনু’ আলোচনীয়ে এক বিশেষ ভূমিকা গ্ৰহণ কৰিলে। অসমীয়া সাহিত্যত সৃষ্টি হ’ল ‘ৰামধেনু যুগ’ৰ। ‘ৰামধেনু’ যুদ্ধোত্তৰ যুগৰ অৱদান। ডেৰ শতাব্দীক গল্পকাৰৰ সৃজনী প্ৰতিভাৰে জিলিকি উঠা ৰামধেনু যুগৰ অসমীয়া চুটিগল্প বিষয়বস্তু, আংগিক সকলো দিশতে পৰিপক্ব হৈ পৰিল। অসমীয়া মহিলা গল্পকাৰসকলো পিছ পৰি নাথাকিল। সামাজিক দায়িত্ববোধ, বিশ্লেষণ ক্ষমতা, স্বকীয় উদ্ভাৱনী শক্তি আৰু নাৰী মনস্তত্ত্বৰ স্বাভাৱিক জ্ঞানেৰে সমৃদ্ধ হৈ এই গল্পকাৰসকলেও উল্লেখযোগ্য অৱদান আগবঢ়াই থৈ গৈছে। স্নেহ দেৱী, নিৰুপমা বৰগোহাঞি, নীলিমা শৰ্মা, প্ৰবীণা শইকীয়া, অনিমা দত্ত, ৰুণু বৰুৱা, বাসন্তী বৰুৱা, অলিমুন্নিছা পিয়াৰ প্ৰমুখ্যে কিছুসংখ্যক লেখিকাৰ নাম এই প্ৰসংগত উল্লেখযোগ্য। গল্পকাৰ হিচাপে মামণি ৰয়চম গোস্বামীয়েও আত্ম প্ৰকাশ কৰিলে এই ৰামধেনুৰ পাততে। এই গল্পকাৰসকলৰ ভিতৰত মাত্ৰ কেইগৰাকীমানৰ বাহিৰে অন্যসকলৰ গল্প সম্পৰ্কে বিশেষ চৰ্চা পৰিলক্ষিত হোৱা নাই। সেয়েহে আমাৰ এই আলোচনা-পত্ৰত সামগ্ৰিকভাৱে এই গল্পকাৰসকলৰ গল্পৰ বিচাৰ-বিশ্লেষণ আগবঢ়াবলৈ প্ৰয়াস কৰা হ’ব।

বীজশব্দ : ৰামধেনু যুগ, চুটিগল্প, মহিলা গল্পকাৰ।

০.০.০ অৱতৰণিকা :

যুগান্তকাৰী আলোচনী ‘ৰামধেনু’ৰে অসমীয়া সাহিত্যলৈ আধুনিকতাৰ ধ্বজা বহন কৰি আনিলে। সমগ্ৰ অসমীয়া সাহিত্যতে এই নতুনত্ব বিয়পি পৰিল— চুটিগল্পতে হওক বা কবিতাতে হওক, উপন্যাসতে হওক বা সমালোচনামূলক সাহিত্যতে হওক। পাশ্চাত্য জগতত আলোড়ন সৃষ্টি কৰা বিভিন্ন দৰ্শন, চিন্তা-চৰ্চা বহুল ৰূপত অসমীয়া সাহিত্যলৈ ৰামধেনু যুগে আদৰি আনিলে। এই পশ্চিমীয়া ভাবধাৰা ‘আৱাহন’ৰ পাততো প্ৰকাশ পাইছিল যদিও ‘ৰামধেনু যুগ’ত ই খোপনি পুতি বহিল। জোনাকী যুগৰপৰা প্ৰচলিত হৈ অহা ৰোমাণ্টিক সাহিত্যৰ সৈতে যুদ্ধোত্তৰ যুগৰ সাহিত্যৰ যথেষ্ট পাৰ্থক্য দেখা গ’ল। আদৰ্শ, দৃষ্টিভংগী আৰু প্ৰকাশ-কৌশলৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত এই পাৰ্থক্য স্পষ্ট ৰূপত প্ৰতিভাত হ’ল। ৰোমাণ্টিক সাহিত্যৰ অন্যতম বৈশিষ্ট্য কল্পনা-বিলাসিতাৰ ঠাই ল’লে গভীৰ বাস্তৱবাদে। ধৰ্ম আৰু আধ্যাত্মিকতাৰ সম্পৰ্কে থকা গতানুগতিক বিশ্বাসৰ ভেটি থৰক-

বৰক হ’ল। জীৱনৰ মূল্যবোধৰ পৰিৱৰ্তন ঘটিল। এক নতুন দৃষ্টিৰে ব্যক্তি আৰু সমাজক প্ৰত্যক্ষ কৰাত এই নতুন যুগৰ লেখকসকল ব্ৰতী হৈ পৰিল।

ৰোমাণ্টিকতাৰ অৱসান ঘটোৱাত প্ৰভূত পৰিমাণে অৰিহণা যোগোৱা মহাযুদ্ধৰ ফলস্বৰূপে সমগ্ৰ দেশৰে ৰাজনৈতিক, অৰ্থনৈতিক আৰু সামাজিক অৱস্থাৰ দ্ৰুত পৰিৱৰ্তন ঘটে। তেনেদৰে পৰিৱৰ্তিত হ’ল সাধাৰণ মানুহৰ চিন্তা-ভাবনা আৰু বিশ্বাস। নিত্য নতুন বিজ্ঞানৰ আৱিষ্কাৰে মানুহৰ চকুত চমক লগালে। ধৰ্ম তথা ভগৱানৰ অস্তিত্বৰ প্ৰতি সন্দেহৰ সৃষ্টি হ’ল। এনে দ্ৰুত পৰিৱৰ্তনশীল সমাজৰ বিভিন্ন সমস্যা, ঘটনা, অভিজ্ঞতাৰে পুষ্টি হৈ পৰা ব্যক্তিৰ আশা-আকাংক্ষাৰ বৰ্ণনা কৰিবলৈ এই যুগৰ লেখকসকল আগ্ৰহী হৈ পৰিল। আধুনিক মনোবিজ্ঞানৰ প্ৰভাৱে তেওঁলোকৰ মনত ব্যক্তিৰ বাহ্যিক ৰূপটোতকৈ আভ্যন্তৰীণ ৰূপটোৰ সূক্ষ্ম বিশ্লেষণ কৰিবলৈ তীব্ৰ ইচ্ছাৰ জন্ম দিলে। প্ৰখ্যাত মনস্তত্ত্ববিদ

ফয়দৰ দৰ্শনে তেওঁলোকৰ ওপৰত বিশেষভাৱে দ্ৰিষ্টা কৰিলে। ৰামধেনুৰ যুগত কেইবাগৰাকী মহিলা গল্পকাৰেও নতুন দৃষ্টিভংগী লৈ অসমীয়া গল্পৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনত আত্মপ্ৰকাশ কৰিলে। পৰিৱৰ্তিত জীৱনচৰ্যাৰ সৈতে খাপ খোৱাই তেওঁলোকেও অভিনৱ বিশ্লেষণেৰে গল্প লিখাৰ প্ৰয়াস অব্যাহত ৰাখিলে। মানুহৰ মানসিক জগতখন, বিশেষকৈ নাৰী মনস্তত্ত্বক গল্পৰ বিষয়বস্তু হিচাপে গ্ৰহণ কৰিবলৈ তেওঁলোক আগবাঢ়ি আহিল।

০.০.১ অধ্যয়নৰ উদ্দেশ্য :

ৰামধেনু যুগৰ গল্পসমূহে অসমীয়া সমাজ আৰু সাহিত্য উভয়তে বিশেষভাৱে প্ৰভাৱ পেলাবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছিল। ৰামধেনু যুগৰ গল্পকাৰৰ গল্প সম্পৰ্কে আলোচনা যথেষ্টখিনি হৈছে; কিন্তু সেই অনুপাতে মহিলা গল্পকাৰসকলৰ গল্প সম্পৰ্কীয় চৰ্চা তেনেই কম। কেইগৰাকীমান খ্যাতিসম্পন্ন গল্পকাৰ যেনেঃ স্নেহ দেৱী, মামণি ৰয়চম গোস্বামী বা নিৰুপমা বৰগোহাঞিৰ বাহিৰে অন্যান্য গল্পকাৰসকল, যিসকলে নিজৰ সৃষ্টিৰাজিৰ ৰামধেনুৰ জৰিয়তে সামগ্ৰিকভাৱে অসমীয়া গল্পসাহিত্যলৈ বিশেষ অৱদান আগবঢ়াইছিল— তেওঁলোকৰ গল্প সম্পৰ্কীয় গৱেষণা আলোচনা হোৱাই নাই বুলিয়েই ক’ব পাৰি। নীলিমা শৰ্মা, প্ৰবীণা শইকীয়া, অণিমা দত্তৰ গল্পৰ বিষয়ে ছেগা-চোৰোকাকৈ আলোচনা কৰা হৈছে যদিও ‘ৰামধেনু’ৰ পাতত ভালেসংখ্যক উচ্চ পৰ্যায়ৰ গল্প লিখা ভালেকেইগৰাকী গল্পকাৰ আলোচক-গৱেষক, আলোচনীৰ সম্পাদকৰ দৃষ্টিৰ অগোচৰে ৰৈ গ’ল। তেওঁলোক হ’ল ৰুণু বৰুৱা, বাসন্তী বৰুৱা, আলিমুন্নিছা পিয়াৰ। আমাৰ এই আলোচনা-পত্ৰত নীলিমা শৰ্মা, প্ৰবীণা শইকীয়াকৈ মুখ্য কৰি এইসকল গল্পকাৰৰ গল্পৰ বিষয়ে বিচাৰ-বিশ্লেষণ কৰিবলৈ প্ৰয়াস কৰা হৈছে।

০.০.২ অধ্যয়নৰ পৰিসৰ আৰু পদ্ধতি :

ৰামধেনুৰ যুগৰ মহিলা গল্পকাৰ— এই বিষয়টো বিস্তৃত আৰু গভীৰ। এই সম্পৰ্কে আলোচনাৰ থল আছে, গৱেষণাৰ বাবে পৰ্যাপ্ত সমল আছে; কিন্তু এখন ক্ষুদ্ৰ পৰিসৰৰ আলোচনা-পত্ৰত ইয়াৰ সামগ্ৰিক আলোচনা সম্ভৱপৰ নহয়। সেয়েহে এই আলোচনা-পত্ৰত মূলতঃ ‘ৰামধেনু’ আলোচনীত প্ৰকাশিত গল্পবোৰক সামৰিবৰ চেষ্টা কৰা হৈছে। এই আলোচনা-পত্ৰৰ ৰচনাইশৈলীত বৰ্ণনাত্মক আৰু বিশ্লেষণাত্মক পদ্ধতি প্ৰয়োগ কৰা হৈছে।

অসমীয়া লেখিকাসকলো গল্প-সাহিত্যৰ এই গৌৰৱোজ্জ্বল অধ্যায়ৰ অংশীদাৰ নোহোৱাকৈ নাথাকিল। পঞ্চম বছৰৰ সপ্তম সংখ্যা (১৯৫২)ৰ ‘ৰামধেনু’ত প্ৰকাশিত হৈছিল কমলিনী বৰবৰাৰ ‘টিনপাত’ গল্পটো। সেই বছৰেই বীণা দেৱী, নীলিমা দেৱী, প্ৰীতি ভট্টাচাৰ্যৰ গল্পও ৰামধেনুত প্ৰকাশ হয়। ষষ্ঠ বছৰৰ ‘ৰামধেনু’ত স্নেহ দেৱীৰ গল্প ‘জোৱাৰৰ পিছত’ প্ৰকাশিত হৈছিল। ‘অসময়ৰ অভিমান’ নামেৰে নিৰ্মলপ্ৰভা বৰদলৈৰো এটা গল্প আছে ‘ৰামধেনু’ (সপ্তম বছৰ, চতুৰ্থ সংখ্যা, ১৯৫৫)ত। নিৰুপমা বৰগোহাঞিয়ে ‘নীলিমা দেৱী’ ছদ্মনাম লৈও ৰামধেনুত গল্প লিখিছিল। বিয়াৰ আগলৈকে তেওঁ আছিল নিৰুপমা তামুলী। ছদ্মা দেৱী, দীপালী বৰা, হিৰণ্যময়ী দেৱী, নীলিমা বৰকাকতী আৰু ৰেণু দেৱী নামত এটিকৈ গল্প পোৱা যায়। কমলিনী বৰবৰাই তিনিটা গল্প লিখিছিল ‘ৰামধেনু’ৰ পাতত। তেঁৱেই আছিল ‘ৰামধেনু’ৰ প্ৰথমগৰাকী মহিলা গল্পকাৰ। এই গল্পকাৰসকলৰ ভিতৰত ৰামধেনু যুগত বিশেষ খ্যাতি লাভ কৰিবলৈ সমৰ্থ হোৱা গল্পকাৰকেইগৰাকী স্নেহ দেৱী, নিৰুপমা বৰগোহাঞি আৰু মামণি ৰয়চম গোস্বামী। মামণি ৰয়চম গোস্বামীৰ মাত্ৰ এটা গল্প ‘বীজাণু’ ‘ৰামধেনু’ আলোচনীত প্ৰকাশ হৈছিল। এইকেইগৰাকীৰ উপৰি আন কেইবাগৰাকী গল্পকাৰৰ গল্প আছিল উচ্চমানবিশিষ্ট। তেওঁলোকৰ গল্পৰ বিষয়েও এই আলোচনা-পত্ৰত বিশ্লেষণ কৰা হৈছে। প্ৰবীণা শইকীয়া, অণিমা দত্ত, বাসন্তী বৰুৱা, ৰুণু দেৱী আৰু অলিমুন্নিছা পিয়াৰৰ গল্পৰ আলোচনা ইয়াত দাঙি ধৰা হৈছে। এই আলোচনা-পত্ৰত সন্নিৱিষ্ট গল্পসমূহ বীৰেন্দ্ৰ কুমাৰ ভট্টাচাৰ্যৰদ্বাৰা সম্পাদিত (১৯৫২ খ্ৰীষ্টাব্দৰ মে’ মাহৰপৰা ১৯৬৩ খ্ৰীষ্টাব্দৰ মে’ মাহলৈকে প্ৰকাশিত) ৰামধেনুৰপৰা অনা হৈছে।

১.০.০ বিষয়ৰ পৰিচয় :

১৯৯২ চনত শতবৰ্ষ সম্পূৰ্ণ কৰা অসমীয়া চুটিগল্পৰ ইতিহাসে অসমীয়া সাহিত্যৰ বুৰঞ্জীত এক চমকপ্ৰদ অধ্যায় ৰচনা কৰিছে। শতাব্দী অতিক্ৰম কৰা অসমীয়া চুটিগল্পৰ ক্ৰমবিকাশৰ স্তৰসমূহ স্বকীয় বৈশিষ্ট্য আৰু অভিনৱত্বৰে সমুজ্জ্বল। এই সুদীৰ্ঘ যাত্ৰাপথত ভিন্ন যুগৰ ভিন্ন লেখকে সেই এছোৱা বিশেষ সময়ক নিজৰ অনুভৱ, অভিজ্ঞতাৰে বৰ্ণিত কৰি তুলিছে।

‘ৰামধেনু যুগ’ অসমীয়া গল্প সাহিত্যৰ স্বৰ্ণময় যুগ। শতাধিক গল্পকাৰৰ অপূৰ্ব সৃজনী প্ৰতিভাৰে জিলিকি উঠা এই

সময়ছোৱাৰ অসমীয়া চুটিগল্পই বিশ্বসাহিত্যৰ যিকোনো ভাষাৰ চুটিগল্পৰ সৈতে প্ৰতিদ্বন্দ্বিতা কৰিব পৰাকৈ ঐশ্বৰ্য্যশালী হৈ পৰিল। মহিলা গল্পকাৰসকলো পিছ পৰি নাথাকিল এই যাত্ৰাত। সামাজিক দায়িত্ববোধ, গভীৰ বিশ্লেষণ ক্ষমতা, স্বকীয় উদ্ভাৱনী শক্তি, নাৰী মনস্তত্ত্বৰ স্বাভাৱিক জ্ঞানেৰে সমৃদ্ধ হৈ তেওঁলোকেও অবিস্মৰণীয় অৱদান আগবঢ়াই গৈছে।

স্নেহ দেৱীৰ গল্প :

ভাবিলে আচৰিত নহৈ নোৱাৰি যে স্নেহ দেৱীয়ে কোনো ধৰণৰ আনুষ্ঠানিক উচ্চ শিক্ষা গ্ৰহণ নকৰাকৈ, ঘৰুৱা জীৱনৰ চাৰিসীমাৰ গতানুগতিক পৰিৱেশৰ মাজতে সৃষ্টি কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছিল সৰ্বসাধাৰণ মানুহৰ মনৰ অসাধাৰণ বিশ্লেষণৰ গল্পৰূপ। এই বিশ্লেষণত আছিল এগৰাকী সুদক্ষ মনস্তত্ত্ববিদৰ নৈপুণ্য আৰু এক সাৰ্বজনীন আৱেদন।

‘পাতমুগী’ গল্পৰ জৰিয়তে জোনাকী যুগতে মানুহৰ অৱচেতন মনৰ ভিতৰুৱা সন্তোষ আৱিষ্কাৰ কৰাৰ যি প্ৰচেষ্টা লক্ষ্মীনাথ বেজবৰুৱাই আৰম্ভ কৰি থৈ গৈছিল, সেই প্ৰচেষ্টাক এটা সুকীয়া সাৰ্থক ৰূপ স্নেহ দেৱীয়ে ‘ৰামধেনু যুগ’ত তেওঁৰ গল্পবোৰৰ জৰিয়তে প্ৰদান কৰিলে। ব্যক্তিগতভাৱে তেখেত আকৃষ্ট হৈছিল ‘আৱাহন যুগ’ৰ গল্পকাৰ হালিৰাম ডেকাৰ প্ৰতি আৰু এই আগ্ৰহেই স্নেহ দেৱীক গল্প লিখিবলৈ উৎসাহী কৰি তুলিছিল। তদুপৰি বাংলা সাহিত্যৰ আদৰ্শও তেখেতৰ সন্মুখত আছিল।

“মোৰ গল্পত যিবিলাক নাৰী চৰিত্ৰৰ কথা লেখোঁ তেওঁবিলাক মোৰ চিনাকি চৰিত্ৰ। মই সততে তেওঁলোকক লগ পাইছিলোঁ। তেওঁবিলাকক মই বুজিছিলোঁ আৰু তেওঁবিলাকেও নিজৰ সুখ-দুখৰ কথা অকপটে মোক জনাইছিল। তেওঁবিলাক প্ৰধানকৈ গাঁৱৰ তিৰোতা নাইবা গাঁৱৰ ওচৰৰ সৰু চহৰৰ মধ্যবিত্ত বা নিম্নবিত্তৰ ঘৰৰ।”

একেষাৰেই ক’ব পাৰি স্নেহ দেৱীৰ গল্প নাৰীকেন্দ্ৰিক। আমাৰ পৰিচিত দৈনন্দিন জীৱনত লগ পাই থকা সাধাৰণ নাৰী চৰিত্ৰবোৰক লৈয়েই এইগৰাকী গল্পকাৰৰ গল্পবোৰ আৱৰ্জিত হৈছে। গল্পবোৰ পঢ়ি উঠাৰ পিছতহে পাঠকে উপলব্ধি কৰে যে অতি চিনাকি এই চৰিত্ৰবোৰৰো একো একোটা অচিনাকি কাহিনী আছে। এই প্ৰসংগত মন কৰিবলগীয়া যে মনৰ ভিতৰুৱা খবৰ দাঙি ধৰোঁতে স্নেহ দেৱীয়ে ক’তো বৰ্ণনাৰ আতিশয্য কৰা নাই; সুস্থ সামাজিক বাতাবৰণত বিশৃংখলতাৰ সৃষ্টি কৰিব

পৰা অবাধ্য, তীব্ৰ আকাংক্ষা বা কাৰ্যকলাপৰপৰাও তেওঁৰ গল্পৰ চৰিত্ৰবোৰ আঁৰত থাকে। মাৰ্জিত আৰু পৰিশীলিত বাক্যৰীতিৰ মাজেৰে জীৱনত এক স্বাভাৱিক মাত্ৰা প্ৰদান কৰিবলৈ গল্পকাৰ সক্ষম হৈছে। স্ত্ৰী-পুৰুষৰ পৰস্পৰৰ প্ৰতি থকা আকৰ্ষণ, প্ৰেম-মৰম-ভালপোৱাৰ সন্তোষ তেওঁৰ গল্পবোৰত আছে; কিন্তু সেইবুলি এই চৰিত্ৰবোৰ জৈৱিক কামনাৰ প্ৰতিভূ হৈ পৰা নাই। বিভিন্ন নাৰী চৰিত্ৰৰ বিচিত্ৰ নাৰী হৃদয়ৰ চিত্ৰ অংকন কৰাত স্নেহ দেৱী সিদ্ধহস্ত। চিনাকি পৰিৱেশ, চৰিত্ৰবোৰেই তেওঁ গল্প লিখিছে। স্নেহ দেৱীৰ অভিজ্ঞতা বহুধা-বিস্তৃত নহয়।

‘ৰামধেনু’ আলোচনীত গল্পকাৰ হিচাপে আত্মপ্ৰকাশ কৰা স্নেহ দেৱীৰ চিন্তা-চৰ্চা, ধ্যান-ধাৰণা প্ৰাক্ ৰামধেনু কালতেই পূৰ্ণ হৈছিল। তেখেতৰ গল্পবোৰত নাৰী স্বাধীনতাৰ বাণী ঘোষিত হৈছে যদিও সমাজৰ সনাতন প্ৰাচীন মূল্যবোধ, সংস্কাৰধৰ্মিতাক সম্পূৰ্ণৰূপে আওকাণ কৰিব পৰা নাই। নাৰী মুক্তি তেখেতে বিচাৰে যদিও তাত উগ্ৰ নাৰীবাদী চিন্তা, উচ্ছৃংখলতাৰ অৱকাশ নাই। মাৰ্জিত ৰুচিৰ এখন সুন্দৰ সমাজ গঢ়িবৰ বাবে প্ৰয়োজনীয় সু-সংগত পৰিৱেশ সৃষ্টি কৰাৰ আগ্ৰহ স্নেহ দেৱীৰ আছে।

‘ৰামধেনু’ত প্ৰকাশিত ‘সূচনা’ স্নেহ দেৱীৰ এটি সাৰ্থক আৰু জনপ্ৰিয় গল্প। ‘ৰামধেনু’ৰে পতা তেতিয়াৰ গল্প প্ৰতিযোগিতাত এইটো গল্প পুৰস্কৃত হৈছিল। এক জটিল মানসিক সংঘাতৰ বাখ্যা কৰিবলৈ গল্পকাৰে ইয়াত চেষ্টা কৰিছে। নাৰী চৰিত্ৰৰ বিশ্লেষণ স্নেহ দেৱীৰ ভালেমান গল্পৰ বিষয়বস্তু। নাৰী হৃদয়ক সততে আলোড়িত কৰা প্ৰেম-ঈৰ্ষ্যা-বিদ্বেষৰ বাস্তৱ চিত্ৰ আঁকিবলৈ লেখিকাই মনস্তাত্ত্বিক বিশ্লেষণৰ আশ্ৰয় লৈছে। ‘সূচনা’ গল্পটোৱে নাৰীৰ মনৰ বহস্যময়তাৰ এখন গোপন দ্বাৰ মুকলি কৰিছে। পাঁচোটো সন্তানৰ মাতৃ সূচনাৰ মনৰ ওপৰত পৰা এটা সপোনৰ প্ৰভাৱৰ স্বীকাৰোক্তিৰেই গল্পটোৰ বিষয়বস্তু।

নাৰীৰ মনৰ আন এখন জগতৰ সন্তোষ দিছে তেওঁৰ ‘প্ৰেৰণাৰ সমাধি’ গল্পটোৰ মাজেৰে। এই গল্পটোৰ ‘সুমিত্ৰা’ এটা সাৰ্থক চৰিত্ৰ। সুমিত্ৰাৰ মনোজগতখনৰ চিত্ৰ অংকনত লেখিকা সফল হৈছে। গল্পটোৰ আৰম্ভণিতে সৃষ্টি হোৱা অনুসন্ধিৎসা শেষলৈকে অব্যাহত আছে। এই মাথোন কেন্দ্ৰীয়ভাৱে ক্ৰিয়া কৰা গল্পটোৰ মূল চৰিত্ৰ এটাই— সুমিত্ৰা। কাব্যিক, কোমল

অনুভূতিপূৰ্ণ আবেগ সঞ্চৰী ভাষাৰ সু-সমন্বয়ে গল্পটি সুখপাঠ্য কৰি তুলিছে। স্নেহ দেৱীৰ এটি উল্লেখযোগ্য গল্প হৈছে ‘বৰমা’। বৰমাৰূপী নাৰীগৰাকীৰ চৰিত্ৰ চিত্ৰণ, গল্পটোৰ কাহিনী ৰূপায়ণৰ লগতে বৰমাৰ মানসিক সংঘাত সৃষ্টি কৰাত গল্পকাৰ সফল হৈছে।

এখন সুখী-সমৃদ্ধিশালী ঘৰৰ গৃহিণী মৃণালিনীয়ে নিজৰ স্বামী আৰু পুত্ৰ-কন্যাৰ সৈতে শান্তিৰে দিন অতিবাহিত কৰি আহি জীৱনৰ শেষ বয়সত গম পালে যে তেওঁৰ স্বামীয়ে তেওঁলোকৰ পামত অন্য এগৰাকীক পত্নীৰ স্বীকৃতি দি ৰাখিছে। এই দ্বিতীয় পত্নীগৰাকী আছিল এসময়ত তেওঁলোকৰ ঘৰতে কাম কৰি পেট পূৰ্ত্তোৱা ছোৱালী হৰিমতী। বহু বছৰৰ আগতেই মৃণালিনীয়ে তেওঁৰ স্বামীৰ সৈতে হৰিমতীৰ সম্পৰ্কৰ বিষয়ে গম পাইছিল যদিও স্বামীৰ ভুৱা আশ্বাসত তেওঁ আশ্বস্ত হৈছিল। বহু দিনৰ মূৰত আকৌ এবাৰ হৰিমতীৰ প্ৰসংগই তেওঁৰ জীৱনৰ সকলো সুখ-শান্তিকঢ়ি নিলে। তেওঁ মানসিকভাৱে ক্ৰমে অসুস্থ হৈ পৰিল। মানুহৰ ভুল-ভ্ৰান্তি কেতিয়াবা অজানিতে হয়েই বুলি বহুবাৰ নিজৰ মনক প্ৰবোধ দিয়ে মৃণালিনীয়ে দ্বিতীয়বাৰ তেওঁৰ স্বামীক ক্ষমা কৰিব নোৱাৰিলে। মানসিক অশান্তিত ভুগি অৱশেষত তেওঁৰ মগজুৰ বিকৃতি ঘটিল। ‘বৰমা’ৰূপী মৃণালিনীৰ অন্তৰ্দ্বন্দ্বৰ স্বৰূপ লেখিকাই অতি প্ৰত্যয়জনক ৰূপত দাঙি ধৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে। ‘বন্ধু তুমি মোৰ, তুমি শত্ৰু’ গল্পটোৰ বিষয়বস্তু ‘আৰাহন যুগ’ৰ সমধৰ্মী। ইয়াত লেখিকাই বিধৱা বিবাহৰ সমৰ্থনত কাহিনীভাগ গঢ়ি তুলিছে।

পুৰুষৰ চলনা, প্ৰতাৰণাৰ কাহিনীৰে স্নেহ দেৱীৰ কেইবাটাও গল্প মুখৰিত। দুৰ্ভাগীয়া স্বামী পৰিত্যক্তা নাৰীৰ জীৱনৰ কাৰুণ্যৰে পৰিপূৰ্ণ গল্প যিদৰে আছে সেইদৰে স্বামী বা প্ৰেমিকৰদ্বাৰা প্ৰতাৰিত হোৱাৰ পিছতো জীৱনযুঁজত অকলশৰেই দৃঢ়ভাৱেই থিয় হ’ব পৰা সাহসী নাৰীৰ কাহিনীও স্নেহ দেৱীৰ গল্পত আছে। ‘কৰুণ উলাহ’ গল্পৰ সৰযু তেনে এগৰাকী সাহসী নাৰী। ‘জোৱাৰৰ পিছত’ গল্পৰ নায়িকা বিশালাক্ষীয়েও স্বামীয়ে পৰিত্যাগ কৰাৰ পিছত অভিনেত্ৰী হিচাপে জীৱন অতিবাহিত কৰিছে। ‘পৰিপূৰক’ গল্পত সন্তান সুমিত্ৰাৰ মনোকষ্টৰ ইংগিতধৰ্মী বৰ্ণনা আছে। সেইদৰে ‘জননী’ পুত্ৰৰদ্বাৰা অনাদৃত মাতৃৰ মৰ্মব্যথাৰ স্বৰূপ গল্পকাৰে প্ৰত্যয়জনকভাৱে ফুটাই তুলিছে। ‘নীৰৰ সিদ্ধান্ত’ গল্পত সম্পৰ্কীয় দেওৰেকৰ হাতত লাঞ্ছিতা হোৱা বিধৱা মালতীক

আশ্ৰয় দিছে লেডী ডাক্তৰ কুমাৰী আশালতাই। নতুন দিনৰ পোহৰেৰে জ্যোতিষ্মান চৰিত্ৰ ড° আশালতাৰ সবল অস্তিত্ব স্নেহ দেৱীৰ কেইবাটাও গল্পত পোৱা যায়।

বিচিত্ৰ নাৰী মানসিকতাৰ সাৰ্থক প্ৰতিফলন ঘটিছে স্নেহ দেৱীৰ গল্পসমূহত। ‘বিষক্ৰিয়া’ গল্পটোও তাৰ ব্যতিক্ৰম নহয়। এই গল্পটোত প্ৰকাশ পোৱা ইংগিতধৰ্মিতা অসমীয়া গল্পৰ পাঠকৰ বাবে এক নতুন স্বাদ। সাম্প্ৰতিক সাহিত্যৰ চৰ্চিত বিষয় তৃতীয় লিংগ, সমকামী ধ্যান-ধাৰণাৰে সম্পৃক্ত এই গল্পটো স্নেহ দেৱীয়ে ‘ৰামধেনু যুগ’তেই লিখিছিল। সাধাৰণ দৃষ্টিত এজনী মৰমিয়াল, সাদৰী বিবাহিতা মহিলাৰ অশুভ প্ৰভাৱে কিদৰে অন্য এজনী গাভৰু ছোৱালীৰ জীৱনলৈ দুৰ্যোগ নমাই আনিছে তাৰেই ইংগিত আছে ‘বিষক্ৰিয়া’ গল্পটোত।

