

A Feminist Reading of *Sagan* and *Modern Bodo Short Story*

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DECLARATION

With due concern, I EjibleDaimari, bearing Roll No- PGENG408A22013, and Registration No- 019245/2019-20 hereby sincerely declare that the Dissertation “ A Feminist reading of *Sagan and Modern Bodo short stories.*” is my own original research work conducted under the Supervision of Dr ZothanchhingiKhiangte to fulfill the curricular demand of PG degree(M.A. 4th Semester). I also declare that this dissertation does not contain any part of the any work which has been submitted for the award of any degree without a proper citation.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation project aims to delve into the myriad issues and crises faced by women in their lives, particularly focusing on the challenges of livelihood and the conditions prevailing in rural areas. It sheds light on the entrenched patriarchy prevalent in these regions. Many individuals lead modest lives, often forced to relinquish their aspirations due to financial constraints. The research also delves into the socioeconomic status of women.

The overarching goal of this dissertation is to examine the hurdles and crises encountered by women in their pursuit of a better life and their journey towards self-actualization. It seeks to analyze the roles of women in both society and the family unit. While women are often characterized as emotional, they are far from weak; they possess the ability to carve out their own identities independently. The dissertation challenges the notion of male superiority and decision-making, highlighting the complexity and capabilities of women. Women deserve respect, equality, and recognition of their diversity across all facets of life.

Keywords: Women, Livelihood, Identity, Socioeconomic, Equality.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1) An Introduction to the study area

Feminist reading involves looking at stories and books to see if they treat men and women fairly and talk about women's lives and issues. It analyzes how gender roles; prejudice, are depicted in the texts, and also how women are portrayed by the authors. Feminist reading looks at stories to find and question unfair rules favoring men and to show how women have their own power, viewpoint and difficulties. It explores women's power, ability, identity, social justice etc. Women are emotional but not weak, women can create her own identify without relying on anyone on any men. It is always men who consider themselves as someone who is superior and decision maker but women are also can be the role model in the society. This dissertation tries to describe the women's ability and complex, they are deserving at respect equality and their diversity should be acknowledge and celebrated in every aspects. Women are the beautiful human on this earth, they are mother, sister, daughter, friends business partner, earwer, wife, we can say they are angels in form of human. Historically women have been considered to be someone who is emotional, weak and inferior evil, and only meant to take care at her family and do the household works, but as we develop slowly the mindset of the people have been changing from narrow to broad and the portrayal at women is also changing gradually. A feminist reading means going inside the text to see ad analyze that how it is written and how they are portraying, representing women if is it really the truth or not, instead of just accepting whatever is written a feminist reading tries to analyse and critique the things whatever is there in the text. It helps to look at the women with clean and clearer eyes without any partiality. It ask questions and find out the truth analyse how men and women characters shown in the text that it is really fair and equal or not. For example A feminist reading will examine a woman character that whether she is shown as an individual who makes her own decision, on it is for man who tells her what to do, and their emotions

and feelings are respected or not. Stereo types is one big idea in feminist interpretation. How women are supposed to look or do and treat they are meant to do only the household and bear children and men will always be the head and decision maker at the family but feminist reading challenges this idea that it is more the just stereo types. Feminist reading look closely that if women characters are fighting for their own identity and standing up for themselves or not and looks for time when women take actions for themselves and fight for their rights and also to stands against the unfair rules and inequality. It is all about questioning stereo types, and trying to bring peace and equality in the society and understanding everyone's feelings and emotion, respecting everyone and making sure that every voice is heard. Short stories are the reflection of the society in the short story. The social life is highlighted and it reflects the reality at the human society. Short stories source of happiness; it's the therapy to the broken heart. It is the mirror of human society, the truth of social life reflects trough the short story. Bodo short stories often reflect whatever is going on in the Bodo society. The life of Bodo people, its cultural norms are also often highlighted. Through the perspective of feminist reading the bodo short stories "Abari" "A Deer in a big forest", "The Means" "Orge" and "Dumphao'sPitha" written by different Bodo writers are discussed and justify how women in bodo community are shown through these Bodo short stories. Women's life, their experience of both good as well as bad and their life journey are studied in this paper. It is necessary to examine how women of different regions are represented in various fields. Women in these short stories has been portrayed as strong and sometimes painful. It represents the pain of women and their protest against the patriarchal society system. It gives more understanding about the women and their life's experience.

In the short story "Dumphao'sPhitha" which is written by Janil Kumar Brahma, the protagonist Dumphao's life is described that how she was dependent and with her hard work, and dedication she became able to be financially independent and created her own identity. In

‘A deer in a big Forest’ A women’s strong personality and her courage of decision making for herself is shown that how a woman can be a leader of her life in a patriarchal society but still the strong and rigid patriarchy system affects her mind.

Another short story ‘Orge’ talks about a poor women’s life and her struggles that how she had to follow what her family and society wants her to do, she was helpless and remains powerless throughout the story. She represents many women living in rural area that how powerless they are, all their dreams, all their dreams and wishes have to be sacrificed.

In the short story ‘Abari’ the writer talks about the idea of “New women” who stands for herself against the society and be an example for the women empowerment. She followed her heart but not what others told her to do.

In the 2nd chapter of the paper the representation of women in the short stories is discussed that how Bodo women are portrayed in the short story, also about what are the problems and crisis that they are facing today.

In chapter 3rd the patriarchal elements in the Bodo tribal society are discussed that how women are being independent and they are being equal as men, their hardship towards the journey of identity and socio-economic condition of women are discussed critically.

Chapter 4th is the final discussion that is the last part of the dissertation. It is the conclusion part of the paper. In conclusion the areas that are discussed in this paper are summarized. This overall research explored the idea of how women can leave a strong impression among the society and how they are deserving of love and respect in the society. The problems and crisis faced by women are also explored so that people can understand women and make no partiality among the people in the society. Overall this dissertation explored about women and their representation and the patriarchal society system that affects their lives.

