

# WOMEN EMPOWERMENT PROJECTED IN THE SHORT STORIES OF JANIL KR. BRAHMA

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## Abstract

Janil Kr. Brahma is one of the outstanding short story writer in Bodo literature. He has produced number of short stories of highest order. Dumpaoni Pitha is his first collection of short stories. He has collected different short stories from different magazines and has published a book named Dumpaoni Pitha. Most of his stories are set in and about the rustic society. Therefore, the picture of the remote interior rural society is able to acquire its place in his work. In Bodo society, women also enjoy equal rights just like men in different aspects. Through his stories, Janil Kr. Brahma has presented the equal rights enjoyed by the women folk to that of men in the spheres of education and livelihood and in almost every aspects of life.

**Index Terms:** Boro, education, empowerment, family, rural people, preference, right, society, women

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Short story is one of the most important genre of literature. In the present day situation, we find that the popularity of short story is gaining ground in the society. "Abari" by Ishan Ch. Muchahary is the first short story in Bodo literature. It was published in the "Hathorkhi Hala" magazine in the year 1940 edited by Promod Ch. Brahma. Since then many writers have contributed number of stories today in Bodo literature. Not only in the collection of stories in quantities, but also in the inculcation of quality of knowledge, short stories just as other techniques of writing have also emerged as a good technique or scope of writing. Janil Kumar Brahma is today's most remarkable writer of short story writing in Bodo language. He was born on 1951 in a village, Tipkai. He is also a poet and a prose writer. Nonetheless, he has emerged as a famous short story writer in Bodo literature. He has published three collections of short story books. Some of them are Dumphaoni Phitha (2005), Mwidar Muhini (2007) and Japanni Swima (2009). Janil kr. Brahma has also received Sahitya Academy award for his short story book 'Dumphaoni Phitha' in the year 2007.

## 2. AIMS OF STUDY

Following are the basic aims of the current study: -

- i. A discussion on Janil Kr. Brahma's presentation of women's place in the spheres of education.
- ii. A discussion on Janil Kr. Brahma's presentation of how women take the role of motivator in maintenance of the family.

## 3. HYPOTHESIS

- i. Due to the absence of broad discussion and critical analysis on Janil Kr. Brahma's work, the hidden creativity of his aims and objectives has not come to the light.
- ii. To look out whether the actual truth is represented in his writings or not.
- iii. The right of Bodo women has reflected in his writings.

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

In the preparation of the research works, both the primary and secondary sources of data have been taken into account. In the primary sources data has been collected from the three short stories published by Janil Kr. Brahma and a face to face interview has been conducted with the writer. On the other hand, secondary sources have been collected from different journals, articles and critical writings of different writers.

#### 5. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Till today, the writings of Janil Kumar Brahma are still praised and spoken about. But, the reflection of Bodo culture in his comments of the people regarding his writings. In the preparation of this research work, the nature of help and support are gained from the writings of Janil Kr. Brahma, the literary works of Rakhao Basumatary and the critical analysis of literary works of Anil Kr. Brahma.

#### 6. DISCUSSION ON THE SUBJECT

Literature is the mirror of the society. Just like we see our face clearly on looking at the mirror, so if we turn the pages on literature, we can see the whole picture of the Bodo society. Various aspects of the society like economics, political, education and the means of livelihood find a place to bloom through the literature. In the writings of Janil Kr. Brahma too, the equal rights enjoyed by the women folk with the men in the educational and occupational aspects of the society are clearly reflected. So, a discussion will be made on this.

#### 7. WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN EDUCATION

The position of women education is equal to men in Boro Society. In the family along with men, women also enjoy equal rights to acquire education.

Let us discuss about all these through the short stories of Janil Kr. Brahma. The child Labari is the female character of the short story "Alashi". She had lost her parents at the childhood. The gaonbura (Headman), named Bhatiram of Chandrapara village adopted Labari as his daughter. Still then Labari could get opportunity to take education to write her own name. Lambre, the daughter of Bhatiram gaonbura's (Headman's) younger brother also got opportunity to acquire education equally along with his son Tupra.

The female characters, Dhumphao, Sorala and Gaodang of the short story "Dhumphaoni Phita" are also depicted as highly educated women. All these three are class-mates since their students' life at Patsala.

As luck has favoured for Gaodang and Sorala, they got married to job holder husbands and they resided at town. But Dhumphao got married with the teacher of venture school. In spite of poverty stricken Dhumphao, by her hard struggling, could find out means to survive.

