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Appendix: 1

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SOCIAL ISSUES AS REPRESENTED IN THE NOVEL DAINEE?

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Abstract

In Sociology, Social Issue is a very important element to be precisely analyzed. A social issue is a problem that influences the common people of a society. Every society in the world has come across different types of social issues and is still battling through it. In fact, it affects the whole community as well as the society and hampers its growth and development. In this context the novel *Dainee?* from the Bodo literature is worth mentioning. '*Daina*' or '*Dainee*' means someone practicing *witchcraft or exorcism*. It is worth noting that through the title of the novel many social issues of the Bodo society has been highlighted where the belief in witchcraft is a superstitious belief. The main objective behind analyzing this novel is to discuss the various social issues of the Bodo society as highlighted in it and analytical method has been used to analyze the various social issues and concerns.

Keywords: Social Issues, Communal conflict, Illiteracy, Witch hunting, Violence against women.

Introduction

The novel *Dainee?* is a social novel authored by the renowned Bodo writer Monoranjan Lahary in the year 2005. He wrote a sum of seven novels which are *Kharlung* (1976), *Hainamuli* (1986), *Rebeka* (1999), *Aalaishri* (2003), *Dainee?* (2005), *Jom* (2007) and *Fame* (2007). His writings are confined not only to novels but he has also mastered in writing poetries, short stories, prose, dramas and literary criticisms. His writings have expanded and enriched the world of Bodo literature. The novel *Dainee?* is his fifth literary work for which he was conferred the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award. Many important elements of the Bodo community like traditions, thinking's and characters, superstitious beliefs, socio economic conditions, socio cultural practices etc. have been highlighted through his novels. As a matter of fact, the themes of his novels have brought a new trend in the Bodo literature.

Aims and Objectives of the Study

The aims and objectives of the study are to highlight and analyze the social issues or problems

as indicated in the novel and secondly to find out the causes of social issue and causes of witch hunting in the Bodo community.

Methodology

To study the proposed topic Social Issues as represented in the novel *Dainee?* analytical method has been used.

Data Collection

For the study both primary and secondary source has been used significantly to collect the required data. The textbook has been used as the primary source of data and different magazines, journals, news papers etc. have been the source of secondary data.

Result and Discussion

Thus the novel *Dainee?* is both a social novel as well as a regional novel. It concentrates in the villages falling under Gossaigao subdivision and primarily focuses on the various social incidents like witchcraft hunting occurring frequently in the Bodo society. Believing in witchcraft or exorcist is a superstitious belief and a grave social issue which greatly affects and damages the development of any society. It is a known fact that a social issue does not affect only one individual but affects many people within the society. In the present times, it is a problem of the commons. It is an aspect of the society that people are worried about and would like to change. According to Ram Ahuja – “A social issue is a problem that influences a considerable number of individuals within a society. It is often the consequence of factors extending beyond an individual’s control. Anything that affects a considerable amount of people in a community/society can be headed as a social problem.” Social issues are deeply rooted in a particular society, in the understanding of an individual or a group of people. Consequently, different societies have different approach and hence different social problem. A social issue or concern is a condition or a set of events that some people in the society view as being undesirable and require it to be changed. Every country in the world faces different social issues like racism, gender inequality, poverty, corruption, illiteracy, drug abuse, alcoholism, rape, child abuse, terrorism, unemployment, communal violence, violence against women etc. One of the ways to understand these kinds of social issues and to bring awareness and handle them is through literature. Literary writers are the ones who identify such kinds of social issues and bring awareness among the people in the society through their literary works like novels, poetries, stories, prose etc. Monoranjan Lahary through his novel *Dainee?* has highlighted the various social issues and has tried to bring awareness among the masses in the Bodo society. As a matter of fact one social problem is closely related to another one. He has highlighted the various social issues through the plot, character, dialogue and storytelling. The various social issues are analyzed as given under –

