

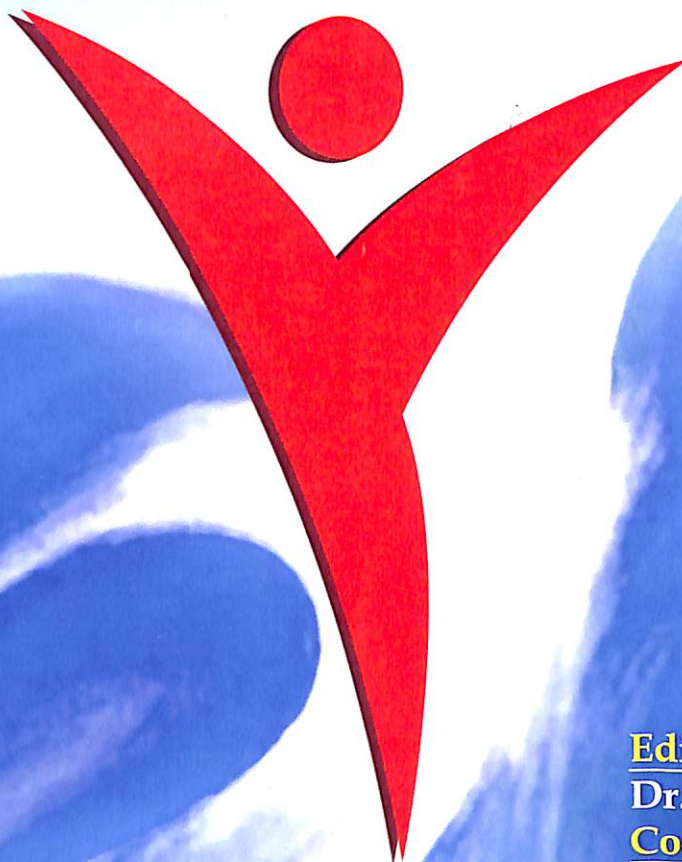
No-3, 2016-17



# शक्ति

*The Strength*

ISSN 2395-5007



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Dr. Karabi Goswami

**Co-Editors**

Gitika Sarma

Sumitra D' Chetty

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



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Womens' Studies and Research Centre**



**Narangi Anchalik Mahavidyalaya**  
Narangi, Guwahati-781 171

**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

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Price : 150/- Only

**Printed at : BNit Book Builders**  
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## **EDITOR'S NOTE**

Women are regarded as the symbol of Strength. The strength and progress of a society depends on its basic elements, i.e., man and woman, therefore the certainty in the progress of a society lies in giving equal status to both the elements without any exception.

"Shakti , The Strenght" an women related research journal, published by Narangi Anchalik Mahavidyalaya Women Cell, is a humble attempt to create awareness and research on women related issues.. The journal got its ISSN on its maiden issue and we are proud to present its third edition. The current issue contains twelve papers on different issues related to women. The papers are diverse in nature containing different problems and prospects of women of different tribes, women empowerment, education, sociological and economic issues etc. We hope our journal contributes towards research work and grows stronger in years to come.

Here, on behalf of the editorial board, I would like to acknowledge all the contributors for their valuable contributions. I would also like to offer our heartfelt thanks to the principal (i/c) of our college, Reeta Dutta Hazorika for her moral support and all the members of woman cell, for their constant support and appreciation.

**Dr. Karabi Goswami**  
Department of Philosophy  
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# Empowering Women through Aqua weaves in Darrang District of Assam

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## **Abstract :**

Aqua Weaves is a brand name for the products made from water hyacinth (pani meteka). This is an innovative and eco-friendly handicraft developed by North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd (NEDFi). This handicraft industry has helped to improve the socio-economic status of many rural poor. Many poor women are now enjoying a modest living by making a wide variety of eco - friendly products out of dried stems of water hyacinth and thus contributing to a major share of their family income.

It is in this background this paper makes an attempt to study the importance of aqua weaves in empowering the poor women in the rural areas. of Assam. The paper has selected 'Sipajhar' area of Darrang district in Assam as the study region for analytical purposes. Although empowering of women means many things such as economic independency, mobility, household decision making, public speaking, awareness, exercise of rights, public participation etc, this study takes into account the socio-economic empowerment of women. The paper also tries to study the future prospects of aqua weaves industry in empowering the women in the region. The study is based on both primary and secondary data.

[Key words : Empower, Rural, Water hyacinth, , women.]

## **Introduction :**

Aqua Weaves is a brand name for the products made from water hyacinth (pani meteka).

Water hyacinth is a plant which are grown in water. This plant is available in abundant quantities in any water bodies like ponds, lakes, any type of wet land. It was taken as menace. But presently the plant has been an important raw material for making many types of household and decorative items such as bags, purses, mats,

dustbins, caps, flower pots, jewellery box, pen stands, furniture and many other things..The plant Pani meteka has no value in water but once it is placed and procured, every part of it can be used for making and this create a viable value addition.

In the year 2008, North Eastern Development Finance corporation Ltd (NEDFi) has taken the initiative to popularize the the use of water hyacinth for making handicraft products.. NEDFi's initiative was supported by NEC. Water hyacinth based products are eco friendly, so it has been accepted by people of all parts of the world.

This innovative craft developed by NEDFi has helped to improve the socio-economic status of rural poor, enabling them to make eco-friendly products and thus providing. self employment to a number of rural women of different tribes and communities throughout Assam and Northeast to augment their income.

It is in this background this paper makes an attempt to study the role of aqua weaving in empowering rural women amongst the low income groups in Sipajhar area of Darrang district of Assam..

Women empowerment is a much debated and very sensitive topic in the modern world. It means a process by which women are made economically independent, socially mobile, confident and allow them to take part in all types of decision making both in the family and society. They become aware of their rights and meet their challenges in life. This can be done by securing greater access to resource, command over knowledge and bringing about a significant ideological shift which result in changes in women's self image and how they are perceived in relation to the community. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) focuses on gender equality and women's empowerment not only as human rights, but also a pathway to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development.

In India women are the vulnerable and poorest members of the low income societies. They are shackled by tradition, customs, superstitions, orthodoxy and conservatism. They are still dominated by their husbands and other male relatives of their family. Even many of the educated and earning women cannot participate in decision making and are deprived of financial autonomy.

Therefore it has been strongly realized that such gender disparity should be removed for inclusive and sustainable growth. of the country..

Devi (2013), in a study ' Women Status in Assam' mentioned that there is need to create socio political consciousness among women in order to bring changes in their traditional life style.

### **Significance of study :**

Assam is known for its exquisite silk, bamboo, cane and other types of handicraft products. But recently due to irregular supply of cane and high cost of procurement of bamboo have been a major cause of concern for the artisans associated with this crafts. This has led to the identification of alternative low cost raw materials where the existing

skill and craftsmanship can be used suitable for the contemporary markets. This has led to the introduction of water hyacinth as a substitute of cane and bamboo. By using the dried stems of water hyacinth same type of furniture and other household and utility products can be produced. Further this aqua weaves industry is important from the point of view of economy as it requires low capital investment, gives high value addition, produces eco friendly products, provides employment in the rural areas particularly the women folk and leading to sustainable livelihood and inclusive growth., and also has high export potentiality. As availability of such a cost effective alternative helps the traditional craftsman to be more effective where the existing skills can be integrated to reap the benefits of the modern market, such an industry should be used as an alternative source of livelihood for the rural population..At present some artisans of Darrang, Nalbari, Dhubri and Nagaon districts are doing this work successfully giving employment to a large number of rural women and thus playing an important role in improving their socio-economic status. As the whole benefit from this go to the women of rural areas, this paper studies the role of this craft in empowering poor women in Sipajhar area of Darrang district and future prospects of this industry in other parts of Assam.

#### **Objectives :**

- 1) To study the importance of aqua weaves in empowering the poor women in the rural areas. of Assam.
- 2) To study the future prospects of aqua weaves industry in empowering the women in the region.

#### **Methodology :**

The analysis is primarily based on primary data. Some secondary data have also been used to information about the history ,training facilities of the industry by consulting the various publications of NEDFi. For collecting primary data the researcher visited the area under study several times in order to meet the artisans who are engaged in preparing household and utility products from the dried water hyacinth stems. Nilim Kumar Bhuyan, the mentor of Darrang district has given necessary information about the products, sale ,training and other related information of the industry. The researchers also collected necessary information about the industry by visiting the craft Gallery of NEDFi situated at Rihabari in Guwahati. The research paper is a descriptive analysis on the basis of available information.

#### **Study Area :**

Sipajhar is a block in Darrang district of Assam .It is 50 km away from Guwahati, the capital city of Assam .It is 15 km away from Mangaldoi the headquarter town of Darrang district. The Sipajhar block consists of four Gaon panchayats. They are Balipara,

Bhuktabar, Nayakpara, and Pachimchuba.. Crafting of water hyacinth products was started in the sipajhar region with the initiative of Nilim Kumar Bhuyan in 2010. The Common Facility Centre (CFC) which provides training, designing and making of the products is situated at village Duni the border of the Darrang and Kamrup District. The artisans working there are mostly women. These women belong to Duni and also some nearby villages including Hussain Suburi, Hengal para, Panda Ghat, Gabhara, Bagasola, Parpathar, Outola, dakhin Suburi and also some villages of Khoirabari area..

### **Discussions and Findings :**

In the survey, the researcher came to know that in the Sipajhar area there are nearly 250 very poor women who are engaged in making various products from water hyacinth. They generally make purses, hats, dustbins, baskets, bags, pen stands etc which can be sold in the domestic markets. Besides these goods there are 50 very skilled artisans who make different varieties of furniture like sofa-sets, centre table, differently designed bags etc. For making these products they collect the water hyacinth during the months from August to September from nearby areas. First the leaves are separated from the stems and then the stems are dried. After 10-12 days the stems are ready to be used for making different products.

In order to understand socio economic empowerment of the women, 30 women from different villages who got training and engaged in making crafts from water hyacinth were queried on the issues like their educational qualification, increase in income, elimination of dependence on their husband financial self reliance etc., freedom to use money, their status in the family and society etc.

Findings have shown that most of women engaged in making products from water hyacinth. have very low education level. Some of these women are completely illiterate. Major reasons cited for these are poverty and early marriages and also discouragement from family members.

Almost all the women belonged to the group of below poverty line. They have claimed that after engaging themselves in making water hyacinth products, they can contribute to their family income and their economic conditions have improved.

They are happy because they are now able to earn Rs 5000-10000 per month which is a reasonably good income for a village woman. The more they work, the more they earn.

Majority of the women opined that they have started earning more than their husband, and are able to fulfill their dreams and aspirations and finance studies of their children and provide them access to quality education..

The study also revealed that all the interviewed women know weaving, but after involving in making water hyacinth based products they do not get time for weaving

cloth. Another reason for this is that this work brings much more income than the traditional handloom weaving .

Women are satisfied with this work because there is no fixed time for making these products.. When they are free from their household work they can engage themselves in the work..They need not come out for the work and do at any time, day or night that is convenient for them. Further the work is less laborious than any other work available in the village.

After involving in this work the women are self dependent, This has increased their confidence and they are now in a position to meet their challenges in life.

As the industry has high potential development with freely available raw material and create an opportunity of self employment for poor women in rural areas ,there is need to extend this craft to other districts of Assam..

### **Conclusion :**

Aqua weaves is an innovative and eco-friendly handicraft developed by North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd (NEDFi). This handicraft industry has helped to improve the socio- economic status of many rural poor particularly the women. Many poor women are now enjoying a modest living by making a wide variety of eco - friendly products out of dried stems of water hyacinth and thus contributing to a major share of their family income. Further, the water hyacinth based industry has enough potentiality to provide self employment to the rural poor particularly the women in the state of Assam which in turn help sustainable livelihood, and inclusive growth.

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# **Witch Hunting and Socio-Economic Infrastructure : With Special Reference to Backward Areas of Assam**

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## **Abstract :**

Human civilization has now reached the highest stage of development. At this stage we can't believe anything which is not based on empirical fact. But unfortunately in this advanced age of science and technology still some people believe in superstitions and are involved in some evil practices. Witch hunting is one of such practice. It is a social stigma, which is against humanity, and a big obstacle for peace and development of a society. But such a century old problem can't be solved simply by passing the laws to punish those who practice it; or by any protest movements and suppressive measures. What is needed is that -changing the mindset and developing scientific temperament of the village people that are victimized for only because of their ignorance. And for that purpose this study emphasizes the need of overall improvement of the rural socio economic infrastructure including - proper management of the education system, proper health care facilities, proper drinking water facilities, proper sanitary facilities, adequate faculty facilities, good transport and communication facilities, availability of required books and other study materials, peace and value oriented curriculum, sports and games equipment, facilities for cultural developments etc.

**[Key Words :** Witch hunting, socio economic infrastructure, ignorance, law, humanity]

## **Introduction :**

Witch hunting as a practice is a serious threat to humanity. Witchcraft is a century old belief among people in many a countries of west as well as east. In Assam, in most

of the incidents a particular individual especially women are supposed as witches or 'dainis' and are held responsible for any bad incidents like epidemic or unknown diseases in their villages. Generally when the ojhas or the local healers fail to cure the patients of such diseases, they blame for it any person specially women who is lonely, powerless and ignorant. The village people either drive them out from the village or beaten to death. Originally although ignorant people unknowingly performed this evil practice, nowadays influential village peoples with selfish interest involve in this practice. The people of the vulnerable section of the society, or those who are powerless, are usually identified as witches with an aim to denounce them from their community and take control over their land and property. Their targeted peoples are single unmarried women, widows, elderly persons of both the sexes, and all those who are lonely but possessing property. The illiterate village people guided by superstitions easily motivated by those cunning greedy peoples and involve themselves in such barbaric practice. If they would have living in good socio-economic condition and having the ability of rational thinking through proper education, then in this modern days witch craft could not create such a barbaric situation. This paper aims at to study the importance of proper socio-economic infrastructure to eradicate the practice of witch hunting from our society with special reference to Assam.

#### **Objectives of the study :**

1. To explore the causes responsible for witch hunting in Assam.
2. To examine the importance of proper socio economic infrastructure in solving the problem of witch hunting in Assam
3. To study the actual socio economic condition of the backward areas of Assam where the practice of witch hunting in mainly prevalent.

#### **Socio-economic condition of witch hunting affected areas of Assam :**

In fact almost all witch hunting practice prevalent regions of the world, are backward. For example, in Sukuma region of Tanzania, witch craft beliefs are very strong. A large proportion of their population has never converted to Christianity or Islam. They still practice traditional religion and are guided by superstitious beliefs in their social life. Their economic condition is also not good and lacking proper medical and educational facilities. In India also in some regions where witch craft is very common especially in remote tribal dominated areas of Jharkhand, Bihar, Chhatisgarh, Rajasthan etc., socio economic infrastructure is not good. In the North East India almost all the states particularly the rural areas and predominantly the tribal areas and also the tea garden areas have proved to the hub of witch hunting activities. In Assam the practice of witch craft was patronized even by many kings across the state during premedieval period. Mayong in Marigaon district, now a major tourist hub used to be

known as the Indian capital of black magic. In Assam the such heinous crimes like witch hunting is very much prevalent in the areas like Udalguri, Tinsukia, Goalpara, Chirang, Baska, Sonitpur, Dhemaji, Majuli and Kokrajhar. The communities among which this practice is very common are mainly Bodo, Rabha, Hanong, Mishing, Cachari, Adivasi etc. Basically the tribal people believe in old customs and superstitions. Moreover the area where they live is backward, remote and lacking required proper facilities of livelihood. Actually the socio economic condition of interior and rural areas of Assam is too poor to cope with the modern thinking and lifestyle. There is no proper education system, proper medical facilities, pure drinking water, good transport and communication system, good facilities of livelihood and socio cultural centers for refreshment. But it does not mean that the villages in Assam are in early stage of civilization. In reality primary schools are there, but there is no proper management. Absence of teachers during school hours, irregular attendance of students in the classes, lack of proper guidance of the students by the teachers, student's drop outs, poor condition of class rooms etc. are the major hurdles of education system in most of the rural areas of Assam. In such a situation numbers of educated persons are very few in those areas who can direct the ignorant masses. Taking advantages of this, the village Ojhas and the opportunists misguide the ignorant innocent masses in the name of witch hunting.

Some socio-economic parameters of eight districts in Assam with frequent witch hunting case are given below.

**Table -1**

Sl No	Districts	Main Communities involved in witch Hunting	Percentage of Scheduled Tribe to total population	Literacy rate	Female literacy rate
1	Goalpara	Rabha, Hajong	22.97%	67.37%	63.13%
2	Kokrajhar	Adivasi, Bodo Rajbongshi	31.41%	65.22%	58.27%
3	Chirang	Bodo, Rajbongshi	37.06%	63.55%	56.65%
4	Baksa	Bodo	34.84%	69.25%	61.27%
5	Sonitpur	Adivasi, Bodo	12.07%	67.34%	60.73%
6	Udalguri	Adivasi, Bodo	32.15%	65.41%	58.05%
7	Tinsukia	Adivasi	6.18%	69.66%	61.73%
8	Dhemaji	Mishing	47.45%	72.70%	65.21%
Assam			12.45%	72.19%	66.27%
India			8.6%	74.04%	65.46%

Source: *Statistical Handbook Assam 2014* (Government of Assam)



Above table reveals the fact that not all the rural and backward areas of Assam, mainly the tribal dominated rural and backward areas are involved in this heinous practice. Another fact is that in comparison to total population in these regions less than 50% population belongs to tribal community and they constitutes comparatively a small portion of total population in Assam. Literacy rate is not high in these areas and women literacy is also low.

On the basis of the census reports of 1991, 2001 and 2011, table no -2 shows the level of literacy in some particular districts of Assam and proves that in witch hunting affected districts literary level is lower than the other districts. The table also shows that in developed areas literacy rate is higher than the backward areas.

**Table-2**

<b>District</b>	<b>Literacy rate (%) 1991</b>	<b>Literacy rate (%) 2001</b>	<b>Literacy rate(%) 2011</b>
Kokrajhar	40.47	51.63	66.63
Dhubri	38.36	48.21	59.36
Goalpara	46.81	58.03	68.67
Barpeta	43.24	56.24	65.03
Marigaon	47.95	58.53	69.37
Sonitpur	48.14	59.00	69.96
Kamrup	65.04	74.16	72.81
Jorhat	65.15	76.33	83.42
Sibsagar	64.46	74.47	81.36
Chirang			64.71
Baska			70.53
Kamrup( metro)			88.66
KarbiAnglong	50.28	60.95	73.52
Nalbari	55.99	67.23	79.89
Bangaigaon	49.06	59.33	70.44
Tinsukia	50.28	60.96	70.92
Lakshimpur	58.96	68.56	78.39
Karimganj	57.76	67.62	79.72

The picture of health sector in these regions is also not good because of which village peoples have to depend on the cunning local healers (Bej or Oja) for their health problems. In Assam people in village areas suffers from health problems on account of contaminated drinking water, improper sanitation, poor habitate, insufficient medical facilities, exposure to indoor air pollution due to the use of biomass fuel, water pollution

due to the use of animal dung etc. mortality is also high in those areas due to the insufficient health facilities. Poor habitation and improper sanitation is another serious health problem. Untreated drinking water from open sources like ponds, wells, rivers etc. are the major causes of various water borne diseases like cholera, Diarrhea, dysentery. Under the health department of Assam a sincere attempt is made to cover all the health related affairs of rural areas. A good number of rural hospitals have come up in the rural areas of Assam in the last few years. But these hospitals often face certain problems making health care still a major handicap for the rural people. The problems are lack of required basic equipment for the hospitals, lack of resident doctors and hospital staff, irregular supply of medicines and other essential items in hospitals, improper maintenance of the hospitals etc. Therefore modern medical facilities are not accessible to them. Besides this, the village people are not aware about health and hygiene. As a result of it they have to depend on the village Bez or Ojhas for the treatment of any disease. If there is death of people in the village, due to unknown disease, generally Ojhas try to blame lonely women for it and torture her in the name of witch hunting. And the ignorant village people following the dictates of such cunning and greedy persons brutally torture the women branded as witch.

#### **Findings :**

From the above analysis of the socio economic conditions of witch hunting practice prevalent areas of Assam following facts are found.

1. Generally tribal dominated backward rural areas where superstitious beliefs are very strong are worst affected by witch hunting problem.
2. Because of illiteracy, ignorance and inaccessibility of information of the village people superstitious beliefs are still existing in the society.
3. Low level of education makes the village peoples conservative and superstitious.
4. Improper management of health care programmes and absence of proper medical facilities compels the village peoples to rely on the rural healers known as Bez or Ojaas.
5. Scientific atmosphere with modern technology is not visible in those areas
6. Particularly low level of female literacy rate in comparison of male literacy indicates dominance of patriarchy and lack of women empowerment in these areas.
7. Because of poor socio economic infrastructure people in those areas are living backward life and are unable to change their mindset in right direction.
8. In Assam, the regions where literacy rate is low, there is poor health care facilities and there is absence of modern transport and communication system, witch hunting problem is more serious.

