

Socio-Economic Realities of Assam Reflected in Arupa Patangia Kalita's Short Stories

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Abstract: Socio-economic aspect is a main aspect of the social life. The socio-economic field of Assam is affected by the many political incidences. Writers are influenced by the contemporary socio-economic calamity and the poverty of common people. Arupa Patangia Kalita, a renowned author of contemporary Assamese literature draws the realistic picture of the various aspect of socio-economic condition of Assam in her short stories. The author reflects backwardness and underdeveloped transportation system of rural area of Assam in her short stories. Struggle, scarcity and poverty of poor people are presented in author's short stories. The author also established her sense of anti-poverty. The present study will try to analyse the various aspect of socio-economic condition of Assam, backwardness of rural area of Assam, poor people's struggle affected by the economic disaster and the author's viewpoint to the contemporary socio-economic condition of Assam in Arupa Patangia Kalita's short stories.

IndexTerms -Socio-economic, poverty, contemporary, backwardness, poor people.

I INTRODUCTION

Arupa Patangia Kalita is a renowned writer in contemporary Assamese literature. She started her author life by a short story 'Banchita' in 'Moina Mel', Dainik Asom newspaper in 1967. Arupa Patangia Kalita has enriched modern Assamese literature by many short stories, novels, travelogues and translation literature. She has contributed eleven short stories collections till now to Assamese short story literature. 'Moruyatra Aru Anyanya'(1992) is her first published short stories collection. Her other short stories collections are- 'Morubhumit Menoka Aru Anyanya'(1995), 'Deopaharor bhognoshtupot'(1999), 'Pas Sotalor Kothokota'(2000), 'Mileniyamor Sapon'(2002), 'Alekan Banur Jan'(2005), 'Kurusuwwar Sapon, Mur Sapon, Hihotor Sapon'(2007), 'Sonali Egole Koni Parile Beliyé Umoni Dile'(2010), 'Moriyom Astin Athoba Hira Boruah'(2012), 'Jalatarangar Sur'(2016) and 'Pani Gabhini Asil Aru Anyanya'(2019). Moreover the author has published seven novels, one travel story book and two translated books. She has rewarded many prizes for her contributions to creative literature. She has received the Sailendra Chandra Das Gupta Sahitya Setu Award in 1993, the Bharatiya Bhasha Parishad Award in 1995, the KATHA Award in 1998, Sahitya Sanskriti Award in 2009, the Prabeena Saikia Award in 2012, the 2014 Sahitya Akademi Award and Asom Upatyaka Sahitya Award in 2016.

Arupa Patangia Kalita has taken various subjects from her contemporary society and these are reflected in her creative literature. She has drawn the actual pictures of social and economic condition of Assam in her short stories. Socio-economic condition of Assam is one of the main subjects of her many short stories and she tries to show the reality of socio-economic backwardness of post-independent Assam. The present study is focused on the post-independent socio-economic condition of Assam, contemporary economic adversity or poverty of common people's daily life. For this study, the selected short stories are- 'Ekoish Shatikar Sapon' from the collection of 'Morubhumit Menoka Aru Anyanya' and 'Jonakot Jonaki' from the collection of 'Moruyatra Aru Anyanya'.

II OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of study are-

- To analyze the various aspects of socio-economic condition of Assam reflected in Arupa Patangia Kalita's short stories.
- To search how the author draw the picture of common people's life style affected by the socio-economic backwardness of Assam in her short stories.
- To find out how the Author observed and expressed the problems and struggles of poor in her short stories.
- To explore the author's social sense reflected in her short stories.

III METHODOLOGY

This paper follows analytical and descriptive methods. The required information of this paper is collected from both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data includes selective works of the author and the secondary data includes research articles, edited books, journals and internet sources.

IV DISCUSSION

Socio-economic aspect is a remarkable aspect of social life. The socio-economic field of Assam was imperiled by the political incidences of Assam in the end of 20th Century. The economic exploitation not only creates dangers in common people's life, but also terminates the humanity and moral consciousness. The thoughtful and conscious peoples are influenced by the contemporary economic disaster and the poverty of common people. Thus it reflects in creative literature. In the short stories of Arupa Patangia Kalita, we can see the socio-economic backwardness of Assam, poverty of common people, economic exploitation, struggling life of people created by the poverty.

'Ekoish Shatikar Sapon' is one mentionable short story of Arupa Patangia Kalita. In this short story the author has reflected the distress of rural backwardness and poverty of Assam in the end of 20th Century. According to the story, an urban young man newly appointed as a Block Development Officer comes to the Sonaipuriya village to join his duties. After entering the village, the young man has to take a muddy road. He has witnessed the wailing of people living in poverty. The dull faces, unhealthy bodies and costumes of the peoples seen on the street are the clear indications of poverty of the villagers. The backwardness of all around the village, the young man has witnessed is drawn in the short story like that-

'Mohokuma sodoror pora matro bish mail atoror gao ekhonot barixa jao jao botorotu enekuwa rasta thakibo pare! Notun chakorit jog diboloi kini ana jota-sola-pantoloi sai agot pori thoka alotiya bokare gulgeliya rastatuye dat nikotai hahi uthil.' (P.38)

('It is strange that such a muddy road exists even after the rainy season in a village just twenty miles away from the sub-divisional headquarters! Looking at his new shoe-shirt-pant, buying for joining in his new work, the muddy road is starting to laugh loudly'.)