1.2) Literary Review:

In the journal, *Discovery of the self: An insight into Ishan Mushahari's "Abari" and Janil Kumar Brahma's "DumphaoniPhitha"* by BantiRamchiary, the wider potentialities of women are discussed. In this journal the writer is presenting the courageous attempt of the protagonist Abari and Dumphao that how they attempt to discover one's own self. It tries to show the scintillating power of women's capacity in every sphere of life. It explores the Character's true potential to fulfill their urges and needs, women are facing an existential dilemma but a women's journey to selfhood is a sign of her integrity which fulfill her needs to exist as individual in a society. This journal explores the idea of new women in the characters of Dumphao and Abari.

In the women character in economic activities and their social status as reflected in Nil kamal Brahma's short stories by Dr. DipaliKherkatary tries to highlight the women characters engaging in various economic activities to run their families. Some of them are engaged in socially recognized economic activities and some of them are engaged in sexual activity with in various economic activities to run their family.

1.3) Aims and Objective:

The objective of this dissertation examines the lifestyle of the simple middle class and poor Bodo women and also their daily life struggles for livelihood and their journey towards identity. The central focus of this research is to understand women's life and their hardship. Through this research paper the rural and urban areas Bodo women are explore that women from Bodo tribal community are presently seen to have engaged in various economic

activities, they are helping their family emotionally, morally and economically. A woman is also equally important as men in every aspect of life. The aims and objectives of this dissertation is to measure social status of Bodo women in terms of various roles played by them in economic activities in the society. The aim of this dissertation is to understand the condition of women and to know and understand the challenges that they face in their life and to support them and help in making the society a better place to live where no one think themselves as superior or inferior but equal.

1.4) Research Methodology:

This research is the qualitative research based on the secondary and primary resources. While doing this dissertation the theoretical framework of Feminist theory has been applied. This research will examine the representation of women in contemporary times and the patriarchal elements within the Bodo society. This research work comprises of five short stories, they are – “*Dumphao's Phita*” by Janil Kumar Brahma, “*A deer in a big forest*” by Nil Kamal Brahma, “*Abari*” by Ishan Mushahari, “*Orge*” by Janil Kumar Brahma, “*The Means*” by Hareswar Basumatari. A qualitative method is used in this research to

In these short stories the women crisis of the means, self-realization and journey towards identity has been recorded, also women participation in economic activities and their impression in the society. By using the feminist theory and qualitative research theory this short stories are studied from feminist perspective that how women are represented in the story, what are the problems and crisis they are facing today and the portrayal of men and women are equal or not. It explored the hidden quality of women and helps to bring equality and diversity in the society.

CHAPTER 2: REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN

The representation of women refers to how women are portrayed and shown in various forms of art, media, literature, and society. It involves the presence and participation of women in different fields. In this chapter the representation of Bodo women mentioned in five Bodo short stories will be discussed. The writers of these short stories have tried to portray how a woman faces various kinds of problems in her life. There are so many problems that women face in their lives. The patriarchal society system in India has influenced every community. The historical portrayal of women reflects a multifaceted narrative that is intricately linked to the cultural, social, and political aspects of the people. The Indigenous Bodo community primarily residing in the Northeastern regions of India, especially Assam, have rich cultural heritage including the contributions and roles played by women. Bodo women have significantly improved in contributions to the economic well-being of their Bodo community. Their involvement in weaving, pottery, handicrafts has not only supported their households but also served as the means of income. Additionally, the Bodo women have been actively engaged and involved in agriculture at rural areas, contributing significantly to the food production and sustenance.

In this chapter the representation of women, their socioeconomic status and the impression of women in the society is explored. Bodo women present a complex social status influenced by a variety of cultural, historical and socio-economic circumstances, their socio-economic status is largely determined by their access to education. Due to the things

like geographical isolation, cultural restrictions and lack of infrastructure Bodo women has had limited access to formal education but gradually everything is developing and women are reading and writing but still in some places there is lot to be developed. Bodo women are frequently engaged in agricultural activities in rural areas as well as non-agricultural activities, specially village women are essential to home chores farming, raising animals, weaving, and many other but socio-economic growth infrastructure improvement have also brought forth new opportunity of job for women.

Dumphao'sphitha by Janil Kumar Brahma-

In "*Dumphao'aPhita*" short story the character Dumphao, protagonist of the short story is a literate woman who at the beginning of the story was dependent towards her husband and she herself didn't work but later we find the changing nature of the character. Dumphao realizes her potential and her ability to work. The idea of self-realization and new women is seen in the character of Dumphao. The old Dumphao who was dependent and didn't know how to earn and didn't have her own identity changed into new women who created her own identity. The other two women characters Gaodang and Sarala are also educated but they are dependent towards their husband, they do not have their own identity even though they were educated. In this short story all the women characters are educated but even though they're shown as an educated woman they are still dependent towards men and do not have their own identity, but Dumphao with her self-realization explored herself and started her own business. The ability and potential of women are shown through the character of Dumphao who becomes a successful entrepreneur, she even helped other women to be independent by hirin Page 11 them into her business. Here in the story women are shown as Skillfulhuman who knows different activities like tailoring, preparing foods and snacks etc. Idea of new women is

reflected in this short story which gives hope to women like Dumphao and overcome all the hardship and become successful. Dumphao contributed Rs. 5000 amounts of money for the setup of Martyr's tomb. Women are facing various problems even educated women are in dilemma, suffering from existential crisis but self-realization and journey towards the selfhood is the beginning of her integrity. As she became independent she didn't only care for her family but also for her community. She is the perfect example of the powerful women who made her own path towards the destiny and fulfill all her needs, with all her hard work and dedication she created her own identity. This short story takes us through the hardship of a simple village women struggling to find meaning and identity in her life in this modern world and with her creativity she was able to become successful.