#### **Suggestions :**

A society can be called developed if the overall atmosphere is good enough. Scientific temperament with healthy mental setup is mostly needed for that. And that is lacking in the peoples who are involved in the practice of witch hunting. So to uproot totally this evil from our society only enacting witch hunting specific law

or media publication is not enough. As human society is directed by human behaviour so first we have to give right direction to it in right atmosphere. Now the question is how we can create right atmosphere depends on mainly social and economic infrastructure. The very basis of the practice of witch craft is nothing but superstitions and now it is added with the intention of grabbing other's property. Following points needed to be given importance

1. Simply existence of the educational institutions is not enough. Government has to provide proper infrastructure to all such institutions so that students can get proper atmosphere and can acquire knowledge with the help of which they can understand what is right and what is wrong.
2. Government should take special initiative for the improvement of Transport and communication system in remote village areas of Assam. It will not only help the local peoples to get accessed to information but also school teachers and doctors would also not hesitate to work in those areas.
3. Adult education should also be introduced so that the ignorant peoples can change their mindset and can develop scientific outlook.
4. Along with general education, legal education should also be given importance. Because people should be given to know that for every crime there is punishment.
5. Medical facilities must be developed in these areas so that people need not to depend on the village ojhas for their health problems. Along with it in the village health centers, health and hygiene related workshops, meetings etc. may be organized. Free health checkup, medicines, vaccines, must be made available for the people.
6. Since various organizations are working for the same cause so a proper coordination among them can make the movement against witch hunting more strong and affective.
7. NGOs, Assam State Commission for women, mahila sammittees, etc that are working for removing this evil practice from our society, can visit such places and invite those persons who can play significant role in solving this problem like-educationists, media, psychologists, lawyers, police and doctors to provide required information and knowledge in their respective fields. This kind of effort is urgently needed not only to change the prevailing conservative mindset of the people but also to warn them who are involved in this power game for their vested interest.
8. Social reform movement through art, culture and literature can bring a positive atmosphere in backward areas. T V serials, movies, theatres can present very beautifully the real picture behind the witch hunting problem.

Generally people like these things and can learn easily a lot through such mediums which is not possible otherwise. If Shreemanta Sankardev could preach Vaishnav Dharma through Borgeet, Naam Kirtan and Ankiya Naat in Assamese society, drama, theatre can also play a significant role in motivating the peoples

- and removing such an evil from our society.
9. Scientific research work on this problem of witch hunting is most important before framing any laws or formulating any programme and project to eradicate the evil.
  10. Administrative units in village areas like the Panchyats, Block developmental units etc. should come closer to the village people so that they can easily communicate them and can inform about actual facts and problems. It will definitely help the administration to undertake proper measures and action against any problems arises out of this practice of witch hunting.

### **WITCH HUNTING AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE : WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BACKWARD AREAS OF ASSAM**

#### **Conclusion :**

In fact, we the human beings, create our own problems. So the solution has to be explored by us. Since witch hunting is a social stigma, so every aspects of social life has to be studied very carefully before we try to find out the solution to eradicate this evil practice from our society. From this study it becomes clear that where there is backwardness in the lifestyle and in the mindset of the people, there is every possibility of the prevalence of this evil practice. At present in Assam, the nature of witch hunting practice has been changed into power game. In the name of witch hunting the powerful, dominating persons try to capture the property of those women who are lonely and powerless. Even powerless male persons are also targeted for witch hunting. To challenge those wicked and cunning people the village people must be acquainted with the power of knowledge and all those facilities which are most essential for personality development. And that will be possible only through proper improvement of socio economic infrastructure in backward areas of Assam.

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# REDIFINING THEME OF MARRIAGE IN NAYANTARA PANDIT SAHGAL'S NOVEL, "THE DAY IN SHADOW"

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## ABSTRACT :

Among the many Indo-Anglian writers, Nayantara Pandit Sahgal is quite an impressive one. Though born in a family with political background Nayantara Sahgal's novels mostly reflect the social and political consciousness in them. She has presented in her novels modern Indian women's search for definitions about the self and society, and the relationships that are central to women. Like other women novelist, she too centres her novels around the theme of marriage of her women protagonist, revealing in the process, the relations, gender discrimination and the travails of a woman in a family which serve as a reflection of the place of the Indian women in the society. The writer in her novels tries to combine the theme of Man-Woman relationship, their marital problems, their temperamental incompatibility, the various problems arising out of their submissiveness and finally woman's position in society. She even describes marriage as a life-long damage if her partner is not sensitive enough to communicate. Though woman is an indispensable part of a family, her position appears to be paradoxical, as she is subjugated and suppressed in a family. Thus Nayantara Sahgal's women are of two types; women who are willing to submit to the custom-bound restrictions of married life and women who when humiliated and injustice done, do seriously affect their self-respect and does not hesitate to rebel and revolt. By and large her women are seen suffering from torment of broken marriages – feeling lonely and empty

[Key words : Marriage, Divorce, Women in Society.]

## Introduction :

The novel 'The Day In Shadow' [1971] is autobiographical as it has been build on the writer's own emotional experiences and conflicts. The novel gives a sensitive

account of the sufferings of a woman in Indian society when she chooses to dissolve a seventeen year old marriage. Simrit here has been portrayed as an agonized and divorced middle aged woman whose conjugal life with her husband Som , an industrialist, turns out to be a mere disaster.

### **Objective of the study :**

The objective and purpose of this paper is to study the various issues and problems arising out of marriages and how they are dealt with in the novel.

### **Methodology :**

The present paper is based on both primary and secondary data collected by using the original work of the author and secondary sources from published literature of the novel concerned.

### **Discussion :**

Simrit in the novel is described as an educated and efficient woman at par with man. Though born and brought up in an orthodox Hindu family she gets married to Som against her parent's wish. She is a young and beautiful woman who faces utmost agony only because of her divorce settlement. In spite of being a wife and mother of four children, she is presented as a writer. Her husband is a contrast to her ideals and is most materialistic and ambitious in his nature. He tries to break up the friendship ties with his wife who has always been projected as a most sensible and ideal woman. Simrit is often seen longing for communication and proper understanding with her husband. Her expectation of being married to Som against the consent of her Brahmin parents soon remains shattered. As a result the rift between the wife and husband becomes gradually wider with Som's success. The latter believes in male domination and is quite indifferent in giving freedom to his wife. He wants Simrit to remain a puppet , to live according to his will , but apart from of all one can find him to be a modern.

Simrit feels her intellectual as well as emotional needs remain unfulfilled in her position as a 'happily married woman'. Her desires of Som's kindly attention leads enough to her frequent pregnancies. She is never seen disclosing her reckless feeling during these period resulting in not being fragile.

Som was most materialistic and always sets a price for any work as a businessman does "be tough be winner" was his motto, where he has no place for emotions or sentiments. He paves his way through opposition, much in contrast to his lady. He felt love, sympathy, understanding and friendship remains outside the realm of his business acumen. Thus he was unable to reciprocate Simrit's feelings. Very often it is seen that his male ego was hurt in his wife's resistance to mental and physical bullying. The lady often found him aloof and had to carry out her journey of life quietly accepting

the moment of complete security. Having a pre conceived thought that Simrit knows nothing of his work, he is seen unwilling in sharing his views with her. Som hates woman individuality and freedom and believes latter has to remain under man's control. He gives no voice to Simrit even in ordinary decision of everyday life and the lady finds herself shut out of Som's world.

Having very less interaction with Som, Simrit tries in vain to engage him in meaningful conversation with her. She is isolated and often ignored and remains merely a physical partner to her husband. For her Marriage happened to be a solitary confinement of the human spirit instead of enjoying it as a union of two human mind and spirit. Som is drenched in his affluent arrogance and so called male ego keeping aside culture and refinement.

"Her usefulness to him had never extended to areas of the mind" [TDS 77] Being unable to cope up with these differences she longs to isolate herself from his world of commerce.

Even her orthodox Hindu upbringing has to a certain extent caused her passivity for her closing in on her final decision to divorce. Even after her divorce Simrit remain trapped because of the settlement terms. Som imposed cruel penalties on her on the taxation on the shares. Som could have forgiven if she had been a weaker being; Usually dependent, even deserving. After her divorce it was a crippling burden for Simrit to pay taxes of six lakhs as the shares were in her name. This was almost a revenge from her husband's side, and Simrit felt she had nothing to give her children apart from herself. All this created a problem not only in coping with the fears and tensions, but also with society which does not recognise women's identity apart from her husband's.

When Simrit's world was thus shattered after her divorce, she finds in Raj a member of parliament , much sympathy , support, tenderness , honesty and equality which she vainly sought from Som. Being emotionally disturbed she felt the need to have a person who could extend his helping hand , accept her along with her children . Thus In her days of distress Simrit finds Raj to appear like a soothing balm to her bruised mind and makes her understand that there is every need for them to be united and settle down in a marriage. Though Simrit hesitates to agree to his proposal she finally agrees to tie her nuptial knot with Raj. He tries to alleviate her emotional pain, and after her marriage thus gives her back the status that she lost due to her first marriage. Simrit like any other aware woman is able to break free of the patriarchal enclosure and come in terms with herself. Her decision to remarry is a sign not of continuing subjugation but of social and sexual emancipation that leads to self realisation and self-hood. At times Simrit appears to Raj like a lost child, to look forward to his guidance and quality of strength.

Thus we find the wrong Marriages make both the sexes suffer but the scar of

agony is less in man because they are not dependent on woman. Nayan Tara Sahgal seems to be deeply concerned with the need of freedom for women. Simrit wants to be independent in this novel enjoying individuality, self-expression and self confidence. It is her longing for freedom that urges her to take divorce and wants to have her own identity and name. Thus Sahgal is of the opinion that, "Everything around the writer is material for a novel..... All one's material comes from real life..... one generally draws on one's own experience or someone else's experience.

#### **Conclusion :**

Simrit has a kind of strength in her passivity, that is quite a lesson for young generation which believes in aggressive approach to life. She appears to be a free woman who has the courage to break a long material bond. Sahgal shows her acute awareness of the dependent status of women in society. Not only as a woman who had an unsatisfying experience of marriage, but also as a sensitive observer of the social scene, she realised that their status in India is like that of a second class citizen. In fact these characters are a reflection of their own emotional perplexities and disturbances which they want to come out of and find new -horizons of self-esteem and liberation. Being suffocated, Simrit, struggles to resist the gradual alienation,

"Women are persons not possession" is the note echoed in almost all Sahgal's works specially in her work **THE DAY IN SHADOW**.

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# Status of Bodo women and their role towards society

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## **Abstract :**

Assam is the land of diverse people of different communities, ethnic races, tribes, religions. Among them the Bodo tribal community is one of the most significant tribe of Assam. The social structure of Bodo society is mostly patriarchal but it also described as 'egalitarian and democratic' in nature. Bodo women played a vital role in the society and significantly contribute towards the development of the society. In this paper an attempt has been made to focus on the status of the Bodo women in the tribal society and tried to explore the role played by Bodo women for paving the way for strengthening social harmony and peace which will ultimately lead to the total development of the society.

[Key words : Status of the Bodo women, total development.]

## **1. Introduction :**

According in Ralph Linton, Status refers to positions in pattern of reciprocal behavior and role is the dynamic aspect of status in relation to the total society. Writing on tribal women Lowie has conceived status in respect of four things, "the actual treatment obtained, legal status, opportunities for social participation and character".

Theoretically, the low status of women is accepted in many tribal society except matrilineal communities. But in practice the tribal women enjoys comparatively more freedom and are devoid of many constraints imposing on non-tribal women. But some part of her freedom gets restrained in post-marital stage. She has a firm hand in most of the family matters. But in social life women cannot speak or give decision in the village council. They have to do what the male say and are bound to obey them.

### **1.1 The Bodos: A Brief Introduction :**

The Bodo tribe belongs to the Tibet-Burman speaking Indo-Mongoloid ethnic group. They exercise sovereignty and ruled over Assam until around 1825A.D. and

now settled in the northern areas of Brahmaputra valley, mainly in Kokrajhar, Darrang, Goalpara, Kamrup and Nalbari districts. They also inhabit Bangladesh, Bihar, Meghalaya and Tripura. They are patriarchal and follow Bathuism, a form of animism, although over time some have accepted Hinduism and some have embraced Christianity. The Bodos basically lead a simple life and are peace loving and cheerful people. Each tribe has three alternatives to integrate in the larger society, (i) To exist side by side with the majority, (ii) To absorb itself in the dominant group, and (iii) To secede and seek political independence on the basis of equality by holding their own identity and contribute towards the total development of the society. The Bodo people have adopted the third process.

The Bodo people demand for separate land till from the British rule. In the 1960s, the second wave of Bodoland movement emerged and after a long straggle, on 10 February 2003, under the six schedule as per the administration provision for the scheduled tribe in the constitution under the Article 244(2) for the states of Assam Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram the Bodos were granted the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), an autonomous administrative body that has within its jurisdiction the present district of Kokrajhar, Chirang, Udalguri and Baksa. The area under the BTC jurisdiction is called the Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD).

DISTRICT WISE		COMPARATIVE POPULATION STATISTICS OF BTAD					
Sl.No.	District	Population 2001			Population 2011		
		Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1.	Kokrajhar	843243	433360	409883	887142	452905	434237
2.	Chirang	433061	222364	210697	482162	244860	237302
3.	Baksa	857947	438345	419602	950075	481330	468745
4.	Udalguri	758746	388690	370056	831668	421617	410051
5.	Total BTAD	2892997	1482759	1410238	3151047	1600712	1550335

Source: Provisional Population Census, 2011.

## 2. Objectives :

1. To focus the status of Bodo women in the tribal society.
2. To explore the role played by the Bodo women in strengthening development of the society.

## 3. Limitation :

This paper is delimited to the Bodo women of Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD) of Assam.

#### **4. Methodology :**

The study is based on secondary sources i.e. books and journals .

#### **5. Status of Bodo women :**

##### **5.1 Social :**

The Bodo women play a vital role in preserving the social values which are prescribed and followed since unknown periods by the bodo communities. Hospitalities, sincerity affectionate dealing and obedience to superiors are the very rare qualities that the tribal women gives priority in social living .Voluntary cooperation among each other in distress and tragedy, commitment of words, sacrifice for others in the family and community is very inspiring among tribal women. Despite of their limited resource they continuously and silently work for the progress and peace of the family and the society. Studies shows that the Bodo women have occupied more or less equal status with men though not high. P.C. Bhattacharya said that the Bodo social structure is primarily patriarchal with a few elements of matriarchal characteristics. Sidney Endle said that in the social and domestic life the position of wife and mother is not degraded one .The Kachari husband usually treats his wife with distinct respect and regards as an equal and a companion to an extent. But women have no property right. In the Bodo society father is the sole authority of the family. After his death the property transferred to the eldest son.

##### **5.2 Cultural :**

As a tribal community Bodo culture is mainly depend on agriculture. They mainly observe seasonal, agricultural, and religious cultural activities. Some songs and dances are related to their life cycles like birth, death and marriage ceremonies and rituals. The role of Bodo women is very significant in promoting culture. The Bodo women have kept living these traditional songs from generation to generation due to their cultural affinity. Main seasonal festival of Bodo is Baicagu and some other festivals are Hapsa Hatarnai,Wngkham Gwrlwi Janai,Domashi Kherai etc. All the cultural activities of Bodo society women played an important role and in the cultural field they enjoyed equal status with men.

##### **5.3 Religious:**

The religious outlook of Bodo tribe centers round the super power of Bathou Barai or Khorja Barai Maharaja who is analogous to Sibrai or Siva of the Hindu Trinity (Bordoloi 1987). Mainao is worshipped as the Goddess of wealth by Bodos. Kherai and Garja puja are the most important religious festival of Bodos. There are 18 dance forms are originated from the dance of the Doudini during the Kherai festival. It is observed that in the modern Bodo society many Bodo people practices Brahma dharma and Bodo women who are well-versed and well acquaint in Vedic hymns of yojnahuti are fully participating in it.

In the Bodo Christian society also it is observed that an woman who is well-versed and well acquainted with the system of prayer can conduct the prayer in the church.

#### **5.4 Economical:**

The Bodo women are exceedingly industrious and they spend much of their time in the fields working side by side with their husbands. The women of Bodo community have various types of income sources like agriculture, weaving, poultry, piggery business, service, traditional industries and wage labour. Highly educated women are working Govt. and private sector jobs, They have also their own business like fashion design, Beauty parlour, Sewing and cutting, tailoring etc. Income earn from such activities are impressively higher than traditional primitive economic activities.

But it is seen that very often there is mismanagement of the scanty income that they gather through so much of hardship. The income is spent without their consent just for drinking alcohol or for amusement only by the male members of the society. The tribal women are deprived of share and justice in economic field though they accept the major role to raise income for the family.

#### **5.5 Educational :**

As per the 2001 Census data, the literacy rate among the Bodos in Assam is 61.3 percent as against the overall tribal literacy of 62.5 percent. Again the female literacy rate is as low as 52.4 percent as against 72.3 percent for male. Though there is increase of literacy percentage among Bodos yet there exists significant male-female difference in literacy among the Bodos. There is increase in literacy percentage but rural Boro parents would like to send their daughters only up to certain standards and not beyond. Even educated and well of families would not like to send their girl child away for higher education some time due to security reason and sometime they feel it is the wastage of money. As per 2001 Census out of total female population only 1.40% are graduate and only 0.69% are recipient of higher education.

#### **6. Role of Bodo Women towards Society :**

The Bode women have immense contribution towards society both in the pre-colonial and post-colonial period.

Legends say that during the pre-independence period Bodo women also stood against the colonialist British rulers. For instance, Birgwsri a revenue collector during regime of the British rulers, refuse to collect revenues and valuable things like gold, silver, etc. and stood against the inhuman activities of the British rulers.

In the long struggle for Bodoland, the Bodo womenfolk take active part in the movement. One of the positive effect of this movement is that it have brought an awakening among the Bodo women and can able to take a prestigious position in the political and social life of the community as well as in Assam.

In the mid-1980s under the guidance of All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) a strong women organization was formed named All Assam Tribal Women's Welfare Federation (AATWWF) to mobilize political consciousness among the Bodo womenfolk and work for the development of the society. Its objectives are fighting for equal rights, status and honour of women in the social, political, economic, cultural and individual spheres and thereby working for the empowerment of women of weaker sections of the society. Later AATWWF renamed as All Bode Women's Welfare Federation (ABWWF). During the Bodoland movement the ABWWF played an commendable role, they not only work for the political rights for their community but also work against various ill practices such as polygamy, alcoholism, etc. Again during the Bodoland movement there out break various conflicts, violences, at that critical situation the ABWWF is making conscious efforts at positive peace building. Post conflict reconstruction and reconciliation role is always a difficult task. This is where the positive peace becomes relevant. So the ABWWF is making conscious efforts towards positive peace building by holding various programmes on capacity building livelihood generation and economic empowerment, such as setting up weaving centres, in Bongaigaon, Kokrajhar and various other parts of BTAD. They also imparting training in kitchen gardening, food processing, weaving, dairy farming, carpet making etc.

The women's organization called Mahila Samiti or Aijw Afat has undertaken programmes to eradicate the ill habits such as consumption of liquor and sale of liquor from the society. The main purpose of the group is to act as a pressure group for the infrastructural development of the town and to protest against such vices as alcoholism.

Thus women organizations made great efforts at positive peace building in terms of undertaking constructive programmes aimed at capacity building and income generation, even as it is trying to reach out across the ethnic group.

## **7. Findings :**

Many existing literature on Bodo women have hailed their status role in the society. But the discussion reveals that the Bodo women are not free from gender discrimination.

- In the long struggle for Bodoland, the Bodo women played a very significant role
- They also played a vital role in the post conflict reconstruction and reconciliation.
- For integration and development of the society women's full participation should be the focal point.

## **8. Recommendations :**

- ◆ Women social organizations play a distinctive role in molding cohesiveness. These organizations should be strengthened.
- ◆ Emphasis should be laid on overall socio-cultural development and not merely

on material progress. Development planning should be worked out taking into account the customary traditions of the tribal people.

- ◆ Tribal ethos, modes and morals should be incorporated in the school curriculum.
- ◆ Formal and non-formal education must be imparted to the tribal women so as to enable them to raise their status and come forward for development of the community as a whole.
- ◆ Scheme must be formulated for the development of tribal women against illiteracy, exploitation and social injustice. Special attention should be given in implementation of the scheme.
- ◆ Scheme should be designed and implemented especially for tribal women who will open up new avenues for their employment and make economically independent.

## 9. Conclusion :

The goal of development must be based on equity opposing all exploitation and inequality. For such development, participation of women in all fields economical, cultural, educational, specially in decision making process are very essential . Indeed, it is the women's participation at all levels that will be able to make the developmental process of a society equitable as well as sustainable.

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# **Topic: Role of Assamese Women in the Quit India Movement of India-A Historical Perspective**

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## **Abstract :**

The state of Assam is also not left behind where women have enjoyed equal rights with men since ancient times. In this part of the country women have earned the status of symbol of strength. Their strength have exhibited in the freedom movement. Women power of Konaklota Barua, Bhogeswari Phukanani and Kahuli Nath is the best example in the history of Assam. Gandhiji's message encouraged the womenfolk of Assam to come out of the four walls of their homes and participated in social and political activities. They even did not hesitate to sacrifice their lives for the motherland. Therefore, an attempt has been made to focus on the role of Assamese women in the Quit India Movement. This paper is based on secondary sources.