In the short story "Dorere Rumbangni Jiu Dahar" the only one daughter of Gabkhrao Mahajwan's Rumbhang got opportunity to take education. At the childhood when Dodere was hired as cowboy at the house of Gabkhrao Mahajwan, his playful activities with Rumbhang has transformed to love affair, till adulthood. His father when took him away from being cowboy and gave him education. As a consequence he got the job of teacher after passing matriculation. Though they are separated from each other, their relationship becomes deeper and deeper. When Dodere's mother was ill, Rumbhang visited his home and took care of his mother.

Holding the hands of both Dodere and Rumbhang, the mother gave them married at the altar of Bathou and she left this world for ever. The crooked or devilish mind man Rakeb Udla declared them that they are doing the work against the society. The villagers convicted Dodere and his father guilty and boycotted both of them from the village. Immediately the knot of their love relationship has broken away miserably.

In another one short story "Sanaramni Jiu Lama", Anathi, the daughter of Baranda and Bibari is an educated female character. The male character of the story, Sanaram took up the profession of cultivator as means of living, for not being employed in service in spite of B.A pass. Both Baranda and Bibari wanted Sanaram to be their son-in-law. But their daughter, Anathi resisted against it saying that she would not marry with unemployed B.A pass man. She took all her clothes, ornaments along with her and eloped with Torla of Tingkliguri village and got married.

In the short story "Solo Lirnai Jayaswi" the writer, Janil Kumar Brahma depicted that Mergom Mahajan has facilitated with education to his the only daughter, Rupathi without any objection. The matric pass Rupathi

is skilled in all kinds of household including weaving since her childhood. She took an active role during the Bodoland Movement, without taking rest. She has been beaten brutally by the police for protecting them from attacking the village. Rupathi tried to uplift the down trodden Boro-Community from innumerable problems. She tirelessly delivering heart touching speech from village to village hoping the illiterate Boro women to move ahead in the path of light. She is not moving away even an inch from her whole heartedly dedication of working in Bodoland Movement in identifying her community in the world.

It is seen that the same theme is depicted in the story “Binanao Mwirathi” (Sister Mwirathi). The matric fail, Mwirathi is seen giving stress in quality education. It is because everyone was asking Mwirathi to sit for all allowed consideration H.S.L.C examination in the midst of the Bodoland Movement. But she said, “I don’t want an education if it has no quality in true sense, bluffing oneself in the society. I feel ashamed of such type of education”. (Binanao Mwirathi page 4) she doesn’t bother about her passing or failing of metric examination. She gave more importance to the survival of the Boro Community. So, Mwirathi has been working day and night without paying head to food and neglecting his sleeps for the cause of Boro Community. She is sent to jail in the name of movement and beaten by the police. For the sake of community she breaks the marriage agreement with one Santala engineering. Therefore, we can say that Mwirathi, is depicted as the self sacrificing active woman worker of the society.

In the story “Asokanda” (Immature or Unfulfilled) M.L.A. Gimbar Mushahary has not made any difference between man and woman in giving his the only daughter. Bandana an education college going Bandana has amazed the common villagers by behaving and wearing different short of fancy dress.

In the story “Gambaru Master” Dumpe facilitated her daughter Santali in pursuing higher education even by selling wine. After passing primary education Santali, the young girl is reads in M.E. School. In spite of facing with untold problems her study is going on.

In “Madwi Udang” (Aunty Udang) Jasula, the richest man of the village, understanding the value of education, gave his daughter, Udang an opportunity to study. As she couldn’t pass M.E. School, she left schooling and dedicated herself in household works.

In the story of “Hajwni Sikiri – Hayeni Bibar” (Hill’s Butterfly – Plain’s Flower). Goishree from the village of Patjora Dulagami is a matric pass woman. Though poor, Goishree’s parents educated her. The writer has depicted the character of Goishree as an expert girl at work, cooking, weaving and catching fish and well mannered. Goishree got married with Dimasa young man named Birdao Wary hailing from hill and was serving as Ranger job in plain. In this story, it is also seen that the contractor, Longsaigwra from the higher class family, gave his daughter Miss Swirai Helena higher education without any objection. Swirai Helena is a B.A. pass. The wealthy man, Longsaigwra tried to allure Birdao Wary as his son-in-law by making his daughter wearing on Ultra modern style. But Birdao Wary did not accept Longsaigwra’s word as he had already given marriage’s consent to Goishree.