Janil Kumar Brahma's '*Orge*' -

The short story "*Orge*" by Janil Kumar Brahma provides a thorough examination of women's representation in the Bodo community's social, cultural, and personal spheres. Intricate character development and a compelling story allow Brahma to depict Bodo women's experiences vividly while also highlighting the problems and victories that women face everywhere in their lives. The Understanding of the cultural context of *Orge* is crucial to comprehending how women are portrayed in the narrative. Gender roles in Bodo community are influenced by the unique cultural norms and customs of the Bodo population, an indigenous ethnic group. These conventions are reflected in Brahma's story *Orge*, which presents women as essential to the social and cultural fabric but frequently limited by societal restrictions. In *Orge*, women are portrayed as the custodians of tradition and cultural legacy Page 12 They are observed carrying out domestic chores, maintaining the moral standards of the community. The dual nature of their roles is shown by this portrayal: although they are

valued for their cultural contributions, their freedom is constrained by societal norms. Women's roles are both empowering and restricting in many indigenous and traditional communities, where this duality is a recurring topic.

The female characters in the story are real people with real challenges, goals, and aspirations but not just stereotypical figures or cultural icons. The protagonist, whose name is Orge, personifies the inner turmoil that many women in traditional civilizations experience. She is always reminded of her responsibilities and duties by the people around her, yet who longs for personal independence and self-expression. She is illiterate and damsel woman who did not get the opportunity to study but had to work hard for herself and her family from her childhood, she looks ugly and she knows that she is ugly and she accepts herself the way she is, but it is always the other people who laugh at her and tease her for her ugliness and made her always feel bad for who she is. Even though she is illiterate and hunch backed she doesn't stay idle and curse her fate but instead she works as a Laboure everyday putting aside all her problems.

‘She was ugly to look at as she was hunch-backed with protruding teeth, goitred throat and fingers resembling the head of earthworms. Her body had the scratches of age very prominently as she worked as a female labourer transplanting paddy seedling from her childhood: she was about to tern aged. Her wedding age elapsed long ago. Her parents did not pay attention to her when she was young. Today everybody laughed at her.’ “(brahma,1)”

“ It is God who bestowed her with such anUgly features.”

The protagonist goes through such internal conflict which examines the psychological effects of cultural expectations on women. She battles not simply outside forces but also her own internalized notions of her place in society. The broader feminist debate on the internalization of patriarchal values and the quest for self-identity is in line with this representation. "Orge" is a social critique as well as a personal or cultural narrative. Through the characters, Brahma draws attention to the larger problems of social justice and gender inequity that exist inside the Bodo society and, by extension, in other traditional civilizations. The protagonist's and other female characters' challenges serve as a mirror for the structural problems that support gender inequality. Orge's drunkard brother was someone who took five maunds of paddy from Mahajan and he could not return or pay the money and instead sent Orge to work as a transplantation laborer.

Brahma offers a thoughtful and kind criticism. He highlights the necessity for the traditional customs of the Bodo group to change rather than demonizing them. Women should not be the one who suffer because of men, here in the story women characters are playing such a role in the society through which we can examine that they are being used by men and they are not given any importance to go for studies but to make them work as a labourer and do the household. It's not Orge's fault that she did not learn anything but it was her parents who did not pay attention to her.

The portrayal of women in "Orge" also addresses the concept of intersectionality, recognizing the ways in which gender interacts with other social constructs including ethnicity, caste, and class. In addition to her gender, the protagonist's experiences are influenced by her standing in both the Bodo group and larger Indian culture. This intersectional perspective adds depth to the story and offers a more thorough comprehension of the difficulties that women encounter.

The short story "Orge" by Brahma provides a nuanced and comprehensive portrayal of women in the Bodo society. Brahma highlights the limitations and agency of women while delving into the complex relationship between traditional preservation and individual liberation through the eyes of the characters. The sympathetic and insightful representation challenges established gender roles. It is a gripping story that provides a deep and nuanced portrayal of women in the Bodo society. "Orge" makes an important contribution to the conversation on women's depiction in literature because of its sympathetic and nuanced portrayal that questions conventional gender norms and promotes social transformation. The female character Orge is shown as subordinate to male and present as they conform to stereotypes. She is powerless and does not know what to do as an illiterate woman. Orge faces many things in her life; on the other hand, her desire to be with Bugoba, whom she met at Mahajan's house, also lies to her that his marriage is already fixed even though it was not. The crisis for marriage of women who look ugly is also highlighted that if a girl is not good looking, she will be getting difficulty in finding her life partner, but it is not the same for men; it's the problem mostly faced by women.

'In these days, whatever be the conduct, a girl faces difficulty in marriage if she lacks good looks. That is why, my marriage has not been possible so far, But this is the creation of God himself. Ruminating these off and on in her mind. Orge shed hot tears of grief.'

Through the character Orge, protagonist of the story, women are represented as someone who go through such societal pressure, family pressure for which they are sometimes getting mentally disturbed and do not know what to do, these kind of problems in the society can still be seen in many places in rural as well as urban areas. Orge is representing many women who go through the same problems in their lives.

In conclusion, Brahma's story urges for a greater comprehension and appreciation of women's many roles in society and serves as a monument to the tenacity and fortitude of women. Through "Orge," Brahma mirrors the global movement for gender equality and justice highlights the unique challenges faced by Bodo women.

