

# Diganta Lawary's 'Hangar': A Critical study

Amrit Kherkatary

*Research Scholar, Department of Bodo,  
Bodoland University, Kokrajhar, Assam, India.*

**Abstract:** This paper aims to explore the theme and structure of the novel Hangar (Ash) of Diganta Lawary, an emerging young novel writer in Bodo literature who has contributed altogether 16 number of novels of its kind. Besides, he is also a rising Bodo poet, short story writer and dramatic. 'Swrmilangnai Bibar' (The Drying flower) is the first novel of Lawary published in 2003. Hangar (2010) is 10<sup>th</sup> novel written by him. The novel Hangar is a unique one in the history of Bodo literature. This is a social novel as contemporary social aspects, issues of the Bodo tribe and multiculturalism societies are depicted in it. The author has narrated his life's experiences depicting rural and urban social life. Both Hindu and Muslim marriage systems are highlighted. Social beliefs of Muslim people of Hariyana sector 33 are also focused by the novelist. The technique of presentation in this novel is an important matter. In this paper, an attempt is made to analyse the plot, characters and technique of the novel. The story of the novel is developed based on the main characters- Hadan, Anita (Thunlaisri) and Sonaisri. Dengkhw supports in developing the plot of the novel.

**Key words:** Bodo literature, novel, Hindu, Muslim, marriage and multiculture.

## 1. Introduction

Hangar (2010) novel is a remarkable contribution to the history of Bodo literature written by Diganta Lawary. The Bodo literature began from near about hundred years ago. The Christian Missionaries started translating some religious books from English to Bodo language towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. They collected, compiled and published some other folk literature also prevailing among the Bodos during that period. The first book in Bodo language was 'Boroni Fisa O Ayen' edited by Gangasaran Kachari and it was published in 1915. The trend of the Bodo literature came into existence in the Bodo society when 'Bodo Satra Sanmilani' (A students' Organisation) was formed in 1919. Boro Satra Sanmilani published a quarterly magazine named 'Bibar' during 1920-24 by the Bodo nationalists enthuse. This was the first magazine published in Bodo language. First Bodo poetry book named 'Bathou Naam Bwikhaguni Gidu' was written by Prasanlal Boro Khakhlary and published in 1919-20.

In the history of Bodo literature, novel writing started in the year 1962. 'Jujaini Or' (The Fire of the Husk, 1962) written by Chittaranjan Mushahary, is the first ever Bodo novel. In the renaissance period of Bodo literature, some Bodo novelists have created a number of novels in Bodo language. After Chittaranjan Mushahary, Manaranjan Lahary was a veteran novelist in Bodo literature. Lahary's first novel was 'Kharlung' (1976). Novel kharlung brought a new trend in the history of Bodo novel. Some other noted Bodo novelists are Katindra Swargiary, Nandeswar Daimari, Dharani Dhar Wary, Kanteswar Brahma, Aron Raja, Mina Kherkatary, Lebenlal Mushahary, Sansumwi Khungri Basumatary and many others who have contributed novels of their own that have helped to increase the stock of Bodo novel. Diganta Lawary is an emerging young novelist in Bodo literature. He has written a total of 16 number of novels. His first novel 'Swrmilangnai Bibar' (The Drying flower) was published in 2003. Some critics analyse Hangar as a social novel. Multiculture and multi society are depicted in Hangar novel. The central characters in this novel are Hadan, Anita (Thunlaisri) and Sonaisri. Dengkhw supports in developing the plot of the novel.

## 2. Aims and objectives of the study

The main aims and objectives of this paper are as follows:

- (a) To analyse the structure and plot of the novel

- (b) To study the social aspects of the novel
- (c) To display the social picture of the Muslim community of Hariyana sector 33 as reflected in the novel.

### 3. Methodology

This paper uses the analytical method. The study is based on both primary and secondary sources. The study deals with the novel 'Hangar' of Diganta Lawary as primary source and published articles, criticism books, magazine and research papers are also taken as the secondary sources. Author has taken the help of print media and internet in preparing this paper.