1. Communal Violence

Communal violence is a grave social concern where the involvement of people of a community is mobilized against another. The violence that occurs here is unpredictable, unimaginable, and unmanageable and carries an emotional furry and violent expression which takes the form of uproar (rioting). Communal conflicts bring immense impact upon a society. In this matter two rival communities often clash with each other which take the form of communal violence. According to

Ram Ahuja – “Communal violence is a collective violence when large section of people in the community fails to achieve their collective goal, or feel that they are being discriminated against and deprived of equal opportunities, they feel frustrated and disillusioned and this collective frustration leads to collective violence.” Communal conflicts and violence have been the most important and serious social problem since time immemorial. Every community is conscious about its own language, literature, religion and culture. In this context communal tension and conflicts arises between two different and rival communities. As a result of which intense social situations like communal hatred, burning and destruction of houses and public properties, alleged murdering etc. takes place. This directly weakens the conditions of the two societies and they are never at peace. Schools and hospitals are destroyed and educational and health services are disrupted to a huge extent. As depicted in the novel, similar circumstances can be seen to have a huge affect in the areas under Kokrajhar district like Jharbari, Kasugaon, Gossaigaon and Betmari. The prime reason that gave rise to such circumstance is the communal violence between the Bodos and the Adivasis (Santali). Due to such intense and fearsome situation people revert from moving around as soon as the sun sets: the roads become empty and no vehicles and be seen/found to be plying around. This can be known and found from the author’s quotes in the novel—“ थासारिया दान्धार सुथार, लुत - फात । सान हाबबाथाय थिउरियाफोरा राइफेल, AK-47, ग्रेनेद लानानै हान्जा - हान्जा गिदिङ्गे ।” (पृष्ठ 1)

English rendering – “The situation is bitter and fiercesome. Militants roam freely in groups with rifles, AK-47, grenades as soon as sun sets.”

It further quotes – “ दासान्दि थासारिया जोबोर गुदुं । मोनसेया सावथाल - बर ” हांगामा आरो गुबुन मोनसेया जायगा जायगा बर’ गामिफ्राव दाइना दाइनि बुथारनाय दुहुम । नेसनेल हायवेनिफ्राय झाबारि गामिसिम जि/जिसे माइलसो जागोन । सानाव गंफा गनै स्कुटार, मटर साइकेल आरो जिब गरि खारो । सान हाबबाथाइ बे लामार्जो सासेबो मानसि थाबाया ।” (पृष्ठ 2)

English rendering: “The situation is very intense as of now. One is Bodo – Adivasi uproar and the other is the hunting and murdering of witches in different Bodo villages. The distance from the National Highway to Jharbari will be 10/11 miles. A few vehicles like scooters, bikes, bicycles and jeeps ply during the day and when the sun sets and darkness prevails not a single soul can be seen through this road.”

It thus can be understood that social/ communal conflicts and violence is a serious social issue which harms a society, creates agitation in the minds of the people, hatred among each other and adversely affects the day to day life of the people in the society.

2. Poverty

Poverty is one of the most widespread socio - economic problem of India. Ram Ahuja says – “Poverty refers to a situation when people are deprived of sufficient food, shelter and other basic necessities of life. When a big portion of the population is deprived of the minimum living standard and survives only on the survival level, then it is said that poverty is widely spread in the population.”

One of the important social issue as highlighted in the novel is Poverty, a situation which forces people to find many different ways to fulfill their daily needs. Several poor families can be noted in the novel that have struggled and chosen their own ways to meet their daily needs and support their families. Poverty often shatters the dreams and aspirations of not only the people of the society but also drives the government into making adverse decisions. In the novel, Durmao is

depicted to hold a poor family. After the death of her husband and in order to take care of her son Ajor and her daughter Nijira and also to meet the daily requirements of family she began to prepare folk medicines by collecting leaves and roots of different plants and herbs from the nearby forest and selling them in the locality. She sends her son away to work as a servant in someone's house but is still unable to educate her daughter.

