

No-6, 2019-20

ISSN 2395-5007



शक्ति

The Strength



**Womens' Studies and Research Centre
Narangi Anchalik Mahavidyalaya**

In Collaboration with IQAC, NAM

Editor
Ruplekha Phukan Barthakur

Co-Editors
**Dr. Juthika Barman Choudhury
Sumitra D' Chettry**



The Strength

ISSN 2395-5007

Journal, No. 6, 2019-20



Narangi Anchalik Mahavidyalaya
Womens' Studies and Research Centre
In Collaboration with IQAC NAM



Narangi Anchalik Mahavidyalaya
Narangi, Guwahati-781171

শক্তি, The Strength – An annual bilingual journal (ISSN - 2935-5007) published by Narangi Anchalik Mahavidyalaya Womens' Studies and Research Centre, Narangi Anchalik Mahavidyalaya (in collaboration with IQAC), Guwahati-171

The papers submitted to the Journal are reviewed by a group of experts.

Editorial Board

President : Reeta Dutta Hazorika, Pricipal i.c

Editor : Ruplekha Phukan Barthakur

Co-Editors : Dr. Juthika Barman Choudhury
Sumitra D' Chettry

Members : Minu Das
Dr. Parineeta Saikia Bora
Dr. Banani Borah Hazarika
Banajyoti Sharma

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, NAMWSARC

Advisors : Reeta Dutta Hazorika, Principal i/c
Reeta Sharma, Vice Principal, Co-ordinator IQAC, NAM

President : Dr. Juthika Barman Choudhury

Secretary/

Co-ordinator : Ruplekha Phukan Barthakur

Treasurer : Jonali Talukdar (Dept. of History)

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

Dr. Nira Das (HoD, Dept. of Assamese)

Archana Bora (HoD, Dept. of Political Science)

Gitika Sharma (Dept. of Political Science)

Sumitra D' Chettry (Dept. of English)

Deepanjali Das (Dept. of Education)

Dr. Karabi Goswami (Dept. of Philosophy)

Jayanta Barooah (Dept. of Economics)

Minu Das (Dept. of Assamese)

Rama Bhandari (Dept. of Hindi)

Dr. Bonani Bora Hazarika (Dept. of Mathematics)

Banajyoti Sarma (Dept. of Economics)

Disclaimer : The Editorial Board and the publisher are not responsible for the view expressed by the authors.
The responsibility or the originality of the paper and views expressed by the authors are absolutely their own.

©NAMWSARC, All rights reserved

Price : 150/- Only

Printed at : BNit Book Builders, Chandmari, Guwahati-03

সূচীপত্র / CONTENTS

■ Women Legislator in Assam from 1st to 15th General election ✍ Banasree Devi	7
■ Women Issues And Challenges During Lockdown Period Of Covid 19 Pandemic In India ✍ Gitika Sharma	17
■ Empowerment of women through women entrepreneurship : Its motivating factors in the Context of NE India ✍ Dr. Mrinmoyee Bhattacharyya	29
■ Sister Nivedita...her Love And Appeal To The Common Indians ✍ Mukta Purkayastha	41
■ Picture of Women in the Poetry of William Wordsworth ✍ Dr. Rosie Patangia	47

■ "The Dark Holds No Terrors" by Sashi Deshpande: An Ecofeministic Reading ✍ Ruplekha Phukan Barthakur	53
■ Women Education and changing Attitudes of society towards women in India ✍ Mrs. Sagarika Chowdhury	61
■ Anita Desai's Fire On The Mountain: Understanding The Trauma Of A Housewife ✍ Sumitra Devi Chettry	67
■ A gender based Analysis of 'Labor' and Women's Emancipation ✍ Tanay Choudhury	73
■ শৰৎচন্দ্ৰ চট্টোপাধ্যায়ৰ 'অভাগীৰ স্বৰ্গ' ✍ মিনু দাস	81
■ অসমীয়া সাহিত্য জগতৰ মহীয়সী নাৰী মামণি ৰয়ছম গোস্বামীৰ জীৱন আৰু সাহিত্য কৃতি ✍ ড॰ পৰিণীতা শইকীয়া বৰা	87

EDITOR'S NOTE

In Hindu Philosophy Shakti is described as the seraphic power that resides in Goddesses. It was believed that this power was used to fight and destroy the demonic forces for peace to prevail. Since the beginning of the human civilisation women were considered as a very vital source of power as well as in today's world women are excelling and proving themselves as the most powerful beings in all aspects of fulfilling their duties and responsibilities. Shakti is associated with women as female energy as it is responsible for the creation of the universe and it is only the sole power of a woman to create another being by the concept of birth. Various steps have come into force at an international and national concern for the rights of the women and to remove gender inequality. Even though such measures are being taken and there is an uprise in our society regarding the growth of women empowerment, there are still certain aspects like the mind set of people with respect to women in which we lag behind. Hence it becomes vital to make the people alert and uptight regarding issues women face and providing them with attainable suggestions for their empowerment.

Women are considered to be the symbol of courage and strength. A women related Research Journal "SHAKTI, The Strength", published by Narangi Anchalik Mahavidyalaya Women Studies and Research Centre, is a humble attempt to study and research on various women related issues so as to bring a public awareness for preserving women's rights and dignity. This is the 6th edition of the journal in which the research papers are diverse in nature containing different problems and prospects and hope it will contribute to the research work of women studies and grow stronger in the coming years.

On behalf of the editorial board, we will ever remain grateful to all the contributors for their valuable research papers to "SHAKTI, The Strength". We would like to offer our heartfelt gratitude to the Principal (i/c) of our college, Reeta Dutta Hazorika for her moral support and all the members of Women Cell and IQAC Cell for their constant support and appreciation.

Ruplekha Phukan Barthakur,
Deptt. of English,
Narangi Anchalik Mahavidyalaya

WOMEN LEGISLATOR IN ASSAM FROM 1ST TO 15TH GENERAL ELECTION

 **BANASREE DEVI**

Asstt. Professor

Dept. of Political Science, Narangi Anchalik Mahavidyalaya

Abstract :

Gender equality is very important at the decision making level without which women cannot expect a gender neutral policy for the overall development of their community. Unfortunately not only in India but in fact all over in the world, women's participation at the decision making level is very low. A similar trend can be observed in Assam. In this paper I am going to examine women's participation at the decision making level from the first to the fifteenth assembly election of Assam.

Key words :

Women, Empowerment, Patriarchy, Status.

In democracy, women's active participation at the decision making process is very important. Because through active participation they can themselves be able to make laws of the land which is vital for the all-round development. A state is the combination of both men and women. Therefore both men and women should equally take active part in the decision making processes. But unfortunately due to women's low social status, ignorance and prevailing patriarchal system restricted women from active participation of the decision making system of the state. Not only in Assam but all over India women's active participation at the decision making process is very low. However one interesting point should be noted here that as voter their participation is very encouraging but as an active politician only few are interested to join in the active politics. As a result they cannot successfully make laws in their favour because it is the male person who dominates the law making body of the state and they are not willing to give

women equal status. In this paper I am going to discuss about women's participation at the decision making process of Assam from first to the fifteenth general election which was held from March 27 to April 6, 2021.

The main objectives of this paper are :

- (a) to discuss about the socio-economic status of Assamese women.
- (b) to discuss about various constitutional provision for the women in India.
- (c) to discuss about the role of Assamese women at the decision making process.
- (d) to discuss about the obstacles of women's participation at the decision making process
- (e) to discuss about the gender participation in the 2021 Assembly election.
- (f) to discuss about the various suggestions to solve the problem

Methodology :

This paper is mainly based on descriptive methods and secondary data which I have collected from different books, journals, newspapers and from different internet sources.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF ASSAMESE WOMEN :

Before analysing gender inequality in political representation it is important for us to know about the social status of Assamese women, because women's status in the society constitutes the background for their political empowerment. Those societies where women are generally respected and are highly educated, in such society's women are politically more conscious than that of the societies where women's conditions are very poor.

The term "status" generally refers to a social system which defines the role and position of men and women along with their enjoyment of different rights as a human being.

Assam is a state where both tribal and non-tribal live together and therefore tribal cultures influence a lot at the non-tribal level also. In tribal societies, women play a significant role which also influenced the Aryan culture of Assam. As a result status of women in ancient Assam was quite liberal than that of the contemporary other Indian states. Purdah system which was practice in most of the parts of India was totally absent in Assamese society. Instead of dowry system; where bride's family had to give sufficient amount of money or other items to the

groom's family; "ga –dhan" system was practised in Assam where groom's family had to give a price for the bride. Another notable feature is that girls of tribal society could choose their own husband. Even widow re-marriage was practised among the lower class people.

During the mediaeval period which was dominated by Ahom rulers though women were not generally active in politics still some queens and wives of some Ahom ministers played an active role in political affairs of the state.

The British people ruled over Assam from 1826. Their culture and behaviour mixed up with Assamese society as a result Assamese women got inspiration to take part in public life. Girls' schools were established in some parts of upper Assam. But only a few girls were able to get the benefit of education. People like Jaduram, Gunavbhiram Baruah and Hemchandra Baruah advocated widow remarriage. In the meantime, many women participated in the Gandhian freedom struggle. Many Assamese women were coming out to receive formal education. But even though different changes were taking place in the society and women were coming out of their house to fight for the country yet social conditions of middle class women had not much improved. Even those women who got the opportunity for higher education and worked together with men did not speak much for gender equality. Nalini bala Devi in her biography mentioned that women could not move freely at that time because society did not accept it. Nobody thought about real upliftment of women; to make them socially and economically independent.

After independent even though in many areas women's status had been increasing, many new evil practices like dowry, bride burning, etc. were getting included in to our society. A report of the National Crime Record Bureau reveals that in respect to murder and rape, Assam secured the first position among all the states of the country. The record reveals that in 2018 the number of rape-victims killed in Assam was 66; the highest in the country. In 2017-18, 12750 cases of crime against women were registered in the state. Assam recorded the highest number of rape in India.

Literacy rate in Assam has seen an upward trend and is 72.19 per cent as per 2011 population census. Of that male literacy stands at 77.85% while female literacy is at 66.27%. That means at least 34 %women were illiterate in Assam. The work participation rate of the women in Assam is considerably lower than that of men in general except in the primary sector where the ratings are in favour of women

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS FOR WOMEN IN INDIA :

The constitution of India included different provisions for empowerment of women in the Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles of State Policy and Fundamental Duties. It also provided Universal Adult Franchise for both men and women. Besides these, to improve representation of women at the decision making process particularly at the grass root level, 33 per cent seats is being reserved for women at the Panchayat and municipalities. Articles 243D and 243T of the Indian constitution provides reservation of seats for Indian Women in panchayat and municipalities. These are included in the Indian constitution through 73rd and 74th amendments. Though Government also tried to reserved seats for women at the state legislative assemblies and in Lok sabha due to some problems it has not succeeded till date. The government also passed different laws from time to time to protect women's right. In different five year plans Government includes different provisions for the improvement of the miserable conditions of women. But these provisions are not properly implemented due to negligence of concerned authority or lack of proper education of women they are not able to avail these benefits. So their participation at the decision making level is very important because only women can understand the problems of women.

WOMEN AT THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS OF ASSAM :

Though at the initial stage of freedom struggle women had not largely participated yet they always encouraged male members of their family to stand against the British rule. It was Gandhiji who successfully encouraged women to come out of their houses and take part in the freedom struggle.

After Independence Indian women's participation at the decision making level has not at all been satisfactory, similar is the case in Assam. Though as voter their participation has been quite satisfactory but they are not willing to take part at the decision making level directly. In 1962 women voting percentage was 46.63% while in 2019 general election women voters' turnout was increased to 81.33%. But in comparison to women voter's women representatives in various Lok Sabha elections has not been increasing. The following Table 1 shows the number of women who contested in the various Lok Sabha elections and seats won by them.

Table 1
Representation of Assamese Women in Lok Sabha election

Year	Male contested	Female contested	No of seats in Lok Sabha	No of seats won by Women
1952	40	02	10	01
1957	31	02	10	02
1962	41	03	12	02
1967	47	02	14	01
1971	78	03	14	01
1977	40	03	14	02
1980	07	02	14	NIL
1985	104	04	14	NIL
1991	159	08	14	NIL
1996	129	08	14	NIL
1998	98	03	14	01
1999	106	09	14	02
2004	110	06	14	NIL
2009	147	11	14	02
2014	146	16	14	02
2019	131	14	14	01

Source: CEC Assam

The above table shows that from the first general election to the 16th general election very less women had contested in the elections as well as won the seats.

Another point should be noted here that the percentage of votes secured by women candidates in various elections was not up to the mark. Though women had come out in large numbers to cast their votes in various general elections and it was increasing in each parliamentary election but in comparison to that, women candidates were not able to gain more votes in the various elections. Because of poor economic condition, not being able to give enough time in election campaign or lack of political backing are the main cause for lower percentage of votes secured by most of the women who were contested in the elections. On the other hand those who were elected in the election or secured higher percentage of votes they were generally economically sound or they

themselves actively engaged in the political activity or they were backed by major political parties of the state.

One point should be noted here that in the last general election 724 women were contested all over India in Lok Sabha election and out of them 78 women were able to win in the election which is highest ever in the history of Lok Sabha election.

If we examine the women legislator in Assam from the first general election to the last election we find that only few women were contested and able to win seats in the legislative assembly though their number is higher in comparison to other north eastern states. In 2016 assembly election women turnout was 84.1% but only eight women were able to capture power. In the last assembly election held in March April 2021, number of women legislators decreases marginally. In 2016 there were 94% male legislators and 6% female legislators whereas in 2021 election there are only 5% women legislators. Table 2 showed the number of women legislators from 1985 to 2016 in Assam legislative Assemblies.

Table-2

Number of women legislators in Assam from 1985 to 2016

Year	No. of seats in the Assembly	No. of women Legislators	Percentage
1985	126	5	3.96%
1991	126	5	3.96%
1996	126	6	4.76%
2001	126	10	7.93%
2006	126	13	10.31%
2011	126	14	11.11%
2016	126	8	6.35%
2021	126	6	4.76%

Source: Statistical report on election of Legislative Assembly in Assam

Legislators can play a very important role to shape the fate of women in the state because it is the law making authority of the state. If they make proper policies for the safety and development of women then it will help a lot in their empowerment. For that purpose it is very important that questions regarding

women development should be raised in the various assembly sessions. I examined the various women related questions which were raised in various assembly from 1990 to 2005 and I found that within these fifteen years only very few questions are raised by our honourable legislators regarding development of women .Another interesting point should be noted here that very few questions are raised by the women legislators itself.

From 1990 to 2005 following women related questions were raised in the Assam legislative Assemblies:

1. Question relating to weavers of Assam	14
2. Questions relating to crime against women	26
3. Question relating to Anganwadi centre	09
4. Question regarding women education and employment	11
5. Women health and family welfare	08

Total 68 questions were raised within these fifteen years and among these only few questions were raised for the development of whole women and others were asked for a particular woman or a group of women. Though government adopted various policies for the development of women but due to ignorance of women or due to negligence of our officers only few women were able to avail those benefits. Another noticeable fact is that those policies are made by the male members of the society. But only women can understand the problems of women and therefore sometimes those policies are not able to become a successful one.

At the grassroots level also though two thirds seats are reserved for women but in reality most of those women are also controlled by their husband, father or their party leaders. They cannot take any decision independently.

GENDER IN THE 2021 ASSEMBLY ELECTION :

In the 2021 Assembly election, only 74 women were in the fray against the 872 male candidates in the 126 member assembly which is a mere 7.82 per cent of the total 946 candidates (The Assam Tribune4/4/2021). According to a report of CEO Assam, 2,33,74,087 people were eligible to vote, amongst them 1,18,23,286 were male voters, 1,15,50,403 were female voters and 398 were third gender voters. As voter, women came out in large number which was a good sign towards political empowerment but, interestingly only six women were able to attain power. But one encouraging point should be noted here is that, in the fifteen member ministry (as on 18/5/2021) although there is only one women

minister, i.e. Ajanta Neog, she has been entrusted with a very responsible portfolio by the new Chief Minister Dr.Himanta Biswa Sharma. Ms. Neog is the first woman finance minister of Assam. Earlier, also at the Congress led Tarun Gogoi ministry she was entrusted as the PWD minister.

OBSTACLES FOR WOMEN 'S PARTICIPATION AT THE DECISION MAKING LEVEL :

Due to various causes women's participation at the decision making level is very low .According to UN report (1985) women perform nearly two-thirds of the society's work but unfortunately neither in public nor in private space of their homes they safe from violence. A women's household work or her work in field never counted as work since they are mainly engaged in unskilled work. Much of their work is non-waged since it is categorised as household labour. Female mortality rate is also higher particularly due to mal-nutrition .At the decision making level also their participation is very low .Some of the obstacles for lower participation are discuss below-

- Our religious books are also responsible for lower participation. For eg. In Manu's Smriti it is said that girls should be always under their father during childhood, under husband after marriage and under her son after the death of her husband. Similarly in Bible it is said that God created first Adam and to satisfy Adam He created Eve. That means women should have no right to take decision in public life.
- Prevailing patriarchal norms in our society forbidden women to contest in the election. From her childhood she was thought to become a good wife, good daughter-in-law, good mother but she was never taught to to become a good leader.
- Political parties are generally dominated by male members and they are not willing to leave a seat for women member.
- Women fill insecure to go out for election campaign during night time therefore they are not interested to contest in the election.
- Though some women are lucky enough to get permission from their home to contest in the election yet they have to complete their household responsibilities and after that if she has time than she can contest in the election. Sometimes women themselves are not willing to leave her household work though she is permitted to do so.

- Women dropout rate in school is higher than men. So she has less knowledge about decision making process of the state.
- Highly educated women are not interested to join in politics.
- Gender equality is impossible without economic empowerment of women. To contest in the election women need some amount of money .If they borrow that money from their father, husband or from party than obviously she had to work according to their direction. She will be not able to take independent decisions which is very important for her proper empowerment

SUGGESTION :

- (1) From the above discussion it is clear to us that, women's participation at the decision making level is very important but yet unfortunately their participation is very low. On many occasions women are enemy of women. Their mother, mother-in-law, sister-in-law and friends prohibit them to contest in the election. First, mind-set of the people should be change.
- (2) Male members of political parties should encourage their female members to contest in the election.
- (3) Women should themselves organise political parties so that they are not facing any obstacle from their male partners to contest in the election.
- (4) To properly carry their child caring responsibilities proper arrangement should be there near the parliament or legislature so that they can feed their child or look after them whenever necessary.
- (5) Since girls child drop out is higher after primary education they should be train about their rights and duties at the primary level so that they can know about the various rules of our constitution to some extent.
- (6) Those women who were able to capture power they should be free to work for the development of women .But on many occasion they were not able to speak on behalf of women due to party obligations. As for example Susma Swaraj was normally vocal on the women's issues but she remained silent on Bhanwari Devi rape case because one of the accused was a BJP leader.
- (7) Moreover due to lack of proper grass-root political background the women representatives do not able to take their role seriously. Therefore they should be properly trained before giving party ticket to contest in the election.
- (8) Social conditions that oppress women must be reform.
- (9) Educational opportunities of the right type must be provided.

CONCLUSION :

It is clear from the above discussion that without proper women's representation at the decision making level our society cannot develop in real sense proper development. It is true that women should have to take the household responsibilities but if both men and women work together with proper understanding and cooperation than only we can get an actually develop society which will be free from any exploitation or oppression.

Bibliography :

- Baruah S L :A Comparative History Of Assam, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.54 Rani Jhansi Road.New Delhi,110055,2003
- Baruah S L : Status of women in Assam: with special reference non-Tribal society, Indian council of social science research N.E. region, Dibrugarh University, 1992.
- Goswami .B: Indian women in politics, Abhisek Publications,Chandigarh-17,2010
- Sarma Dipti : Assamese women in the freedom struggle, Puthi Pustak, Calcutta 1993
- Sen Bimla : Role of women in nation building, Abhishek Publications, Chandigarh 2007

WOMEN ISSUES AND CHALLENGES DURING LOCKDOWN PERIOD OF COVID 19 PANDEMIC IN INDIA

✍ GITIKA SHARMA

Asstt. Professor

Dept. of Political Science, Narangi Anchalik Mahavidyalaya

Abstract :

The outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus disease has drastically affected the lives of everyone around us. The never-imagined effects of such a pandemic are still being processed by us to adapt in our daily lives and respond to it. In India, where inequalities against women are intuitively practised, the disparity was further worsened due to the lockdown imposed by the government to contain the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the official data of the National Commission for Women (NCW), domestic violence complaints have increased by 2.5 times since the nationwide lockdown began in India. Some of the researchers are referring to this as the next pandemic or shadow pandemic of India. In 2019, the commission received 607 cases between March to May, while in 2020, they registered 1,477 cases. From the economy, to their health systems, to their homes, COVID-19 is affecting girls and women. So in this paper an attempt has been made to study the new challenges and issues of women occurred due to Covid 19 pandemic and to find out a good solution for eradicating complexities of gender inequalities.

Introduction :

Change is inevitable in a society. But the changes brought by the Covid 19 pandemic has been so unfortunate that it has left no one person in this world unaffected by it. Already in our Indian society there exists gender inequalities. And as a result of the emergence of pandemic situation, women has to face many more new challenges which are complex and interrelated. Various evidences show that women and girls were affected tremendously during the lockdown

period of Covid -19 pandemic and in comparison to men, women were more vulnerable.

A profound shock to our societies and economies, the COVID-19 pandemic underscores society's reliance on women both on the front line and at home, while simultaneously exposing structural inequalities across every sphere, from health to the economy, security to social protection. In times of crisis, it's very common that resources become strained and there is limited institutional capacity. During lockdown period in India also same situation prevailed. And it was very unfortunate that women and girls were the worst sufferers of that situation. Hard-fought gains for women's rights are also under threat. Responding to the pandemic is not just about rectifying long-standing inequalities, but also about building a resilient world in the interest of everyone so that the worst sufferers can have a just space for them. In this paper an attempt has been made to study the new issues and challenges confronted by the women in India that are created by the Novel Coronavirus pandemic.

Objectives :

The main objectives of this paper are as follows-

1. To study the new challenges of the women in India that have been created during the Covid 19 pandemic period.
2. To examine the gender differences in Indian society during Covid period.

Methodology :

The study is based on the secondary data which are collected from various sources like books, news papers and internet. The study has been carried out with descriptive method of inquiry.

Issues affecting women and girls during lockdown period of COVID-19 Pandemic :

The Covid 19 crisis has affected women severely and Indian women are no exception to it.

