

Chapter-3

Women empowerment reflected in the Bodo literature from inception to 1952.

Women empowerment is one of the most effective global issues. It implies that giving the power to self-work, self-decision, self-choice, and self-determination and encouraging the women free from the discrimination in every sphere of social, political, economic, educational issues. It is the key of gender equality and socio-economic development.

According to M.R. Pawar, “Empowerment of women implies process by which women’s power of self organization is promoted and reinforced, they develop the capacity for self-reliance out crossing the relationship of subordinates on account of gender, social and economic status and society.”¹

According to L. George Stephen, “Women empowerment refers to women’s ability to make strategic life choices where that ability had been previously denied them.”²

Keshab Chandra Mandal has categorized the women empowerment into five in his article ‘Concept and types of Women Empowerment’. These are- social, educational, economic, political and psychological³.

Social empowerment- The women empowerment means equal status, equal rights, free from discrimination and freedom for self-development and every spheres of social activities.

¹ Pawar, M.R. *Women empowerment: issues and Challenges*. Kanpur: Gaurav books, (Preface) 2016.

² Stephen, L. George. “*Women Empowerment*”. Review of Research. 8th May 2019.

³ Mandal, Keshab Chandra. “*Concept and Types of women Empowerment.*” International Forum of teaching and studies. Vol.9 No.2(2013):19.

Educational empowerment- Education is the most important tools for personal, social and economic development and transformation. Educational empowerments mean the equality in study and enable them to educate. This increase self-believes self-sufficient, consciousness of society, political, economic, intellectual, religious and cultural.

Economic empowerment- it hints that equal work opportunities, equal organizational benefits, equal treatments and equal working environment.⁴

Political empowerment- it meant equal right to vote, campaign, right to equal participation and speech.

Psychological empowerment- It meant that enable and giving them to be mentally strength, self-confidence, self-adjustment in every sphere.

3.1 Prose:

3.1.1 Educational Empowerment: This empowerment reflected in the prose ‘Noni Maidang’ by Ananda Ram Mushahary. The Education is the most important instrument in character and manner building, personal and social development. It creates self-confidence, self-judgment, self-consciousness, intellectual ability, tolerance etc. The author said about the important of good quality women in the family and the social development. The family may develop in their well behave and may decline on their bad behavior. The women have full responsibility in the family progression. Therefore, the author encouraged to educate them and requested the people to educate the women to make them the self-dependent and good quality women. According to him, the education creates knowledge and makes responsible

⁴ Opcit:21.

for the family. Again, the author said that after educating the women, it does not arise of neglecting and ignoring them. It should give chance to apply their ability, what they learned.

3.1.2 Social Empowerment: There are prose from inception to 1952 in the Bodo literature, where reflected the social empowerment of the women. These are- Bwisagu, Aglani Bathra, Noni maidang and Dau songbainai .

Bwisagu: This is one of the precious prose of the ‘Hathorkhi Hala’ magazine, which composed by Promod Brahma. There reflected images of Bodo seasonal festival Bwisagu and its’ celebration has been declining among the Bodo. The Bodo society is the patriarchal system, although women have equal responsibility in the family development. Therefore, the author has presented the women as the family caretaker in this prose. In the first day of Bwisagu festival the Bodo women throw out the home’s all old earthen wares and keeps new things; clean the whole houses, worship the God by praying to keep their family peace and harmony , worship family and her husband and gift an Aronai to all family members as the sign of love and affection. ⁵ This is one of the pictures of women social empowerment.

Aglani Bathra: This is another prose of the ‘Hathorkhi Hala’ magazine, written by Ananda Ram Mushahary. In this prose the author told about his childhood story. He had more friends, among them Hwlokho was one, who died in child. He was not weared any cloths, but sometimes he wrapped on body one Indi cloth which weaved by his mother. It is highlighted that Hwlokho’s mother was expert in

⁵ Brahma, Promod Ch. *Hathorkhi Hala*. Kokrajhar: Maidangsri Publication, 2012(New edition):1.

weaving and the requirement of cloth in the family. It is the sign of women empowerment.

Noni maidang: This is one another prose of the ‘Hathorkhi Hala’ magazine and Ananda Ram Mushahary wrote it. In this prose, it is reflected high status and full responsibility of women in the family development. The prose title ‘Noni maidang’ shows that the women are the owner of family wealth, things, materials and have ideas how to maintain these things for the families. Men work outside the house, they have not too much time to see the inside of family; but women work mostly in the household and know the condition of family more than men. They have capacity to transform their family from imbalance to balance and balance to imbalance. Therefore, the author said that if women become loose behavior, she could be destroyed the world and defames the community.

