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CONCEPT OF *NEW WOMEN* IN ASSAM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ASSAMESE LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT:

The concept of new-women was born as a result of feminism that was grown within the 19th century. It was developed to a lot among the thinkers of twentieth century. It was also used by few writers to denote the change among the women.Chandraprava Saikiani, one of the famous lady of Assam. Who by dint of her progressive thought could bring about a change within the traditional thought of the time and revolt against the stereotype society. In this paper the author highlight the theme with reference to modern educated circle for helping the concept of new women.

KEYWORDS: *New women, feminism, independent women.*

INTRODUCTION

The new woman concept is a very new concept in assam. The concept indicates that educated new women, but it is not always so. The new women signifies those women who are capable to breaking down the traditional concept of women and is always aware about the cause of women and their existence in society.

The new women are independent in thought and they played important role in mobilizing the society according to their own capacity. They were able to solve any type of problem and as a result they were taking part in all aspects of society whether education and learning. Science and technology, business and commerce, office and industry and so on. Present women have been taking major part in policy-making as well as administration for which the society has been developing day by day.

Assam is proud of the women like Chandraprabha Saikiani, Indira Miri, Mamoni Roysom Goswami, Nirmal Prabha Bordoloi and so on.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY :

In modern times new women have been taking part in all the aspects of human society. In spite of this, there are some limitation among the common women who could not enable themselves to take part according to the needs of the society. As a result, there are some reservation, limitation within the society as the states of women for justify their rights accordingly.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY :

At the topic is very widespread, therefore, I would like to limit this study of the *concept of new women* in context to the life and works of Chandraprabha Saikiani.

METHODS & RESEARCH :

In this paper the investigator tries to eleborate the study in analytical method.

SOURCE:

Library material as well as internet sources will be used in preparing the research paper and in this MLA handbook for writers

of Research papers will be followed .

CONCEPT OF THE THEME :

The feminism movements started at the last part of 19th century has given birth of the concept new women. It is not the women who shows modern in their dresses and styles, it is identified with their modern thought according to the changing society. The feminist thinker could not give proper satisfaction to the concept. As regards to Surajit Kumar Bhagabati, he mention – *Those women who established themselves through their own capability and in workplace could prove their capacity in comparison with male competitor. In this way those who were sincere in their duty, though they could not progress in the field of educations* [NotunNari Aru Anyanya, P. 11]

In the definition given by Bhagawati he has included both educated and uneducated women in the group of new women of course the uneducated women must have their capacity work through their own will inside of cautions about their own duty. They showed have the capacity to judge what is good or bad to identify themselves as new women.

Gail Finny thus remark about new women as –*The new women typically values self fulfillment and independence rather than the stereotypically feminine ideal of self – sacrifice; believes in legal and sexual equality; often remains single because of the difficulty of combining such equality with marriage; is more open about her sexuality then 'old women' is well educated and reads a great deal; has a job; is athletic or otherwise physically vigorous and accordingly prefers comfortable cloths (sometimes male attire) to traditional female garb.*
[httphttp://academic.brookyn.cuny.edu/ english/melani/cs6/newwomen.html]

In the definition Gail Finny advocate for complete independence of he new women. Here she included the cannon, avoidance of sex-biasness, independence of sexual urge highly educated and well-dressed which is comfortable for use everywhere from the above discussion Finny's definition is significant.

The Merriam Webster dictionary has given its view about new women strongly as follows – *A women especially of the late 19th Century activity resisting traditional controls and seeking to fill a complete role in the world. [https://www.meriamwebster.com]*

The new women strongly approved the traditional social customs and tried to establish their own rights. Thus new women may be free-women who were conscious about their own rights and opposed the male dominated traditional social system. This ideological development have broken the traditional wall and sex-biasness.

It has already discussed that the concept of new women were born in the 19th Century and Charles Reade 1stused the word in his novel 'A women hater'
[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki.newwomen]. It was serially published in blackwood's magazine in 1877 where it was emphasized to give equal status to both the sex, which influenced the society.

Sarah Grand first use the word of new women in border outlook to denote the independent women who want change and try to torn out the male dominated traditional system of the society. This term was later popularized by Henry James. The women independence was not limited to mental aspect only, but it has covered all the habit and customs including dresses selection of jobs and so on.