The daughter of Gomtha master, Tempri in the short story of “Gomtha Masterni Kapal” (Luck of Gomtha Master) has had an opportunity to study in college after passing her matriculation. The female character, Hangmashri appeared in the story had also opportunity for studying at high school level.

In the short story, “Lama Seraoni Thaso Bibar” (The Roadside’s Aurum Flower), the headman of the village Maidangshri allowed his only daughter Phaguni to study in college without giving any objection. In the story of “Kamblao Mahajanni Blood Pressure” (The Blood Pressure of the wealthy Kamblao) also Kamblao allowed his daughter Sikhri to study B.A.. Bughali, the female character in the story of “Lwgnwi Haba” (Friend’s Marriage) lost her father during her childhood. Although Bughali could not achieve higher education, she had an opportunity to study till class VIII. They are of one family with elder brother Dangsw Membrang, the old mother and two younger brothers. When Bughali was studying in class VIII her elder brother was addicted to drinking alcohol, as a result he sold 50 (Fifty) bighas of land. It was because he did not work any work. He suffered from Tuberculosis (TB) disease and died of it. Bughali had to take the responsibility of managing the family by serving as maid-servant at others’ houses. The another female character, Paogali of this same story studied till matriculation. Paogali herself along with her mother took the heavy responsibility of maintaining the family.

In the same way, Doyaram Mahajwn of village Batabari of nearby Guyabari station did not give his daughter Bijuli any objection from taking education in the short story “Bijuli Barua”. But because of the parents too much loving upon her, she could not complete even class VI, rather left the study and seemed to give more interest in weaving. In spite of his being a boro, Doyaram Mahajwn, the local intellectuals and contractor had the feeling of hatred on the Boro Community. He gave his daughter marriage to one assamese ranger named Premesh Barua of Sivasagar. Since then Bijuli Basumatary name became Bijuli Barua. The widower Premesh the father of two children took Bijuli marriage by lying. Later he betrayed Bijuli and run away leaving her behind. In spite of the waiting of the mother of child Bijuli with full hopes in heart, Premesh did not come back. The heartbroken Bijuli later became mad like.

In the story of “Daoshrigwba” also Neolai Mahajwn did not lag behind in giving education to his only daughter. He kept his daughter at Onthaibari Brahma Mission for studying.

In the story of “Sonaramni Jiu Lama” (Way of Sonaram’s Life), Boranda Mahajwn, understanding the value of education gave his daughter Anathi chance for taking education. The skilled weaver and embroidering making Seowari, the wife of Sonaram had also studied in college after passing matriculation.

## 8. WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN OCCUPATIONAL WORK

In Boro society any kind of family’s works can be done without any difference between man and woman. Without making any difference between all kinds of works can also be handled equally. Besides working household works, outdoors works like paddy plantation, reaping crops, daily labour, collecting firewood etc. are also done without any objection. Like men women can also equally occupy place by doing business, jobs and thereby earning money.

In the short stories of Janil Kumar Brahma, it is seen that women are also handling all kinds of jobs efficiently like men without any difference.

In the story of “Dhumphaoni Phita” (Dhumphao’s Cake), Dhumphao doesn’t only depend on her husband. The family of Dumphao’s husband venture school teacher Samen is struggling with miserable condition of poverty. In such condition Dhumphao bought thread and weave clothes to wear by selling her chicken. Dhumphao thinks of helping her husband in maintaining family by baking cakes and thinks in her mind as “if women from other community can live by running betel nut shop, Tea- stall why not Boro women can live by doing business”. I am also human being. Dhumphao thought. (Dhumphaoni Phita page 5) As Dhumphao thinks, she started doing work. By selling her two hens, Dhumphao bought some rice and a new pot from the market. Dhumphao started her business by selling rice cakes at Shyamthaibari market. On the first day, Dhumphao could sell two heaps of cakes. After two days she also started selling sitao (oiled cakes) and tea along with cakes. Then, she set up tailoring shop named, “Dhumphao Tailoring”. Doing business by overcoming shyness one can find the means of living. Nowadays selling vegetables and cakes and doing different types of business by Boro women are seen.

In the story, “Arang” Arang has destroyed his family and property by consuming alcohol. As a result he become helpless, frustrated in searching out new land at Mimang, Silapwthar etc. but he came back to the native place lonely losing his wife and children with depressed mind and heavy heart. During the time of helplessness and frustration Arang’s daughter Bisari didn’t stay simply idle. With the money she earned by catching fish and selling the fish at the market she helped the tragic family of the father.

