

## **SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS AS REFLECTED IN THE NOVEL OF BIRINCHI KUMAR BARUA “JIBONOR BATOT”: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY**

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### **Introduction:**

After humans started to live in society, it is seen that various incidents and actions taking place in the society start bothering the human mind and feelings. Which invokes social consciousness among the common people. Improvement of human consciousness is the sign of an advanced society. Social disorders, different misconducts happening in society not only misguide the social interest but also pollute the social environment by awfully manipulating the minds and consciousness of a society. Even after those obstacles, socially responsible writers-artists stand as restless defenders for change of humanity provisions so that overall welfare and excellence of humanity takes place.

Because of social responsibilities of writers-artists, consciously or unconsciously their literatures reflect social sentiments. The reflections of social sentiments can be seen in Assamese literatures too. Mostly, reflection of social consciousness in Assamese Novels makes the readers aware of this matter. From the wide variations of Literature, I have chosen “An analytic study of the reflection of the social consciousness in the novel “Jibonor Batot” by Birinchi Kumar Boruah for our research work.

### **0.1 Method and objective of the study:**

The main objective of this research paper is to analyse the reflection of social consciousness in the novel “Jibonor Batot”. This research paper is mainly compiled by using analytic methods.

### **0.2 Scope of Research:**

In this topic, we will evaluate shortly about social consciousness and it’s reflection in the society.

### **1.0 Discussion of the Subject:**

Society and lives are dynamic. Traditions and cultures are also dynamic. So, without any written literatures its impossible to realize real cultural values of a particular society. But, reflections of such cultures can be found from different creative literatures. The root of all type of growth in humans is the development of consciousness which is related with people’s struggles and works. Real Consciousness is the move of a person to the happenings of the surrounding. The relation between literature and society can be seen in the expression of common sentiments of people in

the society. The source of real Consciousness is hidden in the social relationship of people and a society. So, sentiment of people can't be developed without society. The writer reveals mysteries of life by expressing the images of social consciousness and environment, through literature. So, in every work of the literature the contemporary social consciousness is reflected directly or indirectly. The national events of war and other issues inspired the Greek dramatist Aeschylus, Sophocles etc. A new agitation was invoked due to trade and national issues for which some epochal literature come into existence by some famous personalities like Marlow, Shakespeare etc. The religious consciousness contributes to the social lives of Ancient India which is transformed into social consciousness. In the end of Eighteenth century, the realistic ideology and the contemporary social consciousness is portrayed. When the realistic ideology gets spread, a new way of writing literature is been developed among the writers. The influence of socialism helps in directly reflecting social consciousness in literature. The socialist view attracted the writers of the modern era, for which the Indian and Western openly portrays the consciousness. After the first World War (1914-18) and Russian Revolution, a realistic attitude gets a new form in the Western literature. The writers try to depict the after war scenery of pain, exhaustion etc. Like the Western literature, in the Indian literature also social consciousness is reflected to some extent. In the novels and short stories, social problems, struggles of life, social differences, economic exploitation, compassion towards the poor common people are vividly described. Influence of democratic values, ideology of freedom movement, freedom of life, nationalism and many other aspects of English literature are also coming in the Assamese literature. The influence of social consciousness in the Assamese society is the result of the influence of the English literature. The idea of representing social life in literature came into existence with the passing time.

In the beginning, the writers were concerned by the creation of novels and short stories about the problems associated with the middle class society while we observe the history of modern Assamese literature. The social consciousness takes a different look after the first World War. The second World War and freedom movements influenced the people more. Their was a wave of change in Assam also along with all the other state by this two historical events. This wave was not bounded only in political, social, economic but also spread in every field of life. For which a new way of thought process started among the writers instead of the old set of principles. They felt the need of new ideology instead of the old. That's why, the social consciousness of these era is reflected by various artistic ways. In the modern Assamese literature, the trend of presenting contemporary social consciousness, values are started from the famous Personality of Assam, Lakhshinath Bezbaruah. Through his literary works, every aspects of society of the Nineteenth century is being depicted. In the beginning of the twentieth century, the human civilization in Assam becomes very active with the spread of higher education. The psychology of the writers are hugely affected by the caste, class and other social obstacles of the society which silently declares a cold war against the old orthodox Indian society. The influence of the Second World War helped in changing the attitude of the common people of Assam.

It makes the Assamese writers socially more acceptable and aware. Birinchi Kumar Baruah presents his novel “Jibonor Batot” in a very beautiful and innovative way.

### Subject:

The readers of a society are benefited by the analysis of the nature of the ancient social life in works of Literature like novels. Novels are highly associated with people which are full of conflicts between people and society as well as people and nature. Novels depict the fluctuations of balance between people and society which happens due to such conflicts. People can gain knowledge and get familiarity with the reality of social life through novels. Various social concerns came to light through the novel "Jibonor Batot" by Birinchi Kumar Baruah. Birinchi Kumar Barua was a scholar of folklore and a social novelist. Therefore in this particular novel "Jibonor Batot" many lively and clear depiction of the Assamese society is created. Three images of the wartime Assamese society are portrayed in the Novel-

- i) Raha society of Raha region
- ii) Marabhi region of Golaghat
- iii) The lower middle class society of Dibrugarh

Birinchi Kumar Barua portrays a complete picture of traditional Assamese village society in Jibonor Batot. Occasions like wedding ceremony, festivals, and moments of birth & death, superstition, Prejudice, jealousy, dressing and cooking habit, behaviour, rituals etc. of an Assamese is depicted including all other major and minor aspects of it. In the beginning of the novel, there is description of a wedding of the daughter of Bhagadutta, the Mouzadar. An attractive portrait of rituals of marriage of an Assamese society is reflected here in the novel. The joyous environment among the young ones can be observed. A group of young girls who are of same age of Aideu sit on with their equipments to cut the betel nut beside the Borghor. With their presence made the environment more alive with their jokes, laughter, songs etc. The happiness of all the world surrounds them. In their talk, Assamese songs, proverbs, like

"Aai bupaye bisora nai Dora

Moinu pau goi kot pabho jura"

The betel nut, which is cut from the front and back is only used to invite the relatives and others for any Assamese wedding.

The writer tries to depict a live picture of Assamese society by narrating the struggling life of Tagar. The influence of the great saint's culture in the Assamese society is very deep. Even the illiterate ones also can sing the verses of the holy scriptures like the Kirtan-Dasam and Ankiya Nat. In the novel, the writer mentions such examples in the novel where some of its characters uses such verses. While working in the wedding of the daughter of the Mouzadar, Tagar sings-

"param purush piu bheli murari

Janam safal sakhi hubohu hamari".

Assamese women are skilled weaver. The description of the Assamese weaver women is reflected in the novel. Tagar herself prepared a table cloth and gifts to Kamalakanta. Dharani, a skilled weaver teaches weaving techniques to the women going from one village to the other.

Through the character of Tagar, the novelist tries to show the rumours and mental oppression of women in Assamese villages. A rumour of Tagar has been spread that Tagar and Dharani are having an affair, for which Tagar's father is arranging their marriage in a very short period of time.

In this novel, there is a description of the life struggle of Assamese peasants. The exploitation of the poor peasants by the upper class opportunist and how they make the life of the poor helpless are vividly described here. In parallel, the image of the Assamese poor peasants struggling with poverty, lack of good health is clearly defined in the novel.

In this novel, a partial image of contemporary political situation is also portrayed. The freedom movement led by the National Congress, specially the quit India movement of 1942 influenced Assam in a deep way. The writer has beautifully connected the life of Tagar with this mass movement. Dharani, husband of Tagar joins the 1940s mass movement and became a leader of it. He tried to spread the message of non violence and freedom among the villagers. In the leadership of Dharani, the simple villagers become familiar with the national struggle but it didn't help them to grow political and social knowledge. The contemporary emotions helped them to involve in the freedom movement, but when Dharani and his other leader friends were sent to jail, the involvement of the common people was decreased rapidly.

In the Assamese society, there is a tradition of going out for a good work in an auspicious moment. To take Dharani out of jail, Manohar went to saint Nauram to search for an auspicious moment. Nauram mentions 3.18 pm on Wednesday. Some superstition followed by the Assamese people are also been shown here. When the newborn Kamali was crying, Ahibi scolds Tagar for feeding the child in front of everyone as the child can easily be captured by evil eye.

To make the soul of the dead free from the world, there is a ritual to feed Panchamrit to the person in his death bed. Tagar pours Panchamrit to her mother in law Ahini's mouth before her death.

The ritual of offering money (Ga- Dhan) by the groom in the day of marriage is described in the novel in the marriage of Manohar, the son of Hunodor. In the novel, a description of about God-Evil, ghosts, black magic etc. are mentioned. The Assamese culture is closely related to this rituals. From the very ancient time, the tradition of taking care of the caste and community in marriage is prevalent from a long time not only in Assam but also in the overall India. It is reflected in the marriage of Dharani, where his mother Ahini was worried about all these. Because if the marriage takes place going out of the social boundary, they are going to be kept aside in the society.

In front of the elder brother-in-law, Assamese women use to cover her head. When a distant relative comes to Ahini's place, she comes out by covering her head with her cloth. A tradition of diverting young people's mind by doing medicine or black magic was also prevalent. In the novel Jibonor Batot, a rumour of doing such activities with Dharani was also spread as he was getting ready to marry. That's why his relatives were ready to send someone to Mayong, a place famous for black magic. The novelist draws the picture of village life as well as the middle class Assamese society. A situation of conflict between urban and opportunistic and the poor peasants of Assamese villages has been described in the novel. Some people from the village are well acquainted with high education, jobs, contract and then migrated to cities. Later on they start to exploit the poor peasants. This kind of situations are vividly explained here in the novel Jibonor Batot. Mahikanta dreams of entering into the status of middle class by marrying his son with Suprabha, daughter of Manik Hazarika. To make this happen, he didn't hesitate to break the marriage of Tagar. A middle

class mentality can be seen in the marriage of Kamalakanta and Suprabha. The exact depiction of this hollow nature of the society is itself is very unique in the Assamese literature.

## 2.0 Conclusion

After a broad discussion in this paper, we come to some conclusion –

- i) Birinchi Kumar Barua forwards an analysis of subjects like social consciousness, social responsibility, sympathy, contemporary thinking and other topics of sociology here in the novel.
- ii) Through this novel, social culture, human thought, sympathy, socio-economic problems, social degradation, complexity of city life, selfishness of highly educated people with some other aspects are reflected in Jibonor Batot.
- iii) The change of the Assamese society from ancient to modern era is depicted through this novel. Not only the contemporary Society is focused but also the tradition, rituals, beliefs etc. are also reflected.
- iv) The social consciousness reflected in the novel aids the readers with a clear image of the reality of social life of the Assamese society.

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