**[Key words : Women , Assam, Quit India Movement.]**

## **Introduction :**

The state of Assam is also not left behind where women have enjoyed equal rights with men since ancient times. In this part of the country women have entered the status of symbol of strength in the freedom movement of the country. Women power of Konaklata Baruah, Bhogeswari Phukani and Khahuli Nath is the best example in the history of Assam. During the first part of twentieth century when the wave of women upraise was blowing in the country and Mahatma Gandhi started non cooperation movement against the British rule, the women from Assam took leading part in the struggle. Even Gandhi had expressed his view that in noncooperation movement women's participation was more important than that of the men, because they were the symbol of strength. His message encourage the womenfolk of Assam to come out of the four walls of their homes and participated in social and political activities and sacrificed their lives for the sack of the nation.

## **Objectives :**

The objective of this paper is to emphasize on the role played by Assamese women

in the freedom movement specially in the third phase of freedom movement i.e Quit India movement.

### **Methodology :**

This paper is based on secondary data and the data has been collected from articles, newspaper, books and websites.

### **Contribution made by Assamese women in Quit India Movement.**

The women of India had been taking part in politics from the ancient period, but the participation of women of the country up to the 19th century state policy was restricted only to the members of the royal and noble families. It has been rightly observed that though Assam was one of latest victims of British imperialism in India, her independent status being lost only with the signing of the treaty of yandaboo in 1826. Assam was also one of the earliest to rise in revolt against foreign yoke and join the main stream of the country's movement for freedom. Though, the glorious history of our country's struggle for freedom can be traced back as far as the revolt of 1857 but in true sense, the freedom movement of India began only in the year 1921 when Gandhiji set the nation on the path of Non-Cooperation Movement. It was in this movement which revealed the sacrifice of Indian womanhood for the noble cause and the Assamese women too, came forward to share that glory. Even long before the freedom movement, the sacrifice of the Assamese women for their mother land mentioned in history.

The recorded sources of Assam history, the Buranjies had mentioned that in Assam the women role in politics was very significant. Ramani Gabharu, Mula Gabharu who had taken up arms to safeguard their motherland. Sati Jaymati also sacrificed her life for a greater cause. That glorious tradition was further followed by the heroic sacrifice of young women like Rangili and Padumi. The same heroism was also evinced in repulsing the frequent invasions made by Pathan and Mughal invaders. This example shows the role of women in history of Assam, how women participated in politics, war etc to save own country from enemy. But their dreams of a free India did not come true even after their sacrifice. Their dreams came true by the magical call of Mahatma Gandhi who woke up the entire nation to protest against foreign yoke.

The preaching of the great soul to follow the path of Satyagraha which meant 'abiding by truth' even if it meant self-imposed sufferings, a 'non-cooperation' with injustice even by being the victims of oppression determined the people of all over the country to heroically stood up against the British empire where the sun never set, in the year 1921.

Freedom struggle in Assam has a unique character of its own. The people of Assam made remarkable contributions at every stage of the freedom movement since 1920 to 1947. The visit of Mahatma Gandhi to the state in 1921 gave fillip to the freedom movement which had already gathered momentum in both valley of Assam. Gandhiji's call to women had an immediate liberating effect and he was able to draw large numbers



of women's potential for passive resistance and projected them as symbols of courage, intelligence, perseverance, robust independence and power and not as stereotypes of submission, subservience, self-effacement, helplessness and patience. The fact that there was no material weaponry involved in the Gandhian programme made women equal, or perhaps even better fighters and they participated wholeheartedly in the campaigns, protests, fasts and donated generously to the cause of freedom.

In the non-cooperation (1921) and the civil disobedience movement(1930-34) launched by the Mahtma Gandhi, women of Assam did not lag behind. It was women who helped the other women of India saving lives of the Satyagrahis by bagging from door to door. Emboldened by the call of Gandhiji they came out from the four walls of their domestic life and active part in the struggle for Indias independence.

In the time of the civil disobedience movement of 1930-34 the women of Assam also became active and participated in the different programmes of the congress. In some places of Assam, Nari bahinis(women squads) were formed for carrying out the programmes of picketing. Being led by the non violence principle of Gandhiji, almost all the sections of women of Assam did their best to make the movement of India a successful one. Tribal women of the North East also showed the courage in taking an important part in joining the movement.

The Quit India Movement was the next major milestone after the salt satyagraha in the history of Indian independence struggle. It was a civil disobedience movement launched in Aug 1942 with Gandhijis call for immediate independence. It also known as the Bharat Chodo Andolan or the August kranti.

This historical movement played out in the backdrop of 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. The British Government entered India in the war unilaterally and without consultation with the Indian people. This angered Indians terribly and in March 1942, faced with an increasingly dissatisfied, sub continent, only reluctantly participating in the war. The British Government sent a delegation to India under Stafford Cripps, in what came to be known as the Cripps Mission. The purpose of the mission was to negotiate with the Indian National Congress a deal to obtain total co-operation during the war, in return of progressive devolution and distribution of power from the crown and the viceroy to elected Indians legislature. The talks failed because they did not address the key demand of a timetable of self- government and of definition of the powers to be relinquished. It offered only limited dominion status that was wholly unacceptable to the Indian movement.

On July 14 , 1942, the Indian National Congress passed a resolution demanding complete independence from Britain and massive civil disobedience. On Aug 8, 1942, the Quit India Resolution was passed at the Bombay session of the All India Congress Committee. Inspired by Gandhijis "Do or Die" speech, the common masses eagerly jumped in to the movement. Both men and women actively participated in the Quit India Movement. Assam is also not exception to it. Here the women also along with

the men fought against the British yoke. In this connection mention may be made of Swarnalata Baruah and Haripriya Dutta of Golaghat who were the first women of this valley to undergo rigorous imprisonment because of their participation in the individual Satyagraha. During the Quit India Movement of India, a galaxy of women of Assam came to the forefront and participated in this movement and did not care for their lives. They joined the meetings and processions devoted to organizational and publicity works and sometimes they worked as party's postal peons for delivering secret letters, patrolled its centres at night and acted as spies of the Congress. Besides, they secretly supplied food to the underground Congress leaders and workers. The women of both Brahmaputra valley and Barak valley participated in freedom movement. Amalprova Das, Pusalata Das, Chandraprova Saikiani, Guneshwari Devi and from Barak valley Suprabha Dutta, Malati Shyam, Jyotisha Dutta (Chanda) were at the back of the movement.

It was Pusalata Das who formed the women voluntary group and took the lead of the movement in Darrang District. She requested the people to follow the path of non-violence and encouraged the Government service holders to give up their services to join the movement as a successful one.

The British swiftly responded with mass detentions. A total of over 100,000 arrests were made nationwide, mass fines were levied, and demonstrators were subjected to public flogging. Hundreds of resisters and innocent people were killed by police and army fire. Despite of that both men and women jumped into this movement wholeheartedly.

Female activism was very visible during this period. In the face of unprecedented police repression and with large numbers of men in prison, prominent women leaders took upon themselves the task of coordinating the activists. Chandraprova Saikiani was one of the main guiding forces among women. In 1942, the Mrityu Bahini (Suicide Squad) was formed to carry out subversive activities in a more organized manner. Kanaklata, Ratnabala Phukan, Buddheswari Hazarika, Khahuli Nath and Damayanti Bora were all active members of the Mrityu Bahini and were acclaimed as exemplary women among the radical circles.

Kanaklata Baruah who died a martyr's death while going to hoist the flag at the thana of Gohpur. It was on the same day Ai Kumali Devi aged 63, Khahuli Nath and Sileswari Baruah and many others were succumbed to death in police firing occurred in front of Dhekiajuli Thana. Padumi Golapi, Thuniki and Kan Chutiani died in the Lathi charges of the police. Kumali Neog and many others lost their lives.

But there were hundreds of others, ordinary women who, from behind the scenes, made immense contributions in hiding weapons, sheltering fugitives and encouraging men, using their domestic role to cover subversive and revolutionary activities. Mention may be made in this regard Barumit Koch, Padmavati Borah, Golapi Bhuyan, Kamakmaya Baruah and others copied the secret deeds and letters of the Congress

and distributed them to run the publicity works among general people.

The women of Mangaldai & Nagaon also supported the Quit India Movement. Golapi Bhuyan, Rameswari Devi, Padumilata Gohain Baruah, Purnada Devi and many others were in jail for their involvement in the Quit India Movement. The women suffered much in police firing at Barahampur, Bebezia, Jongalbalahu and Barpujia. Among those martyrs, the name of Bhogeshwari Phukanani shines like a bright star in the history of Quit India Movement. In Lakhimpur, women also played an important part in the Quit India Movement of 1942; they suffered much in the hands of the British police men.

Similarly women from various places like Tiyak, Sibsagar actively involved in the movement and many more were wounded in the Lathi charge of the police. Maibala Barua and Rameswari Devi, Makhani Bordoloi and Sabitri Nath etc were examples of it. Some of the women taking part in the movement like Sarojbala Kakoti, Renu Prova Saikia etc were arrested. The women of Golaghat, Bajali and Patacharkuchi also occupied an important place in the history of freedom movement in India.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 1942 under the leadership of Sundari Bala Das, Ambika and Buneswari Patgiri and many other women numbering many thousands came out to join the procession and attacked police station of Patacharkuchi. The procession was so big that the police did not venture to oppose it. Chandraprova Saikiani was the forerunner of the organizational works in Barpeta sub-division who was also arrested and imprisoned in Barpeta jail and later on she was taken to Guwahati jail. During the time of movement most of the women of Assam gave shelter to underground leaders and saved them from the British police. In doing so, some women were in disguise of mad women. In this connection mention may be made of one woman name Dineswari Hazarika of Jorhat. Though she was caught by British but she is still remembered in history for her love for motherland.

### **Opposing Cabinet Mission :**

In 1946, the Cabinet mission proposed the introduction of grouping system but the Assamese women protested against the proposal of the same to include Assam in Group C. It was Puspallata Das who moved the Anti-Grouping Resolution in the secret meeting of the Congress working Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> January 1947.

On 15<sup>th</sup> August 1947, India became independent from the yoke of British. The role played by the women of Assam in the freedom movement is a story of devotion, sacrifice and patriotism.

In pre independence period under The Government of India Act of 1937 an interim election was held and congress formed the government. In Assam legislative assembly election was also held in that time where 108 members were elected from the undivided Assam where only one woman was elected. She was Mavis Dan Lingdoh from Shillong.

From time to time of independence Assamese women's participation increased in a remarkable numbers and they played important role in decision making process of the politics of Assam.

### **Findings :**

Starting with a limited participation in the 1921 phase, the involvement of women in the subsequent phases of the movement became huge in amount and similar in nature to that of the male participants. It was for this ground that the British Prime Minister declared in 1930 that who, they were frightened of was not Gandhiji but the countless illiterate women of India who became the representative of the message of rebellion in every household. No military power could restrain such a begging. In addition to the martyrdom of these womenfolk, a large number of female activities were seriously insured, while facing the police and military bullets. Around five hundred women freedom fighters had to tolerate the force of British atrocities in Assam in the movement for the country's liberation. In 1942, the Assamese women possibly outshined all other women of the country in respect of bravery and sacrifice. The revolutionary group of women the male counterparts in cutting telephone and telegraph lines, burning government buildings and damaging bridges to paralysed the British administration. Thus the role played by Assamese women in different period of freedom movement specially in quit India movement had subsequently set an exemplary achievement in the era of history.

### **Conclusion :**

Participation of Assamese women in the freedom movement of India was really praiseworthy. They sacrificed their lives for the better and greater interest of the mother country. The women of Assam contributed much to the freedom movement of India especially in the last phase of the same that is in Quit India Movement of 1942 by following both violent and non-violent means. They fought equally with men for the independence of India and India achieved independence in 1947.

Though we have seen a commendable achievement of the women during the freedom movement but after independence the participation of women in politics is not satisfactory. Women are still lagging behind in decision making process. Recent data shows that only 11% women representatives are there in Assam Legislative Assembly in spite of introduction of reservation system for women, this participation is very less. The women of rural Assam uneducated and still far away from the any consciousness of the politics or any other matters except their day to day household matters. Their majority are fighting with poverty and earning livelihood from their wages. As Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said "To awaken the people it is the women who must be awakened. Once she is on the move, the family moves, the village

moves and the nation moves.” So women are at the helm of the progress and prosperity of a nation. Women’s progress is closely associated with the all-round development of a nation. So they should also be aware of their rights and duties to the nation and they must educate themselves to compete in globalized world.. Women’s participation in politics is both a source and a signal of social change. Today women can do everything if they are given full freedom without any hesitation. They are now essential prerequisite for not only their motherland but also in international level. So women should come forward and they can certainly play and indeed have played an important role in all national activities.

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# Women Education in India

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## Abstract :

The topic on "Women Education", is a burning issue all over the world. "Women empowerment" and "women equality with men" is a universal issue. The idea of women empowerment was introduced at the International Women Conference at Nairobi in 1985. 'Education is milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to responds to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life'. Even beyond literacy there is much that education can do for women's rights, dignity and security. Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom for development. So that we can't ignore the significance of education in reference to women empowerment India is poised to becoming superpower, a developed country by 2020. This can became reality only when the women of this nation became empowerment. India preser. 'y account for the largest number of illiterates in the world. Despite the significance of women education unfortunately only 39% of women are literate among 64% of the man in India.

Educated women are the weapon who yields positive impact on the Indian society through their contribution at home and professional fields. They are the reason of improved economy in the country as well as society. An educated woman has capability to handle her home and professional life. They can effectively contribute in controlling the population of India as they would like to marry at a later age in comparison to the uneducated woman. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru once said: "If you educate a man you educate an individual, however, if you educate a woman you educate a whole family. Women empowered means mother India empowered". This paper discusses the role of education on empowerment of women in India as well as challenges and solutions.

[Key words : Women education, women empowerment, discrimination, female literacy, reservation]

## 1. Introduction :

What is education, is a fundamental question, which has been exercising the minds of philosopher and thinkers from Socrates and Plato down to Gandhi and Dewey. In 'The Chambers Dictionary' education is defines as *'the bringing up or training of a child; instruction; strengthening of the power of body or mind'*; in the 'Oxford dictionary' it's found as *'the word education is a process of teaching and learning'*. In Encyclopaedia Britannica (Vol. VIII p. 951), *'Education is an attempt on the part of the adult member of the human society to shape the development of the coming generation in accordance with its own ideals of life'*. In the words of John Dewey education is *"the development of all those capacities in the individual which will enable him to control his environment and fulfil his possibility"*. Thus education is an attempt to develop the man.

Education is an activity or a process, which transforms the behaviour of a person from 'instinctive behaviour' to 'human behaviour'. Dr. Samuel Johnson said, *'education made the mind ; if the mind is the man , it is education which makes the man , a good man or a bad man according to its content, its nature and its methods'*.

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 process in present and future. Thus, the educational concept is not absolute and permanent. It changes according to the changes of time, social conditions and needs. This paper is an attempt to study the role of education to women empowerment in India.

### Objectives of the Study :

The general objectives of the study is -

- To study the objectives of women empowerment in India.
- To know the prospects to empowered women through education.
- To learn the literacy rate of Women in India.
- To learn the basic factors of low enrolment 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 newspapers and websites.

## 2. Social Status of women in India, past and Present :

### Vedic Society :

It is evident from all available accounts that in early Vedic Society, women occupied the same position as that of men. She enjoyed high position in house hold affairs. Women reached a very high standard of learning and culture, and made all round progress. They could move freely with their husbands or lovers and were employed in

a number of professions. The Aryan sought cooperation of their women in almost every walk of life. A man could not undertake any social or religious duty without his wife. The practice of allowing women to select a husband out of a chosen group ruled out the possibility of child marriages. Divorce was not permitted and there is evidence to show that widow marriages prevailed. The practice of Sati did not exist in the Vedic age.

In the post Vedic period (1500BC-500 BC) decline in women status started. During the period, discrimination started in education.

### 2.1.

**Buddhism** believed in social and religious equality. Women were assigned an honoured place in Buddhist society and they were admitted to the Buddhist order. Even the prostitutes were admitted in the Buddhist order. Buddhism allowed women the freedom to be educated and opportunities for development. Buddhism aroused the feeling of self-respect and self-confidence among women. In Buddhist literature, women is not seen to be suffering from social condemnation, however she was still under male control and dominance.

### 2.3.

Actual deterioration of women started with the advent of Manusmriti. Codes of Manu prohibited women's equality with men and lowered down the marriageable age of girls. He approved pre-puberty marriage for girls. Man can do second marriage but women had no right for a second marriage. Practice of Sati was also prevalent at that time. There was no freedom for women in any stage of her life. First she was under the control of her father, then the husband and lastly under her son's domination.

### 3.3.

From 500 AD to 1200 AD women position in India continued to deteriorate. The marriageable age of girls was lowered down still further from 12 or 14 to 10 or 8. The age of 8 was considered as the ideal for daughter's marriage. There was no education for the girls because of lower marriage age. Only the daughters of rich family continued to get education through special teachers but with the incoming of Muslim rule this tradition was also abolished. The women's condition became worse and insecure during Muslim period. During the period, Hindu society became more rigid towards women, because women were forcibly converted into Islam and married. So, consequent insecurity and instability further narrowed down women's social liberties. In such an environment, new evils emerged, like purdah, infanticide, dowry system, *devadasi* system, illiteracy etc. The evils that got stronger were, Sati, polygamy, humiliating widowhood, early marriage, illiteracy, unequal marriage etc.



### 3.4.

The Islamic religious texts laid down the minutes code of conduct for women, the slightest deviation from which was considered irreligious. Such rigidity, coupled with the apathy of the ulemas, led to the weakening of position of women. The 'purdah system' became very rigid among Muslims which also created a great hurdle in the way of education of the Muslim girls. Only the well-to-do families used to make some arrangements for the education of girls in the inner apartments of houses. These were commonly known as zenana schools.

### 3.5.

During the British period an Act was passed in 1829 to stop the burning of women or against Sati system. However, the practice continued in rural parts of India as late as 1905. Unfortunately, the abolition of Sati sys

tem did not end the miseries of the Hindu widows. The plight of the young widows was extremely bad. They were not only tortured but also many times sexually exploited by the unscrupulous males in the family or the neighborhood.

In the 19th century Raja Ramohan Roy., Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, B.M. Malbari and Swami Dayananda were advocating the the cause of uplifting of women in India. Other notable social reformers are P.C. Banarjee, M.G. Ranade, Mahatma Phulay, Swami Vivekananda, Dayananda and Gopal Krishna Gokhale made great efforts for upliftment of women. (Women Development in India.

Women's role and function in society was largely dependent on that of men in relativistic terms in majority of cultures. It is the sum of differences between status of men and of women which gives one on idea that women have a distinctive position in society. Social changes are common to every society and a change in its women's status and vice-versa.

### 3. Objectives of Women Education in India :

It is found that at the beginning of their reign the British were not prepared to provide public education to the Indian people, least of all for women. Even when the Charter Act of 1813 compelled the East India Company to accept responsibility for the education of Indians any involvement in the education of women was judiciously avoided as a measure of administration wisdom. As early as 1820s, girls' schools were being established in Bengal and Bombay. That these schools were formal institutions for girls outside their homes marked an important stage in the evaluation of women's education in India. By 1854, the number of schools for girls and the number of pupils had gone up considerably.

	Bombay	Bengal	Madras	N.W. Provinces	Punjab
Schools for girls	39	39	269	17	2
Number of students	1,325	1,487	7,878	386	35

In India, education is the most important instrument for human resource development. Education of women, therefore occupies top priority amongst various measures taken to improve the status of women in India. After independence, efforts have been made over the first three decades of planned development to enroll more girls in schools and encourage them to stay in schools, to contribute their education as long as possible, and to provide non-formal educational opportunities for women. The fulfilment of the constitutional directives in respect of providing free and compulsory education up to the age of 14 years has been included as one of the components of the 'minimum needs programme' and given overriding priority.

Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Periyar and Baba Saheb Ambedkar were leaders of the lower castes in India who took various initiatives to make education available to the women of India. However women's education got a fillip after the country got independence in 1947 and the government has taken various measures to provide education to all Indian women.

As a result women's literacy rate has grown over the three decades and the growth of female literacy has in fact been higher than that of male literacy rate. While in 1971 only 22% of Indian women were literate, by the end of 2001, 54.16% and 2011, 64.6% , female were literate.

#### 4. Objectives of Women Education in India :

After independence, efforts have been made over the first three decades of planned development to enroll more girls in schools and encourage them to stay in schools, to contribute their education as long as possible, and to provide non-formal educational opportunities for women. The fulfilment of the constitutional directives in respect of providing free and compulsory education up to the age of 14 years has been included as one of the components of the 'minimum needs programme' and given overriding priority.

The objectives to be achieved by 2000 A.D. in regards to women's education are-

- Elimination of illiteracy, universalization of elementary education and minimization of the dropout rate in the age group 6-14 years and stagnation to negligible proportion.
- Ensuring opportunities to all women for access to approachable level , nature and equality of education and also the wherewithal for success comparable with men.
- Substantial vocationalisation and diversification of secondary education so as to provide a wide scope for employment and economic independence of women.