Economic issues and challenges of women in India during COVID -19 pandemic :

The pandemic has disproportionately affected women, especially those who are part of the labour workforce. According to an analysis, COVID-19 and

gender equality: Countering the regressive effects, conducted by McKinsey Global Institute in the year 2020, women are more vulnerable and susceptible to COVID-19-related economic effects because of the already existing gender inequality. Using the unemployment data, trends and surveys in the United States and India, the study estimates that female job loss rates owing to COVID-19 are about 1.8 times higher than the male job loss rates globally, at 5.7% versus 3.1%, respectively. According to the Center for Monitoring Indian Economy, the already low labour participation rate for women has shrunk even further after the pandemic to 11% compared to 71% for men.

The outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic is not just a health emergency for India. It affected each and every aspect of our lives. When in March 2020, lockdown was imposed in India, more than 120 million workers lost their jobs overnight. Majority of these workers were from the informal sector and among them half were women. And when by November 2020, the situation started to improve, men who had lost their jobs had regained most of it and left behind were women - with no jobs, and no social security left for them.

The female workers in India are by and large part of the informal sector and earn low and uneven wages. And due to lockdown, it will likely to push female workers further into poverty, increasing their dependence on men. Since their daily wages have stopped, their lives are moving towards uncertainty. With a huge informal workforce and persistent gender-based occupation segregation, it goes without saying that the COVID-19 pandemic is intensifying pre-existing gender inequalities, exposing vulnerabilities across every sphere, from health to the economy, security to social protection and women continue to bear the maximum brunt simply by virtue of their sex.

In fact the major impact of lockdown on the daily wage female workers is quite evident on their income which resulted in their mental stress and family clashes and even proved to be the cause of death for many of them. Livelihoods of paid domestic workers, who are mostly migrant workers in urban centers are excluded from nearly all basic essential working conditions-paid annual leave, medical leave, working time, minimum wage coverage and social security. Due to lockdown most of them like- the house maids, sales girls in the malls, women labourers in construction work etc. find themselves stranded and reliant on their employers good will. Their inflow of income is solely dependent on their individual employers.

Women in India do not have the same access to healthcare, education and jobs in comparison to their male counterparts. India ranks 112th out of the 153 countries mapped in the World Economic Forum's 2020 Global Gender Gap Index, that uses the pre-pandemic data. For a country that has women as 48% of its population, they contribute only 18% to the country's economic output. The figures are upsetting and distressing.

The job loss has impacted women grievously, upending their lives with ramifications that are irreversible. The pandemic has increased their unpaid work and has put extra burden on women through increased domestic responsibilities, household chores and child care demands. If continued, women will be squeezed out of the productive economy soon.

Comparing the Gender Budget Statement 2021-22 with those released over the last 16 years, it is found that India's first pandemic Gender Budget has largely followed historical trends rather than accommodating new priorities posed by the pandemic. The Gender Budget has remained concentrated within a few ministries and in traditional spending areas. Only 34 of the over 70 central ministries and departments reported allocations in the Gender Budget Statement in 2021-22.

Recognising the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on women globally, the United Nations has highlighted several key areas as short-term priorities for government action, including social protection, prevention of domestic violence, skill training, public transport, digital literacy and support for unpaid care work.

In India, spending for social protection schemes was increased to 21% of the Gender Budget in 2020-21, largely owing to the financial inclusion programme PM Jan Dhan Yojana and the free cooking gas programme for poor families, PM Ujjwala Yojana, but these find no mention in the 2021-22 Gender Budget.

Health issues :

There is rarely a crisis or calamity that doesn't impact women differentially - COVID-19 is no exception. The diversion of resources towards the emergency response to the outbreak has impacted essential non-COVID-19 health services, including sexual and reproductive health (SRH), family planning and abortion services globally, thereby threatening to reverse the limited gains made in ensuring due priority to women's health.

The evidence gathered from past epidemics as well as the existing evidence around the impact of COVID-19 suggests that the disruption of essential health

services puts women and girls at risk of decreased access to services as resources are diverted from routine health services, including pre- and post-natal health care, family planning and contraceptive supply and other reproductive health services.

In March 2020, when the pandemic spread, India witnessed a nationwide lockdown limiting the movement of its 1.3 billion population. What was meant to be a COVID-19 prevention and management strategy had unparalleled impact on women's ability to access SRH and abortion services. Several factors contributed to restricted access, including suspension of transport facilities, shutdown of private facilities, conversion of public health facilities into COVID-19 treatment centres, diversion of medical professionals towards COVID-19 emergency response and stock outs of contraceptives and medical abortion drugs due to interruptions in supply chains. The pandemic also saw the emergence of fear psychosis, with women refraining from visiting health facilities for the fear of being infected. Thus mental health is another aspect of women well being which was very badly affected during this pandemic.

Generally, during crises, epidemics and pandemics, women tend to take up more caregiver responsibilities than usual, often at the expense of their own health. Particularly in the Covid-19 crisis, wherein we come across some instances where families have to stay at home while self-isolating or during movement restrictions, women can be overworked and overstretched as they take on more domestic care. This increasing burden of care can also take time away from paid work. The responsibility of taking care of the sick at home also often falls more on the women. In some cases, they have a double-barrel role of being the caregivers both at work and at home.

Like some other countries, in India also lockdown and isolation policies were implemented which put women at a higher risk of domestic and sexual abuse as they are likely to spend more time with their abusers. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, also known as UN Women, even talked about this violence as a shadow pandemic. The need for protection of women against abuse is therefore heightened during the pandemic. Studies looking into the surveillance and evaluation of effective interventions for those at risk of domestic violence during the pandemic are still lacking.

Pandemic and Gender-Based Violence :

Quarantine has been an effective measure of controlling infection since the 14th century. Since then, the practice of quarantine has been utilized to reduce the spread of contagious diseases. With the declaration of COVID-19 as a global pandemic, there is a mounting pressure on the governments to take measures to reduce the community spread of the disease. Hence, in the absence of a vaccine or effective treatment, going into quarantine for varying periods of time is being adopted as an option by most countries. This has led to a drastic alteration in the day-to-day lifestyle of the individuals. Most of the work is being done from home, and efforts are being made to maintain social distance. These measures are crucial to the protection of healthcare systems. However, the positive efforts to tackle COVID-19 have negative consequences associated with them. These negative consequences include the risk of losing jobs, economic vulnerabilities, and psychological health issues resulting from isolation, loneliness, and uncertainty, among others. This can be regarded as the quarantine paradox. History has witnessed the weakening of the states in the face of pandemics and outbreaks. For example, the Antonine plague of 161 AD had economically weakened the Roman Empire. Past researches indicate that the risk of serious psychological consequences increases with the increase in the duration of the quarantine. Another downside of quarantine is the increase in cases of gender-based violence that is frequently ignored. Gender-based violence is a form of violence targeting a person based on the gender of an individual. It is a complex phenomenon that includes combinations of sexual, physical, and emotional violence and neglect or deprivation. CEDAW (Committee on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women) has defined gender-based violence as a form of violence that disproportionately affects women. Some common forms of gender-based violence include sexual violence, violence against women, domestic violence, and harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation.

Social isolation and mandatory confinement with potential abusers increase the risk of domestic violence. COVID-19 seems to be similar to the pandemics in the past since this too has resulted in an increase in cases of domestic violence. Several media reports indicate a surge in cases of domestic violence in various countries. An increase in violence against women in India during the global COVID-19 outbreak has been described by the United Nations as a "shadow pandemic". According to the official data of the National Commission for Women

(NCW), domestic violence complaints have increased by 2.5 times since the nationwide lockdown began in India. Many women, who have been forced to stay at home due to lockdown measures, have been cut off from support services and have suffered at the hands of abusive partners.

Across the countries, during the lockdown, there has been a steep increase in the calls to helplines and police stations. In India, a rise of more than two times was recorded in sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) during the national lockdown. The total complaints received from women by the National Commission for Women (NCW) rose from 116 in the first week of March to 257 in the final week of March 2020.² In some parts of India, there have been a few incidences of rape and sexual assault against women in quarantine centers. According to WHO, the risk of domestic violence is likely to increase as social distancing measures are put in place and people are encouraged to stay home.

Even though the lockdown lifted, women and men continue to work from home due to social distancing measures. Due to work from home situations, many women have to spend all the time with abusive partners in a confined environment. Accessing help from formal or informal networks became more difficult, and home can no longer be considered a safer place for all women. Role expectations from the abusive partner, loss of a job, insufficient family income, financial dependency due to temporary or permanent job loss, overcrowded family environment, imbalance in work and family lives, and difficulty adapting to current new situations could contribute to an environment that triggers violence on women.

Increase in domestic work :

Women are witnessing an increase in domestic work. On an average, women spent five hours per day on unpaid household and caregiving work compared to 30 minutes for men, according to a time use survey conducted in 2019. As school closures continue and families remain at home during COVID-19, women's care work has increased by almost 30%.

Lesser access to education, health and work opportunities :

The digital gender divide has worsened inequity in access to education, health and work opportunities. In India, 63% of adult women own a mobile phone (compared to 79% of adult men), but only 21% use mobile internet (compared to 42% of adult men). Women are systematically denied access to technology,

with phone use governed by male relatives. With online classes, telemedicine, and work from home becoming the norm, women are at risk of getting left behind, unable to acquire the skills required to participate in a digital economy.

Issues of women working in the health sector :

Although the Department of Public Health and Preventive Medicine (DPH) explicitly mentioned that lactating nurses and those with some specific medical conditions must be excluded from COVID-19 duty, in some cases many nurses all over India are employed in Covid duty.

Many female doctors reveals the fact that working for six hours wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) inside a Covid-19 ward is tough, especially for women doctors during their monthly menstrual cycle. The social discrimination that they face makes it worse.

The ladies who are working as ASHA workers also have been confronting various challenges during Covid 19 period. Their duties and responsibilities have been expanded but little was done to strengthen their paralysing social and physical protection. According to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's Model Micro Plan for Containing Local Transmission of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19), ASHA workers were deployed to conduct house-to-house visits to curb the pandemic. They are to report symptomatic cases, then carry out contact tracing, maintain documentation, monitor the situation and create awareness about the pandemic in the community. The data presented to us on the COVID-19 cases every day from ground zero, i.e. each state, village or ward is largely the work and toil of the same ASHA workers.

Findings :

From the above discussion following major findings have been drawn.

1. The COVID-19 pandemic has widened the already existed gender disparity in our Indian society.
2. Women those who are working in the unorganised sector were affected the most during lockdown period.
3. Women were experiencing the shadow pandemic of domestic violence during lockdown period.
4. Existing laws for women could not provide much protection to the women in India during lockdown period.

5. No effective steps were undertaken by the govt. Of India in the Gender budgeting estimate.

Suggestions :

- Innovative Strategies may be adapted to Handle SGBV : To tackle Sexual and Gender based Violence (SGBV), China launched a social media campaign as a part of the advocacy to break the silence against violence during the lockdown. In France and Spain, the women survivors of violence have relied on code words to seek help from pharmacies to report the situation of violence. The United States launched Digital Services Toolkit to provide information to survivors of violence. In India, NCW launched a separate WhatsApp number to provide help for the victims of domestic violence. However, these kind of facilities should be made available to all. In fact it's publicity is most important.

The telehealth services have gained importance during the COVID-19 pandemic to connect to the people to provide needed help and support. The health care professionals (HCPs) play a pivotal role in screening and offering the needed support to the victims of intimate partner violence (IPV). The HCPs should have adequate skills to screen for IPV, provide the first line of support, and refer to needed help, depending upon the need of the survivors. One of the prerequisites for screening using technology is to ensure that the conversation occurs in a private environment.

- During lockdown, the job loss situation has impacted women grievously. The pandemic has increased their unpaid work and has put extra burden on women through increased domestic responsibilities, household chores and child care demands. If continued, women will be squeezed out of the productive economy soon. Therefore Gender budgeting is very important with special reference to the job less women workers along with those women who are working in unorganised sectors.
- The threat is real and the thematic debate on gender equality cannot continue anymore just on papers, it has to convert into actions that set into motion a holistic, comprehensive and inclusive recovery path for India. Although the massive fiscal stimulus package by the central government aims to provide support to the vulnerable groups, it is not enough. There needs to be an introduction of gender-neutral formalisation at a greater

scale. Till the time gender lens is missing from policymaking and developmental initiatives and till social orthodox, norms and stereotypes continue to mar and hinder women's participation in economic activities, all that is done and achieved will become moot.

- Adequate prevention and redressal mechanisms is needed to curb the rise in domestic violence. Government unemployment support in India must be extended to women workers who form a large proportion of the informal sector.
- Policy responses must be immediate, and they must account for women's concerns. Governments should consider adopting emergency measures to help parents manage work and caring responsibilities, reinforcing and extending income support measures, expanding support for small businesses and the self-employed, and improving measure to help women victims of violence. Fundamentally, all policy responses to the crisis must embed a gender lens and account for women's unique needs, responsibilities and perspectives.
- As India unlocks and seeks to build back better, it must continue to keep women at the heart of its post-COVID-19 economic recovery strategy. In the immediate term, gender-sensitive relief measures can be expanded, such as widening cash transfers for vulnerable women and providing incentives for the retention of women workers through wage subsidies and increased investments.

In the medium term, central, state, and local governments should improve sex-disaggregated data collection to devise targeted policies for women, while applying gender budgeting tools to ensure sustained financing for women-focused programs. ADB is supporting this effort with a technical assistance program. Governments should also involve more women in decision making - and design and implementation - of socio-economic programs and disaster relief.

- The existing women police cells should have mechanisms to connect to the victims of violence immediately with appropriate resources.
- The local self-governance system can be involved, to some extent, to rescue the survivor.
- Media can sensitize the public through educational messages about understanding and identifying violence and scroll information about helpline numbers during prime time programs.

- Mobile companies can provide information about helplines and rescue measures as text messages/push notifications to the users, especially to those numbers registered in the ID of women, and also have awareness messages as caller tunes.
- Mental health professionals should routinely screen for IPV and offer trauma care to alleviate the psychological distress associated with IPV. Effective safety planning should also be a part of the intervention.
- Gender Budget ought to be prepared based on a roadmap by each ministry/ department clearly showing how they plan to meet gender needs, said Aasha Kapur Mehta, head of the Centre for Gender Studies at the Institute for Human Development.

Most importantly, women should be at the heart of India's post-COVID-19 recovery plans, with sustained financing for women-focussed programmes provided through gender budgeting.

Conclusion :

On the basis of the above discussion it is found that in different levels of the society, girls and women in India had to face different challenges due to Covid- 19 pandemic. In India, where inequalities against women are intuitively practised, the disparity has only worsened due to the lockdown imposed by the government to contain the COVID-19 outbreak. Now the question is how can the standardised norms of gender inequalities that are inherent in Indian society be given priority even in the pandemic period? Who is responsible for it--our patriarchal society or government or the women themselves? Actually the situation which was created during lockdown period was totally a new one for all of us. In case of some families it was understood on the basis of compromise and cooperation but was not genderized. But the overall scenario was against the rights and wellbeing of the women in India.

A proper gender-specific treatment protocol is needed to protect the women during the pandemic. Priority must be given in implementing the Protection of Women for Domestic Violence Act, 2005, to safeguard women against SGBV. Strengthening existing helpline services and one-stop centers, continuous dissemination of information about these services through routine news, and advocacy efforts using various stakeholders such as ASHA and Anganwadi workers, police, local governance, media, and mental health professionals should be done.

In the conclusion it can be said that people in our society may either **want** to build a better resilient and equal society or they may leave half of the **population** to teeter on the edges. The choice is ours and we need to be wise about it.

References :

- Dr. Goswami Pallabi,; "Women Issues & Challenges During Covid-19 Pandemic:Prospective Measures"; (2020); Knowledge Publications, Assam
- The Assam Tribune, pg-7, February21, 2021
- <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/health/covid-19-women-issues>
- [https://www.fsg.org/sites/default/files/7 issues affecting women during covid-19_0.pdf](https://www.fsg.org/sites/default/files/7%20issues%20affecting%20women%20during%20covid-19_0.pdf)
- <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/voices/covid-19-aggravates-gender-inequality-burning-at-the-stake-are-women/>
- <https://www.fsg.org/blog/seven-key-issues-affecting-women-and-girls-during-covid-19-pandemic>
- <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fgwh.2020.00004/full>
- [https://www.financialexpress.com/lifestyle/health/covid-19-may-have-adverse-effects-on-womens-health-pfi/2020829/6.](https://www.financialexpress.com/lifestyle/health/covid-19-may-have-adverse-effects-on-womens-health-pfi/2020829/6)
- <https://indiaeducationdiary.in/covid-19-and-the-impact-on-women/>
- <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/12/1080182>
- <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0253717620966735https://10.www.newindianexpress.com/opinions/2020/oct/19/tackling-the-shadow-pandemic-of-rising-domestic-violence-2212123.html>
- www.livemint.com.online
- [www.indiaspend.com/budget/decoding-indias-first-covid-19-gender-budget-722823\](http://www.indiaspend.com/budget/decoding-indias-first-covid-19-gender-budget-722823/)

EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN THROUGH WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP: ITS MOTIVATING FACTORS IN THE CONTEXT OF NE INDIA

Dr. Mrinmoyee Bhattacharyya

Associate Professor

Dept. Of Economics, Paschim Guwahati Mahavidyalaya

ABSTRACT :

Empowerment has been defined as a process through which man and women increase their access to knowledge, resources, decision making power and raise their awareness of participation in their communities to reach a level of control. In case of women, the ultimate objective of such empowerment is to create large scale awareness with the active participation of women themselves. Such empowerment could be in social areas, or economic or political or other areas.

Women form a large component of human resources of a country and a nation can only be developed if its women are given ample opportunities. Entrepreneurship development among the women will be a proper strategy for empowerment of women. This would increase their socio-economic status.

Women entrepreneurship is a vital element for empowerment of women by which a woman will feel that she is economically strong and potential and equal to man in all respect.

In the NE Region of India designed and methodological efforts regarding women entrepreneurship began since seventies and there are some conducive factors for women entrepreneurs in comparison to other state of the country. So, empowering women through women entrepreneurship is perhaps the need of the hour.

Introduction :

The term women empowerment has been recognized globally as a key to achieve overall progress of the society. It is one of eight millennium development goals to which the world leaders agreed at the Millennium summit held in New York 2000. Empowerment is an active and multidimensional process that helps and assists people, both men and women to realize their identity, becoming aware of their capacity and potential and strive for success, happiness and peace of mind.

Empowerment of women basically means providing them with equal opportunities in all spheres whereas gender equality plays a crucial role in uplifting women. It is a process which enables women to their full identity and power in all walks of life such as social, economic, political, decision making in the family etc.

In our region, women plays a significant role in the economy. From time immemorial they have been contributing to economic field with equal to men. They shoulder the major responsibilities in the agricultural operation, live stocks and husbandry. However, their contribution have never been recognized or mostly unpaid. On the contrary they are considered as economic burden. The higher rates of illiteracy among them also compel them to work at lower rates. Thus, in many ways women are subjected to economic exploitation. In order to make the dream of women empowerment a reality, the economic status of women must be raised by involving them in income generating activities.

Educational attainment and economic participation are the key constituents in ensuring empowerment of women. The economic empowerment is a vital element for economic-development of any countries.

Considering the economic empowerment of women, entrepreneurship development has been considered to be one of the best ways towards self-sufficiency and poverty alleviation for women in a country where employment is not curtailed.

Keeping this concept in mind, in this paper is an attempt to present the Kaleidoscope of women empowerment and tries to show how economic empowerment began through women entrepreneurship especially in NE India.

Objective :

1. To study the concept of economic empowerment of women through entrepreneurship development;
2. To analysis the motivating factors regarding women entrepreneur and its prospects in North East India
3. To examine the challenges faced by women entrepreneur

Methodology :

The paper is primarily based on secondary sources like the various reports of the institutions and reports of Govt. of India, Books Journals, Webs etc.

Economic empowerment through women entrepreneurship development :

According to the United Nations Human Development Report 2004, women work on average more than men, when both paid employment and unpaid household tasks are concerned. In rural areas of the developing countries surveyed, women perform an average of 20 per cent more work than men, or an additional 98 minutes per day. Women earn 10 per cent of the world's income and own only 1 per cent of the world's wealth, despite making up 49.5 per cent of the population. Women are also under-represented in all the world's major legislative bodies. An ILO Report also states that women are almost 50 per cent of the world's population, utilize two-thirds of the world's work hour, produce half of the world's food supply, receive 10 per cent of the world's income and own less than one per cent of the world property.

The UNDP has prepared two additional indices; i.e. GDI (Gender Development Indices) and GEM (Gender Empowerment Measures) with a focus on Beijing Conference. In both the indices, India scores very low showing the great gender disparity in the country. GDI measures the equality in achievements between men and women, on the other hand GEM measures the participation of women in economic and political decision making.

In India, the constitution provided equal opportunity and status to the women and it is also regarded as a fundamental right to all the people of India. But, in actual field it is seen that women still do not enjoy equality. Men are 'more than equals' or the women are 'less than equals' even after more than sixty years of independence.

Regarding opportunity is concerned, it would not be wrong to say that many of the opportunities so created can be used by only a certain segment of the population. These segments consist of the rich or educated families who regard women as equals, on the other hand remaining as well as large part of the women are submerged in poverty or tradition and some restrictions on their education & profession. Many people still want their girls to be non-achiever and to remain as willful subordinates to males. It is certain that unless the economic power of the women is enhanced, equality cannot be established. It cannot be

done simply by legislations or by reservations. Regarding status of women it is seen that status of women is very low in our country although the govt. of India envisaged various measures to improve it.

"Virtually, empowerment is a process that enables a powerless women to develop autonomy, self-control, and confidence and with a group of women and men, a sense in collective influence over oppressive social condition" (Rotter 1996). Empowered women should be able to participate in the process of 'decision making' and is to create an enabling environment where women can freely exercise their rights both within and outside home, as equal partners along with men. Hence, the process of empowerment of women is not only a means of bringing about in women but also the one that ensures equal participation in the decision making process.