In the short story, “Laishrwmi bswm”, the widow Laishree did not stay simple idle without working, blaming her luck. She accepted that by selling the collected fire wood from the forest as means of living for her along with her four children.

Consuming and selling of wine is a bad habit in the Bodo society. Yet the widow Anaishi had to choose selling of alcohol as their means of living in order to meet the daily needs of herself and her daughter Dodere. Anaishi also sold cake along with alcohol. In the story of “Bibaidinw Hwntara Ang” (I say same like this) the similar theme of this kind is seen. The daughter of Kwrwm Oja, widow Tingkli also accepted the selling of alcohol as means of living. In the story of “Dodere Rumbang Ni Jiu Dahar” (Life Story of Dodere Runbang) also Dodere’s aunt from Kasibhari village earned a huge amount of money by selling at alcohol.

In the “Barandani Phaothai Bijab” (The Drama Book of Baranda), the dramatist Baranda visited place to place while teaching drama of his play “Dimapurni Nidan”. As he is showing drama from Assam to Bengel, he is appreciated in everywhere, whereas on the other side he has not taken any information whether his wife and children are getting food or not. But Baranda’s wife Bangbuli did not stay idle waiting for her husband. To fill up the needs of her two children and her own she is reaping the paddy of Kongga Mahajwn and thereby looking after the family.

In the story of “Mwider Muhuni” Professor Kwirw Kungkur’s wife Mainao Kungri is portrayed as highly educated woman. But Mainao did not stay idle without working though her husband is a professor. Like her husband Mainao also helped in making happy family, by serving High School teacher and e-----

-----arning money. Besides being busy in household works Alari is seen doing service in “Dabaoswi, Pwigwn Bwisagao” Story. After the death of her father there the cloud of crisis is trying to cover Alari’s family. Alari has to carry on the heavy burden of her family. Working as clerk in the Post Office, Alari has to look after the two younger brothers and her old mother.

In the story, “Lwgwni Haba” (Friends Marriage) Bugali’s dearest friend Paogali has to work as daily labour of planting paddy in Hogom Mahajan bearing the scorching heat of the sun and heavy rain in order to fill up the stomach of her old mother along with herself. Paogali has to work one work or the other in finding out the means of living. The weaving identifies the culture of Bodo Society. Even the illiterate person, jobless person can also live by weaving. Hence Paogali is seen choosing an ambition of weaving as means of living.

It is a matter of pride that Boro women could work high officer rank jobs by taking high education. In the story “Lwgwni Haba” the Boro woman, Weaving Director, Mrs. Anjali is seen laying foundation stone for training centre of weaving. All the villagers are pleased with the valuable speech delivered by Mrs. Anjali and they are inspired that by weaving they can uplift and maintain Boro Culture.

In the story of “Lakhrani Karlung Aku” (Lakhra’s shifting character) Lakhra lost or destroyed all the properties inherited from father by drinking alcohol every day without doing any work. He left for Gohpur for searching new land. There also he could not do anything rather became a failure. After this he ran away to Mimang, Dwiyang a reserved forest in the border of Arunachal. He kept his daughter as maid servants at others house here and there. In such type of critical and helpless situation his wife Dumali did not stay in idle, without doing anything. Working as a day labour alongwith her husband she could manage in providing two meals a day.

Through the story of “Kwila Jaonw Tangnayao” (While Going for digging Coal) the story teller depicted this very same idea, situation through the characters of Ganggai. Auojhar Mahajwn, the father of Ganggai left behind him fifteen bighas of land and cattle of one full shed after his death. But consuming alcohol in extreme manner he sold all his properties, land, cattle and went for digging coal in Meghalaya. Spending many years in Meghalaya by digging coal Ganggai did not take care of whether his wife and children were having food. As a result his wife Durlai had to work as day labour in others house to feed and bring up her children. The widow Dumpe in the story “Gambaru Master” has chosen the business of alcohol as a means of his livelihood.

## 9. CONCLUSION

Janil Kr. Brahma has clearly pictured the rights and privileges enjoyed by the women in his creativity. The people even from remote rural society, from rich to poor, every class of people understood the value of education. Though every parents are not able to give higher education to their daughters, yet they are not totally debarred from receiving minimal education. Parents coming from low economic background also sent their daughters to get their minimal education even by selling the rice beer prepared by them at home. Different kinds of occupational works performed by the womenfolk along with men can also be seen. Without dependency on their husbands, wives can be seen working and earning by themselves. From daily wages to government services, business and different other works can be seen performed by the women.

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