

# Violence against Mythological Women Characters as reflected in the *PALA-Art-Form* of Assam & Orissa.

**Dr. Tridib Kr Goswami**

**Senior Assistant Professor**

**Department of English,  
BATADRABA S.S.S. COLLEGE,**

**NAGAON, ASSAM, INDIA.**

In the Pálá-performance, both mythological and real woman characters are found. The mythological woman characters of Pálá-performance play significant role in the development of the theme of a particular Pálá. It is observed both in Assam and Orissa that mythological woman characters of Pálá-performance always keep balance in between good and evil, justice and injustice and reward and punishment etc.

The significant mythological woman characters of Pálá-performance are - Sabya, Damayanti, Beula, Savitri, Cinta, Sati, Sita, Kayadhu, Tara etc. These mythological woman characters of Pálá-performance have always influence upon the woman of Assamese and Oria society. The mythological woman characters of Pálá-performance are taken from the BhagavataPuráan, Rámáyana and the Mahábhárata. It is seen that mythological woman characters of Pálá-performance always take part in transferring the message of the sacred scripts to the mass people. Although these mythological woman characters have been polished with goddess like qualities but they have more earthly nature and they are decorated with local colours. Consequently these mythological woman characters are very popular both in Assam and Orissa.

In the Pálá Harichandra Uppakhyana, Sabya, the queen of Harichandra, who for the life of Harichandra, sacrifices everything and establishes herself as a Sati. The character of Sabya can be estimated from the role that she has been playing from the very beginning to the end of the Pálá i.e., Harichandra-Uppakhyana. The core of her heart and specially her power of forecasting the future can be realised from the following-

Sabya: he prameshwar sarana kátor

doyá kari náth rouk ibár

neláge neláge mrigayá karite

aAmangal hoba, Amongal hoba,

mrigayáloi gole náth // (Harichandra-Uppakhyana)

Sabya's assessment is right. In mrigaya, the downfall of Harichandra's fortune starts. He has been cursed by the angry sage Visvamitra and the king faces a series of obstacles, loses his wife, son, kingdom and ultimately his own past life and glory.

The character of Sabya, dazzles best in the very moment of her separation from her husband and only son Rohitashya -

Sabya :jáu he o' jáu he

praneshwar tomák erithoi

hobane nohoba dekhá, nakabáne áru kathá

jáu, jau, mone kare

jáboke nowáro

swamir caran ero kenekoi

máyár bandhan cigim kenekoi //

(Harichandra Uppakhyana)

Sabya accepts each and every situation imposed upon her life by time. She, very easily gives up her ornaments and prepares herself to go to exile which reveals her power of acceptance and wisdom. She considers all earthly possessions as trivial and supports her husband by heart:

Sabya: ei lowá raj alankár

ei lowá galar hár

tushya kará saba

dharmahe sár

O he praneshwar

dharmahe sár // (Harichandra Uppakhyana)

The very exhibition of Sita in Sita-Haran pálá focuses her as the symbol of patience, perseverance etc. The character of Sita is a subject of too much discussion at present time. And there is controversy regarding the existence of Sita, whether she is a real character or a mythological character. But the character of Sita is so heart touching and eye-attracting that such an obedient character is not found in the campus of the whole world literature. Sita goes to exile with her husband, Rama. There, she has been abducted by Ravana, the ten headed demon. Rama defeats Ravana and brings Sita back to Ayodhya. But for the satisfaction of the common people of the kingdom, again Sita has been sent to exile while she is pregnant.

Later on, she gives birth to two twin namely Lava and Kusha and returns to Rama but she stays no further with Rama and submits herself to Basumati her mother by uttering the following lines:

Sita: áura jena nusunu ramara eto nau

phat diya basumati pátale Lukáu// (Sita-Haran)

(No more I like to hear the name of Rama. O' the earth, make open your heart to make a room for me)

Thus, Sita is a character who gives teachings to the common woman through the ages.

Damayanti is the daughter of Vimsena and is the wife of Nala. She goes to exile with her husband Nala and in the exile, unfortunately, they are separated from each other, ultimately, for their true love for each other they are united and live a happy life.