In the context of national development, women's participation in economic sphere, is a crucial importance. Providing gainful employment to women is not merely a matter of social justice nor it is a social welfare measure but it becomes essential of women involvement in economic activities, because they constitute almost one half of the country manpower and they play an important role in shaping and versatilities of the nation human resources. So economic empowerment through women entrepreneurship is one approach to enable women to realize their inherent knowledge, skills, and competencies for creation of small enterprises. Involvement of women in entrepreneurial activities would ensure effective utilization of labour, generation of income and improvement of quality of life. So women empowerment through women entrepreneurship is a must for a modern developed economy. Similarly, entrepreneurship is a process of getting oneself self-employed by setting up a business of her own. In doing so, the entrepreneur paves the way for employment opportunities for others. The entrepreneur takes the initiatives and act as the catalyst in the process of turning human skill, opportunities and the unutilized resources in to wealth. The term women enterprise has been defined by the Govt. of India as 'enterprise owned and controlled by a women entrepreneur with a minimum financial interest of 51% of the capital and giving at least 50% empowerment to women'.

Usually entrepreneurship involves the following three inter-related aspects:

1. Entrepreneur
2. Environment
3. Support System

An entrepreneur is one who converts himself/herself from a vulnerability in to an opportunity by his/her innovative spirit. In our country the above three aspects regarding women entrepreneur is not found integrated, that is why development of entrepreneurship is lagging behind.

Ambition or aspiration is the guiding force for development of entrepreneurship. It works as an index for one's own resourcefulness. Well-conceived notions, careful planning, calculated risk-taking, timely decision making, and swift execution make the ambition meaningful and fruitful (Rao 1986). Entrepreneurship is function of multiple factors. Entrepreneurs are not only a product of their own ambition, but also of the aspiration of their family, friends, and benefactors. Sometimes, certain compulsions also lead them to entrepreneurship. The encouragement and the support received from the govt. agencies, friends, and relatives and the experience and exposure gained hitherto, either in trading or employment, are some of the important factors influencing the emergence of an entrepreneurial personality (Sing, N.P. 1981). So, entrepreneurial spirit implies a commitment to certain ends, adherence to self-fulfillment, the vision, progress and the means of realizing it.

Development of women entrepreneurship in the NE India :

India's North East which is also known as land of eight sisters, collectively account for about 8% of the country's geographical area and roughly 4% of its population. Economically, the plain areas of the region are more active than the hilly areas. However, in the hilly areas, women are comparatively more enterprising than the male counter parts. According to 3rd small Industry Census, (2001-02) 20.03% micro enterprises in the region are owned and managed by women entrepreneurs as against 10.11% in the country. This is mainly because the tribal women are mostly dominating the markets in most of the hilly areas of the region. According to another study made by IIE, Guwahati in the North East, 54% of trained women started their enterprise at the age of 26 - 30 years, while 49% untrained women started their enterprises at the age of 31 - 40 years. The study also revealed that 48.1% trained and 29.4% untrained women are married. Again 32.5% untrained and 1.6% trained entrepreneurs are widow. Besides, in the formation of Self-help Groups (SHGs), women SHGs are dominating in the region. Out of about 3.72 lakhs SHGs already formed in the region, more than 55% SHGs are owned and managed by women. In Assam also more than 93 thousand SHGs are belonged to women, out of total 1,70,779 SHG.

So, women of the NE India are now playing a proactive role in all walks of life. Handloom and Handicrafts, tourism, have been playing an important role in the economies of the NE states. The name Lalita Devi Jain, fondly known as Madhu by the people of Guwahati, Assam has shaped her own destiny in the entrepreneurial arena. She created her own brand 'Madhushree' and has marched her way forward to carve a niche in the global market. She started with five looms and over the period of last more than 25 years, she has build up 50 looms. Almost 200 women are employed and they all have become the part of the family to create the brand of Madhushree. Similarly, Naga women Kos Zhasa, has made significant mark in redesigning handloom and handicraft products and become famous as a fashion designer. Further, Assamese women named Mrs. Jahnabi Phukan owner of Jungle Travels has successfully established her position in the tourism industry not only in Assam but also in the whole NE Region.

Today, North Eastern women have also move beyond the known and have ventured into the less traversed sectors in entrepreneurship. Saroj Khemka from Assam is an entrepreneur who dons several hats in the world of business. She is the Proprietor of M/s Meghalaya Hume Pipe Industries, Guwahati, manufacturer of silk machineries and simultaneously the Director of M/s North Eastern Concrete Industries, Byrnihat which is a Manufacturer of Gems Designer Tiles. She had also started another business venture in 1988, by the name GEMS ice Cream Parlour and had turned it into a highly popular happening joint in Guwahati.

Prospect of women entrepreneurs in NE India :

So far as the prospects of women entrepreneurship in NE is concerned, it is one of the most economic friendly sites in the map of India and land of natural abundance, have a host wonders to offer for entrepreneur.

In Assam, industries like tea, cane and bamboo, terracotta, pottery, metal works of brass and bell, wood carvings, weaving and toys have immense prospects. The work of making Japi is also popular in Assam. Furniture pieces of cane and bamboo are exclusive to Assam and are exported. The skill of Terracotta makes everything including idols of Gods and mythological creatures and the pottery tradition in Assam results in wonderful items like earthen pot and pitchers, plates, incense stick holders and earthen lamps. Assam also fashions many types of toys like clay toys, pith, wooden and bamboo toys, cloth toys, cloth-and-mud toys. Besides, Cotton, 'Eri', 'Pat' and 'Muga' Silk are the weaving heritages of the region.

Likewise, Arunachal is the land of Orchids and medicinal plant. There is little entrepreneurial activity here but there is potential to develop it, based on the natural resources available locally. For instance, medicinal plants that grow here can be made into products.

Mizoram, Meghalaya, Tripura, Manipur and Nagaland are known for bamboo work, wood carving, pottery, handicrafts, traditional jewellery, artificial flowers from various natural things, black-smithy etc. and also for traditional weaving, dying and spinning. Sikkim offers opportunities of entrepreneurship in Woven Woolen Carpets and Blankets. Thangkas - traditional paintings on cotton canvas with silk frames, Choksee or small wooden tables, Sweaters and Jackets, Wall Hanging and Antiques with Buddhist motifs, Wooden and Bamboo Artifacts, Jewellery, Sikkim Tea ('Solja' and Khangchendzonga') Cardamom or Elachi, Yak's cheese (chhurpi), Lepcha Weave bags and many more.

Agro and food processing industry is another area for entrepreneurship in NE Region. Especially mushroom cultivation which is flourishing in the area. Moreover, entrepreneurs can venture into areas like agriculture, horticulture, fisheries, poultry, animal husbandry and forest which would improve value addition in the agricultural produce, employment generation in the region.

Motivating factors of women entrepreneurship in NE India :

There are number of motivating factors which motivate women of the North East to work outside their homes as entrepreneur. These factors are

- (i) **High social status in comparison to other state** - Women in North East India is achieving higher status in comparison to other state. Because, dowry system is very few and some states of North East avail matrilineal society. So inheritance of property for women is there and hence it also leads entrepreneurial capabilities.
- (ii) **Freedom of mobility** - Freedom of mobility is higher in North East State in comparison to other state. The women of NE Region can go out from their homes to town for selling their goods whereas women in other parts of the country cannot come out of their homes to start business easily. In other parts of India some community like Marowari and women of Bihar, UP etc. are largely confined to their homes.
- (iii) **Traditional advantage** - In the North East, most of the women have skills in weaving, embroidery and handicrafts. The tradition is to encourage women to learn weaving as a part of routine activity. Hence, the tradition is helpful in increasing their entrepreneurial capabilities.

- (iv) **Achievement, Motivation and Confidence** - In the North East particularly in Meghalaya, Mizoram and Manipur women are managing and controlling markets confidently. It reflects that their need for achievement is higher than that of the women from other parts of the country.
- (v) **Advantage of Customs, Customary Law rituals and others** - All the states of the North East is dominated by SC, ST and OBC and other customs, tradition customary law rituals taboos etc. are too much different in comparison to other states, e.g. there prevails lack of formal dowry system, existence matrilineal society (in some state) lack of parda protha, freedom of mobility with their male counter parts are the favourable factors for leading rural women entrepreneurship. Moreover, their customary law, rituals and other taboos are not too much unfavourable for women's decision making process.

Efforts of support organization for women entrepreneurship in NE Region :

There are numbers of support organizations for rural entrepreneurship development of Assam at National Regional States and district level. Among these, role of three organizations i.e. Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE), National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC), and North East Development Finance Corporation Limited (NEDFI) are discussed. IIE is a training Institute, NSIC is a technical support organization and NEDFI is a development financial organization. Besides these, National Agriculture Bank for Rural Development (NABARD), Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART), Consortium of Women Entrepreneur of India (CWEI), North Eastern Industrial and Technical Consultancy Organization (NEITCO) and in state level District Industries Centres (DIC) etc. are exclusively for development of women entrepreneur.

Efforts of Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE) :

IIE is established in 1993 and undertakes training, research and consultancy activities in the field of Micro, Small, & Medium Enterprise (MSME-DI) sector focusing on rural women entrepreneurship development programme in North East. In order to encourage women to take up entrepreneur activities, the Institute has been organizing women entrepreneurship development programme (WEDP) exclusively for women. Besides, it has also been encouraging women to participate in general entrepreneurship development programmes. These programmes are organized in different states of the North East.

Apart from WEDP, IIE trained many women under 6/8 weeks entrepreneurship development programme in which about 25 to 30% participation of women was found in general, Rural, SC/ST and Science and Technology groups etc. IIE has also helped women participants through its awareness camps in preparing for entering into entrepreneurial activities. Women participants from different strata of the society have entered into entrepreneurial activities through PMRY, IRDP and WCRA and other Govt. schemes also.

National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) :

The Govt. of India set up NSIC in 1955. Its NSIC provides support to the micro, small and medium entrepreneurs by supplying indigenous and imported machines providing marketing support through Tender marketing, export of products, assisting in support of MSME products and developing the export worthiness of the products of these units, providing training in industrial trade etc. NSIC extends its help to MSMEs at each and every stage of its requirement through different schemes. e.g. Hire purchase scheme, Raw material Assistance, single point Registration scheme, Infomediary services etc.

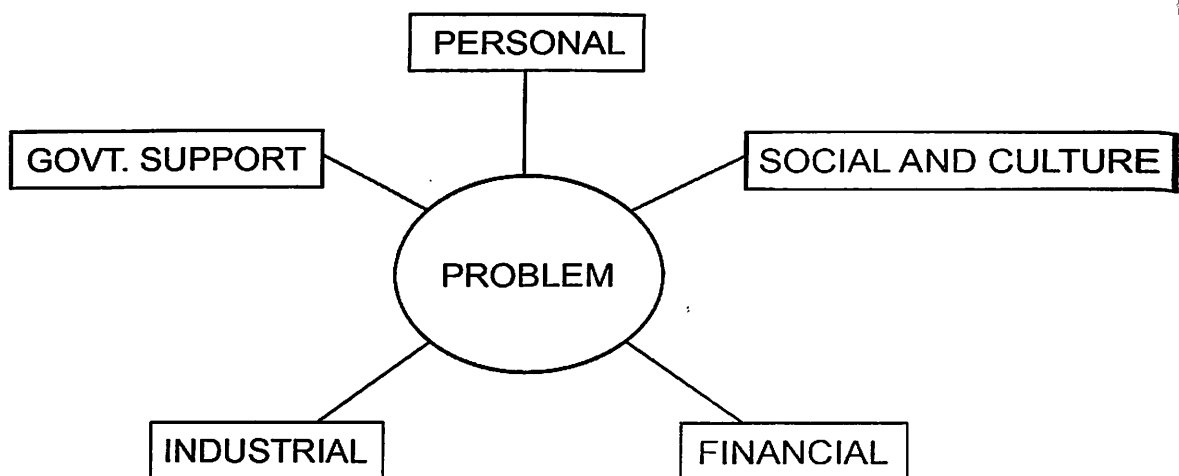
North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd. (NEDFI) :

NEDFI was set up in 1995 and it is for the development of industries, infrastructure, animal husbandry, agri-horticulture plantation, medicinal plantation, sericulture, aquaculture poultry and dairy in the North Eastern States of India. NEDFI has a number of financial schemes both for start up and also to sustain throughout the initial periods of enterprises. E.g. Project, Term loan, Equipment Finance working capital finance, North East Entrepreneurs Development Scheme (NEEDS), Women Entrepreneur Development Scheme (WEDS), Jute Enterprise Development Scheme (JEDS), Scheme for North East Handloom and Handicrafts (SNEHH), Initiative for Development of Entrepreneur in Agriculture (IDEA) etc. WEDS Scheme is for providing assistance to women entrepreneur for taking up business ventures. During 2003-04 to 2009-10, 120 rural women entrepreneurs got the benefit under this scheme. NEDFI Haat has also been giving opportunities to all kinds of entrepreneurs to display and sell their products and get exposure for wider markets.

Challenges Faced by Women Entrepreneurs :

The main challenges faced by rural women entrepreneur are social educational and work back ground. They have to balance their time between work and family problems.

In the following the problems faced by women entrepreneurs are stated



(A) Personal :

- (1) Family Responsibility
- (2) Limitation of undertake of frequent traveling
- (3) Lack of sufficient education
- (4) Power of limited risk bearing
- (5) Low need for achievement
- (6) Lack of confidence and courage

(B) Social and Cultural :

- (1) Male dominated society
- (2) Autocratic attitude of officers of different departments
- (3) Non-availability of women friendly facilities
- (4) Indifferent attitude of elders in the family
- (5) In sufficient laws and regulations related to women employment

(C) Financial :

- (1) Lack of access to external funds due to security and credit
- (2) Complicated procedure of bank and other loan
- (3) In ordinate delay in obtaining loans
- (4) Lack of confidence of loan disbursing in organization on women for continuance of enterprise.

(D) Industry :

- (1) Cut throat competition
- (2) Scarcity of raw material
- (3) High prices of raw material
- (4) High cost of production
- (5) Non availability of infrastructure facilities for sale and marketing
- (6) Lack of training facilities in specialized fields
- (7) Non-availability of electricity at site and particularly skilled and semi-skilled manpower in rural area for a specified job or work.

(E) Govt. Support :

- (1) Non-availability of proper single window policy
- (2) No clear cut policy of Govt. incentives

Suggestion :

In view of the problems mentioned above, following suggestions are necessary for the development of women entrepreneurship in NE Region:

- Banks, Govt. agencies should launch awareness and publicity campaigns about schemes available for women;
- The dual responsibilities of women can be solved by adopting better time management, other family members may also be involved to share the responsibilities;
- Women entrepreneurs must update themselves with the latest information of the market. For this market survey is very much essential;
- For marketing the products, they must establish credibility in terms of equality. Character and commitments are the two important conditions for successful entrepreneurship;
- They must nurture the qualities like tolerance, cooperation and adjustments;
- Besides the spread of women education, motivation self-confidence, managerial skills are the requisite qualities for development of women entrepreneurship.
- Making provisions of marketing and sales assistance from Govt. part
- A women entrepreneur's guidance cell set up to handle the various problem of women entrepreneurs all over the NE States.
- Training entrepreneurial attitudes should be given at the high school level through well designed course
- Provision of separate finance cells for women

Conclusion :

On the basis of the above discussion and suggestions it is hoped that women entrepreneurship has tremendous prospects in uplifting the socio-economic status of women in NE India by which the concept of women empowerment is justified. The women entrepreneurs of NE Region must have to take up challenges of the new economic policy, especially they should take the opportunities of look east policy. In this context Pandit J. Nehru had rightly commented that "you can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of women. Freedom depends on economic condition even more than political. If a woman is not economically free and self-earning, she has to depend on her husband, or son, or father or someone else and dependents are never free". Women entrepreneurship development among women will be the right approach for empowerment of women.

Reference :

- Barua, N & Borkakoty A (2005) - Women Entrepreneurship, APH Publishing Corporation, New Delhi
- Das Sanjoy Kanti (2012) - An Analysis of Constraints in Women Empowerment in Tribal Area - Evidences From Assam, Asian Journal of Research in Social Science and Humanities Vol. 2 Issue 4 April
- Dhameja S.K (2002) - Women Entrepreneurs, opportunities, performance and problems, Deep Publication Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi
- Mali D.D. (2001) - Micro Enterprise Development problem and programme, IIE, Guwahati
- N. Gangadhara Rao (1986) - "Entrepreneurship and Growth of Enterprises in Industrial Estates", Deep and Deep Publications, New Delhi, P-137
- Rotter (1966) - Generalised expectancies for internal vs external control of reinforcement, Psychological monograph Pp 80 - 609.
- Saikia S (2009) - Article - Empowerment of women in North East
- Singh, N.P. (1981) - "From Motivation Building to Entrepreneurial Identity", Banking Journal, Vol.1, No.1

SISTER NIVEDITA...HER LOVE AND APPEAL TO THE COMMON INDIANS

✍ MUKTA PURKAYASTHA

Asstt. Professor

Dept. of English, Narangi Anchalik Mahavidyalaya

Abstract :

Many great Indian social reformer and thinkers by their hard work and sacrifice paved the way for the great resurgence of spirit that took place in our country in nineteenth century followed by the national struggle which finally bear fruit in getting her independence. But the paradox is that few among those great Indians did what was done by a British woman, originally known as Margaret E. Noble and later named as Nivedita by her master, Swami Vivekananda. She can be pointed out to be a single individual who may be credited with having inspired and guided most of the progressive movements that took place in India in the early decades of nineteenth century inscribing her name as one of the great genius in the pages of history. True to her master's wish, amidst various difficulties and hardships she agreed to serve humanity, and with this she not only brought phenomenal service in the field of girl education, but also aroused dormant Indian consciousness and awakened to its own glory. One can find the dominant concern in her was to find the best way to serve India so that she with the multitudes might progress in all directions. Being an alien to this country she had selfless love for India and her knowledge and understanding of our country's rich cultural heritage proves of her coming to India on a mission of service and of great personal sacrifice that even the most daring among the Indian patriots were lacking.

Key Words :

Alien, Preach, Sacrifice, Passion, Love

Discussion :

On November 1885 Nivedita first met her master, Swami Vivekananda at the house of a society lady in England. After having a resounding success in America, Swamiji was then on a visit to England in response to an invitation sent to him by some of his admirers. His deliberations in America brought people closer to him not only in U.S but in many other western countries. Many women started to follow him in his preached ideals and Nivedita who was earlier known as Margaret Fuller too was much inspired by his zeal. In spite of her young age, she had by then attracted attention in the intellectual circles with her frequent writings in the literary columns of journal and as a distinguished speaker. She was then the secretary of a club where noted writers like Thomas Huxley and George Bernard Shaw were members who spoke.

Nivedita listened to Vivekananda with admiration when he voiced on eternal truths which at times made the listeners compelled to think. The thought that surprised her most was Swamiji's ability to compress and condense, so many serious thoughts within the range of such short speeches and express them so logically, clearly and convincingly.

Nivedita often faced with a difficulty in agreeing with what Swamiji preached but was ever ready to acknowledge that he was indeed a remarkable man who always had a message for the whole world. The lady would eagerly look forward to hear him every time he spoke, and often sat in long discussions. She was often seen to retain her nature of independent thought, and would never accept a viewpoint unless she was convinced, resulting in heated arguments with Swamiji. But the difference in their opinion never made her set back in declaring his intellectual superiority and his deep spiritual insight. By the time Swamiji completed his second visit to England; she recognised him to be her 'master' and made up her mind of responding to his call if ever given, for any sort of sacrifice necessary for a cause.

It was at this stage Swami once said that Nivedita could be of great help to him in carrying out the plans he had for the education of the women in India and he wrote to Miss Margaret,

'Let me tell you frankly that I am now convinced that you have a great future in the work for India. What was wanted was not a man, but a woman - a real lioness- to work for the Indians, women specially.' He also added,

'India cannot yet produce great women; she must borrow them from other nations. Your education, love, determination and above all the Celtic blood make you just the woman wanted.'

Thus Under the personal and continuous guidance of Swamiji, Margaret became 'Nivedita' (the dedicated) as wanted of her to be 'mistress, servant and friend' of India and all Indians. By this time Nivedita had resolved herself to completely follow her master and do whatever he wanted her to do. This was a turning point in her life and later wrote to a friend,

'Suppose swami had not come to London that time! Life would have been like a headless torso'

However when after a year or two she made preparations to come to India swamiji was little thoughtful about it, and rather being convinced that she had a great future to work for India, pointed out that she must be prepared to face many difficulties on the way.

Nivedita arrived at Madras on 25th January 1898 and was received at the port and later when she entered in her diary, as she started for Calcutta expresses her sad plight,

'In spite of infinite kindness - very, very lonely'.

For the first time in India Nivedita spoke at a formal inauguration of the Ramkrishna Mission where Swamiji chaired the proceedings. Among the many other things she spoke in the meeting she said that,

'Yours is the conservation of a people who have through that long period been able to preserve the greatest spiritual treasures for the world, and it is for this that I have come to India to serve her with our burning passion for service.'

Soon after this on 25th march 1898, Nivedita had her formal initiation into the vows of Bramacharya, at the end of which her master gave her the new and meaningful name 'Nivedita' (Dedicated) that God might accept her as an 'offering' from her.

Seeing the poverty stricken conditions of the Indian multitudes she felt sorry and was anxious to do whatever she could do to mitigate their suffering. Every morning Swamiji would talk to Nivedita, and his western disciples, giving possible details and views of the vast panorama of India's history, art, literature, philosophy, culture, etc. Nivedita often found many things unintelligible but when

pointed out in their true meaning, seemed not only to be logical and true but also quite satisfying.

The lady was seen ever conscious of being a British and was prone to judge from critical point of view, ending up in total disagreement with her master. Swami Vivekananda cleared her doubts with good humour, patience, and sometimes with well - directed thrusts at her racial pride. She was told to remove the pre conceived idea of India in her mind before she launched into her work and Swamiji took much pains in making her understand the factors which constituted our country's strength and weakness, enabling her to know better the problems and work for the welfare and well being of its people. Nivedita along with other disciples, visited every important cities in northern India, specially the places where one could still find the old traditions and culture. She by then well understood India's pursuit of spiritual goals despite all the sufferings she endured politically and otherwise. This spiritual preoccupation led her to neglect other interests resulting in being an easy victim to foreign aggression and suffering other consequential misfortunes. Like her master she too wanted every Indian should be educated and study western science and technology which is the only way to solve many problems. Swamiji felt if only she could identify herself completely with other Indians she would play the role to be the 'mistress, servant or friend in one'

In spite of many guardians' suspicion of imposing on their children her alien culture, Nivedita on returning to Calcutta, first started a girls' school in a small rented house. Much to the former's surprise, being far from teaching them anything alien, she was more anxious to teach and make aware of rich Indian traditions. By 1900 the plague broke out in epidemic form in Calcutta too, and many lost their lives followed by many fleeing the country leaving behind their sick relatives to die. Nivedita with some monks from Ramkrishna mission organised relief measures which she continued till the end of epidemic and first time the Indians saw a white woman showing concern for them as dear ones. She was then widely known for her deep understanding and love for India, and then people began to address her as 'sister' and began to regard her with deepest affection.