Ishan Mushahri's Abari

The short story "Abari" by Ishan Mushahari is a notable piece of modern feminist short story due to its structural and artistic approaches in addition to its thematic content. In order to comprehend "Abari" as a feminist work, one needs examine how gender roles are portrayed, the difficulties that women encounter, and the larger sociocultural criticisms that are woven throughout the story. By using these perspectives, "Abari" becomes clear as a powerful indictment of patriarchy and a defense of the liberty and empowerment of women. The short story "Abari" is highlighting various aspects of the Bodo community's culture, traditions, and social dynamics. Among its many themes, the representation of women stands out as a critical area of exploration. Mushahary portrays women in "Abari" through a lens that captures their roles, struggles, and contributions within the patriarchal structure of Bodo society. He represents women, delving into the varied aspects of their life, the obstacles they confront, and their agency within the story's narrative structure. In "Abari," Mushahari avoids clichéd depictions of women by giving his female characters nuance and complexity. Instead of being limited to conventional roles, the protagonist Abari is portrayed as a strong, self-reliant, and resilient person. Her journey through the play serves as a metaphor for the difficulties that women in patriarchal countries confront. She challenges the expectations placed on her by her own family and maneuvers through a variety of social limitations. Abari's

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personal represents the pursuit of independence and self-governance. The story's feminist theme is mostly conveyed through her unwavering quest of personal independence and her defiance to restrictive standards. By foregrounding Abari's inner strength and her ability to make her own decision of denying to marry a man with whom she doesn't want to be with, Mushahari underlines the opportunity for women to reclaim their identities and destinies outside the limitations of traditional prescriptions. The story critically investigates the patriarchal systems that support gender inequity. The play's portrayal of cultural customs and societal conventions functions as a microcosm of larger structural problems that marginalize and exploit women. It reveals the underlying biases and prejudices that uphold patriarchal dominance through eloquent dialogue and stirring monologues.

The story does not hold back when depicting the terrible realities that women must deal with, such as economic dependency, domestic abuse, and restricted access to possibilities for education and employment. Through drawing attention to these problems, "Abari" advocates for a reassessment of the social structures that support the oppression of women. Thus, the play's feminist critique serves as a call to action for revolutionary change as well as a reflection of lived realities. "Abari" places significant emphasis on the loneliness of women and the value of female solidarity. The play illustrates the weakness that women get from ignoring one another through difficult times. Abari's mother and her sister did not understand the pain that Abari gone through, her own mother plays a dirty trick on her daughter by not telling her about the marriage proposal that came for Abari's sister Maifri but Abari thought it was for herself. A woman can understand the pain of other woman more than any other but if a woman ignore the pain of another women it is the very ungrateful work that can be done. Women may only truly be freed when they band together and support one another. Thi Page18 short story is a significant literary work that explores the complexities of rural life, societal systems, and individual goals in a tiny village. Among its many levels, the representation of

women is particularly important, providing insights regarding gender roles, expectations, and the setting's socio-cultural dynamics. Women characters of the story to be very bold who can make her own decision and face the challenges that she witnesses in her life and also to face whatever the consequence is. Abari is traveling a path of self-discovery and defiance against the systems of oppression that want to limit her. Abari is fundamentally about a patriarchal culture in which traditional gender norms are well established. Women in the story are frequently depicted in positions that the culture considers proper for women, such as caregivers, homemakers, and supporters of their male peers. Abari was also meant to do the same. The patriarchy in Abari governs not only women's positions, but also their behavior. Despite the constrained circumstances, Mushahari's female characters demonstrate persistence and inner power. The protagonist Abari is not passive victims of their surroundings; rather, they show extraordinary courage and flexibility. This is particularly visible in Abari, who bravely and determinedly navigates the difficulties of her life. Mushahari's portrayal of female transition from a traditional woman to a new woman is sympathetic and realistic. He does not romanticize the battle; instead, he depicts it in all of its intricacies and inconsistencies. Younger women, on the other hand, frequently represent the hopes and disappointments of a generation torn between competing values. Their experiences vary depending on their socioeconomic background. While wealthier women may have more options for education and self-expression, those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, such as face additional challenges.

Abari's frequent theme is women's solidarity. Despite their unique struggles and societal expectations, the protagonist Abari is a bold woman who stands for herself in a society full of patriarchy. Abari depicts women in a complex and layered way that goes beyond clichés. His female characters are multifaceted individuals who negotiate a world defined by tradition and evolution. Mushahari's stories explore themes of resilience, identity, and unity, offering a

realistic portrait of rural women's lives. The story provides a riveting meditation on women's changing roles in society, showing both achievements and challenges that persist. Mushahari's empathic and realistic insights that resonate with broader discussions about gender and societal transformation. Abari's hardships and victories are emblematic of a broader fight by women in Bodo community against patriarchal oppression. The rich cultural background of the story's locale acts as a real and metaphorical arena for the contestation and redefinition of conventional ideals. The story addresses the position of women in Bodo society from a cultural and social perspective. In addition to criticizing gender roles, Musahary's depiction of patriarchal aspects also serves as a call to reflection and action. The story invites readers to consider the deeply rooted patriarchal ideals that influence their own communities and way of life. Musahary promotes a more just and equal society where women can enjoy their rights and freedoms without worrying. Through the bold nature of Abari the writer spread out hopes and courage to all the women who are suppressed in this patriarchal society.

Nil Kamal Brahma's A Deer in a big forest-

Nil Kamal Brahma, a well-known Bodo writer, has made significant contributions to Indian literature, particularly with his evocative short stories that explore the cultural and social fabric of the Bodo community. One such story, "A Deer in a Big Forest," is a poignant tale that depicts the hardship and tenacity of women in a patriarchal culture. This story serves as a mirror, reflecting women's diverse roles and hardships, their search for identity and freedom. "The societal demands put on women are thoroughly depicted, emphasizing how these norms limit their roles to the home realm. The story personifies the universal struggle of

women attempting to break free from patriarchal constraints. Her portrayal is rife with metaphorical connotations, depicting her as a figure of weakness and strength. However, as the story progresses, the deer becomes a symbol of tenacity and inner power, challenging the conventional and often insulting depiction of women as innately weak. Brahma's " It is a profound social commentary that addresses societal inequalities against women. The story highlights the pervasiveness of gender inequity, demonstrating how society rules and expectations are geared to oppress and limit women's potential. The protagonist's struggle against these standards becomes a compelling story of resistance, representing the larger fight for gender equality. Being a educated woman the protagonist of the story is still affected by the patriarchal society system.

Understanding the cultural background of Brahma's story is essential for appreciating its complex depiction of women. The Bodo community, with its rich cultural heritage and traditions, provides a unique setting for the story. Brahma's image of women is profoundly embedded in this cultural context, representing the unique obstacles and dynamics that Bodo women experience.