In context of new women of Assam we have to mention Chandraprabha Saikiani and Indira Miri in the very beginning. They struggled in the society to establish the right of women when illiteracy among women was very high. In the words of **Arpana Mahanta** -

In the beginning of the 20th century in Assam Chandraprabha Saikiani through her life and work had refused the position of new women. She was inspired through the education getting from the Nagaon Mission Girls School conducted by the American Baptist Missionary to prepare herself as women of modern age and to work accordingly.Through the education and ideology acquired by Chandraprabha worked for the welfare of the cause of women and proved her capacity and courage, being women she established new model among the Assamese women in comparison of man-itself [ChandraprabhaSaikianiSwadhinatapurbaAsomorStree Sikhya Aru Nari Jagaran, P. 132]

The time was not favourable for women, when Chandraprabha was not socially accreditedand she had to lead a non-traditional personal life. Being a women she had to faced different criticism from different angles which made her motive a revolutionary one and she strong protest against the traditional social system and encouraged the women to step forward equally with man. She made her journey through bicycle form one partto another of the state of Assam and organized meetingsto bring about a change within the women.

Nirupama Borgohain in her novel has strongly depicted the stereotype picture of the traditional society in context to Chandraprabaha - " She has no shame, cycling from village to village likea divorce. She organized meeting among women, She must planed to made our girls and women nontraditional..." *[Abhiyatri, P 289]*

(Ai Sikuhu, cycleot uthi dhe dhe ke ga ghele ghuri fure, laj sorom nai. Modde era tiri hen. Tirir mel mate bole ? Eta amar apigilaku bahirot uile dangkati karbu.)

It was a very surprising matter of cycling by a women in the traditional society of Assam. But when the concept of new women came, it turned into a revolution. She strongly made aware of the women about the other sex and encouraged to opposed the social customs for which, she was given many nickname as if *tree-climber, dangkati,*etc.

She declared that there is no difference between man and women. Both are equally capable of doing anything and everything. It is nota matter of fact that both are equally complete within.

For example

a) *Both Bearing the he some soul, therefore the energy within man is equally within women.* [Abhiyatri, 335]
   (Nari Purukh duyure atma ek, sei babe purukhor g sokti samarthya ase, si tirutaro ase)
b) *There is no any difference between boys and girls except the structure of body. It was not suggested by god that boys can be educated which girls not at the time of creation*. [Abhiyatri, P.51]

(Dehator bahire aan kothat lora suwalir kiba proved ase buli navabo. Isware amak sristi korar somoyot ai kotha koi pothiua nai j loraihe porha suna karib parib suwalie noware)

The lone movement done by Chandraprabha to come out from the traditional male dominated society, it is proved by the above examples. She totally rejected the ideaof second sex and said that a complete man may be the confirmation of both the sex. She worked alone by crossing all the obstacles of the society and established herself as a new women.

In this context Arpana Mahanta has described Chandraprabha as new women and thus wrote - *Those whose were thought as the characterstics of modern western society had earlier done by Chandraprabha. The western accredited accorder the single motherhood. A lady can give birth of a child without recognizing his father, which was unthinkable for a traditional society of Assam. Her personality was so widespread that ignoring all the insult she came forward to context in the politics and show the path of women to exist in the society.*[Togorordukh / dokh aru anyanya prabondha, P. 24]

From the study of her life we can understand about the struggle she had done and worked like the heroine of a film of modern era, A women who organized meetings, lectured about literature and politics. Made friendship with man and all these things were very rare in the society of the past. And from those courageous and uncompromised attitudes of Chandraprabha we may regard her as a new women. It is really a matter of surprise that a women could courageously fight against a stereotype society and established her motive by organizing the entire women folk of the time to stand equally with the man and established the self identity of women for future generation.

CONCLUSION :

Chandraprabha was modern in her outlook and an asa new women she could handle all those social obstacles, sex-biasness, as well as social evils like illiteracy, dominations of male equal states to women and so on. She worked for the cause of women and organized them according to the need of modern society, though the required infrastructure of the society was not available at the time. Western society was established by the thought in the 19th century, but till the time of chandraprabha, though she herself was not accustomed with the habits and customs was, education and learning of the western

society was boldly thought for the cause of women and brought them under one umbrella. As a new women, a revolutionary women thus we must salute Chandraprabha for her encouragement to change the society from every angle and made a tremendous movement in the state much earlier which was unthinkable.

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