এইদৰেই স্নেহ দেৱীয়ে তেখেতৰ গল্পবোৰৰ মাজেৰে বিভিন্ন বয়সৰ বিচিত্ৰ নাৰী মানসিকতাৰ সাৰ্থক আৰু প্ৰত্যয়জনক চিত্ৰণ কৰিছে। কেতিয়াবা সেই চৰিত্ৰ ৰূপায়ণ কৰিছে পোন্ধৰ বছৰীয়া কিশোৰীয়ে মাকৰ অধঃপতন দেখি চিন্তিত হয়, ক্ৰমান্বয়ে অকলশৰীয়া হৈ পৰা পিতৃৰ দুখৰ বোজা পাতলাবলৈ যত্ন কৰে আৰু শেষত লোক লজ্জাৰপৰা হাত সাৰিবলৈ সেইগৰাকী নিজৰ জন্মদাত্ৰী মাতৃক মাহীমাক বুলিহে চিনাকি দিবলৈ আৰম্ভ কৰে। আকৌ সুদৃশ্য ঘৰ, সুন্দৰ চেহেৰাৰ মানুহবোৰেই বৰ সুখী, ভাল বুলি ভাবি থকা প্ৰভাৱাণীৰ মোহভংগ হ’বলৈ বেছি সময় নালাগে। তাইৰ উপলব্ধি হয় যে চিকচিকীয়া বস্তু মাত্ৰেই সোণ নহয়। সেইদৰে স্বামীৰ হাতৰপৰাই নিজৰ মান-সন্মান বচাবলৈ দূৰ সম্পৰ্কীয় দেওৰেকৰ লগত পলাই আহি নিঃস্ব ৰিক্ত জীৱন কটোৱা ফুলিবাইৰ কাহিনীৰ কাৰুণ্যয়ো পাঠকৰ অন্তৰ স্পৰ্শ কৰি যায়। আকৌ কেইবাটাও গল্পৰ নায়িকাৰ চৰিত্ৰ ৰূপায়ণ কৰিছে দুশ্চৰিত্ৰ ভিনিহিয়েকৰ কৰাল গ্ৰাসত পৰি উদ্ধাৰৰ বাট বিচৰা খুলশালী একোজনীয়ে। এই চৰিত্ৰবোৰ কেতিয়াবা পৰিস্থিতিক নিজৰ বশলৈ, নিয়ন্ত্ৰণলৈ আনিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে আৰু কেতিয়াবা নিজেই পৰিৱেশৰ দাসত্ব স্বীকাৰ কৰি লৈছে।

নিৰুপমা বৰগোহাঞি :

‘ৰামধেনু যুগ’তে জনপ্ৰিয় হৈ পৰা গল্পকাৰ নিৰুপমা বৰগোহাঞিয়ে মধ্যবিত্ত নাৰীৰ মৰ্মবেদনাক তেওঁৰ গল্পত সঠিক ৰূপত উপস্থাপন কৰিছে। এনে বিষয়বস্তুৰে গঢ় লৈ উঠা কেইটামান গল্প ৰামধেনুত প্ৰকাশিত হৈছে। তেওঁৰ গল্পত



নাৰী মনৰ স্পষ্ট আৰু মুক্ত প্ৰকাশৰ প্ৰচেষ্টা দেখিবলৈ পোৱা যায়। অৱশ্যে কেৱল নাৰীকেন্দ্ৰিক গল্পৰ উপৰি এইগৰাকী লেখিকাৰ গল্পত সমাজৰ মধ্যবিত্ত শ্ৰেণীটোৰ বিভিন্ন প্ৰকাৰৰ মানুহৰ জীৱন যাত্ৰা তথা চাৰিত্ৰিক বিশিষ্টতাও বাস্তৱ ৰূপত চিত্ৰিত হৈছে। “তদুপৰি জীৱনৰ কিছুমান সাধাৰণ ঘটনাৰ মাজতে বিশিষ্টতা বিচাৰৰ প্ৰয়াস নিৰূপমা বৰগোহাঞিৰ কেইটামান গল্পত চকু পৰে”।^{১২}

নিৰূপমা বৰগোহাঞিৰ গল্পত লেখিকাৰ বক্তব্য স্পষ্ট ৰূপত প্ৰকাশ পোৱাটো পৰিলক্ষিত হয়। তেওঁৰ গল্পত সচৰাচৰ আদৰ্শকেন্দ্ৰিক বক্তব্য ইমানেই স্পষ্ট হৈ উঠে যে কেতিয়াবা গল্পই তাৰ শিল্পসৌন্দৰ্য হেৰুৱাই পেলায় আৰু বক্তব্য প্ৰচাৰধৰ্মী হৈ পৰে। কিছুসংখ্যক গল্পৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত বৰ্ণনাৰ বাহুল্যও পৰিলক্ষিত হয়। ইংৰাজী কবি আৰু কবিতাৰ পংক্তিৰ উল্লেখ ভালেমান গল্পত আছে, তেনেকৈয়ে আছে ৰবীন্দ্ৰনাথ ঠাকুৰৰ কবিতাৰ টুকুৰাৰ উল্লেখ।

আধুনিক নাৰীৰ মানসিকতাৰ দ্বন্দ্ব নিৰূপমা বৰগোহাঞিৰ উদ্ঘাটন কৰিছে। ‘অপমৃত্যু’ গল্পটোৰ জৰিয়তে। ইয়াত লেখিকাই নিৰ্মালী নামৰ এটি নাৰী চৰিত্ৰৰ সৃষ্টি কৰিছে— যিগৰাকী প্ৰতিভাসম্পন্ন হোৱা সত্ত্বেও নিজৰ মতত নিচেই সাধাৰণ মানুহ এজনৰ পত্নী হৈ চৰম হতাশ আৰু ব্যৰ্থতা আৰু অভাৱেৰে পূৰ্ণ সংসাৰ চলাবলৈ বাধ্য হৈছে। সাহিত্য, সমাজনীতি আৰু ৰাজনীতিত দখল থকা নিৰ্মালী হ’বলগীয়া হ’লগৈ এজনী সাধাৰণ গৃহিণী। অভাৱৰ সংসাৰখনত নিৰ্মালীয়ে লাভ কৰিছিল কেৱল এই আশীৰ্বাদ— “God bless the happy pair with a child every year”, কলেজীয়া জীৱনত প্ৰেমৰ সম্পৰ্ক থকা প্ৰকাশক নিৰ্মালীয়ে সময়ত বিবাহৰ জৰিয়তে চিৰদিনৰ বাবে নিজৰ কৰি ল’ব নোৱাৰিলে। নিজৰ পৰিয়ালৰ ওচৰত নিৰ্মালীয়ে প্ৰতিবাদ কৰিব নোৱাৰিলে। কলেজত অন্য ছোৱালীৰ মনৰ দ্বিধা আৰু ভয় দেখি “Hesitation, thy name is middle class”— বুলি বিদ্ৰূপ কৰা নিৰ্মালীয়ে নিজৰ জীৱনত তাকেই আকৌ এবাৰ ভালকৈ প্ৰমাণ কৰিলে। কলেজীয়া জীৱনত প্ৰকাশৰ সৈতে কল্পনা কৰা অগতানুগতিক জীৱন-যাত্ৰাৰ কথা ভাবি ৰোমাঞ্চিত হৈ উঠা নিৰ্মালী প্ৰকৃত সময়ত কিন্তু থমকি ৰ’ল। যি মনোবল লৈ এদিন তেওঁ মনে মনে গৰ্ব কৰিছিল যে পুৰণি সকলো কু-সংস্কাৰ ভাঙি-ছিঙি নতুন পথত নিজৰ যুগ্ম জীৱন আৰম্ভ কৰিব,

সেই বৈপ্লৱিক মনোবৃত্তি তেতিয়া ক’ৰবাত লুকাই গ’ল। আৱৰ্জনাৰে ভৰা হ’লেও সহজ পথ এৰি আন বাট লোৱাৰ বিষয়ে সেই সময়ত নিৰ্মালীয়ে ভাবিবই নোৱাৰিলে। নতুন সংসাৰৰ সকলো ক্ষেত্ৰতেই দেখিবলৈ পোৱা দৈন্যই নিৰ্মালীৰ জীৱন ৰিক্ত কৰি তুলিলে। তেওঁ নিজৰ ওপৰতেই ভীষণ প্ৰতিশোধ ল’লে, নিজৰ অকাল মৃত্যুৰ দণ্ডাজ্ঞাত চহী কৰাৰ বাবে, প্ৰকাশক জীৱনত দিয়া আঘাতৰ বাবে নিৰ্মালীয়ে প্ৰতিজ্ঞা কৰিলে তেওঁ নিজৰ প্ৰতিভা আৰু ব্যক্তিত্বক অকাতৰে বলিদান দিব আৰু এৰি থৈ অহা তেওঁৰ কলেজীয়া জীৱনৰ প্ৰত্যেক আপোনজনৰপৰা স্বেচ্ছাই নিৰ্বাসন ল’ব।

নাৰী জীৱনৰ ব্যথা ফুটি উঠা এইগৰাকী লেখিকাৰ আন দুটা গল্প হৈছে— ‘টেকীৰ সৰগ’ আৰু ‘পেহীদেউ’। এই দুয়োটা গল্পতে বিশেষ পঢ়া-শুনা নথকা ঘৰৰ কাম কাজত অতি নিপুণ দুজনী ছোৱালীৰ মৰ্মব্যথা প্ৰকাশ পাইছে। মাক নাইকিয়া এই শ্ৰেণীৰ ছোৱালীবোৰৰ পিতৃগৃহত সময় পাৰ হয় দাদা-বৌৱেক আৰু ভতিজাইঁতৰ আলপৈচান ধৰাত। বিয়াৰ পিছৰ পৰ্যায়তো পতিগৃহত সেই একেই আমনিকৰ ঘৰৰ কাম-কাজ, আনৰ আলপৈচান ধৰাতেই এই নতুন জীৱনটো ক্ৰমে তেনেই গতানুগতিক আৰু বিৰক্ত হৈ পৰে। পিতৃগৃহৰ অৱহেলিত এওঁলোক পতিগৃহতো একেই অৱহেলাৰে পাত্ৰী হয়গৈ।

নিৰূপমা বৰগোহাঞিৰ কিছুসংখ্যক গল্পৰ আন এটা চকুত পৰা বৈশিষ্ট্য হ’ল যে গল্পৰ কাহিনীয়ে চিঠিৰ মাজেৰে আত্মপ্ৰকাশ কৰে। ‘অপমৃত্যু’, ‘টেকীৰ সৰগ’, ‘পেহীদেউ’ আদি গল্পৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত এইটো বৈশিষ্ট্য পৰিলক্ষিত হোৱা দেখা যায়।

‘ৰামধেনু’ত প্ৰকাশিত এইগৰাকী লেখিকাৰ আন এটি গল্প ‘অযোগ্যতা’ৰ কাহিনীটোকে আকৌ পৰৱৰ্তী সংখ্যাত ‘জীৱন জীয়াই থাকে’ নামেৰে দ্বিতীয় খণ্ড হিচাপে লিখা হৈছে। এইটোও নাৰীৰ দৈনন্দিন জীৱনৰ সাংসাৰিক সমস্যাৰ ওপৰত ভিত্তি কৰি লিখা গল্প। নিৰ্বিকাৰ স্বামী, এজাক ল’ৰা-ছোৱালীৰে সংসাৰৰ জ্বালা-যন্ত্ৰণাত অস্থিৰ হৈ পৰা ৰুগ্মা বিনুক নতুন এখন ঠাইলৈ গৈ সহজ হোৱাত সহায় কৰিবলৈ গৈছিল ভনীয়েক ৰাণু। বায়েকক কিছু উপশম দিয়াৰ মানসেৰে কেইদিনমানৰ বাবে সহায়ৰ হাত আগবঢ়োৱা ৰাণুৱে কামৰ ব্যস্ততাৰ মাজতো প্ৰায়েই নিজৰ অতীতৰ কথা মনত পেলায়। বিনুৰেই দেওৰেক সুনীলৰ লগত কলিকতাত পঢ়ি থকা অৱস্থাত ৰাণুৰ এক

আন্তৰিক সম্পৰ্ক গঢ় লৈ উঠিছিল যদিও পাছত তাইৰ অনিচ্ছাত সেই সম্পৰ্কৰ সিমানতে ইতি পৰে। ঘটনাক্ৰমে ৰাণুৰ জীৱনলৈ আকৌ এবাৰ আহে সুনীল। বায়েকৰ ঘৰত থাকোঁতেই তালৈ সুনীলৰো আগমন ঘটে। আকৌ এবাৰ ৰাণুৰ স্বাভাৱিক জীৱন যাত্ৰাত আউল লাগি যায়। সুনীলে আগবঢ়োৱা নতুন প্ৰস্তাৱত ৰাণু সুখী হয়। গল্পটোৰ শেষত নিজেজ বিনুৰ মুখতো ইচ্ছা-আশা-হেঁপাহৰ আভাস দিয়া হৈছে।

নিৰুপমা বৰগোহাঞিৰ ৰচনাৰ বিষয়বস্তু নাৰীকেন্দ্ৰিক আৰু নাৰীমুক্তিৰ প্ৰয়াসী যদিও এই নাৰীবাদ একাকাৰ হৈ পৰিছে বহুল মানৱতাবোধৰ মাজত। প্ৰকৃততে মানৱতাৰ ঘোষণাহে তেওঁৰ গল্পৰ উদ্দেশ্য। লেখিকাই নিজেই কৈ থৈছে— “অৰ্ধনাৰীসকলৰ অংগ ছেদন কৰি পুৰুষ আৰু নাৰীক ভাগ কৰি চাবলৈ মোৰ সমূলি প্ৰবৃত্তি নহয়। বহুত দিন আগতে এখন বঙালী চিনেমা ‘কাৰগিলৰ লড়াই’ত শুনা এই কথাফাঁকিয়ে মোৰ বাবে ধ্ৰুৱ সত্য— ‘তুমি দেখো নাৰী পুৰুষ; আমি দেখি শুধুই মানুহ’; কিন্তু কি কৰিম, এতিয়া প্ৰচলিত আমাৰ সামন্ত্যুগীয় সমাজ-ব্যৱস্থাই যে মোকো মাজে মাজে নাৰী-পুৰুষক বেলেগ বেলেগকৈ চাবলৈ বাধ্য কৰায়।” (ব্যক্তিগত সাক্ষাৎকাৰ)।

— লেখিকাৰ এই নাৰীবাদ পুৰুষ বিদ্বেষী নহয়, বৰঞ্চ নাৰীমুক্তিৰ যুঁজত তেওঁ পুৰুষক সহযাত্ৰী হিচাপে গণ্য কৰে। সমাজৰ দুৰ্বল অৱস্থালিত শ্ৰেণীটোৰ প্ৰতিনিধি হিচাপে নাৰীক লৈ তেওঁলোকৰ উদ্ধাৰৰ হকে এইগৰাকী মানৱতাবাদী লেখিকাই কলম তুলি লৈছে।

নীলিমা শৰ্মা :

মানৱীয় অনুভূতিক হৃদয়স্পৰ্শী প্ৰকাশেৰে গল্পত উপস্থাপন কৰা এগৰাকী বিশিষ্ট গল্পকাৰ নীলিমা শৰ্মাৰ আত্মপ্ৰকাশ ‘ৰামধেনু’ৰ পাততেই ঘটিছে। নীলিমা শৰ্মাৰ গল্পৰ আৰম্ভণিৰ আকস্মিকতা, কাহিনীৰ উৎকণ্ঠা আৰু সামৰণিৰ নাটকীয়তাই তেওঁৰ গল্পক সফল ৰূপত প্ৰতিষ্ঠা কৰিছে। নাৰী চৰিত্ৰৰ সূক্ষ্ম মনস্তাত্ত্বিক বিশ্লেষণৰ ক্ষেত্ৰতো এইগৰাকী গল্পকাৰে বিশেষ দক্ষতাৰ পৰিচয় দিছে।

নীলিমা শৰ্মাৰ ৰামধেনুত প্ৰকাশিত এটি সুখপাঠ্য গল্প ‘অন্যসূতি’। ইয়াত এজনী ছোৱালী মিনুৰ বয়ঃসন্ধিৰ সময়ছোৱা, তাৰ ফলস্বৰূপে তাইৰ জীৱনলৈ অহা পৰিৱৰ্তন আৰু এক অভাৱনীয় তথা অপ্ৰত্যাশিত ঘটনাক্ৰমে স্কুলীয়া বান্ধৱী জবাৰ

এসময়ৰ প্ৰেমাস্পদ সুনীল ভাগৱতীৰ বাগদত্তা হ’বলগীয়া হোৱা ঘটনাৰ ৰুদ্ধশ্বাস চেতনাক মনস্তাত্ত্বিক চিন্তাধাৰাৰে বিশ্লেষণ কৰা হৈছে। অন্য এটি গল্প ‘ওৰণি নালাগে গুচাব’ৰ নামকৰণত লুকাই থকা অৰ্থৱহ ব্যঞ্জনাৰ সৌন্দৰ্য দুওণে বৃদ্ধি কৰিছে।

ইয়াত নায়িকা কাৰেবীৰ মানসিক বিকাৰগ্ৰস্ততাক প্ৰত্যয়জনক ৰূপত প্ৰতিষ্ঠিত কৰা হৈছে। অতি আচম্বিতে আৰু আকস্মিকভাৱে স্বামীক হেৰুৱাই বিধৱা হৈ পৰা কাৰেবীক শহুৰৰ ঘৰৰ মানুহখিনিয়ে বৰকৈ অত্যাচাৰ কৰিবলৈ লোৱাত এসময়ত তেওঁ মানসিক ভাৰসাম্য হেৰুৱাই পেলায়। ডাক্তৰ উদ্ধৱ বৰুৱা আৰু চন্দ্ৰমা কটকীৰ চিকিৎসাত মানসিক চিকিৎসালয়ত ভৰ্তি হোৱা কাৰেবী পুনৰ লাহে লাহে সুস্থ হৈ উঠে; পিছে এই সুস্থতাই কাৰেবীক বিপদতহে পেলালে; কাৰণ অসুস্থ হৈ থাকোঁতে তেওঁ নিজৰ দুখ, তিক্ততাৰে পূৰ্ণ অতীতটোক পাহৰি থাকিব পাৰিছিল; কিন্তু এতিয়া তেওঁ কি কৰি জীয়াই থাকিব? উন্মাদনাৰ ওৰণিৰে অতদিনে অতীতক ঢাকি থোৱাটোৱেই প্ৰকৃততে তেওঁৰ পক্ষে মংগলজনক আছিল। এই ঘটনাটোকে গল্পত মনঃসমীক্ষাত্মক তত্ত্বৰে বিশ্লেষণ কৰি দেখুওৱা মনস্তাত্ত্বিক ব্যাখ্যা ৰসোত্তীৰ্ণ হৈ উঠিছে। সেইদৰে ‘ৰামধেনু’ত প্ৰকাশিত ‘আৱৰণ’ গল্পটোৰ জৰিয়তেও এইগৰাকী লেখিকাৰ মনঃসমীক্ষাত্মক দৃষ্টিভংগী পোহৰলৈ আহিছে।

নীলিমা শৰ্মাৰ গল্পৰ চৰিত্ৰবোৰৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত দেখা যায় তেওঁৰ গল্পৰ নায়ক-নায়িকাই সাধাৰণতে শিক্ষিত মধ্যবিত্ত শ্ৰেণীৰ প্ৰতিনিধিত্ব কৰে। বহু নায়ক কলেজৰ অধ্যাপক আৰু নায়িকাসকল স্কুল-কলেজৰ ছাত্ৰী, নহ’লে শিক্ষয়িত্ৰী আৰু কেতিয়াবা নায়ক-নায়িকা উভয়েই চিকিৎসক। মানুহৰ মনৰ বিচিত্ৰতা সময়ৰ লগে লগে হোৱা সহজ পৰিৱৰ্তনৰ সুন্দৰ চিত্ৰ এইগৰাকী গল্পকাৰে তেওঁৰ ‘সময়ৰ সংলাপ’ত ফুটাই তুলিছে।

মানুহৰ অভ্যন্তৰ জগতখনৰ সূক্ষ্ম বিশ্লেষণৰ দক্ষতা থকা লেখিকা নীলিমা শৰ্মাৰ অন্য এটি গল্প ‘গোসাঁনী’ত নাৰীৰ মনৰ ভিতৰত আত্মগোপন কৰি থকা কেতবোৰ অশুভ দিশক মনস্তাত্ত্বিক দৃষ্টিভংগীৰে প্ৰকাশ কৰিবলৈ যত্ন কৰা হৈছে। নাৰী মনস্তত্ত্ব বিশ্লেষণৰ মাজেৰে এইগৰাকী গল্পকাৰে শিশু মনস্তত্ত্বৰ ওপৰতো দৃষ্টিপাত কৰিছে। ‘ৰামধেনু’ত এনে ধৰণৰ শিশু মনস্তত্ত্বৰ ওপৰত ভিত্তি কৰি লেখা গল্পৰ সংখ্যা তেনেই তাকৰ। নীলিমা শৰ্মাৰ ‘সেতুবন্ধন’ এই প্ৰসংগত উল্লেখযোগ্য।

প্ৰবীণা শইকীয়া আৰু অণিমা দত্ত :

‘ৰামধেনু’ৰ শেষৰফালে আত্মপ্ৰকাশ কৰা দুগৰাকী বিশিষ্ট গল্প-লেখিকা অণিমা দত্ত (ভৰালী) আৰু প্ৰবীণা শইকীয়া। এই দুয়োগৰাকী গল্পকাৰে গল্পত একোটা কাহিনী কথনৰ ওপৰত গুৰুত্ব দিয়া পৰিলক্ষিত হয়। একোটা নিটোল কাহিনী থকা তেওঁলোকৰ গল্পত ভাৱৰ ঐক্য অক্ষুণ্ণ থাকে। এটা মাথোন কেন্দ্ৰীয় ভাৱক অৱলম্বন হিচাপে লৈ কাহিনী আগবঢ়াই নিওঁতে ভাববস্তুৰ ঐক্য বিনষ্ট হোৱা দেখা নাযায়। নাটকীয় পৰিস্থিতিৰ সৃষ্টি কৰি কাহিনী নিৰ্মাণ কৰিব পৰা সৃষ্টি ক্ষমতাৰ বাবেই প্ৰবীণা শইকীয়াৰ গল্পৰ কাহিনীয়ে পাঠকক আকৰ্ষণ কৰে। চুটিগল্পৰ সাফল্যৰ বাবে অতি প্ৰয়োজনীয় গুণ গল্পৰ পৰিণতিমুখী উৎকৰ্ষা সৃষ্টিৰ এইক্ষেত্ৰত দুয়োগৰাকী লেখিকাৰ সচেতন মনৰ পৰিচয় পোৱা যায় তেওঁলোকৰ গল্পবোৰৰ জৰিয়তে। গল্পৰ কাহিনীৰ এক পৰিণতিমুখী উৎকৰ্ষা অব্যাহত ৰাখিব পৰাটোতো গল্পকাৰ দুগৰাকীৰ দক্ষতাৰ প্ৰমাণ আছে। তদুপৰি এই দুগৰাকী লেখিকাৰ সাদৃশ্য থকা আন এটা বৈশিষ্ট্য হ’ল চৰিত্ৰৰ গভীৰতালৈ প্ৰৱেশ কৰি পাঠকক চৰিত্ৰৰ মনৰ জগতখনৰ সন্তোষ দিবলৈ কৰা প্ৰয়াস।

বাস্তৱবাদী দৃষ্টিভঙ্গীৰে গল্প লিখি অণিমা দত্তৰ ‘ৰামধেনু’ৰ পাতত প্ৰকাশিত এটা সাৰ্থক গল্প ‘অস্ত আকাশ’। ইয়াত পৰিস্থিতিৰ হাতত নিৰ্মমভাৱে প্ৰতাৰিত হোৱা এজনী ছোৱালী বনজাৰ স্বপ্নভংগৰ বতৰা আছে।

‘অৱশ্যভাৱী’ অণিমা দত্তৰ আন এটা গল্প। ইয়াত গাঁৱলৈ ডাক্তৰ হিচাপে যোৱা ৰাজীৱৰ সৈতে ঘৰৰ ছোৱালী চম্পাকলিয়ে একপক্ষীয়ভাৱে প্ৰেম গঢ়ি তোলে আৰু তাইৰ ঘৰখনেও তাইৰ এই প্ৰচেষ্টাত সাঁহাৰি জনায়। অৱশেষত এদিন ৰাজীৱৰ প্ৰেমিকাৰ ফটো এখন দেখি চম্পাকলিৰ ভুল ভাগে আৰু ৰাজীৱেও সোনকালে তাৰ বিয়াৰ বন্দোৱস্ত কৰিবলৈ তাৰ মাকলৈ বুলি চিঠি লিখে।

এই দুয়োটা গল্পতে গল্পকাৰে অণিমা দত্তই বাস্তৱ জীৱনৰ পটভূমিত কাহিনী ভাগ আগবঢ়াই লৈ গৈছে। কাহিনীত গুৰুত্ব দিয়া হৈছে যদিও এটা মাথোন কেন্দ্ৰীয় ভাৱকে অৱলম্বন হিচাপে লোৱা হেতুকে গল্পৰ ভাববস্তুৰ ঐক্য ক’তো ক্ষুণ্ণ হোৱা নাই। ইয়াত প্ৰকাশ পোৱা প্ৰেম-প্ৰণয়ৰ চিত্ৰখন বাস্তৱসন্মত। সাধাৰণ মানুহৰ দৈনন্দিন জীৱনৰ এটা অংগ হিচাপে ইয়াত প্ৰেমক প্ৰতিষ্ঠা কৰা হৈছে। দুয়োটা গল্পতে লেখিকাই গল্পৰ

উৎকৰ্ষা আৰু পৰিণতিমুখী ঐক্যক অত্যন্ত সফলতাৰে ৰক্ষা কৰিব পাৰিছে আৰু ইয়াতে লেখিকাৰ দক্ষতা ফুটি উঠিছে।

প্ৰবীণা শইকীয়াৰ ‘ৰামধেনু’ৰ পাতত প্ৰকাশিত এটা বিখ্যাত গল্প হৈছে ‘কৰব কাহেৰি সাৰ’ ইয়াত স্বৰাজেন্দ্ৰৰ কালত বিস্তৃতি লাভ কৰিব ধৰা ভ্ৰষ্টাচাৰৰ শ্লেষাত্মক ছবি অংকিত হৈছে। তাৰ লগতে গল্পকাৰে কিদৰে সন্দেহৰ বীজে মগজুত বাহ লোৱাৰ পিছত হিতাহিত জ্ঞানশূন্য হৈ পৰি উন্মাদপ্ৰায় হৈ নায়িকাই নিজৰ ক্ষতি কৰিছে— তাৰ মনস্তাত্ত্বিক আৰু বাস্তৱসন্মত বিৱৰণ দাঙি ধৰিছে।

ৰুণু বৰুৱা, বাসন্তী বৰুৱা আৰু অলিমুন্নিছা পিয়াৰ :

ৰুণু বৰুৱা, বাসন্তী বৰুৱা আৰু অলিমুন্নিছা পিয়াৰ— ‘ৰামধেনু’ৰ পাতত গল্প লিখি জনপ্ৰিয়তা অৰ্জন কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হোৱা অন্য তিনিগৰাকী গল্পকাৰ। ৰুণু বৰুৱাৰ গল্পত সাধাৰণতে নাৰীৰ মনোজগতৰ ভিতৰলৈ প্ৰৱেশ কৰাৰ প্ৰযত্ন পৰিলক্ষিত হয়। মানৱীয় চেতনা আৰু আদৰ্শৰ প্ৰতি থকা পৰকাষ্ঠাই তেওঁৰ গল্পবোৰত সততে ক্ৰিয়া কৰে। লেখিকাৰ গল্পৰ চৰিত্ৰবোৰ সজীৱ আৰু সক্ৰিয়। বিষয়বস্তুৰ বৰ্ণনাতো তেওঁ সংযমৰ পৰিচয় দিছে। কাহিনীৰ গাঁথনিও আটল। অনাৱশ্যক বৰ্ণনাই তেওঁৰ গল্প ভাৰাক্ৰান্ত কৰি নোতোলে। এটি কেন্দ্ৰীয় ভাৱে ক্ৰিয়া কৰাৰ বাবে তেওঁ গল্পবোৰ পৰিণতিমুখী উৎকৰ্ষা ৰক্ষাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰতো সফল হৈছে বুলি ক’ব পাৰি।

‘মহীয়সী’ আৰু ‘পৰিচয়’ ৰুণু বৰুৱাৰ দুটা উল্লেখযোগ্য গল্প। এই দুয়োটাতে নাৰীমনৰ বিচিত্ৰতাক দাঙি ধৰিবলৈ প্ৰয়াস কৰা হৈছে। ‘পৰিচয়’ গল্পটোত চাৰিত্ৰিক বৈশিষ্ট্যৰ প্ৰকাশত লেখিকা সফল হৈছে। গল্পৰ আৰম্ভণিৰ উৎকৰ্ষা শেষলৈকে অব্যাহত আছে। কথাবস্তুৰ বৰ্ণনাতো লেখিকাই সংযমৰ পৰিচয় দিব পাৰিছে, সেইদৰে পান্নাৰ চৰিত্ৰাংকনতো দক্ষতাৰ প্ৰমাণ দিছে। পান্নাক আশ্ৰয় দিয়া খাছিয়া পৰিয়ালটোৰ মানৱতাবোধ সমগ্ৰ গল্পটোত অন্তৰ্নিহিত হৈ আছে। ‘মহীয়সী’ ৰুণু বৰুৱাৰ আন এটা গল্প। ইয়াত জন জাহাবৰ পত্নী বনুৱা ছোৱালী সৰলাই সতিনীয়েক ষ্টেলাৰ বুকুৰপৰা নিজৰ পুত্ৰ ৰবাৰ্টক আঁজুৰি আনিবলৈ গৈও শেষ মুহূৰ্তত মাতৃৰ মমতাক পৰিহাৰ কৰিছে আৰু ৰবাৰ্টৰ ভৱিষ্যতৰ চিন্তাত পুত্ৰস্নেহক আওকাণ কৰিছে, বাগানৰ মেনেজাৰ জন চাহাব আৰু এখন সাধাৰণ বাগানৰ স্কুলত কাম কৰা শিক্ষয়িত্ৰীৰ মাজত আকাশ-পাতালৰ পাৰ্থক্য। সেয়েহে পুত্ৰস্নেহক অস্বীকাৰ কৰি সৰলা একাকাৰ হৈ পৰিছে

নিজৰ পুত্ৰসম অন্য ছাত্ৰসকলৰ মংগল চিন্তাত।

‘ৰামধেনু’ৰ পাতত আত্মপ্ৰকাশ কৰা আনগৰাকী লেখিকা বাসন্তী বৰুৱাৰ গল্পৰ বিষয়বস্তু হ’ল মানুহৰ বিচিত্ৰ মানসিকতাৰ বিচাৰ-বিশ্লেষণ। ‘ৰামধেনু’ত প্ৰকাশিত বৃদ্ধ বয়সৰ মনস্তত্ত্ব প্ৰকাশত সাৰ্থক গল্প হিচাপে বৰুৱাৰ ‘সম্ৰাট’ গল্পটো বিশেষভাৱে উল্লেখযোগ্য।

বৃদ্ধ বয়সৰ মনস্তত্ত্বক লৈ ভালেমান গল্প লিখা হৈছে যদিও সাধাৰণতে দেখা যায় সেইবোৰ গল্পত প্ৰকাশিত বৃদ্ধৰ নিঃসংগ চেতনাত জীৱন সম্পৰ্কে নেতিবাচক দৃষ্টিভংগী আৰু বিষাদবোধেহে ক্ৰিয়া কৰে। এইক্ষেত্ৰত বাসন্তী বৰুৱাৰ এই গল্পটো এক মধুৰ ব্যতিক্ৰম। ইয়াত বৃদ্ধৰ নিঃসংগ চেতনাক ইতিবাচক দৃষ্টিৰে পাৰিবাৰিক মৰম, স্নেহ আৰু সহায়তাবে উপশম কৰা হৈছে। মানুহৰ মনোজগতৰ মৌলিক অনুভূতিপ্ৰকাশক বাসন্তী বৰুৱাৰ আন এটা সাৰ্থক গল্প হৈছে ‘ভগ্নী’।

