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Review Of Research



SOCIAL ASPECTS AS REFLECTED IN THE SHORT STORIES OF HARIBHUSAN BRAHMA



Piriti Basumatary

Research Scholar , Department of Bodo, Bodoland University, Kokrajhar, BTAD, Assam.



Piriti Basumatary

ABSTRACT

Haribhusan Brahma, an eminent short story writer in the Bodo literature who has credit of literary contributions in the field of Bodo short story. In his short stories, vivid representation of Bodo society and culture has been depicted minutely. Most of the short stories are based on Bodo society. In his short stories 'Honglani Saori' and 'Narkhw, writer tries to depict the social life, way of living and culture of the Bodos. Keeping in view to this aspects the paper attempts to highlight the socio-cultural life of the Bodos that has been depicted in the short stories of Haribhusan Brahma.

KEYWORDS: way of living, socio-cultural life.

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

In the decade of sixty of the Bodo literature an enormous numbers of short story have been flourishing in the history of the Bodo literature. Among the makers of the Bodo short story Haribhusan Brahma is an eminent short story writer in the Bodo literature who has given literary flavor having native colour



of the Bodo society. In the history of Bodo short story it is seen that most of the writers have enthusiastically accepted social aspects as well as socio-cultural aspects and traits of culture as the elements of story. Story telling is performed with the help of characterization that been gathered from the village as well as agro-based society. These aspects have been observed in most of the stories of Bodo short story writers. In case of the stories of Haribhusan Brahma it may be noticed extensively.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The objective of the paper is to highlight the social aspects of the Bodos. The native and agro-

based society of the Bodos is fairly depicted through the story telling; also how it is performed through the story telling with composition of socio-cultural aspects is the principal aim of the analysis.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

For doing minute analysis of the short story of Haribhusan Brahma and socio-cultural aspects of the Bodos as reflected in the short stories as cited above a critical review has been done in this paper. To make convenient the analysis necessary data have been gathered from different sources as primary and secondary. Critical reviews of short stories of Haribhusan Brahma, as available in Bodo, and published articles on the writings of the writer, responses and comments from literary critics have been utilized for a literary analysis. Also to discuss about cultural life of the society of the Bodos, as depicted in the stories, a folkloristic view point has been taken into account.

4.0 DISCUSSION

In this paper the discussion has been done on the main points like social aspects that comprises socio-cultural aspects as well as socio-cultural life as depicted in the story 'HONGLANI SAORI' and 'NARKHW'.

4.1 SOCIO-CULTURAL ASPECTS IN THE SHORT STORY 'HONGLANI SAORI'

Hongla's Saori is a social story. In this story there are three characters e.g. Hongla, Phania master, Nagen inspector. These three characters are educationally related. Hongla is the secretary in the Pathwibari L.P. School, Phania is the teacher of this school and Nagen is the school inspector of the Bodo medium. All three are seen having similar character. All of them are equally responsible for deteriorating the educational environment. Hongla being as a school secretary has no thoughts of the welfare for the villager children and Phania also being as a school teacher has no qualities of a good teacher who by withholding the teaching schedule consumes liquor in Hongla's residence and after being drunk lie down on the bench on the pretext of headache. He also asks his students to pour water on his head. On another side, Nagen inspector arrives for inspecting and selecting the teacher for Rhastrapati award when Phania master was lying on the bench with headache. Hongla and Phania master are the individuals who don't know the worth of education and have no good qualities. Similarly Nagen inspector is a corrupt Govt. official who demands bananas, fine fragrant rice etc. as a bribe and makes a fake report; while Nagen inspector arrived Phania teacher was lying intoxicated on the bench. This was witnessed by Nagen inspector. Instead of taking severe action, he wrote a fake report on the Phania teacher, Phania as a good teacher and recommended him for the Rhastrapati Award. As a result of this fake report, Nagen inspector was suspended for three years. This story is based on Bodo society for which Bodo society's social aspects are reflected extensively. These aspects are given as follows:

4.1.1 Shaori janai: Shaori janai (Community Service) is an ancient tradition of the Bodos. The Bodo people lives in the village, during the time of need they are extended help to each other. Generally the main livelihood of Bodo is agriculture. In different season Bodo people cultivates different crop. Paddy plantation, paddy plucking, paddy harvesting and varieties of domestic works like fencing house, renovating, roof repairing etc. are different works, if some family couldn't complete the work due to shortage of time then the village people are invited in the name of Shaori Janai. They are given special feast for their Service. It is reflected in Hongla's shaori, Hongla is one of the rich persons of Phatwibari village. He also invited the village youths for roof repairing of his house and also arranged the special feast. It is in the story as:

"Today is the Shaori (Community Service) of the repairing of the House of Hongla, the members

of the service have already known that there are two pitchers of Rice Beer.” (Translated)