Poverty often brings disaster and hardship into one's life where such people are often malice by the other class in the society and are also often the victims of false rumors and allegations. In the novel, poverty has brought Durmao a great misery. Bilasu takes advantage of her poverty and out of jealousy for the little money she earns by selling folk medicines, he allegedly blames her and spreads the rumor of her being a witch and ultimately tortures and murders her cruelly.

This is a serious social concern of not only the Bodo society but also the entire world. Developed countries like America, France, Germany etc, are also not free from this particular social obstacle. Many poor people in the Bodo society are often the victims of false allegations of practicing witchcraft and this often creates bitter circumstances in the society. The author has expressed this in the novel in this way – “सालिसखौ गयाखैब्लाबो दुर्मावा खर’ सुबाव मोनबाय। गोलोमस्त्रावलायबाय। दसे उनाव बेयो गोजांसिउ मोनबाय। जिंगा सिबाय फिसा सानैनि थाखाय। निजिराया बिमाखौ गोबानानै गाबबाय। अजरआबो मोदै हुगारबाय। खैफोदा निखावरि फोरनाव बांसिन साफियो। दाय था बा दाथा गाजि नोजोराव गोग्लैयो। लोरबांफोरनि सायाव बांसिन हामला आरो जुलुम जायो। दूरमावनि मते बियो गामियाव आरो बायजोआव जेबो दाय खालामाखै रावनिबो जिउ खहा खालामाखै। बरंसे बेमार आजार सोखादों, फाहामदों, सुबुं सेवा खालामदों। गावखौ दाइनि साजायनानै साजा होनो ओंखारनायाव दुर्मावआ बिलासु, सान्द्रोब, दिलसोन आरो जायसोन मोनखौनो दाय खालामो।” (पृष्ठ 75)

English rendering: Even though she was not afraid of the village court but Durmao was really tensed. She sweat and after sometime shivered thinking of the many things that came to her mind at that time. She became worried of her two children. Nijira hugged her mother and wept deeply. Ajor too wiped his tears. Misery strikes very hard on poor people. However innocent the individual may be, people malice upon them and the weak are often victimized. Durmao believes in herself that she has not harmed and brought ill fate upon anyone but has in fact treated and cured people of various illness and diseases both in and outside her village and served the society. She blamed Bilasu, Sandrwb, Dilsrwm and Joysrwm for framing and victimizing her as a witch.

3. Lack of Healthcare Facilities

When people are sick or hurt, they need access to medical care to get better. The lack of proper and sufficient healthcare facilities is also one of the important social issues. The Bodos have always inhabited near rivers and lakes and away from towns and cities. There is lack of doctors and hospitals in the Bodo villages. They are financially backward and lack transportation facilities too. These illiterate villagers are not able to adopt and accept the modern systems of health care facilities they are dependent upon medicine man for village folk medicines and are to certain extent able to get rid of certain illness and diseases. Sometimes these folk medicine men and their medicines are not sufficient and people suffer miserably. These failures by gives rise to pessimism in the minds of the people and suspect them to be witch or wizard.

In the novel too, there is the lack of doctors and proper healthcare facilities in the areas of Jharbari and Betmari for which people have to depend largely upon these village medicine men. As

a village medicine man, Durmao has been able to cure a lot of illness and diseases but when she was informed and called to cure Dilsrwn's son, the condition of the child was very serious. Even though both allopathic and ayurvedic herbal medicines were given to him he did not recover. The reason was that due to lack of proper medical facilities his disease couldn't be recognized. Thus, Dilsrwn put the blame upon Durmao and spread the rumor that she is a witch. This can be known from the quotes in the novel as – “दुर्मावआ दाइनि बियो आंनि फिसाखौ राइनानै फोथैबाय । आमुखिखौ बुंदोंमोन आं बेखौ लायनाड़ा होनानै । आं थाड़ैआव गावनो खिसाउ खिसाउ थानानै दुर्मावखौ लायथारदों । दाइनिआदि आंनि फिसाखौ जाबाय । आर सोर सोरनि फिसाखौ जाबावगोन बेनि हिसाब गैया ।” (पृष्ठ 70)

English rendering – Durmao is a witch. She has cursed and killed my son. I told my wife not to call her. As I did not go she went and called her without my knowledge. That witch has killed my son and I don't know how many more other's sons will be killed by her.