‘ৰামধেনু যুগ’ৰ অন্যতম গল্পকাৰ আলিমুন্নিছা পিয়াৰৰ ‘ৰামধেনু’ত প্ৰকাশিত অৰ্থবহনামকৰণেৰে ব্যঞ্জিত এটা ভাল গল্প ‘কুঁহিলা’। ইয়াত গল্পৰ নায়িকা মীৰাৰ জীৱন বৰশীৰ বটীয়াত বান্ধি দিয়া কুঁহিলাৰ পুণ্ডসদৃশ। এনে অৰ্থময়তাৰে এটা সাধাৰণ কাহিনীক গল্পৰ ৰূপ দিব পৰাতোই লেখিকাৰ সাফল্য পৰিস্ফুট হৈছে।

মামণি ৰয়চম গোস্বামী :

যশস্বী কথাস্থানী মামণি ৰয়চম গোস্বামীয়ে ‘ৰামধেনু’ৰ শেষৰ স্তৰত গল্পকাৰ হিচাপে আত্মপ্ৰকাশ কৰে। ‘ৰামধেনু’ত প্ৰকাশিত হোৱা এইগৰাকী লেখিকাৰ গল্প মাত্ৰ এটিয়েই— ‘বীজাণু’। বলিষ্ঠ ৰচনাভংগী, গভীৰ মানৱতাবোধ, দুৰ্বল পীড়িতজনৰ প্ৰতি অন্তৰ্ভাৱ সহানুভূতিৰে তেওঁৰ গল্পবোৰ সমুজ্জ্বল। মানুহৰ বিশেষকৈ নাৰীৰ অৱদমিত মৌলিক প্ৰবৃত্তিবোৰৰ বাস্তৱসন্মত আৱিষ্কাৰৰ প্ৰচেষ্টা তেওঁৰ গল্পৰ অন্যতম বৈশিষ্ট্য। বিষয়বস্তুৰ মনোগ্ৰাহী উপস্থাপন, জীৱনবোধ, মননশীলতা, সংবেদনশীলতা আৰু বাস্তৱধৰ্মিতাই তেওঁৰ গল্পক আকৰ্ষণীয় কৰি তোলে। ‘বীজাণু’ গল্পটোত কিশোৰী আইমানোৰ ঘৰৰে পুৰণি বিশ্বাসী লগুৱা তথা তাইৰো শৈশৱৰ লগৰীয়া শ্ৰীগুৰুৰ প্ৰতি থকা অকৃত্ৰিম আন্তৰিক মৰম আৰু সহানুভূতিৰ বৰ্ণনা আছে— যিখিনি শ্ৰীগুৰুৰ নৈতিক স্থলনতো অপৰিৱৰ্তিত হৈয়েই ৰৈছে, বৰঞ্চ গভীৰ সহানুভূতিয়ে পূৰ্বতকৈ বেছিকৈহে আইমানোৰ হৃদয় অধিকাৰ কৰি পেলাইছে।

২.০.০ সিদ্ধান্ত :

এই আলোচনাৰপৰা দেখা গ’ল যে ‘ৰামধেনু যুগ’ত মহিলা গল্পকাৰৰ যথেষ্টসংখ্যক গল্প প্ৰকাশ হৈছিল। এই আলোচনাৰ অন্তত আমি কেইটামান সিদ্ধান্তলৈ আহিব পাৰোঁ—

- (১) ‘ৰামধেনু’ৰ মহিলা গল্পকাৰসকলৰ অসমীয়া গল্প সাহিত্যৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনলৈ অৱদান লেখত ল’বলগীয়া।
- (২) স্নেহ দেৱী, নিৰুপমা বৰগোহাঞি বা মামণি ৰয়চম গোস্বামীৰ দৰে চৰ্চিত নহয় যদিও প্ৰবীণা শইকীয়া, অণিমা দত্ত, নীলিমা শৰ্মা, ৰণু বৰুৱা, বাসন্তী বৰুৱা, আলিমুন্নিছা পিয়াৰো একোগৰাকী সাৰ্থক গল্পকাৰ।
- (৩) কমলিনী বৰবৰা ‘ৰামধেনু’ৰ প্ৰথমগৰাকী মহিলা গল্পকাৰ। তেওঁ ‘ৰামধেনু’ত তিনিটা গল্প লিখিছিল— ‘টিনপাত’, ‘পূজাৰ চোলা’ আৰু ‘মৃত্যু’।
- (৪) এইসকল গল্পকাৰৰ গল্পত নাৰী মনস্তত্ত্বৰ সাৰ্থক প্ৰতিফলন ঘটিছে। স্নেহ দেৱীৰ ‘সূচনা’, প্ৰবীণা শইকীয়াৰ ‘কৰব কাহেৰি সাৰ’, নীলিমা শৰ্মাৰ ‘গোসাঁনী’, ‘আৱৰণ’, আলিমুন্নিছা পিয়াৰৰ ‘কুঁহিলা’ৰ নাম এই প্ৰসংগত উল্লেখযোগ্য।
- (৫) পুৰুষৰ মানসিক জগতখন, শিশু মনস্তত্ত্বৰ লগতে বৃদ্ধ মনস্তত্ত্বৰো সাৰ্থক বিশ্লেষণ তেওঁলোকৰ গল্পত আছে। স্নেহ দেৱীৰ ‘বিপত্তি’, নীলিমা শৰ্মাৰ ‘সেতুবন্ধন’, বাসন্তী বৰুৱাৰ ‘সম্ৰাট’ এই প্ৰসংগত আনিব পাৰি।

৩.০.০ উপসংহাৰ :

‘ৰামধেনু যুগৰ মহিলা গল্পকাৰ’ শীৰ্ষক বিষয়টোৰ বিস্তৃতি আৰু গভীৰতা অত্যন্ত ব্যাপক। এই সম্পৰ্কে গৱেষণা-ক্ষেত্ৰ এখন মুকলি হৈ আছে। ‘ৰামধেনু যুগ’ৰ সকলোখিনি গল্পকে এই আলোচনাৰ আওতালৈ আনিব পৰা নগ’ল। ক্ষুদ্ৰ পৰিসৰৰ এখন আলোচনা-পত্ৰত ইয়াৰ সামগ্ৰিক আলোচনা সম্ভৱপৰো নহয়। ভৱিষ্যতে এই বিষয়ে পূৰ্ণাংক ৰূপত অধ্যয়ন কৰাৰ পৰ্যাপ্ত থল আছে। নতুন পঢ়ুৱৈ, ছাত্ৰ-ছাত্ৰী, গৱেষকসকলে এই সম্পৰ্কে নতুন নতুন চিন্তা-চৰ্চাৰে বিচাৰ-বিশ্লেষণ কৰিবলৈ আগ্ৰহী হোৱাৰ আৱশ্যকতা আছে। গৌৰোজ্জ্বল শতবৰ্ষ অতিক্ৰম কৰা অসমীয়া গল্প সাহিত্যৰ



আধুনিক ধাৰাটোক সমৃদ্ধ কৰাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত ই এক সময়োচিত পদক্ষেপ হ'ব বুলি বিবেচনা কৰিব পাৰি।

প্ৰসংগ-সূত্ৰ :

১। শইকীয়া, অন্নদা (সম্পাদিত)। পাতনি : স্নেহ দেৱী ৰচনা সম্ভাৰ, প্ৰথম প্ৰকাশ, ২০০১

২। গোস্বামী, ত্ৰৈলোক্য নাথ। আধুনিক গল্প সাহিত্য, তৃতীয় প্ৰকাশ, ৰাণী প্ৰকাশ, ১৯৮৭

প্ৰসংগ গ্ৰন্থ :

ঠাকুৰ, প্ৰাপ্তি। ৰামধেনুৰ চুটিগল্প : বিচাৰ আৰু বিশ্লেষণ। গুৱাহাটী : ভৱানী বুক্ছ, ২০১২। মুদ্ৰিত।

বৰা, অপূৰ্ব। অসমীয়া চুটিগল্প : ঐতিহ্য আৰু বিবৰ্তন। যোৰহাট : যোৰহাট কেন্দ্ৰীয় মহাবিদ্যালয় প্ৰকাশন কোষ, ২০১২।
মুদ্ৰিত।

বৰুৱা, প্ৰহলাদ কুমাৰ। অসমীয়া চুটিগল্প অধ্যয়ন। ডিব্ৰুগড় : বনলতা, ১৯৯৫। মুদ্ৰিত।

তিনিগৰাকী মহিলা পৰিচালকৰ অসমীয়া চলচ্চিত্ৰ : দৃষ্টিভংগী আৰু সম্ভাৱনা

চয়নিকা বৰা

সহকাৰী অধ্যাপিকা, অসমীয়া বিভাগ, গোগামুখ মহাবিদ্যালয়, ধেমাজি

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সাৰাংশ :

চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ ইতিহাসত জন্মলগ্নৰেপৰা নাৰীয়ে পৰিচালক, প্ৰযোজক, অভিনেত্ৰী বা চিত্ৰনাট্যকাৰ ইত্যাদি বিভিন্ন দিশত অৱদান আগবঢ়াই আহিছে। বিশ্ব চলচ্চিত্ৰ ইতিহাসলৈ লক্ষ্য কৰিলে দেখা যায় যে, ঊনবিংশ শতিকাৰ শেষৰপৰাই চলচ্চিত্ৰ নিৰ্মাণত নাৰীয়ে অগ্ৰণী ভূমিকা গ্ৰহণ কৰি আহিছে। অসমীয়া চলচ্চিত্ৰতো উদ্ভৱকালৰপৰাই নাৰীৰ উপস্থিতি উল্লেখযোগ্য। অসমীয়া চলচ্চিত্ৰত নাৰী বুলি ক'লেই প্ৰথমখন চলচ্চিত্ৰ 'জয়মতী' (১৯৩৫)ৰ কথা উল্লেখ কৰিব পাৰি। 'জয়মতী' এনে এখন কথাছবি— যাৰ কেন্দ্ৰীয় চৰিত্ৰ এগৰাকী নাৰী, সেই নাৰীৰ প্ৰেম, দেশভক্তি আৰু আত্মত্যাগৰ কাহিনীয়েই ইয়াৰ মূল উপজীব্য। বিংশ শতিকাৰ শেষৰ ফালে অসমীয়া চলচ্চিত্ৰত নাৰী কেৱল অভিনয়ৰ লগতে জড়িত নাথাকি চলচ্চিত্ৰ নিৰ্মাণ আৰু পৰিচালনাৰ কামতো মনোনিৱেশ কৰে আৰু সফল হয়। সুপ্ৰভা দেৱীৰ 'নয়নমণি' (১৮৮৩), 'সৰৱজন' (১৮৮৫), সান্ত্বনা বৰদলৈৰ 'অদাহ' (১৯৯৬), মঞ্জু বৰাৰ 'বৈভৱ' (১৯৯৯), 'আকাশীতৰাৰ কথাৰে' (২০০৩), 'লাজ' (২০০৪), ববী শৰ্মা বৰুৱাৰ 'অদম্য' (২০১৪) ইত্যাদি ইয়াৰ উদাহৰণ। একবিংশ শতিকাৰ আৰম্ভণিৰপৰা বৰ্তমানলৈকে আৰু বহুতো মহিলা পৰিচালক আৰু প্ৰযোজকৰ চলচ্চিত্ৰ নিৰ্মাণ হৈ আছে। অসমীয়া চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনত নাৰীবিষয়ক বিভিন্ন চলচ্চিত্ৰ নিৰ্মাণ হৈ থকাৰ বাবে নাৰীসকল অভিনয়ৰ লগত সচেতনভাৱে জড়িত হৈ পৰিছে আৰু বহু পৰীক্ষা-নিৰীক্ষাৰে অসমীয়া চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ নিৰ্মাণ কাৰ্যতো ভূমিকা গ্ৰহণ কৰিছে। চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ দৰে গভীৰ সংবেদনশীল আৰু প্ৰত্যাহ্বানমূলক ক্ষেত্ৰখনত অসমৰ মহিলা পৰিচালকসকলৰ ভূমিকা আৰু দৃষ্টিভংগীক মূল্যায়ন কৰাৰ অৱকাশ আছে। সেয়েহে অসমীয়া চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ তিনিগৰাকী মহিলা পৰিচালক সান্ত্বনা বৰদলৈ, মঞ্জু বৰা আৰু ববী শৰ্মা বৰুৱাৰ তিনিখন নিৰ্বাচিত চলচ্চিত্ৰ ক্ৰমে 'অদাহ', 'আকাশীতৰাৰ কথাৰে' আৰু 'অদম্য'ৰ আধাৰত মূল গৱেষণা পত্ৰখন প্ৰস্তুত কৰাৰ প্ৰয়াস কৰা হৈছে।

বীজ শব্দ : অসমীয়া, চলচ্চিত্ৰ, দৃষ্টিভংগী, নাৰী, নিৰ্মাণ, পৰিচালক।

০.০ বিষয়ৰ পৰিচয় :

সৃষ্টিৰ পাতনিৰেপৰাই নাৰীৰ বিভিন্ন ৰূপ বা নাৰীৰ ভূমিকা বিভিন্ন শিল্প মাধ্যমৰ জৰিয়তে প্ৰতিভাত হৈ আহিছে। ই যুগসাপেক্ষ। চিত্ৰকলা, ভাস্কৰ্য, সংগীত, নাটক, সাহিত্য ইত্যাদি এনে মাধ্যম হোৱাৰ উপৰি শেহতীয়াকৈ এইসমূহৰ লগত সন্নিবিষ্ট হৈছে বহুমাত্ৰিক কলামাধ্যম হিচাপে স্বীকৃত চলচ্চিত্ৰ। দৰাচলতেই চলচ্চিত্ৰই নাৰীক বহুমাত্ৰিক ৰূপত উপস্থাপন কৰিবলৈ অহৰহ প্ৰয়াস কৰি আহিছে। মূল কাহিনীৰ এটা চৰিত্ৰ

হোৱাৰ লগতে কাহিনী তথা চলচ্চিত্ৰ নিৰ্মাতা হিচাপেও নাৰীৰ ভূমিকা গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ। বিশ্ব প্ৰেক্ষাপটৰ লগতে ভাৰতীয় তথা অসমৰ প্ৰেক্ষাপটতো চলচ্চিত্ৰত নাৰীৰ জীৱন গাথা অন্যতম বিষয়। ভাৰতীয় চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ বহুকেইগৰাকী প্ৰতিভাৱান চলচ্চিত্ৰকাৰৰ সৃষ্টিত নাৰীয়ে মুখ্য স্থান লাভ কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে। বহু সময়ত এনে চলচ্চিত্ৰই কলাগতভাৱে সমাদৃত হোৱাৰ লগতে বিশ্বজনীন আবেদন লাভ কৰিবলৈও সক্ষম হৈছে। চলচ্চিত্ৰ এখনত নাৰীৰ চিত্ৰায়নৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত সাম্প্ৰতিক কালৰ



নাৰীবাদী চলচ্চিত্ৰ সমালোচকসকলে বিভিন্ন ধৰণেৰে মতপোষণ কৰিছে— “এনেট কুহানৰ দৰে সাম্প্ৰতিক কালৰ নাৰীবাদী চলচ্চিত্ৰ সমালোচকসকলে ব্যাখ্যা কৰাৰ দৰেই চলচ্চিত্ৰ, সাহিত্য বা কলাৰ মাধ্যম যিয়েই নহওক, নাৰীৰ প্ৰতিনিধিত্বকৰণ সুস্পষ্টভাৱে লৈংগিক পক্ষপাতদুষ্ট বৃত্তান্ত মাথোঁ (Gendered Narrative), কেতিয়াবা কিছু পৰিমাণে আলোকসম্পাদনী। কিন্তু অধিকাংশ সময়ত কেৱল পৰম্পৰাগত শক্তিৰ সূতাৰে বান্ধ খোৱা।” সাম্প্ৰতিক কালৰ বহুতো অসমীয়া চলচ্চিত্ৰতো ইয়াৰ প্ৰতিফলন পৰিলক্ষিত হয়। “পশ্চিমৰ নাৰীবাদী চলচ্চিত্ৰ সমালোচনাত প্ৰায়বিলাক নাৰীবাদী লেখিকাৰ প্ৰধান আপত্তি এয়ে যে চলচ্চিত্ৰত নাৰীক ‘নাৰী’ৰূপে, পৰিপূৰ্ণ মানৱৰূপে কেতিয়াও প্ৰকাশ কৰা হোৱা নাই; নাৰীৰ স্বকীয় অধিকাৰ হিচাপে নহয়, পুৰুষে বিচৰাধৰণেৰে পুৰুষক পূৰ্ণৰূপে প্ৰতিষ্ঠা কৰাত সহায়ক আহিলা হিচাপেহে আৰু পুৰুষৰ ‘আন’ৰূপে (Male ‘Other’) চলচ্চিত্ৰত নাৰীৰ একমাত্ৰায়ুক্ত অসত্য ৰূপ এটি চিত্ৰায়িত হৈ আহিছে।”

অসমীয়া চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ যিসমূহত নাৰীক বিশেষভাৱে উপস্থাপন কৰা হৈছে তাৰ অধিকাংশই ভাৰতীয় আদৰ্শ নাৰীৰ প্ৰতিভা হোৱাৰ লগতে পুৰুষ আধিপত্য সমাজৰ বাসিন্দা। “ঐতিহাসিক কাৰণতে সামাজিক উৎপাদনৰ কামৰপৰা আঁতৰি ঘৰৰ চাৰিবেৰৰ মাজত সোমাই পৰা দিনৰেপৰা নাৰী সমাজৰ দৃষ্টিত (অকল পুৰুষৰ দৃষ্টিতো) হৈ পৰিছিল দেৱী, শক্তিৰ আধাৰ, আদৰ্শ মাতৃ, গৃহলক্ষ্মী, লজ্জাশীলা, সুকোমল, বান্ধৱী, পত্নী, বেশ্যা আৰু বহস্যময়ী। সমাজে নাৰীৰ আন সকলো ৰূপৰ স্বীকৃতি দিলেও এটা কথা স্বীকাৰ নকৰে আৰু সেইটো হ’ল যে নাৰীও মানুহ।” বাস্তৱৰ দৰে চলচ্চিত্ৰতো নাৰীয়ে অহৰহ নিজৰ ভাগ্য অথবা দুৰ্ভাগ্যৰ সহায়স্থান কৰি থাকে আৰু বহুসময়ত প্ৰতিবাদী হৈ ধৰা দিয়ে। অসমীয়া চলচ্চিত্ৰত এনে বহুতো চৰিত্ৰৰ সমাবেশ ঘটিছে। ভবেন্দ্ৰনাথ শইকীয়াৰ স্বৰচিত উপন্যাস ‘অন্তৰীপ’ৰ আধাৰত নিৰ্মিত ‘অগ্নিস্নান’ নামৰ চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ মেনকা, কিৰণ; ভবেন্দ্ৰনাথ শইকীয়াৰ অন্য এখন চলচ্চিত্ৰ ‘আৱৰ্তন’ (১৯৯৩)ৰ জয়ন্তী; জাহ্নু বৰুৱাৰ প্ৰথমখন কাহিনী চিত্ৰ ‘অপৰূপা’ৰ অপৰূপা; ‘ফিৰিঙতি’ৰ ঋতু আদি এনে চৰিত্ৰৰ উদাহৰণ। নাৰীক সবল ৰূপত উপস্থাপন কৰা অন্য অসমীয়া চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ ভিতৰত উল্লেখযোগ্য হ’ল—সান্ত্বনা বৰদলৈৰ ‘অদাহ’ (১৯৯৬), মঞ্জু বৰাৰ ‘আকাশীতৰাৰ কথাৰে’,

অৰূপ মান্নাৰ ‘আইদেউ’ (২০০৭), শেহতীয়াকৈ ববী শৰ্মা বৰুৱাৰ ‘অদম্য’ (২০১৪), মঞ্জু বৰাৰ ‘অন্তৰীণ’ (২০১৭), হেমেন দাসৰ ‘মৃগনাভি’ (২০১৭) ইত্যাদি। অসমীয়া চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ ইতিহাসত প্ৰথম মহিলা পৰিচালক হিচাপে আত্মপ্ৰকাশ কৰে সুপ্ৰভা দেৱীয়ে। ১৯৮৪ চনত ‘নয়নমণি’ আৰু ১৯৮৬ চনত ‘সৰৱজান’ চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ জৰিয়তে চলচ্চিত্ৰীয় প্ৰতিভাৰ পৰিচয় দিয়া এইগৰাকী পৰিচালকৰ স্থান সুকীয়াকৈ ৰক্ষিত হৈছে।

তেওঁৰ পৰৱৰ্তী সময়ত যিকেইগৰাকী অসমীয়া মহিলাই চলচ্চিত্ৰ পৰিচালক হিচাপে আত্মপ্ৰতিষ্ঠা কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে তেওঁলোকৰ কেইবাখনো ছবিও নাৰীক কেন্দ্ৰীয় বিষয় হিচাপে লোৱা পৰিলক্ষিত হয়। নাৰীৰ ব্যক্তিগত-সামাজিক সমস্যা, সামাজিক অৱস্থান, নাৰীৰ মনস্তত্ত্ব ইত্যাদিক মূল উপজীব্য হিচাপে লৈ নিৰ্মাণ কৰা এই ছবিসমূহত এগৰাকী নাৰীয়ে অন্য এগৰাকী নাৰীৰ উপস্থাপনৰ দৃষ্টিভংগীক মূল্যায়ন কৰাৰ যথেষ্ট অৱকাশ আছে।

০.২ অধ্যয়নৰ উদ্দেশ্য :

ক) অসমৰ চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনৰ তিনিগৰাকী মহিলা পৰিচালক ক্ৰমে সান্ত্বনা বৰদলৈ, মঞ্জু বৰা আৰু ববী শৰ্মা বৰুৱাৰ চলচ্চিত্ৰ সম্পৰ্কে নিৰ্বাচিত চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ আধাৰত মূল্যায়ন কৰা।

খ) বিষয়বস্তু নিৰ্বাচন আৰু চলচ্চিত্ৰীয় ভাষা নিৰ্মাণত পৰিচালকৰ দৃষ্টিভংগীৰ বিশ্লেষণ কৰা।

গ) অসমৰ চলচ্চিত্ৰ নিৰ্মাণৰ ইতিহাসত তিনিগৰাকী পৰিচালকৰ স্থান নিৰ্ণয়ৰ লগতে সম্ভাৱনা বিচাৰ কৰা।

০.৩ অধ্যয়নৰ পৰিসৰ :

এই অধ্যয়নত অসমৰ তিনিগৰাকী মহিলা চলচ্চিত্ৰকাৰক সামৰি লোৱা হৈছে। অসমত চলচ্চিত্ৰ নিৰ্মাণ তথা পৰিচালনাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত মহিলা হিচাপে সুপ্ৰভা দেৱীয়ে আগবঢ়োৱা প্ৰচেষ্টাৰ পাছতেই অসমীয়া চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ সচেতন ধাৰাটোৰ বিকাশৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত সান্ত্বনা বৰদলৈ, মঞ্জু বৰা আৰু ববী শৰ্মা বৰুৱাৰ যি ভূমিকা সেয়া অনুধাৱন কৰিয়েই অধ্যয়নৰ বাবে নিৰ্বাচন কৰা হৈছে। চলচ্চিত্ৰ নিৰ্বাচনৰ ক্ষেত্ৰতো তিনিগৰাকী পৰিচালকৰ নাৰীকেন্দ্ৰিক চলচ্চিত্ৰকেইখনকহে প্ৰাধান্য দিয়া হৈছে। তেওঁলোকৰ অন্যান্য চলচ্চিত্ৰসমূহতো নাৰীজনিত বিভিন্ন বিষয়ে প্ৰাধান্য লাভ কৰিলেও চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ অন্তৰ্নিহিত সুৰটোৰ সামঞ্জস্যৰ ভিত্তিত ‘অদাহ’, ‘আকাশীতৰাৰ

কথাৰে’ আৰু ‘অদম্য’ক অধ্যয়নৰ পৰিসৰৰ অন্তৰ্ভুক্ত কৰা হৈছে।

০.৪ অধ্যয়নৰ পদ্ধতি :

প্ৰস্তুত অধ্যয়নৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত গৱেষণাৰ গুণগত পদ্ধতিৰ ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা হৈছে। গৱেষণাৰ গুণগত পদ্ধতিয়ে অন্তৰ্দৃষ্টি আৰু কাৰ্যকাৰিতাৰ সহায়ত বস্তুনিষ্ঠ মূল্যায়নৰ পোষকতা কৰে। পৰ্যবেক্ষণ আৰু বিষয় বিশ্লেষণৰ জৰিয়তে এই অধ্যয়ন আগবঢ়াই নিবলৈ যত্ন কৰা হৈছে।

১.০ সাক্ষ্যনা বৰদলৈৰ ‘অদাহ’ :

১.১ বিষয়বস্তু :

বিংশ শতিকাৰ শেষৰফালে অসমৰ চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনত পৰিচালক হিচাপে বলিষ্ঠভাৱে পদাৰ্পণ কৰা সাক্ষ্যনা বৰদলৈৰ ‘অদাহ’ আৰু ‘মাজৰাতি কেতেকী’ দুখন গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ অসমীয়া ছবি। পৃথক পৃথক বিষয়বস্তু আৰু পটভূমিৰে নিৰ্মিত দুয়োখন চলচ্চিত্ৰই অসমীয়া চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ ইতিহাসত এক সুকীয়া স্থান দখল কৰাৰ লগতে আৰু বিভিন্ন ৰাষ্ট্ৰীয়-আন্তঃৰাষ্ট্ৰীয় সন্মান লাভ কৰিবলৈও সক্ষম হৈছে। বিংশ শতিকাৰ শেষৰ দশকত নিৰ্মাণ হোৱা এখন উল্লেখযোগ্য অসমীয়া চলচ্চিত্ৰ হ’ল ‘অদাহ’। সাক্ষ্যনা বৰদলৈৰ ৰচনা আৰু পৰিচালনাৰে নিৰ্মিত চলচ্চিত্ৰখনৰ আধাৰ (আংশিকভাৱে) আছিল মামণি ৰয়ছম গোস্বামীৰ কালজয়ী আৰু বহুসমাদৃত উপন্যাস ‘দঁতাল হাতীৰ উঁয়ে খোৱা হাওদা’। উপন্যাসখন মূলতঃ প্ৰাক-স্বাধীনতা কালৰ পুৰুষতান্ত্ৰিক সমাজৰ ৰক্ষণশীলতাৰ বলি হোৱা ব্ৰাহ্মণ বিধৱাৰ জীৱন যন্ত্ৰণাৰ কাহিনী। ইয়াকে মূল উপজীব্য হিচাপে লৈ সাক্ষ্যনা বৰদলৈয়ে ‘অদাহ’ৰ কাহিনী নিৰ্মাণ কৰিছে। তিনিগৰাকী ব্ৰাহ্মণ বিধৱাৰ কাহিনী প্ৰতিফলিত হোৱা চলচ্চিত্ৰখনৰ মূল চৰিত্ৰ তিনিটা ক্ৰমে দুৰ্গা, সৰু গোসাঁনী আৰু গিৰিবালা। মূলতঃ এই তিনিগৰাকী বিধৱাৰ কাহিনীৰেই ‘অদাহ’ নিৰ্মিত। চলচ্চিত্ৰখনৰ মূল বিষয় হিচাপে দক্ষিণ কামৰূপীয় দামোদৰীয় পন্থৰ গোসাঁই পৰিয়ালৰ দণ্ড, আভিজাত্য আৰু ক্ষয়িষ্ণু মূল্যবোধৰ উপৰি মানুহ আৰু সমাজৰ ৰূপান্তৰকামী ভাবধাৰাৰ চিত্ৰণ কৰা হৈছে। চলচ্চিত্ৰখনত ইন্দ্ৰনাথ, দুৰ্গা, সৰুগোসাঁনী আদি চল্লিছৰ দশকৰ অসমৰ বহুধৰ্মীয় সংস্কাৰ-কুসংস্কাৰ, ব্যক্তিগত হা-হতাশা, গভীৰ সামাজিক অসুখেৰে গ্ৰাসিত; কিন্তু তেওঁলোক পৰিৱৰ্তনকামী সমাজৰ প্ৰতিনিধি নহয়। ৰূপান্তৰৰ দাবীত নিজকে নিঃশেষ কৰিবলৈও কুণ্ঠাবোধ নকৰা গিৰিবালাহে সেই চেতনাৰ প্ৰতিনিধি।

সমগ্ৰ চলচ্চিত্ৰখনতে (গিৰিবালাই শূন্যত উৰুৱাই দিয়া চাদৰপৰা সজাৰপৰা মুক্ত কৰি দিয়া ভাটোৰ প্ৰতীকলৈকে) পৰিচালক বৰদলৈয়ে গিৰিবালাক সচেতনভাৱে অনুসৰণ কৰিছে।

১.২ পৰিচালকৰ দৃষ্টিভঙ্গী :

মূলতঃ উপন্যাস আধাৰিত হ’লেও ‘অদাহ’ চলচ্চিত্ৰখনকহে যিহেতু আলোচনাৰ আওতালৈ অনা হৈছে সেয়ে চলচ্চিত্ৰীয় ভাষা নিৰ্মাণত পৰিচালকৰ কৌশল আৰু দৃষ্টিভঙ্গীৰ আলোচনাই বিশেষভাৱে প্ৰাধান্য লাভ কৰে। পৰিচালক বৰদলৈয়ে মূল বিষয়ৰ উপস্থাপনত চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ নন্দনতাত্ত্বিক উপাদানসমূহক অত্যন্ত সচেতন আৰু সংবদ্ধ ৰূপত প্ৰয়োগ কৰাৰ ফলতেই চলচ্চিত্ৰখনৰ মৌলিকতা অক্ষুণ্ণ আছে। প্ৰথম ছিকুৱেন্সতেই এটা দুঃসংবাদৰ মাজেদি আৰম্ভ হোৱা চলচ্চিত্ৰখনৰ কেইটামান ব্যক্ত্যতাপূৰ্ণ শ্বটে সেই সামাজিক পৰিৱেশ, ধৰ্মীয় মূল্যবোধৰ লগতে সামন্তীয় পৰিৱেশৰ সূচনা কৰিছে। নঙলামুখেদি হাতীৰ প্ৰৱেশ, ভিতৰৰ চোতালত ধান সিজোৱা, পানী তোলাৰ নীৰৰ ব্যস্ততা আদিৰ পিছতে সেই দুঃসংবাদ আহে। পিছৰ দৃশ্যত ক্ৰমে সদ্যবিধৱা গিৰিবালাৰ গৰুগাড়ীত পিতৃগৃহলৈ যাত্ৰা আৰু যাত্ৰাপথত গিৰিবালাৰ শৈশৱৰ স্মৃতিৰ দৃশ্যই তেওঁৰ কৰুণতাক অধিক প্ৰকট কৰি তোলাত সহায় কৰিছে। জীৱনৰ আটাইতকৈ কৰুণ সময়ত মধুৰ স্মৃতিকাতৰতা : এই দুয়োটাৰে বৈপৰীত্যই গিৰিবালাৰ মানসিক দুৰৱস্থা আৰু দ্বন্দ্বক সবল ৰূপত উপস্থাপন কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে। চৰিত্ৰৰ মানসিক সংঘাতক সুতীৱ কৰি তোলাৰ বাবে পৰিচালকৰ এই কৌশল ফলপ্ৰসূ আৰু বাস্তৱসন্মত।