Later she was even seen to travel to western countries to raise funds for her work in India. In many a public meeting she was interrupted by interested

people if she would ever make a misleading statement for India, but then too she was able to stop them with her prompt, intelligent and authoritative replies. Indeed slowly but inevitably, Sister Nivedita had transferred her loyalty from Britain to India though faced with short sighted policies of British Government repressing the legitimate aspirations of India. Describing the British conquest of India she said,

'India was absorbed in study, a gang of robbers came upon her and destroyed her land...Can the robbers teach her anything? '

She thought that England should realise their mistake and willingly withdraw from India and for that she even met the members of British parliament and appealed for their departure. She made aware the Indians residing in England to join hands in their country's freedom struggle. Her devoted feelings for India might be understood from the excerpts of her letter from England,

'I wish I were back in India. I am just longing to get there...I cannot bear to be away. How wonderful India is!'

After coming back to India she resumed her school work but, then was more inclined to move with leading Indians to bring about resurgence in the country. Thus she concentrated in taking part in all the progressive forces of the country to create with their help a new climate of vigour, hard work and creative activity in the country. She frequently contributed articles to Indian journals on the relevant topic of the day, telling the people never to lose heart in the face of problems but to solve them with courage and work for reconstructing India in a way that the country might regain her previous glory and greatness.

Conclusion :

The role that Sister Nivedita played was to inspire the leaders of the country to awake a sense of national pride. To her understanding mind, and her capacity of discovering the true meaning of Indian symbols, forms and rituals was truly amazing. Her mastery of Indian languages made her the most forceful and convincing spokesperson on behalf of India and the message she left behind are thus the potent means of transforming lives, and a source of strength and inspiration to India's multitudes. One finds in her teachings a proper guidance for decent living in this world, and finally realizing God. She had infinite faith in India which she expressed whenever she had an occasion to make any comment

about her. Thus her warmth of feeling and attachment towards our country's people was reflected in her speeches, and later India's poet laureate Rabindranath Tagore rightly said that it appeared as if she was speaking about her own 'dead child'.

Books and References :

1. Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata Pravrajika Prabuddhaprana , Sister Nivedita in contemporary newspapers.
2. Advaita Ashrama, The Complete Works Of Sister Nivedita, 1975.
3. Lizelle Raymond, The Dedicated, A Biography of Nivedita, BEE Books 2017.
4. Sister Nivedita, The Master as I saw Him, Prabhat Prakashan, 1910.
5. S. V. Bharathi -Educational philosophy of Swami Vivekananda - Discover publishing house
6. Swami Vivekananda - Women of India - Sri Ramkrishna Math Chennai 2013.

PICTURE OF WOMEN IN THE POETRY OF WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

✍ DR. ROSIE PATANGIA

Assistant Professor & H.O. D

Dept. of English, Narangi Anchalik Mahavidyalaya

Abstract :

William Wordsworth was one of the greatest poets of the Romantic age. "The Lyrical Ballads" jointly published by Wordsworth and Coleridge in 1798 was a milestone in the history of Romantic literature. Wordsworth gave a new propulsion to the Romantic revival. His poetry is studded with the gems of nature and in many of his poems we find his vivid description of women. Thus, there is interconnection of women with Nature in his poetry. There are different types of images used by Wordsworth to depict women in his poetry. This study is an attempt to lay forth a vivid picture of women as reflected in the poems of William Wordsworth.

Keywords :

Women, picture, William Wordsworth, poetry.

Introduction :

William Wordsworth (1770-1850), the priest poet of Nature, was born in 1770 at Cockermouth. His father was John Cookson while his mother was Ann Cookson. The interconnection between men, women and Mother Nature is evident in his poetry. He made ample contribution to English poetry. After the publication of his "Lyrical Ballads" in 1798 jointly with Coleridge, he composed a group of intense lyrics in 1799. His poems comprise of ballads, short poems, sonnets and odes. His longest poem was on man and nature. The Prelude was

published only after his death. His themes range from his depiction of nature to his humble life. He uses simple diction used by the common men. Some of his poems depict Nature influencing his beloved. Wordsworth's portrayal of women appears to be calm. Nowhere we find his lady love protesting. Thus, women in the poetry of Wordsworth plays a passive and subordinate role. This paper attempts to discuss the issue of women with reference to his well-known poems such as "She was a Phantom of Delight", "Lucy Poems", "Ruth", "Lucy Gray" and "The Solitary Reaper".

Objective :

The main objective of this paper is to discuss the role of women in the poetry of Wordsworth. It also aims at evaluating the different aspects of women depicted by Wordsworth in his poetry.

Methodology :

The present study is based on the secondary data collected from various published books, journals, magazines, research articles and websites.

Discussion :

William Wordsworth's portrayal of women ranges from the solitary reaper to Lucy and to his depiction of his sister and his wife or beloved. "The Solitary Reaper" was composed by the poet in 1807. During his visit to Scotland, Wordsworth came across a solitary reaper who was reaping the corn and at the same time was singing a melancholy song. The poet compares the song of the Highland girl to the two harbingers of the spring season, namely, the cuckoo and the nightingale. The poet writes,

*No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:*

*A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.*

The poet fails to understand what the girl is singing because she was singing in Gaelic language, but he could feel the sad tone of her voice. He believes that the maiden's voice was more mellifluous than the voice of the nightingale or the cuckoo. The poet was eager to know what the girl was singing. He believed that the girl was singing about some old, unhappy, far-off things and battles that had taken place long ago. Wordsworth surmises that she was perhaps singing about some sorrow, loss or pain that had taken place in the past or might take place again in future. The song of the girl made a profound impact on the soul of the poet. He remembered her song many years later on and it left an indelible imprint on his mind.

The poem shows that Wordsworth has chosen a simple rustic girl from the country-side as the theme of his poetry. Geoffrey J Hartman (1975: 126) says, 'Wordsworth finds his inspiration actually anywhere: he recalls us to the simplest incidents, to words or events that would pass us by... There is always a reserve in the experiences Wordsworth depicts. It may suddenly develop in the poet or profoundly displace his initial thought. "The Solitary Reaper" does not fructify in him till two years after his sister had seen an analogous sight, and it moves in an excursive yet natural arc from the girl through reflections covering past, present and future.'

The next poem of Wordsworth we can take into account is "She was a Phantom of Delight". Composed in 1804 and published in 1807, this poem was addressed by Wordsworth to his wife Mary Hutchinson with whom he tied his wedlock in 1802. In the three stanzas of the poem, Wordsworth portrays his wife as a child, a maid and a wife. She was in reality the poet's cousin and as such known to him since her childhood. The poet eulogizes her beauty and her romantic nature as a child. He describes her as a maid who is in complete freedom and modest. As a wife, Wordsworth finds her moral and spiritual. Thus, in this poem we find that Wordsworth describes three different aspects of a woman. He looks at a woman from three different angles. As a girl she looked mesmerizing with

her dark eyes, dusky hair and her lively, animated movements. As Wordsworth came to know her more closely, he discovered in her the feelings of humanity and found her grounded and she was not above the petty things such as joys and sorrows, praise, blame, love etc. When Wordsworth tied the nuptial knot with her, he observed her firmness, her temperate will, her endurance, foresight, strength and skill. Thus, Wordsworth enumerates,

*A perfect Woman, nobly planned
To warn, to comfort and command
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of an angel light.*

This poem shows the kind of respect Wordsworth has for a woman. He pays a glorious tribute to his wife Mary Hutchinson through this poem.

The next set of poems comprises of the Lucy poems addressed by Wordsworth to his beloved Lucy. These poems addressed to Lucy are five in number. The first poem addressed to Lucy titled "Strange Fits of passion Have I Known" was composed by Wordsworth in Germany in 1799 and published in 1800. Wordsworth expresses his deep-rooted emotions for his beloved Lucy. He says that the girl he loved, appeared fresh like a rose that blooms in the month of June. Thus Wordsworth says,

*"When she I loved looked everyday
Fresh as a rose in June"*

The poet would ride towards her cottage on horseback daily in the evening. He would constantly observe the moon which was setting in the horizon. As soon as the poet had reached Lucy's cottage, the moon dropped and sudden thoughts came to his mind that Lucy might be dead. In the second poem addressed to Lucy is "I travelled Among Unknown Men"; Wordsworth points out that he had travelled among strangers. He did not know how much he loved England until he found out that his beloved Lucy turned her wheel beside the fireplace of England. It was here that Lucy played among the bowers. This shows the intensity of Wordsworth's love for Lucy.

The third poem addressed to Lucy is titled, "She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways". Wordsworth says that Lucy lived unrevealed beside the countryside of England. There was none to eulogize her and very few to love her. The poet

compares her to a violet lying beside a stone covered by moss and half hidden from the eyes of the people. Wordsworth again compares her beauty to a star when only one star is shining in the sky. Wordsworth says,

A violet by the mossy stone

Half hidden from the sky

—Fair as a star

When only one is shining in the sky

She was taken care of by Nature who was like a teacher to her. But Lucy died prematurely and this has made a difference to the life of the poet. The fourth poem of the series of Lucy poems is "Three Years She Grew in Sun and Shower". Wordsworth says that when Lucy was three years old, she was brought up by mother Nature. Nature considered her as a beautiful flower and encouraged her to lead a bright life. An unknown power guided her among the rocks and the plain. She was as sportive as the deer. The poet reiterates,

She shall be sportive as the fawn

That wild with glee across the lawn

She was happy to be amidst the sights and scenes of Nature. She enjoyed to be among the mountain springs, the floating clouds, the stars, the rivulets and even the storms. She learnt dignity, gracefulness and modesty from Nature. Wordsworth deplors the fact that Nature snatched away the life of Lucy very soon. The poem reveals the impact of Nature on Lucy and the poet's depth of his love for her.

The last poem of the series of Lucy poems is titled, "A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal". Wordsworth says that Lucy appeared to him like a spirit who was not affected by the years she lived on this earthly paradise. She is now dead and her body has been buried. She has now become a part of the earth as her body is now rolling in the daily movement of the earth. The poem shows the intensity of the poet's love for Lucy whose life was nipped in the bud at the prime of her life.

Conclusion :

Thus, we can conclude that William Wordsworth's portrayal of women in his poems is unique and assertive. Wordsworth associates the grandeur of women with Nature. He looks at the varied facets of his wife's being and turns it

into a tribute. In his 'Lucy Poems' he expresses his profound love for Lucy. He uses the objects of Nature to describe her beauty. He is called the Pantheist. He believed that Nature had a soothing influence. He believed that the emotion evoked by Nature is powerful. For Wordsworth, Poetry is a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. It is emotion recollected in tranquillity.

References :

- Abrams, M.H. (ed) (1975). English Romantic Poets. New York: Oxford University Press
- Bowra, C. M. (1988). The Romantic Imagination. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Gupta, K. (ed) (2016). Romantic Poets. Delhi: Worldview Publications
- Hartman, G.H. (1975). Nature and the Humanization of the Self in Wordsworth. In Abrams, M.H. (ed). English Romantic Poets. New York: Oxford University Press
- Sen, S. (1993). William Wordsworth. Selected Poems. New Delhi: Unique Publishers

"THE DARK HOLDS NO TERRORS" BY SASHI DESHPANDE: AN ECOFEMINISTIC READING

✍ RUPLEKHA PHUKAN BARTHAUR

Asstt. Professor

Dept. of English, Narangi Anchalik Mahavidyalaya

Abstract :

Ecofeminism argues that there are important connections between the oppression and domination of women and between the domination and exploitation of nature by patriarchal methods and attitudes. The connection between women and nature dates back to the ancient classical mythology. At the time when most of the romantic writing was produced, nature was feminized because it was seen as possessing the same qualities as women. According to the nature of separate spheres: men and women were different in terms of their characteristics as on the one hand women were seen as being domestic, pious, moral, pure, gentle, kind, graceful and beautiful. Men were seen as hard working, rational, strong, assertive, independent and proud. which were not easily connected to nature. In literature, many references regarding nature was therefore seen as an embodiment of all the characteristics that women possessed.

Traditionally, Indian women, have been treated as marginalized figures and were typify as spineless, wooden creature, subjugated to male domination. In reality, women were always adopted as daughter, sister, mother and wife. She was not viewed as an individual or human being. Sashi Deshpande in her novel "*The Dark Holds No Terrors*", through her protagonist's relationship with other characters, especially with the family members, emphasizes her attitudes and approaches to women and nature.

Keywords .

Discrimination, ecofeminism, plight, exploit, revolt, trauma.

Introduction :

The term 'ecofeminism' was coined by Francoise d'Eaubonne in 1974 in the book *Feminism or Death*. She used the word to call upon women to lead an ecological revolution to save the planet. Ecofeminists are referred to all women who bring feminist and ecological concerns together in both formal and informal movements and do not necessarily identify themselves. The importance of interrelationships between human, non human and the earth emphasize ecofeminism. They argue that a strong parallel exists between the male domination and subordination or oppression of women in families and societies and the degradation of nature by similarly masculine attitudes and methods. The role of women was always to serve the needs and desires of men. Traditionally women were not considered to have a life except in relation to a man, whether father, brother, husband or son. Nature had no purpose except to provide for human wants with food, shelter and recreation.

Simon de Beauvoir in "The Second Sex" analyzes women's subordination proceeded from the assumption that men viewed women as fundamentally different from themselves. Being defined as "other", women were reduced to the status of "the second sex". Though the impact of the western culture was there, these women remained stable with the Indian sensibility and sentimentality. They are normally confined to the traditional codes. The new typical Indian women at last, regain the position not of compulsion surrender, but their own will of individuality. The intricacies of the problems of women caught between the two worlds of tradition and modernity has always been reflected in the novels written by Indian writers in English.

Shashi Deshpande in "The Dark Holds No Terrors" does not only present a feminist insight into patriarchal values, but also prescribes a balance between tradition and modernity as a working philosophy for the contemporary woman. She means by tradition, the values of security and harmony that symbolize the Indian way of life, while modernity refers to the assertion of the independent, individual self. Deshpande, through, the protagonist's relationship especially with her family members, emphasizes her attitude and approaches to women and nature, thereby, conceptualizing female identity.

Objectives :

The paper is an attempt to study the novel from the ecofeminist perspective. The interconnection between the oppression of women and the

oppression of nature, how women and nature are related to each other. On the one hand violence against nature and on the other hand the root cause for the sufferings of women is reviewed and analyzed.

Methodology :

The methodology used in this paper is purely descriptive and analytical in nature. The data has been collected from primary and secondary sources such as books, journals, publications, references, seminar papers, reviews etc.

Discussion :

The novel "The Dark Holds No Terrors" is about a well educated, economically independent woman's search for identity which leads to uncover the reposing strength of human beings. It tells us about the torturous tale of Sarita or Saru as she is referred to. She lives a pale, loveless life, deprived of her parental care and affection. Saru's mother loves her brother Dhruva more than Saru. Saru's mother blames her for no fault of hers when her brother is drowned. In spite of her mother's approval, she receives her education. The novelist very well expresses this point of view by presenting a dialogue between Saru and her parents when she decides to pursue her career in medicine. If she had been a boy, her parents would have taken pride in her achievement of scoring a first class, but in it was not so in the case. A woman did not have the freedom to choose one's career but is also ripped of the freedom to choose her own life partner. So, Saru rejects the role of a daughter and looks forward to the role of a wife with the hope, that it will give her a relief and freedom from the oppression of her mother. But this decision proves to be wrong and her second home becomes a prison or cage she had escaped. Saru is soon disappointed with her husband as he is a sadist, who bullies her while she provides bread and butter to the family. He tortures her both physically and mentally. She struggles with her emotions and anxieties and gradually realises that there is no life than depending on marriage or her parents. She resolves to use her fond truths to make a better life for herself.

"Darkness" means incapability to see things objectionably and clearly. It is a source of constant fear from outside. The outlook of the inside is affected, but it holds no terrors in itself. The theme of identity is dealt in the real sense in the

novel and also symbolically the "dark", the darkness of the mind ceases to be a terrible moment which one is ready to face the situation. In this novel, Sarita's quest for identity leads her into the past, and in the course of which she comes to the terms with a traumatic childhood experience and a problematic marital relationship. Indian society is based on patriarchy, and because of this, even if a woman tries to realize her individual needs and aspirations, she finds that she is not able to free herself from her domestic commitments. The novelist raises an issue that devotion and submissiveness of women are taken to be 'social backwardness' by the so-called male chauvinist, and she cannot even walk out of a marriage though it is a bad one. She tries to achieve freedom by compromising between the role of her femininity and the 'masculine' identity that gives her a profession. She learns to value herself as a person and a human being and at the same time she has learnt to root out herself from the patriarchal values which define her as a sex object or a wife and a mother alone.

Relation between Women and Nature :

God has created both human beings and nature, and due to various factors man made the discrimination and the subordination. The concept of connection between women and nature can be seen in the ancient Indian mythologies. At a time when most of the romantic writings were produced, nature was feminized and it was seen that both women and nature possessed the same qualities. Women were seen as domestic, pure, gentle, kind, pious, graceful and beautiful. In terms of the characteristics of men and women, men were seen as strong, rational, hard working, independent, proud and assertive: none of which were connected to nature. There are frequent references in literature that nature was seen as an embodiment of all the characteristics that women possessed.

Emotions play an important role in human mental life. To a certain extent, happiness, sadness and spiritual joy are some of the universal emotions which any intelligent system with limited systematic measure is bound to experience. To the readers it is shown how the natural elements are used as an object to reflect the minds or the attitudes of Sarita, Sarita's mother and Sarita's daughter Renu. This clearly shows the relationship between women and nature. We find, for instance, in "The Dark Holds No Terrors", Sarita's mother expresses her anguish and gender biasness through the natural element, sunlight which

she feels as a barrier for women's beauty or for their fair complexion. Sashi Deshpande, through her novel, conveys an important message that suppression, subjugation and exploitation are not confined to the male-female relationship only but also exist between a female-female relationship as well. As a child, she is fully aware of her mother's preference for the son. She is not able to comprehend her mother's behaviour towards her. Her mother, completely if not partially reminds her of the fact that she is merely a liability or a responsibility that can be ridden off by marrying off. Like a traditional Indian mother, Saru's mother is worried about her daughter's complexion and her appearance instead of her education. She gets constant reminders of her destiny to get married and leave her father's home. A sense of insecurity and hatred towards her parents, particularly her mother, is created by the unconcealed discrimination between Saru and her brother, Dhruva. Saru is always made to feel ugly, unwanted and undesirable, and hence, her liveliness is gradually suffocated by her mother's constant criticism and fault finding. Here, Sashi Deshpande, wants to highlight the problem of a girl of marriageable age. It feels like the girl with the fear of rejection. Saru's defiance towards her mother awakens her careeristic ambitions. Kamla tai, Saru's mother, tries her best to persuade her husband not to send Saru to a medical college. The socialization of these female patriarchs has been done in such a manner that they look upon girls only as future wives.

During her childhood, Sarita would find peace, secrecy and comfort in the mango grove. She spends most of the time there, but on the other hand, Dhruva finds nothing interesting there. Dhruva was a boy and he enjoyed maternal preferment that Sarita did not. A close relation is shown between women and nature in this novel. Sarita acts as if she were a regular member of the mango grove. As a little girl, she proved that she can easily become a part of nature. On the contrary, nature too welcomed her to become a valuable part of the land. Sarita could deeply absorb and comprehend nature through the five senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching. Firstly, when Sarita goes to meet her friend Smita, she absorbs nature through her sense of sight. She notices the mango blossoms. Next, when she inhales the air in the orchard, she requires her sense of taste and smell, which not only smells but also sweet. Her sense of touch is employed when she stands bare footed on the land, the mango leaves struck softly against her feet.

After fifteen years of coming back home and adjusting herself into the routines that her mother did, and young Madhav's presence addressing her as 'Saruthai', as Dhruva did, all these help her towards healing herself. She saves Madhav's life, the surrogate Dhruva, who returns home late at night as his bus breaks down on the way. Madhav is suffering from fever, his trembling body is calmly held by her throughout the night. She was quite confident that Madhav was going to be all right, as the rain comes crashing down bringing her memories of her brother's death. In the morning, she has a bath and feels very sensual pleasure with the warm water. Her nature also helps her to turn from the past which is now dead, having served its function and helps to meet the present complex realities of life.

Sarita's daughter Renu draws a picture of a girl in a deep forest with straight tall trees with black crayons. Unlike other children she does not draw a colourful one, and a child's psychology is expressed through the picture.

The child in the picture may be considered as Renu as through her drawing, she tries to reflect her loneliness or uncaring child's attitude for mother's love. This kind of utter loneliness a human being faces in life stands as the core of "The Dark Holds No Terrors". On the other hand, the girl in the picture may be Sarita also, as she often doubts whether her children are aware of her sufferings and tortures that she experiences every night.

Renu's picture creates a sense of brooding darkness in her mind. She feels lonely and miserable when her mother rejects her and blames her for her brother's death. She lived a life of guilt. Later when she begins to think that she has found Manu who would cherish her forever, she goes through traumatic experience when he rapes her in one form or the other, Saru is the symbol of many women, who live in loneliness and the author tries to clearly show Renu and Sarita through the picture and the deep forest reflects that they are encompassed by their lonely feelings.

Violence against Nature - the root cause for the sufferings of women :

Most ecofeminists have agreed to the concept that there is a fundamental connection between the oppression or domination of women and nature. As a result, both are victims of patriarchal society.

The explosion in the factory in "The Dark Holds No Terrors", is the root cause of Sarita's problems. Her neighbours become aware of her professional identity due to the incident. Her husband's sense of inferiority changes him into a sadist. As a Doctor, Sarita treats the victims caught in the factory explosion and instantly her profession achieves for her a position superior to Manu. Actually construction of industries and factories is violence against nature. Therby, globalization creates an elusive relationship between Sarita and nature.

Manohar's sense of insecurity turns him into a sadist, insults, harasses and sexually abuses his wife every night. The male domination of the Indian society does not allow tolerance for a better woman even within a marriage. She punishes herself, in this way, with the 'rape' she undergoes every night with her husband. When it comes to difference in earnings and status, a man always expects that he has to be superior, no matter how much he loves his wife.

