

A BRIEF STUDY ON THE CHARACTER 'CHITRALEKHA' FROM THE DRAMA 'SONITKUNWARI' BY JYOTIPRASAD AGARWALA

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Abstract:

Jyotiprasad Agarwala had been a multi-talented literary and cultural legend of Assamese literature and culture. Great man who influenced greatly for uplifting of Assamese literature, language and culture. The main topic of this drama of Jyotiprasad Agarwala's 'Sonitkunwari' is the love between Usha and Anirudhdha. Chitralekha is the central character of the drama 'Sonitkunwari'. She is the daughter of the Minister of King Bana and also she is the friend and companion of Princess Usha. She is the collaborator in between Usha and Anirudhdha. She stays with the Princess Usha in her exile in Agnigarh. Usha's happiness is her happiness and the Princess's sorrow is her sorrow. While Usha becomes unhappy for not finding the man of her dream, Chitralekha always stands by her side and consoles her. Chitralekha went to Dwaraka and met Prince Aniruddha there. She informs him that Princess Usha wants to marry Anirudhdha. Anirudhdha does not believe Chitralekha. Anirudhdha has become mesmerized with the dance performance of Chitralekha. He reaches Agnigarh with Chitralekha. Due to such brave act of Chitralekha Anirudhdha and Usha have married as per Gandharva ritual. Through the character of Chitralekha, the dramatist Jyotiprasad wants to see the world full of happiness, joy and peace.

Keywords: Chitralekha, Usha, Aniruddha, Padamkali.

About Jyotiprasad Agarwala:

Jyotiprasad Agarwala, a multifaceted talent of Assamese literature is treated as the soul of Assamese culture. His talent was fully blossomed in creation of dramas. Jyotiprasad was born on 17th June in 1903 at Tamolbari Tea Estate in Dibrugarh, Assam to Paramananda Agarwala and Kiranmoyee Devi. Jyotiprasad's Great Grandfather Navrang Ram Agarwala came to Assam from Rajasthan. He settled here in Bishwanath and married an Assamese girl Sadori Rajkhowa and became an Assamese by heart and soul. Navrang's eldest son from his first wife was Haribilash, Haribilash Agarwala's sons were Bishnuprasad, Chandra Kumar, Paramananda, Krishnaprasad and Gopal Chandra and Haribilash had a daughter. Yagneswari. Jyotiprasad passed the test examination from Tezpur High school to appear in Matriculation Final Examination. Later he was admitted to National school in Kolkata which was established by Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das. From there he passed the Matriculation examination and returned back to home in

Assam. He joined the press of his elder uncle (Bordeuta) Chandraprasad Agarwala from where Chandraprasad was publishing the newspaper "Axomiya."

In the year 1926, he went to England to make further studies. He got himself enrolled in Edinburgh University. But keeping incomplete his studies in England, he went to Germany to learn film making. In Germany he met the legendary film maker and actor Himangshu Rai and started to learn the different aspects of film making under the guidance of Rai. After undergoing training of film making for seven months, he returned back to the country in the year 1930. He again joined the freedom movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and in 1932 he was imprisoned for fifteen months. In the year 1936, Jyotiprasad married Debjani Bhuyan.

Jyotiprasad had written some great Assamese dramas such as Sonitkunwari, Karengar Ligiri, Rupaleem, Nimati Koina, Sonpokhili, Labhita, Khanikar etc. He had also written novels and stories such as Rupahi, Bogitara, Sontara etc. Jyotiprasad had been a music composer, poet, lyricist, singer and actor also. Jyotiprasad was the first Assamese film maker. He produced and directed the first ever Assamese film Joymati which was released in the year 1935.

Jyotiprasad took his last breath in Tezpur on 17th January 1951 at the age of only 48 years.

Objective of the study:

Characters are the main elements of a drama. They are like the backbone of a drama. Creation of a drama and then reading by the people, makes the characters of the drama very clear in the vision of the readers. The objectives of this study are:

- (1) To analyze the woman character Chitrakleha, from the drama 'Sonitkunwari' by Jyotiprasad Agarwala.
- (2) To clarify the messages of the drama after studying the characters.