সমালোচকসকলে চলচ্চিত্ৰখনত উপন্যাসৰ গভীৰতা আৰু বিস্তৃতিৰ অনুপস্থিতি সম্পৰ্কে উল্লেখ কৰিছে— “অদাহত নাৰীৰ অৱদমন আৰু পুৰুষৰ চিৰাচৰিত শোষণ আৰু ভণ্ডামিৰ প্ৰতি স্পষ্ট ইংগিত থাকিলেও সমাজত পুৰুষৰ অবিহনে অৰ্থহীন আৰু তাৎপৰ্যহীনৰূপে প্ৰতিষ্ঠিত বিধৱা নাৰীৰ নিষ্ঠুৰ বঞ্চনা আৰু শোষণৰ ব্যক্তিগত কাহিনীটোত নাৰীবাদৰ নৈয়ায়িক-সামাজিক মাত্ৰা অস্বচ্ছ হৈ ৰ’ল।”^{৪৪} অৱশ্যে দৃশ্যৰ নিৰ্মাণ আৰু চয়নৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত বহুসময়ত পৰিচালকে উৎকৃষ্টতাৰ পৰিচয় দিছে। বৰষুণৰ নিশা আত্মনিবেদনৰ দৃশ্য, থিৰিকিৰে দীঘলীয়া সময়ৰ বাবে আবদ্ধ দৃষ্টি, বাৰাণ্ডাত নিঃসংগে থিয় হৈ থকা সৰু গোসাঁনীৰ লং শ্বট ইত্যাদি অৰ্থপূৰ্ণ আৰু সাৰ্থক উপস্থাপন।

দৃশ্যৰ নিৰ্মাণ আৰু গাঁথনিগত দিশ, কাহিনীৰ বিকাশ, চলচ্চিত্ৰীয় ভাষা আৰু ধৰ্ম বক্ষাৰ লগতে চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ মৌলিকতা অক্ষুণ্ণ ৰখাত চিত্ৰনাট্যখন সফল হৈছে। অৱশ্যে ছিকুৱেন্সৰ পৰিৱৰ্তন আৰু আৱহাৰ ব্যৱহাৰত কিছু পৰিমাণে শিথিলতা দেখা পোৱা যায়। সংগীতৰ সফল প্ৰয়োগেও চলচ্চিত্ৰখনৰ বিষয়বস্তু উপস্থাপনত সহায় কৰিছে। সংগীত পৰিচালক শ্বেৰ চৌধুৰীয়ে আৱহাৰ ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা লোক-সংগীতৰ ব্যৱহাৰ আৰু ওজাপালি আৰু টোকাৰী গীতে নামনি অসমৰ স্থানীয়তাক বিশ্বাসযোগ্য কৰি তুলিছে। আটাইতকৈ উল্লেখযোগ্য বিষয় এয়ে যে, “ধৰদলৈয়ে চলচ্চিত্ৰখনত ইমানবোৰ নাৰী চৰিত্ৰ উপস্থাপন কৰোঁতে কোনো শ্ল’গানধৰ্মী নাৰীবাদী বাগধাৰা (Feminist Discourse)-ৰ আশ্ৰয় লোৱা নাই; কিন্তু তীব্ৰ সংবেদনশীলতা আৰু যথার্থতাৰ জোৰতে প্ৰতিজনী নাৰীয়ে তেজ-মঙহৰ হৈ ধৰা দিছে।”^{১০}

২.০ মঞ্জু বৰাৰ ‘আকাশীতৰাৰ কথাৰে’ :

‘বৈভৱ’ (১৯৯৯) চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ জৰিয়তে অসমৰ চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনত মঞ্জু বৰাই পৰিচালক হিচাপে আত্মপ্ৰকাশ কৰে। প্ৰথমখন ছবিতোই গভীৰ চিন্তাশীল পৰিচালকৰ বাৰ্তা বহন কৰা বৰাই ছবিখনৰ জৰিয়তে যথেষ্ট সফলতাও অৰ্জন কৰে। পৰৱৰ্তী সময়ত ‘অন্য এক যাত্ৰা’ (২০০১), ‘লাজ’ (২০০৪), ‘জয়মতী’ (২০০৬), ‘আই ক’ত নাই’ (২০০৮), ‘কঃয়াদ’ (২০১২, মিচিং ভাষা), ‘দাও ছুদুনি মেথাই’ (২০১৫, বড়ো ভাষা) ইত্যাদি কেইবাখনো চলচ্চিত্ৰ নিৰ্মাণেৰে মঞ্জু বৰাই অসমীয়া চলচ্চিত্ৰক সমৃদ্ধ কৰিছে। ইয়াৰে কেইবাখনো চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ বাবে তেওঁ বিভিন্ন ৰাষ্ট্ৰীয় আৰু আন্তঃৰাষ্ট্ৰীয় সন্মান লাভ কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে।

২.১ বিষয়বস্তু :

মঞ্জু বৰাৰ ‘আকাশীতৰাৰ কথাৰে’ (২০০৩) শীৰ্ষক চলচ্চিত্ৰ অসমৰ নাৰীকেন্দ্ৰিক লোকসংস্কৃতিৰ পৰ্যবেক্ষণৰ এক সম্পৰীক্ষাবুলিয়েই অভিহিত কৰিব পাৰি। মূলতঃ নাৰীকেন্দ্ৰিক চলচ্চিত্ৰখনত চলচ্চিত্ৰকাৰে অসমৰ লোকসংস্কৃতিক প্ৰসংগৰ আধাৰত সমাজত নাৰীৰ স্থান সম্পৰ্কে উপস্থাপনৰ প্ৰয়াস কৰিছে। আকাশীতৰা নামৰ কেন্দ্ৰীয় নাৰী চৰিত্ৰটোৰ গৱেষণা কৰ্ম হিচাপে ‘অসমৰ নাৰীকেন্দ্ৰিক লোকসংস্কৃতি’ বিষয়ৰ পৰ্যালোচনা, ইয়াৰ অন্তৰালৰ প্ৰেক্ষাপট অনুসন্ধান কৰি ক্ষেত্ৰ অধ্যয়নৰ সমল সংগ্ৰহৰ কাহিনী আৰু ইয়াৰ সমান্তৰালভাবে

চৰিত্ৰটোৰ জীৱন পৰিক্ৰমাক চলচ্চিত্ৰকাৰে সংবদ্ধ কৰিছে। গৱেষণাৰ মূল বিষয়ৰ লগত সংগতি ৰাখি আকাশীতৰাই সন্ধান কৰিব বিচাৰিছে— ‘সামাজিক আৰু সামূহিক স্বাৰ্থত নাৰীয়ে স্বীকাৰ কৰি অহা ত্যাগ আৰু পুৰুষপ্ৰধান সমাজত এই ত্যাগৰ মূল্যহীনতাৰ প্ৰসংগ।’ লোকসংস্কৃতিৰ আধাৰ লোকসমাজখন আৰু আধুনিক সমাজৰ মাজৰ দ্বন্দ্বই চলচ্চিত্ৰখনৰ জৰিয়তে প্ৰতিফলিত কৰিব বিচৰা মূল বক্তব্য। অন্যান্য চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ দৰেই মঞ্জু বৰাৰ এই চলচ্চিত্ৰতো অসমীয়া সমাজ সংস্কৃতিৰ বাবে প্ৰাসংগিক নানা উপজীব্যৰ অৱতাৰণা কৰা হৈছে। মূলতঃ এই চলচ্চিত্ৰ পৰম্পৰাগত পুৰুষতান্ত্ৰিক সমাজৰ কঠোৰ লিংগীয় পক্ষপাত, পৰম্পৰাগত আদৰ্শ ভাৰতীয় নাৰীৰ বাস্তৱধৰ্মী প্ৰতিচ্ছবি আৰু নাৰীমনৰ মনস্তাত্ত্বিক উপস্থাপন। চলচ্চিত্ৰখনৰ কেন্দ্ৰীয় নাৰী চৰিত্ৰই পুৰুষ আধিপত্যই তেওঁলোকৰ ওপৰত জাপি দিয়া পৰিচয় নিৰ্বিবাদে মানি ল’বলৈ বাধ্য আৰু নিজ নিজ ভাগ্য অথবা দুৰ্ভাগ্যৰ লগত সহাবস্থান কৰিবলৈও বাধ্য। এই মূল বক্তব্যক উপস্থাপন কৰিবলৈ যাওঁতে চলচ্চিত্ৰকাৰে মূলতঃ অসমীয়া নাৰীকেন্দ্ৰিক লোক-সংস্কৃতিৰ গছতলৰ বিহু, খেবাই পূজা, হুদুম পূজা আৰু দেৱদাসী প্ৰথাক সামৰি লৈছে।

২.২ পৰিচালকৰ দৃষ্টিভঙ্গী :

‘আকাশীতৰাৰ কথাৰে’ চলচ্চিত্ৰত অসমৰ নাৰীকেন্দ্ৰিক লোক-সংস্কৃতিৰ নিৰ্বাচিত উপাদানৰ প্ৰতিটোতেই নাৰীৰ সামাজিক মৰ্যাদাৰ প্ৰসংগটো চলচ্চিত্ৰকাৰে জড়িত কৰি এক নতুন দৃষ্টিভঙ্গীৰে চোৱাৰ প্ৰয়াস কৰিছে। চলচ্চিত্ৰখনত উপস্থাপন হোৱা প্ৰতিটো পৰম্পৰাগত অনুষ্ঠানৰ প্ৰকৃত প্ৰেক্ষাপটক উদ্ধাৰ কৰি ইয়াৰ অন্তৰালত থকা অপৰিসীম ত্যাগৰ পাছতো চিৰন্তন অৱহেলিত আৰু উপেক্ষিত নাৰী জাতিৰ প্ৰতি সমমৰ্মিতা প্ৰদৰ্শন কৰিছে। লোকসংস্কৃতিক প্ৰসংগৰ আধাৰতে পুৰুষতান্ত্ৰিক সমাজত নাৰীৰ সামাজিক স্থান সম্পৰ্কেও বহু সময়ত চলচ্চিত্ৰকাৰ সন্দিহান হৈছে আৰু এই সম্পৰ্কে বিভিন্ন সময়ত প্ৰশ্নৰ অৱতাৰণা কৰিছে আৰু উত্তৰৰ বাবে দৰ্শকক বাৰে বাৰে ভাবিবলৈ বাধ্য কৰাইছে।

হুদুম দেওৰ পূজা ভাৰতীয় কৃষক সমাজৰ পৰম্পৰাত অনাবৃষ্টিৰ সময়ত বৃষ্টি কামনা কৰি পতা এক লোক-অনুষ্ঠান। “তোৱা নদীৰ পূবফালৰ লোকসকলে অনাদি কালৰেপৰা এই হুদুমদেও পূজা কৰাৰ প্ৰথা প্ৰচলন হৈ আহিছে।”^{১১} হুদুমদেওৰ পূজা দৰাচলতে মহিলাসকলৰ অনুষ্ঠান। কেৱল বিবাহিতা আৰু



বিধবা তিৰোতাসকলেহে এই পূজাত অংশগ্ৰহণ কৰে। হুদুমদেওৰ সন্তুষ্টিৰ অৰ্থে পৰিৱেশিত নৃত্য-গীতৰ অন্তৰালত এক গভীৰ তাৎপৰ্য নিহিত হৈ থাকে। মহিলাসকলৰ এই আকুল প্ৰাৰ্থনাত আৰু নাৰীৰ আভূষণস্বৰূপ লজ্জাও দেৱতাৰ চৰণত উছৰ্গা কৰাৰ বাবে দেৱতা সন্তুষ্ট হয় আৰু বৰষুণ দিয়ে।

‘আকাশীতৰাৰ কথাৰে’ চলচ্চিত্ৰত চলচ্চিত্ৰকাৰে হুদুমদেও পূজাৰ মূল তাৎপৰ্যক দৃশ্যধৰ্মিতাবে উপস্থাপন কৰাৰ লগতে এই পূজাৰ প্ৰতি থকা অশ্লীল ভাবপ্ৰৱণতাৰ প্ৰতি সেই সমাজৰ লোকৰ ক্ষোভৰ বহিঃপ্ৰকাশকো কৌশলেৰে উপস্থাপন কৰিছে। চলচ্চিত্ৰখনত ৰাজবংশী সমাজৰ এটা উল্লেখযোগ্য চৰিত্ৰত থকা সংলাপ অনুসৰি—

শিক্ষিত সমাজে গাঁৱৰ সংস্কৃতিক হয় দৃষ্টিৰে চায়।
আধুনিক বস্ত্ৰৰ স্বল্পতাত তেওঁলোকে লাজ নাপায়। কিন্তু গাঁৱৰ
মহিলাই পথাৰত একবস্ত্ৰে কাম কৰিলে তেওঁলোকৰ নাক কোচ
থায়। খৰাং ধৰালৈ বৰষুণ নমাবলৈ গাঁৱৰ মহিলাসকলে হুদুম
দেৱতাৰ চৰণত নিজকে উজাৰি দি কৰা নাচ-গানত তেওঁলোকে
অশ্লীলতাৰ গোন্ধ পায়।

— ইয়াতেই প্ৰকাশ পাইছে চলচ্চিত্ৰকাৰৰ দৃষ্টিভংগী।
লোকপৰম্পৰা আৰু আধুনিক সমাজৰ মাজৰ দ্বন্দ্বক তেওঁ
উপস্থাপন কৰি নিজা মত পোষণ কৰিছে। চলচ্চিত্ৰকাৰৰ মতে,
নাৰী হ’ল সৃষ্টিৰ প্ৰতীক। এয়া হ’ল নাৰীৰ সৃষ্টিকামনাৰ প্ৰাকৃতিক
ৰূপ। ইয়াত অশ্লীলতাৰ ধাৰণাক আৰোপ কৰাটো একেবাৰেই
অপ্ৰাসংগিক। পুৰণি সমাজৰ যিবোৰ গীত-মাতো মানুহ আৰু
প্ৰকৃতি, পুৰুষ আৰু নাৰীৰ সম্পৰ্কক স্বাভাৱিক ৰূপত বৰ্ণনা
কৰিছিল সেইসমূহক আধুনিক সমাজে অশ্লীল আখ্যা দিছে।
একেদৰেই হুদুম পূজাৰ গীতবোৰো পুৰুষ আৰু প্ৰকৃতিৰ
স্বাভাৱিক মিলনৰ গীত হৈও আধুনিক সমাজত ই অশ্লীল হিচাপে
পৰিচিত হ’ল। ইয়াৰ মূলতেই হ’ল মানুহৰ ক্ৰমবিবৰ্তিত
মানসিকতা। ভোগবাদী সভ্যতাই প্ৰকৃতিৰ লগতে মানুহকো
মানুহৰ দাস হোৱাত ইক্ষন যোগাইছে। অন্য সামগ্ৰীৰ লগতে
নাৰীকো পণ্য হিচাপে গ্ৰহণ কৰাৰ ফলতেই নাৰীৰ সামাজিক
অস্তিত্ব সম্পৰ্কে প্ৰশ্নও উত্থাপিত হ’বলৈ ধৰিলে। সেয়ে
চলচ্চিত্ৰকাৰেও আকাশীতৰাৰ যোগেৰেই প্ৰশ্নৰ উপস্থাপন
কৰিছে—

সঁচাকৈয়ে নাৰীৰ সেই ত্যাগৰ বিনিময়ত দেৱতা সন্তুষ্ট
হৈছিলনে? পুৰুষেতো কেতিয়াও এই ত্যাগ স্বীকাৰ কৰিবলৈ

ওলাই অহা নাই। কিন্তু এটা কথা সত্য যে, বৃষ্টি আহক বা
নাহক এনে লোকাচাৰৰ মাজেৰে নাৰী নিৰ্যাতনৰ বুৰঞ্জীত আৰু
এখিলা পৃষ্ঠা সংযোগ হ’ব।

খেৰাই পূজা বড়োসকলে কল্যাণকামী উদ্দেশ্যেৰে
অনুষ্ঠিত কৰা এক উৎসৱ। খেৰাই উৎসৱত বড়োসকলে নানা
দেৱ-দেৱীৰ পূজা কৰে। এই পূজাৰ বিষয়ে যতীন্দ্ৰ কুমাৰ
বৰগোহাঞিয়ে উল্লেখ কৰিছে এনেদৰে— “পূজাৰ দিনা
দেউৰীয়ে সূৰ্য ডুবাৰ লগে লগে প্ৰাৰ্থনা আৰম্ভ কৰে। পূজাৰ
প্ৰাৰ্থনা চলি থকা সময়খিনিত দেওধনীগৰাকীয়ে বেদীৰ সন্মুখত
আঁঠু কাটি সেৱা কৰি থাকে। ওজাৰ প্ৰাৰ্থনা চলি থকা সময়ত
দেওধনীৰ গা কঁপি থাকে, হাতজোৰ কৰি বাথৌ বুৰাইৰ সন্মুখত
সেৱা কৰি থকা দেওধনীৰ নৃত্যৰ ভংগিমা মূলতঃ খাম (মাদল),
বাঁহী (চিফুং) আৰু তালৰ শব্দত এক বহস্যভাৰা, আকৰ্ষণীয়
আৰু গম্ভীৰ পৰিৱেশ গঢ় লৈ উঠাৰ লগে লগে ক্ৰমান্বয়ে
লাস্যময় হৈ পৰে। নৃত্যৰ লাস্য সৰ্বোচ্চ পৰ্যায়লৈ উঠাৰ পিছত
দেওধনীয়ে অতি উদ্দাম গতিৰে এই সময়তে দেৱ-দেৱীসকলৰ
প্ৰভাৱত বা তেওঁলোকেই দেওধনীৰ শৰীৰত প্ৰৱেশ কৰি
দেওধনীক বল-শক্তি আৰু নৃত্যৰ উদ্দামতা প্ৰদান কৰে বুলি
বিশ্বাস কৰা হয়।”^৭

চলচ্চিত্ৰখনতো পৰিচালকে খেৰাই পূজাৰ সম্পন্ন কৰাৰ
ৰীতি আৰু ইয়াৰ তাৎপৰ্যক একেধৰণেৰে উপস্থাপন কৰাৰ প্ৰয়াস
কৰিছে। অৱশ্যে ভিজুৱেল ৰূপটোত পৰিচালকৰ মৌলিকতা বা
মূলৰ যথাযথ উপস্থাপন সম্পৰ্কে ক্ষেত্ৰ অধ্যয়নৰ জৰিয়তেহে
সঠিক তথ্য লাভ কৰিব পৰা যাব। মূলতঃ কৃষিভিত্তিক উৎসৱ
খেৰাই পূজাত তিনি দিন তিনি ৰাতিধৰি দেওধনীৰ নৃত্য প্ৰদৰ্শন
মহিলাগৰাকীৰ বাবে শাৰীৰিক দিশৰপৰা কিমান গ্ৰহণযোগ্য
সেয়া বিচাৰ্যৰ বিষয়। এই সত্যটো অনুধাৱন কৰিয়েই পৰিচালকে
এই লোকসাংস্কৃতিক উপাদানবিধক চলচ্চিত্ৰখনত অন্তৰ্ভুক্ত
কৰিছে। বড়োসকলৰ শৌৰ্য-বীৰ্য, সৌন্দৰ্য আৰু সামূহিক
কল্যাণধৰ্মী চিন্তাৰ অৰ্থে মহিলাসকলৰ এই অপৰিসীম ত্যাগ
আৰু কষ্ট স্বীকাৰৰ পাছতো এই বিষয়টো প্ৰায়ে অৱহেলিত
হৈয়ে ৰয়। ধৰ্মীয় পৰম্পৰাৰ লগতে জাতীয় কৃষ্টি অক্ষুণ্ণ ৰখাত
খেৰাই নৃত্যৰ লগত জড়িত নাৰীসকলৰ ভূমিকা সদায়ে
গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ। নাৰীৰ সামাজিক ভূমিকা আৰু স্থানৰ প্ৰতি সততে
সংবেদনশীল এইগৰাকী চলচ্চিত্ৰ পৰিচালকৰ মনোভাব তথা
দৃষ্টিভংগী চলচ্চিত্ৰখনৰ এই অংশতো স্পষ্ট ৰূপত ফুটি উঠিছে।

সাধাৰণতে দেৱদাসী বুলি ক'লে দেৱতাৰ দাসীকেই বুজা যায়। দেৱতাৰ পত্নীস্বৰূপে মন্দিৰত কন্যা উৎসৰ্গা কৰা প্ৰথাটোৱেই দেৱদাসী প্ৰথা আৰু দেৱমূৰ্তিৰ মনোৰঞ্জনৰ অৰ্থে উৎসৰ্গিত মন্দিৰৰ কুমাৰী কন্যাসকলেই হ'ল দেৱদাসী। দাসীবৃত্তিৰ উপৰি দেৱসেৱাৰ নামত কন্যাসকলে দেৱতাৰ প্ৰতিনিধিস্বৰূপ পুৰোহিতসকলৰ শাৰীৰিক-মানসিক সকলো প্ৰয়োজন পূৰাব লাগিছিল। গতিকে দেৱতাৰ পত্নী হিচাপে সমাজত দেৱদাসীসকল তথাকথিত উচ্চমৰ্যাদাসম্পন্ন হোৱা সত্ত্বেও এই প্ৰথা নাৰীচেতনাৰ ওপৰত একপ্ৰকাৰ অত্যাচাৰ বুলিয়েই অভিহিত কৰিব পাৰি। সমগ্ৰ ভাৰততে দেৱদাসী প্ৰথাৰ প্ৰচলন আছিল আৰু অসমতো বহুলভাৱে প্ৰচলিত নহয় যদিও ঠাইবিশেষে ইয়াৰ প্ৰচলন আছিল। 'আকাশীতৰাৰ কথাৰে' চলচ্চিত্ৰত উল্লেখ কৰা অনুসৰি ডুবিৰ পৰিহৰেশ্বৰ দেৱালয়ৰ শিৱমন্দিৰ, হাজোৰ হয়গ্ৰীৱ, কেদাৰ, নেঘেৰিটিং শিৱমন্দিৰ ইত্যাদিত দেৱদাসী নৃত্যৰ প্ৰচলনৰ আভাস পাব পাৰি। দেৱদাসীসকলে স্বীকাৰ কৰা ত্যাগ আৰু তাৰ বিপৰীতে পুৰুষপ্ৰধান সমাজে তেওঁলোকৰ প্ৰতি কৰা দুৰ্ব্যৱহাৰে আকাশীতৰাক ভবাই তুলিছে—

এক পুস্তৰ মূৰ্তিৰ দেৱতা আৰু সেই দেৱতাৰ নামত
আচৰিত শক্তিমন্ত্ৰ পুৰুষৰ কামনাৰ জুইত এজনী ফুলকুমলীয়া
ছোৱালীৰ জীৱন-যৌৱন কি আসুৰিকতাৰে কাঢ়ি নিয়া হ'ল।
মানৱ সভ্যতাৰ ই কি আচৰিত ৰূপ। সেয়াই ধৰ্ম, সেয়াই
পৰম্পৰা। কেৱল ধৰ্মীয় পৰম্পৰাৰ নামত মাথোন শাৰীৰিক
ক্ষমতাৰ জোৰত নাৰীৰ এই অপমান যুগৰ পাছত যুগ চলি
আহিছিল। সদ্যপুষ্পিতা নাৰী হৈছিল বাৰবনিতা, বৃদ্ধা হৈছিল
বাৰবনিতা। শেষ বস্তুটুকুৰাও হেৰুওৱা এজনী অনাহাৰী,
অৰ্ধাহাৰী, মৃত্যুৰ বাবে অপেক্ষাৰত দেৱদাসী, যাৰ মৃত্যুত
দেৱতাৰো নোলাইছিল এটোপালো চকুপানী।

পৃথিৱীত দেৱতাৰ নামত যিমান অন্যায্য সংঘটিত হৈ
আহিছে, দেৱদাসী প্ৰথা এই অন্যায্য সংঘটনৰেই এক সাক্ষ্য
বুলি ক'ব পাৰি। এই দেৱদাসী প্ৰথা নাৰীৰ সামাজিক অৱস্থানৰ
এক দলিলস্বৰূপেও অভিহিত কৰিব পাৰি।

উল্লিখিত লোক-সাংস্কৃতিক প্ৰসংগকেইটাৰ আঁত
ধৰিয়েই 'আকাশীতৰাৰ কথাৰে' চলচ্চিত্ৰখনত চলচ্চিত্ৰকাৰে
নাৰীৰ সামাজিক অৱস্থানক অৱলোকন কৰাৰ প্ৰয়াস কৰিছে।
তেওঁৰ এই প্ৰয়াসৰ লগতে লোকসাংস্কৃতিক প্ৰসংগত নাৰী

আৰু আধুনিক সমাজৰ নাৰীৰ মাজত এক যোগসূত্ৰ ৰক্ষাৰ
চলচ্চিত্ৰীয় প্ৰয়াস কৰিছে। এগৰাকী শিক্ষিত মহিলা নাৰী হিচাপে
আকাশীতৰাই অসমৰ নাৰীকেন্দ্ৰিক লোকসংস্কৃতিৰ আঁৰৰ
প্ৰসংগক বিচাৰ কৰাৰ প্ৰয়াস কৰিছে। পৰম্পৰাৰ নামত
নাৰীসমাজৰ অকৃত্ৰিম ত্যাগ আৰু সেই ত্যাগৰ মূল্যহীনতাক
পৰ্যালোচনা কৰিবলৈ যোৱা আকাশীতৰাই নিজৰে জীৱনত
সন্মুখীন হৈছে এক অভাৱনীয় পৰিস্থিতিৰ আৰু সেই পৰিস্থিতিৰ
উদ্ভাৱক হৈছে পুৰুষতান্ত্ৰিক সমাজখন।

এগৰাকী আধুনিক সমাজৰ নাৰী হৈয়ো পৰম্পৰাগত
পুৰুষতান্ত্ৰিকতাৰ বলি হৈ নিজৰ সৰ্বস্ব হেৰুৱাই আকাশীতৰা
আত্মপৰিচয়ৰ দ্বন্দ্বৰ সন্মুখীন হৈছে। প্ৰাচীন কালৰেপৰা সমাজত
চলি অহা পৰম্পৰাৰ নামত নাৰীসকলৰ সামাজিক স্থান সম্পৰ্কে
সন্দিহান হৈ গৱেষণাৰ বিষয় হিচাপে নিৰ্ধাৰিত বিষয়ক বাছি
লোৱা আকাশীতৰাই বিবাহৰ পাছত নিজৰ গৱেষণা কৰ্মকেই
আধৰুৱাকৈ এৰিছে, অন্যান্য নিজৰ ৰুচিৰ বিপৰীতে কেৱল
স্বামীৰ ৰুচিৰ লগতেই সহায়স্থান কৰিবলৈ বাধ্য হৈছে। বাৰে
বাৰে স্বয়ংসত্তাৰ সন্ধান কৰিবলৈ গৈ ব্যৰ্থ হৈছে। পুৰুষতান্ত্ৰিকতাৰ
নিৰ্মম বাস্তৱৰ প্ৰতিফলন ঘটিছে আকাশীতৰাৰ স্বামীৰ মুখৰ
এক সংলাপৰ জৰিয়তে—

আমাৰ শাস্ত্ৰত কৈছে নাৰী হ'ল ভাৰ্যা, স্বামীয়ে তেওঁক
পোহপাল দিয়ে। নাৰী ৰমণী, তাই কামিনী আৰু কান্ত, যি পুৰুষক
আকৰ্ষণ কৰে, আনন্দ দিয়ে। তাই জায়া, স্বামীৰ সন্তান ধাৰণ কৰি
মানৱ সমাজৰ ক্ৰম ৰক্ষা কৰে।

আকাশীতৰাৰ হেঁপাহৰ পৃথিৱীখন ভাঙি চূড়মাৰ হৈ
যোৱাৰ পাছতো তেওঁ বিনা প্ৰতিবাদে আকাশীতৰাই ভাগ্যৰ
ওচৰত আত্মসমৰ্পণ কৰিবলৈ বাধ্য, নিজকে পৰম্পৰাগত
আদৰ্শাত্মক ভূমিকাত বিলীন কৰিবলৈ বাধ্য। লোকসাংস্কৃতিক
পৰম্পৰাৰ মাজত নাৰীক অনুসন্ধান কৰিবলৈ প্ৰয়াস কৰি থকা
আকাশীতৰাই পৰিণত হৈছে সেই একেই চিৰন্তন অৱহেলিত
তথা জীৱন্ত নাৰীসত্তাত। আকাশীতৰা আধুনিক সমাজৰ নাৰী
হৈও পৰিণত হৈছে এক পৰিত্যক্ত, লোক-সাংস্কৃতিক পৰম্পৰাৰ
অৱহেলিত নাৰী চৰিত্ৰলৈ। পৰিচালকৰ এই ব্যঞ্জনাময় প্ৰকাশে
চলচ্চিত্ৰখনৰ মূল বক্তব্যক অধিক শক্তিশালী কৰি প্ৰকাশ
কৰিছে। প্ৰকৃততে আমাৰ সমাজত সময়ৰহে পৰিৱৰ্তন হৈছে,
মানুহ আৰু চিন্তাবোৰ নহয়। 'আকাশীতৰাৰ কথাৰে' তাৰেই
এক নিদৰ্শন। যুগে যুগে নাৰীয়ে সামাজিক স্বাৰ্থৰ বাবে

সামাজিকভাৱে ধৰ্ম বা লোকাচাৰৰ নামত অনেক ত্যাগ স্বীকাৰ কৰি আহিছে; কিন্তু বৰ্তমান সভ্যতাৰ চৰম পৰ্যায়ত উপনীত হৈও পৃথিৱীৰ চুকে-কোণে কত নাবী কতধৰণে উপেক্ষিত আৰু নিৰ্যাতিত হৈছে, নিপীড়িত হৈ আহিছে তাৰ উদাহৰণ অলেখ, অসংখ্য। *আকাশীতৰাৰ কথা*ৰে চলচ্চিত্ৰখন চলচ্চিত্ৰকাৰৰ এনেধৰণৰ চিন্তাপ্ৰসূত ফচল।

৩.০ ববী শৰ্মা বৰুৱাৰ ‘অদম্য’ :

‘অদম্য’ৰ জৰিয়তে অসমীয়া চলচ্চিত্ৰ পৰিচালক হিচাপে আত্ম পৰিচয় গঢ় দিয়া ববী শৰ্মা বৰুৱাৰ আন এখন চলচ্চিত্ৰ হ’ল ‘সোণাৰ বৰণ পাখি’। ছবিখন গোৱালপৰীয়া লোকগীতৰ সন্মিলিত প্ৰতিমা বৰুৱা পাণ্ডেৰ জীৱনৰ আধাৰত নিৰ্মাণ কৰা হৈছে। বিভিন্ন দেশী-বিদেশী চলচ্চিত্ৰ মহোৎসৱত প্ৰদৰ্শিত আৰু সন্মানিত হোৱা এই দুয়োখন পূৰ্ণ দৈৰ্ঘ্যৰ কাহিনীচিত্ৰৰ উপৰি তেওঁ বিভিন্ন তথ্যচিত্ৰৰ পৰিচালনা অব্যাহত ৰাখিছে।

৩.১ বিষয়বস্তু :

‘অদম্য’ মূলতঃ এখন নাৰীকেন্দ্ৰিক চলচ্চিত্ৰ। এটা অতি স্পৰ্শকাতৰ সামাজিক বিষয়বস্তুক মূল উপজীব্য হিচাপে লৈ নিৰ্মিত চলচ্চিত্ৰখনে অসমৰ নাৰীকেন্দ্ৰিক চলচ্চিত্ৰসমূহৰ ভিতৰত এক বিশেষ স্থান লাভ কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে। চলচ্চিত্ৰখনৰ মূল কাহিনী আগবাঢ়ে জুৰি নামৰ মুখ্য চৰিত্ৰটোক কেন্দ্ৰ কৰি। নাৰীমনৰ চিৰন্তন আকাংক্ষা আৰু সপোন বুকুত বান্ধি গাঁৱৰ ছোৱালী জুৰিয়ে চহৰৰ এগৰাকী অভিযন্তাৰ লগত বিবাহপাশত আবদ্ধ হয়। বিয়াৰ প্ৰায় ছমাহ পাছতেই এইড্ছ ৰোগত আক্ৰান্ত হৈ স্বামীৰ মৃত্যু হয়। সেই সময়ত গৰ্ভৱতী জুৰিৰ দেহতো এইড্ছ ৰোগ ধৰা পৰাত সকলোৰেপৰা অস্পৃশ্য ব্যৱহাৰ পাবলৈ ধৰে। পিতৃৰ পৰিয়ালৰপৰাও কোনো সাঁহাৰি নোপোৱা জুৰি সমাজৰ দৃষ্টিত এক অৱহেলিত আৰু অস্পৃশ্য সত্তা হৈ ৰয়। এইড্ছমুক্ত এটি কন্যা সন্তান জন্ম দিয়াৰ পাছতো সামাজিক দুৰ্ব্যৱহাৰৰ কোনো পৰিৱৰ্তন নেদেখি জুৰিয়ে কন্যা সন্তান (জোনাক)টিৰ সৈতে নিজাকৈ জীৱন সংগ্ৰামত নিৰন্তৰ যুঁজত ব্ৰতী হয়। ‘জোনাক’ৰ সৈতে এটা আলোকসন্ধানী যাত্ৰা অব্যাহত ৰাখে। ঘাইকৈ এই কাহিনীটোকেই কেন্দ্ৰ কৰি পৰিচালকে সমগ্ৰ চলচ্চিত্ৰখন ৰূপায়ণ কৰাৰ প্ৰয়াস কৰিছে।

৩.২ পৰিচালকৰ দৃষ্টিভঙ্গী :

‘অদম্য’— চলচ্চিত্ৰখনৰ শীৰ্ষকেই প্ৰতীয়মান কৰে চলচ্চিত্ৰকাৰৰ দৃষ্টিভঙ্গী। সাধাৰণতে প্ৰচলিত সমাজ ব্যৱস্থাত

এইড্ছ ৰোগৰ প্ৰতি মানুহৰ দুৰ্ভাৱনাই অধিক। এই ৰোগৰ সম্পৰ্কে জ্ঞান সীমিত হোৱা বাবেই এইড্ছ ৰোগীৰ প্ৰতি সততে অস্পৃশ্যতা প্ৰকাশিত হয়। প্ৰচলিত এই চিন্তা-চেতনাৰ উৰ্ধত মানুহৰ সামাজিক সচেতনতা বৃদ্ধিয়েই এই চলচ্চিত্ৰ নিৰ্মাণৰ মূল উদ্দেশ্য। চলচ্চিত্ৰখনৰ মূল চৰিত্ৰ জুৰিয়েও পৰিয়ালৰ আপোনজনৰ, সমাজৰ প্ৰত্যাখ্যান স্বীকাৰ কৰিও সন্তানৰ ভৱিষ্যতৰ স্বাৰ্থত এক অদমনীয় সত্তা হৈ থিয় দিছে। জুৰি এনে হাজাৰজনী সমাজবিৰজিতা নাৰীৰ প্ৰতিবাদী কণ্ঠৰ প্ৰতিনিধি। প্ৰথমখন চলচ্চিত্ৰ নিৰ্মাণৰ কামতে এনে এটা প্ৰত্যাখ্যানমূলক বিষয় নিৰ্বাচনে পৰিচালকৰ সাৰ্থকতা আৰু সচেতন দৃষ্টিভঙ্গীকে প্ৰতিফলিত কৰে। এগৰাকী ভুক্তভোগী নাৰীৰ মানসিক যন্ত্ৰণাক চলচ্চিত্ৰীয় ভাষাৰে উপস্থাপনত পৰিচালক সফল হৈছে। জীৱনত প্ৰতি পদে পদে সন্মুখীন হোৱা ঘাত-প্ৰতিঘাতক হেলাৰঙে আওকাণ কৰি নিজাকৈ এটা পথ নিৰ্মাণ কৰি লোৱা চৰিত্ৰটোক বাস্তৱসন্মত ৰূপত চিত্ৰায়ণ কৰিবলৈ পৰিচালক বৰুৱাই যথাসাধ্য প্ৰয়াস কৰিছে। মূল প্ৰটগনিষ্ট তথা কাহিনীৰ কেন্দ্ৰবিন্দু হিচাপে জুৰি চৰিত্ৰটোৱে কেমেৰাৰ অধিকাংশ ফ্ৰেম দখল কৰিছে। জুৰিৰ মানসিক সংঘৰ্ষ আৰু মনস্তত্ত্বক কেমেৰাৰ ভাষাৰে ফুটাই তোলাৰ যত্ন চলচ্চিত্ৰখনৰ জৰিয়তে প্ৰতিফলিত হয়। চৰিত্ৰটোৰ সঘন মুখাৱয়বৰ শ্বট আৰু চেহেৰাৰ সালসলনিৰে কাহিনীৰ ক্ৰমগতিক চিহ্নিত কৰে। কোনো নাটকীয়তা তথা জড়তাৰ প্ৰভাৱ পৰিবলৈ নিদি সম্পূৰ্ণ স্বভাৱসুলভতাৰে পৰিচালকে মূল চৰিত্ৰকেইটাৰ অভিনয় শিল্পীৰপৰা আদায় কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে। এয়া পৰিচালকৰ দক্ষতাৰ পৰিচায়ক। ইয়াৰ মূলতে আছিল পৰিচালকৰ গভীৰ ক্ষেত্ৰ অধ্যয়ন আৰু কছৰং। এই সম্পৰ্কে ববী শৰ্মা বৰুৱাই তেওঁৰ চলচ্চিত্ৰবিষয়ক এটা সাক্ষাৎকাৰত উল্লেখ কৰিছে — বিষয়টো মোৰ নিজৰে আছিল। এইড্ছ সম্পৰ্কে মই এটা প্ৰবন্ধ পঢ়িছিলোঁ। সেই প্ৰবন্ধটোৰপৰাই মই কাহিনী নিৰ্মাণৰ বাবে উৎসাহী হৈছিলোঁ। কাহিনীটো যদিও নিজৰ আছিল, জনা-নজনাকৈ ইয়াৰ প্ৰভাৱ অসমৰ কোনো মানুহৰ গাত পৰিব পাৰে। এই সম্পৰ্কত মই কিছুমান এইড্ছ আই ভি পজিটিভ ৰোগী লগ পাইছিলোঁ। ডাক্তৰৰ পৰামৰ্শ অনুসৰিও কিছু মানুহক লগ কৰিবলৈ গৈছিলোঁ। তেওঁলোকৰ সৈতে মই কথা হৈছিলোঁ। ইয়াৰ জৰিয়তে মোৰ এটা সংঘাতিক অনুভৱ হৈছিল। তেওঁলোকৰ মনৰ বেদনা মই অন্তৰৰপৰা অনুভৱ



কৰিছিলোঁ আৰু গোটেই চিনেমাখনত এই যন্ত্ৰণাটো মই কঢ়িয়াই লৈ ফুৰিছিলোঁ।” (সাংবাদিক বিদ্যুৎ কুমাৰ ভূঞাৰ অনুষ্ঠান ‘কথা প্ৰসংগ’ত সম্প্ৰচাৰিত)। সমাজ জীৱনৰ ৰূঢ় বাস্তৱতাক কেমেৰাৰ জৰিয়তে পুনৰ নিৰ্মাণৰ সযত্ন প্ৰয়াস ‘অদম্য’ চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ জৰিয়তে প্ৰকাশিত হয়। চলচ্চিত্ৰখনৰ বিষয়বস্তু আৰু কাহিনীৰ অন্তৰ্নিহিত ভাবধাৰা অক্ষুণ্ণ ৰখাত আৱহ সংগীত আৰু আলোকসম্পাতৰ ভূমিকা গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ। এখন সংহত চিত্ৰনাট্যই চলচ্চিত্ৰখনৰ সামগ্ৰিক সফলতাত যথেষ্ট বৰঙনি আগবঢ়ায়। চিত্ৰনাট্যৰ এই গুৰুত্বক অনুধাৱন কৰিয়েই পৰিচালকে চিত্ৰনাট্যৰ পৰ্যায়তে অৱলম্বন কৰা সচেতনতা চলচ্চিত্ৰখনৰ জৰিয়তে প্ৰতীয়মান হয়। এটা অগতানুগতিক বিষয়ক মূল হিচাপে লৈ আৰম্ভ কৰা প্ৰথম প্ৰচেষ্টাতে ববী শৰ্মা বৰুৱাই এগৰাকী প্ৰত্যয়দীপ্ত পৰিচালকৰ পৰিচয় দিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে।

৪.০ অসমীয়া চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ ইতিহাসত তিনিওগৰাকী পৰিচালকৰ স্থান আৰু সম্ভাৱনা :

আলোচ্য তিনিওগৰাকী চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ পৰিচালকৰ নিৰ্বাচিত চলচ্চিত্ৰ সম্পৰ্কে অধ্যয়নত দুটা মূল দিশে প্ৰধানতঃ ক্ৰিয়া কৰিছে। তিনিওখন চলচ্চিত্ৰ মহিলা পৰিচালকৰ দ্বাৰা নিৰ্মিত হোৱাৰ লগতে তিনিওখনেই নাৰীকেন্দ্ৰিক চলচ্চিত্ৰ। এখন সাৰ্থক কলাগত চলচ্চিত্ৰ নিৰ্মাণ কৰাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত সাক্ষ্য বৰদলৈ প্ৰথমখন চলচ্চিত্ৰ ‘অদাহ’তে সফল হৈছে। যদিও চলচ্চিত্ৰকাৰে নাৰীবাদী চলচ্চিত্ৰ তত্ত্ব বা ভাবধাৰাৰ প্ৰতি আনুগত্য মুকলিকৈ প্ৰকাশ কৰা নাই, তথাপি ভাৰতীয় পুৰুষতান্ত্ৰিক সমাজত নাৰীৰ পৰিণতিৰ বিষয়ে অন্তঃকৰণেৰে অনুভৱ কৰিছে আৰু এনে বক্তব্য তেওঁ চৰিত্ৰসমূহৰ মাজেৰে প্ৰতিফলিত কৰিছে। “উপন্যাসৰ বৰ্ণনালৈৰ দৰে অদাহৰ সংলাপতো গ্ৰাম্য নাৰীসমাজৰ ভিতৰ চ’ৰাৰ কথিত ভাষাই ব্যৱহাৰ হোৱাত পুৰুষতান্ত্ৰিক সমাজৰ অনুশাসনমুক্ত নাৰীৰ কিছুমান দুৰ্লভ মুহূৰ্ত অন্য কিছুমান তাৎপৰ্যৰে বাৎময় হৈ পৰিছে।”^{৩৮} কথাছবিখনত উপস্থাপন হোৱা প্ৰসংগ নাৰীক যথোচিত মৰ্যাদা প্ৰদানৰ বাবে নাৰীমুক্তিৰ প্ৰয়োজনীয়তা আৰু গুৰুত্ব— এই বিষয়ে মহিলা চলচ্চিত্ৰকাৰ হিচাপে সাক্ষ্য বৰদলৈয়ে অনায়াসে অনুধাৱন কৰিছে। বিংশ শতিকাৰ অসমীয়া চলচ্চিত্ৰত নাৰীক চিত্ৰায়ণৰ দিশৰ উপৰি মহিলা চলচ্চিত্ৰকাৰৰ নিৰ্মাণ হিচাপে ‘অদাহ’ৰ গুৰুত্ব অপৰিসীম।

‘আকাশীতৰাৰ কথাৰে’ চলচ্চিত্ৰত পৰম্পৰাগত পুৰুষতান্ত্ৰিক সমাজৰ আৱৰ্তত নাৰীৰ সামাজিক স্থান চলচ্চিত্ৰকাৰৰ মূল বিচাৰ্যৰ বিষয় হোৱাৰ পৰিপ্ৰেক্ষিতত লোক-সাংস্কৃতিক প্ৰসংগত নাৰী আৰু আধুনিক সমাজত নাৰীৰ অৱস্থানৰ মাজত এক যোগসূত্ৰ স্থাপন কৰিছে আৰু ই প্ৰতিফলিত হৈছে সম্পূৰ্ণ ব্যঞ্জনধৰ্মী ৰূপত। এক নিষ্ক্ৰিয় নাৰীবাদী বাগ্‌ধাৰাক গভীৰ আৰু সুক্ষ্মভাৱে বিশ্লেষণ কৰি চোৱাৰ আন্তৰিক প্ৰয়াসে চলচ্চিত্ৰখনক বিশেষ ব্যাপ্তি প্ৰদান কৰিছে লগতে পৰিচালকৰ ঐকান্তিক প্ৰচেষ্টাকো সূচিত কৰিছে। মূল কাহিনীৰ লগত সংগতি ৰক্ষা কৰি অসমৰ নাৰীকেন্দ্ৰিক লোকসংস্কৃতিৰ ক্ষেত্ৰ অধ্যয়নভিত্তিক বৰ্ণনা আৰু ইয়াৰ দৃশ্যৰূপৰ উপস্থাপনে চলচ্চিত্ৰখনক তথ্যচিত্ৰ (Documentary)ৰ ওচৰ চপাই নিছে। এনেধৰণৰ সযত্ন প্ৰয়াসে অসমৰ লোকসংস্কৃতিৰ অন্যান্য উপাদানসমূহকো বহুমাত্ৰিক ৰূপত বিশ্লেষণ কৰি চোৱাৰ সম্ভাৱনা বহন কৰে।

এক মানৱীয় সংকট আৰু সহায়স্থানৰ ছবি ‘অদম্য’ৰ পৰিচালক হিচাপে ববী শৰ্মা বৰুৱাই গ্ৰহণ কৰা প্ৰত্যাহ্বানে তেওঁৰ প্ৰত্যয়দীপ্ত আৰু চিন্তাসমৃদ্ধ দৃষ্টিভংগীক বহন কৰে। বিশ্বৰ বহু দেশত এইড্‌ছক লৈ সুস্থিৰ বাতাবৰণ গঢ় লৈ উঠাৰ সময়তো আমাৰ সমাজ ব্যৱস্থাত বৰ্তমানেও ইয়াৰ ভয়াবহতাক লৈ সন্দিহান হৈ থকাৰ প্ৰসংগই ছবিখনক এক বিশেষ মাত্ৰা প্ৰদান কৰিছে। সমাজত অস্পৃশ্য বুলি জ্ঞান কৰা এনে ৰোগীসকলকে আঁকোৱালি লৈ গভীৰ সমমৰ্মিতা আৰু সাহসেৰে উপস্থাপন কৰাত পৰিচালক সফল হৈছে। সংহত আৰু পৰিশীলিত উপস্থাপনৰ জৰিয়তে গভীৰ চলচ্চিত্ৰ বীক্ষাৰ পৰিচয় দিবলৈ সক্ষম হোৱা তিনিওগৰাকী পৰিচালকেই অসমৰ চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ ইতিহাসত ইতিমধ্যেই স্বকীয় আসন দখল কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে। তেওঁলোকৰ এই সংবেদনশীল প্ৰয়াসে অসমীয়া চলচ্চিত্ৰ জগতৰ অপাৰ সম্ভাৱনীয়তাক বহন কৰে।

আপাততঃ সংযোগবিহীন, পৃথক হ’লেও তিনিওখন চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ মাজত এক অদৃশ্য পাৰস্পৰিক সংযোগসূত্ৰ অনুভৱ কৰিব পাৰি। পৃথক পৃথক নাৰী চৰিত্ৰৰ পৃথক সমস্যাৰ উপস্থাপন সম্বলিত চলচ্চিত্ৰকেইখনৰ চাৰিওটা কাহিনীক একত্ৰিত কৰি অনুধাৱন কৰাত সহায় কৰা প্ৰসংগটো হৈছে আত্মপৰিচয়, আত্মসন্মান তথা আত্ম অধিকাৰৰ প্ৰসংগ। প্ৰথমৰপৰা শেষলৈকে প্ৰত্যেকটো কাহিনীৰেই অন্তৰ্নিহিত



সুৰটোৱেই হৈছে আত্মসন্ধান তথা আত্মপৰিচয়ৰ সুৰ। গিৰিবালা, আকাশীতৰা, জুৰি— প্ৰতিটো প্ৰধান চৰিত্ৰই পুৰুষতাত্ত্বিক সমাজৰ পৰম্পৰাগত আচৰণবিধি, ৰীতি-নীতিৰে আবদ্ধ হোৱাৰ পাছতো পৰিসমাপ্তিত নিজৰ অৱস্থিতিত সন্দিহান। নিজৰ ভাগ্য অথবা দুৰ্ভাগ্যৰ সৈতে সহ্যৰস্থান কৰাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত, পুৰুষ আধিপত্যক গ্ৰহণ কৰাৰ মানসিকতাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত গিৰিবালা আৰু আকাশীতৰাৰ নীৰৱ প্ৰতিবাদৰপৰা জুৰিৰ সামাজিক প্ৰত্যাখ্যানৰ সৰৱতালৈকে চৰিত্ৰকেইটাক গতিময়তা প্ৰদানৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত সচেতন প্ৰয়াস পৰিলক্ষিত হয়। নাৰী আৰু পুৰুষৰ এই বৈপৰীত্যৰ সন্ধান আৰু ইয়াক উপস্থাপনৰ মাত্ৰাৰ দিশৰপৰা চলচ্চিত্ৰকেইখনক সম্পূৰ্ণ নাৰীবাদী আখ্যা দিব নোৱাৰি যদিও শেষৰ বাৰ্তাই ইয়াৰ এটা ক্ষীণ ৰেঙণিৰ আভাস দৰ্শকক দিব পাৰে।

৫.০ সামগ্ৰিক সিদ্ধান্ত :

শীৰ্ষক বিষয়টো অধ্যয়নৰ শেষত কেইটামান নিৰ্দিষ্ট সিদ্ধান্তত উপনীত হ'ব পাৰি। সেই সিদ্ধান্তসমূহ হৈছে—

ক) অসমীয়া চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনত পৰিচালক হিচাপে সান্ত্বনা বৰদলৈ, মঞ্জু বৰা আৰু ববী শৰ্মা বৰুৱাই নিজৰ চলচ্চিত্ৰ কৰ্মৰ জৰিয়তে গভীৰ চলচ্চিত্ৰীয় বীক্ষাৰ পৰিচয় দিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে।

খ) নিৰ্বাচিত তিনিওখন চলচ্চিত্ৰতে বিষয়বস্তু নিৰ্বাচনৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত পৰিচালকেইগৰাকীৰ সচেতনতা আৰু সংবেদনশীলতা প্ৰতীয়মান হৈ উঠে। এই সংবেদনশীলতাৰ উৎস হিচাপে

তেওঁলোকে নিৰ্বাচন কৰি লৈছে চৌপাশৰ সামাজিক ব্যৱস্থাত নাৰীৰ সহ্যৰস্থান। এইখন সমাজৰে একোগৰাকী নাৰী হৈ নাৰী মননক সূক্ষ্ম পৰ্যবেক্ষণ কৰি চলচ্চিত্ৰত তাক বাস্তৱসন্মত ৰূপত উপস্থাপন কৰাত তেওঁলোক সফল হৈছে।

গ) 'অদাহ্য' আৰু 'আকাশীতৰাৰ কথাৰে'-ত পৰম্পৰাৰ নামত নাৰীসমাজৰ অকৃত্ৰিম ত্যাগ আৰু সেই ত্যাগৰ মূল্যহীনতাৰ প্ৰসংগ, পুৰুষতাত্ত্বিক সমাজ ব্যৱস্থাত বাৰে বাৰে অৱহেলিত, পদদলিত হৈ ৰোৱাৰ যন্ত্ৰণা ইত্যাদিসমূহ প্ৰতিফলিত হৈছে। 'অদম্য'ত দুৰাৰোগ্য শাৰীৰিক ব্যাধিতকৈও ভয়ংকৰ হৈ দেখা দিয়া সামাজিক ব্যাধিসমূহক প্ৰতিহত কৰাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত এক নাৰীসত্তাৰ নিৰন্তৰ সংগ্ৰাম প্ৰতিফলিত হৈছে।

ঘ) বিষয়বস্তুৰ নিৰ্বাচনৰ লগতে এইসমূহক চলচ্চিত্ৰীয় ভাষাৰে বাংময় ৰূপত উপস্থাপনৰ সযত্ন প্ৰয়াস তিনিওগৰাকী পৰিচালকৰ চলচ্চিত্ৰতে পৰিলক্ষিত হয়। অৱশ্যে চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ কাৰিকৰী উপাদানসমূহৰ নান্দনিক আৰু বাস্তৱসন্মত প্ৰয়োগৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত পৰিচালক হিচাপে সান্ত্বনা বৰদলৈক অধিক সফল বুলি ক'ব পাৰি।

ঙ) তিনিওগৰাকী পৰিচালকৰ চলচ্চিত্ৰবোধ আৰু দক্ষতাই অসমীয়া চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ উজ্জ্বল ভৱিষ্যতৰ সম্ভাৱনীয়তাক পূৰ্ণমাত্ৰাই বহন কৰে।

প্ৰসংগসূত্ৰ আৰু টোকা :

^১ প্ৰাঞ্জল বৰা, 'অসমীয়া চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ কেন্দ্ৰীয় নাৰী চৰিত্ৰ', ৰংবং তেৰাং(সম্পা.), প্ৰকাশ, তৃতীয় পৰ্ব, ত্ৰয়োদশ সংখ্যা, মে', ২০১৩, পৃষ্ঠা : ৬০

^২ অপূৰ্ব শৰ্মা, অসমীয়া চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ ছাঁ-পোহৰ, পৃষ্ঠা : ১২৩

^৩ আনন্দ বৰমুদৈ, 'জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদ আৰু এটা চিৰন্তন অমীমাংসিত সমস্যা', জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদ শইকীয়া (সম্পা.), জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদৰ সৃষ্টি আৰু চেতনা, পৃষ্ঠা : ৮০

^৪ অপূৰ্ব শৰ্মা, অসমীয়া চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ ছাঁ-পোহৰ, পৃষ্ঠা : ১২৫

^৫ ৰংবং তেৰাং (সম্পা.) প্ৰকাশ, পঞ্চম বছৰ, চতুৰ্থ সংখ্যা, জানুৱাৰী, ১৯৯৮, পৃষ্ঠা- ৮১

^৬ ধ্ৰুৱকুমাৰ তুলকদাৰ, অসমৰ বিভিন্ন জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোক-উৎসৱ, পৃষ্ঠা : ১০৫

^৭ যতীন্দ্ৰকুমাৰ বৰগোহাঞি, অসমৰ উৎসৱ আৰু পূজা, পৃষ্ঠা : ১৬৪

^৮ পেহীয়েকৰ সৈতে শুবৰ সময়ত গিৰিবালাৰ মুখেদি যেতিয়া মাহেকীয়াৰ পৰিৱৰ্তে চুৰা হোৱা বুলি উচ্চাৰিত হয়, তাত কথিত ভাষাৰ গ্ৰাম্যতাকৈ অতিৰিক্ত তাৎপৰ্যহে ধ্বনিত হয়। এনেবোৰ সূক্ষ্ম কথাৰ বাবে বৰদলৈ মূল উপন্যাসৰ ওচৰত ধৰুৱা হ'লেও



পৰিচালক মহিলা নোহোৱাহেঁতেন ‘অদাহ্য’ত এনেবোৰ গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ কথাই প্ৰাধান্য পালেহেঁতেন নাই সেই বিষয়ে সন্দেহ হয়। —
ৰংবং তেৰাং (সম্পা.) প্ৰকাশ, পঞ্চম বছৰ, চতুৰ্থ সংখ্যা, জানুৱাৰী, ১৯৯৮, পৃষ্ঠা : ৮১

সহায়ক গ্ৰন্থপঞ্জী :

গোহাঁই, হীৰেন। *চলচ্চিত্ৰ আৰু বাস্তৱতা*। পদাতিক প্ৰকাশন, প্ৰথম প্ৰকাশ, ২০১৬

তালুকদাৰ, ধ্ৰুৱকুমাৰ। *অসমৰ বিভিন্ন জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোক-উৎসৱ*। বনলতা, প্ৰথম প্ৰকাশ, ২০০৪

নেওগ, সুব্ৰতজ্যোতি। *চলচ্চিত্ৰ সাহিত্য*। আঁক-বাক, প্ৰথম প্ৰকাশ, ২০১৪

বৰগোহাঞি, যতীন্দ্ৰ কুমাৰ। *অসমৰ উৎসৱ আৰু পূজা*। জে.বি কলেজ ৰোড, প্ৰথম প্ৰকাশ, ২০০৪

বৰপূজাৰী, মনোজ। *জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদৰ পৰা জাহ্নু-জংদাও আৰু অন্যান্য*। অসম প্ৰকাশন পৰিষদ, প্ৰথম প্ৰকাশ, ২০১৬

বৰা, প্ৰাঞ্জল। *সুখী মানুহৰ চলচ্চিত্ৰ আৰু অন্যান্য*। শব্দ, প্ৰথম প্ৰকাশ, ২০১৬

শইকীয়া, জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদ (সম্পা.)। *জ্যোতিপ্ৰসাদৰ সৃষ্টি আৰু চেতনা*। সদৌ অসম ছাত্ৰ সন্থা, ডিব্ৰুগড় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, প্ৰথম
প্ৰকাশ, ২০১৭

শৰ্মা, অপূৰ্ব। *অসমীয়া চলচ্চিত্ৰৰ ছাঁ-পোহৰ*। আঁক-বাক, আঁক-বাক সংস্কৰণ, অক্টোবৰ, ২০১৪

আলোচনী :

গোস্বামী, জনাৰ্দ্দন (সম্পা.)। *অসমীয়া সা ৰে গা মা*, তৃতীয় বছৰ, পঞ্চম সংখ্যা, আগষ্ট, ২০০৬

তেৰাং, ৰংবং (সম্পা.)। *প্ৰকাশ*, পঞ্চম বছৰ, চতুৰ্থ সংখ্যা, জানুৱাৰী, ১৯৯৮

তেৰাং, ৰংবং (সম্পা.)। *প্ৰকাশ*, তৃতীয় পৰ্ব, ত্ৰয়োদশ সংখ্যা, মে’, ২০১৩

ইৰম শৰ্মিলা : উত্তৰ-পূব ভাৰতৰ এক প্ৰতিবাদী সত্তা

বৰ্ণালী বৰা

গৱেষক, অসমীয়া বিভাগ, ডিব্ৰুগড় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

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সাৰাংশ :

সমাজ, সাহিত্য, অৰ্থনীতি, ৰাজনীতি, ক্ৰীড়াকে আদি কৰি প্ৰায় সকলো দিশতে উত্তৰ-পূব ভাৰতৰ নাৰীয়ে সুকীয়া পৰিচয় দাঙি ধৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে। উত্তৰ-পূব ভাৰতৰে এখন ৰাজ্য মণিপুৰৰ জীয়ৰী ইৰম শৰ্মিলাই ব্যতিক্ৰমী কৰ্মৰাজিৰে সমগ্ৰ ভাৰতৰ লগতে বিশ্ববাসীৰ দৃষ্টি আকৰ্ষণ কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছিল। ‘লৌহ মানৱী’ খ্যাত এইগৰাকী নাৰীয়ে জীৱনৰ ১৬ টা বছৰ মণিপুৰবাসীৰ ন্যায়ৰ বাবে অনশন কৰি কটালে। পৰৱৰ্তী সময়ত শৰ্মিলাই প্ৰত্যক্ষ ৰাজনীতিলৈ আহিব বিচাৰিছিল যদিও তাৰ প্ৰতি মণিপুৰবাসীয়ে বিশেষ সঁহাৰি নজনালে। ১৬ বছৰ জুৰি যি জনতাৰ বাবে বিনা খাদ্যগ্ৰহণেৰে প্ৰতিবাদ-অনশন কৰি আহিছিল, সেই জনতাই ৰাজনীতিৰপৰা ইৰম শৰ্মিলাক আঁতৰত ৰখাৰ আঁৰত বিভিন্ন কাৰণ নিহিত হৈ আছে। এই গৱেষণামূলক প্ৰবন্ধটিত ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ প্ৰতিবাদৰ কাৰণ, প্ৰতিবাদৰ স্বৰূপ তথা তাৰ ফলাফল সম্পৰ্কে পৰ্যায়ক্ৰমে আলোচনা কৰা হ’ব।

বীজ শব্দ : ইৰম শৰ্মিলা, সেনাবাহিনী বিশেষ ক্ষমতা আইন (AFSPA), মেইৰা পাইবি, মণিপুৰ, ভাৰত।

১.০০ অৱতৰণিকা :

১.০১ বিষয়ৰ পৰিচয় :

১৯৪৭ চনৰ ১৫ আগষ্টত ভাৰতে স্বাধীনতা লাভ কৰে। স্বাধীনতা লাভ কৰা প্ৰক্ৰিয়াটোৰ দৰে স্বাধীনতাৰ পৰৱৰ্তী কালত উত্তৰ-পূবৰ ৰাজ্যসমূহক ভাৰত ৰাষ্ট্ৰৰ লগত যুক্ত কৰি ৰখাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত ভাৰতীয় শাসনকৰ্তাসকল কণ্টকময় পথেৰে অগ্ৰসৰ হ’বলগীয়া হৈছিল। উত্তৰ-পূব ভাৰতৰ প্ৰতিখন ৰাজ্যৰে স্বকীয় পৰম্পৰা আৰু ইতিহাস আছে। এই পৰম্পৰা আৰু ইতিহাস সম্পৰ্কে অজ্ঞতা, অৱহেলা বা আন কিছুমান কাৰণতেই হওক ভাৰতীয় শাসনকৰ্তাসকলে উত্তৰ-পূবত শান্তি বৰ্তাই ৰখাৰ স্বাৰ্থত কিছুমান এনে আইন প্ৰণয়ন কৰি আহিছে, যিসমূহে জনসাধাৰণক সন্তুষ্ট কৰাৰ পৰিৱৰ্তে সততে অগ্নিগৰ্ভা পৰিস্থিতিৰেই উদ্ভৱ কৰে। ভাৰত চৰকাৰৰদ্বাৰা গৃহীত ‘সেনা বাহিনী বিশেষ ক্ষমতা আইন, ১৯৫৮’, চমুকৈ AFSPA হৈছে তেনে এখন আইন। এই আইনৰ অচিলা লৈ ভাৰতীয় সেনাই মানৱ অধিকাৰ খৰ্ব কৰিছে বুলি বিভিন্ন সময়ত অভিযোগ উত্থাপিত হৈ আহিছে। এই AFSPA বাতিলৰ দাবীতেই তথা মণিপুৰৰ শান্তি ঘূৰাই অনাৰ স্বাৰ্থতেই উত্তৰ-পূব ভাৰতত ইৰম

শৰ্মিলাৰ দৰে প্ৰতিবাদী সত্তাই মূৰ দাঙি উঠিছিল। এই গৱেষণা প্ৰবন্ধত ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ AFSPA বিৰোধী প্ৰতিবাদৰ সবল আৰু দুৰ্বল-উভয় দিশৰ তথ্যনিৰ্ভৰ আলোচনা কৰাৰ প্ৰয়াস কৰা হ’ব। তদুপৰি মণিপুৰৰ ৰাজনৈতিক ইতিহাস, নাৰী জাগৰণ আদি সম্পৰ্কে প্ৰসংগ অনুযায়ী আলোচনা কৰা হ’ব।

১.০২ গৱেষণা প্ৰশ্ন :

- (ক) ইৰম শৰ্মিলাই কিয় প্ৰতিবাদ কৰিবলগীয়া হৈছিল ?
- (খ) ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ প্ৰতিবাদৰ প্ৰতি ৰাজ্য আৰু ৰাষ্ট্ৰৰ সঁহাৰি কেনেধৰণৰ আছিল ?
- (গ) প্ৰত্যক্ষ ৰাজনীতিৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনৰপৰা ইৰম শৰ্মিলাক মণিপুৰবাসীয়ে কিয় আঁতৰাই ৰাখিলে ?