In traditional Bodo society, women perform important responsibilities in the family and community, yet they are frequently subject to patriarchal domination. Brahma exploits this paradox by presenting the protagonist as both a product of her cultural context and a challenger to its confining standards. His story underlines the value of cultural identity while also arguing for the progression of cultural traditions to achieve gender equality. Women are frequently portrayed as weaker and more delicate than males. This image not only reduces women's perceived talents, but also justifies their exclusion from roles requiring strength and resilience. The patriarchal society has always tried to keep women under their control, even educated women are bound to follow what patriarchal society wants from them. No matter

how educated a woman become, men will still consider them inferior and meant to take care of the family and be a very traditional woman. Even educated Sharmila has decided not to study farther so that no difficulties would come in her marriage.

Nil Kamal Brahma's short story "*A Deer in a Big Forest*" is an expert examination of the female experience in a patriarchal society. Brahma uses rich symbolism and emotive characterization to illustrate women's trials and perseverance, providing a striking indictment of society conventions. The protagonist's trek through the forest serves as a metaphor for the larger struggle for female emancipation, highlighting the significance of inner strength, solidarity, and identity reclamation. It encourages readers to detect and combat structural injustices against women while pushing for a more equal and just society. It depicts women's lasting tenacity and persistent pursuit of independence and self-determination. Through this story, Brahma contributes to the larger discussion of gender equality, making a strong case for the reform of societal structures to empower women.

"*A Deer in a Big Forest*" is a remarkable literary masterpiece that provides profound insight into the representation of women in literature. Nil Kamal Brahma's evocative storytelling and rich symbolism combine to produce a gripping narrative that not only depicts the Bodo community's distinct cultural background, but also speaks to universal themes of women equality and empowerment and also the deeply rooted patriarchal system that still affects the mind of people. The narrative is a painful reminder of the ongoing reality of still following patriarchal norms in a modern world even an educated woman like Sharmila is a victim of that as she decides not to continue her studies because she does not want any trouble in her marriage, she thinks people prefer someone studying in class 9 or 10 rather than someone with B.A and M.A.

Hareswar Basumatari's *The Means*-

The women characters in this short story are from the very poor family of a rural area who gone through such problems for which they had to live a life full of misery. There is always a lack of opportunity for livelihood in rural areas specially for women. In this short story as well a poor family who suffer from the existencial crisis and finds no ways for livelihood. Hareswar Basumatari's Bodo short story "*The Means*" depicts women in a complex way, reflecting the socio-cultural landscape of the Bodo community. Basumatari, a renowned Bodo writer, utilizes his story to focus light on women's many roles, hardships, and agency in a typically patriarchal environment. We can better grasp Basumatari's portrayal of women by delving into the story's themes, characters, and context, while also criticizing society standards and emphasizing the possibility of change. Bodo literature, which is rooted in the cultural and linguistic history of the Bodo people frequently addresses topics related to the community's socioeconomic conditions, traditions, and transitions. "*The Means*" fits into this paradigm, providing a lens through which to examine the interconnections of gender, tradition, and modernity. The Bodo community, like many other indigenous tribes, faces challenges between conserving cultural identity and conforming to modern societal norms. Women's roles and statuses are especially fluid in this environment, frequently mirroring larger societal transformations. The story follows the hardships of woman navigating the complexity of her cultural and familial responsibilities. Basumatari's narrative is carefully crafted to highlight the complexities of gender dynamics, utilizing his protagonist to explore topics such as economic dependency, familial duty, and personal agency. The women in the society does not have any opportunity to work, they were helpless and the father of the family is also suffered because he himself was unable to find any ways of earning money. Tharli being the eldest daughter had to take the wrong way of earning money, a man whose name is Sonaram asked Tharli to sell her body to him for money and Tharli obeyed even though she

did not wanted to. For her family she even sell her body to Sonaram in order to save her family from starving. Basumatari's female characters are portrayed with realism, emphasizing their strength and ingenuity. This representation contradicts the stereotype of women as quiet or submissive, instead emphasizing their active participation in the socioeconomic world. Basumatari uses the protagonist to criticize patriarchal traditions, emphasize the need of economic independence, and push for more gender equality. His nuanced representation of women's life not only reflects the societal conditions of the day, but also serves as a call to action for continued social development. The story adds to the larger conversation on gender and empowerment in indigenous literature by emphasizing women's resilience and agency. *"The Means"* exemplifies storytelling's potential to challenge and modify society views, while also giving a hopeful vision for a more egalitarian future. This guarantees that Bodo women's perspectives and experiences are recognized and appreciated, both within and outside their community.

Chapter 3: Patriarchal Elements in the Bodo society.

The Bodo community is one of Assam's largest indigenous communities, they have an extensive cultural and historical legacy. Many traditional communities, has a considerable impact on the social structure, gender roles, and cultural customs by patriarchy system. This examination dives into the numerous manifestations of patriarchal components in Bodo society, including family structure, marital customs, religious practices, economic activities and governmental institutions. The Bodo people are also known as the Boro and they speak