- iv. Making education as effective means for women's equality by (a) addressing ourselves to the restrictions that prevent women from participating in the educational process; (b) eliminating the existing sex-bias in the system; (c) making necessary intervention in the content and processes of education to inculcate positive and unrestricted attitudes, and ensuring the teachers perceived this as one of their essential role.
- v. Providing non-formal and part-time courses to women to enable them to acquire knowledge and skills for their social, cultural and economic advancement.
- vi. Impetus to enrol in various professional degree courses so as to increase their number in medicine, teaching, engineering and other fields subsequently.
- vii. Creating a new system of accountability, particularly in respect of the basic educational services, to the local community, inter alia, by active involvement of women.

### **5. What is Empowerment :**

A common understanding of empowerment is necessary, to allow us to know empowerment when we see it in people with whom we are working, and for program evaluation. Empowerment is a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power in people, for use in their own lives, their communities, and their society, by acting on issues that they define as important.

Women empowerment involves a process where women can independently analyse, develop and voice their needs instead of imposed values. Decision making capacity and anatomy in decision making are the key factors leading to women empowerment. Empowerment of women may be economic, social, household and women's perception for their rights.

### **6. Education and Women's Empowerment :**

An individual needs training to use her own reason so that thereby she may learn to live orderly life or a moral life. Education is the training of the eye and the mind so that the individual should make correct responses to the problems and the opportunities of life.

The movements for improving women status all over the world have emphasized the role of education. It is believed that education will bring about a reduction in the inequalities between sexes and uplift women's subjugated position in the society. The social reformers of 19<sup>th</sup> century India held this view and the present day educationists and policy planners voice similar opinions.

Before the capabilities approach, education had been regarded as a key to women's empowerment for its ability to raise awareness and open possibilities as well as its

instructional link to economic growth and children's health. Hence universal primary education has been a goal in many developing countries for many years.

It is proof that education not only develops women's personality, character and awareness but also their productive capacity. For women in the workforce, even a little education greatly increases their earnings. A study conducted by National Survey Organisation exposes that technically trained literate women earn three times than those of illiterate women, though they too can double their earnings with some technical training.

Moreover, higher levels of women's education are strongly associated with both lower infant mortality, as well as with higher levels of education and economic opportunity for their children.

Education plays a crucial role in helping women and girls achieve equality. Women have never been part of the mainstream society in India and they are still considered as a great liability. To say the least, the progress in women's education in India is far from satisfactory. The gender gap in educational involvement though reduced over the years, is still a matter of great concern. According to "The Hindu" newspaper, India falls short in female literacy in 2016.

*Data from new research on female literacy show that India's school education system is under-performing in terms of quality when compared to its neighbours, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. ....The proportion of women who completed five years of primary schooling in India and were literate was 48 per cent, much less than 92 per cent in Nepal, 74 per cent in Pakistan and 54 per cent in Bangladesh.....The data also revealed that, female literacy rates went up by one to 15 per cent after completing two years of schooling. Corresponding numbers for Pakistan and Nepal were three to 31 per cent and 11 to 47 per cent respectively".*

Adult female literacy by highest grade attained

Grade	No schooling	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Nepal	11%	47%	80%	92%
Pakistan	3%	31%	57%	74%
Bangladesh	1%	8%	36%	54%
India	1%	15%	33%	48%

(THE HINDU, OCTOBER 24, 2016)

The table shows % of females literate who have studied upto that grade. For instance, only 15 per cent of Indian women who studied till Class 2nd can read a sentence (or literate).

The Hindu further added that countries are ranked by the earliest grade at which

at least 50% of women are literate. India ranks 38<sup>th</sup> among 51 developing countries.

Female literacy rate in India is just 74.04 persons, 82.14 male and 65.46 female as per 2011 Census. In India parliament and assemblies women have never represented more than 10%. Most of the women workers in India are outside the organised sector. Administrators, managers, professionals combined together and technical workers on the other hand are the lowest at 2.3% and 20% respectively. Now these figures gives the real truth of the actual mentality of the society which has restricted, marginalised and discriminated against women quite openly.

Education is central to women's empowerment in so far as it enables women to become more productive both inside and outside the household. The World Bank has further determined that a mother's education has a beneficial impact on family size, the well being of her children, and her use of community services. Conversely, illiteracy has a limiting effect on women's ability to access relevant information.

#### **7. Basic factors of low enrollment :**

Female enrolment in educational institutions is low as when compared with males and dropout rates are high. Still the need for educating girls is not considered worthwhile. In urban areas, by and large, there is a greater acceptance of its need than in rural areas. Some factors responsible for low enrolment are-

- (I) The requirement for older girls to stay at home to take care of siblings when mother are away at work;
- (II) Needs for girls to works in order to help in a augmenting the family income;
- (III) Early marriage of girls;
- (IV) Social customs that hinder female mobility after puberty;
- (V) Lack of relevance of school curriculum, and
- (VI) Lack of facilities in the form of school buildings, hostels and women teachers etc.

The discrimination against women in the form of male-female differentiation constitutes the core of the gender-biased system. The education is the biggest liberating force and the rise in the level of education which nourishes progressive outlook and the advent of industrialisation and modernisation have effect a change in the attitudes and thinking pattern of the people.

#### **8. Suggestions :**

Following measures may be suggested for women empowerment through education which are found in the study .

- ◆ Equal access to education for women and girls need to be ensured.
- ◆ Especial measures need to be taken to eliminate discrimination, universalised education, eradicate illiteracy, create a gender-sensitive educational system, increase enrolment and retention rates of girls.

- ◆ Improve the quality of education to facilitate lifelong learning as well as development of occupation/ vocation/ technical skills by women,
- ◆ Proper care should be taken for development of women education particularly those belonging to weaker sections including the Schedule Cast/Scheduled Tribes/ Other Backward Classes/ Minorities,
- ◆ Women reservation policy should strictly be maintained in admission into the educational institutions,
- ◆ Scholarship and free women hostel facilities for weaker classes,
- ◆ Gender sensitive curricula would be developed at all levels of educational system in order to address sex stereotyping as one of the causes of gender discrimination.
- ◆ Opening of a large number of adult school with facilities of handicrafts, knitting, sewing, animal husbandry training .
- ◆ Women education and employment matching is dire necessity. This could be made possible by formulating the education and training programs more closely related to available employment opportunities.
- ◆ A special division should be created in the Department of Women and Child Development for the enforcement of law for women.
- ◆ Spread the message that education of women is a pre-condition for fighting against their oppression.

## 9. Conclusion :

What is seen today is that in every field, women are worse off men. Women have less power, less autonomy, more work , less money and more responsible and sharing a small proportion of development benefits. But the world at large is becoming conscious of the fact that only when a women develops, a society can progress and develop. Educationists, thinkers and politicians have realised the fact that with the neglect of women there is no possibility of good for the country.

Educating a girl means directing the girl properly. It is the prime concern of education to direct the undeveloped capacities attitudes , interests , urges and the needs of the girls into the most desirable channels.

Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru rightly said- " To awaken the people, it is the women who must be awakened, once she is on the move, the family moves, the village moves and the nation moves".

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# Education as an instrument to change women

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## **Abstract :**

Since independence India has made considerable progress in the in the field of literacy. There have been quantitative expression of education all over the country at various levels. Particular attention also is being given to the creation of minimum basic facilities for all children of rural areas, remote hilly areas, difficult hilly taverns, sparsely populated localities inhibited by the children of deprived groups of people. In the last few decades strenuous efforts had been made to realize the constitutional safeguard of meeting the educational needs of our children up to the age of 14 years (6 - 14 years). The preamble of Indian Constitution provides equal right to each and every citizen of India. The major concern with regard to elementary education at the time of framework of the Constitution was providing education to all children in the age group of 6 - 14 years. In the directive principle of the Constitution it has firmly asserted that the state shall endeavors to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years. It felt the need of literate populations according to the need of the sovereign socialistic, Democratic framework of our independent country. Constitution made an elaborate provision in its articles. The state and central government have initiated several schemes to make the children literate. Education of girls and women has become a major policy concern in our country both as human and development imperative. Recent psychological research has shown that favourable attitudes towards life develop in the earliest stage of child growth. Education gives solution to any kind of problems. Education gives strength to the person. It is education which can become a strong instrument in changing and improving a women because they are the greatest living being in the earth.

**[Key words : Progress, education, problem, solution, change.]**

## **Introduction :**

There is a revolutionary change in the position of women due to education. The



advancement of women is the most significant fact in the world.

Still there are many problems in educating the girl specially in the backward areas. When these problems will overcome by awakening women through their education then there will be a basic change in the status of women. Women's education is the stepping stone to all kinds of education. Therefore Napoleon said; "Give me ten educated mothers and I will give you a great nation."

Education has a great role for improving the condition of women in the society. Because it is said that education is a continuous process of reconstruction of experiences. Education is the development of all those capacities in the individual which will enables them to control their environment and fulfill the possibilities. It is a continuous process which aims at complete development of women personality and prepare them for the battle of life. It is education which can bring prospect and progress for their life and help to establish themselves in the society.

### **Objectives Of The Study :**

The objective of this paper are as follows :-

- 1) Education can train women to be adjusted with the changing situation.
- 2) Education can improve women access to vocational training, science and technology and continuing education.
- 3) Education give women ability to bring about transformation.
- 4) Education is the strong instrument to bring about improvement in one's own capabilities.

### **Methodology :**

As the secondary data are used from various books, journals and internet so the method is basically descriptive.

### **Discussion :**

Education is a fundamental instrument to bring various changes in society, this is an accepted fact all over the world. It is true that the best way to judge a nation's progress is to find out the condition of women there. The role of women as a mother, wife, sister and daughter and a kin relationship in the life of human beings and his involvement to the family and the society cannot be underestimated. It is the women who nurture the child and take care of his/her overall development, particularly in the formative years. Hence she has to be educated to provide a sound base for upbringing the child. Education takes us away from backwardness, darkness, poverty, misery and overpopulation to enlightenment, prosperity and happiness. Education give strength to a women as a person. They get knowledge and can perceive what is right and wrong with the help of education.

Education is the most important means for social, economic and political transformation. Promotion of women education bring certain benefit for the society in the form of social reconstruction and development. Change of women can be achieved through the fundamental education to the women folk. Education make them aware about their traditional role, enables them to confront their role and change their life.

Education of women is most powerful tool of change of position in society. Education brings a reduction in inequalities and function as a means of improving their status within their family. It not only helps in the development of half of the human resources but in improving the quality of life at home and outside. Educated women not only tend to promote education of their girl children, but also can provide better guidance to all their children. They can also help in reduction of infant mortality rate and growth of the population.

Education enables women to acquiring basic skills & abilities and faster a value system which is conducive to raising their position in society. Education make them aware that they should get some opportunities as men for all kind of activities and this presupposes that they get equal facilities so that their entry in to the professions and public services cannot be denied.

Education create a base for positive change and transformation of women as an individual in the society. This provides them creative and constructive thoughts understanding and important skills in them towards developing self and surroundings. Education act as a power to understand the economics of managing resources and grab the opportunity in their life. It helps them to resist and overthrow oppressive tradition of a society. Educated women in a society are aware of their rights and they have the intelligence and training to fight exploitation or violation of their rights. Hence education is the real foundation for their progress.

Intellectual development of women through education can bring tremendous progress in a society. Social degradation is caused by educational backwardness. So without education women will became slave of others. As a result it is very much essential to educate everyone especially women. Woman is the first teacher of a child and the backbone of the society. In this regard Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru rightly mentioned that education of a boy is education of one person, but education of a girl is the education of the entire family. In fact, educated women are the pillar of progress in a society. There can be no educated people without educated women. A well educated women can mould character and prosperity of children as education remove her fears, prejudices and superstition from their mind.

The most remarkable change in women through education as they change of their attitude and relinquishing their conservatism, which is the great obstacle in their progress of life. Educated women no more tolerate the double standard of morality. The sense of equality make them independent in their thoughts and action. Education is an index of the general, social and economic change of women of a country.

An educated woman understand that scientific knowledge and technology have entered the every sphere of our day to day life and culture. So they don't want to be backward and try hard for getting the various facilities of present development so that they can fully adjust with this changing scenario of the society. They want participation in science and technology so that they become able to utilize the tool in capturing the opportunities from research to high skilled employment in firms.

Education create an awareness for self defense. She is determined to preserve her own life and wellbeing. Through education they can recognize violence and the content in which it may occur and prepare for challenging situations. Education has not only supplied the key to open the vast treasure house of their mind but also filled the minds with new hopes and aspirations.

Education gives women the freedom to be someone so that nobody can make them isolated in any situation of their life. Education make them understand that to be static is the worst thing and give them the platform for development. They are encouraged to do their duties and responsibilities with the awareness that they are the integral part of the whole society and get inspiration for scaling greater height in the society.

### **Findings :**

From the topic the following points we found .-

- 1) Education of women is an important aspect for boosting the social and economic change of the country.
- 2) Education creates opportunities for women to develop in the society.
- 3) Education enhance the self image and self confidence of women and thereby enabling them to contribute to the society.
- 4) Education create a sense of living life in a better way and enable them to step forward in the path of progress.
- 5) Education make them aware that they are also the meaningful contributing factor to national development.

### **Conclusion :**

Various problems facing by women today is due to lack of education. It is fairly obvious that education alone can solve the various problems facing by women . It is education only which can make them aware of their rights and can bring the end of gap between men and women in our society. Education gives them voice and ability to make decisions and influence positive change in the community. It is education which play one of the most significant role for women in enhancing their overall condition in a society.

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# Behind the Headlines: A Sociological Study of Karbi Women Living in the Plains of Assam

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## Introduction :

Belong to the Indo-Mongoloid stock of the Tibeto Burman linguistic group (Bordoloi G.T.1987. p.14).the Karbis, outside the two autonomous Hills Districts, can be found in parts of administratively recognized plains areas of Assam viz., Kamrup, Nagaon, Morigaon, Sivasagar, Golaghat, Sonitpur, Lakhimpur, Dhemaji and Cachar. From time immemorial, Assam has witnessed waves of migration of people belonging to different ethnic grouped poured in different periods of time. In this process a composite culture grew up and this culture we can determine as great Assamese culture which turn at this present time a composite social structure of Assamese society.

The Census data about the Karbis in general is based on the Colonial Anthropological considerations that connected a 'Scheduled geographical location' with the identity of a specific community. This perception is accepted only those ethnic communities as administratively accepted term 'tribal' that were inhabitant of particular 'scheduled' area that was designed as an abode of 'Tribal' communities since 1874(Dutta.1993).Following this anthropological idea, both the Government of India and the Census do not consider the Karbis living outside the two hill districts (Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao). Again, following this, the Indian Census and the various amended versions of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Act, 1950, recognize only those Karbis as Scheduled Tribe that lives in the Hill districts of Assam. Therefore, the Karbis living in the Plains districts have failed to enjoy the benefits of the scheduling system provided by the Government of India. In 1982, after a prolonged agitation by the Plains Karbis, Government of Assam through an amendment of the said Act, only partially recognized them as Scheduled Tribe (plains) and offered facility of reservations in the domain of govt. appointment and education within Assam.

The Karbis never called themselves as Mikirs which was given to them by the non-Karbis during the colonial period or it can be also seen that this term has multiple source of its origin as there are different myths and legends associated with the name

Mikir and how the term came to signify the Karbis. They prefer to be called as Arleng which literally means a man. According to a legend among the Karbis Arleng means the only son of a father<sup>1</sup>. The Karbis of plains offer certain interesting features so far as their culture is concerned. They offered with ample scope to study their customs and practices which have been changing or on the verge of change in many respects from their original traditional form, primarily due to their close contact and association with the neighbouring people mainly the caste society.

Karbīs are now more Hinduised and the impact of acculturation which is more prominent amongst them due to close contact with the Assamese speaking Hindu society, except a few of them follow Christianity. This is true of the Karbis in the plains districts of Assam. Yet, they retain their own language, customs and traditional religious belief which is Animism.

Most of the traditional Assamese cultural elements have found inroad into the culture of the Karbis residing in the plains today. Still retaining some of their traditional practices related to religion and festivals. Therefore, process of sanskritisation is evident among the Karbis. Thus, the Karbis in plains are in the midst of continuing their age old customs and practices and also some acculturation process taking place at same time living with the caste Hindu Assamese society. Thus it would be interesting to study the recent ethnic consciousness among them which has gradually developed after the formation of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council. They are not being able to feel connected with their own counterparts in Karbi Anglong, although they have ethnic connectedness with them.

The paper has made an attempt to discuss the Karbi women living in the plains of Assam and their status in the society. The paper would explore the representation of women in the narratives of the community. It would try to discuss the identity issues of the community and position of their womenfolk in the process of identifying their community identity.

### **Women in Karbi Society :**

Karbīs are patriarchal in social organization. Women have no share in administration. She has an inferior status than man (Bhattacharya: 1943). Woman rejoice her domination within the four walls of her house. Four important tasks that all woman perform like preparing food, rearing children and bringing firewood from jungles and also helping the male members in the family in agriculture and allied activities. However, in recent times there is an awareness growing among them regarding their status. There is spread of education among them, although the number is insignificant to note. The woman is the protective and retentive factor in any society. The Karbi women is of course not the vocal arbiter of the community. She silently performs behind

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<sup>1</sup>(Information from an unpublished ethnographic report on so called Amri Karbis. Author Unknown)

the hassle and bustle of the society. Terangpi described the age old aspirations of a Karbi woman to grow as a good weaver in her society. Every parent of the community dream of her daughter to be weaver who would weave for her brother. Therefore, it shows the status of woman describing her as weaver and as warrior. This idea naturally flows to the customary laws of the society treating women as belonging to the private domain.

During Chomangkan ceremony (death ritual), girls and boys take part in the dance. This is the only ceremony where girls and boys take part together. However, among the Karbis living in the plains this ceremony is not prevalent. In the community feasts, women are seen to be eat separately in the Karbi Villages. Karbi women cannot even perform any rituals in the main festival of Karbis in the plains areas, i.e. Dehal puja, where women are not even allowed to be around the area of ritual performance. However, in many cases the food offered to their 'Mumpe Armu', which is their supreme God among the plains dwelling Karbis is prepared by women.

It is to be noted that the established fact about the division of labour in tribal society is based more on gender and age than on hierarchy and occupation. Division of labour has been both fluid and rigid. However, it is rarely explored that this is also based on the fact that there is customary laws that also defined the lives of women in such societies. This laws are rules within rules that doubly threaten the status of women. Taboos on women like touching and using the plough in tribal societies has been seen as a way of denying women a control over the means of production viz. land.

To also talk about the traditional ethnic councils among the plains Karbis, there are separate councils for men and women. Tarang, where only male members are allowed to participate and decide their issues and also where the traditional chiefs or heads of their community. Tiri deals with the issues of women in the villages. However, what is to be noted is that the decision makers are men in both the house.

Even when we are discussing the changes in the customs and practices of Karbis in the plains areas, it is the women folk who are known to be the carrier of tradition, facing the changing outcomes in their everyday lives. They are directly accountable for not being able to teach their off springs about their culture. As cultural bearers women are taken responsible for socializing their children. The two facts mentioned above about the plains Karbi society can be delineated with the Ortner's (1996) postulation of male/female as a metaphor for nature/culture, where women are always associated with nature through reproduction and child rearing and males are closer to culture and says that since culture dominates nature, thereby males dominating females.

The bachelor's dormitory is also known as Faria, Terang Ahem, Terang Hangbar or Zirkedam. It is an important organization that trains the youths of the community. Although the concept of dormitory is very pertinent in the everyday lives of tribal. It is not seen among the Karbis living outside the two hill districts. In such areas the Risomel or the youth clubs are present that serves almost the same purpose as Zirkedom.

Originally, the Zirkedom includes only boys of the village. However, at present girls are also allowed to be a part of the dormitory, it do not necessarily gives them any power of making decisions as they do not hold any position of importance. Therefore, again re-establishing the fact that power is not part of a woman's destiny.

It is often understood that tribal societies in India in a relative sense offer a better degree of treatment to their women than the so called modern societies. However, we forget the fact that they are too part of the mainstream India where the fate of women is in the hands of few man. Then the question arises is why do we consider them as different. We always tend to falsely understand the documentation as reality than seeing it pragmatically.

In the context of Karbis too it is seen that the women are really hard working. Besides her household work, they engage in agricultural activities helping the male members of the family. They also sell the field produce vegetables, betel nuts, fruits, spices etc. in the nearby available markets carrying it by themselves. Thus this allow them to use the income all by themselves. The answer is an obvious no. Her stand as a mother, wife is more glorified than as a bread winner. Her position in the society is not given separate attention in history.