4.1.2 Use of bamboo: The Bodos used bamboo to build their houses from the ancient time. In rural area's Bodo people are using bamboo to build their house till today. Bamboo occupies a very important place in the Bodo society. In Bodo society bamboo are associated with some rituals from child birth to death, Bamboos are used in some ritualistic purpose for e.g. the new born child is first laid on Shongrai (winnow made of bamboo slips) and if somebody dies he/she is laid in Bamboo mate and later the Bamboo mate is carried on shoulders for cremation or burial. The importance of bamboo is not lessened till today and from domestic to religious task, it is being used. Bodo people use different bamboo-implements. Bodo people dwelling house is constructed basically with bamboo and thatches. It is mentioned that the youths of community service helped Hongla for roof repairing and also used bamboo slips for Hongla's house. It is in the story as:

“Some of them are preparing the slips of bamboo, some of them are throwing up the thatch on the roof, some of them arranged in pitching the thatch on the roof the thatched house and ridge.”(Translated)

4.1.3 Domesticated Animals and Birds: The Bodo people have been rearing cows, buffalos, pigs, goats etc. from the ancient time .In agriculture work such as ploughing, paddy carrying, harvesting and threshing cows and buffalo were used. The Bodo people regard the cow as a sacred animal and as the form of Goddess Laxmi. In other side hens, goats, pigs, ducks were reared to sell in needy time for maintaining their family and to consume them. Till today, it is witness in the remote village of Bodo people who are poor. In the Bodo society, if the guests arrive then the domesticated birds like hen, duck, pigeon etc are killed to serve the guests and in some special occasions like family function , Yunkam Gwrlwi Janai (first eating of the new rice). Shaori Janai (Community Service) they kill domesticated birds. In spite of this they kill goat, pig for the Marriage and some functions. It is reflected in the Hongla Shaori's story, Hongla's family had also killed two domesticated hen for the Community Service. It is in the story as:

“Two large cocks are kept tied for the Saori (Community Service).”(Translated)

4.1.4 Food habits: Rice is the main staple food of the Bodos. They take rice with varieties of curries. In the ancient Bodo Society, mustard oil was not much used in curries. They are mostly used kharwi (an alkaline condiment). The Kharwi is prepared from the ashes of dried Banana leaves, Mustard seeds and dry leaves of jute plant etc. The traditional curries of Bodos are Onla (pasted rice curry), Narji (dried jute leaves) and Sobai (pulses) etc. In these curries kharwi is an essential ingredient. They cook Onla and Sobai with varieties of meat like Dao Bedor (Chicken), Oma Bedor (Pork) etc. Oma Bedor is the most favourite meat of the Bodos. Hatha Suni is the traditional marriage of the Bodos without Onla curry Hatha Suni marriage cannot be held. In spite of this Onla curry is used in special occasions like yunkham gwrlwi janai (first eating of the new rice), religious festival, Saori janai (community service) etc. It is reflected in Hongla's shaori, Hongla's family also served Onla and chicken for community service. It is in the story as:

“In midst of the feast , one member of service commented - though we put in much labour , I can hardly find feast of meat, so we have no other alternative but to lick up the Onla (Pasted Rice Curry)” (Translated)

Jou (rice-beer) occupies an important place in the Bodo society. Bodo people uses rice-beer for several purposes like- Marriage, Religious Festival, Funeral, Community Service etc. They become very

glad if they can entertain their guests with rice beer. This rice-beer is prepared by womenfolk in special occasions like Bwisagu Festival, Religious festival, Saori Janai (Community Service) etc. It is mentioned that the Hongla's families also prepared rice-beer for Community Service and members of service also knew its presence of two pitchers of rice-beer. It is in the story as:

"The Rice Beer of the community service serve continually, along with the work does not exhaust in one go." (Translated)

4.2 SOCIO-CULTURAL ASPECTS IN THE SHORT STORY 'NARKHW'

Narkhw's story is a social story which is mainly based on Narkhw's character. There are two main characters in this story- Narkhw and Narhw's father. In this story Narkhw's father is shown as a kind, humble and hardworking where in another side Narkhw is shown as cunning and idle. Narkhw's father always wanted to provide better education to his son and whatever his son desired he always tried to provide him. In another side Narkhw had no interest in studies and spoiled his study hours by cheating his father by receiving lots of money for his studies. He spent all this money in buying varieties of attires and watching films. He was disinterested in study similarly he was not interested in any work. Suddenly, when Narkhw's father died with Saukha Bemar (one type of typhoid disease) Narkhw remain sad for only few days but later on he feels free. After the death of his father he got married with the girl whom he liked , Narkhw because of his idle personality did not work and day by day mortgaged all his father's property. As a result he finally finished up all his property and for no way he had to stay in the nearby PWD road with his wife and children. How human beings for his idle character destroy his own life that can be seen in the Narkhw's short story. This story is based on Bodo society for which Bodo society's socio-cultural aspects are reflected in minutely. All these social aspects are given as follows:

4.2.1 The Occupation of the Bodo people: The main occupation of the Bodo people is agriculture. They produce varieties of crops in different seasons. Paddy crop is the main cultivation of the Bodos .Most of the Bodo people has vast cultivated land in the village area. It is reflected in Narkhw's short story through Narkhw's father, Narkhw father was a rich person in the village and owner of 50/60 bighas of land and mainly relied on agriculture. The ancient Bodo people used to have 50 to 60 bighas of land. For the cultivation of these vast lands, they took Dahwna (male servant) and Ruwati (female servant). Narkhw's father also used to take Dahwna and Ruwati for cultivation .In Bodo society the Dahwna and Ruwati are not treated merely as a servant but they are treated as their family members. It is in the story as:

"The father of Narkhw had about Fifty Bighas of Agriculture land, beside Seven Bighas of home-
stead land with gardens of various trees." (Translated)

4.2.2 Pre-marriage Preparation: A Grand wedding in Bodo society is held with the contribution and works of the village people. The womenfolk of the village extended their help by paddy pounding (Mai saunai), rice polishing, winnowing and sieving rice together before several days of the wedding. In another side the menfolk also collect firewood's from the jungle. It is reflected in Narkhw's short story through Narkhw's marriage. The menfolk of the village collected firewood for Narkhw's marriage, for which he arranged a Gaan Bazna .It is in the story as:

"A party for the workers in the marriage and firewood collectors had to be entertained with a Gaan Bazna (Drama)." (Translated)

In earlier days, the rich family of the Bodo society entertains their guests by bringing Gaan Bajna in the marriage. Narkhw also wanted to bring Gaan Bajna for his marriage.

4.2.3 Marriage: Marriage is a social custom of the society. In a Bodo society for the date fixation the members of the Groom visit the house of the Bride. At the date fixation the family members of the Groom side along with the elderly village person approach the parents of the bride. They take some goods like bunch of betel leaves, pot of sugar, rice beer and several items to the bride side. It is seen through the medium of Narkhw, Narkhw also for not having parents, sent two or three elderly village members for the date fixation. He also sent some goods like- pot of sugar, a little milk, bunch of betel nut etc. It is in the story as:

“Fixation of the date of the marriage was settled by Narkhw by deputing a band of match makers with a pitcher of sugar, a little milk and a bag of nuts and betel leaves to the house of the bride.” (Translated)

There are six types of marriage in the Bodo society (1) Sangnanwi lainai haba (social marriage/marriage according to the standard practice) (2) Gorjia lakhinai Haba (3) Kharsonnai Haba (4) Bonanoi lainai Haba (5) Donkharlangnai Haba and (6) Dongkha Habnai Haba. In these six types of marriage Sangnanai lainai haba is the marriage which is solemnized in a grand way. It is reflected in Narkhw's short story, Narkhw also done Songnanwi lainai haba and solemnized in a grand way. In this type of marriage all the villager family members and two or three adjacent villages are invited. Generally in Bodo marriages rice along with different curries and meat are served. Oma bedor (pork) is the main dish of Bodo's marriage. It is mentioned in Narkhw's marriage, Narkhw also invited all the villagers and nearby three to five villages in his marriage. He gave feasts in his marriage which consists of pork, mutton and chicken. The villagers can consume this food items as much as they can. It is in the story as:

“People from fine nearby villages were invited cordially by Narkhw. Those who were used to Pork or Mutton were entertained heartily by him.” (Translated)

4.2.4 Main House of the Bodos: The main house of the Bodo is called Nomano, it has three parts, First room is Khopra, Second is Akhong and the third is Ishing. Besides this every Bodo people have Granary (bakri) house and Cowshed. To build such houses, certain side is selected already. Bodo people always builds Nomano on the north side, facing to the south. In Ishing and Akhong room, non member of the household are not allowed to enter into it. Khopra house is also regarded as the extra room where any person can enter and when the guests arrive they are allowed to stay in it. This picture of the presence of Khopra house is reflected in Narkhw's short story. Narkhw also kept marriage's several things in Khopra house. It is in the story as:

“Pulses and vegetables were kept in full in the Kopro Room of Narkhw.” (Translated)

Another main house of the Bodos is Granary where seasonal cultivated paddy is stored. Narkhw father also kept seasonal cultivated paddy in the granary but during Narkhw's time, he did not cultivate the land as a result granary became empty day by day. It is in the story as:

“The Granary which were full to the brim at the time of father, have become empty with no sign of House Sparrow, nearby.” (Translated)

4.2.5 Ornaments: The Bodo women mostly use gold and silver ornaments, for the ear- Khera, Phulkuri and for nose- Naka-phul and for the Neck- Chandra-har. Formerly the Bodo people used to purchase gold ornaments after the marriage. Such picture is reflected through Narkhw, Narkhw also wanted to give the Chandra har for his new wife and it is in the story as:

“Most of the Bodos, used to purchase gold ornaments after the marriage. Narkhw too wanted to order for a Chandra har for his new wife.” (Translated)

5.0 CONCLUSION

From a minute observation it may be stated that the short stories HONGLANI SAORI and NARKHW both of them deserve, in a real sense, to be the statement of the agro-based Bodo society; also a transparent sketch of socio-cultural life the of the Bodos. The picture of domestic life is vividly discoursed through the art of storytelling where characters are gathered from the traditional society. This will give the readers a window to keep watch the traditional agro-based life of the tribal society as a whole.

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