Dau songbainai: It is a prose of Bibar magazine, where reflected social empowerment. In this prose, the author said about the Bodo social living system. Khaylab, one relative come as a guest after a long time to their home. She has to receive her guest and prepares food for him, but she has no any meat for it. Therefore, she went to search chicken in neighbors. This is the sign of women freedom in the society, however the author emphasis on household work. They should not loiter to and fro in the neighbors. It is wasting of time and gossiping breaks the good relation among the members of the villages.

3.1.3 Psychological empowerment: This reflected in the prose ‘Khanthi Arw Bijirnai’, which is edited in the ‘Boroni Phisa O Ayen’. In this prose, the author told the story of the two brothers and their life. In the last part of the story, the younger

brother Hajar Ram returned lately from his parent-in-law's home. His wife was waiting him, but he could not arrive at home until midnight. Therefore, she started to think about her husband. Firstly, she thought that her parents were not allow to return him for over drunk and again she thinks, he may be happened unto warded situation in the way of returning for over drink. She becomes very much anxiety. Lastly, supposed to be go out in search of her husband.

3.1.4 Economic empowerment: This empowerment reflected in the prose 'Dao songbainai', which is written by Rongdini Phagli (nickname of Satish Ch. Basumatary) and edited in the Bihar magazine. In this prose, a little part of economic condition of Bodo society is highlighted. Khaylab went in search of hen or cock in neighbor Khailong but she has only one hen and second neighbor Lambubi had but all died by disease. They replied to Khaylab that they would be given if they had. It shows that these women maintained economic shortest by rearing and selling the hen and cock in their family.

Khaylab visited at third neighbor Maydang Khasuli (a cough disease woman); she had, but all were too small, hence she could not give her. However, she (Maydang Khasuli) buys tobacco and lime and weaves dokhona (Bodo traditional women's dress) and other necessary cloths by selling her hens and cocks. This is appreciable for economic consciousness by the women in the Bodo society.

3.2 Poetry:

3.2.1 Educational empowerment: There are some poems, where educational empowerment reflected. These poems are- Bihar Khanai, Swabni Boro, and Nwngni Gwshwhphunanwi.

Bibar Khanai: This poem is written by Rupnath Brahma and edit in the ‘Khonthai Methai’ book. In this poem, the poet encouraged the young women to study and work for future life at the right time. The poet said to wake up in the early morning to pluck the flowers. Here the poet compared the early morning with young time and the flowers with study and knowledge. It highlighted that young is the right time to earn knowledge. Some lines are given:

‘Honwi sanjaha swrang jabai
 Bibar bariyao bibar barbai.

 Phurhab jahab gaodang bibar bardwng
 Birhab gwdwhab honwi sikhiriya bidwi swbdwng’
 Khadw agwi Dwisari, Laisari, Mwnsari
 Douba suphung suphung Gambari phara phari.’⁶

Swnabni Boro: It is written by Modaram Brahma and published in the ‘Khonthai Methai’. The poet said about the conditions of uneducated Bodo community. This community is neglected by other community for uneducated. Education is the tools for personal, community and the national development and transmission. Therefore, poet encouraged the Bodo community’s parents to educate their children both boys and girls so as they can do for development of the society. One stanza is given from this poem:

⁶ Brahma, Rupnath and Modaram Brahma. *Khonthai methai*. Kokrajhar: N.L. publication, 2012 (2nd edition). 28.

‘Boro bimaphwra Boro phisaphwra

Gao gao phisa phisouphwrkhrou

Gasibw houoa hinjaosakhrou

Burkhainanwi dumkhinanwi

Lai hwjenwi hwjenwi

Phwrwngjendw.- phwrwngjendw-’⁷

Nwngni Gwswhwphunanwi: It is the oral poem, which composed by Nileswar Brahma and published in the book ‘Balabganwi Boro Khonthai’. Here the poet said about the unsteady mind of young woman and suggest and couraged to educate so that they can be steady in their life. The oral poet told to young women that the education brings in brightness from darkness mind and it creates the self-choice capacity in mind. Some lines are given in bellow from this oral poem, which lines reflected the educational empowerment:

‘Lekha phorai agwi

Lekha phorai gaoni khwmsi gswskhou swranghwnw

Agwi nongkhai nongwikhou sinaynw.’⁸

3.2.2 Social Empowerment: There are some poems from inception to 1952 of the Bodo Literature, where reflected the women’s social empowerment. These are- Bima-Phisa, Bibar, Jakhado bwibo Boro Bima and Hinjao jathi mani durgothi. Some short description is given on these poems-

⁷ Opcit.36-37.

