

# Portrayal of the Female Characters in Syed Abdul Malik's "Surujmukhir Swapna"

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**INTRODUCTION:** Syed Abdul Malik, one of the great literary masters of Assam, portrayed the contemporary Assamese society in his writings. He not only portrayed the society of Assam, but also documented the condition of social beings during that particular period. Malik uses a great variety of characters and brings them together neatly. In Abdul Malik's fictional works reader gets the raw smell of the soil and water of his motherland, Assam, for these have influenced him greatly. Most importantly, his birth place Naharani, Golaghat as well as the river Dhansiri that flows near by have highly influenced Malik's creative work.

## WHAT IS 'CHARACTER' :

The character is the name of a literary genre, it is a short and usually witty, sketch in prose of a distinctive type of person. According to M.H Abrams in his book 'A Handbook of Literary Terms', "Character are the persons represented in dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as possessing particular moral, intellectual and emotional qualities by inferences from what the persons say and their distinctive ways of saying it- the dialogue – and from what they do- the action". (2009:45)

E. M Forster, in 'Aspects of the Novel'(1927), introduced new terms for an old distinction by discriminating between flat and round characters. A flat character (also called a type or "two dimensional"), Forster says, is built around "a single idea or quality" and is presented without much individualizing detail, and therefore can be described adequately in a single phrase or sentence.

A round is complex in temperament and motivation and is represented with subtle particularity; such a character therefore is as difficult to describe with any adequacy as a person in real life, and like real persons, is capable of surprising us. Almost all dramas and narratives properly enough have some characters who serve merely as functionaries and are not characterised at all, as well as other characters who are left relatively flat.

## FEMALE CHARACTERS IN 'SURUJMUKHIR SWAPNA' :

In the fictional works of Syed Abdul Malik, we see the various socio-economic condition of the society of that particular period as well as how Nature provides the livelihood to the inhabitants of Assam, specially of Naharani, all these aspects are reflected. In the novels, Malik tries to show that as because the socio-economic conditions were not good, so some of the people had to suffer with some undesirable situations. After that Nature possess a great role in the writings of Malik. Sometime it stands for creation and sometime it is for destruction, in the words of Wordsworth, Nature becomes the "Friend, Philosopher and Guide". In the lapse of Nature, the characters find peace and enjoyment. In some of his novels, the theme of Marginalisation is also arisen. A kind of discrimination between higher class and lower class, between the male and female of the society during that period is mirrored. Malik has also given to the readers a taste of relationship, bonding among the people through his writings. In this paper, the female characters of Syed Abdul Malik's 'Surujmukhir Swapna' and their nature as well as the responses towards their respective situations will be minutely analyzed.

Malik's 'Surujmukhir Swapna' is a social novel, which portrays a beautiful picture of Dalim Village, river Dhansiri and adamant-insensate nature of the villagers. As because the village is situated on the bank of Dhansiri, the villagers accept him as their strength and consolation. The novel presents the 'Dalim' as a backward village, not influenced by the city life 'Gula' and therefore the villagers were uneducated and undeveloped, but still among them the feeling of togetherness was there, famous American writer Toni Morrison's idea of 'inclusiveness' was there in the Dalim village.

The novel sketches many characters, which are both male and female. The central character is 'Gulos' and through this character Malik creates the link among all the characters in the novel. The major female characters are Kopahi, Tora, the mother of 'Gulos' and lastly Senimai, who was presented firstly a little bit weak but in the later part of the novel she was changed into a strong personality because of the circumstances. And all these characters are interrelated in 'Surujmukhir Swapna'.

Firstly, Kopahi is a woman in her thirties, she was born and grown up at Dalim village. She wedded with Nahor, after the death of Jyoti (elder sister of Kopahi/mother of Tora). But the married life was not a happy one, it was dismissed because of Bashirat, a trade person. So Nahor went away from her life.

Due to illicit relationship with Bashirat Kapahi was alone, she had to tolerate the ignorance of the society. In the absence of Nahor, Kopahi faced difficulty to spend her normal life with her niece Tora. She used to live in the extreme part of the Dalim. She worked in the residence of others for their livelihood, especially she went to work in the house of Saphiyat.