The lack of doctors and proper health care facilities is a great curse towards a society which often leads to pessimist thoughts and superstitious beliefs, and leads to witch craft hunting in the rural areas.

4: Illegal Felling of Trees

The Bodos have always lived close to the nature and have always inhabited close to rivers and forest. They live upon the fresh fish from the rivers and gather firewood from the forest and sell them to make a living. These are generally harmless and small ways of livelihood but illegal felling and selling valuable timber from the forest and selling them is the major concern of the society as forests are true resources of the society. There are several members in the society who illegally cut valuable timber from the forest, sell them illegally to other states and nations and earn lots of money and identify themselves as rich and respected members of the society. They use these natural resources of the society as their own. The illegal sale of timber is seen through the characters of Sandrwb and Dilsrwn in the novel. They both are residents of Jharbari and are the richest individuals in the area. Since Jharbari is a forest area they have wrongly utilized its resources. They cut valuable timber from the locality and illegally sell them to other states like Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh etc. and became wealthy men. The author describes a robber like Sandrwb in the following way – “सान्द्रोबआ गमिनि गामिबिराय । झारबारिनि 'राजा' होनजासै । फरेस्त एलेखायाव थानायखाय दुइ नम्बरि दंफांजों देरदों । दामि दामि दिमबार बिनि आखायजोंनो सिखावयै सालान जादों बेंगल, इउ.पि. आव ।” (पृष्ठ 16)

English rendering – Sandrwb is the village headman. Since he lives in a forest area he became wealthy out of fraud activities. Valuable timber is exported to other states like Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh etc. through him.

This type of illegal activities is a grave social concern because of which a lot of valuable resources are lost and people suffer in making their daily livelihood.

5. Illiteracy

Illiteracy is also one of the important social concerns that affect the society as a whole. It makes the people ignorant, leads into poverty and spreads superstitious beliefs among the masses. The people under the poverty line are mostly illiterate because of their poor economic conditions which do not allow them to further continue their educations, or at the best not allow them and their

children to have basic education. Instead they will encourage their children to work to meet their daily requirements. Due to lack of skill and knowledge they will involve themselves and also their children to untrained labour. Education is quite necessary to lead a life into prosperity. A society develops in the right direction in the light of proper and higher education. The Bodo community is still not able to develop in the right direction due to their lack of proper education and poor economic conditions. An illiterate society is the birth place of all social evils like superstitious beliefs, witchcraft hunting, child marriage, dowry system, female infanticide, terrorism, communalism, corruption, poverty etc. As a matter of fact, the Bodo society is still illiterate to a certain extent. As for example, the people in the villages of Jharbari and Betmari are quite illiterate where Arongbir is the only individual who had gone for pursuing BA in Shillong and on the other hand Nijira had the opportunity to study only till 9th standard. Even though she had the wish to continue her studies due to the pressure from her mother she had to discontinue her studies, through which the problem of women education is highlighted in the novel.

The people in the villages Jharbari and Betmari are mostly illiterate. They sell firewood, work as servants, prepare and sell village folk medicines etc. to meet their daily requirements. They are ignorant about the value of education in their lives. They lack the capacity of profound thought and reasoning about the things happening around and blindly follows anyone. This can be seen clearly in the novel where the rich individuals like Sandrwb, Dilsrwn Joysrwn suspects and blames Durmao of being a witch or exorcist. The innocent villagers blindly accept this rumor as the truth supports them and without any proof condemns her to death in the village court.