the Bodo language. Historically, they have been predominantly an agricultural culture with a strong attachment to their land and traditional ways of life. External influences, modernization, and political events have all had a considerable impact on the Bodo society, as they have on many other indigenous tribes in northeast India. In Bodo society, the family is the most important unit of social organization, and it is largely patriarchal. The eldest male member is usually the family's head, and he has responsibility over family concerns and decision-making. This patriarchal structure perpetuates women's subservient position in the home. The Bodo's inheritance practices have always favored male members. Sons inherit the family property, while daughters do not have the same inheritance rights. This system keeps property within the patrilineal line, reinforcing male supremacy over economic resources and family power dynamics. Gender roles in Bodo society are well defined. Men are often in charge of activities outside the home, such as farming, hunting, and participating in political and community affairs. Women, on the other hand, are largely responsible for housework, childrearing, and other domestic tasks. This division of labor reinforces traditional gender stereotypes while limiting women's economic freedom and social mobility. Bodo marriage customs support patriarchal values. Several features of marital customs show gender inequities and women's submissive positions. In religious customs of Bodo religion men predominately hold positions of priesthood and religious leadership. Usually a man leads religious rites and ceremonies. The low percentage of women in positions of religious leadership perpetuates the dominance of men in both spiritual and social spheres. Men typically play the lead parts in religious rituals while women typically play supporting roles. This gendered divide in religious rituals is the dominance of men in larger socioeconomic structures. Gender has a major influence in determining economic roles as well, which has important ramifications for women's status and autonomy. Although male and female both engage in agricultural pursuits, males usually hold the reins when it comes to decision-

making and higher income. Though they frequently perform labor-intensive jobs like planting, weeding, and harvesting, women's contributions are typically overlooked in favor of men. The majority of women's economic endeavors are limited to the home or small-scale unofficial industries, including the weaving of traditional Bodo fabrics. Women's lack of access to financial resources and decision-making authority, in spite of their contributions, restricts their ability to be economically independent and upholds patriarchal dominance.

Bodo society has historically had predominantly male political systems, with little involvement or representation of women. The village council is primarily made up of men in traditional Bodo governance. The council is in charge of settling conflicts, upholding social order, and making significant decisions affecting the community. The opinions and voices of women are frequently ignored in these political processes.

Patriarchal elements in the short story *Abari* by Ishan Mushahari-

'*Abari*' by Ishan Musahary has presents a comprehensive picture of Bodo customs, culture, and social mores. The novel's central theme is a patriarchal system that rules the lives of its protagonists, especially the protagonist Abari, the female lead. The story offers a moving examination of the ways in which ingrained patriarchal beliefs influence gender norms, expectations, and personal fates. One can identify several aspects of patriarchy and their effects on the individuals and larger society by carefully examining the text. The gender roles that are allocated to men and women in '*Abari*' are clear indications of the patriarchal system. In the story men are frequently portrayed as the decision-makers and authority figures in both the family and the community at large. On the other side, women are generally limited to domestic responsibilities and assigned to submissive roles. The hierarchy and

power relations between the genders are determined by patriarchal traditions in traditional Bodo society. The protagonist Abari personifies the struggle against these assumptions, her journey demonstrates the oppressive nature of these societal conventions by controlling her resistance to the limits placed on her because of her gender. The institution of marriage is portrayed in "*Abari*" as being crucial to the exercise of patriarchal authority. Women are under a lot of pressure to fulfill the roles of submissive wives, daughters, sisters, loving mothers, and their identity and worth are frequently linked to their marital status. The story shows how marriage turns into a tool for defending male supremacy and female subjugation. This dynamic is reflected in Abari's personal experiences. Abari's one leg is crooked, she is hobbling girl but she can do all the work that a normal person can do, once she even won the first prize in a weaving competition. But she was asked for the marriage with a lame and hunch-backed person who is just an unnecessary burden of the house who is unable to do anything. Abari proclaimed NO for the marriage but she was forced by the society by saying "As the bride, so will be the groom".

Even her own family members were very dominance, nobody respect the decision of Abari, it shows even a bride is not allow to choose her own partner according to her wish. When Abari proclaimed No for the marriage the villagers often blamed Abari's brother Ule. He also abuses at Abari.

"It is you for whom I have to bear insults and shame in and outside home. Leave it or kill yourself jumping into a river."

These words only filled her with agony. Despite her all out endeavor to sustain the serenity of the home, she fell away. Notwithstanding her determination to go out somewhere she could not proceed even a step further, as she could not bear the thought of missing her mother. The story by Mushahari critically investigates the patriarchal systems that support

gender inequity. "*Abari*" shows the pervasiveness of patriarchy throughout the story. Whether she challenges the patriarchal status quo by challenging marriage standards, or claiming her individuality, her actions of disobedience reflect a challenge to it. These acts of defiance are important because they show that empowerment and change are achievable even in severely patriarchal environments. "*Abari*" is a potent examination of the patriarchal aspects of Bodo society. The story exposes the restrictive systems that imprison women by portraying gender stereotypes, marriage and customs.

Patriarchal elements in Janilkumar brahma's Orge-

"*Orge*" by Janil Kumar Brahma offers deep insights on the social and cultural makeup of the Bodo group, especially when viewed through the prism of gender dynamics. The Bodo society shown in "*Orge*" like many traditional civilizations, is enmeshed in patriarchal norms and systems that set out expectations for men and women in terms of roles and conduct. This study investigates the patriarchal themes present in the short story, looking at how they appear in the lives of the characters.

The strict gender norms and demands placed on the characters are the examples of patriarchy in the Bodo society. Traditionally, women are portrayed as the caregivers and breadwinners, and men as the ones who make decisions. This separation stems from cultural norms that place a high emphasis on male authority and female subservience, not only from practical considerations. The male characters in the short story "*Orge*" are frequently in positions of authority and influence, both inside and outside of the family. They are expected to lead and support their families, and their authority is rarely questioned. On the other hand, female characters are expected to play the roles of obedient daughter, mothers and wives, and their value is frequently determined by how well they can support and manage the home and their husbands. A core component of patriarchal ideology, the gender dichotomy perpetuates the

idea that men are fundamentally better and more capable than women. In the story, women are frequently viewed as the male characters' property or belongings. This is shown in marriages, when women are supposed to submit to and be submissive to their husbands and an unmarried woman to her father or brothers. In the story the protagonist whose name is Orge, she had to work as a laborer in Basiram Mahajan's house because her brother Thobra, a drunkard took five bags of paddy from Basiram and still unable to pay back so Orge had to work in the house of Basiram Mahajan but she won't be getting money because of her brother.