Damayanti suggests her husband not to play pasha but Nala accepts the proposal of Puskara and loses everything. Her pre-estimation is reflected through the following :

Damayanti: náláge náláge páshá khelá karite jaba

amongal hoba páshá khelá karite gole

amangal hoba // (Nala-Damayanti)

(You need not go to play with dice. This will bring you omnious result)

Again, Damayanti's confirmed mind regarding Nala, after a long period of separation, is seen constant which reflects her chastity and sincerity :

suniook protie dev mohor bacan

nala bine ána swámi noboribo moi // (Nala-Damayanti)

(Listen to me, o' my father, I shall not adorned as husband except Nala)

That Damayanti is an inseparable part of Nala's life is evident and their reunion brings rhythm to their life.

Sati is an another mythological character whom can be easily counted with other mythological characters. She is the daughter of Daksa and wife of Siva. Once Daksa preparing a yanja, didnot invite Siva. The news of the grand festival of her father reached the ear of Sati and she without invitation wanted to go :

Sati: priteer álaye moi jáu tripurári  
 biná nimantane pitree yajna jába pári  
 bidái diyá bhootanáth bidái diyá mok  
 daksa páte yajna nayan bhari cháu (Daksa-Yanja)

(O' Tripuri, let me go to the sacrifice being solemnised by Daksa at his residence. It is implied that I have got easy excess to the sacrifice of Daksa even being non-invitee. So please, bid-adieu to me to go and see the sacrifice celebrated by Daksa) Sati takes the decision to go to her father and Siva in a state of dilemma sends her. But while Siva, the husband of Sati, has been severely criticised by her father, she like a true and devoted wife ventilates her mind :

Sati: kátor karisu pitá nubulibá ár  
 swámi nindá suni mor dahice antar  
 bholánáth mer swámi jane sarbajane  
 tini troilokyar loke puye sarbakhyanee// (Daksa-Yanja)

( I entreat you not to say more. I have been perturbed on hearing the ill-speech thrown towards my husband. Bholanath is my husband known to all and has been worshipped by the three worlds)

Sati is a true soul to her husband and centering round her sacrifice the theme of the pálá develops and she by her act establishes that a true wife should always be ready to sacrifice her life for her husband.

Cinta, another mythological character, the wife of Srivatsa, exhibits herself as a wife who is always ready to support her husband. The character of Savitri reflects best through the Savitri- Satyavan

pálá. In spite of knowing the immature death of Satyavana, Savitri confirms her mind to marry him. And for her consistent mind, she returns the life of her husband from Yamadeva. Her true love comes to light through her following song -

Savitri:oh yama devatá

koloinu niyá

jivane morane vál pái áhiso

oh yama devatá

ninibá ninibá// (Savitri- Satyavan)

(O'yama,the deity,where do you take away? He is beloved to me in life and death. Donot take him away,O' yama,the deity.) Savitri's heart to heart and soul to soul love for Satyavana comes to light and she is an example for all the woman who live a conjugal life.

In the Lakhindar-Beula pálá, woman mythological characters like Beula,Netai and Padma are found. Beula is the central woman character and her marriage with Lakhindara is the climax of the pálá. Afterwards, she loses her husband and for her devotion to God as well as to her husband, she regains the life of her husband. Although, Beula is a young girl at the time of her marriage but she possesses a good temperament. She is courageous and has the power of selection and rejection as demanded by time.

The character of Kayadhu, the mother of Prahlada and wife of Hiranyakasipu, is also a mythological woman character of count. She, although the wife of a Datya, is not like him. In her heart, she always thinks about Prahlada. Prahlad's opposite nature to his father, in reality delights his mother. While Prahlada has been tortured, she cries in her heart like a true mother and ultimately while Hiranyakasipu has been killed, she cries, but at the same time, she is also happy, although she reflects not. On the otherhand, she is confirmed that tragedy of Prahlada and the chaos of the contemporary world ends by the killing of the Hiranyakashipu. She accepts it and like a true mother consoles his son.

Kayadhu: nákándibá nákándibá

amár tonoya

janma hole mrityu hoba

jánibá nicaya // (Bhakta-Prahlad)

(O' my son donot cry.whoever is born destined to die.)

Sources : i) A comparative study of the Pala art form of Assam and Orissa,  
Ph.D thesis 2009, G.U.

ii) Different unprinted Pala Scripts collected from Assam & Orissa.