The Karbi legends about three women helping in the production of traditional dresses. Another story prevalent that the name Kaziranga as it is known today is derived from a Karbi word, 'Kajir-a-rong', meaning "Kajir's Village" or "Kaziror- gaon". It is to be noted that Kajir is a female name among the Karbis. There is another story that says about the Karbi women that says that the Kachari king used to feed his tiger with milk of Karbi women. Thus, this agin shows that the Karbi women had to face such ill treatment from the then kings dominating their community. The Karbi women addresses her husband and brother-in-law in affectionate relative pronoun 'nang' and with honorific suffix while addressing other men. The society decreed that she should follow her husband. She should follow him in the rear leaving him the front (Bhattacharya: 1943)

The notion of cultural memory to some extent directs our attention to the connection between community version of its past and its version of community identity. The politics of remembering and forgetting past who one was and trying to establish one's present self as someone is associated with the processes of recognition. Thus, there is a constant process of reconstruction and representation of one's group identity in making it 'politics of recognition'. The construction of identities by different sections within the same group have made it difficult for the outsiders to comprehend the group. As in most of the cases the 'others' only interpret them simply as Plains Karbi or Dumrali. Since Karbis were thought to be a community with similar cultural experiences by others since ages. Thus, there is a series of unfinished points of identification.

The stories they narrate to others do not only have content that glorifies their past but it also acts as instrument for mobilizing their own people and at the same time

representing their culture and identity. It too help in shaping their claim for their interests in the present political order. To mention these narratives, have hardly portrayed any woman as warrior or as brave protector of their community. She is being portrayed as born weaver and hard working engaging both in the household and agricultural and allied activities. Her narratives is small and as full of despair and destitute.

The point that require attention is the kind of narration within by the two groups of the same community, who actually have focused on different aspects of their history. What made them follow certain parts of their history and not the other? It definitely require an in depth analysis to understand their agendas and issues. Are they in the race of making their demands heard by the 'others' or they are genuinely concerned about preserving their identity among 'others'. The most important question that actually arise here that often go unnoticed is how women in their community are being perceived as. Whether their ideas and opinions are taken into account or not? Who narrates the stories and whose accounts are being given importance? Therefore, listening only at the narratives would not suffice rather the content and the kind of content they focus on is important.

Studies on tribal women per se have not been many nor of much depth. There has been no explicit discussion on the status of women in tribal society. While some say that tribal societies generally assigned high status to women, others opine that women's position in tribal society is the same as in other societies (Xaxa: 2004). Therefore, women are taken for granted. Based on the context they are treated as equal when the need is to take their views into account and it is often portrayed by their counterparts as women too carry same kind of values and opinions like them. In cases where it is about distribution of power and property, they are taken as different from the man having unequal status. As if they do not have the ability to control both the private and public domain. They are always treated as queens of the private domain (mainly household chores), trying to prove their inadequate knowledge about the public domain. In this perspective, tribal are the vulnerable ones as they are believed to be a member of a so-called egalitarian society where women have been associated in both the domains. Earlier the public and private spheres of tribal societies are not strictly separated, thereby perceiving both the sphere as coinciding. There was clear demarcations between the two. However, the society has undergone a lot of changes, thereby changing the traditional social system of the Karbis in the contemporary time. Therefore we cannot at present time to view the importance of public and private sphere as equal. Thus has created the gap of understanding the tribal women as having inferior status as other non-tribal women in a patriarchal society. Gender construction shapes and reshapes in the everyday interactions. Thus, we need to change the ways of cultural socialization for both male and female at a very young age.

This paper is an attempt to raise certain questions pertinent to the status of women in the Karbi society of the plains areas. The paper does not claim to give any sole



solution to the problems. Rather, it is indeed an initiative to focus on the womenfolk and issues of identity of the community. Women should not be taken as granted for having similar kind of opinions when it is about their identity. They should also be encouraged to form social and political organizations and should have membership shares in the existing organization dominated by man only. The women should be given separate attention in the narratives as they too share history and infact face all hassles and tussles in the past with the man. Because narratives are too constructed and reconstructed by the present society. Thus, women should be seen in front rather than behind the bustle.

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# Women empowerment – in the vision of Swami Vivekananda

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## **Abstract :**

Women empowerment is a debatable and sensitive issue in the modern society. In Indian culture, since time immemorial women enjoyed significant status. Hindus worship God as well as Goddess such as Sita-Ram, Laxmi -Narayan, Radha-Krishna etc. But, during the time of civilization women lost her prominence and accepted as a secondary status to men.

During the early Vedic period, it is visualized that the status of women was much better than at present. Women enjoyed a very considerable position in the society. They had an equal status with men. But, since then the position and status of women gradually started deteriorating. Though in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the position and status of women all over the world has risen incredibly, we find that it has been very low in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in India. Women were neglected by the society and treated like things that can be bought and sold easily. Swami Vivekananda, one of the great religious and social thinkers of India thought about the uplift of women clan all through his life in the context of traditional Indian philosophy. Vivekananda believed that besides education through the philosophy of Indian spiritualism, Indian women must grow and develop which might be considered as an effective approach in the process of uplifting women.

This paper is an attempt to show that in the process of women's empowerment, Vivekananda's thoughts are very much effective. His thoughts will help in the intellectual development of women and direct towards the total development process.

**[Key words : Empowerment, Spiritualism, Education, Perfect, Embodiment, Footprints.]**

## **Introduction :**

There is no chance of the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is

improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on one wing only.

- Swami Vivekananda

Swami Vivekananda is a name which brings to us the images of a saint, a prophet, a reformer, a humanist and much more. Vivekananda dreamt of a society where women like men would get equal status. Therefore, empowering women is closely related to the economic, social, physical and intellectual development of women. Mainly, Vivekananda thought about the upliftment of Indian women. He tried to develop Indian women for better position in every field. He strongly believed that a house, a society and the nation can develop rapidly if it takes all kinds of upliftment of the Indian women.

Swami Vivekananda considered Indian spiritualism as an effective system or approach in the process of empowering women. So he tried to increase awareness, develop and empower women not only through education but also by enlightening them through the philosophy of Indian spiritualism. The thoughts and beliefs of Swami Vivekananda were very much applicable that helped the intellectual development of women and directed towards the total development process.

With the help of the process, in one hand, women must find themselves free from superstitious beliefs, stronger and more self-confident and on the other hand, full of love and affection, gentle natured, full of mother kind, etc.

Swami Vivekananda has held Indian women in high esteem and has appreciated their typical Indian features like spirit of service, compassion, affection, contentment and reverence. Swamiji remarked that the Indian women must grow and develop in the footprints of Sita as all the Indian ideals of a perfected woman have been properly reflected in her life and any attempt to modernize our women taking away the ideals of Sita will immediately be a failure.

#### Objectives of the study :

1. To highlight the concept of Vivekananda's women empowerment
2. To bring out the need of Vivekananda's ideal for developing the empowerment of women in the present age, situation and time.

#### Methodology :

The method in this paper is mainly descriptive and based on secondary data. Information has been collected from various books.

#### Discussion :

According to studies, during the early Vedic period, women enjoyed equal status and rights. They enjoyed freedom, good status and learning opportunities. Scriptures such as Rigveda and Upanishads mention several women sages and seers notably Gargi and Maitreyi. Rigvedic verses suggest that the women married at a matured age and were probably free to select their husbands. However, later, the status of women

began to decline with the Islamic invasion of Babar and the Mughal empire and later Christianity curtailing women's freedom and rights. The Indian women's position in the society further deteriorated during this period when Sati, child marriages and a ban on widow remarriages became part of social life among some communities in India. The Muslims brought the Purdah practice in the Indian society. The Devadasis or the temple women were sexually exploited. Among the Rajput of Rajasthan, the Jauhar was practised. Polygamy was widely practised especially among Hindu Kshatriya rulers. In many Muslim families, women were not allowed to Zanana areas. So, medieval period is described as the darkest period in the history of Indian women in general. After Islamic rule, India was under the power of the British. The British rule had created widespread poverty, hunger and the propaganda of their missionaries. These had created a sense of insecurity among the Indians about their traditional customs and beliefs. During such a period of crisis and controversies of the 19th century, many reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Ray, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, and Swami Vivekananda etc. appeared as a resplendent star in the Indian sky illuminating the entire atmosphere by their uncommon wit and spectacularly convincing speeches. They launched nationwide effort against the evils of both East and West.

Swami Vivekananda was one of the epitomes of India who with Sankara's intellect combined Buddha's heart, Christ's renunciation and the Prophet of Arabia's spirit of equality and the result of this holy confluence will in time flood the whole world. As Vivekananda had a cosmopolitan and a catholic outlook, he wanted in heart the proper fusion of the ideals of East and West for developing a system of women empowerment for future India vehemently criticizing the negative aspects of both the cultures.

To reform the Indian society, reformers raised a new voice of pan Indian nationalism. This first voice of protest was against the moral exploitation of the Indian society and this was to guide and provide the unique feature of the Indian freedom struggle. Swamiji was in close touch with both the core of Hindu religious thought and with the western philosophy. That Vivekananda's position was unique amongst the Indian leaders, he was able to take up the best feature of both in his work and attempt to fuse them in his dream of the future. Vivekananda's message was not the one of renunciation and mysticism that was used to hearing. Instead, he cried for work - work for the down-trodden and poor of the country, work to revitalize the society as a whole. Physical strength, moral strength, strength to work for others was his message to the Indians.

Vivekananda believed that downfall of India was largely due to the negligence of women. In the Upanisadic age, great Brahminis like Maitreyi and Gargi, women missionaries like Sanghamitra carrying Buddha's message to Syria and Macedonia, all were lying buried deep due to millennium of foreign domination. The cause of degradation of Indian women, the principal reason why our race has degenerated is

that we had no respect for these living images of Shakti. Manu says, "Where women are respected, there the Gods delight, and where they are not, there all work and efforts come to naught." (1) "There is no hope of rise for that society where there is no estimation of women, where they live in sadness." (2)

According to Vivekananda, there is a difference in the attitude of Indian men and their western counterparts. In America, men take upon their women as a manifestation of the omnipresent force of God and treat their women as well as can be desired, and hence they are so prosperous, so learned, so free and so energetic. But in India, men believe that women are born to please them. Indians are family oriented. In India, parents often indicate that girls will be going to another household, while the boy will earn and would inherit the family's wealth. Even little boys are told that they are stronger than girls. Naturally, they grow up believing that they are superior to women and may mistreat their parents later. Here a question arises, why cannot we just tell little boys to be more sensitive towards girls rather than feeding their brains with such lame notion. Vivekananda said, "It is very difficult to understand why in this country so many differences are made between men and women, whereas the Vedanta declares that one and the same conscious self is present in all beings, you always criticize the women, but say what have you done for their uplift? Writing down smritis etc., and binding them by hard rules, the men have turned the women into mere manufacturing machines! If you do not raise the women, who are the living embodiment of the Divine Mother, do not think that you have any other way to rise." (3)

Swami Vivekananda rightly observed that the condition of women in Mughal and British ruled India was deplorable. Women were treated rudely. They were deprived of their rights. As a result, the conditions of Indian women were pathetic. Seeing the pitiable condition of Indian women, Swamiji fell in great tension. At last, he arrived at the conclusion that women should be put in positions of power to solve their own problems in their own way. "Always people think that men can do his best because he can fight, and undergo tremendous physical exertion; women have physical weakness and noncombating quality. This is unjust. Women are as courageous as men. Each is equally same in his or her way. What man can bring up a child with such patience, endurance, and love as the woman can? The one has developed the power of doing; the other the power of suffering. If woman cannot act, neither can man suffer. The whole universe is one of perfect balance." (4) Vivekananda believed that it is the woman who moulds the next generation, and hence the destiny of the country. So, he emphasized that woman must be educated. "Duly emphasizing the role of educated women, the first Prime Minister of our country Jawaharlal Nehru has very rightly said "Education of a boy is education of one person but education of a girl is the education of the entire family". (5) In Vivekananda's educational scheme for India, the uplift of women and the masses received the highest priority.

Women — "Be emboldened"; Embodiment of Goddess of Mother.

In every country, it seems that men and women have different ways of understanding and judging things. Men have one angle of vision, women another; Men argue from one standpoint, women from another; Men extenuate women and lay the blame on men; while Women exonerate men and heap all the blame on women. (6) Swami Vivekananda considered Sita as the ideal Indian woman. He also told, "The ideal womanhood of India is motherhood- that marvelous, unselfish, all suffering, ever forgiving mother." He understood the day India started neglecting their women, the downfall of the nation started.

### **The idea of perfect womanhood is perfect independence :**

Vivekananda was against early marriage. He claimed that early marriage was the very reason for the existence of so many widows, so many early births of emaciated children who would only increase the number of beggars in the country. Vivekananda was in favour of educating and supporting the daughters with as much care and attention as they do the same for their sons. As sons should be married in matured age, so daughters also should be married in matured age. Daughters should be educated by their parents. Sister Christine wrote that for weeks and months, Vivekananda would be buried in thought, creating and recreating the splendid image of the Indian women of the future, which would be a combination of the western spirit of independence, freedom and dynamism with Indian austerity, purity and chastity.

In the west its ideal is wife, in India is the mother. In India, mother is the center of the family and our highest ideal. Mother is to us the representative of God, as God is the mother of the universe. Our God is both personal and absolute, the absolute is male, the personal female.

The rise of outstanding women administrators, statesmen, scientists, writers and spiritual teachers is gradually proving the truth of the prophetic words. Following the footsteps of Sarada Devi and Sister Nivedita, hundreds of women all over the world are coming forward with a combination of 'Mother's heart' and 'Hero's will', a combination of the purity of 'Holy Mother' and the dynamism of the 'Rani of Jhansi' or 'Joan of Arc'. Sita, Sabitri and Damayanti are the very types of the true Indian women. They are unique. So, the women of India must grow and develop in the footprints of them. They are ever chaste and ever pure wives, the ideal of the people, our national Goddess they must remain. They have gone into the very vitals of our race. Any attempt to modernize our women without inculcating the ideals of Sita, Sabitri and Damayanti will immediately become a failure.

Women in India now participate in all activities such as education, sports, politics, media, art and culture, service sectors, science and technology etc. Moreover, scientists of Indian origin like KalpanaChawla and Sunita Williams have also been to space. The position of women in india has been subject to many great changes over the past few centuries, from equal status with men. In ancient times, through the low points of the medieval period, to the promotion of equal rights by many reformers, the history of

women in India has been eventful. In independent India, women have adorned high offices. In India, women are still exposed to numerous social issues.

To Swami Vivekananda, "If women are raised, their children will by their noble actions glorify the name of the country; then will culture, knowledge, power and devotion awaken in the country." (7)

#### **Conclusion :**

Vivekananda offered many solutions for women empowerment, which are of much need in today's society. The society today, no doubt is developed. Women too are developing. Condition of the females of the society has improved. They are in a better position than what they were few decades back. But, despite all these progressions, they have not reached the level of men. They are still considered subordinate to men, inferior to the other section of the society. Many parts of the country still report cases of dowry and domestic violence on women. There is still a lot more to develop in the society for the better. So, it is of utmost importance to bring together concept of women empowerment along with changing the thoughts of the society. Men in particular need to understand that women held a very important position in the society, and that they too deserve equal respect and opportunities. Only then will the views of men will change for the better. And this will certainly help in the development of females. Vivekananda's philosophy on women empowerment is of importance for this change.

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2. Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Volume 7, Page 215
3. Ibid, Page 214
4. Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Volume 2, Page 25-26
5. Swami Vivekananda on education, by Dr. Damodar Mahapatra, Dr Ramakrushna Pati Page 25
6. Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Volume 7, Page 378
7. Ibid, Page 220 ○



# PANCHALI'S NEW IDENTITY

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## Introduction :

Chitra Banerjee Devakaruni 's *The Palace of Illusions* is the epic interpretation of tale of The Mahabharata narrated through the view point of Panchaali alias Draupadi. She begins narrating the incidents of her abnormal birth, lonely childhood, friendship and relationship with Lord Krishna, life with the five Pandavas, relation with Kunti ,her mother-in-law, ways created to keep Pandavas together, her fatal attraction towards Karna, motherhood and her journey in the long endeavour and her role in the Kurukshetra war. She has been hailed as 'the woman who shall change the course of history' and indeed credit goes to her for the change which brought the war of *Mahabharata*, a woman in the midst of the chaos created. She has been hailed and also cursed for being a woman at the helm of big decisions.

Draupadi has been hailed as a 'kritya' (demoness), one who brings destruction and ruin to the clan. But Devakaruni presents Panchali as a powerful, strong ,fiery and independent women, and equals to the men specially her five great husbands each of them having great powers ,around her. Her life is a choice made by herself and has a voice in the Indian patriarchal society, to certain extent of extolling the status of Indian woman to a higher position. The novel reclaims to present the famous tale of Kurukshetra war held between the two families Kauravas and Pandavas, the men and their devoted wives and also the crucial relation between womanhood and vengeance . Panchali has to marry all five Pandavas , after Arjun, the handsome warrior won her hand in an archery contest. When she was brought before Kunti she asked the five brothers to divide amongst themselves as always. A game by Yudhisthir with Duryodhan the elder Kauravas and the shrewedness of Shakuni, maternal uncle of the Kauravas makes him gamble away all his possessions , his kingdom as well as Draupadi who vows to avenge her womanhood for the shame accorded to her amidst the great dignataries seated at the court. Infact she has to face the tragedy of being undressed though Krishna was their to help her. Her modesty had been outraged. She vows vengeance. And she does. In the final battle of Kurukshetra, everyone dies except Draupadi and her husbands.

[Key words : Kritiya, Kurukshetra, Gamble, Womanhood, Modesty.]

### Objectives :

The epic has a monstrosity of its own, though the focal point in Devakaruni's *The Palace of Illusions* is Panchali. *Mahabharata* is one of the defining cultural narratives in the construction of masculine and feminine gender roles in ancient India, and its numerous telling and retellings have helped shape Indian gender and social norms ever since. The gender belying man are represented by the virile husband and fearless warrior complimented the ideal of the Royal and devoted wife underlined in the characters of Gandhari, Draupadi, Kunti in the representation of the feminist aspect. The view point is a womancentric peep through the eyes of Panchali, at the great epic.

### Methodology :

The present paper is based on both primary and secondary data collected by using the original work of the author and secondary sources from published literature of the novel concerned.

### Discussion :

The epic puts forth the aspects of femininity which has mythical connotation and implies female independence, presenting woman to be the main contributors to their husband's success. Brodbeck and Black rightly point that "the roles are restrictive, only representing women in relation to the menfolk, but in terms of the behaviour of female characters, there is a sense in which neither there is a paradigm is complete in itself". Andrea Custodi describes Draupadi being extolled as devoted to her husband's, yet on the other is often shown 'to be intellectual, assertive and sometimes bold and downright dangerous.' Again Alf Hiltebeitel sees Draupadi as an invocation of Kali/Lakshmi, the Goddess of Destruction and Wealth respectively.

The epic's central characters Arjun and Draupadi manifest different modes of gendered behaviour at different moments in the narrative'. Draupadi is a fiercely loyal wife and a hot-tongued critic of her husbands, hence at once 'active and passive' articulate speaker and symbolic listener.

As far as Education is concerned, Brian Black points out, the women undergo a second-hand instruction as they are usually a constant pressure in all scenes, watching when men receive important teachings and hearing their Histories and stories, yet this eavesdropping 'is far from passive'. Black argues the central female characters, though mostly confined to the background, emerge to shape the story in significant ways and the stance taken towards their agency appears thoroughly ambivalent as,

'.....for both Gandhari and Draupadi, there is more to being a listener than merely their symbolic presence. The way in which both of them are constituted as subjects shows that they are not merely defined and portrayed in relation to male characters, that what they hear and say is linked up with their sacrificial duties and circumstances

as queens(...) Draupadi's role as listener(...) educates her for her role as drama queen.

Divakaruni's version portrays Draupadi's education and her transformation from ambitious princess to revenge-seeking queen in subjective detail. First, her brother's and later her husband's lessons, she also receives many instructions of her own (sorceress, sage or Krishna). During Pandavas year of disguise, Draupadi and her husband's spent the final year of exile in hiding under cover - Draupadi takes the role of a chambermaid and Arjun that of an eunuch, a reversal of role. Draupadi is depicted as dynamic, impatient and even aggressive whereas Arjun is playful and effeminate. These disguise and action associate defilement of both Arjun and Draupadi.

Divakaruni explains her motivation to write the Mahabharata from Draupadi's perspective and to put her life, her questions and her vision,

'.....her destiny that was foretold when she was born, her insistence on doing what none of the other women around her were doing and her unique situation -being married to five brothers -all made her the perfect choice. I was also interested in the fact that in some ways she was the catalyst for the great war and perhaps the one who suffered the most as a result of it.'

Draupadi was not satisfied with the portrayal of women,

'.....they remained shadowy figures, their thoughts and motives mysterious, their emotions portrayed only when they affected the lives of the male heroes, their roles ultimately subservient to those of their fathers or husbands, brothers or sons. If I ever wrote a book.....I would uncover the story that lay invisible between the lines of the men's exploits'.

As, traditionally felt, the patriarchal-oriented Indian Society with an established segregation of the sexes and the family is of crucial importance. These issues and the suppression of women are current topics in Indian writing and is found in Divakaruni's novels. Urbashi Barat explains that 'Indian feminism developed differently than in the West and how contemporary fiction reflects that women's relationships remain to a large extent governed by the power politics of patriarchy.

Divakaruni gives voice to the female Asian immigrants and to portray the struggle with hybrid identities in her fictions, she uses cross-cultural perspectives, feminist issues (like women's oppression, arranged marriages, sisterhood etc continue to shape her work. Divakaruni wrote, 'I really wanted to focus on women battling and coming out triumphant. The author's interest in a fusion of art forms characterizes her writing as well as an ideologically interesting mix of Hindu traditionalism, spiritualism and emancipated feminism.'