Conclusion :

In this novel, the relationship between the women characters and natural elements resonate with each other. Through ecofeministic perspective "The Dark Holds No Terrors" can be reviewed and analyzed. Women and nature can be harmonious, and this notion can be clearly seen in the female character- Sarita. A strong relationship is seen between the oppression of women and the degradation of nature. Thus, the main aim of this paper is not to nurture the environment and depict how it is degraded, the realistic depiction of the contemporary Indian women's situation, but also to create awareness among the people to stop the violence against nature and also human beings, especially women.

References :

Primary Source :

Deshpande, Shashi. The Dark Holds No Terrors, New Delhi: Penguin Random House India PVT. Ltd; 1990. Print.

Secondary Sources :

Asha, Adlin. S. R: An Ecofeministic Reading of Sashi Deshpande's The Dark Holds No Terrors; The Criterion: An International Journal in English, Vol III, Issue, I, March 2012, ISSN 0976-8165,

Beavoir De Simone:The Second Sex,For H.M.Parsley:London:Vintage

Das, Veena. Reflection on social construction of Adulthood, In SudhirKakka (ed.), Identity and Adulthood, New Delhi, OUP, 1992:93.Print.

Ed.Warren, Karen,Bloomington:Ecofeminism:women,culture,nature;India University Press,1997.

Jeyamantha,S:Eco Feminism in Shashi Deshpande's The Dark Holds No Terrors;International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts(IJCRT),Vol8,Issue 4 April,2020,ISSN:2320-2882

Kaur,Gurpreet:Beyond the Binary:Postcolonial Ecofeminism in Indian Women's Writing in English;PhD Thesis submitted in English and Comparative Literature Studies University of Warwick,Department of English and Comparative Studies,Sept.2017

Holmstorm, Lakshmi."Interview: Shashi Deshpande Talks to Lakshmi Holmstrom"

Mellory,Mary:Capitalism Nature Socialism " Eco-feminism and eco-socialism:Dilemmas of essentialism and materialism".Vol 3,Issue 2,1992,pp 43-62

Prajapati,Rajesh,S:The Plight of Women in Indian Society depicted in "The Dark Holds No Terrors"by Sashi Deshpande;[VOLUME 2 | ISSUE 4]- Dec,2015;ISSN 2348 -1269,PRINT ISSN 2349 -5138 IJRAR

Reddy, Y Sunita. A Feminist perspective on the novels of Shashi Deshpande,New Delhi:

Prestige Books, 2001: 51.Print

Sandhu,Sarabjit:The Image of Women in Novels of Sashi Deshpande;New Delhi:Prestige Books;1991

The Hindu Woman:Life under the Laws of Manu;

http://www.coursework.info/GCSE/Sociology/The_Hindu_Woman_Life_under_the_Laws_of_L810640.html

WOMEN EDUCATION AND CHANGING ATTITUDES OF SOCIETY TOWARDS WOMEN IN INDIA

✉ Mrs. Sagarika Chowdhury

Asstt. Professor

Dept. of Education, Narangi Anchalik Mahavidyalaya

Abstract :

Women are human beings and hence as much right to full development as men and women should get the same opportunities for intellectual development, equal rights and responsibilities in life and should have regarded as citizen with the same right and obligations. Education can play a very important role in the development of society. Education is the milestone of women empowerment because it enables them confront their traditional role and change their society.

Education of women is the most powerful tool of change of position in society. Education for girls has a strong and very important effect on the role of women in society. Education brings social benefits that improve the situation of the poor such as lower fertility, improved health care of children etc. Education is important for everyone, but it is especially significant for girls and women. The empowerment of women is recognized as the central issues for the development of a society. Women are significantly underrepresented in education. Education needs to be reoriented to increase women's access to traditionally male dominated society and recognized them as an essential human resource. Women education in every society plays a very important role in the overall development of society.

Key words :

Resource, right, development, empowerment, citizen.

Introduction :

Education is a very comprehensive and continuous process. It is as much as wide as life itself. Education means acquisition of knowledge which help individual to harmonious development throughout their life. It is a process of individual adjustment with his own self , with relatives, family and the whole society. It is a process of evolution and progress and development. In other words, education is a natural and continuous process of life. It is a lifelong process of living. It is education which makes man active, industrious and ensures his ability for the society. Education means an all round drawing out of the best in the child and men- body, mind and spirit. Education not helps in the development of personality of the child but also determine his future. Recent psychological research has shown that favourable attitudes towards life develop in the earliest stages of growth. Education gives solution for any type of problems. Through education we promotes values and good habits and awareness towards corruption, terrorism and diseases. Education helps to continue communication with known and unknown persons through technology and mass media. Education gives strength to the person. They get knowledge and discriminate which is wrong and which is right through education.

Objective of the study :

The general objective of the study is :

- To study the nature of women education in India.
- To know the effect of education in the life of women in India.

Methodology :

The present study is based on the collection of data from secondary sources. Secondary data is obtained from various published books, records, magazines, journals, newspaper and Internet. So the method is basically descriptive.

Discussion :

Education is an essential part of living being, whether it is a boy or a girl. Education helps an individual to be smarter , to learn new thing and to know about the facts around the world. Especially women in India is the need of the hour. In terms of inhabitants, India is the second largest nation in the world, but

the rate of girl education in India is extremely low. Educating girl child must be a necessity for the overall development of the country as women plays an essential part in all round process of the country. Generally, in rural areas where people rarely want to send their daughters to school, they think that education is not important for girls as they grow up and eventually get married and settle down. People think that girls should be stayed at home to help their mothers and nothing else. This mentality is completely wrong and since girls education can bring around massive revolution in the society, a lack of women education weaken the potent part of the society. Education can play an important role in development of the country.

Gender equality continues to be prevalent issue in today's society due to the persistent gap in terms of access to opportunities for women and men. Gender equality is a fundamental human right that every human being is entitled to regardless of their race, ethnicity, sexuality or religion. The role men and women plays in the society are totally determined and as a result there is a genders gap.

India's literacy rate continues to be below the global average. When girls are educated they can focus on other things rather than getting married at a young age. They can serve the society in many ways by practicing the profession that they want. This can help to play an important role in the society.

It is believed that girl education in India is not that important as they grow up to eventually be stay-at-home mothers. Due to the regressive nature of India's society the development of girl education has been hampered to a large extent. The majority of India's population is rural and the mind set of these people grow up with such attitudes and to educate these people about the benefits of girls is quite challenging.

That women might have the chance of a healthier and happier life should be reason enough for promoting girls education. However, there are also important benefit for society as a whole. An educated women has the skills, information and self confidence that she needs to be a better parent, worker and citizen.

An educated women is, for example, likely to marry at a later age and have fewer children. Cross-counties study shows that an extra year of schooling for girls reduces fertility rate by 5% to 10% and the children of an educated mother can more likely to survive. In India, for example, the infant mortality rate of babies whose mother have received primary education is half of children where mothers are illiterate.

What it would take to improve girls access to education shows the importance among other things of ?

Parental and community involvement- Families and communities must be important partners with schools in developing curricular and managing children's education.

Low cost and flexible time tables :- Basic education should be free or cost very little where possible there should be stipends and scholarships to compensate for the loss of girls' household labour. Also school hours must be flexible so that children can help at home and still attend schools.

Schools close to home with women teachers - Many parents worry about girls travelling long distances on their own. Many parents also prefer to have daughters taught by women teachers.

Preparation for School - Girls do best where they received early childhood care which enhance their self esteem and prepare them for school.

Relevant curricular - learning materials should be relevant to the girl's background and be in the local language. They should also avoid reproducing gender stereotypes.

Some notable positive changes which took place during this period :-

In 1966 Indira Gandhi became the first Prime Minister of India and served on that post for an aggregate period of fifteen years and became the world's longest serving women Prime Minister.

In the field of politics women like Indira Gandhi, Jayalalita, Mayawati, Vasundhara Raje, Uma Bharti, Sheila Dixit, Sushma Swaraj, Mamta Banerjee etc. proved themselves and make Indian women feel proud.

From a time where there is no women writer in India, today names like Arundhati Roy, Anita Desai, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri etc. can any other write to shame.

Kiran Bedi, Mother Teresa, Bachendri Pal, Kiran Mazumder, Kalpana Chawla, Meera Kumar, Pratiba Patil etc. are those women from different fields which are example for others.

Women are now regularly performing duties that are traditionally assigned to male. The income of one man is no longer enough in the modern expensive culture. So fluctuation in the economy have made it necessary for a woman to obtain a career, in order to provide the essential funds to support and maintain the family.

Along with being achievers, women of modern India are fulfilling their roles as wives and mothers.

In the 1990 grant from the foreign donors agencies enabled the formation of new women oriented NGOs. Self help groups and NGOs such as self employed women's Association (SEWA) have played a major role in the advancement of women's status in India.

Many women have emerged as leaders of local movements, for example, Medha Patkar of the Normada Bachao Andolon.

The Govt. of India declared 2001 as the year of Women Empowerment. The National policy for the empowerment of women was also passed in 2001.

Women are actively participated in the democratic process and elections which is quite impressive in enhaching their status.

Today modern women in India are entering all kinds of profession like engineering, medicine, politics etc. They are joining the universities and colleges in large numbers. In fact India has the largest population of working women in the world and has more numbers of doctors, surgeons, professors in the United States.

Thus the women are climbing the ladder of success with the help of education.

Findings :

From the above discussion, following points are found -

- (1) To develop a strong mind set education is one of the most powerful instrument of the society.
- (2) With the help of growing literacy among women, the gender discrimination in the society can be reduced to a great extent.
- (3) A women is the first educator of a child, so she must get equal status in the society.
- (4) Sustainable development is only possible when women and men enjoy equal opportunity to reach their potential.
- (5) The prejudices related to women has reduce to some extent in comparison to ancient time in India.
- (6) Gradually the negative attitudes are changing for women folk in India.

Conclusion :

Gandhiji once said, women is the noblest of God's creation, suppress in her own sphere of activity. These words are blossoming now. Increased awareness and education has inspired women to come out of the walls of home. The modern women has started caring for her social, emotional, cultural, religious and economic needs. She has now become tool for social change in India. It can be said that women have more freedom than earlier however not true in many respects because prejudices still remains in the society. Though the status of today's modern women in India is high, the overall picture of women's position in India is not satisfactory.

Last but not the least, we should not forget that the progress of a nation cannot be achieved until and unless there is active participation of its mothers, wives, sisters and daughters. So each and every person should thoughtfully decides to bring a revolutionary transformation in his attitudes towards women and accept the women to be the equal participation in the countries progress.

REFERENCES :

1. Kar B.C. : Principles of Education
Prakashan Kendra, Lukhnow 1986
2. Kumar Rajive : Women Education in India
Kumar Narendra Sarup Book Publishers Pvt. Ltd., Ansari Road,
2014
3. Desai Neera : Changing Status of Women.
Policies and programmes.
Quiterion Publishers, New Delhi, 1986.-

ANITA DESAI'S FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN: UNDERSTANDING THE TRAUMA OF A HOUSEWIFE

 **SUMITRA DEVI CHETTRY**

Assistant Professor

Deptt. of English, Narangi Anchalik Mahavidyalaya

Abstract :

Anita Desai's *Fire on the Mountain*, is one of her best novels where she presents the trauma of the main protagonist Nanda Kaul and her family. She had not had a happy married life though she managed the house with the expertise of being the hostess which was expected of her. The prosperity, status and affection of the children were not strong enough bonds to make her continue to live in the family. Her acceptance in living with her family, with her husband, doing everything a hostess needs to do even though not happy can be said to be an acceptance of a woman of the situation that life put her to. She had to bear the faithlessness of her husband . but the death of her husband and financial independence of her children gave her the opportunity to fulfill her long-standing desire to live like a recluse in the natural habitat of Carignano. She wanted to lead an ascetic life but Raka's arrival was an intrusion in the life she wanted to live.

(Key-words) :

Trauma, Acceptance, Faithlessness, Recluse, Ascetic.

Introduction :

Fire on The Mountain, published in the year 1977, in London is one of Anita Desai's reputed novel, which puts her as one of the best Indian English novelists. The novel centers round the character of Nanda Kaul, and the title of

the novel symbolizes the fire which burns in her heart and her total emotional world. Nanda Kaul faces a lifelong faithlessness of Mr.Kaul, her husband . Mr.Kaul never loved Nanda Kaul as a wife , she was just his physical need and circumstantial convenience. Nanda had to pass through psychic suffering and bitter experience of a marital life. Nanda always plays the gracious hostess, and enjoys the comforts and social status of a dignified person. She becomes a mother, grandmother and a great grandmother of many unwanted and unloved children. As the Vice Chancellor's wife , her life was full of social activity but with no basic purpose and little time for privacy, They had constant guests trooping in and out and her time passed arranging the dinner table as a dutiful wife and polite hostess. Infact, the novel presents the traumatic self of Nanda Kaul., an old woman , who has had too much of the world with her and so longs for a quiet, retired life. Her busy past now looks like "a box of sweets" positively sickening.

Objectives :

This paper is an attempt to study the portrayal of Indian woman and tracing her psyche and in course coming across a common trauma besetting many Indian women who do not protest of the injustice done to them as they feel the importance of their family first and by the time they realize their worth, it's quite late. This paper tries to make a realization that every women can dream and fulfil their desires as and when they feel like. They have a right to their respective identity, apart from being a mother, grandmother, great grandmother.

Methodology :

This study is based both on primary and secondary sources. The primary source is the work of the author. The secondary sources are collected from the various publications , references, reviews, Journals, Seminar Papers, Lectures etc. The paper is a descriptive analysis on the basis of the available information.

Discussion :

As the novel opens, Nanda Kaul though surrounded by people, is found to be a solitary figure in the hills of Kasauli. Her past and experiences have nothing to do with the happening in the novel. Her reactions of withdrawal and fantasy provide glimpses of her past life. Her emotional coldness is a poise that she

carefully cultivates to convince herself and the world that has rejected her of her self-reliance and her self-sufficiency. Her withdrawal from life and family is not the result of any existential realization of man's ultimate aloneness but she has just been reduced to such a state of utter loneliness. She prefers her lonely isolated existence , guarding her privacy fiercely and the news of her great granddaughter Raka's arrival conveyed to her through a letter , by her daughter, unsettles her. In the authorial description of Part 1 ,a comparison has been shown between her and a tree:" She was grey, tall and thin and her silk saree made a sweeping , shivering sound and she fancied she could merge with the pine trees and be mistaken for one.

Nanda Kaul performed the duties of her married life very well, but her husband and her children never bothered about her inner psyche, never asked about her in any circumstance. Their indifference made her look for a privacy, a place to bury herself. It is because of this she looked for seclusion in Carignano and did not like the idea of Raka staying with her. Her feelings prevail her life as her desires are suggestively painted through an eagle : "An eagle swept over it, far below her, a thousand feet below, its wings outspread, gliding on currents of air without once moving its great muscular wings which remained in repose , in control."

The eagle, symbolizes a total detachment here, a free soul that is not bound by any type of responsibilities or duties, and is not attached to any place or person. Though the use of the poem, is not attached to any place or person or significant in the novel yet it has some connection with the character of Nanda Kaul who quotes it and the poem depicts her desire to be away from the humdrum of life and far from the madding crowd. And the poem is :

*I have decided to go
Where springs not fail,
To field where flies on sharp and sided hail
And a few lilies blow,
And I have asked to be
Where no storms come
Where the green swell is in the heavens dumb
And out of the swing of the sea.*

It is clear enough to understand that Cariagnano is presented in the novel as a contrast to the city life. Nanda's dislike for city life leads her to seclusion in Carignano. She is disinterested in her family, Asha in her letter writes that she wants Raka, Nanda's great grand-daughter to stay at Carignano for the recovery of her health as it is hot and dusty summer in Delhi. Raka was a different temperamental child as she seemed to have no needs, she just wanted to be left alone and pursue her own secret life among the rocks and pines of Kasauli. Anita Desai calls her a 'natural recluse' and compared her with Nanda. "If Nanda Kaul was a recluse out of vengeance for a long life of duty and obligation, her great granddaughter was a recluse by nature, by instinct." Raka did not become a recluse by rejection like her great grandmother but because of the abnormal circumstances around her. She had become the prey of parental perturbations.

Anita Desai presents the trauma of a housewife through the following passages :

"The old house, the full house, of that period of her life when she was the Vice-Chancellor's wife and at the hub of a small but intense and busy world, had not pleased her. It's crowding had stifled her. There had been too many guests coming and going, tongas and rickshaws piled up under the eucalyptus trees and the bougainvilleas, their drivers asleep on the nests with their feet hanging over the bars. The many rooms of the house had always been full, extra beds would have had to be made up, often in not very private corners of the hall or verandah, so that there was a shortage of privacy that vexed her. Too many trays of tea would have to be made and carried to her husband's study, to her mother-in-law's bedroom, to the verandah that was the gathering place for all at all times of the day. Too many meals, too many dishes on the table, too much to wash after.

They had so many children, they had gone to so many different schools and colleges at different times of the day, and had so many tutors- one for Mathematics who was harsh and slapped the unruly boys, one for drawing who was lazy and smiled and did nothing, and others equally incompetent and irritating. Then there had been their friends, all of different ages and sizes and families."

The novel depicts Nanda Kaul's intense awareness of 'lost privacy and busy world'. Nanda Kaul's liabilities as a housewife is natural but 'eddy or whirlpool' suggests her traumatic state. Externally, everything looks normal but internally Nanda burns with frustration. She feels neglected, lonely and unimportant. She had to live all her married life knowing fully well that her husband carried on an illicit relationship with Miss Davidson, a teacher. He invited Miss Davidson for badminton parties and compels her to spend the night and comes back secretly to his separate bedroom. No wife could tolerate such an illicit relationship of her husband in the same house but Nanda appears smooth and calm before her family while inwardly her heart wrenches in pain and hurt. Many a time, even in the present times, woman are found enduring painful relationship because of various circumstances. They can break the marital bond and seek to lead their own lives. But woman like Nanda choose to paste a smile and continue looking after their family, children, house, servants, shutting the doors, cooking food, keeping the visitors comfortable and welcomed and wait for the person, husband who actually is the reason for her unhappiness. To stop all these, Nanda craves for a blessed widowhood, complete separation from both man and children around. These are the situations which have forced her to get such a dream house at Kasauli. She had never been loved by her husband, he had done things to keep her quiet while he carried a lifelong affair with Miss Davidson. As a result, Nanda distrusts all attachments and affairs. After her husband's death she was quite happy to leave behind everything her pain, hurt, disappointments, insults with a feeling that she had discharged all her duties.

There is no doubt that the novel presents a marital incongruity. Nanda Kaul had spent all her life concealing the circumstance of her marital status. She had been injured, disappointed in her life as a wife, mother, housewife. Now she wants seclusion, to rest her body from all the vagaries of her pain-filled life. She wants to get back the little bits and pieces of her identity in Carignano in an absolute peaceful yet strong shelter. She towards the end of her life, hopes for a hopeful destination. Now she is afraid to be hurt again by the insensible world and wants no obstruction or disturbance in her place of refuge. Nanda Kaul decides to concentrate on the soothing scene which awaits her. She is upset as she had enough in life and of course now she doesn't expect much from life, just quiet solitude and peace.

Nanda Kaul also has to face the incongruities faced by Raka, Tara and Ila Das. Raka is a victim of 'economic deprivation', Tara suffers a gruesome fate of a chronic nervous breakdown as a result of her marital incongruity. Another dire and despised marriage is that of Ila Das. Nanda is directly related with these problems and these are the trauma of her life. She not only faces problems in her daily life but she also sees her family suffering. Ila was raped and murdered by Preet Singh for trying to stop the disastrous child marriage of his daughter. Ila's death shatters Nanda as she was close to her, she is shocked and faints. Raka finds her sitting, Nanda dies on the stool 'with her head hanging, the black telephone hanging, the long wire dangling.'

Conclusion :

Anita Desai in her novel *Fire on The Mountain*, presents the traumatic and tragic view of a housewife's life. It can be called a destruction of an unkind and sorrowful world of many Nanda Kaul's, Ila Das's and Raka's of our society. These are women who suffer from the slings of misfortune, social inequities and injustices committed on them by a savage society of men. The title of the novel is emblematic of the revolt of the new generations of women against the male chauvinistic society. Anita Desai, commenting upon the importance of such feelings, remarks in an interview : "But I'm quite sure that even life contains many traumatic experiences."

Bibliography & References :

1. Desai, Anita. *Fire on the Mountain*. Allied Publishers, Delhi, 1977.
2. Jain, Jasbir. 'Anita Desai: Interviewed', *Rajasthan University Studies in English*, Vol 12, 1979, pp60-61.
3. Prasad, Madhusudan. 'Anita Desai : The Novelist', *New Horizon*, 1981, p. 140.

A GENDER BASED ANALYSIS OF 'LABOR' AND WOMEN'S EMANCIPATION

 **TANAY CHOUDHURY**

PhD Research Scholar at OKDISCD

Abstract :

This paper attempts to highlight certain critical issues surrounding women empowerment and gender equality in the context of urban areas in Global South. In particular, this paper will look into the issue of 'value' attributed to women's 'labor' in the economic process. This will be done by a careful analysis of gender norms at the level of the household as well as at the holistic level of the community and society at large.

KEYWORDS :

Women empowerment; Global South; Poverty; Gender Equality; Reproductive Labour

Introduction :

The urban is the space where it is deemed that 'the woman', who is traditionally disempowered and historically discriminated against in different societies, can be liberated and empowered. The assumption is so, because the urban as a spatio-temporal context is understood to be motivated by the principles of enlightenment and free market and thus traditional and conservative is replaced by liberation and modernity. However, how does it work? Is it effective? How liberated and empowered are women within the urban space in Global South?

Objective/Scope of the Paper :

- Attempt to understand if policies aimed at ensuring women empowerment and gender equality taking into consideration the issue of 'reproductive labor'.

- Careful analysis of gender norms at the level of the household and society as a whole.
- To understand the extent of women empowerment and gender equality in the context of urban areas in Global South.

Methodology :

This paper is based on a qualitative and theoretical analysis of secondary data collected from secondary data sources, i.e. relevant published literature and policy decisions on the subject concerned.

Underlying Problem :

Classical gender stereotypes attach women to activities which are placed outside what is understood as conventional economic production process. These stereotypes become naturalized over time. There is a general tendency to attach women to 'care' related activities, typically within the four-walls of a household and is considered as a natural process. Although, this gendered coloring of labor activities is a problem, the bigger issue is not the stereotype itself. Rather it is that such labor is not considered to have any significant economic value.