⁸ Ibid.32.

Bima-Phisa: This poem composed by Satish Ch. Basumatary and published in the 'Bibar' magazine. The Bima-Phisa word means the mother and son. In this poem, the women is presented as the parents and guide. Guiding and caring her child is the innate spirit of every mother and they need in every success and development of their sons. The mother should counsel her children for success in their future life. Father works outside the house the day, he could not get too much time to guide and care their children like mother. When, he reaches at home after work in outside he wants to see their good and progress of sons. Therefore, the poet emphasized more responsibility to the mother in the children's progression and development than father. In this poem, mother is suggested to learn new knowledge and teach their sons to steak to the study for successful in life. If they do not do as she suggest, father will scold them. One stanza is given bellow which is reflected to this points:

'Phorainai somao jejongbo dasan
Solongno dabao jebw godan godan
Nongabla raypwigon nompha.'⁹

Another poem Bima Phisa is there in the Bodo literature, which composed by Promthesh and published in the 'Hathorkhi Hal' magazine. In this poem, the mother is put as the guide of her children and expert in cooking. Every mother cook for her children, guides them for success and develops in future.

Bibar: This poem is put from the Hathorkhi Hala magazine, which composed by Kali Kumar Lahary. In this poem, the poet mentioned about the beauty and prestige of flowers and impolite behaves of the Bodos. The poet said the Bodo young

⁹ Basumatary, Satish Ch. *Bibar*. Kokrajhar: Words N Words, 3rd edition(2017): 27.

women played Batha Bengbung (one kinds of musical instrument). This is the sign of social empowerment. The young woman got freedom to play the musical instrument.

Jakhado bwibo Boro Bima: This poem composed by Kali Kumar Lahary and edited in his 'Khonthai Bijab'. In this poem, the poet noted the women's power and rights in the nation development. Therefore, the poet encouraged the Bodo women to work for the progression of nation and expose their hidden capacity and knowledge without any shyness and fear. The poet cited an example- it can not clap with single hand smoothly, it needs help of left hand also; similarly- the nation cannot develop only with the men and there must needs equal co-operation and participation of the women also. Some lines given below, where above sentences are reflected:

'Jakhado- jakhado- bimaphor'

Jatikhou dikhangno bwibo phwr phwr.

Jakhangabola hinjao jathia,

Hayakhwi sikhangno raobo hoa jathia,

Nakhi nongabla –nagda lojong maono haya jerwi

Hinjao nongabla hoa hasingywi uthrino haya erwi.'¹⁰

Hinjao jathi mani durgothi: This is another poem of Kali Kumar Lahary. The poet mentioned about the women has hidden power in the society. The poet said the women have more quality and more external and internal powers; but in the name of custom of the society are retarded from the development progression. They have more unique quality. These are- as the goddess Durga, who controls the obstinate; as

¹⁰ Lahary, Kali Kuma. *Khonthai bijab*. Kokrajhar: N.L. Publications, 2012(New print):16.

the goddess Kali, who destroys the enemies; as the goddess Laxmi, who cares the all livings and as the goddess Swarasati, who gives knowledge to livings. Again, as the mother, who loves to all equally and as the wife, who satisfies her husband; as the sister, who encourages to all and as the daughter, who roles to worshippers. However, they are dominated by the social rules. Some lines are given from this poem:

‘Gurga rubwi durgothikhou hosrang dong,
 Kali rubwi mohakalkhou phojob srang dong,
 Laxmi rubwi jibkhou phalitho khalaiddwng,
 Sara shanty rubwi jibnw giyan hodong,
 Bima mohorwi bwikhoubo soman ondwng
 Hinjao mohorwi hoakhou gojon hodong
 Bibo, binanao mohorwi bwinobo goho hodong,
 Bias mohorwi phujinay phar ladong,,’¹¹

3.2.3 Psychological empowerment: There are some poems in the Bodo literature from inception to 1952, where reflected the women psychological empowerment. The poems are- Akhol mwjang hinjaoni aroj and Bathoua Swr.

