

Cultural Consciousness in the Works of Dr. Nirmalprabha Bordoloi

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Abstract: Nirmalprabha Bordoloi is one of the famous women writers of Assam. She has contributed a lot in many genre of Assamese literature like poems, songs, articles, research articles, criticism and song-based plays (*nrityanatika*). She has written many books on child literature. Assamese folk-literature is very colorful which gets reflected in the creations of Bordoloi. Bordoloi had deep knowledge of Assamese culture. In this paper, a discussion will be made about the cultural consciousness of Nirmalprabha Bordoloi in a thorough and broad manner. An analytical study will be made to write this paper for which both primary and secondary sources have been used.

Keywords: Nirmalprabha Bordoloi, Assamese Literature, Assamese folk-literature, Assamese folk-culture, Cultural consciousness.

1.0. Introduction

Assamese literature is very rich and colorful in the genre of Indian literature. From ancient period to modern period, Assamese literature has been continuously growing. Assamese folk-literature is very diverse. Many communities like Mising, Bodo, Karbi, Rabha, Khasi, Garo etc. are living in Assam. The formation of Assamese folk-literature is based on folk-culture and folk-literature of all these communities. As these are the ancient ethnic groups of Assamese race, they contribute a lot in the formation of Assamese folk-literature. Riddles, folk-tales, proverbs, folk-songs, rhymes, narrations, marriage songs, devotional songs etc. are the main sections of Assamese folk-literature and they are one of the attractive and heartfelt compositions.

Folk-literature is based on some elements which are: folk-tales, folk-proverbs, folk-riddles, folk-songs and folk-languages. Assamese society believes in some traditional things like: god is the supreme power on the earth, man reborn after death, man has to confront punishment if he/she does anything wrong in his/her life, god is kind to those who pray regularly etc. The Assamese culture has been mainly formed on Assamese traditions. Rongali, Bhogali and Kongali bihu are the main festivals of Assam and *Bihugeet* (traditional folk-song) and *bihunritya* (traditional folk-dance) are the soul of all these festivals. The Assamese people have a traditional faith in the superpower of gods like *Rama*, *Krishna* and *Shiva*.

Nirmalprabha Bordoloi is one of the significant writers of Assamese literature. She has written in different genre of literature like poetry, songs, prose and research based articles. In poetry section, she was one of the prominent and popular poets among the contemporary society of Assamese poets. She was not only a songwriter but also a composer of her own songs. She has written many popular modern Assamese songs for AIR

(All India Radio), television and films. She has written innumerable telefilms, *nrityanatika* (dance based play) and *sangitalekhya* (music based play). She has also written some non-fictional books (prose) which are mainly based on Indian philosophy. Thus, it is worth mentioning that she was the pioneer writer of this literary class.

2.0. Methodology and Objective of the Study

The study is mainly analytical in nature. The study is based on collection of primary and secondary data from different textbooks, reference books, periodicals, websites etc. The main objective of this paper is to know about the essence of cultural consciousness of Nirmalprabha Bordoloi which is present in her works. She had the cultural consciousness of Assamese folk-society in most of her works whether it is poems, songs, articles, research articles, criticism, song-based plays (*nrityanatika*) or child literature.

3.0. Discussion

One of the shining stars of Assamese literature is Dr. Nirmalprabha Bordoloi. She was the first Assamese woman to obtain doctorate degree (PhD) in literature. Her contribution in the world of Assamese literature is boundless. In her incomparable creations, books of poems like '*Bon Foringor Rong*' (1967), '*Dinor Pasot Din*' (1977), '*Saamipeshu*' (1978), '*Antaranga*' (1978) and '*Sudirgho Din Aru Ritu*' (1982) are worth mentioning. In children literature, '*Asomiya Umola Geet*', '*Mon Uroniya Manuh*', '*Jiki Mikir Kotha*', '*Xaliki Rotow Tow*' and '*Chil Chil Chila*' etc. have been written by her. '*Debi*' (1966), '*Shiba*' (1997) and '*Surja*' (2000) are her three (3) unique research based books. Some of the Bordoloi's literary, cultural and research based books are- '*Asomor Loka Sanskriti*', '*Asomor Loka Kobita*' (1997), '*Kobitar Kotha*', '*Adhunik*