Again Divakaruni also focuses on the marked silences, on the grief of the widows after the battle of Kurukshetra and also the intimate friendship Panchali shares with Krishna. Again another important element in the novel. Panchali's secretlove for Karna, an obsessive attraction. It is found right at the beginning of the novel, Draupadi's obsession with her roots and her struggle to make an identity for herself. She is in love with the stories and prophecies of her birth and listening to these are her favourite pastime.

Her dream of leaving her father's palace and escaping to her dream world is her fantasy. She questions how can someone so dark could change the history. She is visualised to be someone who desires then someone who is desired. Draupadi consults a sage about her future and the sage predicts her marriage to five heroes, a Goddess, mistress of the palace of illusions, and the beginner of the great war. Panchali's dream of possessing her own palace is clear, what she wants and now is transparent though a little wavering is obvious. Nair, opines, Panchali appears as a character who wants to attain centrality in everything. She attaches importance to the men in her life and specially the men of her secret desire, Karna, Krishna, her friend and her five husbands. Panchali suffers mainly as she tries to balance the roles she plays which is not an easy job.

Panchali is a born rebellion - her rebellion against the typical female skills like poetry, painting and sewing are shunned by her as she prefers those skills taught to her brother. When her father allows her to join the class, she herself finds that she was gathering manlike attitudes hardheadedness and argumentative. But she also knows how to utilise her feminine- by dazzling and manipulating through her looks and people easily give into her charms. A sorceress makes Panchali understand to control her passion and the destructive power. Every instance makes Panchaali plan how to utilise the situations.

### Conclusion :

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni in *The Palace of Illusions* revives the mythological character of Draupadi from being an object to subject. She tried to construct the character of Draupadi, though she is not the centre of the narrative, but she did give a rendering discourse on the female desires of 'their emotions portrayed only when they affected the lives of the male heroes their roles ultimately subservient to those of their fathers/husbands, brothers or sons.' Divakaruni's Draupadi is just not a mythological understanding of feminine issues but a contemporary understanding of feminine matters, desires and issues.

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# ব্ৰজবুলি সাহিত্যত অষ্ট নায়িকা

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## সংক্ষিপ্তসাৰ :

বৈষ্ণৱ ধৰ্মৰ উত্থানৰ লগে লগে ভাৰতবৰ্ষ ভক্তিৰসৰ ফলু ধাৰাৰে প্লাৱিত হৈ পৰে। ভাৰতবৰ্ষৰ বৈষ্ণৱ কবি-সন্তসকলৰ কল্পনা ৰাজ্যত শ্ৰীমদ্ভাগৱতৰ কষ্ণ লীলাই গভীৰ ক্ৰিয়া কৰিবলৈ আৰম্ভ কৰে আৰু সেই লীলামালাৰ আধাৰতেই সৃষ্টি হয় গীত, পদ, নাট আদিৰ।

বৈষ্ণৱ সাহিত্যত শ্ৰীকৃষ্ণৰ ৰতিৰ মাজেৰে ভক্ত আৰু ভগৱানৰ মাজত প্ৰেমৰ সম্বন্ধ স্থাপন কৰিছে আৰু সেই প্ৰেমেই উচ্চ ভাৱ সম্পন্ন ভক্তি ৰসলৈ সম্প্ৰসাৰিত হৈছে।

বৈষ্ণৱ সাহিত্যত শ্ৰীকৃষ্ণৰ আন লীলাতকৈ প্ৰেমলীলা অতি সৰস ভাৱে বৰ্ণিত হৈ আহিছে। অসমৰ বৈষ্ণৱ কবিসকলৰ সৰহ সংখ্যক পদ মধুৰ ৰসেৰে সিদ্ধ।

বৈষ্ণৱ সাহিত্যত নায়ক নায়িকাৰ বিভিন্ন পৰিস্থিতিত, তেওঁলোকৰ চৰিত্ৰত প্ৰকাশ পোৱা লক্ষণেৰে নায়ক আৰু নায়িকাৰ প্ৰকাৰ বা ভেদ নিৰূপণ কৰা হৈছে। নায়িকাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত দেখা যায় যে কৃষ্ণৰ প্ৰেম আকাঙ্ক্ষিত ব্ৰজ নায়িকাই কৃষ্ণৰ সৈতে প্ৰেমৰ সম্পৰ্ক ৰক্ষা কৰে। এই সম্বন্ধ অনুসৰি নায়িকাসকলকৰ প্ৰধানত : আঠোটা ৰূপৰ ব্যাখ্যা আগবঢ়োৱা হৈছে। সেই ৰূপ বোৰ হ'ল —

অভিসাৰিকা, বাসকসজ্জা, উৎকণ্ঠিতা, বিপ্লৱন্তা, খণ্ডিতা, কলহান্তৰিতা, স্বাধীনভৰ্তৃকা আৰু প্ৰোষিত ভৰ্তৃকা। বৈষ্ণৱ সাহিত্যত এই নায়িকা বিভাজনৰ আধাৰত ব্ৰজবুলি সাহিত্যৰ কেইটামান কবিতাৰ নায়িকাৰ আলোচনা কৰাৰ উদ্দেশ্যেৰে 'ব্ৰজবুলি সাহিত্যত অষ্ট নায়িকা' বিষয়টোক অধ্যয়নৰ বিষয় হিচাপে গ্ৰহণ কৰা হৈছে।

## মুখ্য শব্দ :

নায়িকা, প্ৰেম ধৰ্ম, অভিসাৰিকা, বাসকসজ্জা, কলহান্তৰিতা, উৎকণ্ঠিতা, বিপ্লৱন্তা, খণ্ডিতা, স্বাধীনভৰ্তৃকা, প্ৰোষিতভৰ্তৃকা।

## পাতনি :

বৈষ্ণৱ ধৰ্মীয় ধাৰণাৰ উত্থানৰ লগে লগে ভক্তি ৰসৰ ফলু ধাৰাই সমগ্ৰ ভাৰতবৰ্ষৰ ধৰ্মীয় চেতনাক ভক্তিৰ প্ৰেমৰসত প্লাৱিত কৰি পেলাইছিল। সংস্কৃত ভজ্ ধাতুৰ সৈতে— 'ভক্তি' প্ৰত্যয়ৰ সংযোগত সাধিত 'ভক্তি' শব্দৰ অৰ্থ আনুগত্য বা সেৱা। বৈষ্ণৱ সাহিত্য ৰাজিত ঈশ্বৰৰ প্ৰতি ৰখা তীব্ৰ প্ৰেমকেই ভক্তি আখ্যা দিয়া হৈছে। নাৰদৰ ভক্তি সূত্ৰত উল্লেখ আছে যে ঈশ্বৰৰ প্ৰতি তীব্ৰ প্ৰেমেই ভক্তি।

বল্লাভাচাৰ্যৰ মতে জীৱ ব্ৰহ্মৰ অণু আৰু সেৱক। জগত সত্য আৰু ব্ৰহ্ম নিগুণ। শ্ৰীকৃষ্ণ ব্ৰহ্ম আৰু এই ব্ৰহ্মক পতি

ভাৱে সেৱা কৰাই পুৰুষাৰ্থ। মধৱাচাৰ্যই ভক্তক ঈশ্বৰৰ দাস বুলি কোৱাৰ বিপৰীতে বল্লাভাচাৰ্যই মধুৰ ভাৱৰ ওপৰত বিশেষ গুৰুত্ব দিছে আৰু ভগৱান আৰু ভক্তৰ মাজত স্বামী-স্ত্ৰীৰ মাজৰ প্ৰেম সম্পৰ্ক আৰোপ কৰিছে।

আনহাতে চৈতন্যদেৱে পৰপতি হিচাপে ভগৱানক ভজনা কৰাৰ পথ নিৰ্দেশ দিছে। চৈতন্যদেৱৰ আদৰ্শত উপপতিৰ প্ৰতি গোপ বধূসকলৰ প্ৰেম অনুভৱক শ্ৰেষ্ঠ অনুভৱ আৰু এনে অনুভৱৰ পৰিমাজ্জিত ভক্তিয়েই হৈছে শ্ৰেষ্ঠ ভক্তি। এই ভক্তি সাধনৰ দ্বাৰাই জীৱই ব্ৰহ্মত বিলীন হ'ব পাৰে আৰু এই প্ৰেমভক্তিক মহা প্ৰেমলৈ নিব পৰাটোৱেই হ'ল জীৱৰ পুৰুষাৰ্থ।

ভক্তি আৰু প্ৰেমেই ভাৰতীয় বৈষ্ণৱ ধৰ্মীয় সাধনাৰ মূলতত্ত্ব। জাগতিক প্ৰেমে যি দৰে মিলনত সন্তুষ্টি লাভ কৰে সেইদৰে দিব্য প্ৰেমতো পৰমাত্মাৰ সৈতে জীৱ আত্মাৰ মিলনতেই পৰম সুখ, পৰম শান্তি লাভ কৰিব পাৰি।

বৈষ্ণৱ সাহিত্যসমূহত শ্ৰীকৃষ্ণৰ প্ৰতি ব্ৰজধামৰ গোপীৰ প্ৰেম শ্বাস্বত। কৃষ্ণৰ প্ৰেমলীলাৰ একান্ত সহযোগী হৈছে গোপী। বৈষ্ণৱ সাহিত্যৰ ৰাধা এই গোপীসকলৰ ভিতৰত শ্ৰেষ্ঠ। কৃষ্ণৰ প্ৰতি ৰাধাৰ প্ৰেমআকুলতা আৰু মিলনত যি আত্ম সন্তুষ্টি প্ৰকাশ পাইছে সি দিব্য প্ৰেমৰ পৰিচায়ক। দিব্য প্ৰেমত পৰমাত্মাৰ সৈতে মিলনেই একমাত্ৰ লক্ষ্য। সেয়েহে ৰাধাই মিলনৰ আকাঙ্ক্ষাৰে কৃষ্ণৰ প্ৰেম পাবলৈ ঘৰ-দুৱাৰ, সমাজৰ বান্ধোন ত্যাগ কৰি পৰকীয়া প্ৰেমত আত্মনিয়োগ কৰিছে আৰু কৃষ্ণ প্ৰেমত ব্যাকুল হৈ পৰিছে।

বৈষ্ণৱ সাহিত্যত কৃষ্ণৰ লীলা মালা, সৌন্দৰ্য, মহিমা, আদিৰ কথাকেই বিস্তাৰিত ভাৱে বৰ্ণনা কৰা হয়। নায়ক কৃষ্ণৰ প্ৰেমক কেন্দ্ৰ কৰি নায়িকা ৰাধা আৰু কোনো কোনো সাহিত্যত গোপীৰ প্ৰেমৰ সৰস বৰ্ণনা বৈষ্ণৱ সাহিত্যৰ সৌন্দৰ্য।

**উদ্দেশ্য :**

বৈষ্ণৱ সাহিত্যত অৱস্থা অনুযায়ী নায়কৰ লক্ষণ আৰু প্ৰভেদ পোৱা যায়। অনুকূল, ধৃষ্ট, অনভিজ্ঞ, প্ৰোষিত, মানী, স্বয়ংদূত আদি ভিন ভিন নায়কৰ লক্ষণ যি দৰে বৈষ্ণৱ সাহিত্যত পোৱা যায় ঠিক সেইদৰে নায়িকাৰ অৱস্থা অনুসৰি আঠ ধৰণৰ নায়িকা ভেদ বৈষ্ণৱ সাহিত্যত উত্থাপিত হৈছে।

প্ৰকৃততে বৈষ্ণৱ সাহিত্যত নাৰী ৰাধা আৰু অঙ্গনা গোপীসকলে কৃষ্ণক ক্ৰমে পতি আৰু উপপতি ৰূপে ভজে। আমাৰ উদ্দেশ্য ব্ৰজবুজী সাহিত্যৰ কেইটামান কবিতাৰ আধাৰত এই আঠপ্ৰকাৰ নায়িকাৰ বিশ্লেষণ আগবঢ়োৱাটো। এনে আচনিৰে “ব্ৰজবুলি সাহিত্যত অষ্ট নায়িকা” এই বিষয়টো অধ্যয়নৰ বাবে গ্ৰহণ কৰা হৈছে।

**পদ্ধতি :**

উক্ত বিষয়টোৰ আলোচনাৰ বাবে “ব্ৰজবুলি গীতি গুচ্ছ”ক মুখ্য উৎস হিচাপে লৈ বৈষ্ণৱ সাহিত্য সম্বলিত বিভিন্ন গ্ৰন্থ আলোচনী পত্ৰিকা আদিক গৌণ উৎস ৰূপে লোৱা হৈছে। সমগ্ৰ বিষয়টো বিশ্লেষণাত্মক পদ্ধতিৰে আলোচনা কৰা হৈছে।

**আলোচনা :**

শ্ৰীকৃষ্ণৰ প্ৰেম পিয়াসী ব্ৰজধামৰ অঙ্গনা দুই প্ৰকাৰৰ স্বকীয় আৰু পৰকীয়া। ৰুক্মিণী, সত্যভামা, জাম্বৱন্তী, ভদ্ৰা আদি স্বকীয় প্ৰকৃতিৰ, এওলোকে শ্ৰীকৃষ্ণক পতি আৰু উপপতিৰ ৰূপত বিচাৰে। ৰুক্মিণী এই সকলৰ ভিতৰত সকলোতকৈ ঐশ্বৰ্যশালী।

আনহাতে পৰকীয়া প্ৰেমিকা সকলো দুই ধৰণৰ। — কন্যাকা আৰু পৰোঢ়া। কন্যাকা সকল অবিবাহিতা, কুমাৰী আৰু দুৰ্গাৰ ব্ৰত ৰাখোতা।

পৰোচা নায়িকাসকল গোপসকলৰ পত্নী অৰ্থাৎ বিবাহিতা স্ত্ৰী, সন্তানহীনা আৰু এওঁলোক কেৱল কৃষ্ণৰ প্ৰেম  
প্ৰাপ্তিৰ আকাঙ্ক্ষাত চলে।

পৰকীয়া প্ৰেমত শ্ৰীৰাধা উত্তমা। বৈষ্ণৱ সাহিত্যত পৰকীয়া ৰূপক মধুৰ ৰস নিৰ্যাসৰ বাবে উৎকৃষ্ট বুলি বিবেচিত  
হৈছে। ব্ৰজধামৰ বধু হৈছে শ্ৰেষ্ঠ পৰকীয়া ভাৱ বহনকাৰী প্ৰেমিকা আৰু শ্ৰীৰাধা এই সকলৰ ভিতৰত শ্ৰেষ্ঠা।

**অভিসাৰিকা নায়িকা :**

যি নায়িকাই মদন পৰবশ হৈ প্ৰিয়তমক নিজৰ ওচৰলৈ মতাই আনে নতুবা তেওঁ নিজেই প্ৰিয়ৰ ওচৰলৈ যায়, তেওঁ  
অভিসাৰিকা নায়িকা। ৰসশাস্ত্ৰী ৰূপ গোস্বামীয়ে এই প্ৰসঙ্গত কৈছে যে যি নায়িকাই প্ৰিয়তমক অভিসাৰ কৰায় বা নিজে  
অভিসাৰ কৰে, সেয়ে অভিসাৰিকা।

অভিসাৰিকা নায়িকাই সামাজিক বাধা, মান-সন্মান নেওচা দি প্ৰাকৃতিক বিভিন্ন বাধা অতিক্ৰমি প্ৰিয় মিলনৰ আকাঙ্ক্ষা  
কৰে। সেয়ে প্ৰতিকূল বতৰতো প্ৰিয় মিলনৰ বাবে ওলাই যোৱা বাধাক সখীয়েকে কৈছে —

“নিসি নিসিঅৰে                      ভয়ভীম ভূজঙ্গম,  
জলধৰ বীজুৰি উজোৰ।  
তৰুণ তিমিৰ                      নিমি তইও চলসি  
বড় সখি সাহস তোৰ।।”

(বিদ্যাপতি)

(অৰ্থ নিশা নিশাচৰৰ লগতে ভয়ঙ্কৰ সাপ ওলায়। আকাশত বিজুলীৰ চক্ৰমকনি। অতি ঘনঘোৰ নিশা তুমি ক’লৈ  
যোৱা? তোমাৰ সাহসতো কম নহয়।)

প্ৰেমিক কৃষ্ণক পোৱাৰ আকুলতাত ৰাধাই প্ৰতিকূল পৰিবেশক উলঙিঘৰলৈ প্ৰয়াস কৰা দেখি সখীয়েকে বুজনি দি  
কৈছে —

“দশ্ দিশ দামিনি দহন বিখাৰ।  
হেৰাইতে উটকই লোচন তাৰ।।  
ইসে জানি অব তুহঁ তেজবি গেহ।  
প্ৰেমক লাগি উপেখবি দেহ।।

(গোবিন্দ দাস)

(ব্ৰজবুলি সাহিত্য মুকুৰ পৃঃ ১৭০)

(অৰ্থ সমানে বজ্জ পৰিছে, কড়ক্ কড়ক্ শব্দ হৈছে। শুনিলেই কাণ আৰু প্ৰাণ (হৃদয়) যেন জ্বলি যায়। কেউপিনে  
বিজুলীৰ চক্ৰমকনি, চকু চাওঁ মাৰি ধৰে। এনে অৱস্থাত প্ৰেমৰ বাবে ঘৰ এৰি বাহিৰলৈ ওলালে দেহক উপেক্ষা কৰা হয়।)

**বাসক সজ্জা নায়িকা :**

প্ৰিয় মিলনৰ বাবে যি নায়িকাই বাসভৰন সু-সজ্জিত কৰায় সেই নায়িকাই হ’ল বাসকসজ্জা নায়িকা।

বৈষ্ণৱ ৰসশাস্ত্ৰী শ্ৰীৰূপ গোস্বামীয়ে শ্ৰীৰাধাৰ বাসকসজ্জাৰ সংজ্ঞা এইদৰে নিৰূপণ কৰিছে — “আপোন সুবিধা  
অনুসৰি প্ৰিয়তম আহিব বুলি ভাবি যিয়ে নিজৰ শৰীৰ আৰু বাসগৃহ সুন্দৰ ভাৱে সজায়। তেৱেই হৈছে বাসকসজ্জা।”  
(ড° ভূপেন্দ্ৰ ৰায় চৌধুৰী ব্ৰজবুলি সাহিত্য মুকুৰ পৃঃ ৪২)

বাসকসজ্জা নায়িকা আঠপ্ৰকাৰৰ। মোহিনী, প্ৰতীক্ষা, জাগ্ৰতা, নায়কৰ আগমন পলম হোৱা দেখি কন্দা মধ্যোক্তিকা,

সুপ্তিকা সুৰমা সঙ্গীত পৰা, উদ্দেশ্য।

বৈষ্ণৱ কবিসকলে বাসকসজ্জা নায়িকাৰ দৈহিক আৰু মানসিক নানা অৱস্থাৰ ছবি অতি সুন্দৰভাৱে অঙ্কণ কৰিছে চণ্ডীদাসৰ পদত কৃষ্ণ আৰু ৰাধাৰ মিলন ঘটাবলৈ ৰাধাৰ বাসগৃহ এনে ধৰণৰ সজাইছে —

“ফুলেৰ আচিৰ                      ফুলেৰ প্ৰাচীৰ  
ফুলতে ছাইল ঘৰ।  
ফুলেৰ বালিস                      আলিস কাৰণ  
প্ৰতি ফুলে ফুলশৰ।।”

(চণ্ডীদাস)

(ব্ৰজাবুলী সাহিত্য মুকুৰ পৃঃ- ১৬১)

(অৰ্থ ফুলৰ দাপোন, ফুলৰ বেৰ, ফুল আচ্ছাদিত ঘৰ, ফুলৰ গাৰু, আৰামদায়ক শয্যা যেন প্ৰতিটো ফুলতে কামদেৱৰ শৰ অন্তৰ্নিহিত হৈ আছে।)

উৎকণ্ঠিতা নায়িকা :

মিলনৰ আকাঙ্ক্ষাত বৈ থকা, প্ৰিয়তম অহাত পলম হোৱা দেখি দুখত কাতৰ হৈ পৰা নায়িকাই উৎকণ্ঠিতা নায়িকা। এনে সময়ত নায়িকাৰ হৃদয়ত দুখ বৃদ্ধি হয়, কঁপিবলৈ ধৰে আৰু চকুলো মচি নিজৰ বিবহৰ কথা আনক কব খোজে। গোবিন্দ দাসৰ ৰাধাই গোটেই ৰাতি উজাগৰে থাকি প্ৰিয় কৃষ্ণ নহাৰ আক্ষেপেৰে কৈছে —

“কানুৰ লাগিয়া পোহাইলু এ চাৰি প্ৰহৰ ৰাতি  
এতদিনে মই নিশ্চয় জানিলো, নিষ্ঠুৰ পুৰুষ জাতি।।

(গোবিন্দ দাস)

(ব্ৰজাবুলী সাহিত্য মুকুৰ পৃঃ ৪৫)