Akhol mwjang hinjaoni aroj: This is a devotional poem, which edited in the ‘Boroni gudi sibsa arw aroj’ book. There reflected the prayer of a good quality woman to the God for well being of her whole family and the society. She did not pray for her success and progress; but prayed- to feed her child and grandchild even

¹¹ Opcit.18.

she not ate; to live happy and harmony with her children, brothers, sisters, brother-in-laws, sister-in-laws and wanted to stay without any quarrel with others peoples. She thought- husband is her life and wealth; she wanted to spend her life with husband till death. The woman is mentally very strong, hence she has prayed to the God to keep in adjustment, peace and harmony of the family and the society. One stanza is given from this poem:

‘Nanga apha angnw jebw
 Ang mwnja lagi damwnja-
 Phisa-phisounw hwlo nwnw
 Bibo-binanaojwng bibnangphwrjwng
 Bijaojalijwng boijwngbw
 Minibala thanw mwnthwng.’¹²

Bathoua Swr: It is one another poem of the ‘Boroni gudi sibsa arw aroj’ book, where one couple interacted each other about the Lord Bathou. In this poem, the woman asked more questions to the husband (man) about the Lord Bathou very curiously. She asked to husband who is Bathou, why do they worship and sprinkle the holy water every day. There woman’s curious comment is given below from this poem:

‘Buri: Dinwi angjwng gwsua maba jadwng,
 Suoami, swngnw lubwidwng ang nwnгнаo phongse
 Khwtha gwnda suoami Bathou swr jadwng ?
 Mwnthiya, manw jwng bikhou khulumnw

¹² Brahma, Modaram. *Boroni gudi sibsa arw aroj*. Kokrajhar: N.L. Publications .2011(2nd edition):17.

Oubong bungnanwi' gosai sannanwi

Manw sanphrambw dwi gwthar sarhwnw.'¹³

3.3 Short story:

3.3.1 Social Empowerment: There is some social empowerment in the short story 'Abari'. It is reflected through Abari, who is main character of the story. The major social empowerment points of this story, this are- cancellation of marriage proposal, winning of weaving competition, Kharson hwinai (one kind of Bodo marriage, in this marriage the bride enters into the bridegroom house before the settlement of marriage without her parents' consent¹⁴) etc.

Cancellation of marriage proposal: When one physically challenge groom marriage proposal to Abari for him (Lame man), her brother has accepted without her consent in the pressure of the society and neighbors. Abari, being the physical challenge, she should marry some physical challenge man. There was the outlook of the customary laws of the society in earlier. But Abari was a unique girl. She can do every work of household as well as paddy field as like other girls of the village. She does not agree with the outlooks of the society. She has confidence on herself whatever challenge may come in her life, she will easily over come. So, she wants to marry with a physically sound man. That is why, she asked her brother to cancel the marriage proposal forwarded by the physically challenge man.

Winning of weaving competition: Abari was a slight physical challenge due to small foot pox disease during childhood period. Nevertheless, she can weaving and

¹³ Opcit..2.

¹⁴ Brahma, Kameswar. *A study of socio-religious beliefs, practices and ceremonies of the Bodos*. Kolkata: Punthi Pustak, 2010(2nd impression): 77.

embroidery etc. as other girls in the village. One day in the weaving competition Abari has got first prize. It is said in the story- ‘bosorse khali danai lunaini gidid jujilainayao Abariyanw bwinibo sigang jadwng aro bantha mondwnng.’¹⁵

Kharrison hwinai: All other girls of the village are married but she remained alone after cancellation of the marriage proposal. Even her younger sister got married. Abari regretted in this regard the villagers scold to brother for cancellation of the marriage proposal. Brother feels insulted by villagers for which he used to scold with very coarse words to her every day. Therefore, she determines to elope with one boy of Simbliguri village who love Abari also. He is not bad but physically sound. Therefore, she decides to elope one evening without knowing of her family to get marry with him.

3.4 One act play:

3.4.1 Psychological Empowerment: This empowerment reflected in the one act play ‘Lekha gwrong hoa arw lekha rwngywi hinjao’. The play highlighted, how drunkard husband cheated his wife due to uneducated. He deceives that if smell wine it is a sign of die immediately. So, to escape from such ensuing death, it is needed to use amulet. However, he did not take the amulet due to financial problem. The wife was socked on hearing of die; because not all women want her husband is to die. She thought how to save him from this danger disease, she did not get any way; therefore she offered him her necklace to bring amulet from Oja to save from danger.

¹⁵ Brahma, Promod Ch. *Hathorkhi Hala*. Kokrajhar: Maidangsri Publication, 2012(New edition):18.