So, broadly it is a two-dimension issue. The first includes stereotyping of gender roles and the second includes undervaluation of women's labor. Let's understand the stereotyping issue first. When we talk about women empowerment it's mostly centered around the discourse of 'including women'. So we talk about empowering women by including women in the production process; ensuring income earning opportunities for them; inclusion of women in the economic sphere of activities, etc. However, the women empowerment narrative needs to be complemented by an equally powerful discourse regarding the inclusion of men in activities perceived to be non-economic in nature. Thus, the struggle for emancipation of women would be incomplete if 'the man' is not equally represented in the household activities typically understood to be a woman's sphere. Thus, women empowerment and gender equality can take place in the real sense only when there is the inclusion of different genders in different kinds of work, 'productive' as well as 'reproductive'.

The urban space is generally understood as more progressive than the rural counterpart. Thus, the urban space must reflect emancipation of women and thus, inspire similar change in the rural space as well. However, merely locating oneself within an urban space doesn't guarantee freedom and

empowerment. A woman's empowerment within the urban space depends on various other factors. Education is one important factor. If a woman is educated and possesses the required skills to fulfill the requirements of high-end jobs, then gender disparity in employment to a certain extent can be reduced. However, there are reported cases where men and women are paid differently for the same work. Moreover, mere education cannot free women from age-old stereotypes. Women can be perceived to be suited to carry out only certain kinds of jobs. One's potential to hold on to and manage a particular job profile is to a large extent influenced by gender stereotypes and gender roles. Also, there is a dual burden of productive and reproductive labour, for women residing and working in urban areas (Chant, 2014) as men generally tend to avoid (care) reproductive labor as this is naturalized as the woman's sphere solely.

In a recent analysis by UNRISD (2010) covering Argentina, Nicaragua, the Republic of Korea, Tanzania, South Africa and India, it was found that women spend fewer hours in work which is paid or deemed of enough 'productive' value to be included in the System of National Accounts (SNA), but work more hours in total. In addition, in all six countries, women spend more than twice as much time as men in unpaid care work, and in India, ten times more. Generally speaking, the disparity between hours of men's and women's work is most marked among low-income groups, and, as noted by Pineda-Ofreneo and Acosta in relation to the Philippines, the '... poorer the household, the longer women work'(Chant, 2014).

Representation in formal structures of governance :

The experiences of women are often not included or given a subordinate place in the discipline of politics. Since American politics and culture has a hegemonic influence on the global system, it is important to understand the ideological and gendered underpinnings of such a system. Various instances show that the role played by women takes a backseat in the USA's realpolitik. One instance where this gender bias was reflected was when before the superpower summit in Geneva in 1985, Donald Regan, the then White House chief of staff, told a Washington Post reporter that women wouldn't understand the issues at stake at the meeting. Apparently such gendered underpinnings were evident in other events as well; like in the year 1972, out of the twelve women in the House of Representatives to the United States Government, five were assigned to the Education and Labor committee, which suggests that women

in politics are channeled into certain areas of public policy that are perceived as 'women's issues' (Tickner, 1992).

Job profiles and incomes of individuals are influenced by gender stereotypes throughout all disciplines and areas of work and employment. This is how Foucault understands 'knowledge' influencing 'power' and vice versa. So, there are two dimensions to the notion of gender inequality- on one hand, women are not allowed to occupy the traditional position of power in the work environment and on the other hand, women's experiences are considered as less important in the overall running of the system.

Thus, representation in governance forms an important element of gender equality (since traditional politics is considered as a man's sphere of activity). Even within politics and governance, there is a tendency to assign women to departments considered feminine enough to suit their gender. In recent times, change has been witnessed. For example, the Defence Ministry of India was headed by a woman from 2017 to 2019. Women are provided reservations in the local bodies in India. This can help to trigger positive change. Studying the effect of having women policymakers, Raghavendra Chattopadhyay and Esther Duflo found that the gender of the village council president influence the investments into different kinds of public goods (Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004).

Reproductive Labor :

So far we have seen that within the dominant socio-economic discourse which shapes the mainstream societal narrative at large, there are ascertained dichotomies and consequent devaluations of certain 'work types' resulting from the gendered understanding of 'labor' itself. Some of the dichotomies are as follows: unproductive - productive; private-public; unpaid -remunerated or paid less - well paid; female - male; soft work - hard work; caring-rationality.

Let us understand how women's experiences are devalued in the overall system of affairs. In this sense, it is important to understand 'reproductive labor' and its importance for the system. Reproductive labor or (care) reproductive labor includes activities which are poorly remunerated or even unpaid labor. It includes activities which contribute towards reproducing the workforce. Activities involving household chores such as cooking and washing clothes come under reproductive labor.

Reproductive labor is often naturalized as women's sphere of activity. However, it is not given economic valuation in the dominant socio-economic

discourse. This kind of labor remains behind the veil, outside the conventional measures of weighing productivity. However, reproductive labor is very significant in ensuring 'productivity' and 'growth' in the wider economic essence. Reproductive labor facilitates the continuous reproduction of 'labor-power' which ensures the sustainability of the economic system. Reproductive labor plays the role of nurturing the potential laborer who eventually goes on to contribute to the economic system. So, to undermine the role of reproductive labor, to demean its value in the societal discourse is unfair. To overlook reproductive labor in the production process is a 'blind spot' in economics and was pointed out in the critique of mainstream economics by feminist economists.

Women in urban areas in Global South :

Gender inequalities and injustices persist in urban areas. There are constraints in engagement in the labour market and informal enterprises. Other constraints include:

- Unequal access to decent work,
- Human capital acquisition,
- Financial and physical assets,
- Intra-urban mobility,
- Associated time burden, and
- Personal safety and security (Chant, 2013).

Women's contribution to urban prosperity is significant on one hand and on the other hand women reap only limited rewards for her work. Barriers to woman empowerment remain widespread in the global south. This is especially true among the urban poor in global south. Gender inequality is a pertinent issue in the urban areas. However, the urban is a spatio-temporal construct is where we witness prosperity in conjunction with poverty. And this paradox acts as hindrance for emancipation of women in global south.

The political economy of urbanisation primarily focuses on growth led production process and there is a minimum focus on urban poverty (this especially holds true in the context of developing societies of Asia, Africa and Latin America). Thus, prosperity is not an inevitable outcome of urbanization. Poor living standards, socio-economic disparities, lack of decent work opportunities coupled with violence, crime, insecurity, and mental and physical ill-health are other properties that exist hand-in-hand alongside with prosperity within the urban

space. The poverty and violence adversely impacts the well-being of women in the urban space.

In mainstream narrative, there is a tendency to consider urbanisation as universally beneficial for women as an interest group. However, such a generalization is a biased one. It is true that urban spaces provide opportunities for women's emancipation. However, such opportunities are not equally distributed. Women form a highly heterogeneous urban group and hence any linear correlation between urban growth and gender equality is problematic. Also, gender discrimination can be witnessed in terms of access to different spaces within the city.

"Urban women, while generally sharing specific gender interests arising from a common set of responsibilities and roles, constitute a fairly diverse group. There are elderly women, working women and women whose major responsibility is in the domestic sphere. There are also women who balance multiple roles at the same time. Poor women living in slums and low-resource areas face disadvantages which are very different from those faced by women from middle-class families. Slum dwellers also experience an unequal level of service; women are doubly disadvantaged from poor access [sic]. Cities, especially large urban areas, also have more numbers of women-headed households, single women living by themselves, professional women who need to travel..." (Khosla, 2009)

Also, the problems are "not only multi-dimensional but is also multi-sectoral...[and]...is experienced in different ways, at different times and in different 'spaces'" (Bradshaw, 2002)

Some common areas where women face discrimination are :

1. Access to Education- Women, as a gender category lagged behind in access to education on an equal par to men since women, until recently, were always associated with reproductive labor and thus skipped formal education.
2. Vocational training- This too is gendered. For example, the skill of driving a car is to men, while weaving and tailoring are to women.
3. Unequal pay for equal work.

Mobilization of communities concerning awareness regarding universal human rights is very essential. Strategies for increasing the levels of education of girls or raising their access to health services will have little or no effect on lessening the gender gap between men and women, whether rich or poor if they

are not embedded in human rights frameworks that affirm, guide, and monitor violations of equal and universal rights (Keleher, 2007).

We saw the problem of the dual burden of productive and reproductive labor, for women residing in urban areas. Policy interventions targeting women's multiple, time-consuming responsibilities and obligations is a paramount necessity.

Gender stereotypes exclude women from traditional notions of productive work. These stereotypes also exclude men from certain domestic care related work involving reproductive labor. So, if a man is not able to find a breadwinning role for himself and at the same time isolating himself from the household chores as well, then this will put a dual burden on the woman of the household.

Conclusion :

To achieve emancipation of women, who as a historical group have been discriminated against since centuries, there needs to be social awareness at the macro-level of the community as well as the micro level of the family. Inclusion of women in traditional economic activities must be complemented with inclusion of men in care oriented labor of the household. There needs to be due appreciation and valuation attributed to the economic significance of reproductive labor. This should be a good place to start with. Urban is a symbol for modernity and the civilizational epitome of our times. So, positive changes must get reflected in the urban space. If social transformation in popular perception can be brought about in the urban space, such transformation will over time trickle down to the rural space as well.

Bibliography and References :

Tickner J. Ann (1992), Gender in international relations: Feminist perspectives on achieving global security, New York: Columbia University Press.

Runyan, Anne Sisson, and V. Spike Peterson (2013). Global Gender Issues in the New Millennium. Fourth edition. United States: Westview Press.

Chant, Sylvia (2013), Cities through a "gender lens": a golden "urban age" for women in the global South? , Environment & Urbanization Copyright © 2013 International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). Vol 25(1): 9-29. DOI: 10.1177/0956247813477809 www.sagepublications.com

Khosla, Rena (2009), Addressing Gender Concerns in India's Urban Renewal Mission, UNDP, New Delhi, available at [http://data.undp.org.in/dg/pub/Addressing Gender Concerns.pdf](http://data.undp.org.in/dg/pub/Addressing%20Gender%20Concerns.pdf), 62 pages.

Bradshaw, Sarah (2002), "Gendered poverties and power relations: looking inside communities and households", International Cooperation for Development/ Embajada de Holanda/Puntos de Encuentro, Managua, 100 pages.

Kelleher, Helen and Lucinda Franklin (2007), Changing gendered norms about women and girls at the level of household and community: a review of the evidence, Background paper prepared for the Women and Gender Equity Knowledge Network of the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health

Chant, Sylvia (2014) "Exploring the "feminisation of poverty" in relation to women's work and home-based enterprise in slums of the Global South", International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship, 6 (3). pp. 296-316. ISSN 1756-6266

Chattopadhyay, Raghabendra and Duflo, Esther (2004) "Women as Policy Makers: Evidence from a Randomized Policy Experiment in India", Econometrica, Econometric Society, vol. 72(5), pages 1409-1443, September.

শৰৎচন্দ্ৰ চট্টোপাধ্যায়ৰ 'অভাগীৰ স্বৰ্গ'

শ্ৰী মিনু দাস

সহকাৰী অধ্যাপক

অসমীয়া বিভাগ, নাৰেংগী আঞ্চলিক মহাবিদ্যালয়

শৰৎচন্দ্ৰ চট্টোপাধ্যায় বিংশ শতিকাৰ দ্বিতীয় দশকৰ বঙালী সাহিত্যৰ এগৰাকী মহাকাব্য। ১৯০৩ চনত শৰৎচন্দ্ৰই সাহিত্য চৰ্চা আৰম্ভ কৰে যদিও ১৯১৩ চনলৈ এইজন কথাশিল্পীয়ে তেখেতৰ সৃষ্টিৰাজিৰ প্ৰকাশৰ পৰা আঁতৰত আছিল। পাছলৈ বংগীয় পোষকীয় আলোচনী 'যমুনা', 'সাহিত্য' আৰু 'ভাৰতবৰ্ষ'ত আত্ম প্ৰকাশে শৰৎচন্দ্ৰৰ সাহিত্যৰাজি পোহৰলৈ আনে। অভিজ্ঞতা সম্ভূত শৰৎচন্দ্ৰৰ সমূহ সৃষ্টিয়ে সাহিত্য কলাৰ সমৃদ্ধিৰে পৰিপূৰ্ণ আৰু বৈচিত্ৰ্যতাৰে সম্পূৰ্ণ। শৰৎচন্দ্ৰৰ উপন্যাস, গল্প অথবা প্ৰবন্ধত কথাশিল্পীজনাৰ মননশীলতাই সাহিত্যৰ শৰীৰত তেজ মণ্ডহৰ দৰেই অনিবাৰ্য উপাদানৰূপে পৰিগণিত হয় আৰু সিয়ে আজিও সাহিত্য প্ৰেমিকৰ মনোজগতত প্ৰভাৱান্বিত কৰে। আজিও সাহিত্য ৰসিকে শৰৎচন্দ্ৰৰ সাহিত্যৰ প্ৰতি পূৰ্বৰ আকৰ্ষণ অনুভৱ কৰে। ১৮৭৬ চনৰ ১৫ ছেপ্টেম্বৰত জন্মগ্ৰহণ কৰা এইজন সাহিত্যকাৰে কোমল বয়সৰ পৰাই সাহিত্য চৰ্চাত আত্মনিয়োগ কৰে। চট্টোপাধ্যায়ৰ সাহিত্যিক জীৱনৰ আদি ভাগতে লিখা গল্প 'কাশীনাথ' শৰৎচন্দ্ৰৰ কিশোৰ মনৰ সাহিত্য চেতনা প্ৰসূত। সেই লিখা আজিও মানুহে সমানেই পঢ়ে আৰু পাঠক তথা শ্ৰোতাৰ হৃদয়ক সাহিত্য অনুৰাগৰ কোমল স্পৰ্শ দিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈ আহিছে।

শৰৎচন্দ্ৰ চট্টোপাধ্যায়ে বিংশ শতিকাৰ বংগীয় সমাজত থকা ধৰ্মীয় আৰু জাতিগত গোড়ামীৰ বিপক্ষে থিয় দি সাহিত্য কৰ্ম চলাই নিছিল। শৰৎচন্দ্ৰৰ সাহিত্যই সেই সময়ৰ বংগীয় গ্ৰামীণ সমাজৰ ধৰ্মীয় আৰু জাতিভেদৰ নিকৃষ্ট ব্যৱস্থাৰ প্ৰত্যাহ্বান হৈ থিয় দিছিল।

শৰৎচন্দ্ৰ এগৰাকী নাৰীবাদী কথাশিল্পীৰূপেও পৰিচিত আছিল। সুনিৰ্মিত লিখনিৰে চট্টোপাধ্যায়ে তেখেতৰ ভালেকেইখন উপন্যাস আৰু গল্পত শক্তিশালী নাৰী চৰিত্ৰ নিৰ্মাণ কৰি উলিয়াইছিল। নাৰীবাদী চেতনাৰে শৰৎচন্দ্ৰই 'স্বামী' চুটি গল্পৰ সৌদামিনী চৰিত্ৰৰ ৰূপ দিছিল। কোমল বয়সীয়া উজ্জ্বল প্ৰতিভাসম্পন্ন সৌদামিনীয়ে সাহিত্য চৰ্চা কৰে আৰু প্ৰয়োজনত বংগীয় সংকীৰ্ণ সমাজ ব্যৱস্থাৰ প্ৰতিনিধি শাহুৱেকৰ মনটোৰ বিপৰীতে নিৰ্ভিকতাৰে থিয় দিয়ে। সৌদামিনী শৰৎ চন্দ্ৰৰ নাৰীবাদী চেতনাৰ বাহক। 'ৰামেৰ সুমতি', 'পৰিনীতা', 'বিন্দুৰ চেলে', 'পথ নিৰ্দেশক', 'স্বামী', 'হৰিলক্ষ্মী', 'অভাগীৰ স্বৰ্গ' আদি একৈশটা গল্পৰ ৰচনাৰে শৰৎচন্দ্ৰ চট্টোপাধ্যায়ে বাংলা সাহিত্যক চহকী কৰি গৈছে। সংযত প্ৰকাশভঙ্গী, সাধু ভাষাৰ প্ৰয়োগ, সমসাময়িক সমাজৰ বাস্তৱ আৰু কলাসন্মত

উপস্থাপনেৰে শৰৎচন্দ্ৰ চট্টোপাধ্যায়ৰ গল্পবোৰ কলাগুণ সমৃদ্ধ সাহিত্যৰ থুপি। ২০ শতিকাৰ জাতি বৈষম্য আৰু ধৰ্মীয় গোড়ামীৰে আচ্ছন্ন বংগীয় গ্ৰামীণ সমাজৰ সৰলমনা নাৰীৰ আশা-আকাংক্ষাবোৰ জীৱন কালত সমাজৰ ৰুঢ়তাৰ যি সীমাহীন আতিশয্যাৰ বলি হয়, মৃত্যুৰ পাছতো সেই অন্যায়, অবিচাৰৰ ওৰ নপৰে। অজটিল মনৰ আশাবোৰ মৃত্যুৰ পাছতো ধূলিসাৎ হোৱাৰ হৃদয় স্পৰ্শী কাহিনীৰে তুলিধৰা হৈছে ‘অভাগীৰ স্বৰ্গ’ গল্পটি।

গল্পটিৰ কেন্দ্ৰীয় চৰিত্ৰ অভাগী এগৰাকী সহজ সৰল গাঁৱলীয়া মহিলা। অভাগীয়ে বুকুত কোনো উচ্চ আকাংক্ষা নোপোহে। কেৱল মৃত্যুৰ পাছত শাখা সেন্দূৰ, পুত্ৰৰ হাতৰ জুই লৈ স্বৰ্গলৈ যোৱাৰ হেঁপাহ ৰাখে। শৰৎ চন্দ্ৰৰ শব্দশিল্পই অংকন কৰিছে এগৰাকী সৰলমনা নাৰীৰ জীৱনৰ কৰুণ ছবি। শৰৎচন্দ্ৰ চট্টোপাধ্যায়ৰ ‘অভাগীৰ স্বৰ্গ’ গল্পটিৰ অভাগীৰ চৰিত্ৰ বিশ্লেষণেৰে গল্পকাৰৰ সাহিত্য প্ৰতিভাৰ অবলোকনৰ চিন্তা আগত ৰাখি ‘শৰৎ চন্দ্ৰৰ অভাগীৰ স্বৰ্গ’ — বিষয়টি আলোচনাৰ বিষয়বস্তু হিচাপে নিৰ্বাচন কৰি লোৱা হৈছে।

সৰল মনৰ অভাগীৰ মানসিকতাক সমসাময়িক সমাজৰ গোড়া ব্যৱস্থাই গভীৰভাৱে প্ৰভাৱিত কৰিছে। সেয়েহে প্ৰতাৰক স্বামী ৰসিক বাঘাৰ নামৰ সেন্দূৰকণক অভাগীয়ে সৌভাগ্যৱতী হোৱাৰ সমল বুলি ভাবে। পুতেক কাঙালীৰ হাতৰ অগ্নিয়ে অভাগীক স্বৰ্গলৈ লৈ যাব বুলি ভ্ৰান্ত ধাৰণাক হৃদয়েৰে পোষণ কৰে। এয়া তথাকথিক সমাজৰ সংকীৰ্ণ চিন্তা আৰু কুপ্ৰভাৱত গঢ় লৈ উঠা ধাৰণা। অভাগীৰ স্বৰ্গত ২০ শতিকাৰ বঙ্গীয় গ্ৰামীণ সমাজৰ জাতি বৈষম্যৰ ক্ৰুড়তাক গল্পকাৰে সংযত আৰু সু নিৰ্মাণ কলা সুষমাৰে পাঠকৰ চিন্তাৰ জগতলৈ কঢ়িয়াই আনিছে। ‘অভাগী’ৰ চৰিত্ৰটো গল্পকাৰৰ এই উদ্দেশ্যৰ বাহক। অভাগীৰ জীৱনৰ কাঠিন্য আৰু মৃত্যুৰ পাছতো মৃত শৰীৰে চিতাৰ জুই পোৱাৰ পৰা বঞ্চিত হোৱা ঘটনায় বিংশ শতিকাৰ বংগীয় গোড়া সমাজখনৰ প্ৰতিচ্ছবি অংকন কৰিছে।

সামাজিক গল্পসমূহ এক বিশেষ শ্ৰেণীৰ সাহিত্য, য’ত সমাজৰ নানান অন্যায় অবিচাৰ, কু-প্ৰথা প্ৰভৃতিৰ উদ্ঘাটন আৰু তাৰ সমালোচনাৰ মাজেৰে সমাজ সংস্কাৰৰ মহৎ উদ্দেশ্য নিহিত হৈ থাকে।

গৱেষণাৰ পদ্ধতি :

‘বিশ্লেষণাত্মক পদ্ধতি’ৰে গৱেষণা পত্ৰখনি প্ৰস্তুত কৰা হৈছে। শৰৎচন্দ্ৰৰ ‘অভাগীৰ স্বৰ্গ’ গল্পটি প্ৰাথমিক উৎস আৰু আন আন প্ৰাসংগিক গ্ৰন্থ, ইণ্টাৰনেট ৱেবচাইট আদি গৌণ উৎস হিচাপে গ্ৰহণ কৰা হৈছে।

আলোচনা :

সাহিত্যক যিকোনো সমাজৰ দাপোণ বুলি অভিহিত কৰা হয়। সাহিত্য হৈছে সৌন্দৰ্য আকাৰ, সুন্দৰৰ প্ৰতীক। সাহিত্য মানৱ কল্যাণৰ দূত। মানৱ জীৱনৰ সুখ-দুখ, হাঁহি-কান্দোনৰ জীৱন্ত ৰূপ সাহিত্যই দিব পাৰে। সাহিত্যৰ অন্তৰ্নিহিত ভাব। ভাষা আৰু প্ৰকাশৰ মাধ্যমেৰে লিখকৰ চিন্তা-আদৰ্শ, মেধাৰ পূৰ্ণ ছবি উন্মুক্ত হয়। সাহিত্যৰ মূল অৱলম্বন হৈছে মানৱ জীৱনৰ নানা দিশ। কোনো জাতিৰ বা সমাজৰ ধ্যান ধাৰণা, চিন্তা-বিচাৰ —

এই সকলোখিনি সাহিত্যৰ মাজেৰে লাভ কৰিব পাৰি। সেয়েহে এটা জাতি বা এখন সমাজক জানিবলৈ তেওঁলোকৰ সাহিত্যৰ অধ্যয়ন, গৱেষণাৰ প্ৰয়োজন অধিক। অনুসন্ধানকাৰীয়ে এই সম্পৰ্কে সচেতন হোৱাৰ প্ৰয়োজনীয়তা আছে।