১.০৩ অধ্যয়নৰ উদ্দেশ্য :

- (ক) ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ প্ৰতিবাদৰ কাৰণ আৰু কাৰক উদ্ঘাটন কৰা।
- (খ) ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ প্ৰতিবাদৰ প্ৰতি ৰাজ্য আৰু ৰাষ্ট্ৰই জনোৱা সঁহাৰি সম্পৰ্কে আলোচনা কৰা।
- (গ) প্ৰত্যক্ষ ৰাজনীতিৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনত শৰ্মিলাই লাভ কৰা বিফলতাৰ আঁৰৰ কাৰণসমূহত আলোকপাত কৰা।

১.০৪ অধ্যয়নৰ পৰিসৰ :

গৱেষণা প্ৰবন্ধটিত ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ AFSPA বিৰোধী প্ৰতিবাদৰ কাৰণ, স্বৰূপ তথা তাৰ ফলাফল সম্পৰ্কে আলোচনা কৰা হৈছে। তদুপৰি উত্তৰ-পূব ভাৰতৰ প্ৰতি ভাৰতৰ কেন্দ্ৰীয় শাসকসকলৰ অৱহেলা, মণিপুৰৰ স্বকীয় ৰাজনৈতিক ইতিহাস, নাৰী জাগৰণ আদি প্ৰসংগক অধ্যয়নৰ পৰিসৰত সামৰি লোৱা হৈছে।

১.০৫ অধ্যয়নৰ পদ্ধতি :

গৱেষণা প্ৰবন্ধটি প্ৰস্তুত কৰোঁতে বৰ্ণনাত্মক আৰু বিশ্লেষণাত্মক পদ্ধতিৰ প্ৰয়োগ কৰা হৈছে।

২.০০ মূল আলোচনা :

২.০১ ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ জন্ম, বংশ, পৰিচয় :

১৯৭২ চনৰ ১৪ মাৰ্চত মণিপুৰৰ কংগপাল নামৰ ঠাইত ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ জন্ম হৈছিল। তেওঁৰ প্ৰকৃত নাম হৈছে 'ইৰম চানু শৰ্মিলা'। মণিপুৰৰ এক নিম্ন মধ্যবিত্ত পৰিয়ালত জন্মগ্ৰহণ কৰা শৰ্মিলাৰ পিতৃ প্ৰয়াত ইৰম নন্দ সিং আছিল এগৰাকী চতুৰ্থ শ্ৰেণীৰ কৰ্মচাৰী। মাতৃ ইৰম অঙ্গবী সাক্ষী দেৱী এগৰাকী সাধাৰণ মহিলা। ইৰম শৰ্মিলা এগৰাকী ভাল পঢ়ুৱৈ আছিল আৰু তেওঁ পঢ়া কিতাপবোৰ পঢ়ি শেষ হোৱাৰ পিছত মণিপুৰৰ পুথিভঁৰাললৈ দান কৰিছিল। সাংবাদিকতাকে বৃত্তি হিচাপে লোৱা ইৰমে যোগাসন কৰাৰ লগতে কবিতা ৰচনাৰ প্ৰতিও ৰুচি ৰাখিছিল। ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ কবিতা পুথি 'Fragrance of Peace' ২০১০ চনত প্ৰকাশ হৈছে। ইয়াত মুঠ ১২ টা কবিতা সন্নিৱিষ্ট আছে। ২০০০ চনৰ ২ নৱেম্বৰত মণিপুৰৰ 'মালম' নামৰ ঠাইত অসম ৰাইফলছৰ জোৱানে কিছুমান নিৰীহ লোকক 'সেনাবাহিনী বিশেষ ক্ষমতা আইন' (AFSPA)ৰ অধীনত গুলীবৰ্ষণ কৰি হত্যা কৰিছিল। এই ঘটনাৰ প্ৰতিবাদত ২০০০ চনৰ ৪ নৱেম্বৰৰপৰা ইৰম শৰ্মিলা অনশনত বহে। ভাৰত চৰকাৰে শৰ্মিলাৰ অনশন ৰোধ কৰিবলৈ চলে-বলে বিভিন্ন কৌশল প্ৰয়োগ কৰে। আনকি সংবিধানৰ ৩০৯ নং ধাৰা অনুযায়ী Attempt to commit suicide-ৰ অধীনত শৰ্মিলাক জেল হাজোতলৈও পঠোৱা হৈছিল। তাত কৰ্তৃপক্ষই জোৰকৈ পাইপেৰে আহাৰ খুৱাই এৰি দিয়ে। অথচ ইয়াৰ মাজতো শৰ্মিলাৰ অনশন ধৰ্মঘট চলি থাকিল। ২০১৬ চনত শৰ্মিলাই অনশন ভংগ কৰি আহাৰ মুখত দিয়ে আৰু প্ৰত্যক্ষ ৰাজনীতিত খোজ দিয়াৰ কথা ঘোষণা কৰে। ২০১৭

চনৰ মণিপুৰৰ বিধানসভা নিৰ্বাচনত ইৰম শৰ্মিলাই The People's Resurgence and Justice Alliance (PRAJA) দলৰ হৈ প্ৰতিদ্বন্দ্বিতা আগবঢ়ায়। প্ৰত্যক্ষ ৰাজনীতিৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনত মণিপুৰবাসীয়ে ইৰমক আঁকোৱালি নল'লে। কংগ্ৰেছপ্ৰাৰ্থী অকৰম ইব্বি সিংহই নিৰ্বাচনত জয়লাভ কৰে আৰু ইৰমে পৰাজয় বৰণ কৰে। নিৰ্বাচনত পৰাজয় বৰ্জন কৰাৰ পাছত ২০১৭ চনত ইৰম শৰ্মিলাই মণিপুৰৰ ত্যাগ কৰি স্বামীৰ সৈতে দক্ষিণ ভাৰতত বসবাস কৰিবলৈ আৰম্ভ কৰিছে। বৰ্তমান শৰ্মিলা দুটা সন্তানৰ মাতৃ। ইৰম শৰ্মিলাক বিভিন্ন সময়ত বিভিন্ন অনুষ্ঠানে বিভিন্ন সন্মানেৰে বিভূষিত কৰিছে। 'লৌহ মানৱী' আৰু 'মেংগউবীখ্যাত শৰ্মিলাক World's longest hunger striker' আখ্যা দিয়া হয়।

২.০২ প্ৰতিবাদৰ কাৰণ আৰু কাৰক :

১৮৯১ চনলৈকে মণিপুৰ এখন স্বাধীন ৰাজ্য আছিল। এই চনতেই ই ব্ৰিটিছ ভাৰতৰ অন্তৰ্ভুক্ত হয়। ব্ৰিটিছ ভাৰতৰ অন্তৰ্ভুক্ত হ'লেও মণিপুৰত মূলতঃ ৰজাৰ শাসন চলিছিল। নিৰ্ধাৰিত নিয়মত ৰজাই ব্ৰিটিছ চৰকাৰক কৰ সোধাব লাগিছিল। এনেদৰেই মণিপুৰত ৰাজতান্ত্ৰিক শাসন প্ৰবৰ্তিত হৈ আছিল। ব্ৰিটিছ সাম্ৰাজ্যৰ অন্তৰ্ভুক্ত হোৱাৰ পাছতো মণিপুৰৰ প্ৰশাসন আৰু সংস্কৃতিৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনত ব্ৰিটিছে হস্তক্ষেপ নকৰিছিল। গতিকে দেখা যায় যে অতীজৰেপৰা স্বতন্ত্ৰভাৱে বাস কৰি অহা মণিপুৰবাসীয়ে বাহিৰা শক্তিৰ অবাধ হস্তক্ষেপ স্বাভাৱিকতে ভালপোৱা নাছিল। ১৯৪৯ চনত মণিপুৰক যেতিয়া স্বাধীন ভাৰতৰ লগত যুক্ত কৰা হয়, তেতিয়া মণিপুৰৰ জনসাধাৰণে বৰ বেছি ভালপোৱা নাছিল। আৰম্ভণিৰেপৰা তেওঁলোকে স্বতন্ত্ৰ মণিপুৰ দাবী কৰি আহিছিল। আনহাতে ভাৰতৰ লগত যুক্ত হোৱাৰ পাছতো মণিপুৰক ভাৰতৰ সংবিধানৰ সা-সুবিধাৰপৰাও বঞ্চিত ৰখা হ'ল। ভাৰত চৰকাৰৰ অৱহেলামূলক কাম-কাজবোৰে মণিপুৰৰ সচেতন মহলক ক্ষুব্ধ কৰি তুলিছিল। এফালে পূব পাকিস্তান, আনফালে চীনা শক্তিয়ে এই সুযোগতে মণিপুৰত ৰাষ্ট্ৰবিৰোধী বীজ সিঁচিবলৈও আৰম্ভ কৰিছিল। এনে পৰিপ্ৰেক্ষিতত ভাৰত চৰকাৰে মণিপুৰক নিজৰ অংগ কৰি ৰখা আৰু শান্তি বৰ্তাই ৰখাৰ স্বাৰ্থত বহুতো পদক্ষেপ ল'বলগীয়া হৈছিল; কিন্তু এই পদক্ষেপবোৰে বেছিভাগ সময়তে হিতে বিপৰীত কৰি মণিপুৰক অগ্নিগৰ্ভা কৰি তুলিছিল। "১৯৫৫ চনতহে পৰিস্থিতিৰ সামান্য উন্নতি ঘটাই মণিপুৰক

কেন্দ্ৰীয় শাসিত অঞ্চল (Union Territory)ৰ মৰ্যাদা দিয়া হৈছিল— যি শাসনত চৰকাৰে নিযুক্তি দিয়া এজন প্ৰশাসকে ৰাজ্যৰ প্ৰশাসনৰ মূল সিদ্ধান্ত গ্ৰহণ কৰে আৰু নীতি নিৰ্ধাৰণ কৰে। বহু বছৰ অসমৰ ৰাজ্যপালক এই দায়িত্ব দিয়া হৈছিল। ভাৰতৰ আন ৰাজ্যৰ নিৰ্বাচিত বিধানসভা আৰু মুখ্যমন্ত্ৰী থকা সময়ত নিজৰ ইচ্ছাৰ বিৰুদ্ধে এনে শাসনৰ অধীন হৈ থকাটো সচেতন মণিপুৰীসকলে অন্যায় আৰু অপমানজনক বুলি ভাবিছিল।”^১ ভাৰত চৰকাৰে প্ৰথমৰেপৰা গণতান্ত্ৰিক আলোচনাৰ পথ নলৈ বল প্ৰয়োগেৰে মণিপুৰৰ সমস্যা সমাধান কৰিব বিচাৰিছিল। মণিপুৰৰ ভাষা-সংস্কৃতিৰ প্ৰতিও ই কেতিয়াবা ভাবুকি স্বৰূপ হৈ পৰিছিল। “উদাহৰণস্বৰূপে সংখ্যাগৰিষ্ঠ ‘মেইতেই’সকলৰ নিজ ভাষা অগ্ৰাহ্য কৰি চৰকাৰী কাম-কাজত সংখ্যালঘু বিষুগ্ৰিয়াসকলৰ ভাষাকে অগ্ৰাধিকাৰ দিয়া হৈছিল, কাৰণ বাহিৰৰ শাসনকৰ্তাসকলে বিষুগ্ৰিয়া ভাষাৰ শব্দৰাজি আৰু ব্যাকৰণৰ লগত অন্যান্য ভাৰতীয় আৰ্যভাষাৰ মিল দেখিছিল। ৰেডিঅ’ত মণিপুৰৰ বাতৰি পঢ়া হৈছিল বিষুগ্ৰিয়া ভাষাত।”^২ ভাৰত চৰকাৰৰ এনে পদক্ষেপে স্বাভাৱিকতে মণিপুৰবাসীক ক্ষুব্ধ কৰি তুলিছিল। তেওঁলোকৰ প্ৰতিবাদ, ধৰ্মাঘোৰ কেন্দ্ৰীয় চৰকাৰৰ গা লৰাব পৰা নাছিল। ফলশ্ৰুতিত বিচ্ছিন্নতাবাদী আৰু স্বাধীনতাকামী মনোভাৱে মণিপুৰবাসীৰ মাজত গা কৰি উঠিছিল। এই মনোভাৱে লাহে-লাহে বিপ্লৱী সংগঠনৰ জন্ম দিয়াত সাৰ-পানী যোগাইছিল। বিপ্লৱী সংগঠনসমূহৰ নেতাসকল সততে কেন্দ্ৰীয় চৰকাৰৰ লগত সংঘৰ্ষত লিপ্ত হৈ পৰিছিল। তেওঁলোকে দীৰ্ঘকাল জুৰি ভাৰত চৰকাৰৰপৰা পোৱা দমন-অৱহেলাৰ পোতক তুলি মণিপুৰক ‘স্বাধীন’ কৰিবলৈ বিভিন্ন প্ৰকাৰে প্ৰচেষ্টা হাতত লৈছিল। আনহাতে ভাৰত চৰকাৰে সেই বিদ্ৰোহদমনৰ নামত বল প্ৰয়োগৰ সহায় লৈছিল। ফলত মণিপুৰৰ শান্তি পৰিৱেশ অশান্ত আৰু সন্ত্ৰাসজৰ্জৰ ভূমিলৈ পৰ্যবসিত হৈ পৰিল। বিপ্লৱী সংগঠনসমূহক মৰিচা কৰি মণিপুৰত শান্তিৰ পৰিৱেশ ঘূৰাই আনিবলৈ ভাৰত চৰকাৰে এইবাৰ এখন নতুন আইনৰ সহায় ল’লে। সেয়া হ’ল ‘সেনা বাহিনী বিশেষ ক্ষমতা আইন, ১৯৫৮’— যাক চমুকৈ AFSPA বুলি কোৱা হয়। এই আইনৰ অধীনত কেন্দ্ৰীয় চৰকাৰে সেনা বাহিনীৰ সন্ত্ৰাস দমনৰ বাবে সৰ্বোচ্চ ক্ষমতা প্ৰদান কৰি তিনিমাহৰ ভিতৰত সন্ত্ৰাসবাদ দমনৰ অগ্ৰগতিৰ খতিয়ান দাঙি ধৰিবলৈ আদেশ দিলে। এই

আইন অনুযায়ী বিদ্ৰোহদমনৰ স্বার্থত সেনাবাহিনীৰ নিম্নশ্ৰেণীৰ এজন বিষয়ায়ো সন্দেহজনক যিকোনো ব্যক্তিক বিনা বিচাৰে গুলীয়াই হত্যা কৰিব পাৰে। ভাৰত চৰকাৰে বিদ্ৰোহ দমনৰ বাবে জৰী কৰা এই আইনে মণিপুৰলৈ শান্তি ঘূৰাই অনাৰ বিপৰীতে মণিপুৰবাসীৰ মানৱ অধিকাৰ পৰ্যন্ত খৰ্ব কৰিবলৈ আৰম্ভ কৰিলে। মণিপুৰত AFSPA-ৰ অপপ্ৰয়োগ ঘটিবলৈ ধৰিলে। বিনা বিচাৰে হত্যা আনকি ধৰ্ষণৰ ঘটনাও ঘটিল। “আনকি বিদ্ৰোহদমনত কৃতিত্ব প্ৰতিপন্ন কৰিবলৈকো সম্পূৰ্ণ নিৰপৰাধ; বিদ্ৰোহৰ লগত নামমাত্ৰ সম্পৰ্কও নথকা লোককো হত্যা কৰা হৈছে। অলপতে ‘টেহেলকা’ নামৰ আলোচনীৰ কেমেৰামেনে কেমেৰাত দাঙি ধৰি ৰাখিছিল কেনেকৈ এজন সম্পূৰ্ণ নিৰপৰাধ যুৱকক নিৰাপত্তা বাহিনীৰ লোকে শীতল মস্তিষ্কে খেদি খেদি হত্যা কৰিছিল।”^৩ AFSPA ৰ অধীনত সেনা বাহিনীৰ এনে মানৱ অধিকাৰ ভংগকাৰী কাৰ্যৰ স্বাভাৱিকতে মণিপুৰবাসীয়ে তীব্ৰ বিৰোধিতা কৰিছিল। ২০০০ চনৰ ২ নৱেম্বৰত AFSPA-ৰ অধীনতে অসম ৰাইফলছৰ জোৱানে ‘মালম’ নামৰ এখন ঠাইত বাছৰ বাবে বৈ থকা দহগৰাকী লোকক সন্ত্ৰাসবাদীৰ লগত সম্পৰ্ক ৰখাৰ সন্দেহত নৃশংসভাৱে গুলীয়াই হত্যা কৰে। এই ঘটনাই মণিপুৰবাসীৰ মনত ভাৰত চৰকাৰৰ প্ৰতি ক্ৰোধৰ দাৱানলৰ সৃষ্টি কৰে। মণিপুৰৰ জীয়ৰী ইৰম শৰ্মিলাই এই ঘটনাৰ দুদিনৰ পাছতে অৰ্থাৎ ২০০০ চনৰ ৪ নৱেম্বৰৰপৰা AFSPA বাতিলৰ প্ৰতিবাদেৰে অনশনত বহে। শৰ্মিলাই ঘোষণা কৰে যে, যেতিয়ালৈকে ভাৰত চৰকাৰে AFSPA দৰে গণতান্ত্ৰিক অধিকাৰ খৰ্ব কৰা আইন বাতিল নকৰে, তেতিয়ালৈকে তেওঁ অন্নৰ এটা দানাও মুখত নিদিয়। শৰ্মিলাৰ এই ব্যতিক্ৰমী প্ৰতিবাদে মণিপুৰবাসীক শোকজৰ্জৰ কৰি তুলিলে। শৰ্মিলাৰ প্ৰতিবাদত তেওঁলোকে যে এক নতুন আশাৰ বাট দেখা পালে। যি বাটেৰে গৈ তেওঁলোকে মণিপুৰৰ পূৰ্বৰ শান্তিৰ পৰিৱেশ ঘূৰাই আনিব পাৰিব। আনফালে ইৰম শৰ্মিলায়ো মণিপুৰবাসীৰ আশাক বাস্তৱ ৰূপ দিবৰ বাবে ১৬ বছৰ জুৰি অনশন চলাই গ’ল। এই অনশনত শৰ্মিলাই ব্যক্তিগত জীৱন আৰু শৰীৰক সমাজৰে হকে দান কৰি এক সামূহিক চৰিত্ৰলৈ ৰূপান্তৰিত হৈছিল। যি সামূহিক চৰিত্ৰই ৰাষ্ট্ৰৰদ্বাৰা প্ৰান্তীয়কৃত, অৱদমিত এচাম মানুহৰ অৱৰুদ্ধ মনোবেদনা আৰু ক্ষোভ প্ৰতিবাদক অহিংসৰূপত বিশ্ববাসীৰ আগত দাঙি ধৰিলে।

২.০৩ প্রতিবাদৰ স্বৰূপ আৰু তাৰ প্ৰতি ৰাজ্য, ৰাষ্ট্ৰৰ সঁহাৰি :

২০০০ চনৰ ২ নৱেম্বৰত অসম ৰাইফলছৰ জোৱানে অগণতান্ত্ৰিক আৰু অবিচাৰভাৱে মণিপুৰত পুৰুষ-মহিলা-শিশু সমন্বিতে নিৰীহ লোকৰ ওপৰত আতিশয্য চলোৱাৰ পাছত উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলত বলবৎ হৈ থকা ‘সেনাবাহিনী বিশেষ ক্ষমতা আইন, ১৯৫৮’ (AFSPA)ৰ বাতিলৰ দাবীত ইৰম শৰ্মিলা নামৰ মণিপুৰী মহিলাগৰাকী আমৰণ অনশনত বহিছিল। তেওঁ পণ লৈছিল যে, যেতিয়ালৈকে AFSPA-ৰ দৰে আইন মণিপুৰৰপৰা প্ৰত্যাহাৰ কৰা নহ’ব, তেতিয়ালৈকে তেওঁ একো খাদ্য গ্ৰহণ নকৰে; নখ আৰু চুলিৰ যতন নলয়। ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ এই AFSPA বিৰোধী প্ৰতিবাদৰ প্ৰতি মণিপুৰৰ জনসাধাৰণে সম্পূৰ্ণ সঁহাৰি দিছিল। ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ প্ৰতিবাদত সহায় কৰিবলৈ মণিপুৰৰ মহিলাসকল বিশেষভাৱে আগবাঢ়ি আহিছিল। AFSPA বিৰোধী এই প্ৰতিবাদৰদ্বাৰা ইৰম শৰ্মিলাই মণিপুৰৰ নাৰীসকলৰ মাজত এক জাগৰণৰ সৃষ্টি কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছিল। মণিপুৰৰ এক প্ৰধান মাতৃ সংগঠন ‘মেইৰা পাইবি’ৰ সদস্যসকলে ইৰমৰ প্ৰতিবাদত সকলো ধৰণৰে সহযোগিতা আগবঢ়াইছিল। ১৯৮০ চনত ভাৰতীয় সেনাই এজন নিৰ্দোষী ল’ৰাক হত্যা কৰাৰ প্ৰতিবাদত ‘মেইৰা পাইবি’ৰ জন্ম হৈছিল। ‘মেইৰা পাইবি’য়ে সততে ভাৰতীয় সেনাৰ অমানৱীয় কাৰ্যৰ প্ৰতিবাদ কৰি আহিছিল। ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ অনশনে যেন তেওঁলোকক যেন এক নতুন শক্তি প্ৰদান কৰে। ২০০৪ চনৰ ১৫ জুলাইত ‘মেইৰা পাইবি’য়ে মনোৰমা দেৱীৰ ধৰ্ষণ আৰু হত্যাৰ উলংগ প্ৰতিবাদ কৰি মণিপুৰী নাৰীৰ চমকপ্ৰদ শক্তিৰ উমান দিয়ে। AFSPA-ৰ অধীনত সন্দেহজনক কাৰণত মণিপুৰী নাৰী মনোৰমা দেৱীক ভাৰতীয় সেনাই হত্যা কৰাৰ লগতে ধৰ্ষণ কৰা বুলিও অভিযোগ উত্থাপিত হয়। এই ঘটনা তথা মেইৰা পাইবিৰ ব্যতিক্ৰমী প্ৰতিবাদে সমগ্ৰ বিশ্বকে সচকিত কৰি তুলিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছিল। ‘মেইৰা পাইবি’ৰ নেতৃত্বত বহুসংখ্যক নাৰীয়ে ৰাজপথত উলংগ হৈ Indian Army Rape us, Kill us, Flesh us ধ্বনিৰে মণিপুৰৰ আকাশ-বতাহ উত্তপ্ত কৰি তুলিছিল।

ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ অনশনে মণিপুৰত AFSPA বিৰোধী প্ৰতিবাদক তীব্ৰ কৰি তোলাত সহায় কৰিছিল। আনফালে ইৰমৰ ভোক হৰতালে কেন্দ্ৰীয় চৰকাৰক চিন্তিত কৰি তুলিছিল। কাৰণ এগৰাকী নাৰী যি নিজ ৰাজ্যৰ কণ্ঠক প্ৰতিনিধিত্ব

কৰি বিনা আহাৰে প্ৰতিবাদ কৰি আছে, সেই নাৰীৰ কিবা হানি হ’বলৈ হ’লে মণিপুৰৰ জনতাই তাৰ বাবে চৰকাৰকে দোষী ঠাৱৰ কৰিব। তেনে অৱস্থাত মণিপুৰত চৰকাৰ বিৰোধী বিদ্ৰোহক লেকাম লগোৱাটো সম্পূৰ্ণৰূপে অসম্ভৱ হৈ পৰিব। সেয়েহে ভাৰত চৰকাৰে ইৰমৰ ভোক হৰতালক সংবিধানৰ ৩০৯ নং ধাৰামতে Attempt to suicide-ৰ দোষত দোষী সাব্যস্ত কৰি গ্ৰেপ্তাৰ কৰে। এই ধাৰামতে আত্মহত্যা কৰিবলৈ চেষ্টা কৰা ব্যক্তিজনে ১ বছৰৰ জেলত কটাব লাগে। আইনৰ দোহাই দি চৰকাৰী সেনাৰ হতুৱাই ২০০০-২০১৪ চনলৈকে ইৰমক জেললৈ জোৰ কৰি অনা-নিয়া কৰি থকা হৈছিল। আৰক্ষীয়ে প্ৰতিবাদতলীৰপৰাই ইৰমক জেললৈ লৈ গৈ জোৰেৰে আহাৰ খুৱাই পুনৰ এৰি দিয়ে। মুখেৰে খুৱাব নোৱাৰি জোৰকৈ পাইপেৰে আহাৰ খুৱোৱাৰ ব্যৱস্থাও কৰ্তৃপক্ষই কৰিছিল যাতে ইৰমৰ মৃত্যু নঘটে। গোটা খাদ্যৰ অভাৱত ইৰম শৰ্মিলা দুৰ্বল হৈ পৰিছিল যদিও তেনেদৰেই তেওঁ দিল্লীৰ যন্ত্ৰ-মন্ত্ৰলৈ গৈয়ো প্ৰতিবাদ কৰিছিল। ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ এই কঠোৰ প্ৰতিবাদে কিন্তু কেন্দ্ৰীয় চৰকাৰৰপৰা বিশেষ সঁহাৰি লাভ কৰিব পৰা নাছিল। কংগ্ৰেছৰ মনমোহন সিঙেই হওক বা বিজেপিৰ নৰেন্দ্ৰ মোদী; এজনো প্ৰধানমন্ত্ৰীয়ে ইৰমৰ লগত মণিপুৰৰ সমস্যাৰ বিষয়ে আলোচনা কৰিবলৈ অহা নাছিল। আন হাজাৰেই মাত্ৰ ১৩ দিন অনশন কৰোঁতেই পৰিৱৰ্তনৰ লহৰ আহিছিল। চৰকাৰ, সংবাদ মাধ্যমৰ গুৰুত্ব লাভ কৰিছিল। অথচ ১৬ বছৰ অনশন কৰিও ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ প্ৰতিবাদে চৰকাৰ আৰু ৰাষ্ট্ৰীয় সংবাদ মাধ্যমৰপৰা বিশেষ গুৰুত্ব লাভ নকৰাটোৱে ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ লগতে তেওঁৰ সহকৰ্মীসকলক হতাশ আৰু ক্ষুব্ধ কৰি তুলিছিল। মণিপুৰৰ এগৰাকী সমাজকৰ্মীয়ে এটা সাক্ষাৎকাৰত কৈছে— “It is only when Anna Hazare or someone from India fasts it matters to the state. Except India, it nowhere happens in the world”^৪ চৰকাৰ, ৰাষ্ট্ৰীয় সংবাদ মাধ্যমৰপৰা সঁহাৰি নাপালেও ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ প্ৰতিবাদে দেশৰ অন্যান্য ৰাজ্য তথা সংগঠনৰ সমৰ্থন লাভ কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছিল। “সদৌ অসম ছাত্ৰ সন্থা, নাগা ষ্টুডেণ্টছ ফেডাৰেচন, খাচি ষ্টুডেণ্ট ইউনিয়ন, সদৌ মণিপুৰী ছাত্ৰ সন্থা, সদৌ অৰুণাচল ছাত্ৰসন্থা, মিজো জিৰালি পাৰল, খাচি ছাত্ৰ সন্থা আৰু ত্ৰিপুৰাৰ ছাত্ৰ সন্থাৰ সমন্বিতে সংগঠন নেছ’ৰে গুৱাহাটীৰ দীঘলী পুখুৰীৰ পাৰত

বিয়লি ৪ বজাৰপৰা ৬ বজালৈ ২৫ এপ্ৰিল মংগলবাৰে অৱস্থান ধৰ্মঘট কাৰ্যসূচী ৰূপায়ণ কৰি সশস্ত্ৰ বাহিনীৰ বিশেষ ক্ষমতা আইন প্ৰত্যাহাৰৰ দাবী জনোৱাৰ লগতে ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ গণতান্ত্ৰিক আন্দোলনৰ প্ৰতি পূৰ্ণ সমৰ্থন আগবঢ়ায়। ... ধৰ্মঘটকাৰীসকলে ‘আমি ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ লগত আছোঁ’, ‘ইৰম শৰ্মিলা উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলৰ সাহস’, ‘ৰাষ্ট্ৰীয় সংবাদ মাধ্যমে অৱজ্ঞা কৰিলেও তুমি উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলৰেই’, ‘ৰাষ্ট্ৰীয় সংবাদ-মাধ্যমক ধিক্কাৰ’ আদি শ্লোগানপূৰ্ণ প্লেকাৰ্ড প্ৰদৰ্শন কৰে।”^৫ ২০০৪ চনত ইৰম শৰ্মিলা প্ৰমুখ্যে দল-সংগঠনৰ দাবীৰ প্ৰতি সাঁহাৰি জনাই চৰকাৰে ন্যায়াধীশ জীৱন ৰেড্ডীৰ নেতৃত্বত আইনখনৰ প্ৰয়োগ সম্পৰ্কে তদন্ত কৰিবলৈ কমিটি গঠন কৰি দিছিল। AFSPA-ৰ অপব্যৱহাৰৰ প্ৰমাণ পাই কমিটিয়ে তাক বাতিলৰ পৰামৰ্শ দিছিল যদিও সেয়া বাস্তৱত ফলপ্ৰসূ নহ’ল। চৰকাৰৰ প্ৰতিশ্ৰুতি বুমেৰাং হৈ দেখা দিলে। এনে এক নিৰাশাপূৰ্ণ পৰিস্থিতিতেই ইৰম শৰ্মিলাই ২০১৬ চনৰ ২৬ জুলাইত অনশন ভংগ কৰি আহাৰ মুখত তুলি লয়। লগতে এই বুলি ঘোষণা কৰে যে অনশন ভংগ মানে AFSPA বিৰোধী প্ৰতিবাদৰ অৱসান নহয়। তেওঁ কেৱল মাত্ৰ প্ৰতিবাদৰ মাধ্যমহে সলনি কৰিব, প্ৰতিবাদ নহয়। ইৰম শৰ্মিলাই কয় যে যি দাবী তেওঁ ১৬ বছৰ অনশনত বহিও পূৰণ কৰাৰ নোৱাৰিলে, সেয়া তেওঁ প্ৰত্যক্ষ ৰাজনীতিলৈ আহি পূৰণ কৰিব। এনেদৰেই শৰ্মিলাৰ প্ৰত্যক্ষ ৰাজনীতিৰ যাত্ৰা আৰম্ভ হৈ পৰে।

