Women life in Nirupama Borgohain’s “Nari Dosokot Akon”

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Abstract:
Nirupama Borgohain is an Assamese women writer who is renowned for her short stories and novels. She primarily deals with the life of women from a psychological point of view. Being a journalist for a long time, she has been witnessing the struggle of life. As female, Nirupama Borgohain has come through many obstacles in her personal life too. Picture of her life struggle got reflected in her writings. So, feministic concern is one of remarkable aspects of Nirupama Borgohain’s writings. ‘Nari Dosokot Akon’ is a famous short story by Nirupama Borgohain. The objective of the paper is to examine the presentation of women life in the short story ‘Nari Dosokot Akon’.

Key words: Women, life struggle, suffering.

Nirupama Borgohain is one those Assamese women writers who earned popularity in the post war era. She has established herself as a prominent short story writer. Apart from short stories, she also left her mark as a novelist and critic as well. Being a journalist for a long time, she has been witnessing the struggle of life. As female, Nirupama Borgohain has come through many obstacles in her personal life too. Picture of her life struggle got reflected in her writings. He is very brave and revolutionary so far as her creation and issues are concerned. Narrations of various issues associated to women’s life are abundant in her writings; hence he has been regarded as a feminist writer.

Nirupama Borgohain was born in 1932 in Guwahati. She has stated her writing career since her school days with a few short stories. He passed HSLC examination in 1948 with letter marks in two subjects, ISC in 1950 from Cotton and also BA in 1952 from Cotton College with the honours in Education. Nirupama Borgohain did her MA twice- the first one from Calcutta University in 1954 in English and second one from Gauhati University in Assamese literature in 1965.
Nirupama Borgohain started her teaching career from Netaji Railway High School, Maligaon and later on she taught in various colleges including Nalbari College. She married to prominent writer Homen Borgohain in 1958. She has resigned the job of lecturer and started her career as journalism by joining “Saptahik Nilachol” as associate editor. She is a mother of two sons.

Although, she was terminated from her job as she wrote boldly against the blind nationalism of Asom movement and supported humanitarianism, she was steady in her idealism. In between 1982 and 1984, Nirupama Borgohain worked as an editor in the journals respectively “Saptahik Jonojibon”, “Saptahik Sanchipat”, and “Chitrangoda”.

Nirupama Borgohain was follower of Marxist ideology. He has ten collection short story including Onek Akash(1961), Jolosobi(1966) etc, twenty one novels including Hei Nodi Nirobodhi(1962), Ejon Burha Manuh(1966) and many novellas in her name. Moreover, he also owns four collections of articles related to journalism, five translated books, one travelogue, one children book and her biography Biswash aru Sonsoyr Majedi. Thus, she has contributed immensely to Assamese literature.

As recognition of her contribution to Assamese and Indian literature, he has been awarded Shashwati award (1987) in Bangalore for her novel Onya Jiban, Bashanti Devi Bordoloi 91989-90) award by Assam Sahitya Sabha for the same novel, Hem Baruah Bota 1994) by Assam Sahitya Sabha for the novel Abhijatri and she was also awarded prestigious Sahitya Academy in 1996 for the novel Abhijatri.

Feministic concern is one of remarkable aspects of Nirupama Borgohain’s writings. Most of the characters of her short stories are female and they revolve around the life struggle, happiness, sorrow of the women’s life. She presents the suffering and struggle of the women sensuously from the psychological point of view penetrating into the mind of the characters.

‘Nari Dosokot Akon’ is one of her renowned short stories that reflect the thought of the writer. It is included in Nirupama Borgohain’s Srestha Galpa published in 1998 by Subhadra publication.

The subject matter of the short story is on a young girl named Akon. She lost her mother and brother in flood in her childhood. She along with her father somehow managed to save them by climbing at the roof. At that time she was just four years old. Second time, the blood made their paddy field infertile by
filling it with sand. It made their life dark. With the passing of time, Akon grew older. Her father also turned old and lost his eyesight. At time she started begging at the bus stoppages, railway stations holding the sticks of her father. Under the circumstances, she stepped into the world of prostitution. The old father was helpless in spite of knowing these all. Her father started abusing Akon every now and then. One day, suddenly her lover Jatin arrived at the scenes. Akon’s father desired Jatin to offer marriage proposal to her. But he did not; on the contrary Jatin started supplying her to the people. When her father came to know, he started hating them and used slang words to them. Thus the story ends.