বিংশ শতিকাৰ দ্বিতীয় দশকৰ বংগীয় কথা শিল্পী শৰৎ চন্দ্ৰ চট্টোপাধ্যায়ৰ ‘অভাগীৰ স্বৰ্গ’ গল্পটি সংস্থাপিত হৈছে সমসাময়িক কালৰ বংগীয় গ্ৰামীণ সমাজৰ পটভূমিত। অৰ্থনৈতিক তথা জাতি বৈষম্যই জুৰুলা কৰা এগৰাকী নাৰীৰ জীৱনৰ কৰুণ অৱস্থাৰ কলাসন্মত চিত্ৰণেই হৈছে ‘অভাগীৰ স্বৰ্গ’ গল্পটিৰ সৌন্দৰ্য। গল্পকাৰে সমাজৰ জাতি বৈষম্য কিদৰে এগৰাকী সহজ-সৰল গ্ৰামীণ মহিলাৰ মৃত্যুৰ পাছত স্বৰ্গ প্ৰাপ্তিৰ আকাংক্ষাক ধূলিস্যাৎ কৰিছিল তাৰ মৰ্মস্পৰ্শী উপস্থাপনেৰে গল্পটিৰ বিষয়বস্তু আগবঢ়াই নিছে। গল্পটিৰ নিখুট চৰিত্ৰাঙ্কন সামাজিক ৰীতি-নীতিৰ লগতে জাতি ভেদৰ কু-বিচাৰত পদানত হোৱা মানৱতাৰ কলাত্মক তথা হৃদয়স্পৰ্শী বৰ্ণনাই গল্পকাৰৰ সাহিত্য প্ৰতিভাৰ স্বাক্ষৰ বহন কৰিছে।

কাহিনীভাগ :

কাহিনীৰ আৰম্ভ হয় গাঁৱৰ এগৰাকী বামুণ বয়োজ্যেষ্ঠ মহিলাৰ শ্মশান যাত্ৰাৰে। গাঁৱৰ বৃদ্ধ মুখোপাধ্যায়ৰ বৃদ্ধা পত্নীৰ বিয়োগত তেওঁৰ পুত্ৰবধু, জীয়ৰীহঁতে মৃতকৰ ভৰিত আল্টা, সেন্দূৰৰে শিৰ ৰঞ্জিত কৰি শ্মশানলৈ নিবলৈ সাজু কৰিছে। বৃদ্ধ মুখোপাধ্যায়ে ভৰিৰ ধূলা দি মৃত পত্নীৰ বাবে দুটোপাল চকুলা পেলাই বিদায় দিলে। সেই সময়তে গাঁৱৰে অভাগী নামৰ মহিলাগৰাকীয়ে ঘৰৰ বাৰীৰে বেঙেনা কেইটামান চিঙি আঁচলত বান্ধি বাটলৈ বুলি ওলাই আহিছিল। বাটত মুখোপাধ্যায়ৰ বৃদ্ধপত্নীৰ শ্মশান যাত্ৰাৰ সমস্ত কাৰ্য প্ৰত্যক্ষ কৰে আৰু যথাস্থানতে ৰৈ যায় আৰু এটা ব্যৱধানৰ পৰা চাই থাকে। পাছত শ্মশান যাত্ৰাত সকলোৰে লগত অভাগীও শ্মশান পায়গৈ আৰু ওখ টীপ এটাত উঠি বামুন পুত্ৰই মাকৰ মুখাগ্নি কৰা চাই থাকে। দুলেৰ জাতিৰ আছিল বাবেই অভাগী শ’ দেহৰ ওচৰ চপাটো নিষেধ আছিল। বামুণ পত্নীৰ মুখাগ্নিৰ পাছত চিতাৰ পৰা ওলোৱা ধোঁৱা চাই থকা অভাগীয়ে হঠাতে আৱিষ্কাৰ কৰিলে যে সেই ধোঁৱাৰ মাজতে স্বৰ্গৰ পৰা এখন ৰথ আহিছে আৰু বামুণ পত্নীক স্বৰ্গলৈ লৈ গৈছে। পুত্ৰৰ হাতৰ মুখাগ্নিয়ে বামুণ পত্নীক স্বৰ্গলৈ লৈ যোৱা ৰথ আনি দিলে বুলি সৰল মনৰ অভাগীয়ে ভাবি লয় আৰু অভাগীয়েও মৃত্যুৰ পাছত পুতেক কাঙালীৰ হাতৰ অগ্নি বাঞ্ছা কৰে। ঘটনাক্ৰমে সেইদিনাই অভাগীৰ জ্বৰ হয় আৰু নৰীয়া গাৰেই তেওঁ পুতেক কাঙালীক সেন্দূৰ, আল্টাৰ যোগাৰ কৰিবলৈ উপদেশ দিয়ে। পৰম সৌভাগ্যৱতী হোৱাৰ আশাত অভাগীয়ে আনকি পূৰ্বতে সন্তানসহ পত্নীক ত্যাগ কৰি যোৱা স্বামী ৰসিক বাঘাকো মাতি আনিবলৈ উপদেশ দিয়ে। স্বামীৰ ভৰিৰ ধূলি লৈ অভাগী স্বৰ্গলৈ যাব।

সম্পূৰ্ণ ডেৰটা দিনৰ পাছত অভাগীৰ মৃত্যু হয়। স্বামী আৰু পুত্ৰই শ’ দাহৰ বাবে বেলগছ এজোপা কটাৰ ব্যৱস্থা কৰোঁতেই জমিদাৰৰ দাৰোৱানে ৰসিকক মাৰপিট কৰে। জমিদাৰে গছ কাটিবলৈ বাধা দিলে। কাঙালীয়ে উচিত বিচাৰ বিচাৰি কাছাৰী পালেগৈ আৰু কাছাৰীৰ কৰ্মী অধৰ ৰায়ক কথাটো ক’লে। অধৰ ৰয়ে গছৰ বিনিময়ত পাঁচ টকা কাঙালীৰ পৰা বিচাৰে। কাঙালী পইচা দিবলৈ অপৰাগ। গতিকে কাঙালী এইবাৰ তাৰ পৰা গুচি আহি

বৃদ্ধ বামুণ মুখোপাধ্যায়ৰ ওচৰ পালেহি আৰু মাকৰ চিতাৰ বাবে খৰি বিচাৰিলে। কিন্তু বৃদ্ধ মুখোপাধ্যায়ে 'দুলেৰ' জাতিৰ মৃতকে অগ্নি নাপায় বুলি কাঙালীক ত্যাগ কৰিলে আৰু শ'দেহত সামান্য অগ্নি স্পৰ্শ দি মাটি ঢালি দিয়াৰ পৰামৰ্শ দিলে। কাঙালী মৰ্মাহত হ'ল। সি মৃতমাকৰ অন্ত্যোষ্ঠি ক্ৰিয়াৰ বাবে কাৰো ওচৰত হাত নাপাতি গৰুড় নদীৰ পাৰত গাঁত এটা খান্দি মৃত মাকক গুৱাই দিলে আৰু চুবুৰীৰ ৰাখালৰ মাকে আনি দিয়া খেৰৰ জুমুঠিৰ জুইৰে মাকৰ মুখাগ্নি কৰি মৃত দেহত মাটি জাপি দিলে। নতিদূৰত পৰি থকা জুমুঠিৰ পৰা কুণ্ডলী পকাই ওপৰলৈ উৰি যোৱা ধোঁৱাখিনিৰে কাঙালীয়ে চাই ব'ল।

ইয়াতেই গল্পটিৰ কাহিনীৰ পৰিসমাপ্তি ঘটিছে।

অভাগীয়ে চাৰিত্ৰিক সৌন্দৰ্য :

শৰৎ চন্দ্ৰ চট্টোপাধ্যায়ৰ 'অভাগীৰ স্বৰ্গ'ৰ কেন্দ্ৰীয় চৰিত্ৰটি হৈছে সহজ-সৰল এগৰাকী গাঁৱলীয়া মহিলা। জাতত 'দুলেৰ'। বৰ বৰ মানুহৰ দোলা কান্ধত কঢ়িয়াই নিয়া এই চাম বৃত্তিধাৰী মানহক নিম্নজাতৰ বুলি গণ্য কৰে। তেওঁলোক অস্পৃশ্য। এই জাতৰ বাবে সমাজত আছে বহু বাধা নিষেধ। সমাজৰ ধৰ্মীয় গোড়ামী আৰু জাতি বৈষম্যৰ সংকীৰ্ণতাত ললিতা অভাগীয়ে নিজৰ মন মগজুক সমাজৰ ঠেক চিন্তাৰ অনুকূলে চলাই নিব বিচাৰে যদিও বুকুৰ একোণত সাম্যবাদৰ সৰল চিন্তাৰ পোষণ কৰে আৰু এনে সৰল চিন্তাৰে অভাগীয়ে বামুণৰ বৃদ্ধ পত্নীৰ দৰে মৃত্যুৰ পাছত স্বৰ্গ প্ৰাপ্তিৰ বাঞ্ছা কৰে।

দীনতাত পাৰ কৰা অভাগীয়ে বেঙেনা চিঙি আনি বাটলৈ যোৱাৰ পথত মুখোপাধ্যায়ৰ বৃদ্ধা পত্নীৰ শ'খাত্ৰা দূৰৰ পৰাই চাই ব'ল। বামুণ পত্নীৰ সৌভাগ্য দেখি অভিভূত অভাগীয়ে পাহৰি পেলালে নিজৰ কৰ্তব্য। পাহৰি গ'ল হাটলৈ যোৱাৰ কথা—

“এই দৃশ্য দেখিয়া আৰ নাড়িতে পাৱিল

না। ৱহিল তাহাৰ হাটে যাওয়া,

ৱহিল তাহাৰ আঁচলে বেগুণ বাধা।”

(অভাগীৰ স্বৰ্গ- এক)

বামুণ পুত্ৰই মাকক মুখাগ্নি কৰা দেখি অভাগীয়ে আকুলতাৰে কৈ উঠিছিল—

“ভাগ্যমণী মা, তুমি সগ্যে

যাচ্ছে। আমাকেও আশীৰ্বাদ

করে যাও, আমিও যেন এমনি

কাঙালীৰ হাতের আগুণ টুকু পায়।”

প্ৰচলিত ধৰ্মীয় ধ্যান-ধাৰণা, বিশ্বাসে অভাগীক শিকাই পেলাইছিল যে পুত্ৰৰ হাতৰ অগ্নি পালেহে মৃত পিতৃ-মাতৃয়ে স্বৰ্গ লাভ কৰে। অভাগীৰ সৰল মনে বিশ্বাস কৰিছিল যে ঘী, তেল, ধূপ-ধূণাৰে জ্বলা চিতাৰ জুয়ে মৃতকক স্বৰ্গলৈ লৈ যায়। এনে বিশ্বাসেৰে অভাগীয়ে বামুণীৰ চিতাৰ ধোঁৱাৰ মাজতে এখন ৰথ দেখিলে আৰু

সেই বথতে বামুণ পত্নী স্বৰ্গলৈ যোৱা দেখি অভাগীয়ে পুতেক কাঙালীক বিশ্বাসেৰে কৈছে— “ছেন বাবা, বামুণ মা ওই রথে চড়ে সগ্যে যাচ্ছে।”

সৰল মনৰ অভাগীয়ে মানি লৈছে যে পৰম সৌভাগ্যৱতীয়েহে স্বামীৰ পদধূলি লাভ কৰে। সেয়ে আন এগৰাকী নাৰীক লৈ নতুনকৈ সংসাৰ কৰা ৰসিক বাঘালৈ স্বামী পৰিত্যক্ত অভাগীয়ে মনতকোনো আক্ষেপ বা অভিযোগ নাৰাখি পৰম সৌভাগ্যৱতী হোৱাৰ আশাত ৰসিক বাঘাৰ পদধূলি ল'ব বিচাৰি পুতেক কাঙালীক কৈছে—

“নিয়ে বলবি, মা শুধু একটু তোমাৰ
পায়ের ধুলো চায়।”

মাতৃৰ বুকুত অপত্য স্নেহৰ নৈ এখন নিৰবধি বৈ ৰয়। সন্তানৰ প্ৰতি অকৃপণ প্ৰেম কৰুণাময়ী মাতৃয়ে আমৃত্যু বুকুত কঢ়িয়াই ফুৰে। জীৱনৰ যিকোনো সংঘাত, সংশয়ে মাকৰ বুকুৰ পৰা সন্তানৰ কুশল কামনাৰদৰে নিৰীহ চিন্তাত যতি পেলাব নোৱাৰে। ত্যাগৰ প্ৰতিমূৰ্তি আইৰ স্নেহময়ী ৰূপ ‘অভাগীৰ স্বৰ্গ’ গল্পৰ অভাগীৰ চৰিত্ৰত, গল্পাকাৰে অতি নিখুটভাৱে সংযোগ কৰিছে। অভাগীয়ে দীনতাত কোঙা হৈ পৰিলেও হাৰ মনা নাই। সন্তানৰ পেটৰ ভোক নিবাৰণৰ বাবেই অভাগীয়ে ঘৰৰ বেঙেনা চিঙিছে, হাটলৈ বেচিবলৈ নিছে। ঘৰৰ অৱশিষ্ট চাউলখিনি ৰান্ধিব নিজে নাখায় পুতেক কাঙালীৰ মুখত তুলি দি কৈছে—

“বেলা গাড়িয়ে গেছে বাবা
এখন আৰ ক্ষিদে নেই।”

অভাগীয়ে জীৱনত বহু মানসিক যাতনাৰ সন্মুখীন হৈছিল। আৰ্থিক অনাতন, স্বামীৰ প্ৰতাৰণাই এগৰাকী সৰল মনৰ নাৰীৰ জীৱন দুৰ্বিসহ কৰি তুলিছিল। সেই জটিল সময়তো অভাগীয়ে সততা নেৰিলে। স্বামীয়ে এৰি যোৱাৰ পাছতো বহু পুৰুষে তাইৰ কাষ চাপিব বিচাৰিছিল। তাইৰ আৰ্থিক অনাতনৰ সুযোগ ল'ব বিচাৰিছিল। নিসংগতাৰ সুযোগ ল'বলৈ বিবাহৰো প্ৰস্তাৱ দিছিল। অভাগীয়ে কিন্তু সেই প্ৰস্তাৱ একে আধাৰে প্ৰত্যাখান কৰিছিল। দীনতা, সংগীহীনতাৰ মানসিক কষ্টৰ মাজতো যেন অভাগীয়ে ভৰিৰ দুপতা মাটিতে সততাৰে থিয় হৈ ৰৈছিল। পুনৰ বিবাহৰ প্ৰস্তাৱ নাকচ কৰি অভাগীয়ে সেয়েহে দৃঢ়তাৰে ক'লে— “কাঙালী বাঁচলে আমাৰ দুঃখুঃ ঘুচবে; আবাব নিকে করতে যাব কিসেৰ জন্যে।”

‘অভাগীৰ স্বৰ্গ’ গল্পত বিংশ শতিকাৰ বংগীয় গ্ৰামীণ সমাজত প্ৰচলিত অন্ধবিশ্বাস, কু-সংস্কাৰ, জাতি বৈষম্যৰ কু-প্ৰভাৱত বিনষ্ট সমাজ ব্যৱস্থা, অৱনমিত মানৱীয় মূল্যবোধৰ দৰে দুঃসময়ৰ ছবি অংকিত হৈছে।

‘দুলেৰ’ জাতিৰ আছিল বাবেই অভাগীহঁত আছিল ‘অচ্যুত’। সমাজৰ উচ্চ বৰ্ণৰ মানুহৰ দৰে জীয়াই থকাৰ অধিকাৰতো নাছিলেই, আনকি মৃত্যুৰ পাছতো চিতাশ্মি পোৱাৰ অধিকাৰ নিম্নজাতৰ মানুহৰ নাছিল। সেয়ে অভাগীৰ মৃত্যুৰ পাছত চিতাৰ খৰি বিচাৰি মুখোপাধ্যায়ৰ ওচৰলৈ যোৱা কাঙালী আৰু ৰসিক বাঘাক বামুণ মুখোপাধ্যায় নিষ্ঠুৰভাৱে ক'লে—

“তোদেৰ জাতে কে কৰে আবাব পোড়ায় রে? যা, মখে একট ঘড়ো জ্বলে দিয়ে নদীৰ চাড়ায় মাটি দে গে।”

আনকি মুখোপাধ্যায়ৰ বৰ পুত্ৰই আকৌ তীব্ৰ কটাক্ষ কৰি ক'লে—

“দেখচেন ভট্টাচাৰ্য মশায়, সব ব্যাটাৱাই এখন বামুণ কায়েত হতে চায়।”

নিম্ন জাতিৰ মৃতকে চিতাৰ জুই পোৱাত যেন বামুণ, কায়স্থৰহে একমাত্ৰ অধিকাৰ আছে। অভাগীৰ দৰে ‘দুলেৰ’ জাতিৰ মৃতকৰ বাবে চিতাৰ জুই বিচৰাতো পৰিহাসমূলক।

অভাগীৰ সৰল মনে কিন্তু সমাজৰ এই বিভেদকামী চিন্তাৰ বিপৰীতে সাম্যবাদী চিন্তাক মনতে পোষণ কৰে। সেয়েহে অভাগীয়ে বিশ্বাস ৰাখে যে গিৰিয়েকৰ পদধূলি আৰু পুত্ৰৰ হাতৰ অগ্নিয়ে যদি বামুণ পত্নীৰ বাবে স্বৰ্গৰ ৰথ আনিব পাৰে, তেনেহ'লে অভাগীৰ বাবেও স্বৰ্গৰ ৰথ আহিব। ৰসিক বাঘাৰ পদধূলি আৰু কাঙালীৰ হাতৰ মুখাগ্নিয়ে অভাগীৰ বাবে স্বৰ্গ ৰথ নিশ্চয় আনিব আৰু সেই ৰথে অভাগীক স্বৰ্গলৈ লৈ যাব। তেতিয়া নীচ জাতি বুলি আৰু তাইক কোনেও ঘীণ কৰিব নোৱাৰিব। দীনহীন বুলি আৰু কোনেও ঠেক গপ্তীৰ মাজত আৱদ্ধ কৰিব নোৱাৰিব—

“ছোট জাত বলে তখন কেউ ঘেন্না করতে পারবে না, দুঃখী বলে কেউ ঠেকিয়া রাখতে পারবে না।”

গল্পকাৰ শৰৎ চন্দ্ৰই অতি নিখুঁটভাৱে অভাগীৰ চৰিত্ৰটো সৰলতা, বিনম্ৰতা আদি গুণেৰে সমৃদ্ধ কৰিছে, যাৰ বাবে গল্পটোত অভাগী হৈ পৰিছে সততা তথা সুন্দৰতাৰ প্ৰতিমা। গল্পকাৰে অভাগীৰ মহানতাক কাঙালীহঁতৰ চুবুৰীৰ এগৰাকী মহিলাৰ মুখেৰে ব্যক্ত কৰি কৈছে “এমন সতী লক্ষ্মী বামুণ কায়েতের ঘরে না জন্মে; আমাদের দুলের ঘৰে জন্মালো কেন?”

অভাগীয়ে জন্মৰ পৰা মৃত্যুলৈকে সমাজৰ পৰা পাই আহিছিল সীমাহীন মানসিক জাতনা। জীৱিত কালত আৰ্থিক দীনতাত বিপন্ন অভাগীৰ জীৱনে মৃত্যুৰ পাছতো নাপালে সামান্যতম মানৱীয় সহানুভূতি। তথাকথিত উচ্চ বৰ্ণজাত মানুহে শোষণৰ নিকৃষ্ট চিন্তাৰে মাৰি দিয়া অস্পৃশ্যতাৰ মোহৰ আঁতৰাই অভাগীয়ে বামুণ পত্নীৰ দৰে মৃত্যুৰ উপৰান্তত বিচাৰিছিল সম মৰ্যাদা। মুখোপাধ্যায়ৰ বৃদ্ধ পত্নীৰ দৰে স্বৰ্গলাভৰ আকাংক্ষাৰে শেষ নিশ্বাস ত্যাগ কৰিছিল। সংকীৰ্ণ সমাজ ব্যৱস্থাই অভাগীৰ সেই ইচ্ছা পূৰণ হ'বলৈ নিদিলে। দুখীয়া, অস্পৃশ্য অভাগী অস্পৃশ্যৰ মোহৰ লৈয়ে চিতাৰ জুইৰ পৰা বঞ্চিত হ'ল। মাটিত পুতি থোৱা হ'ল অভাগীৰ মৃতদেহ।

বিংশ শতিকাৰ সামাজিক গোড়ামীয়ে সৃষ্টি কৰা অৱনমিত মানৱীয় মূল্যবোধৰ লগতে সমাজৰ সংকীৰ্ণতাত বিনষ্ট নিম্ন শ্ৰেণী মানুহৰ দুৰ্বিসহ জীৱনৰ মৰ্মস্পৰ্শী প্ৰকাশেই হৈছে শৰৎচন্দ্ৰ চট্টোপাধ্যায়ৰ “অভাগীৰ স্বৰ্গ”।

অসমীয়া সাহিত্য জগতৰ মহীয়সী নাৰী মামণি ৰয়চম গোস্বামীৰ জীৱন আৰু সাহিত্য কৃতি

শ্ৰী ড° পৰিণীতা শইকীয়া বৰা

সহকাৰী অধ্যাপক

অসমীয়া বিভাগ, নাৰেংগী আঞ্চলিক মহাবিদ্যালয়

সংক্ষিপ্ত সাৰ :

মামণি ৰয়চম গোস্বামী অসমীয়া প্ৰায় সকলো লোকৰ বাবে ই এক চিনাকী নাম। তেওঁৰ কৰ্ম তথা তেওঁৰ কথা লগতে তেওঁৰ ব্যতিক্ৰমধৰ্মী লিখনিয়ে অসমীয়া সাহিত্যত তেওঁক উচ্চস্থান দিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে। ১৯৪২ চনৰ ১৪ নৱেম্বৰ দিনটোত জন্মগ্ৰহণ কৰা এইগৰাকী সাহিত্যিক, কবি, লিখক মৃত্যুৰ পিছতো প্ৰত্যেকজন অসমীয়াৰ বুকুতেই জীয়াই আছে। তেওঁৰ লিখনিয়ে সমাজত এক নতুন ধাৰাৰ সৃষ্টি কৰিছিল।