২.০৪ প্ৰত্যক্ষ ৰাজনীতিত খোজ আৰু ইয়াৰ পৰিণতি :

২০১৬ চনৰ ২৬ জুলাইত ইৰম শৰ্মিলাই অনশন ভংগ কৰি ২০১৭ চনত হ’বলগীয়া বিধানসভা নিৰ্বাচনত প্ৰতিদ্বন্দ্বিতা আগবঢ়াব বুলি ঘোষণা কৰে। লগতে তেওঁ মণিপুৰৰ মুখ্যমন্ত্ৰী হোৱাৰ আশাও ৰাইজৰ সন্মুখত ব্যক্ত কৰে। ইয়াৰ লগে লগে মণিপুৰত এক সুকীয়া পৰিস্থিতিৰ উদ্ভৱ হয়, যাৰ কল্পনা হয়তো শৰ্মিলাই প্ৰত্যক্ষ ৰাজনীতিত খোজ দিয়াৰ সিদ্ধান্ত লওঁতে কৰা নাছিল। ৰাষ্ট্ৰৰ পৰাতো ইৰমে প্ৰথমৰপৰাই বিশেষ সাঁহাৰি লাভ কৰা নাছিল— ক্ৰমাগতভাৱে মণিপুৰবাসীৰ সাঁহাৰিও কমি আহিবলৈ ধৰিছিল। ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ সমৰ্থনকাৰীসকলৰ মাজতে দৃষ্টিভংগীগত অমিল ঘটি বিভাজন হ’বলৈ আৰম্ভ হ’ল। ইয়াৰ মাজতে নিজৰ সিদ্ধান্তত অবিচল থাকি ইৰম শৰ্মিলাই The People’s Resurgence and Justice Alliance (PRAJA) নামৰ এটা ৰাজনৈতিক দল

গঠন কৰে। ২০১৭ চনৰ বিধানসভা নিৰ্বাচনত ‘খুৰাই’ (Khurai) আৰু ‘খাংগাবুক’ (Khangabok) সমষ্টিৰপৰা ইৰমে প্ৰতিদ্বন্দ্বিতা আগবঢ়ায়। অথচ দুখৰ কথা যে এই নিৰ্বাচনত ইৰমৰ জয় নহ’ল। ইৰমে কেৱল মাত্ৰ ৯০ টা ভোট লাভ কৰাৰ পৰিৱৰ্তে প্ৰতিদ্বন্দ্বী নেচনেল কংগ্ৰেছৰ ইববি সিংহই ১৮৬৪৯ টা ভোট লাভ কৰি জয়লাভ কৰে। এই নিৰ্বাচনত প্ৰতিদ্বন্দ্বিতা আগবঢ়োৱা মুঠ পাঁচোজন প্ৰাৰ্থীৰ ভিতৰত ইৰমে লাভ কৰা ভোটৰ সংখ্যাই কম আছিল। আনকি মানুহে NOTA-ত দিয়া ভোটৰ সংখ্যাও ইৰমে লাভ কৰা ভোটতকৈ অধিক আছিল। ১৬ বছৰ জুৰি যিসকল লোকৰ বাবে অনাহাৰে প্ৰতিবাদ কৰি আহিল, সেইসকল লোকৰপৰা পোৱা এনে প্ৰত্যুত্তৰে স্বাভাৱিকতে ইৰম শৰ্মিলাক সম্পূৰ্ণৰূপে ভাঙি পেলালে। ইৰমৰ সমান্তৰালভাৱে গণতান্ত্ৰিক প্ৰতিবাদত বিশ্বাসী প্ৰতিজন নাগৰিকক এই পৰাজয়ে হতাশগ্ৰস্ত কৰি তুলিলে। দৰাচলতে ইৰমে অনশন ভংগ কৰি প্ৰত্যক্ষ ৰাজনীতিলৈ অহাৰ সিদ্ধান্ত লোৱাৰ সময়ৰেপৰা ইৰম আৰু তেওঁৰ সমৰ্থনকাৰী মণিপুৰবাসীৰ মাজত ভুল বুজাবুজি আৰম্ভ হৈছিল। ১৬ বছৰ অনশন কৰিও AFSPA বাতিল হোৱাৰ সম্ভাৱনা নেদেখি ইৰম শৰ্মিলাই প্ৰত্যক্ষ ৰাজনীতিৰ অংশীদাৰ হৈ গণতান্ত্ৰিক ব্যৱস্থাৰ কেৰোণবোৰ আঁতৰাব বিচাৰিছিল। ‘হিন্দুস্তান টাইমছ’ৰ এটা সাক্ষাৎকাৰত শৰ্মিলাই কৈছে—“Now its time for change in the mode of struggle. Politics is dirty but people should be there to change it. I wish other people accept my change.”^৬ — কিন্তু মণিপুৰৰ জনগণে শৰ্মিলাৰ এই পদক্ষেপক শুদ্ধ নুবুলিলে। তেওঁৰ সহকৰ্মীসকলৰ মতে শৰ্মিলাই ৰাজনীতিত যোগদান কৰাটো একেবাৰে উচিত নাছিল। কোনো কোনোৰ মতে অনশন ভংগ কৰি ৰাজনীতিলৈ যোৱাৰ সিদ্ধান্ত শৰ্মিলাৰ সম্পূৰ্ণ ব্যক্তিগত সিদ্ধান্ত; এই সিদ্ধান্তগ্ৰহণৰ বাবে শৰ্মিলাই মণিপুৰবাসীৰ লগত কোনো আলোচনা কৰা নাছিল। গতিকে স্বাভাৱিকতে তেওঁলোক ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ সিদ্ধান্তৰ প্ৰতি ৰুপ্ত হৈছিল। তদুপৰি অনশন ভংগৰ পাছত ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ বৰ্তমানৰ স্বামী ডেচমণ্ডৰ লগত ঘনিষ্ঠতা বাঢ়ি অহাটো মণিপুৰবাসীয়ে সমালোচনাৰ চকুৰে চাইছিল। তেওঁলোকৰ অভিযোগ আছিল যে শৰ্মিলাই প্ৰতিবাদ আধাতে এৰি নিজৰ ব্যক্তিগত জীৱনক অধিক গুৰুত্ব দিছে। তেওঁলোকে আশা কৰিছিল যে ইৰমে AFSPA বিৰোধী

প্রতিবাদ আৰু বেছি আগুৱাই নিব। আনহাতে নিৰ্বাচন সমাগত হোৱাৰ লগে লগে বিৰোধী শক্তিসমূহে ইৰমৰ বিপক্ষে বিভিন্ন অপপ্রচাৰতো লিপ্ত হৈছিল। ইৰমক বিচ্ছিন্নতাবাদী, ৰাষ্ট্ৰদ্রোহী, এণ্টি-বিজেপি শক্তি আখ্যা দি জনমানসত হয় প্রতিপন্ন কৰাৰ প্ৰয়াস চলিল। ৰাজনীতিত এইবোৰ তেনেই সাধাৰণ কথা যদিও এইসমূহে মণিপুৰবাসীক ইৰম শৰ্মিলাক নিজৰ মুখ্যমন্ত্ৰী হিচাপে ভবাৰ সুযোগ নিদিলে। ৰাজনীতিৰ মেৰ-পেচত শৰ্মিলাৰ ১৬ বছৰীয়া অনশনৰ কোনো গুৰুত্ব নাথাকিল। নিৰ্বাচনৰ শোচনীয় পৰাজয়ত ভাগি পৰা ইৰম শৰ্মিলাই ‘হিন্দুস্তান টাইমছ’ৰ এটা সাক্ষাৎকাৰত কৈছিল—“I want to be successful with the struggle but nobody standing with me in reality. People thinks I am Iron. I am very hurt. people think that I will fast unto death, that I have given up my life for the cause. Nobody knows about what I am in reality.”^১

ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ AFSPA বিৰোধী প্রতিবাদত আৰম্ভণিৰেপৰা পৰিকল্পিত আঁচনিৰ অভাৱ আছিল, যাৰ বাবে এই প্রতিবাদ ফলপ্ৰসূ হোৱাত বাধা আহি পৰিল। বহু সময়ত এই প্রতিবাদ সম্পূৰ্ণৰূপে আৱেগৰদ্বাৰা নিয়ন্ত্ৰিত আছিল বুলিলেও ভুল কোৱা নহ’ব। ৰাষ্ট্ৰই জাৰি কৰা আইন এখন হেঁচা প্ৰয়োগ কৰি বাতিল কৰোৱাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত আৱেগৰ লগতে যুক্তিৰো যথেষ্ট প্ৰয়োজন আছিল। ইৰম শৰ্মিলাই যুক্তি দাঙি ধৰিছিল যদিও বিভিন্ন পক্ষই সেই কণ্ঠক প্ৰান্তীয়কৃত কৰিছিল, যিদৰে উত্তৰ-পূবৰ সমস্যা আৰু প্ৰগতিক অতীজৰেপৰা প্ৰান্তীয়কৰণ (Marginalize) কৰি অহা হৈছে। আনফালে পুৰুষতান্ত্ৰিক মানসিকতাৰে পৰিচালিত সমাজব্যৱস্থাত এগৰাকী নাৰীয়ে কিদৰে অকলে এখন ৰাজ্য শাসন কৰিব পাৰিব, সেই সম্পৰ্কেও মানুহৰ মনত প্ৰশ্নবোধক চিহ্নৰ উদ্ভৱ হৈছিল। মুঠৰ ওপৰত ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ প্রতিবাদ দুই ধৰণেৰে প্ৰান্তীয়কৃত হৈছিল— এক উত্তৰ-পূবৰ মানুহৰ প্রতিবাদ হিচাপে, দুই এগৰাকী নাৰীৰ প্রতিবাদ হিচাপে। ইৰম শৰ্মিলাই যদি প্ৰত্যক্ষ ৰাজনীতিলৈ অহাৰ সুযোগ পালেহেঁতেন তেতিয়া হয়তো মণিপুৰৰ ৰাজনীতিত বহুতো নতুন দিশৰ সংযোজন বিয়োজন হ’লহেঁতেন।

২.০৫ বৰ্তমান সময়ত ইৰম শৰ্মিলা :

প্ৰত্যক্ষ ৰাজনীতিৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনত শোচনীয়ভাৱে পৰাজয় লাভ কৰাৰ পিছত ইৰম শৰ্মিলাই হতাশগ্ৰস্ত হৈ ভৱিষ্যতে ৰাজনীতিৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত ভৰি নিদিয়াৰ সংকল্প লৈছে। বৰ্তমান তেওঁ

নিজ স্বামী আৰু দুটা যমজ সন্তানৰ সৈতে সাধাৰণ মানুহৰ দৰে জীৱন-যাপন কৰি আছে। মণিপুৰ ত্যাগ কৰি তেওঁ দক্ষিণ ভাৰতৰ বাংগালুৰুত নিগাজিকৈ বাস কৰিবলৈ আৰম্ভ কৰিছে। মণিপুৰৰ সমস্যাৰ প্রতি শৰ্মিলাৰ কণ্ঠ অৱশ্যে আজিও সৰৱ।

৩.০০ উপসংহাৰ :

৩.০১ সামগ্ৰিক সিদ্ধান্ত :

(ক) ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ প্রতিবাদে উত্তৰ-পূবৰ জনতাৰ প্রতি ভাৰতীয় ৰাষ্ট্ৰযন্ত্ৰই স্বাধীনতাৰ পিছৰেপৰা চলাই অহা অৱহেলা-অৱদমনৰ বিৰুদ্ধে জনসাধাৰণৰ ক্ষোভ আৰু বিদ্ৰোহাত্মক মনোভাবক প্ৰতিনিধিত্ব কৰে। যেতিয়ালৈকে চৰকাৰে উত্তৰ-পূবৰ সমস্যাসমূহৰ গভীৰত প্ৰৱেশ কৰি গণতান্ত্ৰিক আলোচনাৰ মাধ্যমেৰে সমাধানৰ বাবে আগবাঢ়ি নাহিব তেতিয়ালৈকে এনেধৰণৰ প্রতিবাদ নিত্য নতুন ৰূপত মূৰ দাঙি উঠিয়েই থাকিব।

(খ) ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ প্রতিবাদে মণিপুৰত আশাৰ জোৱাৰ তুলিছিল যদিও শৰ্মিলাই প্ৰত্যক্ষ ৰাজনীতিত খোজ থোৱাটো মণিপুৰবাসীয়ে উচিত বুলি গণ্য কৰা নাছিল। ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ প্রতিবাদৰ দুৰ্বল দিশ বুলিলে অপৰিপক্ক আঁচনি, আৱেগনিৰ্ভৰ সিদ্ধান্ত, প্রতিবাদকাৰীৰ মাজৰ ভুল বুজাবুজিৰ কথা ক’ব লাগিব। এইসমূহৰ বাবেই হয়তো ১৬ বছৰ জুৰি নিজ ৰাজ্যবাসীৰ সম্পূৰ্ণ সঁহাৰি পোৱাৰ পাছতো নিৰ্বাচনত শোচনীয়ভাৱে পৰাজয় বৰণ কৰিছিল। বোকা ছটিওৱা ৰাজনীতি, কেন্দ্ৰ আৰু সংবাদ মাধ্যমৰ অৱহেলাকো ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ পৰাজয়ৰ অন্যতম কাৰণ বুলিলে ভুল নহ’ব। তদুপৰি পুৰুষতান্ত্ৰিক সমাজে ইৰম শৰ্মিলা নাৰী হোৱা হেতুকে প্ৰত্যক্ষ ৰাজনীতিত অকলে বৰ বেছি প্ৰভাৱ পেলাব পাৰিব বুলিও বিশ্বাস কৰিব পৰা নাছিল।

৩.০২ অধ্যয়নৰ সীমাবদ্ধতা আৰু ভৱিষ্যত অধ্যয়নৰ প্ৰয়োজনীয়তা :

অসমীয়া সাহিত্যত ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ প্রতিবাদী সত্তা সম্বন্ধে বৰ বিশেষ আলোচনা হোৱা নাই। এই বিষয়ত অধিক অধ্যয়নে ভাৰতীয় গণতন্ত্ৰ আৰু ৰাজনীতিৰ প্ৰকৃত স্বৰূপ বুজাত সহায় কৰিব। তদুপৰি উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলৰ সমস্যাসমূহৰ সমাধানৰ অৰ্থে ইৰম শৰ্মিলাৰ দৰে প্রতিবাদী সত্তাৰ প্ৰকৃত স্বৰূপ বিশ্লেষণৰ যথেষ্ট প্ৰয়োজনীয়তা আছে।



প্ৰসংগ-সূত্ৰ :

১. হীৰেন গোহাঁই, উত্তৰ-পূব ভাৰতৰ জীৱন্ত বিবেক : ইৰম শৰ্মিলা', *তাইৰ নাম ইৰম শৰ্মিলা, হিৰণ্যময়ী বৰুৱা*
২. উল্লিখিত।
৩. উল্লিখিত।
৪. Aparajita Sharmah, Irom Chanu Sharmila and the movement against Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), *Space and Culture, India*, P-24
৫. হিৰণ্যময়ী বৰুৱা, *তাইৰ নাম ইৰম শৰ্মিলা*, পৃ. ৮২
৬. <https://youtu.be/v8luncfhjdww>
৭. উল্লিখিত।

সহায়ক গ্ৰন্থপঞ্জী :

অসমীয়া গ্ৰন্থ :

বৰুৱা, হিৰণ্যময়ী : *তাইৰ নাম ইৰম শৰ্মিলা*, শান্তি প্ৰকাশন, গুৱাহাটী, প্ৰথম প্ৰকাশ, ২০১১

ইংৰাজী গ্ৰন্থ :

Mehrotra, Deeptipriya : *Burning Bright Irom Sharmila and the struggle for Peace in Manipur*. Penguin India, 8 July, 2009

গৱেষণামূলক প্ৰবন্ধ :

Sharmah, Aparajita : *Irom Chanu Sharmila and the movement against Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA)*, *Space and Culture, India*, Volume 1, February 2014, Published by: ACCB Publishing, England.

অনলাইন ভিডিঅ' :

Irom Sharmila: Beyond the Iron lady, [youtu.be](https://youtu.be/v8luncfhjdww), 2016, August 19, <http://youtube/v8luncfhjdww>



উত্তৰ ঔপনিৱেশিক প্ৰেক্ষাপটত আৰাধনা পটংগীয়া গোস্বামীৰ দুৰ্গা উপন্যাসৰ উপনিৱেশিত নাৰীৰ শোষণ আৰু বৰ্ণবৈষম্য

উৎপল মেচ

সহকাৰী অধ্যাপক, অসমীয়া বিভাগ, মৰিগাঁও মহাবিদ্যালয়, মৰিগাঁও

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সাৰাংশ :

উত্তৰ ঔপনিৱেশিকতাবাদ হ'ল ঔপনিৱেশিকতাবাদ বিৰোধী এক সংগ্ৰাম, যাৰ চৰিত্ৰ মূলতঃ প্ৰতিবাদী আৰু বিনিৰ্মাণপন্থী। আপাত দৃষ্টিত ঔপনিৱেশিক শাসনৰ অন্ত পৰাৰ পিছৰ পৰ্যায়টোক ই সূচায়; কিন্তু অনেক সমালোচকে পদটো কালবাচক বুলি কোৱাৰ বিপৰীতে চেতনাবাচক বুলি মন্তব্য কৰি উপনিৱেশীকৃত মুহূৰ্ত্তৰপৰা সাম্ৰাজ্যবাদী প্ৰভাৱপুষ্ট সাংস্কৃতিক প্ৰভাৱক বুজাবলৈহে অভিধাটোৰ ব্যৱহাৰ কৰিছে। এনে দৃষ্টিভংগীৰে অসমৰ ঔপনিৱেশিক ইতিহাসৰ চৰ্চিত নোহোৱা বিষয়বস্তুক লৈ ৰচনা কৰা এখন উপন্যাস হ'ল আৰাধনা পটংগীয়া গোস্বামীৰ দুৰ্গা। অসমৰ মহিলা শ্বহীদ দুৰ্গা ভূমিজৰ জীৱনভিত্তিক এই উপন্যাসত ঔপন্যাসিকে ঔপনিৱেশিকতাবাদৰ নীতি, অসমত ইয়াৰ প্ৰভাৱ, ইয়াৰ বিৰুদ্ধে অসমীয়া সমাজ আৰু দুৰ্গা ভূমিজৰ অৱদানক সামৰি লৈছে। প্ৰস্তাৱিত আলোচনা-পত্ৰত এই দিশবোৰৰ উপৰি ঐতিহাসিক তথ্যৰ ওপৰত আধাৰিত উপন্যাসত ঔপনিৱেশিক উদ্যোগক্ষেত্ৰত মহিলাৰ সামাজিক স্থিতি কি ধৰণৰ সেই সম্পৰ্কে অধ্যয়ন কৰিবলৈ চেষ্টা কৰা হৈছে। উপন্যাসখনৰ মূল চৰিত্ৰ দুৰ্গা ভূমিজৰ লগত জড়িত ঔপনিৱেশিকালীন সামাজিক প্ৰসংগবোৰৰ মূল্যায়ন এই আলোচনা-পত্ৰৰ অন্যতম উদ্দেশ্য।

সূচক শব্দ : উপনিৱেশক (Coloniser), উপনিৱেশিত (Colonised), নাৰী, বৰ্ণবৈষম্য, যৌন বাসনা (Sexual Desire)।

০.০ অৱতৰণিকা :

সাম্প্ৰতিক কালত সমাজ বিজ্ঞানৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনত নাৰীবাদ আৰু লিংগ অধ্যয়নৰ প্ৰসংগই বিশেষ মাত্ৰা লাভ কৰা দেখা গৈছে। ভাৰতীয় ঔপনিৱেশিক ইতিহাস অধ্যয়নৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনত স্বাধীনতা আন্দোলনত মহিলাৰ অংশগ্ৰহণ, গান্ধীবাদী আদৰ্শ আৰু নীতিৰ প্ৰচাৰ, তৃতীয় বিশ্বৰ নতুন নাৰী, সামাজিক সংস্কাৰত নাৰীৰ ভূমিকা আদি বিষয়ক চিন্তা-চৰ্চাই গুৰুত্ব লাভ কৰিছে। সমান্তৰালকৈ ঔপনিৱেশিক কালৰেপৰা মহিলাৰ ওপৰত হোৱা অন্যায়, অবিচাৰ আৰু মহিলাৰ দ্বি-ঔপনিৱেশিকৰণৰ বিবিধ প্ৰসংগই নতুন চিন্তাৰ বাট মুকলি কৰিছে; কিন্তু ভাৰতীয় মহিলাৰ ওপৰত হোৱা উপনিৱেশকৰ যৌন শোষণ সম্পৰ্কে ইতিহাসবিদসকল নিমাত বুলি ক'ব পাৰি। পৰম্পৰাগত তথা

ঔপনিৱেশিক ইতিহাসবিদসকলে এই দিশটো আওকাণ কৰাৰ লগতে মাক্সীয় ইতিহাসবিদসকলেও ইয়াৰ গভীৰতাত প্ৰৱেশ কৰাৰ প্ৰয়াস কৰা নাই। অৱশ্যে এনেধৰণৰ দিশবোৰক সূক্ষ্মভাৱে পৰ্যবেক্ষণ কৰাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত উত্তৰ-ঔপনিৱেশিকতাবাদী সমালোচকসকল আগ্ৰহী। সকলো উপনিৱেশতে যেতিয়া উপনিৱেশকে এক দৃঢ় স্থিতি গ্ৰহণ কৰে, দেশীয় লোকসকল (Native)-এ এক প্ৰতিবাদী মনোবৃত্তিৰে ঔপনিৱেশিক আধিপত্য, শাসন আৰু শোষণৰ বিৰুদ্ধে প্ৰতিক্ৰিয়া প্ৰকাশ কৰে। উপনিৱেশিতৰ অসাম্য আৰু অনৈতিকতা, শোষণ-শাসনৰ প্ৰতিবাদত গঢ় লৈ উঠা প্ৰত্যক্ষ আৰু পৰোক্ষ প্ৰতিৰোধৰ লগতে উপনিৱেশিতৰ পৰিচয় উদ্ধাৰৰ সংগ্ৰামক বুজাবলৈ উত্তৰ-ঔপনিৱেশিকতাবাদ অভিধাটোৰ প্ৰয়োগ কৰা হয়। আলোচনাৰ

বাবে গ্রহণ কৰা আৰাধনা পটংগীয়া গোস্বামীৰ উপন্যাস *দুৰ্গী*ত ঔপনিবেশিকালীন সমাজ ব্যৱস্থাৰ এই আটাইবোৰ দিশৰ প্ৰতিফলন হৈছে। ব্ৰিটিছ বিৰোধী আদিবাসী শ্বহীদ দুৰ্গী ভূমিজৰ জীৱন আধাৰিত এই উপন্যাসত ঔপন্যাসিকে বিষয়বস্তুৰ উপস্থাপনৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত ঐতিহাসিক ঘটনাবোৰৰ হুবহু উপস্থাপন কৰিবলৈ চেষ্টা কৰিছে। দুৰ্গী ভূমিজ আটাইখাট চাহ বাগিচাৰ এগৰাকী শ্ৰমিক আছিল। বাগিচাৰ পাত তোলা আৰু কলঘৰত কাম কৰা দুৰ্গীৰ সৌন্দৰ্য দেখিয়েই বাগিচাৰ বৰ চাহাব ফ্ৰেজাৰে বৰ বাংলাত বন্ধিতা কৰি ৰাখিছিল। চাহাবৰ লগত থাকি জীৱনত পোৱা প্ৰতাৰণা, বঞ্চনাৰ প্ৰতিবাদস্বৰূপে অসমৰ স্বাধীনতা আন্দোলনত ভাগ লৈ দুৰ্গী ভূমিজে মৃত্যুবৰণ কৰে।^১

০.১ অধ্যয়নৰ পৰিসৰ :

আৰাধনা পটংগীয়া গোস্বামী ৰচিত *দুৰ্গী* উপন্যাসত ঔপনিবেশিক কালৰ ইতিহাস সামৰি লোৱা দেখা গৈছে। উপন্যাসত অসমীয়া সমাজ জীৱনত ঔপনিবেশিকতাবাদৰ প্ৰভাৱ আৰু উপনিবেশিতৰ প্ৰতি-ঔপনিবেশিক চেতনাৰ বিভিন্ন দিশ প্ৰতিফলিত হৈছে। এই আলোচনা-পত্ৰত কেৱল উপন্যাসখনৰ আধাৰত অসমৰ স্বাধীনতা আন্দোলনৰ দুগৰাকী শ্বহীদ মাংৰী ওৰাং আৰু দুৰ্গী ভূমিজ চৰিত্ৰ দুটাৰ জীৱনৰ লগত জড়িত প্ৰসংগকহে অধ্যয়নৰ বাবে নিৰ্বাচন কৰা হৈছে।

০.২ অধ্যয়নৰ পদ্ধতি :

গৱেষণা কৰ্মটিত তুলনামূলক সাহিত্যতত্ত্বৰ অন্তৰ্গত সম্বন্ধমূলক দ্বন্দ্বাত্মক পদ্ধতি আৰু সাহিত্যৰ সমাজতত্ত্বৰ আধাৰত সম্বন্ধমূলক দ্বন্দ্বাত্মক পদ্ধতিৰ সহায় লোৱা হৈছে। সম্বন্ধমূলক দ্বন্দ্বাত্মক পদ্ধতিৰ জৰিয়তে সাহিত্যৰ সৈতে সমাজ আৰু সাহিত্যবিহীন বিষয়বোৰৰ মাজৰ সম্পৰ্ক বিচাৰ কৰা হয়। সমাজ-বিশ্লেষণ পদ্ধতিৰ সহায়ত সমাজৰ ব্যক্তি বা সমূহৰ মনোজগত, বিভিন্ন ব্যক্তি বা গোটবোৰৰ মাজৰ পাৰস্পৰিক সম্পৰ্ক, চিন্তা-ধাৰা তথা আচৰণৰ বিচাৰৰদ্বাৰা সামাজিক স্বাস্থ্যৰ পৰীক্ষাৰে সামাজিক ব্যাধিসমূহ চিনাক্ত কৰা হয়।

১.০ মূল আলোচনা :

১.১ ঔপনিবেশিক প্ৰেক্ষাপটত শোষিত নাৰী :

ঔপনিবেশিক প্ৰব্ৰজন উপনিবেশকৰ আৰ্থ-সামাজিক লুণ্ঠনৰ এক পৰিণতি আছিল। প্ৰব্ৰজনৰ উদ্ভেজক (Push) আৰু আকৰ্ষক (Pull) কাৰক (factor)-এ অসমলৈ আদিবাসী শ্ৰমিকসকলক লৈ অনাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত অনুঘটক (Catalyst)-ৰ

ভূমিকা পালন কৰিছিল। অমলেন্দু গুহই আদিবাসী শ্ৰমিকসকলক আমদানি কৰি অনাৰ প্ৰক্ৰিয়াক অমানৱীয় হিচাপে আখ্যা দি উল্লেখ কৰিছে যে নানা ধৰণেৰে প্ৰলোভন দেখুৱাই, ফুচুলাই আৰু আনকি জোৰ-জবৰদস্তিৰে অপহৰণ কৰিও পুৰুষ, নাৰী আৰু শিশুবোৰক অসমৰ চাহ বাগিচাত কাম কৰিবৰ বাবে ধৰি আনি গৰু-ছাগলীৰ দৰে বেচা-কিনা কৰা হৈছিল।^২

তেনেদৰেই অসমলৈ দুৰ্গী ভূমিজৰ আগমন ঘটিছিল। উপন্যাসত উল্লেখ থকা অনুসৰি ছোটনাগপুৰত তাইৰ জন্ম। জন্মভূমিত থকাৰেপৰা দুৰ্গীৰ দৰে কিশোৰীৰ ওপৰত শোষণ চলিছে। মাকৰ মৃত্যুৰ পিছত অত্যাচাৰী সতীয়া মাকে পুষ্টিতা হোৱাৰ আগেয়েই দুৰ্গীক দেউতাকৰ বয়সৰ ধনী লোক এজনলৈ বিয়া দিবলৈ চক্ৰান্ত কৰে। তেওঁলোকৰ দৰে আন আদিবাসী পৰিয়ালৰ মাজতো উদ্ভৱ হোৱা আৰ্থিক-অনাটনৰ পৰিণতিত ঘৰুৱা হিংসা সততে লক্ষ্য কৰিব পাৰি। ইয়াৰ কাৰক হিচাপে ঔপন্যাসিকে ঔপনিবেশিক লুণ্ঠনক চিহ্নিত কৰিছে—

“বোপা-ককাৰ দিনৰে পৰা পাই অহা মাটিৰ বিশেষকৈ অৰণ্যৰ অধিকাৰ আদিবাসীসকলৰ পৰা কাটি লোৱা হৈছিল। তেওঁলোকৰ থকা ঘৰ ভেটি, সামান্য খেতিৰ মাটি, আনকি আব-ভগৱানে দিয়া অৰণ্যখনৰ ওপৰতো বৃটিছে জাপি দিছিল অত্যধিক কৰ। চৰকাৰৰ টেকেলাক কৰ দিব নোৱাৰি বেছি ভাগেই ঘৰ-মাটি, পোহনীয়া গৰু-ছাগলী এৰি পলায়ন কৰিছিল। সেই সময়ত চাহ কোম্পানীৰ আড়কাঠীয়াই সেই অঞ্চলবোৰত পিতৃপিতাই ঘূৰি ফুৰিছিল। অসমত নভঙা মাটিত মানুহ বস্ত্ৰাই ৰাজহ সংগ্ৰহৰ স্বার্থত চৰকাৰেও শ্ৰমিক চালানত সহযোগ কৰিছিল।”

(দুৰ্গী, পৃ. ২)