(অৰ্থ কানুৰ কাৰণে চাৰি প্ৰহৰ ৰাতি উজাগৰে কটালো। নাহিলে। ইমান দিনে মই বুজি পাইছোঁ যে পুৰুষ জাতি সাঁচাকৈয়ে নিষ্ঠুৰ)

বিপ্ৰলঙ্কা নায়িকা :

মিলনৰ সংকেত দিয়াৰ পাচতো যদি প্ৰিয়তম নায়িকাৰ কাষলৈ নাহে, তেনে অৱস্থাত নায়িকাৰ মানসিক বিবহৰ আৰম্ভ হয় আৰু এনে বেদনা বিধূৰ নায়িকাক বিপ্ৰলঙ্কা নায়িকা বোলা হয়। এনে নায়িকাৰ দেহত চিন্তা, খেদ, অশ্ৰুপাত, মূৰ্ছা আৰু দীৰ্ঘশ্বাস আদি প্ৰকাশ পায়। চণ্ডীদাসৰ পদত বিপ্ৰলঙ্কা নায়িকাৰ ছবি অঙ্কিত হৈছে এনেদৰে —

“শাশুড়ি ননদী                      বঞ্চনা কৰিয়া  
আইলু গহন বনে,  
বড় সাধ মনে                      এ ৰূপ যৌৱনে  
মিলিব বন্ধুৰ সনে।।  
পথ পানে চাহি                      ক’তনা ৰহিব

(ব্ৰঃসাঃমুঃ পৃঃ ১৬২)

(অৰ্থ শাশু ননদক বঞ্চনা কৰি গভীৰ বনলৈ আহিলোঁ। এই ৰূপ যৌৱন, এই পূৰ্ণ অৱস্থাত প্ৰিয় কৃষ্ণৰ সঙ্গ সুখ লাভ কৰাৰ মনত বৰ হেৰ্পাহ আছিল। কিন্তু সিও অথলে গ’ল। পথলৈ চাই ৰইছোঁ, প্ৰিয় কৃষ্ণ নাহিল।)



## খণ্ডিতা নায়িকা :

সময় পাৰ হৈ গ'ল, কিন্তু প্ৰিয়তম নাছিল। অহাত আহিল যদিও অন্য নাৰীৰ সন্তোগ চিহ্ন ধাৰণ কৰি কাষলৈ আহোতে যি নাৰীৰ অন্তৰ ইৰ্ষাত বিকৃত হয়, তেৱেই খণ্ডিতা নায়িকা। ক্ৰোধ, দীৰ্ঘনিশ্বাস, মৌনাদি— খণ্ডিতা নায়িকাৰ লক্ষণ। ড° পৰাগ কুমাৰ ভট্টাচাৰ্যই খণ্ডিতা নায়িকা আঠ প্ৰকাৰৰ বুলি উল্লেখ কৰিছে — “নিন্দা বা কাস্তৰ নিন্দাকাৰিণী, ক্ৰোধ বা অনুনয়ৰত। কাস্তৰ তিবন্ধাৰ কাৰিণী, ভয়ানকা বা সিন্দুৰ কাজল প্ৰভৃতি ভোগ চিহ্ন ধাৰণকাৰী নায়কক দেখি যি ভীতা হয়, প্ৰ গলভ অৰ্থাৎ কাস্তৰ লগত কলহকাৰিণী, মধ্যা বা অন্য নায়িকাৰ সন্তোগ চিহ্ন দেখি লজ্জিতা, মুগ্ধা বা যিয়ে মৌন আৰু কাতৰ ভাৱে থাকে অথচ চকুলোৰে দুচকু ভৰে, কম্পিতা বা ক্ৰোধবশত : ক্ৰন্দসী আৰু সন্তপা।”

(প্ৰেম ধৰ্ম বৈষ্ণৱ কাব্য পৃঃ ১৪৯)

চণ্ডীদাসৰ পদত খণ্ডিতা নায়িকাৰ ছবি এইদৰে অঙ্কিত হৈছে —

“নয়নেৰ কাজৰ                      বয়নে লেগেছে  
কালোৰ উপৰে কাল,  
প্ৰভাতে উঠিয়া                      ও মুখ দেখিলু  
দিন যাবে আজি ভাল।।  
অধৰেৰ তাম্বুল                      বয়নে লেগেছে  
ঘুমু ঢুলু ঢুলু আখি,  
আমা পানে চাও                      ফিৰিয়া দাঁড়াও  
নয়ন ভৰিয়া দেখি।।”

(ব্ৰজাৱলী সাহিত্য মুকুৰ পৃঃ ১৬৩)

(অৰ্থ, তুমি এনেয়ে ক'লা। তাতে চকুৰ কাজল গালত লাগিছে। ৰাতিপুৱাই উঠি এইখন মুখ দেখিলোঁ, আজি নিশ্চয় দিন ভালেৰে যাব। তামোলৰ পিক্ মুখত লাগিছে, নিদ্ৰাত চকু টানি টানি নিছে। এতিয়া মুখ লুকুৱাব নেলাগে। মোৰ ফালে মুখ কৰি থিয় হোৱা, ভালদৰে এবাৰ চাই লওঁ।)

যি নায়িকাই ক্ৰুদ্ধ হৈ প্ৰিয়ক প্ৰত্যাখ্যান কৰি পিছত দুখ কৰে নতুবা অনুতপ্ত হয় তেৱেই কলহাস্তৰিতা নায়িকা। ড° ভূপেন্দ্ৰ ৰায়চৌধুৰীয়ে ব্ৰজবুলি সাহিত্য মুকুৰত এই বিষয়ে উল্লেখ কৰি কৈছে — “সাধাৰণতে কলহাস্তৰিতা নায়িকাই দুৰ্জয় মানৰ বশীভূত হৈ অনুকূল নায়কক প্ৰত্যাখ্যান কৰে। ইয়াৰ ফলত যেতিয়া প্ৰিয়জন আতৰি যায় বা নায়িকাৰ প্ৰতি অনুৰূপ ব্যৱহাৰ কৰে তেতিয়া নায়িকাই নিজৰ ভুল বুজিব পাৰি অনুশোচনা কৰে।” (পৃঃ ৪৯)

জ্ঞান দাসৰ পদত ৰাধাৰ পৰা অনাদৰ পাই প্ৰিয়তম কৃষ্ণ মথুৰালৈ গুছি যোৱা বুলি ভাবি অনুতপ্ত হৈ ৰাধাই বাৰে বাৰে কান্দিছে আঁচলেৰে চকুপানী মচিছে, অথচ মুখেৰে এটা বাক্যও ক'ব পৰা নাই। সেই গিৰিধৰ মোহনে তেওঁৰ কটুবাক্যত আতৰলৈ গুছি গৈছে যে, এতিয়া আৰু মিলনৰ আশা একেবাৰে ক্ষীণ হৈ পৰিছে —

“আঁচৰে মুখ শশী                      ঘন ঘন ৰোয়সি  
কহইতে কহন না ফুৰ।।  
সো গিৰিধৰ বৰ                      অনত চলল জব  
তুহু মিলন বৰ দূৰ।।”

(ব্ৰঃসাঃমুঃ পৃঃ ১৬৬)

স্বাধীনভৰ্তৃকা নায়িকা :

প্ৰেমিক বা কান্ত যি নায়িকাৰ কাষৰ পৰা ক্ষন্তেকো আতৰি নাযায়, নায়িকাৰ অধীন হৈ থাকে সেয়েই স্বাধীনভৰ্তৃকা নায়িকা। স্বাধীনভৰ্তৃকা নায়িকাৰ অন্য নাম হ'ল আক্ৰান্ত নায়িকা অৰ্থাৎ নায়ক যাৰ বশীভূত হয় —

কান্তো ৰতিগুণ্যাক্ষণো ন জহতি যদন্তিকম।

বিচিত্ৰ বিভ্ৰমাসক্তা সা স্যাৎ স্বাধীনভৰ্তৃকা।।

(বিশ্বনাৰায়ণ শাস্ত্ৰী, সাহিত্য দৰ্পণ ৩য় পৰিচ্ছেদ)

(অৰ্থাৎ, ৰতি গুণত আকৃষ্ট হৈ যেতিয়া কান্তই বা প্ৰেমিকে সঙ্গ ত্যাগ কৰিব নোৱাৰে আৰু বিচিত্ৰ বিলাসত আসক্ত হৈ থাকে, তেনে নায়িকাই স্বাধীন ভৰ্তৃকা)

এনে নায়িকাৰ চেষ্টা হৈছে — জলকেলি, বনবিহাৰ, কুসুমচয়নাদি। ব্ৰজবুলি সাহিত্যত কবি অনন্তদাসৰ পদত স্বাধীন ভৰ্তৃকা নায়িকাৰ ছবি এইদৰে অঙ্কণ কৰা হৈছে —

“বিবিধ কুসুম আনিয়া নাগৰ, কৰল আমাৰ বেষ।

বেণী বাইয়া কৰী বাঞ্চিল, যতনে আঁচৰি কেশ।।

(ব্ৰঃ সাঃ মুকুৰ পৃঃ ৫২)

(অৰ্থ, বিভিন্ন ফুল আনি মোৰ প্ৰিয়তমে মোক সজাইছে। চুলিটাৰি পৰিপাতিকৈ আঁচৰি বেণী গুঠি খোপা বান্ধি দিছে।)

প্ৰোষিত ভৰ্তৃকা নায়িকা :

নানা কাৰ্যৰ বাবে যেতিয়া কান্ত দূৰ দেশলৈ যায় আৰু নায়িকাই বিবহ বিধূৰ হৈ বাট চাই থাকে, মদন পীড়াত কাতৰ হৈ পৰে, এনে নায়িকাই প্ৰোষিতভৰ্তৃকা নায়িকা। ড°পৰাগ কুমাৰ ভট্টাচাৰ্যই এনে নায়িকাৰ লক্ষণ সম্পৰ্কে এইদৰে কৈছে —

“প্ৰিয়তমৰ গুনানুকীৰ্তন, নিজ অন্তৰৰ দীনতা প্ৰকাশ

দেহৰ কৃশতা, ৰাত্ৰি জাগৰণ, স্নান চিন্তেৰে অৱস্থান,

চিন্তামগ্নতা প্ৰকৃতি প্ৰোষিতভৰ্তৃকাৰ লক্ষণ।”

(প্ৰেম ধৰ্ম আৰু বৈষ্ণৱ কাব্য পৃঃ— ১৪৬)

বৰ্যাকালত প্ৰৱাসত থকা নায়িকাৰ বাবে আকুল হোৱা প্ৰোষিতভৰ্তৃকা নায়িকাৰ ছবি বৈষ্ণৱ কবি বিদ্যাপতিয়ে এইদৰে দাঙি ধৰিছে —

সখিহে হামাৰ দুখক নাহি ওৰ

ই ভৰ বাদৰ মাহ ভাদৰ

সূণ মন্দিৰ মোৰ।

ঝাম্পি ঘন

গৰজন্তি সপ্ততি

ভুবন ভৰ বৰসান্তিয়া।

কান্ত পাহন

কাম দাৰুণ

সমনে খৰশৰ হান্তিয়া।

(প্ৰেম ধৰ্ম আৰু বৈষ্ণৱ কাব্য পৃঃ ১৫৮)

(অৰ্থাৎ সখি, মোৰ দুখৰ কোনো শেষ নাই। প্ৰিয়ৰ অৱিহনে এই সুন্দৰ ভৰ ভাদ মাহত মোৰ গৃহ একেবাৰে শূণ্য হৈ পৰিছে। ঘনে ঘনে বিজুলি পৰিছে। হৃদয় কামশৰে ভেদি পেলাইছে।)

বৈষ্ণৱ কাব্যগীতত এইদৰে নায়িকাৰ বিচিত্ৰ ৰূপৰ অনুপম চিত্ৰ অঙ্কিত হৈছে। বিচিত্ৰ ৰূপৰ সমাহাৰত বৈষ্ণৱ কবিৰ নায়িকা হৈ পৰিছে প্ৰেমময়ী নাৰী সত্ত্বা। যি সত্ত্বা হৈছে লৌকিক সত্ত্বা। য'ত প্ৰত্যেকগৰাকী নায়িকা হৈ পৰিছে মানৱী সত্ত্বা বিশিষ্ট। লৌকিক জীৱনৰ ঠেথ-পেচ, মান-অভিমান, কামনা-বাসনাৰে পৰিমার্জিত বৈষ্ণৱ কবিৰ পদাৱলীৰ নায়িকা।

গ্ৰন্থপঞ্জী —

মুখ্য উৎস :

১. ৰায়চৌধুৰী, ডঃ ভূপেন্দ্ৰ ব্ৰজাবলী সাহিত্য মুকুৰ দ্বিতীয় খণ্ড, গীতিগুচ্ছ চতুৰ্থ সংস্কৰণ ২০০১
২. নেওগ মহেশ্বৰ(সম্পাদিত) ব্ৰজবুলি গীতিগুচ্ছ, ১৯৫৮

গৌণ উৎস :

১. শাস্ত্ৰী, বিশ্বনাৰায়ণ— সাহিত্য দৰ্পণ, ১৮৭৫
২. ভট্টাচাৰ্য, ডঃ পৰাগকুমাৰ প্ৰেমধৰ্ম আৰু বৈষ্ণৱ কাব্য ১৯৯৭

পত্ৰিকা :

১. প্ৰাচ্যজ্যোতি (শংকৰদেৱ সংখ্যা, মিৰ্জা) অসমীয়া ব্ৰজবুলিৰ উৎপত্তি বিকাশ, শ্ৰী নাৰায়ণ দাস ○

# ‘চাহেবপুৰাৰ বৰষুণ’ উপন্যাসত নাৰী চৰিত্ৰ

শ্ৰী মীনাক্ষী দেৱী

অতিথি অধ্যাপিকা

নাৰেংগী আঞ্চলিক মহাবিদ্যালয়

## সাৰাংশ :

আধুনিক উপন্যাসিকা সকলৰ ভিতৰত অনুৰাধা শৰ্মা পূজাৰীৰ নাম বিশেষভাৱে উল্লেখযোগ্য। তেখেতৰ উপন্যাস সমূহত বিবিধ বিষয়ৰ সমাহাৰ ঘটিছে। ‘চাহেবপুৰাৰ বৰষুণ’ উপন্যাসত মুখ্য ভাৱে নাৰীকেন্দ্ৰিক চিন্তাধাৰা প্ৰকাশ পাইছে। উপন্যাসৰ নায়িকা বৰ্ষাৰ মাজেৰে এগৰাকী আধুনিক নাৰীৰ দৃষ্টিভংগী আমি দেখিবলৈ পাব। প্ৰায়েই দেখা যায় যে নাৰীৰ চিন্তাক অগ্ৰাধিকাৰ নিদি পুৰুষকেন্দ্ৰিক সমাজত পুৰুষৰ সিদ্ধান্তই মানি লোৱা হয়। তেনেদৰে একোখন ঘৰতো নাৰীয়ে পদে পদে লাঞ্ছনাত ভুগিবলগীয়া হয়। পিতৃ-মাতৃয়ে নিজৰ কণ্যা সন্তানক নিজস্ব চিন্তাধাৰাৰে আগবাঢ়িবলৈ সুবিধা নিদিয়। বৰ্ষাৰ দৰে বহুতো নাৰী শিক্ষিত আৰু স্বাধীন মনৰ নাৰীয়ে জীৱনত স্বাধীন চিন্তাধাৰাৰে আগবাঢ়িব বিচাৰে আৰু সমাজৰ বাবে নিজস্ব কৰ্তব্য পালন কৰিব বিচাৰে। প্ৰান্তিকৰ দৰে ঠেক মনৰ ল’ৰাৰ লগত বিয়াত বহাৰ সিদ্ধান্ত ত্যাগ কৰি বৰ্ষাই নিজস্ব চিন্তাক অগ্ৰাধিকাৰ দিছে। পৰৱৰ্তী সময়ত বৰ্ষাই জীৱনৰ নানান প্ৰত্যাহ্বান নেওচি আনকি সমাজৰ বাবে নিজৰ পৰিয়াল ত্যাগ কৰি স্বাধীনভাৱে জীৱনত আগবাঢ়ি গৈছে।

উক্ত আলোচনাত ‘চাহেবপুৰাৰ বৰষুণ’ উপন্যাসৰ মাজেৰে বৰ্ষাৰ দৰে এগৰাকী সাহসী নাৰীৰ চৰিত্ৰ উপস্থাপনৰ দ্বাৰা আজিৰ সমাজৰ নাৰী সকলৰ মানসিকতাক সবল কৰাৰ বাবে প্ৰয়াস কৰা হৈছে। যুগে যুগে লুপ্তিত পদদলিত নাৰীয়ে আজি আত্মসন্মান আৰু স্বাভিমানৰ বাবে আগবাঢ়ি আহিবৰ হ’ল।

## চালিকা শব্দ :

নাৰী, স্বাধীনতা, সমাজ, মানসিকতা

## আৰম্ভণি :

সাহিত্যিক সমাজৰ দাপোন বুলি কোৱা হয়। সমাজ এখনক সুচাৰু ৰূপে পৰিচালিত কৰিবলৈ পুৰুষৰ লগতে নাৰীৰো সমানে দৰকাৰ হয়। এখন সমাজক শিক্ষিত পুৰুষ আৰু নাৰী উভয়েহে প্ৰতিষ্ঠিত কৰে। কিন্তু সমাজৰ কোনো এটা অংশত নাৰীক অৱহেলাৰ দৃষ্টিৰে চোৱা হয়। ভাৰতবৰ্ষত এনেকুৱা বহুতো ঠাই আছে য’ত কন্যা সন্তান জন্ম হোৱাটোৱে পাপ বুলি ভবা হয়। তেনে স্থলত নাৰীৰ ইচ্ছা-আকাংক্ষাই প্ৰাধান্য নোপোৱাতোৱেই স্বাভাৱিক। চলিত সময়ত সাহিত্য ক্ষেত্ৰত নাৰী বিমৰ্ষ এটি গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ বিষয়। আজিৰ সচেতন সাহিত্যিক সকলে

নিজৰ উপন্যাস, গল্প, প্ৰবন্ধ আদি বিবিধ দিশৰ মাজেৰে নাৰী সমস্যাক অগ্ৰাধিকাৰ দিয়া দেখা যায়।

অনুৰাধা শৰ্মা পূজাৰীৰ অনেক উপন্যাসত নাৰী চৰিত্ৰৰ উপস্থাপন দেখিবলৈ পোৱা যায়। তেখেতৰ কেইখনমান নাৰীকেন্দ্ৰিক উপন্যাস যেনে – ‘হৃদয় এক বিজ্ঞাপন’ (১৯৯৮) ‘কাঞ্চন’ (২০০১), ‘বৰাগী নদীৰ ঘাট’ (২০০৪), ‘নাহৰৰ নিৰিবিলি ছাঁ’ (২০০৫)। এই সমূহ উপন্যাসত সমাজৰ বিভিন্ন শ্ৰেণীৰ নাৰীৰ চিন্তাধাৰাক সুন্দৰভাৱে উপস্থাপন কৰা হৈছে। উপন্যাসিকাৰ ‘চাহেবপুৰাৰ বৰষুণ’ উপন্যাস খনি ২০০৩ চনত প্ৰকাশ পাই। এইখন এখন মনস্তাত্ত্বিক উপন্যাস। উপন্যাসৰ নায়িকা বৰ্ষাৰ শক্তিশালী চৰিত্ৰ উপস্থাপনৰ লগতে সমাজৰ এনে কিছুমান সমস্যাক দাঙি ধৰা হৈছে যাক, দূৰ কৰিবলৈ অত্যন্ত সাহস আৰু ধৈৰ্য্যৰ প্ৰয়োজন। শেখৰ হুছেইনৰ দৰে শিক্ষিত ব্যক্তিৰ তত্ত্বাবধানত এটা এন.জি.অ’ৰ যোগেদি ভাৰতৰ বিভিন্ন ঠাইৰ সমস্যা সমূহক দূৰ কৰিবলৈ যত্ন কৰা হৈছে। এন.জি.অ’ত বৰ্ষাৰ দৰে অন্য শিক্ষিত যুৱক-যুৱতীও আছে যিয়ে নিজৰ ঘৰ-দুৱাৰ এৰি কেৱল সমাজৰ কামত ব্ৰতী হৈছে।