### 4. Discussion

Although there has been much progress in the Bodo novel, but no much critical works have been done so far on Bodo novels, specially on 'Hangar'. 'Hangar' is a social novel. Its main themes are love, romance and tragedy. Hangar means 'ash' in Bodo language. The story of this novel has been developed based on the main characters- Hadan, Anita and Sonaisri. The life of Hadan and Anita are compared with ash in this novel. Anita got marry with Hadan. Anita married third time in her life. First husband was Rajib, second was Hadan and third husband was Jwhwlao.

Novelist started the plot in the novel by narrating the life of Hadan, Dengkhaw and Sonathi. Hadan was an Auto driver who lived in Guwahati in a rented house with his mother Sonathi and son Dengkhaw. His life was very critical in his early age and struggled with his life. His father was killed by some unknown gunmen at their own residence in their native village when he was just studying in higher secondary. After that incident, Hadan and his mother came to Guwahati and settled there. Hadan also worked in a factory in Delhi.

Novelist uses the flash back method in the novel and narrated past incidents that happened in the life of Anita. Anita was Sonaisri's elder sister. Their father Jebra Khungur was a powerful man in Gossaigaon locality of Western Assam. Anita and Sonaisri were both qualified girls. Anita was a Post Graduate from Delhi University. Babita was a classmate and close friend to Anita in Delhi. Before eight years, Anita met Rajib in Delhi. Rajib was working in an International call center in Delhi and he was from Hariyana sector 33 area. Anita was also working as a part timer in the same call center. They became very close to each other and romance started between them. Day by day their love deep rooted and finally both of them decided to get marry. Rajib and his family belonged to muslim community. On the other hand, Anita and her family belonged to Hindu community. Religion became a bar to them and thus differences in religion did not permit them to marry with one another. Overlooking the caste barriers, Anita got marry with Rajib.

Anita followed her husband's religion. She learnt about muslim religion and rituals from her mother-in-law. Within a few days she used to go for Namaz and practised the rituals of Islam at home. Every family member liked her except Aarzu. Aarzu was sister-in-law of Rajib. After a month Anita became pregnant. Rajib was very much happy when he got the information about her pregnant. Rajib and Anita went back to Delhi for their job. After a few days, Anita told her husband that she did not want to have a child. So she wanted abortion. Rajib was very angry on her. At the same time, Rajib's mother called him to home. Aarzu was jealous on Anita as everyone in the family loved her. She was uneducated woman. Aarzu took a secret plan to get Anita out of the family. In some parts of Hariyana, it is customary to put white bedsheets on honeymoon bed at the first night of honeymoon. It is believed that the spotting of blood on the honeymoon white bedsheet assumes that girl is a virgin. Otherwise, she is not considered a virgin. Novelist narrated the Muslim marriage and customary law of muslim of some parts of Hariyana in the novel. Folk beliefs of muslim community of some parts of Hariyana are also depicted in the novel. Aarzu show her mother-in-law the honeymoon white bedsheet of Rajib and Anita. The blood spot was not seen in honeymoon bedsheet. Aarzu convinced her mother-in-law Abeda by saying that Anita was not virgin before marriage. She told her mother-in-law that Anita might have physical relation with others before marriage. Abeda was agreed with Aarzu. She also thought that Anita was not good wife and good daughter-in-law when Rajib told her that Anita wanted for abortion of her child. Aarzu and Abeda advised Rajib to get his wife aborted. Aarzu started secret planning for the second time. She wanted that Rajib would marry her uncle's daughter Jumur. She was successful in her plan. Rajib promised that he would marry to Jumur. After returning to Delhi, Rajib told Anita that he would marry to Jumur and told her for abortion of her child.

Anita was shocked. She realised that her child from womb told her not to kill. She decided not to abort her child at any cost. The crux of war started between them and continued. One mid night, Anita left Rajib and their house and wanted to commit suicide on train track. When Anita wanted to commit suicide on train track, Hadan saved her. Raju knew that Anita was Bodo woman from Assam. Knowing it, sympathy on her increased. Anita told to Hadan her life's tragic story. Hadan took Anita to his small rented house and started to settle there. She decided to give birth her child and would offer her child to Hadan. But Hadan wanted her to stay along with her child. Unknowingly Anita fell in love with Hadan. She expressed her love and proposed him to get marry. Hadan also loved her and accepted her as his wife and her child was also accepted. Here, Anita completely forgot Rajiv. She never thought for Rajiv again. Her character was just like a selfish woman.

Hadan's mother Sonathi started to take care of Anita. Anita's baby was named Dengkhew. Jebra Khungur's men kidnapped Anita and took her back home after a few weeks from Delhi to Gossaigaon, Assam. Hadan searched Anita everywhere in Delhi but did not find her. Anita's father Jebra Khungur was very much angry to her knowing the fact that Anita married with Muslim boy. Jebra never thought of his daughter to be married with a Muslim boy due to religious differences. Novelist show the discrimination of religion in the novel.

After nine years, Hadan met Sonaisri in Guwahati. Sonaisri worked as a teacher in a school where Dengkhew studied. She is younger sister of Anita. Dengkhew always felt the absence of his mother and always remembered her. Sonathi, the grand mother looked after Dengkhew like a mother. On Mother's day, Dengkhew recited a poem touching the mothers' heart in the School. Sonaisri, the class teacher liked Dengkhew very much. She loved him as her son. He also liked her as a mother. Sonaisri gradually maintained a close relation to his grand mother and father. Some time she used to stay in their house. She liked Dengkhew's father Hadan. Hadan also liked her. Jebra Khungur called his daughter Sonaisri to back home to Gossaigaon. As he was a rich man, he never agreed a poor person like Hadan to accept as a son-in-law. Sonaisri did not get permission from her father to go again to Guwahati for her job. When Dengkhew knew that his teacher Sonaisri would never come to his school again, he started feeling very sad. He emotionally forced his father for going to Gossaigaon to meet Sonaisri. Finally, Dengkhew and his father decided to go to Gossaigaon. Anita was then the wife of Jhwlao, the third husband who was a powerful MLA. Jhwlao was very angry, he kicked and hit Hadan when he knew that they had come to meet Sonaisri. Jebra khungur was also hit him. They thought that Hadan loved Sonaisri and he wanted to marry her. They never thought a poor person to be a life partner for Sonaisri. Dengkhew earnestly requested Jebra Khungur and Jhwlao to forgive them but they did not forgive. Hadan and Dengkhew were hurt by them. When Anita suddenly saw Hadan, she shouted and cried. But at that time, Hadan and Dengkhew left the place by a hired car for Guwahati. Anita told the true incidents that happened eight years ago in Delhi to in front of everyone. She explained how Hadan saved her life in Delhi when she was about to commit suicide. Her husband Jhwlao and all the family members knew the truth. Anita felt very sad. She wanted to meet Hadan. They all supported her and decided to go to Guwahati to meet Hadan and Dengkhew. Jebra khungur and Jhwlao realised that they misbehaved with Hadan and Dengkhew. On the way to Guwahati, they met Hadan and Dengkhew near the Naranarayan Bridge on the Brahmaputra river. Hadan and Dengkhew sat near the Naranarayan bridge with broken minds for some time. Anita recognised her son Dengkhew. Anita wanted her son Dengkhew to live along with her but Dengkhew did not agree. Dengkhew wanted Sonaisri as a mother in his life. He was angry with Anita because when he was in need of a mother, at that time she was not available to him as a result he did not get love and care of mother. She also realised that she could never be a good mother for her son, so she handed over her younger sister Sonaisri to Hadan. After that, suddenly blood was bleeding from her mouth and nose. Her voice was breaking and finally she breathed her life leaving everyone in the world. She was no more. The novel was ended with the death of Anita.

## 5. Conclusion

Hangar novel is a social novel. In this novel, multi castism and multi culture are reflected. The customary law, folk beliefs, contemporary socio-economic issues of rural Bodo society, Muslim society, Hindu society and living style in metro and rural societies are depicted in the novel. Novelist tries to highlight the social discriminations and social diversities in the novel. Love, romance and tragedy are the themes of the novel. The novelist is strong enough in presenting the plots from the beginning till the end of the novel. Hadan is male central character and Anita is central female character whose life are compared with ash. Sonaisri is another major female character. Dengkhew is supporting character for development of

the plot of the novel. Novelist Diganta Lawary has reflected the Bodo society of Delhi also. He narrated his life experiences in the novel. Gossaigaon, Guwahati, Delhi and Gurgaon sector 33 are the different places (areas) covered in the plots of the novel.

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