Kobita, *'Kobita Aru Prokriti*', *'Karbi Samaj-Sanskritir Echerenga*', *'Gopan Sadhan- Roti Seba*', *'Robindranathar Gaan Aru Sadhana*' etc. In books of songs, *'Sonbori*' and *'Surjamukhi*' are mentionable. *'Desi- Bidesi*' (1987), *'Mirbang*', *'Tulsidas*', *'Bindu aru Sindu*', *'Amar Lagotiyal Gos Gosoni*', *'Asiar Sadhu Kotha*', *'Urishyar Lok Sanskriti*', *'Subhabarta*' etc. are her books of translated poems. Some of her edited and compiled books are- *'Asomiya Chuti Golpo*', *'Assamese Short Story*', *'Kobitamonjori*', *'Esho Bosoror Asomiya Kobita*', *'Asomiya Bhasa Sahitya Sanskritir Aryabhinno Upadan*', *'Panchali Bibah*' etc. In addition, 3 (three) english books - *Rajanikant Bordoloi, Raghunath Choudhary* (biography) and *The Don* (poetry book), *Jalpadma* (novel about Majuli Satra), *Manchanaat, Opera, Gitinatya, Anaatargeet, Koyhachobir Geet, Gramophone Geet, Sangitalekhyia* etc, are some of her commendable works. All the creations or works of Bordoloi are the outcome or fruits of her earnest and arduous hard work.

One of the described elements of Bordoloi's works is its cultural consciousness. The folk-cultural thoughts and consciousness of the writers like Birinchi kumar Barua, Prafulla Dutta Goswami, Laxminath Bezborua, Rajanikant Bordoloi etc. got expressed in the works of Bordoloi. According to Dr. Nabin Chandra Sharma, folk-art or folk-study can be divided into 4(four) categories- *attributive or oral folk-study, elemental or physical folk-study, folk-custom and performing folk-study*. All these categories have been expressed in the works of Dr. Bordoloi.

'Asomor Loka Sanskriti' is one of the contemporary books of Dr. Bordoloi which is culture based. The book is rich in research and informative knowledge. This book consists a total of 27 essays from *'Loka Sanskritir Janma*' to *'Asomor Lokkola*' which reflects the Assamese folk- culture. The scenario of the earlier age of folk-culture, marriage, field, granary, *dhekishal* (a wooden material to grind rice), ghost and physician, worship, blessing, slang; curse and abusive language, swearing, death, folk-mindset and folk-death etc. have got exploited in the book. Even, if there is a smell of individual devotion in the essays, but there is no impersonalize combining intellectual, analysis and logical.

The origin of folk-cultural consciousness has been found in the profound study of Dr. Bordoloi's rich work of *'Shiva*', *'Devi*' and *'Surja*'. A significant combination of folk-art and constituents of classical art have been gathered in the self-expression of Shiva. It is a research based prose work of Dr. Bordoloi.

In the work *'Shiva*', imagination of Rudra (Shiva) in the time of Vedic period, formation and development of the name of Rudra, different categories and devotion of gender of Shiva, relation between the Manasa (goddess of snake), and Shiva, trend and tendency of Shiva in the ancient Kamrupa, dance of Debadasi in Shiva temples,

shivlingas and Shiva embodied as a god of common man and agriculture etc. have been reflected in the eastern philosophy along with the cultural consciousness. The elements in the *'Shiva*' have also got reflected in the work of *'Surja*' which comprises- meditation of Sun god in pre-Vedic and post-Vedic period, worshipping Sun god in different era (like Gupta period, mythological period etc.), *Pachali* (a book of verses on a particular god or goddess), different forms of worship, ancient methods of worshipping Sun god etc. The element of folk-culture has been seen in the description of Sun god. *'Devi*' is the full-fledged expression of incomplete study of one of the earlier work of Bordoloi named *'Asomor Loka Sanskriti*'. It has to be acknowledged that the different ethnic elements of tribes, non-tribes, classical culture, folk-culture etc. have a significant role in the widespread of development and different views of Goddesses.

In terms of Indian goddesses like Devi Adya, Basundhara, Durga, Kali, Chandi, Tara, Saraswati, Annapurna, Katayani, Chamunda, Shitala, Manasa etc., 30 goddesses have been mentioned and it is noteworthy about their significant description and their location. In terms of goddesses of Assam, Devi Kamakhya, Bhubeneswari, Mangalachandi, Dirgheswari, Kechaikhati, Prasuti Aai, Apeshwari, Kali, Dimasa goddess, goddesses of Rabha and Bodo tribes etc., and their 29 sections (paragraphs) have been described through analytical study. On the other hand, power related elements and Assam's power related wavelength and their topics have thrown light on Shiva related topics in 2 sections (paragraphs).

'Jalpadma' is Dr. Bordoloi's one of the compelling novels. It describes the unhappy (inert) life of two devotees; Sunanda and Govinda, who spent their whole life within the four walls of *Satra* (Vaishnavite monastery). The novel mainly deals with the cultural life of the *Satra*.