জন মিল্টনে কৈছে- “এখন মহৎ গ্ৰন্থ হ’ল এক মহৎ আত্মাৰ জীৱনৰক্ত স্বৰূপ। জন্মৰ পৰা জন্মান্তৰলৈ অধ্যয়ন যোগ্য।” মাৰ্কিন চিন্তক হেনৰী ডেভিড থৰোৰ দৃষ্টিত “গ্ৰন্থ হ’ল পৃথিৱীৰ সঞ্চিত সম্পদ, জাতি আৰু চামে চামে মানুহৰ উত্তৰাধিকাৰ সূত্ৰে লাভ কৰা অক্ষয় সম্পত্তি।” প্ৰতিখন মহৎ গ্ৰন্থতে নিহিত হৈ থাকে একো একোগৰাকী মহান আত্মাৰ জীৱন অস্তিত্ব। এখন গ্ৰন্থ পঢ়োতে আমি সেই পণ্ডিতজনৰ লগত অন্তৰংগ কথোপকথনত লিপ্ত হওঁ। তেওঁৰ লগত বিনিময় কৰোঁ হৃদয়। তেওঁৰ বিশাল অভিজ্ঞতা অনুভৱেৰে উৰ্বৰা কৰি তুলিব পাৰোঁ আমাৰ জীৱন।

আমাৰ এই আলোচনা পত্ৰত তেনে এক মহীয়সী নাৰীৰ জীৱন গাথাৰ বিষয়ে আলোকপাত আগবঢ়াবলৈ যত্ন কৰা হৈছে।

বিষয়বস্তুৰ উদ্দেশ্য আৰু পদ্ধতি :

আমাৰ এই ক্ষুদ্ৰ আলোচনা পত্ৰৰ জৰিয়তে আলোচনা কৰিবলৈ লোৱা বিষয়টোৰ যথেষ্ট গুৰুত্ব আছে। অসমীয়া সাহিত্য জগতলৈ মামণি ৰয়চম গোস্বামীৰ অৱদান অতুলনীয়। সেয়েহে এই কথাৰ গুৰুত্ব উপলব্ধি কৰিয়েই আমাৰ আলোচনা আগবঢ়োৱা হৈছে। এইগৰাকী মহীয়সী নাৰীৰ ব্যক্তিত্ব ইমান বিশাল তথা ইমান বিশালওখা তেওঁৰ লিখনি যে ব্যতিক্ৰমী এই কথা আলোচনা কৰাই আমাৰ গৱেষণা পত্ৰৰ লক্ষ্য আৰু উদ্দেশ্য।

পদ্ধতি :

এই ক্ষুদ্র গৱেষণা পত্ৰখন প্ৰস্তুত কৰোঁতে মূলতে বিশ্লেষণাত্মক পদ্ধতিকে অনুসৰণ কৰা হৈছে। এইক্ষেত্ৰত এই বিষয়টোৰ লগত জড়িত গ্ৰন্থ, আলোচনী আদিৰ পৰা প্ৰয়োজনবোধে সমল সংগ্ৰহ কৰা হৈছে।

বিষয়বস্তুৰ উপস্থাপন :

মামণি ৰয়চম গোস্বামী সাম্প্ৰতিক অসমীয়া সাহিত্য জগতৰ এগৰাকী স্বনাম প্ৰসিদ্ধ লেখিকা। প্ৰথিতযশা গল্পকাৰ, প্ৰখ্যাত ঔপন্যাসিক। ৰামায়ণ সাহিত্যৰ বিশিষ্ট গৱেষক। এগৰাকী গুণময়ী অধ্যাপিকা সৰ্বোপৰি সমুজ্জ্বল ব্যক্তিত্বৰে এগৰাকী মহয়সী নাৰী। এগৰাকী সত্য বক্তা। এগৰাকী মহান প্ৰকৃতি প্ৰেমী। এগৰাকী মানৱদৰ্দী চিন্তক। এগৰাকী সনাতন প্ৰেমিক। জীৱনৰ প্ৰভাত কালৰ পৰাই ঐকান্তিকভাৱে শব্দৰ সাধনাত ব্ৰতী মামণি ৰয়চম গোস্বামী অসমীয়া সাহিত্যৰ এটি বিস্ময়কৰ সত্তা। অফুৰন্ত সাধনাৰ আধাৰ এটি অপ্ৰতীম প্ৰতিভা। প্ৰাতঃ স্মৰণীয় ড° বীৰেন্দ্ৰ কুমাৰ ভট্টাচাৰ্যদেৱৰ পৰৱৰ্তী কালত এইগৰাকী মহান লেখিকালৈ আগবঢ়োৱা হৈছে ২০০০ বৰ্ষৰ ‘জ্ঞানপীঠ বঁটা’। উল্লেখনীয় যে ‘মৃত্যুঞ্জয়’ৰ পাছত অসমীয়া সাহিত্যৰ সুদীৰ্ঘ একুৰি দুবছৰৰ অন্তত এই সন্মানীয় বঁটাৰে স্বীকৃত মামণি ৰয়চম গোস্বামী দ্বিতীয়গৰাকী বৰেণ্য অসমীয়া। ড° মামণি ৰয়চম গোস্বামীৰ এই সুকীৰ্ত্তিয়ে সমগ্ৰ অসমবাসীক আনন্দত অধীৰ কৰি তুলিলে। সুদীৰ্ঘ কাল অসমীয়া সাহিত্য সৃষ্টিৰ জৰিয়তে সমগ্ৰ ভাৰতীয় সাহিত্যকে প্ৰকৃতভাৱে সমৃদ্ধ কৰা মামণি ৰয়চমৰ সাহিত্যৰ প্ৰতিভাক জ্ঞানপীঠে উচিত মূল্যায়ন কৰিলে। অসমীয়া সাহিত্যই আকৌ এবাৰ ৰাজমুকুট পিন্ধিলে মামণি ৰয়চম গোস্বামীৰ ৰূপত।

মহত্বৰ সাধনা আৰু কৰ্মৰ দ্বাৰা এক বিশাল অনুষ্ঠান স্বৰূপ হৈ পৰা মানৱদৰ্দী এই মহীয়সী নাৰীগৰাকীৰে জন্ম হৈছিল ১৯৪২ চনত গুৱাহাটীত। তেওঁৰ পিতৃ উমাকান্ত গোস্বামী আছিল সেই সময়ৰ অসমীয়া সমাজৰ এগৰাকী সিংহপুৰুষ। এক উল্লেখযোগ্য সন্ধিক্ষণত এক ৰক্ষণশীল পৰিয়ালত জন্মলাভ কৰি ১৯৫৭ চনত গুৱাহাটীৰ তাৰিণীচৰণ চৌধুৰী উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক বালিকা বিদ্যালয়তে আৰম্ভ কৰা শিক্ষা জীৱনকালতেই মামণি ৰয়ছমে হাতত কলম তুলি লৈছিল, সেই দিনধৰি নিৰৱচ্ছিন্নভাৱে নদীময় গতিৰে সৃষ্টি কৰি গৈছিল লাঞ্চিত, বঞ্চিত, শোষিত, অৱহেলিতময় কৰুণতম গাথা। অসমীয়া সাহিত্যজগতৰ পুৰোধা ব্যক্তি তথা গৰীয়সী আলোচনীৰ সম্পাদক চন্দ্ৰ প্ৰসাদ শইকীয়াৰ দৃষ্টিত “সমাজৰ বিশেষকৈ বঞ্চিত শ্ৰেণীৰ জীৱন কাহিনী ৰূপায়ণত মামণি তুলনাবিহীন।”

মামণি ৰয়ছম গোস্বামীৰ প্ৰকৃত নাম আছিল ইন্দিৰা গোস্বামী। তেখেতে মাতৃভাষাৰ উপৰিও ইংৰাজী ভাষাতো সাহিত্য সৃষ্টি কৰিছিল। ৰামায়ণী সাহিত্যৰ গৱেষক হিচাপে মাধৱকন্দলিৰ ৰামায়ণৰ গৱেষণাত ডক্টৰেট ডিগ্ৰী লাভ কৰা ড° মামণি ৰয়ছম গোস্বামীয়ে দিল্লী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ৰ আধুনিক ভাৰতীয় ভাষা বিভাগত অধ্যাপকস্বৰূপে অৱসৰ গ্ৰহণ কৰিছিল।

মামণি ৰয়ছম গোস্বামীৰ পিতৃ উমাকান্ত গোস্বামী এসময়ত কটন কলেজত অধ্যক্ষ থকাৰ উপৰিও পিছলৈ অসমৰ প্ৰথম শিক্ষাধিকাৰ হৈছিল। মামণি ৰয়ছমৰ সৰু কালছোৱা আমৰাঙা সত্ৰত অতিবাহিত হৈছিল। তেখেতৰ

খুৰায়েক চন্দ্ৰকান্ত গোস্বামী সত্ৰৰ সত্ৰাধিকাৰ আছিল। মামণি ৰয়ছমে গুৱাহাটী বালিকা সন্দিকৈ মহাবিদ্যালয়ৰ পৰা আই. এছ. পাচ কৰে। ১৯৬০ চনত অসমীয়া ভাষা মেজৰ হিচাপে কটন কলেজৰ পৰা স্নাতক ডিগ্ৰী লাভ কৰে, তাৰ পিছত ১৯৬৩ চনত তেওঁ গুৱাহাটী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ৰ অসমীয়া বিভাগৰ পৰা স্নাতকোত্তৰ ডিগ্ৰী অৰ্জন কৰে।

হিন্দুস্তান কনষ্ট্ৰাকশ্যন কোম্পানীৰ অভিযন্তা আৰু ব্ৰহ্মপুত্ৰত শৰাইঘাট দলং নিৰ্মাণত আগভাগ লোৱা মাধবেন ৰয়ছম আয়েংগাৰৰ লগত ১৯৬৫ চনত মামণি ৰয়ছমৰ বিবাহ হয়। তাৰ পিছত স্বামীৰ কৰ্মক্ষেত্ৰ কাশ্মীৰলৈ দুয়ো গুছি যায়। পিছে বিবাহৰ ১৮ মাহৰ পিছতেই এক পথ দুৰ্ঘটনাত মাধবেনৰ অকাল মৃত্যু হয়। এই ঘটনাই মামণি ৰয়ছমৰ জীৱন আৰু সাহিত্যত সুদূৰপ্ৰসাৰী প্ৰভাৱ পেলায়।

মামণি ৰয়চম গোস্বামীৰ সাহিত্যকৃতি সম্পৰ্কে তলত আলোচনা কৰা হ'ল —

সাহিত্য সম্ভাৰ :

উপন্যাস	চুটিগল্প	অনুবাদ
১। চেনাবৰ স্ৰোত (১৯৭২)	১। চিনাকী মৰম (১৯৬২)	১। প্ৰেমচান্দৰ চুটিগল্প (১৯৭৫)
২। নীলকণ্ঠী ব্ৰজ (১৯৭৬)	২। কইনা (১৯৬৬)	২। আধাঘণ্টা সময় (১৯৭৮)
৩। আহিৰণ (১৯৮০)	৩। হৃদয় এক নদীৰ নাম (১৯৯০)	৩। জাতক কথা (১৯৯৬)
৪। মামৰে ধৰা তৰোৱাল (১৯৮০)	৪। মামণি ৰয়ছমৰ নিৰ্বাচিত গল্প (১৯৬২)	৪। কলম (১৯৯৬)
৫। দতাল হাতীৰ উঁয়ে খোৱা হাওদা (১৯৮৮)	৫। মামণি ৰয়ছম গোস্বামীৰ প্ৰিয় গল্প (১৯৯৮)	৫। আত্মিক (২০০০)
৬। সংস্কাৰ উদয় ভানুৰ চৰিত্ৰ ইত্যাদি (১৯৮৯)		
৭। ইশ্বৰী জখনী যাত্ৰী ইত্যাদি (১৯৯১)		
৮। তেজ আৰু ধূলিৰ ধূসৰিত পৃষ্ঠা (১৯৯৪)		
৯। মামণি ৰয়ছম গোস্বামীৰ উপন্যাস সমগ্ৰ (১৯৯৮)		
১০। দশৰথীৰ খোজ (১৯৯৯)		
১১। ছিন্ন মস্তাৰ মানুহটো (২০০১)		
১২। খেংফ্ৰাথ্ৰী তহচিলদাৰৰ তামৰ তৰোৱাল (২০০৬)		

আত্মজীৱনী	জীৱনী	ইংৰাজী
১। আত্মলেখা দস্তাবেজ (১৯৮৮)	১। মহীয়সী কমলা (১৯৯৫)	১। Ramayana from Ganga to Brahma Puttra (১৯৯৬)
২। দস্তাবেজৰ নতুন পৃষ্ঠা (২০০৭)	২। 'মা' (২০০৮)	

এই বিশাল সাহিত্য সম্ভাৰে মামণি ৰয়ছম গোস্বামীয়ে। অসমীয়া সাহিত্যৰ ভঁৰাল চহকী কৰিছে এই
গ্ৰন্থসম্ভাৰৰ বাবে তেখেতে দেশ বিদেশত সন্মানীয় স্বীকৃতিও লাভ কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে।

স্বীকৃতিপ্ৰাপ্ত বঁটা আৰু সন্মান :

- ১। ১৯৮২ সাহিত্য অকাডেমী বঁটা। মামৰে ধৰা তৰোৱাল উপন্যাসৰ বাবে।
- ২। ১৯৮৮ অসম সাহিত্য সভা বঁটা।
- ৩। ১৯৮৯ ভাৰত নিৰ্মাণ বঁটা।
- ৪। ১৯৯২ উত্তৰ প্ৰদেশী হিন্দী সংস্থানৰ সৌহাদ্য বঁটা।
- ৫। ১৯৯৩ কথা ৰাষ্ট্ৰীয় সাহিত্যিক বঁটা।
- ৬। ১৯৯৬ কমল কুমাৰী ৰাষ্ট্ৰীয় বঁটা।
- ৭। ২০০০ জ্ঞানপীঠ বঁটা।
- ৮। ২০০২ পশ্চিমবংগৰ ৰবীন্দ্ৰ ভাৰতী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ৰ ডি. লিট সন্মান।
- ৯। ২০০২ মহীয়সী জয়মতী বঁটা।
- ১০। ২০০২ পদ্মশ্ৰী বঁটা (ল'বলৈ অস্বীকাৰ কৰে)
- ১১। ২০০৭ ৰাজীৱ গান্ধী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, অৰুণাচল প্ৰদেশৰ দ্বাৰা ডি. লিট সন্মান।
- ১২। ২০০৮ ইন্দিৰা গান্ধী ৰাষ্ট্ৰীয় মুক্ত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ৰ দ্বাৰা ডি. লিট সন্মান।
- ১৩। ২০০৮ এছিয়াটিক চচাইটিৰ ইশ্বৰচন্দ্ৰ বিদ্যাসাগৰ বঁটা।
- ১৪। ২০০৮ প্ৰিন্স ক্লুছ বঁটা।
- ১৫। ২০০৯ অসম সাহিত্য সভাৰ কৃষ্ণকান্ত সন্দিকৈ বঁটা।
- ১৬। ২০০৯ দিল্লী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ৰ Professor Emerltus সন্মান।
- ১৭। Ramayana From Ganga to Brahmaputra গ্ৰন্থৰ বাবে Florida International University-
ৰ আন্তৰ্জাতিক তুলসী বঁটা।
- ১৮। ২০১৩ মৰণোত্তৰভাৱে অসমৰত্ন বঁটা।

মুখ্যাৰ্থত মামণি ৰয়ছম গোস্বামীৰ সাহিত্যমানেই সমাজৰ নিষ্পেষিত, শোষিত, অৱদমিত, বঞ্চিত,
অৱহেলিত জীৱনৰ জীৱন্ত দলিল। বাস্তৱ সমাজৰ পৰিচিত, অপৰিচিত, বিপন্ন, বিভ্ৰান্ত, বিদ্রোহী, চৰিত্ৰৰ নিত্য
বিশ্লেষণ। তদুপৰি বিশাল অভিজ্ঞতাৰ প্ৰতি তীব্ৰ পিয়াহ আৰু জীৱন সম্পৰ্কে অন্তহীন জিজ্ঞাসাও তেওঁৰ ৰচনাৰ
অন্যতম প্ৰতিপ্ৰাদ্য।

সমাজৰ প্ৰচলিত মানবীয় প্ৰমূল্য বিদ্বিত কৰিব বিচৰা অসামাজিক কাৰ্যকলাপৰ বিৰুদ্ধে তেওঁৰ বলিষ্ঠ
মানৱতাবাদী মুকলি দৃষ্টিভংগীয়ে পাঠকক প্ৰভুতভাৱে মুগ্ধ কৰে আৰু উদ্বেলিত কৰে। স্মৰণাতীত কালৰে পৰা

সকলো চুটি আৰু দীঘল মৌলিক ৰচনাতে তেওঁক এক প্ৰতিবাদ সাব্যস্ত কৰি আহিছে, মানৱতাক আঘাত হনা যিকোনো পদক্ষেপৰে, যিটো অৱশ্যেই কলাসুলভ আৰু নিষ্পেষিত শ্ৰেণী দুটাই লেখিকাৰ গভীৰ অনুকম্পা লাভ কৰিছে। উত্তৰ পূব আৰু সমগ্ৰ দেশৰে এক প্ৰথিতযশা ঔপন্যাসিক হিচাপে প্ৰতিষ্ঠিত মামণি ৰয়ছম গোস্বামীৰ উপন্যাসসমূহৰ কেতবোৰ বৈশিষ্ট্য উল্লেখযোগ্য যেনে—

- (ক) অসমীয়া উপন্যাস সাহিত্য জগতত মামণি ৰয়ছম গোস্বামীয়েই একমাত্ৰ লেখিকা। যি উপন্যাসৰ বিষয়বস্তু আৰু পটভূমি অসমৰ চাৰিসীমাৰ পৰা বাহিৰলৈ নি বাৰানশী, কাশ্মীৰৰ দুৰ্গম অঞ্চল, মধ্যপ্ৰদেশ আদি কৰি ভাৰতৰ সীমা অতিক্ৰমিও সুদূৰ জাপান, মৰিছাছ, নেপাল আদি পটভূমিক সাঙুৰি লৈছে।
- (খ) আধুনিক অসমীয়া সাহিত্যত বাস্তববাদী চিন্তা চেতনা প্ৰকাশৰ ধাৰা বৰ দুৰ্বল নহয়। যদিও মামণি ৰয়ছম গোস্বামীয়ে দুৰ্দমনীয় সাহস আৰু নিৰ্ভীকতাৰে বাস্তব আৰু সাহিত্যৰ সাঁকো নিৰ্মাণত যি অগ্ৰণী ভূমিকা দেখুৱালে সি অতিক্ৰম কৰিব নোৱাৰা।
- (গ) বিশাল জীৱন আৰু জীৱনৰ বিচিত্ৰ অভিজ্ঞতা নিৰ্ভীকতা আৰু দুৰ্দমনীয় সাহসিকতাৰে উন্মোচিত আৰু নিৰ্মোহ বিশ্লেষণ কৰাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰতো হোমেন বৰগোহাঞিদ্ৰেৰ পাছত মামণি ৰয়ছম গোস্বামী দ্বিতীয় গৰাকী সাহিত্য সেৱক। তেওঁৰ ৰচনা সম্ভাৰৰ পাতে পাতে এই নিৰ্ভীকতা সদা বিদ্যমান।
- (ঘ) আধুনিক অসমীয়া সাহিত্য জগতত ৰূপকোঁৱৰৰ জ্যোতি প্ৰসাদ আগৰৱালাদেৱৰ পৰৱৰ্তী কালত মামণি ৰয়ছম গোস্বামীয়েই একমাত্ৰ সাহিত্যিক যাৰ কলমত নিগৰিত হৈছে ঐশ্বৰ্য্যশীল অসমীয়া স্বৰ্ণময় শব্দ প্ৰপাতৰ নদীময় স্ৰোত।

সামৰণি :

মামণি ৰয়ছম গোস্বামীৰ সাহিত্যৰাজিৰ আঙ্গিক সৰ্বসাধাৰণৰ গতানুগতিকতাৰ উৰ্ধত আৰু তথাপি জ্ঞাতভাৱে সেয়া কোনো আদৰ্শৰ অনুগামী নহয়। বিষয়বস্তু আৰু আংগিকৰ আদৰ্শনীয় সুসমন্বয় আৰু এক জনজীৱনৰ আনুভূমিক ভাষাই এইগৰাকী লেখিকাক উত্তৰ পূব আৰু সমগ্ৰ দেশতে এক প্ৰথিত যশা ঔপন্যাসিক হিচাপে প্ৰতিষ্ঠিত কৰিছে।

মুখ্যত ঔপন্যাসিক হিচাপেহে বেছিকৈ জনপ্ৰিয় এইগৰাকী প্ৰতিভাৱান লেখিকাই মাতৃভাষা অসমীয়াৰ উপৰিও ইংৰাজী ভাষাতো অনেক নান্দনিক আৰু গৱেষণামূলক সৃষ্টিৰে সাহিত্যৰ লগতে শৈক্ষিক আৰু সামাজিক ক্ষেত্ৰতো অৰিহণা আগবঢ়াই গৈছে। তেখেতৰ সাহিত্যকৰ্মসমূহে সাধাৰণ মানুহৰ বাস্তৱ জীৱনৰ কঠোৰ সত্য প্ৰতীয়মান কৰিলেও তেখেতৰ প্ৰকাশভংগী অত্যন্ত সংবেদনশীল।

জীৱনৰ প্ৰত্যেককালৰেপৰা জীৱনৰ বিয়লি বেলালৈকে সাহিত্যকৰ্মত বৰ্তি থকা এই মহান মহীয়সী নাৰীয়ে ২০১১ চনৰ ২৯ নবেম্বৰ তাৰিখে ইহলীলা সম্বৰণ কৰে। তেখেতৰ জীৱন পৰিক্ৰমা আৰু সাহিত্যৰাজিয়ে অসম

তথা সমগ্ৰ ভাৰতবৰ্ষৰ সাহিত্য জগতত এক সুকীয়া স্থান দখল কৰি গ'ল। সেয়েহে সাহিত্য জগতত এই মহীয়সী নাৰী গৰাকী সদায় চিৰস্মৰণীয় হৈ ৰ'ব।

সহায়ক গ্ৰন্থপঞ্জী :

- ১। ঠাকুৰ, নগেন : এশবছৰৰ অসমীয়া উপন্যাস জ্যোতি প্ৰকাশন, পাণবজাৰ, ২০১২ চন।
- ২। দাস শোণিত বিজয়
বায়ন মুনীন, সম্পা : কথাবৰেণ্য, ১০০, কথা প্ৰকাশন, পাণবজাৰ, গুৱাহাটী ২০০৬ চন।