Methodology:

- (1) For the proposed study, two kind of sources - Primary Sources and Secondary Sources are chosen. The drama 'Sonitkunwari' of Jyotiprasad Agarwala is considered as Primary Source.
- (2) In the proposed study, both analytical and descriptive ways have been adopted.
- (3) Helps were taken to make the study from the Books through different Libraries.

Our study will be focused briefly on the woman character Chitrakleha from the drama of Jyotiprasad

Significance of the Drama 'Sonitkunwari':

Jyotiprasad's dramas are mainly character based. He gave more importance into characters than the fabrication of the story. The character of Chitrakleha in Jyotiprasad's 'Sonitkunwari' is an important woman character among the main women characters. Jyotiprasad started his career of a dramatist with the drama of 'Sonitkunwari' which was written by him at a very young age. It is a most successful stage drama. Jyotiprasad's 'Sonitkunwari', the symbolic drama was the first of its kind in the field of Assamese Literature. A new era had been started in the Assamese Literature. Jyotiprasad himself was a brilliant actor. The main characteristics of Jyotiprasad's 'Sonitkunwari' is its poetic nature. "The great span of imagination, feelings of love and the poetic appeal with fluency of emotional dialogues touch the heart". The subject of this drama is mythological and this is the only drama of Jyotiprasad based on mythology. The drama was created from part of a well-known mythology. Subject wise it resemblances with Sanskrit Mythologies,

Haiivansh Bhagawat. Apart from these Jyotiprasad took the split subjects from Ananta Kandali's Kumar Haran Kavya and Usha Parinoy by poet Pitambhar. Although subject wise it is a mythological drama, but on transformation, it became a modern romantic drama.

Chitrlekha Character:

Chitrlekha character is a very attractive character of the drama 'Sonitkunwari'. She is the daughter of the Minister of King Bana and also she is the friend and companion of Princess Usha. They are not just friends but they are heartily attached. Chitrlekha is an expert in painting, singing and dance. She is the collaborator in between Usha and Anirudhdha. Chitrlekha is the central character of the drama 'Sonitkunwari'. "Chitrlekha, the anchor of the story of the drama and she is the idolized the character which is treated as long thirst for eternal beauty of the dramatist. Chitrlekha is found to be most essential character of the drama from the beginning. At the initial scene, Chitrlekha performs Padumkali dance as the King Bana desires. Through this song and dance of Padamkali, the eternal thirst of human for beauty is depicted. Chitrlekha is a young woman. She stays with the Princess Usha in her exile in Agnigarh. Usha's happiness is her happiness and the Princess's sorrow is her sorrow. While Usha becomes unhappy for not finding her man of dream, Chitrlekha always stands by her side and consoles her. Not only this, she has promised to Usha to make search and bring to her the Prince of her dream. On listening the description of Usha's dream Prince, Chitrlekha starts to draw the portraits of all Princes from the Devtas (Gods), Danavs, Manavs (Human) to Kinnars. At last Chitrlekha draws the portrait of the Prince of Dwaraka, the dream Prince of Usha. After that she goes to Dwaraka to meet the Prince Anirudhdha to appraise him about Usha's love for him. We observe the bravery of Chitrlekha. Chitrlekha enters Dwaraka in a disguise of a boy who sells paintings, portraits. In disguise of the painting - seller she reaches to Anirudhdha Adopting some trick she shows him the portrait of Usha. After that Chitrlekha discloses her identity to Anirudhdha and tells that the portrait is that of the Princess of Bana Kingdom, Usha. She informs more that Usha wants to marry Anirudhdha. Anirudhdha does not believe Chitrlekha. But he heard that the daughter of the Minister of King Bana is an expert singer and dancer. Anirudhdha said to her, "How can I believe that you are the daughter of the minister of King Bana, Chitrlekha who is an expert in singing and dancing? If you can convince me with your extra ordinary dance performance, only then I will believe that you are really the Chitrlekha whose performance I heard of." Chitrlekha readily accepts the proposal and proves her true identity by presenting an extra ordinary performance of song and dance. In this way we find superb song and dance performance twice in the drama. Anirudhdha has become mesmerized with the performance of Chitrlekha. Aniruddha has immersed completely and as if lost himself in the ambience created by Chitrlekha's performance and started to follow her while she is leaving the room after her performance.

This is to be mentioned here that Jyotiprasad had written the drama 'Sonitkunwari' based on the famous mythological stories of great mythologies like 'Hari Vansha' and 'Bhagwart Puran'. Mythologies emphasized more on the Gandharva Marriage of Bana's daughter, the princess Usha with Sri Krishna's grandson Aniruddha and as a result King Bana & Sri Krishna engaged in a battle while Sri Krishna arrived from Dwaraka to rescue his grandson Aniruddha from the imprisonment of King Bana. In the mythologies like Hari Vans and Bhagawat Puran it is described that Chitrlekha with the help of her 'Tamasi Vidya' abducted Aniruddha from Dwaraka and brought him to Bana Kingdom. Jyotiprasad deliberately avoided this description of unworldly

miraculous act of Chitrlekha in his play Sonitkunwari. He opted for more realistic act and made the drama suitable for stage performance. In Sonitkunwari Jyotiprasad had shown Aniruddha being pleased with the song & dance performance of Chitrlekha, believed her statement and willingly accompanied Chitrlekha to Agnigarh where Princess Usha was in an exile in a hilly fort in the Kingdom of Bana. Due to such brave act of Chitrlekha Aniruddha and Usha have married as per Gandharva ritual. That is why the critics of Assamese literature have termed Chitrlekha as the medium in the marriage of Aniruddha and Chitrlekha.

During the marriage ceremony of Aniruddha and Usha, both requested Chitrlekha to get married with the person of her choice. On making the query whether any man is there whom Chitrlekha loves, she replied –“I love everybody.” Her philosophy is that a true artist loves all. An artist’s pleasure lies on creating beauty & peace for all. An artist’s success becomes fruitful only when people become happy with their lives. Other people’s peace and development is more important than an artist’s own personal comfort and luxury.

The greatness of sacrifice has been established through the character of Chitrlekha. For the sake of happiness of her friend and companion Usha, she has taken big risks and sacrificed all her wishes. Such instance of duty bound woman who does not bother for her self-interest is found very rarely in the field of world literature. Instead of self-interest, to contribute for the people and the society as a whole is the objective of a true artist. An artist becomes glad and successful if he or she works for the joy and peace for the people. At the concluding part of the drama, Chitrlekha wishes good bye to her friend Usha with immense joy. Chitrlekha character of the drama ‘Sonitkunwari’ symbolizes an artist’s consciousness. Here lies her true beauty.

Conclusion:

Chitrlekha, the central character of the drama ‘Sonitkunwari’ has been shown as the presenter or anchor in the drama. The character Chitrlekha is the symbol of dramatist Jyotiprasad’s thirst for eternal beauty. At the beginning of the drama, the presentation of ‘Padamkali’ song and dance by Chitrlekha is the expression of eternal beauty of Chitrlekha’s worshipping. Through the song and dance of ‘Padamkali, the human’s desire for fulfilling the pursuit of life for eternal beauty has been expressed.

In the mythologies, the character Chitrlekha is shown as an elusive proficient dancer who is basically an entertainer. But Jyotiprasad created the character as an expert in song and dances as well as she is shown as a painter of extra ordinary caliber. Jyotiprasad made the character more down to earth than an unworldly powerful woman as depicted in the mythologies.

At the end of the study, we observe that through his drama Sonitkunwari, Jyotiprasad wants to see a new world full of love, beauty. The main objective of Jyotiprasad’s drama is only this.

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