After taking a cup of tea, the young man introduced himself to the shop keeper of the tea stall in the village. The young man comes to know that the street of the village is submerged in water throughout of the year. The shop keeper has also expressed his feelings that if a bullock cart was found, it would have been an advantage for the young man. The use of bullock cart in the village, despite of extreme development of science and technology indicates the backwardness of the village-

"Eh! Eh! Bor kosto pabo sir. Eisuwa rasta kenekoi jabo? Eisuwa rasta bosortur besibhag somoi panit dubi thake. Etiyatu bhalei dekhise, bhor barixat ekokal pani thake. Gorugari ekhon puwa hole!" (P.39)

("Eh! Eh! You will suffer a lot sir. How will you go there? The street is submerged in water for most of the time in the year. It is quite good now but there is a lot of water in the mid-summer season. Bullock cart is the only solution for now.")

After starting the job the young man was given the duty of working for the old age pension. At first it was hard to believe for the villagers that the government would pay hundred rupees per month without interest and without mortgage. But when they received the money of the pension they felt a little relief from their scarcity. A touching image of villagers' needy life and poverty is exposed in this short story through the buying of some daily necessities after pension-

'Chorkare bina hude bina bondhokit mahe esho tokakoi dibo! Sapon jen loga kothatu manuhbure lahe lahe biswash koriboloi lole! Konmair bapeke toka pai churiya kinile, Rupair make suta kinile, bemarot pori thoka Bhadoir make chahoror pora tini botol oshodh anile.' (P.40)

('Government will pay hundred rupees per month without interest and without mortgage. People started to believe the word slowly. After receiving the pension, Konmai's father bought his 'dhuti', Rupai's mother bought thread for weaving, Bhadoi's mother, who was ill, bought three bottles of medicine from the city.')

Connectedly the young man met an old woman in the village on the first day he entered to the village. After doing the pension work of that old woman he gave her a cheque of five hundred rupees. Receiving the cheque, the old woman was very happy and said that she would buy a pan and a mosquito net. The old woman had to limit her dream with buying a pan and a mosquito net only by the money of pension. Thus the author reflects the tragic picture of poverty and make a sharp mockery to the so-called development drumming-

"Seibor kotha thouk. Poisa palei ki koribo etiya?" ("Stop talking about them. What will you do now with the money?")

"Moina! Moi ekhon kerahi kinim." ("Moina! I will buy a pan.")

"Kerahi?" ("Pan?")

"Aru dhone atile ekhon athuwau kinim buli pangisu. Sonai chaporitut bonda bonda moh, jomor jatona diye moina." ("I will buy a mosquito net also, if I can manage the money. It is very painful to live with mosquitoes in Sonai Chapori.") (P.41)

-The author's effort to express the poor people's problems of daily life, struggles and their dreams are clearly reflected in this short story. Moreover author's anti-poverty sense is embodied through the presentation of the plight of the poor.

The picture of backwardness in rural areas and poverty of common peoples are drawn in 'Jonakot Jonaki', another mentionable short story of Arupa Patangia Kalita. The portrait of a village, without a so-called development model and underdeveloped transportation system is reflected in this short story like this-

'Jonaki jikhon gawot thake taloi ajiloike bus jabo pora rasta huwa nai. Raj korobaloi jaboloi hole andharote uthi cho-mail khuj karhi ahi poki alit borgosor tolot robohi lage.' (P.42)

('There is no option for bus in Jonaki's village. To go to somewhere, the villagers had to wake up in dawn. After walking six miles they reached the banyan tree in the main road to wait for the bus.')

The real picture of financial poverty and destitution of poor people is reflected in this short story through giving one hundred rupees to Jonaki's brother by Ganga, the moneylender for arranging chairs for the guests from the city. Jonaki was raped by military and the moneylender complaint in the court about the case. According to the moneylender, the government people will come to Jonaki's home for that reason. Therefore the moneylender gives one hundred rupees to Jonaki's brother to arrange chairs for those people. Taking a chance of poverty of Jonaki's family, the moneylender gives a temptation of getting money from the government. Giving the temptation of money and contributing one hundred rupees to Jonaki's brother by the moneylender indicates the scarcity of Jonaki's family-

"Bujiso! Chorkaror phalor porau toka-hika pabi. Bujisone? Bhal dharonere pabi." Jowar agot mohajone kokayekok esho toka dile- "Chohoror manuh-dunuh ahibo, bohoboloi soki-murha du-dukhorman jugar kori rakhibi." (P.48)

("Do you know? You will also get money from the government. Understand? There is a chance of getting huge amount of money". Before going, the moneylender paid one hundred rupees to her brother- "The people from the city will come, arrange chairs for them.")

V CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, we found that the author Arupa Patangia Kalita has drawn a realistic picture of socio-economic condition of Assam in her short stories. The picture of the backwardness and underdeveloped transportation system of rural area of Assam are clearly reflected in her short stories. The author portrays a touching image of scarcity and poverty of poor people. The author made a sharp mockery to the so-called development drumming in her short stories. Another

mentionable side exposed in Arupa Patangia Kalita's short stories is that the author's social sense is reflected by the human compassion for the plight of the poor and by the anti-poverty sense.

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