আৰ্থিক অভাৱ-অনাটনৰপৰা ৰক্ষা পাবলৈ উপন্যাসৰ চৰিত্ৰ দুৰ্গীয়ে মাহীমাকৰ লগত ছোটনাগপুৰৰপৰা আহি অসমৰ আটাইখাত বাগান পালেহি। উপনিবেশ শাসকেই যে নাৰীৰ ওপৰত অত্যাচাৰ কৰিছিল তেনে নহয়, প্ৰান্তীয় সমাজৰ নাৰীসকল ভাৰতীয় পুৰুষতন্ত্ৰৰ নিৰ্যাতনৰো বলি হৈছিল। গায়ত্ৰী চক্ৰৱৰ্তী স্পিকাকৈ নিম্নবৰ্গৰ সমাজ ইতিহাস অধ্যয়নক কেন্দ্ৰীয় বিষয় হিচাপে লৈ নিম্নবৰ্গৰ মাজতো স্ত্ৰী নিম্নবৰ্গৰ অধ্যয়ন কৰি তৃতীয় বিশ্বৰ নাৰীকণ্ঠৰ কথা কৈছে, যি কণ্ঠস্বৰ শুনিবলৈ দিয়া নহয় বা শুনিব পৰা নাযায়।^৩ উপনিবেশক আৰু পুৰুষতন্ত্ৰই নাৰীৰ যি কণ্ঠ ৰোধ কৰিছিল, সেই অৰ্থত মহিলাসকল দুটা স্তৰত বা দুবাৰকৈ উপনিবেশিত (Double Colonised)।



উপন্যাসখনতো লক্ষ্য কৰা যায় যে অসমলৈ অহাৰ পিছতো মূল চৰিত্ৰ দুৰ্গীৰ ওপৰত মাহীমাকৰ অত্যাচাৰ ইমানতো শেষ হোৱা নাছিল। মাহীমাকৰ গৰ্ভৱস্থা আৰু প্ৰসৱৰ পিছত দুৰ্গীয়ে ঘৰৰ সমস্ত কাম অকলে কৰা আৰু মাক-ভনীয়েকক পৰিচৰ্যা কৰাত ব্যস্ত হৈ থাকিবলগীয়া হয়। স্বামীৰ মৃত্যুৰ পিছত অকলশৰীয়া দুৰ্গী লাইনত থকাৰ সময়ত বাগানৰ ডেকা শ্ৰমিকসকলৰপৰাও আতিশয্যৰ সন্মুখীন হয়। সিহঁতে তাইৰ ঘৰৰ দুৱাৰত ৰাতি চেৰাপ খাই আহি ঢকিয়াই দুৱাৰ খুলিবলৈ কয়। এনে উপস্থাপনে ঔপনিৱেশিক দমনৰ সমান্তৰালকৈ পুৰুষশাসিত সমাজৰ দ্বাৰা নাৰীক দমন কৰাটোক সূচায়। এইক্ষেত্ৰত নাৰীৰ অধিকাৰ নিয়ন্ত্ৰণৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত পুৰুষতন্ত্ৰ আৰু ঔপনিৱেশিক শক্তি দুয়োটাই অনুৰূপে কাম কৰা দেখা গৈছে।

১.২ উপনিৱেশকৰ যৌন বাসনা (Sexual Desire) আৰু বৰ্ণ বৈষম্য :

উপনিৱেশবোৰত কিদৰে মহিলাক যৌনসন্তোগৰ আহিলা হিচাপে ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা হয় আৰু এনে মহিলাই কিদৰে বিভিন্ন মনোঘাত (Trauma)ৰ চিকাৰ হৈ মানসিকভাৱে ভাগি পৰে বা মৃত্যুবৰণ কৰে এই বিষয়ে নিৰ্মোহ ঐতিহাসিক বিশ্লেষণ ইতিহাস-চৰ্চাৰ ধাৰাত অধিক পৰিলক্ষিত নহয়। কেৱল ঔদ্যোগিক, সামৰিক বা প্ৰশাসনিক ক্ষেত্ৰতেই নহয়, যুৱতী-বিবাহিত মহিলা, বিধৱাৰ ব্যক্তিগত যৌন জীৱনতো উপনিৱেশকৰ অত্যাচাৰ আৰু বৰ্বৰতাৰ আঁচোৰ পৰিছিল। অসমৰ চাহ বাগিচাৰ বিদেশী উচ্চবৰ্গীয় পৰিচালক, সহকাৰী পৰিচালক আদিয়ে বাগিচাৰ চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীয় সুন্দৰী গাভৰু নিৰ্বাচন কৰি নিজৰ লগত ৰক্ষিতা হিচাপে ৰাখিছিল আৰু বিলাতলৈ গুচি যোৱাৰ আগতে বস্ত্ৰিত থাকিবলৈ তেওঁলোকৰ বাবে ঘৰ-মাটি কৰি দিছিল। চাহাবৰ তেনে মেমৰ পৰিয়াল অসমত বহুতো আছে।^৪ যোৰহাটৰ চিনামৰা হাতীগড় চাহ বাগিচাত মিনি মেম নামৰ এগৰাকী ৰক্ষিতা আছিল। তিনিটা সন্তান জন্ম দিয়াৰ পাছত চাহাবে সন্তানকেইটাক বুকুৰ গাখীৰ খাবলৈতো নিদিলেই, আনকি মুখখনো চাবলৈ নিদিলে।^৫ অমিয় কুমাৰ দাসে শোণিতপুৰ জিলাৰ ৰঙাপাৰাৰ কছাৰীগাঁও চাহবাগিচাৰ চাহাবে এগৰাকী মহিলা শ্ৰমিকক বাকচ এটাত থিয় কৰাই কাপোৰ খুলি যৌন আতিশয্য চলোৱাৰ বিষয়েও তেওঁৰ স্মৃতিকথাত লিখিছে।^৬

উপন্যাসৰ চৰিত্ৰ দুৰ্গীক কলঘৰৰ ভিতৰত কাম কৰিবলৈ দায়িত্ব দিয়া হয়। দুৰ্গীৰ দেউতাকে অনুভৱ কৰে যে

উঠন বয়সৰ এগৰাকী ছোৱালীক ঘৰত থৈ দিয়াটো আশংকাৰ কথা। কিয়নো তাই যিকোনো সময়তে বাগানৰ উচ্চ বৰ্গৰ কৰ্মচাৰী আৰু বিষয়াৰ যৌনলিপ্সাৰ বলি হ'ব পাৰে। প্ৰথমবাৰৰ বাবে দুৰ্গীক দেখিয়েই চাহাবৰ মনত যৌনলিপ্সাৰ উদ্ভৱ হৈছে। তেওঁৰ বিকৃত কামনাৰ বিষয়ে ঔপন্যাসিকে লিখিছে এনেদৰে—

“ফ্ৰেজাৰ চাহাবে কোনোমতেই দুৰ্গীৰপৰা চকুৰ আঁতৰাই নিব নোৱাৰিলে। দুৰ্গীক তেওঁৰ জাল ফালি পলাই যোৱা এজনী হৰিণীৰ দৰে লাগিল। আজলী হৰিণীজনীলৈ তেওঁৰ কিবা এটা যেন মায়া জাগিল।” (দুৰ্গী, পৃ. ১৩)

এই সাক্ষাতৰ পিছতে দুৰ্গীক চাহাবে বাংলাৰ কামত নিয়োজিত কৰিলে। বাংলাটো সজাই পৰাই তোলাটোৱেই তাইৰ কাম। প্ৰথম অৱস্থাত তাই দিনটো কাম-বন কৰাৰ পাছত আবেলি লাইনলৈ উভতি আহিব লাগে। এই সময়ছোৱাৰ ভিতৰতে চাহাবসকলে কেতিয়াবা চকুৰে ভাষাৰে দুৰ্গীক অসভ্যালি কৰে। ফ্ৰেজাৰ চাহাবৰ বাংলাত ৰাতিৰ আহাৰ গ্ৰহণ কৰিবলৈ অহা হেনৰি আৰু কিলবাৰ্নৰ কৌতুকপূৰ্ণ চাৰনিৰপৰা দুৰ্গী সাৰি যাব পৰা নাই—

“তেওঁলোকৰ লুতুৰা চকুৰে তাইৰ নিপোটল বুকু আৰু তপিনাত বাৰে বাৰে আঘাত কৰা দুৰ্গীয়ে অনুভৱ কৰিছিল। দুৰ্গীৰ অস্বস্তি লাগিছিল আৰু তেওঁলোকৰ নিলজ দৃষ্টি তাইৰ বাবে দুঃসহ হৈ উঠিছিল। এবাৰ হেনৰীয়ে কৈয়েই পেলালে যে জেমছ ফ্ৰেজাৰে ছুটা দিলে দুদিনৰ বাবে দুৰ্গীক তেৱোঁ নিজৰ বাংলালৈ লৈ যাব খোজে, যাতে দুৰ্গীৰ মৰমী হাতৰ পৰশ লাগি তেওঁৰ নিপ্তাণ ঘৰেও হাঁহি উঠে।” (দুৰ্গী, পৃ. ১৬)

স্বামীৰ মৃত্যুৰ পাছত অকলশৰীয়া দুৰ্গী ফ্ৰেজাৰ চাহাবৰ সৈতে নিগাজিকৈ থাকিবলৈ বাধ্য হৈছে। এনেকৈ ৰক্ষিতা হিচাপে একেলগে থকাৰ পিছতো ফ্ৰেজাৰৰ বাবে দুৰ্গীক জীৱনসংগী কৰাটো সম্ভৱ হৈ উঠা নাই, কিয়নো তেওঁ অৱগত যে এনে পদক্ষেপ ল'লে সমগ্ৰ ইউৰোপীয় সমাজখনেই ইয়াৰ প্ৰতিবাদ কৰিব—

“তেওঁলোকৰ মতে কুলী ছোৱালীৰ লগত ধেমালি-ধুমুলা কৰিব পাৰি, জোৰ-জবৰদস্তি কৰাৰো অনেক উদাহৰণ আছে। তাৰ বাবদ সিহঁতক টকা-পইছা দিয়া বা অন্য প্ৰকাৰে সহায় কৰাটো আপত্তি নাই, খুব বেছি কিছু দিনৰ বাবে ৰক্ষিতা কৰি ৰাখিব পৰা যায়; কিন্তু বিবাহৰ দৰে এটা স্থায়ী মৰ্যাদাসম্পন্ন সম্বন্ধ স্থাপনহু এয়া কেতিয়াও গ্ৰহণযোগ্য নহয়।”

(দুৰ্গী, পৃ. ৩৫)

দুৰ্ৱা ঘোষে দেখুৱাইছে যে উল্লেখযোগ্য যে ইউৰোপীয়সকলে দেশীয় (Native) নাৰীৰ সৈতে থকা সম্পৰ্কটোক লোকচক্ষুৰপৰা আঁতৰাই ৰাখিছিল আৰু কেতিয়াবা ইচ্ছাপত্ৰতহে এই নাৰীসকলৰ বিষয়ে উল্লেখ কৰিছিল।^৭ আনহাতে বিবাহৰ প্ৰসংগত দুয়োৰে ক্ষেত্ৰত নিজৰ জন্মগত সমাজখনৰ সমৰ্থন অপৰিহাৰ্য। দুটা ব্যক্তিগত সম্পৰ্কৰ আলমত বিবাহৰ জৰিয়তে দুখন পৃথক সমাজৰ মাজত সম্বন্ধ স্থাপন হয়; কিন্তু উপনিৱেশবোৰত ইউৰোপীয়সকলৰ নৃতাত্ত্বিক বিভাজনৰ মূল আধাৰ হ'ল জাতিতত্ত্ব (Race theory)। জাতিতত্ত্বৰ আধাৰত শ্বেতাংগ-কৃষ্ণাংগ বা প্ৰাচ্য-পাশ্চাত্যৰ দ্বন্দ্বৰ সহায়ত ঔপনিৱেশিক স্বাৰ্থ নিয়ন্ত্ৰণ কৰা হয়।^৮ দুখন ভিন্ন সমাজ আৰু সাংস্কৃতিক প্ৰতিনিধিত্ব কৰা ফ্ৰেজাৰ চাহাব আৰু দুৰ্গীৰ মাজত বিবাহ সম্ভৱ হোৱা নাই। সেয়ে দুৰ্গীয়ে কয়—

“শাদী-বিহাৰ মতলবতো বহুত লম্বা চোঁড়া আছে চাহাব।
... শাদী স্ৰিফ্‌ দুজনকে বিচ্‌মে নহয় চাহাব।”

(দুৰ্গী, পৃ. ৩৯)

ইয়াৰ পাছত আনুষ্ঠানিক বিবাহ সম্পন্ন নহ'লেও দুৰ্গী বক্ষিতা হিচাপে ফ্ৰেজাৰ চাহাবৰ লগত থাকিবলৈ ল'লে। দুৰ্গী ভূমিজক দুৰ্গী মেমৰূপে জনা গ'ল। বাংলাত দুৰ্গীক ৰখাৰেপৰা ব্ৰিটিছ বন্ধুকেইজনৰ সৈতে ফ্ৰেজাৰৰ ঘনিষ্ঠতা নোহোৱা হ'ল। হেনৰীদ্বাৰা তেওঁ তচ্ছিল্যৰ সন্মুখীন হয়—

“মই আচৰিত হওঁ জে'মছ্‌ তুমি সেই নেটিভ নিগাৰজনীক কিদৰে বাৰু বাংলাত ইমান সন্মান দি ৰাখিব পাৰিছা?”

(দুৰ্গী, পৃ. ৬৯)

ইউৰোপীয় উপনিৱেশকৰ যৌন বাসনা (Sexual Desire) পূৰ্ণ কৰাৰ পিছতো ভাৰতীয় নাৰীসকলে বৰ্ণ বৈষম্যৰপৰা বেহাই পোৱা নাছিল। প্ৰায়ক্ষেত্ৰতেই দেখা যায় যে এই সম্পৰ্কৰ ফলত জন্ম হোৱা সন্তানসকলক নিম্নবৰ্গীয় ভাৰতীয় সমাজ-সাংস্কৃতিৰপৰা বিচ্ছিন্ন কৰি ইউৰোপীয় জীৱনশৈলী অনুসৰণ কৰিবলৈ শিকোৱা হৈছিল। প্ৰাচ্যৰ জনগণক সামাজিক আৰু সাংস্কৃতিকভাৱে পিছ পৰা বুলি ধৰি লৈ তেওঁলোকৰ জীৱন ধাৰণ প্ৰণালী, সভ্যতা-সাংস্কৃতিক অধিক উন্নত আৰু সভ্য ৰূপত ধৰি লোৱাটো ইউৰোপীয়সকলৰ নিৰ্ধাৰিত নীতি। প্ৰথম বিশ্ব-তৃতীয় বিশ্ব, কেন্দ্ৰীয়-প্ৰান্তীয় আদি সাংস্কৃতিক ব্যৱধানৰ জৰিয়তে ইউৰোপীয়সকলক যুক্তিবাদী, সভ্য, আধুনিক বুলি স্বীকৃতি দিয়াৰ বিপৰীতে উপনিৱেশিতক আদিম, নাৰীসুলভ,

শিশুসুলভ, বৰ্বৰ, অসভ্য, দাসৰূপে গণ্য কৰাৰ মানসিকতাক মান্যতা প্ৰদান কৰা হ'ল। বক্ষিতাৰ গৰ্ভত জন্মগ্ৰহণ কৰা এনে সন্তানক শিক্ষা দান কৰা কেতিয়াবা অহেতুক কাৰণত আঁতৰাই লৈ যোৱা হৈছিল আৰু মাতৃৰ সৈতে তেওঁলোকৰ দেখা-সাক্ষাৎ চিৰদিনৰ বাবে বন্ধ হৈছিল। অৱশ্যে ভাৰত উপমহাদেশত দেশীয় মহিলাই নিজৰ সন্তানকে আদি কৰি পৰিয়াল পোহ-পালনৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত ইউৰোপীয় সংগীৰ বিত্তীয় সহায়তা লাভ কৰিছিল।^৯ উপন্যাসত পোৱা যায় যে ফ্ৰেজাৰে তেওঁৰ দুই পুত্ৰ সন্তানক শ্বিলঙৰ ছেইণ্ট এডমাণ্ড আৰু ছেইণ্ট এণ্টনিজ স্কুলত নামভৰ্তিৰ বাবে খবৰ কৰিছে যদিও ‘চাহাবৰ ল’ৰাৰ লগত থাকি সিহঁতে নিজৰ মাকক চিনি নোপোৱা হ'ব’ বুলিয়েই দুৰ্গীয়ে এই প্ৰস্তাৱ নাকচ কৰিছে। মাংৰী মেম বা মালতী মেমৰ ত্যাগৰ বিষয়ে দুৰ্গীয়ে শুনিছে। মালতীৰ লগত হোৱা অভিজ্ঞতাৰ কাহিনীয়ে দুৰ্গীক এইক্ষেত্ৰত কোনোধৰণে উৎসাহ নিদিয়ে—

“তিনিটাকৈ পুত্ৰ সন্তান তাই জন্ম দিলে। ‘চাহাবৰ ল’ৰা কুলি হ'ব নোৱাৰে’ বুলি কৈ মিছনত ভাল শিক্ষা দিয়াৰ অজুহাত দেখুৱাই তিনিওটা ল’ৰাকে তাইৰ বুকুৰ পৰা যি কাঢ়ি লৈ গ'ল, এটাকো তাই আৰু এই জীৱনত ঘূৰাই নাপালে।”

(দুৰ্গী, পৃ. ৮৭)

অসমৰ স্বাধীনতা সংগ্ৰামৰ পটভূমিত মাংৰী মেমৰ ত্যাগে অসমৰ ইতিহাসবিদসকলৰ দৃষ্টি আকৰ্ষণ কৰিছে। মালতী নামৰ বাগিচাৰ শ্ৰমিকক চাহাবে মাংৰী মেম বুলি স্বীকৃতি দি নিজৰ লগত ৰাখিছিল। উচ্চাৰণৰ বাবে এনেদৰে দেশীয় নাৰীৰ নামবোৰ সলাই দিয়া হোৱা নাছিল, বৰং মূল পৰিচয়ৰপৰা বিচ্ছিন্ন কৰি তেওঁলোকৰ জনগোষ্ঠীগত পৰিচয় নোহোৱা কৰাটোৱেই ইউৰোপীয়সকলৰ উদ্দেশ্য আছিল।^{১০}

চাহাবৰ সন্তানক কুলী সমাজৰ আঁতৰাই মিছনত উচ্চ শিক্ষা দিয়াৰ অজুহাত দেখুৱাই মাংৰী মেমৰ চাহাবৰ ঔৰসজাত তিনিওটা ল’ৰাকে মাকৰ মৰমৰপৰা বঞ্চিত কৰা হ'ল আৰু পৰৱৰ্তী জীৱনত তেওঁ নিজ পুত্ৰকেইজনক কেতিয়াও লগ নাপালে। নিজৰ জন্মজাত সন্তানক পঠোৱা মিছনৰ ঠিকনা কেতিয়াও মাংৰীক দিয়া হোৱা নাছিল।^{১১} সেইজন চাহাবে বাগান এৰি যোৱাৰ আগতে তাইক আন এজনৰ হাতত গতাই থৈ যায়। এইদৰে ক্ৰমাৎ তিনিজন চাহাবৰ বক্ষিতা হ'বলৈ বাধ্য হয়। জীৱনৰ সৰ্বস্ব হেৰুৱাই মনৰ দুখ নিবাৰণ কৰিবলৈ মাংৰীয়ে অনবৰতে অত্যধিক মদ্যপান কৰিবলৈ ধৰিলে। ব্যক্তিগত জীৱনত পোৱা

অপমান, লাঞ্ছনা, অন্যায় দেখি তেওঁৰ মনত ইংৰাজ জাতিটোৰ প্ৰতি ঘৃণা ভাব জাগি উঠিছিল। চাহাবৰ হাতত প্ৰতাৰিত আৰু সন্তানৰ মৰমৰপৰা বঞ্চিত হোৱাৰ পিছত মালতী মেমে গোলাপী মেমৰ লগত মদ খাই দিন অতিবাহিত কৰিছিল আৰু তাৰ মাজতে এদিন স্বাধীনতা আন্দোলনত জঁপিয়াই পৰি মৃত্যুবৰণ কৰে।^{১২}

যৌন সম্পৰ্ক স্থাপন হোৱাৰ পাছত জন্ম হোৱা সন্তানৰ ভিতৰত গাৰ ৰং আৰু চেহেৰাৰ ফালৰপৰা ইউৰোপীয়সকলৰ লগত সাদৃশ্য থকা সন্তানবোৰ পিতৃৰপৰা অধিক মৰম আৰু অনুগ্ৰহৰ পাত্ৰ আছিল। দুৰ্গী ভূমিজৰ মেমৰ চেহেৰাৰ দৰে দেখিবলৈ ধুনীয়া দহবছৰীয়া ছোৱালী বেবীক বিলাতলৈ চিৰদিনৰ বাবে কাঢ়ি-আঁজুৰি লৈ গৈছিল আৰু ইয়াৰ ফলস্বৰূপে সমগ্ৰ চাহাব জাতিটোৰ প্ৰতিয়েই দুৰ্গীৰ মনত হিংসা, ঘৃণা আৰু প্ৰতিশোধৰ জুই উমি উমি জ্বলিছিল।^{১৩} উপন্যাসত আগবঢ়োৱা বৰ্ণনা অনুসৰি সমাজ জীৱনৰ অভিজ্ঞতাৰপৰা দুৰ্গীৰ মনত প্ৰশ্ন জাগিছে যে তেওঁৰ সন্তানক ফ্ৰেজাৰে কিদৰে গ্ৰহণ কৰিব, কিয়নো ফ্ৰেজাৰৰ বন্ধুত্বমহলে তেওঁলোকৰ সম্বন্ধটোক লৈ টুলুঙা মন্তব্য কৰে। ফ্ৰেজাৰ আৰু দুৰ্গীৰ তিনিটাকৈ ল'ৰা-ছোৱালীৰ ভিতৰত গোলাপী গাল, নীলা চকু, সোণালী চুলিৰ জীয়েকজনীৰ প্ৰতি ফ্ৰেজাৰৰ গুৰুত্ব বেছি। তাইৰ নামকৰণো ইউৰোপীয় সংস্কৃতিক প্ৰতিনিধিত্ব কৰিব পৰাকৈ এলিজাবেথ আৰু বেবী ৰখা হৈছে। ঘৰৰপৰা ওলাই যাওঁতে তাইৰ সৈতে ধেমালি কৰা বা ঘৰত থকাৰ পৰতো তাইক লৈ ব্যস্ত হৈ থকা দেখা যায়। জীয়েকক ইংৰাজী শিকোৱাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰতো ফ্ৰেজাৰ অধিক আগ্ৰহী। বিলাতৰপৰা জীয়েকৰ বাবে ৰং-বিৰঙৰ ছবি থকা বৰ্ণমালাৰ কিতাপ, ইংৰাজী ভাষাত লিখা সাধুকথাৰ দুখন কিতাপ মগাই আনিছে। সৰুপুত্ৰ কুশৰ মনত এই বিষয়ে প্ৰশ্ন উত্থাপন নোহোৱাকৈ থকা নাই—

“বেবীৰ সোণৰ দৰে চুলি আৰু আকাশৰ দৰে নীলা চকু আছে কাৰণে পাপাই তাইক আমাতকৈ বেছি মৰম কৰে নেকি মা ?”
(দুৰ্গী, পৃ.৮৭)

ৰক্ষিতাৰ সৈতে সম্পৰ্কৰ ফলস্বৰূপে জন্মগ্ৰহণ কৰা শিশুৰ ইউৰোপীয় শব্দৰে নামকৰণ কৰাতহে গুৰুত্ব দিয়া হৈছিল। লগতে মিছনৰ অধীনত শিক্ষাগ্ৰহণৰ বাবে চাহাবসকল অধিক উৎসাহী হৈছিল। স্বাভাৱিকতে স্বামীৰ মৃত্যু বা তেওঁৰ সৈতে হোৱা বিচ্ছেদৰ পাছত নাৰীসকল অসহায় হৈ উঠিছিল। নিঃসংগ জীৱন কটাবলৈ বাধ্য হোৱা এনে নাৰীয়ে সহজতেই মানসিক ভাৰসাম্য হেৰুৱাইছিল বা কেতিয়াবা অকালতে মৃত্যুক সাবটি লৈছিল। ফ্ৰেজাৰ অসমৰ বাগানৰ সেউজী শোভাৰ মাজতে বাগানৰ প্ৰধান চালিকাশক্তি আদিবাসী মজদুৰসকলক অমানৱীয় ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা দেখি স্তম্ভিত আৰু লজ্জিত হৈ পৰিছিল আৰু পৰৱৰ্তী কালত আন ইউৰোপীয়সকলৰ দৰে তেঁৱো ভাবিবলৈ বাধ্য হৈছিল যে সুশভ্য ইংৰাজ জাতিয়ে কৃষকবৰ্গৰ বৰ্বৰ মানুহবোৰক সভ্য কৰিবলৈহে অসমলৈ আহিছে।

২.০ উপসংহাৰ :

সামগ্ৰিকভাৱে ক'ব পাৰি যে ঐতিহাসিক তথ্যৰ আধাৰত দুৰ্গী উপন্যাসখনত ঔপনিৱেশকালীন অসমৰ চাহ বাগিচাৰ দুগৰাকী শ্বহীদ মাংৰী ওৰাং আৰু দুৰ্গী ভূমিজৰ ব্যক্তিগত আৰু সামাজিক জীৱনৰ প্ৰসংগৰ উপস্থাপন কৰা হৈছে। ইংৰাজ উপনিৱেশকসকলৰ শোষণ কেৱল তেওঁলোকৰ ওপৰতেই সীমাবদ্ধ হৈ থকা নাই, বৰং সতি-সন্ততিলৈকে ইয়াৰ প্ৰভাৱ অনুভূত হয়। উপন্যাসিকে ইয়াৰ কাৰক হিচাপে উপনিৱেশকৰ জাতিগত বা বৰ্ণ বিভাজনৰ বাগধাৰাক (Discourse) চিহ্নিত কৰিছে। ইয়াৰ উপৰি উপন্যাসখনৰ আধাৰত এই আলোচনাৰপৰা নিম্নলিখিত দিশবোৰৰ বিষয়ে আভাস পাব পাৰি—

- উপনিৱেশিক প্ৰব্ৰজনৰ পৰিণতিত মহিলাৰ পৰিৱৰ্তিত জীৱন।
- উপনিৱেশকৰ শোষণ হিচাপে বৰ্ণবৈষম্যমূলক মানসিকতা আৰু তাৰ কুফল।
- উপনিৱেশকৰ বিকৃত যৌনলিপ্সাৰ উপস্থাপন।
- উপনিৱেশিত পুৰুষতন্ত্ৰই নাৰীৰ অধিকাৰ নিয়ন্ত্ৰণৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত কৰা ক্ষমতাৰ প্ৰয়োগ।

প্ৰসংগ-সূত্ৰ :

১. ওচমান গনি আৰু দেৱব্ৰত শৰ্মা, *বৃত্তিচ বিৰোধী মহান চহিদ আদিবাসী মহিলা দুৰ্গী ভূমিজ*, পৃ. ১-৪
২. Amalendu Guha, *Planter-Raj to Swaraj Freedom Struggle And Electoral Politics in Assam*



1826-1947, p.18

৩. P K Nayar , *Post Colonialism : A Guide for The Perplexed*, p. 25-26

৪ . সুশীল কুৰ্মী, 'মাংৰি ওৰাওঁৰ জীৱন ধাৰা', দেৱব্ৰত শৰ্মা (সম্পা. আৰু সংক.), *বৃত্তিচ-বিৰোধী চহিদ, আদিবাসী কন্যা, মহীয়সী মুক্তিযোদ্ধা মাংৰি ওৰাং*, পৃ. ৪৫

৫. ডিব্ৰুগড়ৰ তাজা, 'অসমৰ প্ৰথম মহিলা চহিদ মাংৰী ওৰাওঁ', দেৱব্ৰত শৰ্মা (সম্পা. আৰু সংক.), উল্লিখিত, পৃ. ৫৭

৬. শৰ্মা, দেৱব্ৰত, *অসমৰ আদিবাসী স্বাধীনতা সংগ্ৰামী অৰ্জুন ঘাটোৱাৰ*, পৃ. ১৪-১৫

৭. Durba Ghosh, *Sex and Family in Colonial India* , p. 3

৮. হিমাদ্ৰী লাহিড়ী, 'ঔপনিবেশিকতাবাদ ও উত্তৰ-ঔপনিবেশিকতাবাদ', নৱেন্দু সেন, (সম্পা.), *পাশ্চাত্য সাহিত্যতত্ত্ব ও সাহিত্যভাবনা*, পৃ. ৬২২

৯ . Durba Ghosh, op.cit., p. 25

১০. Ibid , p. 21

১১. সুশীল কুৰ্মী, 'প্ৰথম সংস্কৰণৰ আগকথা', দেৱব্ৰত শৰ্মা (সম্পা. আৰু সংক.), পূৰ্বোল্লিখিত , পৃ. ৩৩

১২. সুশীল কুৰ্মী, 'মাংৰি ওৰাওঁৰ জীৱন ধাৰা', দেৱব্ৰত শৰ্মা (সম্পা. আৰু সংক.), উল্লিখিত , পৃ. ৪৪-৪৫

১৩. ওচমান গনি আৰু দেৱব্ৰত শৰ্মা, পূৰ্বোল্লিখিত, পৃ. ২-৩

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মূল গ্ৰন্থ :

গোস্বামী, আৰাধনা পটংগীয়া, *দুৰ্গা*, জ্যোতি প্ৰকাশন, প্ৰথম প্ৰকাশ , জুলাই, ২০২১

সহায়ক গ্ৰন্থ :

ওজা, অঞ্জন কুমাৰ (সম্পা.), *সাহিত্য-সমালোচনা-তত্ত্ব*, উত্তৰ লখিমপুৰ, নৰ্থ লখিমপুৰ কলেজ প্ৰকাশন সমিতি ,

দ্বিতীয় পৰিৱৰ্তিত প্ৰকাশ, ২০১৩

কুৰ্মী, গণেশ চন্দ্ৰ, *অসমৰ চাহ জনগোষ্ঠী : নৃগোষ্ঠীগত আৰু সামাজিক পৰিচয়*, পশ্চিম মিলন নগৰ, ডিব্ৰুগড়, প্ৰকাশক-
আলোয়া কুৰ্মী, প্ৰথম প্ৰকাশ, জুলাই, ২০১১

গনি, ওচমান আৰু দেৱব্ৰত শৰ্মা, *বৃত্তিচ বিৰোধী মহান চহিদ আদিবাসী মহিলা দুৰ্গা ভূমিজ*, যোৰহাট , একলব্য প্ৰকাশন,
দ্বিতীয় সংস্কৰণ , ১২ মে' ২০১৯

তামুলী, লক্ষ্মীনাথ, *ভাৰতৰ স্বাধীনতা সংগ্ৰামত অসমৰ অৱদান : সংঘাত আৰু সহযোগিতাৰ ইতিহাস*,

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বেজবৰা, নীৰাজনা মহন্ত, *তুলনামূলক সাহিত্য : কি, কিয়, কেনেকৈ*, ডিব্ৰুগড়, বনলতা, প্ৰথম প্ৰকাশ, আগষ্ট, ২০১৯

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শৰ্মা, দেৱব্ৰত (সম্পা.), *অসমৰ আদিবাসী স্বাধীনতা সংগ্ৰামী অৰ্জুন ঘাটোৱাৰ*, যোৰহাট, একলব্য প্ৰকাশন, প্ৰথম
প্ৰকাশ, ২০১৯

শৰ্মা, দেৱব্ৰত (সম্পা. আৰু সংক.), *বৃত্তিচ-বিৰোধী চহিদ, আদিবাসী কন্যা মহীয়সী মুক্তিযোদ্ধা মাংৰি ওৰাং*, যোৰহাট ,
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