### বিষয়ৰ গুৰুত্ব :

সাহিত্য ক্ষেত্ৰত বিবিধ সমস্যাৰ আলোচনাই গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ যদিও বৰ্তমান সময়ত নাৰীকেন্দ্ৰিক বিষয়ে যথেষ্ট গুৰুত্ব পোৱা দেখা গৈছে। তাহানিৰ যুগৰ নাৰী বৰ্তমান যুগৰ নাৰীৰ মনোভাৱৰ লগত যথেষ্ট পাৰ্থক্য থকা দেখা যায়। পুৰুষ কেন্দ্ৰিক সমাজত নাৰীৰ স্বাধীনতা খৰ্ব হোৱা দেখা যায়। কিন্তু শিক্ষাৰ প্ৰসাৰৰ লগে লগে এনে মনোভাৱৰ কিছু বিলুপ্তি নোহোৱা নহয়। এজনী ছোৱালীৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত মাক দেউতাক আৰু আত্মীয়ই বিচাৰে যে তাই ওৰেটো জীৱন সকলোৰে কথা মানি চলে। পঢ়া-শুনাৰ পৰা আৰম্ভ কৰি বিবাহলৈকে সকলো ক্ষেত্ৰত ছোৱালীয়ে নিজস্ব মত ৰাখিব নোৱাৰে। এই ক্ষেত্ৰত কিন্তু ল’ৰা সন্তানবোৰে বেছ স্বাধীনতা ভোগ কৰা দেখা যায়। সমাজৰ অলিখিত নিয়মবোৰ কেৱল নাৰীৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত প্ৰযোজ্য হয়। এটি পৰিয়াল বা এখন সমাজ সুস্থিৰ হৈ থাকিবলৈ নাৰী পুৰুষ উভয়ৰে প্ৰয়োজন। তেনেস্থলত এগৰাকী নাৰীয়ে কিয় বাধাৰ সন্মুখীন হ’ব লগা হয়। উক্ত উপন্যাস খনিত নাৰী চৰিত্ৰৰ সবল উপস্থাপনে সমাজত নাৰী সবলীকৰণৰ দিশটোক যথেষ্ট মজবুত কৰিব। উক্ত আলোচনাত নাৰী, সমাজ আৰু সমাজৰ মানসিকতাৰ দিশটোক পৰ্যালোচনা কৰি চোৱা হৈছে। ইয়াৰ দ্বাৰা নাৰীকেন্দ্ৰিক সামাজিক দৃষ্টিভংগীক উন্নত কৰিব পৰা যাব বুলি আশা কৰা হৈছে।

### উপন্যাসৰ বিষয়বস্তু :

‘চাহেবপুৰাৰ বৰষুণ’ উপন্যাস খনত নাৰীমনোবিজ্ঞানৰ দিশটোক বিশেষ গুৰুত্ব দিয়া হৈছে। উপন্যাসৰ নায়িকা বৰ্ষাৰ যৌৱনকালৰ সুন্দৰ সপোনবোৰ ভাগি থান বান হৈ যোৱাৰে পৰা আৰম্ভ কৰি নিজৰ স্থিতি অটল ৰাখি ঘৰ-পৰিয়াল সকলো ত্যাগ কৰি সমাজ সেৱাত ব্ৰতী হৈ সাহসিকতাৰ পৰিচয় দিয়া লৈকে সমগ্ৰ ঘটনাৰাজিক সুন্দৰভাৱে উপন্যাসখনিত উপস্থাপন কৰা হৈছে। ইয়াৰ লগতে সমাজৰ অইন কিছুমান দিশো সামৰি লোৱা হৈছে।

উপন্যাসৰ নায়িকা বৰ্ষা এগৰাকী ছ’চিয়েল ৱৰ্কছৰ ছাত্ৰী। ফাইনেল পৰীক্ষা দি দিল্লীৰ পৰা অসমৰ ঘৰলৈ আহি আছিল। লগত আছিল ভাবী স্বামী প্ৰান্তিক। প্ৰান্তিক আৰু বৰ্ষাৰ চিনাকি তিনি বছৰৰ কিন্তু আগৰ প্ৰান্তিকক

বৰ্ষাই বিচাৰি পোৱা নাই। ইউ. এছ. এত কম্পিউটাৰ ইঞ্জিনিয়াৰিং কৰি অহা প্ৰান্তিক বহুত সলনি হৈ গ'ল, আনকি দিল্লীৰ পৰা অসমলৈ ট্ৰেইনত অহা বৰ্ষাৰ প্ৰস্তাৱটোও প্ৰান্তিকে মানি ল'ব বিচৰা নাছিল। “বৰ্ষাই মন কৰিছে, প্ৰান্তিকে বস্তুৰ পৰা অহাৰ পাছত, ৰাস্তা-ঘাটৰ ভিক্ষাৰী, কুষ্ঠৰোগী, বস্তি, একোকে সহ্য নকৰা হ'ল। সকলোতে বেমাৰৰ বীজানু উৰি ফুৰা সি দেখিবলৈ পায়।” বৰ্ষাই বিমৰ্ষ মনেৰে প্ৰান্তিকৰ লগত ঘৰলৈ উভতি আহি থাকোতে হঠাৎ বিহাৰৰ চাহেবপুৰা নামৰ ঠাইত ট্ৰেইনখনৰ লগত অইন এখন মালবাহী ট্ৰেইনৰ মুখামুখি সংঘৰ্ষ হয়। যাৰ ফলত বৰ্ষাহঁতৰ ট্ৰেইনখন বহু সময় ধৰি সেই ঠাইত ৰাখিবলগীয়া হয়। ট্ৰেইনৰ মানুহবোৰক এন. জি. অ' এটাই বিশেষভাৱে সহায় কৰিবলৈ লয়। মানুহবোৰক সহায় আগবঢ়াবলৈ বৰ্ষা আগবাঢ়ি আহে। তাতে এন.জি.অ'ৰ প্ৰতিষ্ঠাপক শেখৰ হুছেইনক লগ পাই। হুছেইনৰ এন.জি.অ'ৰ লগত বৰ্ষাই সহায়ৰ হাত আগবঢ়াব বিচৰাত প্ৰান্তিক মান্তি হোৱা নাছিল। হঠাৎ প্ৰান্তিক হিংস্ৰ হৈ উঠিছিল আৰু বৰ্ষাক নানান অকথ্য কথা কৈ মানসিক আঘাত দিছিল। ফলত বৰ্ষাই প্ৰান্তিকৰ দৰে নীচ মনৰ ব্যক্তি এজনৰ লগত সম্পৰ্ক ছেদ কৰি স্বাধীন ভাৱেৰে জীৱনৰ পথত আগবাঢ়িবলৈ সিদ্ধান্ত ল'লে—“বৰ্ষাই কেতিয়াও অনুভৱ নকৰা এক শিহৰণ অনুভৱ কৰিলে। ইমানদিনে সৰু কুঁৱাত আৱদ্ধ এসোঁতা পানীক যেন স্বাধীনভাৱে বোৱাঁই নিয়া হ'ল মহাসাগৰলৈ।”

তাৰ পাছত বৰ্ষাৰ জীৱনলৈ আহিল এজাক নতুন বৰষুণ। চাহেবপুৰা নামৰ এখন অচিনাকি ঠাইত শেখৰ হুছেইনৰ এন.জি.অ'ৰ লগত জড়িত হৈ মেছু গাওঁ আৰু অন্য ঠাইত বিভিন্ন সামাজিক কাৰ্য্যৰ লগত জড়িত হৈ বৰ্ষাই নিজৰ জীৱনত আঙুৱাই গৈ থাকিল। এন.জি.অ'ৰ অন্য সদস্য ৰাখী, সঞ্জীৱহঁতৰ জীৱনৰ চিত্ৰও ঔপন্যাসিকাই সুন্দৰভাৱে দাঙি ধৰিছে। বৰ্ষাৰ পৰিয়ালৰ মানুহে প্ৰান্তিকৰ দৰে বিদেশত থকা জোঁৱাই হেৰুৱাই বৰ্ষাকে দোষী বুলি মানি ল'লে। কিন্তু বৰ্ষাৰ নিজ পিতৃ-মাতৃয়ে এবাৰো জীয়াৰীৰ কথা নাভাবিলে। আনকি বহু দিনলৈকে বৰ্ষাৰ খবৰ ল'বলৈও কোনো নাছিল। ইয়াৰ বিপৰীতে বৰ্ষাৰ পিতৃ-মাতৃয়ে বিদেশৰ জোঁৱাই হেৰুৱাৰ ভয়ত বৰ্ষাৰ ভগ্নী বন্যাৰ লগতে প্ৰান্তিকৰ বিয়া ঠিক কৰিলে। ইয়াৰ বাবে তেওঁলোকে প্ৰান্তিকৰ ওচৰতহে কৃতজ্ঞ হ'ব লগা হ'ল। কাৰণ সমাজত বৰ্ষাৰ মাক-দেউতাকে মুখ উলিয়াব নোৱাৰা হৈছে। পলাই যোৱা বায়েকৰ ভনীয়েকক নহ'লে কোনে বিয়া পাতিব। প্ৰান্তিকেহে তেওঁলোকক উদ্ধাৰ কৰিলে বুলি মানি ল'লে। সমাজে আৰু পৰিয়ালৰ এনে চিন্তাধাৰৰ বাবেই হয়তো বহুতো নাৰীৰ স্বাধীনতা খৰ্ব হোৱা দেখা যায়।

বৰ্ষাৰ জীৱনলৈ নতুন নতুন অলেখ প্ৰত্যাহ্বান আহিল চাহেবপুৰাৰ দৰে এটি খৰাং পীড়িত অঞ্চলত ব'দে বতাহে সামাজিক কামত ঘূৰি ফুৰাতো ইমান সহজসাধ্য নহয়। কিন্তু বৰ্ষাই নিজৰ তীব্ৰ মানসিক বলেৰে অনেক কষ্টও সহ্য কৰি গৈছিল। কাৰণ বৰ্ষাই ভাল পাই এখন মুকলি আকাশ। য'ত মানুহে কেৱল হৃদয়ৰ ভাষা বুজি পায়, য'ত কৃত্ৰিমতাৰ লেখমাত্ৰও নাথাকে। এন.জি.অ'ত কাম কৰি থকাৰ সময়ছোৱাতে বৰ্ষা তাৰে আন এজন সদস্য সঞ্জীৱৰ প্ৰেমত পৰিল। সঞ্জীৱ আছিল এজন শিক্ষিত, গহীন-গভীৰ, সমাজৰ কামত অগ্ৰাধিকাৰ দিয়া যুৱক। সঞ্জীৱেও বৰ্ষাক ভাল পাইছিল, কিন্তু দুয়ো কৰ্তব্যৰ প্ৰতি সদাসচেতন আছিল। এবাৰ এন.জি.অ'টোৱে উত্তৰ পূৱৰ মাজুলী দ্বীপৰ উন্নতিৰ হ'কে কাম কৰিবলৈ সুবিধা পালে। হুছেইন, বৰ্ষা, সঞ্জীৱ আৰু ৰাখী চাৰিওজন আহি নদীদ্বীপ মাজুলীত উপস্থিত হ'ল। মাজুলীৰ সৌন্দৰ্য্য, কলা-কৃষ্টিয়ে সকলোকে মুহি পেলালে। মাজুলীৰ ৰাইজৰ সহায় সহযোগিতাত সকলো কামেই সুচাৰুৰূপে আগবাঢ়ি গৈছিল। কিন্তু কিছুমান অসামাজিক সংগঠনে

তেওঁলোকক বাধা দিলে। ফলত সঞ্জীৱৰ দৰে কৰ্মস্থ যুৱক এজন অকালতে প্ৰাণ হেৰুৱাব লগা হ'ল। বৰ্ষাৰ জীৱনলৈ কাল ধুমুহা নামি আহিল। কিন্তু এই ধুমুহাই বৰ্ষাক বিচলিত কৰিব নোৱাৰিলে। শেখৰ হুছেইন আৰু ৰাখীক পঠিয়াই দি ওৰোটো জীৱন মাজুলীতে থাকি কাম কৰি যাবলৈ বৰ্ষা বদ্ধপৰিকৰ হৈ ব'ল।

### বিশ্লেষণ :

উপন্যাস খনিৰ নায়িকা বৰ্ষাক আৰম্ভণিৰ পৰা শেষলৈ এগৰাকী সাহসী নাৰী ৰূপে ধৰা হৈছে। পুৰুষকেন্দ্ৰিক সমাজত প্ৰায়েই নাৰীয়ে নিজস্ব সিদ্ধান্তক প্ৰকাশ কৰিবলৈ অসুবিধা পায় আৰু নিজৰ ইচ্ছা অবিহনেও আনৰ কথা অনুসৰি চলিব লগাত পৰে। কিন্তু বৰ্ষাৰ চৰিত্ৰ ইয়াৰ বিপৰীত। বৰ্ষা আৰু প্ৰান্তিক দুয়োজনৰ প্ৰেমৰ পৰিণতিতেই বিবাহ হ'বলৈ ওলাইছিল। কিন্তু বৰ্ষাই প্ৰান্তিকক বিদেশত থকাৰ বাবে ভালদৰে ওচৰৰ পৰা ল'গ পাব পৰা নাছিল। সেইবাবেই বৰ্ষাই ঘৰলৈ উভতি অহাৰ পথছোৱা ট্ৰেইনত অহাৰ কথা কৈছিল। ট্ৰেইনত নহা হ'লে হয়তো তাই প্ৰান্তিকক আৱিষ্কাৰ কৰিব নোৱাৰিলেহেঁতেন। প্ৰান্তিকৰ দৰে ল'ৰা এজনৰ মানসিক পৰিৱৰ্তনে বৰ্ষাক পুনৰ এবাৰ সিহঁতৰ সম্পৰ্কৰ বিষয়ে ভাবিবলৈ বাধ্য কৰালে। কিন্তু বৰ্ষাৰ পিতৃ-মাতৃয়ে নিজৰ কন্যাৰ মানসিক অন্তৰ্য্যথাক বুজিবলৈ যত্ন নকৰিলে। বৰ্ষাই মাকক নিজৰ সিদ্ধান্তৰ বিষয়ে বহুত বুজাবলৈ যত্ন কৰাৰ পাছতো তেখেতে বুজিবলৈ চেষ্টা নকৰিলে—“কিন্তু মা, সময় থাকোতেই যদি মই এই সিদ্ধান্ত নল'লোহেঁতেন, মই চিৰজীৱন মোৰ মানসিকতাৰ সৈতে কোনো পথে খাপ নোখোৱা পুৰুষৰ স'তে কম্প্ৰ'মাইজ কৰি, বাধ্য হৈ জীৱন পাত কৰিবলগা হ'লহেঁতেন।” বৰ্ষাই নিজৰ সিদ্ধান্তক লৈ অনুশোচিত হোৱা নাছিল। কাৰণ তাই জানিছিল যে, তাই ভুল সিদ্ধান্ত লোৱা নাই।

বৰ্ষাৰ মাতৃয়ে যেতিয়া প্ৰান্তিকৰ লগত বন্যাৰ বিয়াৰ খবৰ দিছিল তেতিয়া বৰ্ষাই ভাবিবলৈ বাধ্য হৈছিল যে —“প্ৰান্তিকক তেতিয়াহ'লে যিকোনো এজনী ছোৱালী বিয়া কৰাবলৈ পালেই হয় ! বৰ্ষা নহ'লে বন্যা ! প্ৰান্তিকে বৰ্ষাক তেনেহ'লে কি বুলি ভাবিছিল। এটা নাৰীদেহ !”<sup>৪</sup> প্ৰান্তিকক বুজি পাবলৈ বৰ্ষাৰ আৰু বাকী নাথাকিল। সেইবাবেই তাই ঘৰৰ পৰা সম্পূৰ্ণৰূপে সম্পৰ্ক বিচ্ছেদ কৰি নিজস্ব গৰিমাৰে জীৱনৰ পথত আগুৱাই গৈছিল। পৰৱৰ্তী সময়ছোৱাত বৰ্ষা এগৰাকী শিক্ষিত ছোৱালী হৈও চাহেবপুৰাৰ দৰে এখন অচিনাকি গাঁৱত থাকি সমাজৰ বাবে কাম কৰি যোৱাৰ বাবে সাহস পাইছিল।

উক্ত উপন্যাস খনিত ঔপন্যাসিকাই নাৰীকেন্দ্ৰিক চিন্তাধাৰাকে প্ৰধান ভাবে লোৱা দেখা যায়। মুখ্য নাৰী চৰিত্ৰ বৰ্ষাৰ উপৰিও ৰাখী, গ্ৰামীণ মহিলা আৰু বৰ্ষাৰ, মাতৃৰ মাধ্যমেৰেও নাৰী কেন্দ্ৰিক কিছু চিন্তাধাৰা প্ৰকাশ কৰা হৈছে যাৰ ফলত সম্পূৰ্ণ ঘটনাৰাজি অত্যন্ত মনোগ্ৰাহী হৈছে।

### সামাজিক গুৰুত্ব :

“চাহেবপুৰাৰ বৰষুণ” উপন্যাস খনিৰ যথেষ্ট সামাজিক গুৰুত্ব পৰিলক্ষিত কৰিব পাৰো। সময়ে সময়ে অনেক ঔপন্যাসিকাই নাৰীকেন্দ্ৰিক উপন্যাস ৰচনা কৰি আহিছে। তেওঁলোকৰ ভিতৰত নিৰুপমা বৰগোহাঞি, মামনি ৰয়ছম গোস্বামী, আদিৰ নাম বিশেষভাবে ল'ব পাৰি। সাহিত্যত নাৰীক দুটা ৰূপত চিত্ৰিত কৰা হয় এটি অবলা ৰূপ আৰু আনটি সাহসী ৰূপ। উক্ত উপন্যাস খনিত নাৰীৰ সাহসী ৰূপ প্ৰকাশ পাইছে। সময়ৰ পৰিৱৰ্তনৰ লগে লগে লগে মানুহৰ চিন্তাধাৰাৰো পৰিৱৰ্তন ঘটিছে। আজিৰ নাৰী শিক্ষা-দীক্ষা আদি বিবিধ ক্ষেত্ৰত কোনো

গুণেই পুৰুষতকৈ কম নহয়। সেইবাবে নাৰীয়ে নিজস্ব চিন্তাচৰ্চা, আদিৰ মাধ্যমেৰে সিদ্ধান্তত উপনীত হ'ব পাৰে। বৰ্ষা এগৰাকী স্বাধীন মনৰ নাৰী। তাই আৱেগৰ বশৱৰ্তী নহৈ নিজস্ব বিৱেচনাত সিদ্ধান্তত উপনীত হৈছে। উক্ত উপন্যাস খনিৰ নাৰী চৰিত্ৰৰ উপস্থাপনে বৰ্তমান সমাজত নাৰী সবলীকৰণৰ দিশটোক যথেষ্ট সহায় কৰিব। সমাজত নাৰীক নিজৰ অস্তিত্বৰ বিষয়ে সজাগ হ'বলৈও উপন্যাসখনে যথেষ্ট প্ৰেৰণা যোগাব।

**সামৰণি :**

উক্ত পৰ্যালোচনাৰ পাছত আমি ক'ব পাৰে যে উপন্যাসিকা অনুৰাধা শৰ্মা পূজাৰীৰ 'চাহেবপুৰাৰ বৰষুণ' উপন্যাস খনি নাৰীকেন্দ্ৰিক চিন্তাধাৰাৰ এক উৎকৃষ্ট নিদৰ্শন। নাৰী মনোবিজ্ঞানৰ দিশটোক বৰ্ষাৰ মাধ্যমেৰে ইয়াত সুন্দৰভাৱে ফুটাই তোলা হৈছে। নাৰী আৰু পুৰুষ প্ৰকৃতিৰে দুটা ৰূপ কিন্তু সমাজত নাৰী সদায় অৱহেলিত হৈ থাকিবলগীয়া হয়। ইয়াৰ বাবে কিছু পৰিমাণে নাৰী সমাজো দায়ী নোহোৱা নহয়। কিন্তু বৰ্ষাই প্ৰান্তিকৰ দৰে ল'ৰাৰ লগত বিয়াত বহি ভৱিষ্যৎ জীৱনটো অন্ধকাৰৰ মাজলৈ ঠেলি দিবলৈ মান্তি নহ'ল। পৰিয়াল আৰু সমাজৰ বিৰোধিতা কৰি নিজে সাহসী পদক্ষেপ ল'লে। বৰ্ষাৰ চৰিত্ৰৰ পৰা আজিৰ নাৰীয়ে এয়ে শিক্ষা লোৱা উচিত যে, নাৰী হ'লেও নিজৰ বিবেক বিবেচনাক পাহৰি যাব নালাগে। সময়ৰ পৰিৱৰ্তনৰ লগত নিজক সলনি কৰি সাহসেৰে আজিৰ নাৰী সমাজ আগুৱাই গ'লে ভৱিষ্যৎ প্ৰজন্মও যথেষ্ট লাভৱান হ'ব।

বিঃ দ্ৰঃ ১- পৃষ্ঠা নং ২৬ - চাহেবপুৰাৰ বৰষুণ।

২- পৃষ্ঠা নং ৩৭ - চাহেবপুৰাৰ বৰষুণ।

৩- পৃষ্ঠা নং ৫৬ - চাহেবপুৰাৰ বৰষুণ।

৪- পৃষ্ঠা নং ৫৯ - চাহেবপুৰাৰ বৰষুণ।

**সহায়ক গ্ৰন্থৰ তালিকা :**

**মুখ্য সমল -**

১. পূজাৰী শৰ্মা, অনুৰাধাঃ চাহেবপুৰাৰ বৰষুণ

**গৌণ সময় -**

১. গোস্বামী, যতীন : অসমীয়া ভাষা আৰু সাহিত্যৰ ইতিহাস।

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৪. শৰ্মা, সত্যেন্দ্ৰনাথ : অসমীয়া উপন্যাসৰ গতিধাৰা।

: অসমীয়া সাহিত্যৰ সমীক্ষাত্মক ইতিবৃত্ত। ○







ISSN 2395-5007