“It was autumn. This year she would have to work in the house of Basiram Mahajan of Dauranguri as a transplantation laborer made advance agreements with the Mahajan in respect of cloths- dakhhanas (Bodo skirts) and dalis (upper garments of Bodo Women). But Orge would not get anything. Her brother Thobra, a drunkard took five maunds of paddy from the Mahajan many months ago. Poor Orge had to turn up at Basiram's house wearing the dakhana used by her mother.”

In “*Orge*” patriarchal structures have a major role in the subjugation and suffering of women. Women's constraints have a variety of detrimental effects, from psychological suffering to physical aggression. When women try to question or defy these expectations, they frequently encounter severe consequences, such as abuse, social exclusion, and even death. The wife of the Mahajan is also another female character in the story, she is a powerless woman and always has to follow her dominant husband and she is abused by her husband.

“After finishing the meal, the guest dispersed. Basiram stood up instantly and with the broken handle of the wood-chopper, began to whip his wife, abusing her, “for you, I ar

to be humiliated always while guests come.” Had servant Bugoba not turned up immediately and prevented, Basiram would have given her more thrashing.”

Female characters that display nonconformity or independence are often penalized or marginalized in the story. Their challenges serve as a stark reminder of how patriarchy is repressive and aims to preserve power through force and terror. The current quo is upheld by this systemic oppression, which makes sure that male dominance is not questioned. The way characters interpret and uphold gender norms and expectations is indicative of this internalization. Particularly women tend to internalize the idea that they are less valuable than men and that, in order to be accepted and approved of, they must conform to traditional norms.

The story offers a fascinating examination of the patriarchal systems that shape and limit the lives of its protagonists. The story provides a critical lens on the effects of patriarchy on both people and the larger community by depicting strict gender roles, control and ownership, female pain, and the internalization of patriarchal norms. “*Orge*” is a call to action for better gender equity and justice as well as a reflection of the Bodo community's cultural standards.

Patriarchal elements in Janil Kumar Brahma’s “*Dumphao’s Phitha*”-

The short story “*Dumphao’s Phitha*” by Janil Kumar Brahma has portrayal of patriarchal elements. Brahma is renowned for his vivid depictions of Bodo culture and societal challenges. In “*Dumphao’s Phitha*,” a story full of social critique and cultural nuances is highlighted. Although the novel is based in the unique aspects of Bodo life, it tackles universal themes of power, gender and tradition, emphasizing how omnipresent patriarchy is.

The protagonist of the story is Dumphao, a representation of new women. Before exploring her inner potentiality Dumphao was a dependent woman, she is an educated woman but still she is portrayed as someone's wife but did not have her own identity in the society. Her school friends Sarala and Gaodang are also educated women but they also suffer the same, they also being educated women could not engage themselves in any kind of work. They were just enjoying their lives by marrying rich men. Through this fact we can examine that women in the society are so much affected by the norms of patriarchy that the main purpose of women is to marry a rich and independent man who can provide them a better life. The strong patriarchal system and stereotype has affected their mind so strongly that even being the educated women they think that marrying a poor guy is like a curse for them.

“Dumphaopagli! Why have you changed so much? You were more beautiful than us before.” “Gaodang agreed with Sarala and said- Yes, Yes, Dumphao, whom have you married that you have changed so much? Oh Ram, what luck dear friend.”

“Dumphao we have nothing to tell about our lives. We are doing fine. Can't you tell your husband to look for a job that would make you stay in the town like our Babu's father?”

“That is what happens when one's husband is a teacher. It is better to die than to live like her.”

The story of Brahma explores the tradition upholds patriarchal standards. Men are supposed to be the bread earner but women are only supposed to do the household and depends towards husband and it does not matter how educated they are. The story's intriguing element is how both men and women internalize patriarchal values. Brahma serves as an example of how patriarchal standards are accepted and upheld by women in addition to being enforced by men. The persistence of patriarchy can be attributed in large part to this internalization.

Because they have been conditioned to accept their inferior status. Education is the important tools for confronting and deconstructing patriarchal institutions. Brahma contends that having access to knowledge and critical thinking might enable people to question and reject oppressive standards. But some women like Sarala and Daodang being very educated can't think deep and does whatever the society wants them to do.

In "*Dumphao's Phita*," Janil Kumar Brahma offers a moving examination of patriarchal issues in Bodo society. Brahma's thorough representation of characters and their interactions criticizes patriarchy's pervasiveness and impact on individual lives. The tale reveals the deep origins of male supremacy, the importance of tradition in perpetuating gender inequity, and how both men and women internalize patriarchal ideals.

However, Brahma provides a ray of hope via the tenacity and agency of his female characters. He proposes paths to a more equal society by demonstrating the possibilities for resistance and education's transformative ability. "*Dumphao's Phita*" thus functions as both a critique of patriarchal tyranny and a call to empowerment and change.

Kamal Nil Brahma's "A deer in a big forest"-

Nil Kamal Brahma's "*A Deer in a Big Forest*" contains patriarchal elements. The story offers a complex analysis of gender dynamics, illustrating how patriarchal conventions impact the protagonists' lives and destinies. One of the most obvious patriarchal themes in "*A Deer in a Big Forest*" is the reinforcing of traditional gender norms.

The male protagonist frequently occupies positions of authority and makes decisions that affect the lives of the female characters. This dynamic is a direct result of the patriarchal power structure that gives men authority over women's life and decisions.

For example, whether deciding how to navigate the jungle or cope with threats, the masculine protagonist's thoughts and actions take primacy. In contrast, female characters are expected to blindly follow and assist the male protagonist. This dynamic supports the idea that men are natural leaders and decision-makers, whereas women are passive followers, creating a cycle of dependence and subordination. And somewhere or the other the patriarchal mindset of people are still stuck in today's world no matter how educated they become, the deep rooted patriarchy system will affect our life and our decision and it is proved through the act of the protagonist when she refuge to continue her studies because she thinks that people prefer a uneducated daughter in law rather than a educated one. Somehow the patriarchal mindset is still affecting her even though she is educated.