In the Dalim village, Kopahi lived with her daughter Tora, though Kopahi didn't give birth to her but after the death of Tora's mother Jyoti, both of them started to live together. Kopahi and Tora feel very happy in the presence of Gulos. He secretly comes to their house in the darkness of night. Both Kopahi and Tora think Gulos as their future life partner. They help Gulos according to their capacity to set up the pam residence of Gulos. Both of them started to dream a close relationship with Gulos. Kopahi also plan to hand over Tora to Saphiyat's son Baphi who is almost a dull. Finally, Kopahi gets succes in her plan to marry Gulos and which is unknown to him After having uncovered the face of K o p a h i b y G u l o s i n t h e w e d d i n g n i g h t , h e w a s t o t a l l y s u r p r i s e d :

Syed Abdul Malik presents her as a round character, which can't be understood easily by the readers. These type of characters bound the readers to be surprised. Here, we can make a comparison between 'Kathfula', a short story by Malik and 'Surumukhir Swapna'. The character of 'Bedana' from 'Kathfula' is similar to Kopahi as both the two are unique by nature. To fulfill their desires they do something which are unexpected. But then also 'Bedana' and 'Kopahi' are considered as the wonderful flowers in the literary garden of Syed Abdul Malik. One famous critic has said " Woman always and actively takes the initiative in Martimonial arrangements".

Secondly, Tora is an another important character of the novel. Due to the suppression of Kapahi, she is shying. Malik presents her as a flat character of the novel. After the death of Jyoti, Kapahi brought up Tora. She grew up and ceased at the age of fourteen. Tora was as beautiful as her step mother Kopahi but she was more charming and healthy than Kopahi. She also helped her mother by weaving and working in the field to earn money. She was quite simple and innocent. She didn't talk much and according to the novelist isolation leads her to such a condition. She realized that she was not free like the other girls in the village. As a teenager she also dreamt of her future life. She loves Gulos from the core of her heart and she considers him as the nearest and dearest one. Once Gulos came to their house and Kopahi was not there so Tora takes the advantage to express the feeling before Gulos and he assured her to save her from all the hurdles and marry her. He planned to take her to his pam residence forever. But because of Kopahi and Saphiyat, their plan didn't proceed. Tora became the victim of the unpleasant situation and she tried to protest against the injustice done by Saphiyat and Kopahi. In this particular circumtence, we see Tora as a b r a v e g i r l w h o c a n s a v e h e r s e l f f r o m s u p p r e s s i o n o f o t h e r p e o p l e .

In the middle part of the novel, we see Gulos, Kopahi and Tora restarted their life altogether in the same house. But the behavior of Tora was not like before. She used to do all the daily works but her smile, her happiness faded away. All of a sudden there is a quarrel between Gulos and Kopahi because of the scandal in the life of Kopahi, Gulos ask her to leave the house.

Malik prepared the character of Tora just like a young village girl who tries to overcome from all the problems having in her life.

Thirdly, Syed Abdul Malik presents Senimai as the first beloved of Gulos. Their love relationship didn't achieve the goal because of the suppression of the families. By nature Senimai is quite and calm. In the last part of the novel Senimai has some active and significant role. The family of Senimai forced her to marry with Kolai who was physically weak. Therefore the married life as well as the relationship was not a h a p p y o n e

Human beings are the slave of circumtences. Because of the poor pitiable condition of her husband Kolai, she fall upon the thrones of life. After the discussion with Gulos and Chandra, she decided to take her husband for better medical treatment. Here in her character, we find a courageous wife inspite of the bad financial condition she wanted to take the responsibility of her unhealthy husband. She treated Kolai in a very pleasant way, she took care of him like a small child.

And last but not least, the mother of Gulos is an impotant character. She was a woman who depended on herself not in anyone else that means we can say her as a responsible woman. The features of the flat characters are reflected in her nature. Regarding the character of her t h e r e s h o u l d n o t b e a n y c o n f u s i o n i n t h e m i n d s o f t h e r e a d e r s .

Both Gulos and mother started to live their life. Sometime Gulos had to stay away from the house for his pam house and at that time like a responsible person, she managed everything without any fear. She used to thought of the future of her son as a common mother.

In her character, we find a pleasant and kind hearted woman. Though she left the house of her husband but when she got the news of illness of her husband, she forgot all the unfavourable treatment of him. Finally she decided to go to him, began to take care of him and tried to make him cure. Through this female character Syed Abdul Malik tries to show the equal love, effection, care and response of a woman t o w a r d s h e r h u s b a n d a s w e l l a s h e r c h i l d .

CONCLUSION: Syed Abdul Malik's female characters shows the various problems which are faced by them in the male-dominated contemporary society. These female characters are different from each other. Due to the poor backward economic condition these females

reach to the undesirable pitiable condition of human life. Circumstances bound the characters to plan against their own family members. Through the characters, we can also see that they are actively active. For their livelihood , they work hard without thinking any other thing. And in the novel, Malik tries to show the distinction among the characters including the female, on the one side the round charaters are somewhat critical, difficult to understand and on the other side the flat characters, easy to understand by the readers.

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