Music is the foundation of any culture. In other words, culture also means music. A folk-song is the main constituent of folk-literature. The main theme of culture is lively humanity, individualistic and dynamic development, genuine social settings, customs, manners, thoughts, philosophy and expression of mental practice and all these sides have been expressed in the poems of Dr. Bordoloi. Bordoloi who believed in "Life is very excellent, death is the meditation of success", has a collection of over 500 poems. The culture and customs of Assam and her joys and sorrows have been expressed through the poems like-*Jonbai Beji Eta De, O Phul O Phul Nuphulo Kiyo, Kaam Chorair Ronga Thut, Tuponi Tuponi Horali Tuponi, Lai Hale Jale Aabeli Botahe, Iman Iman Pani Gangarani, Eku Nai Sunya Hai, Akash Aji Mur Nai, Tumi Jodi Nodi Hua, Swapna Buli Matila* etc. The expression of folk-culture is one of the characteristics of Bordoloi's poems. It seems as if in the expression of her poems, the much thought of Assamese folk-studies and ever recognized

reflection of Assamese society have been assembled. It also seems as if she has expressed the village life of Assam, the tranquil beauty of the nature, women's dressing and ornaments and the colorful picture of folk-mind through her poems. For example-

"The crane flies in the evening sky
I remember my paternal home."

Or

"If my request touches your sky
In the form of a star,
If this song of mine stays in your garden
In the form of a flower."

If we externally see the poems of Bordoloi, the element of cultural journey is found incomplete which has been mentioned by some critics. But, if we internally go into the works of Bordoloi, we will find that the poems of her have gone into triangular phase of folk-cultural consciousness. In the one hand, the thought of music have been expressed in her poems whereas on the other hand, the ingredients in the poems have been taken from the Assamese society and folk-rituals, folk-life, social life, contemporary social consciousness, Assamese folk-stories, green fields and illiterate farmers. Most of the words which have been used are related with the folk-mind, folk-song and folk-life. Folk-mind and folk-life are the life giving power of cultural consciousness. For example- from the book of poems '**Bon Foringor Rong**', the words are: *bihu*(Assamese festival), *barasha*(rain), *borshar sesh gaan*(last song of rain), from the book of poems '**Antaranga**', the words are: *barisha*(flood), *Kadam*(a kind of tree which bears scented flower), *khajuraho*(caves of Ajanta), *basantar edin*(a day of spring), *sharat*(autumn), from the book of poems '**Dinor Pasot Din**', the words are: *bihu*, *bohag*(month of April-may), *hemanta*(winter), from the book of poems '**Aru Ritu**', the words are: *jeth*(month of May-June), *aahar*(month of June-July), *saun*(month of July-August), *bhado*(month of August-September), *aahin*(month of September-October), *kati*(month of October-November), *aaghun*(month of November-

December), *puh*(month of December-January), *maagh*(month of January-February), *phagun*(month of February-March) and *chot*(month of March-April).

'**Urisyar Loka Sanskriti**' and '**Karbi Samaj Sanskritir Echerenga**' are the successful works of Dr. Bordoloi's profound study of folk-culture. '**Asomiya Loka Kobita**' (1987) is like one of the fragrant work of Bordoloi in the midst of garden of folk-poetry. Opera drama songs, film songs, radio songs and gramophone songs are some of her creations of her literary thinking.

'**Kobita Desi Bidesi**' (1987) is one of her translated books. Its poems are remarkable because Bordoloi has given importance to the folk centered poems in the form of songs. The poems in the languages of Bodo, Rabha, Nakte, Aao-Naga, Mizo, Karbi and Mising in the book '**Saatbhonir Desh Asomor Kobita**', are mainly present in the form of oral folk-poems. It seems that Bordoloi's cultural spirit has been poured in all these translated poems.

Dr. Bordoloi's cultural consciousness is implicit and not explicit. Blissful heritage and pleasant music has always found a place in the heart of Dr. Bordoloi. Till date, among the Assamese women litterateur's, Bordoloi has perceived the many worthy aspects of literature and cultural aspects of philosophical, creative and formal education.

4.0. Conclusion

From the discussion, it can be sum up that Dr. Nirmalprabha Bordoloi held a high position in the world of Assamese literature as an Assamese writer. As, she had a deep knowledge of folk-culture of Assamese society, the fragrance of cultural consciousness is present in almost all of her works. Therefore, we can say that Bordoloi is one of the rare literary persons of modern Assamese literature who has at least discussed some humorous aspects of tragic contents (subjects) and has introduced a pleasant intimate inquisitiveness in the field of music or art.

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