“Sharmila had a B.A degree but she did not do anything. She just stayed at home. Though her father was very rich Sharmila did not pursue her M.A.. when asked about it she would say – no one dares to marry someone with a B.A. and you talk about doing M.A. If I go on to do M.A. people would call me a ‘mother’.

“Is marriage the ultimate aim of a woman?”

“Is it ultimate in our society?”

“Meaning’

“Meaning that – in your society, your in laws looks for someone who can plant paddy, know fishing, throw cow dung and cook traditional dishes. They prefer someone studying in class 9 or 10 rather than someone with B.A or an M.A that is why the girls do not study even if they want to”.

Women are frequently portrayed as weaker and more delicate than males. This image not only reduces women's perceived talents, but also justifies their exclusion from roles requiring

strength and resilience. The patriarchal society has always tried to keep women under their control, even educated women are bound to follow what patriarchal society wants from them. No matter how educated a woman become, men will still consider them inferior and meant to take care of the family and be a very traditional woman. Even educated Sharmila has decided not to study farther so that no difficulties would come in her marriage.

HareswarBasumatari's *The Means*-

Bodo literature frequently depicts the rural, agrarian lifestyles of the Bodo people, an indigenous tribe in Assam. "*The Means*" is not an exception. The novel is set in a traditional Bodo hamlet, where customs and cultural standards shape people's lives. The rural setting is important because it serves as the foundation for the patriarchal structure's construction and maintenance. In the short story the familial connections are heavily influenced by patriarchal norms. The head of the family, usually the eldest male, wields considerable power over household choices. This hierarchical structure is visible in the way male characters interact with female characters, who frequently exert power and influence over their lives. Economic structures in the story reflect patriarchal dominance. Male characters usually handle money resources and make decisions, whereas women are economically dependent on their husbands or male relatives. This dependence is more than just a matter of tradition; it is a strategy of maintaining male authority. Men maintain authority and influence by controlling economic resources, while women have little autonomy. In this short story women are shown as helpless and they only remain at home waiting for the male member to bring something to eat so that they can stay alive but their father was unable to provide them anything due to not having proper opportunity and here we find the women character Tharlisells her body to Sonaram a rich man who can give her money to buy rice for the family. Instead of helping a

poor family Sonaram used Tharli for pleasure and gave her the money. In this story we find how men are being cruel and forcing women to commit mistakes with them, it is also a kind of dominance which is using women for pleasure. The story's division of work emphasizes gendered roles that are consistent with patriarchal views. Men are seen engaging in tasks outside the home, such as farming or other types of income generation, whilst women are limited to domestic responsibilities. This distinction supports the notion that males are the breadwinners and women are the caregivers, which is a core component of patriarchal ideology. Hareswar Basumatari's "*The Means*" is a moving examination of the patriarchal tendencies present in Bodo society. The story depicts familial bonds, economic dependency, cultural standards, and moments of resistance to offer a full picture of how patriarchy molds and governs people's lives, particularly those of women. By investigating these characteristics, we obtain a better understanding of the intricate interplay between tradition and gender relations in Bodo culture.

In the larger framework of literary studies, "*The Means*" is an important text for understanding how indigenous literature can reflect and criticize established standards. It emphasizes the relevance of cultural specificity when examining patriarchal structures, which are frequently inextricably linked to local traditions and behaviors. Through its rich tale and nuanced characters, "*The Means*" challenges readers to consider the ubiquitous nature of patriarchy and the various forms of resistance that can emerge within even the most entrenched power structures.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

Patriarchal society system still exist and still dominates women, we see there are many places where gender inequality are taking place and mostly in rural areas. In this dissertation the condition of women in the modern world and the impact of patriarchy in their personal life has discussed so that through their life experience the hidden suffering of women comes into light. Women in present days improved in many ways whether it is in education, business or any other thing (fields), for example in Dumphao's Pitha short story the protagonist Dumphao with her lots of hardwork she became successful in her life. By mentioning women's successful story this dissertation tries to give hopes to the women and also by declaring the concept of 'New Women' in the characters like Dumphao and Abari it tries to make readers realize their hidden potentiality. One should not accept what other person has tell about them but everyone should think wisely and explore their inner heart and find their own way towards identity. The main motive of this dissertation is to bring equality and understand women more. Sometimes the rural women are so ignorant and stereotype that village women are very traditional and dependent towards their husband are still present and believed by the people but this paper explores and talks about women in rural life, their journey towards identity, their expences, opportunities, personality and their ability. Due to not having proper opportunities and scope so many women like the women characters in the short story "The Means" by Hareswar Basumatari, are lacking behind. The proper opportunities for women are very much important, because of not having opportunities for education and also other sector the women character in the short story had to remain under the male dominance still in some places women are not getting opportunities to read and write, they're used by the family only to do the household works and instead of being equal

some patriarchal society gives more important to their male child more than their daughter. The mindset that one day daughters will ultimately get married and leave their house and only their sons will look after them in future is ruling the society. Just because daughters will leave house are day they should not be considered as less important. This mindset of people should be break and it is what this dissertation identified persistent motifs that perpetuate women's objectification and trivialization of their contribution or effort. By exploring the women's hidden ability and their daily life struggles in the patriarchal society it tries to contribute to the larger feminist discourse by emphasizing the ongoing battle for representation and equity in literature. The feminist critique of Bodo short stories. 'Dumphao'spitha', 'Orge', 'The mean' and 'A deer in a big forest,' emphasizes literature's ability to reflect and shape societal ideas. By challenging established gender dynamics we may work toward a more fair and just world in which varied voices and experiences are recognized and appreciated. In today's modern and high technological world there are so many people in rural area who struggles for their identity and livelihood specially women are the one who suffer the most.

In this dissertation we explored how the Bodo short story portrays female autonomy. A detailed examination of Bodo Short stories writer's narrative approach and the thematic emphasis reveals that the work promotes women's intellectual freedom and financial independence as essential components of feminist philosophy.

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