The main aspects associated to women that have presented in the story ‘Nari Dosokot Akon’ are:

- The apathy and dislike of the society towards girl child.
- Consideration of the female as a commodity in the capitalist society.
- Domination of female in patriarchy.

The above mentioned aspects can be analysed with reference to the mentioned short story.

Akon’s father had two children including a boy and a girl. When Akon’s brother died in the flood, the agony of the father is presented as- “Akon is alive but he died. I was already dissatisfied when she was born first. Now again he died. I somehow managed to control my mind from the anger to push her into the water” (Paraphrased summary, Srestha Galpa, p. 105).

The reason behind expressing the dissent to his daughter was her entering into prostitution. When he was unable to see in his old age, the father strongly felt the need to of a son. But he was left without option apart from his daughter on which he is depended on. Although, Akon deviated, but it was her only option to earn their living. Although, Akon’s father spent his life on the earning managed by Akon, he also regretted at the degradation of his daughter. The story portrays a helpless father who finally wished the death of his daughter instead of his son. It can be assert that the dead wish of the daughter by a father was caused by the environment of the society. It is a collective attitude towards the girl child of which the father of Akon is only a representative. The family of Akon lost everything in flood, therefore they must get compensation by the government and her father should receive old age pension. Moreover, Akon being a helpless girl must have proper opportunity to live respectfully.

Through the characters of Akon and her father and their story, the author exposed the hollowness of the
society along with the oppressed and inferior position of the woman. Moreover, the reaction of the father on the deviation of his daughter is presented as “if my boy was alive instead of her, I would not have any worry. Why did she not die? Now what should I do with the murderer of her mother and brother” (paraphrased summary, Srestha Galpa, p. 109)

Apart from expressing the suffering of the father, the story also presents the pathetic picture of the lover’s manipulation with the life of Akon through the character of Jatin. Once, Akon’s father loved Jatin so much. Even, when Jatin returned to Akon when she was in the business of prostitution, her father thought that Akon will be saved by Jatin from this hell. On the contrary, Jatin started his business sending Akon to the rich officers. Apart from being blind, the father needed to disguise as deaf too. It was thus he came to know the deviated lifestyle of his daughter. He was angry at his daughter and his mind was filled with hatred to the lovers like Jatin. At the end of the story, Akon’s father expressed his words to Jatin who is the son of his friend Dasarath- “Jatin turns to be traitor who deals in the flesh of the woman. When you came to our house frequently, it gives hope to my mind that it was because of your love to Akon. I thought one day you will marry her. Then at least we can go back to our village out of this hell. This ray of hope was created because everyone knew your frequent visits to our home to Akon. I was happy; there was nothing to disagree as you are the son of my friend Dasarath. It was the flood of Pagaladia who devoured my land and I was rendered to keep Akon in the house of the professor in the town. One of the reasons behind her cry at the time of leaving the village was also you apart from going away from the home. After years when you came back to us searching Akon, why would not I expect this from you? But you have graved your feelings to her in the sand of the river. Now you have started your business instead of marrying her. She turns to be commodity for you. I wish to hit on your head” (paraphrased summary, Srestha Galpa, p.112-113).

After expressing the anguish, the father of Akon opined on Jatin- “after a moment my fury reduced. I lied down on the bed being the deaf man as I was like the lying corpse of the two bulls like woods as I could not release the string from their neck. If I kill Jatin, it would hamper Akon to earn. Moreover, I have always been blind in this respect, so there is no point of rebuking Jatin. How can he marry a prostitute? Whether she is my daughter or expert in household tasks, or too amiable to raise voice or even Jatin had tremendous feeling for her, how can anyone marry a prostitute? (Paraphrased summary,
Srestha Galpa, p.113) through the experience of Akon’s father, it is well reflected that human beings are the slave of circumstances and it is created by the social system. If the government had provided necessary compensation to the family affected by flood, Akon could have lived a respectful life. The writer shows a society where women are always oppressed, sufferer and considered to be a commodity.

Another aspect that got reflected in the story is the dependence of female in patriarchy. One of such example is- “whatever it is, there no value for the opinion of any female, be it daughter or wife” (Paraphrased summary, Srestha Galpa, p.108)

It is noteworthy to mention the style of Nirupama Borgohain’s writing which is precise, organised, clear and has appropriate ending although she writes in traditional style. Her language is simple and sometimes musical.

Nirupama Borgohain is a writer with social consciousness and humanitarian note. She has portrayed the life and people from the middle class in her stories. The life struggle, suffering of women, agony, the drawbacks of the society etc are well conspicuous in her writings.

Bibliography: