

Rural Society and lifestyle in Homen Borgohain's novel: A Discussion

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Abstract: The name of Homen Borgohain is the representative of the trend of Assamese novel. He is one among the remarkable writers of Assamese literature. Most of his works are inspired from his real life experiences. There are many notable features of his works. Among all the features are his depiction of rural life. The way he depicts the rural life in his works is worth mentioning various social problems, exploitations and other such issues are vividly portrayed in his works. The lifestyle, habits, thinking of the rural people along with their emotional state is presented in a wonderful way in his works. There is also mention of economic and social issues along with the exploitations faced by the farmers. From his childhood associated with the wilderness and nature. And these experiences are depicted in his works through various characters and stories. This is also one of the reason behind his immense success as a novelist. Through this research paper there will a detail description of the presentation of rural life in Homen Borgohain's novels. Descriptive method will be used to do the entire study.

Keywords: Society, novel, rural lifestyle etc.

1. INTRODUCTION

Homen Borgohain is one of the most representative novelist of the contemporary period. The social life is very beautifully depicted in his works. Specially the way he has depicted the rural life is very clear and mesmerizing. He has taken the mundane realities of the lives of these people and presented it in his novels. The rural life that he has depicted includes the lives of the fisherman, their life style, the behavior of the upper class, the problems faced by women, their pain, the lives of prostitute etc. besides his works also shows his love for nature. The way he has described the natural sceneries. It seems everything is lively. He has also depicted the exploitation and differences faced by the people due to the caste system. Everything is very realistically portrayed in his novels.

Area of study: Keeping in view the limitation of the paper the depiction of rural life in the works of Homen Borgohain is discussed here.

Importance of study:

Homen Borgohain is a renowned name in Assamese literature who is a poet, an author, a novelist and also an intellectualist. He has authored plenty of books. Among them, we can also include his novels. He has creative a good number of Assamese novels which are really adorable as because many important messages and incidents of society have got their mentions in these novels. In one line, it can be said that, if we want to refer to the writings of one author only to know about the socio-cultural, economic, political and intellectual dimensions of Assamese society, we can refer to the novels of Homen Borgohain without a single kind of hesitation.

'Rural social system of Assam'- many of us may have queries to know about it. The novels of Borgohain give a good notion of knowledge about the rural society of Assam.

Introduction to the novels of Homen Borgohain:

Homen Borgohain started writing short stories in the "Ramdhenu age" of Assamese literature. In the following years, he started writing novels also.

He has contributed to the Assamese literature by writing a good number of novels. The titles of his novels are as follows-

1. hubala
2. Matshyagandha
3. Pita-putra
4. Halodhiya Charaye baodhan khai
5. Trantik
6. Haudor puteke nao meli jai
7. Astarag
8. Kukhilab
9. Timirtirtha

For instance, the novels ‘Pita-putra’, ‘Halodhiya charaye baodhan khai’, ‘Saudor puteke nao meli jai’, and also ‘Hubala’, and ‘Matshyagandha’ are about rural societies of Assam.

2. RURAL SOCIETY AND LIFESTYLE IN HOMEN BORGHAIN’S NOVEL:

Homen Borgohain has authored novels on the basis of reality or practical life. ‘Pita-putra’, ‘Halodhiya charaye baodhan khai’ - these are some of his key novels which have expressed rural societies lifestyles to the fullest. And some of his novels like ‘Matshyagandha’, ‘Hubala’ etc have sketched the traumas, tragical situations happen usually in the lives of rural women.

‘Hubala’ is the first and foremost novel written by great author Homen Borgohain. In this novel he has chosen the subject matter in such a way which has in turn expressed the courageous attitude of the writer and also his commitment to the social duties. In this novel he has described about a prostitute named Hubala, an innocent girl, who has gone through atrocities of society.

The novel ‘Matshyagandha’ is also about social reality. Main subject-matter of it is - the caste system of society. The novel describes about the people of a kaivarta (a lower caste) village who are seen by the people of neighbouring ahom and kalita caste villages from an attitude of untouchability. Thus this novel has described some devil system of society. Other novels of Borgohain’s also have expressed some blind-beliefs, a social ways running in the societies.

2.1 Expression of rural social dimension of life:

‘Pita-putra’, the novel which is about the rural life of the post independent India, is a novel which shows high expectations of Homen Borgohain. This novel has described beautifully the classes between two generations in a family of an undeveloped village. Through this it has symbolized the clashes and social degradations that have taken place in the social and individual lives of people of Assamese villages.

The leading character of the novel is ‘Sivnath’ who is a small zaminder. Sivnath feels the pain of the kaivarta persons working in his household. But even after the affection towards them he wants them to continue their works in his house. That’s why he feels like a selfish person and questions himself - “Am I actually too greedy, too selfish and too materialistic?”¹

This novel also includes the portions describing the eldest son of Sivnath marrying a kaivartya girl, his youngest son as a half-educated, a doct and his middle son as a boy who has returned without completing higher education but has taken some steps for reforms in society.

‘Pita-putra’ has description about the social degradation. Borgohain has clearly expressed here the daily lives of people of rural areas, poetic description of the nature and about the feudal social system.

In the novel ‘Hubala’ poverty and prostitution have been pictured beautifully. There are some devil systems running directly or indirectly in society like sexual atrocities to poor women, caste division etc. and these have been expressed in the ‘Hubala’.

The novel 'Kushilav' has description about the discrimination that are done to the people belonging to lower social classes and castes.

'Haudor puteke nao meli jai' this novel described about the attachment of children and youths with the nature. The way in which this novel gives descriptions about the natural diversity and beauty is awesome. The main character of this novel is a simple boy named 'Bapukan' who knows animals well. For instance this dialodge proves the affection of Bapukan to the animals- "Siyori siyori hiyalor logot duakhar kotha patiboloi tar mon jai, thik jenekoi mon jai hebangor logot"² this dialodge can be translated as-Bapukan wants to have some talk with the fox as well as with other animals.

'Astarag' is one of his best novels. It has described that part of an individual's life which is at many times being ignored by us. It has sensitively given the picture of physical, psychological and social problems that are faced by one in one's old age. Here, when Dilip wants to take his father with him to stay with them because he(his father) was getting older, the father refused the proposal of his son by aying that he has the capability to tolerating the pain of being old but not of breaking up with his home and village. This refusal of father has been expressed beautifully in the novel as- "badhakyar jantrona hojyo koiboloi mur hokti ase, kintu sinaki gaonkhon aru mur ghorkhonr pora bised hojyo koriboloi mur hokti nai"³

Thus, this has been seen that in some of the novels of Homen Borgohain, the portraits of tiny but important things of village life have been expressed beautifully with the awesome level of creativity. Awesome level of creativity because, Borgohain has written about the social situations in his novels in such an emotional way that when we read these, we can feel that these are happening in front of us.

2.2 Expression of village economy:

In the novel of Homen borgohain, the economic dimation of village society has been included. The novel 'Halodhiya charaye baodhan khai' has the description about living village society. This book has a slogan on it- "Garibi hatao" (Get rid of prverty). Through this slogan Borgohain stood by the side of the needy people who heve got discriminated by socio-economic systems of society. Here, the land of a poor peasant named Rameswar has been confiscated illegally by Sanatan Sharma and due to this, clashes took place. But the poor hard working peasent Rameswar loses the fights over his land and everything of his house. And that devil Sanatan Sharma lectures about "Garibi hatao" in many meetings etc which is contradictory to his activities. This novel has clearly expressed the political and administrative reality of India. In this way, this novel expresses the depression of poor peasants after losing all and everything they had.

In this villages, a portion of people have to remain economically dependent upon some other people. They do hard works, but even after that their situation does not improve and at many times their situations walk from bad to worst. In this novel through image of a poor peasant, Borgohain described this problem beautifully.

How did a village girl named Hubala had to become a prostitute due to her weak economic condition has been discussed by Borgohain in the "Hubala". As same as the novel "Matshyagandha" also describes a poverty-ridden household.

"Pita-putra"- this novel describes the clashes between a zamindar and poor peasents. In the novel, the difference between the situations of them are found in the dialogue- " Among the total quantity of agricultural land owned by Svnath, 2/3 rd is given to others to cultivate on 'adhi' contract basis and in the remaining 1/3 rd land owned by Sivnath he himself cultivates with the help of some agricultural workers. These agricultural workers are taken from the neighbouring kaivarta village. This village has almost 40 households. They don't have built their houses. Main livelihood of kaivartya people is the business of fishing. But this can not feed their families for even 3 months in a year."⁴

3. CONCLUSIONS

Homen Borgohain is a socially active and conscious novelist. That's why depression of and discriminations done to women, workers and poor people have taken their places in his novels. His novels have their own stories. Between the stories, Borgohain has pictured the devil systems running in society. This can create the attitudes of social reforms among the readers. In his novels, Borgohain moved to the depth of society and described the clashes between society and individuals in a very artistic way which have also clearly described the socio-economic and political conditions of our society. Mainly, in his a good portion of novels, his lively viewpoint is seen. His novels has a separate and respectable position in Assamese literature. He has been and will be a shining star of Assamese literary world as a socially active, conscious and sensitive writer.

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