6. Witch Hunting

One of the most frightening social problems among the backward societies in the world is the suspect of practicing witchcraft or commonly called as “*daina*” or “*daine*” in the traditional Bodo language. Witchcraft hunting or witch hunting which is hunting down a human who is suspected to have been causing harm to the society through the use of supernatural powers. This particular belief in witchcraft and witchcraft hunting has dominated the Bodo society since time immemorial. The practice of curing different illness and diseases through the use of village folk medicines and exorcism is seen in the Bodo society for a long time and this has led to the birth of superstitious belief in witchcraft in which many innocent widows have been the prime victims who have been allegedly murdered. In the novel too, because of this superstitious belief Durmao and Urao have been the innocent victims who have been allegedly murdered by the rich and powerful representatives of the society. They are considered as to bring evil in the society for which they have been cruelly murdered.

The picture of Durmao’s torture can be seen in her own words as – “हगार, हगार। आंखौ हगार फाफि। आंखौ सिथारनाय नोंहा फाप नांगोन। नों मोरोनाव थैगोन। आंखौ दाइनि साजायनाया नोंनो फाफिथिया। आइदै, आइदै। आंनि आखाइ थाइनैखौबो दानसबाय। राइजोफोर गामियाव मोरोन हाबगोन। आइयै! आइयै!!” (पृष्ठ 88)

English rendering: Held me free, you sinner. You will commit sin for killing me. You will be cursed to die. You are the sinner who alleged me of witchcraft. Aydwi Aydwi (yelled in pain). Both my hands are chopped. The village will be under cursed. Aywi, aywi (cried and yelled).

This kind of act by the members of the society is truly odious or wicked for which many poor and innocent lives have been taken and is one act of crime. Illiteracy, poor economic conditions,

lack of proper health care services has been the prime reasons of witch hunting. These kinds of activities affects greatly in the proper growth and development of a society. Witchcraft hunting or witch hunting is not a problem of only the Bodo society but of the entire Tribal community and the whole world for which each and every member of the society is responsible.

7. Violence against Women

Violence against women is also one of the most common social concerns faced in every society even in the 21st century of science and technology. Women have been always considered as weak and meek since time immemorial. Even the earliest societies have many proofs of violence against women. The men folk have always been considered strong and powerful who have always trampled the rights of women in the society. The women have always been bounded by house works and giving birth and looking after the children. They have always been used for the pleasure of men. Various atrocities against women, rape, domestic violence, domination by men, inequality etc. and several kinds of injustice is against women is seen in every society in the world and widows have always been the victims.

In the novel also violence against women is represented clearly by the author through the character Durmao, who is a poor widow. She struggles and somehow meets the daily requirements of the family by preparing and selling village folk medicines. Many are cured of various illnesses while some are not cured at all. Taking an opportunity of this, the rich and powerful members of the society like Bilasu, Sandrwb, Dilsrwn and Joysrwn allegedly blames her of being a witch or '*Dainee*.' They spread the rumor and together with the support of innocent and illiterate villagers mercilessly tortures and cruelly kills her publicly. Such kinds of incidents of cruelty and violence against women occur frequently in the society which goes unnoticed even today and this has led to the birth of Feminism by conscious women folk of the world.

Conclusion

The above discussion makes it clear that the novel *Dainee?* is a social novel where various social issues and concerns are highlighted and which hampers and affects the proper development of a society. The superstitious belief in witchcraft, also traditionally called as "*daina*" or "*dainee*" in the Bodo society and witchcraft hunting where innocent people are often the victims who are ruthlessly and mercilessly murdered is one of the most important social problem. The prime reason behind this illicit ruthless murder is nothing but superstitious belief. The lack of proper and sufficient health care facilities, educational services, the inability to accept and access to scientific methods paves the way for superstitious beliefs which blinds the society into proper growth and development. In this way one social problem is closely related to another one, one affects the other one in a great way. To get rid of these problems every member of the society has to be conscious towards attaining sufficient education, every innocent and illiterate member of the society has to be taught the importance of education in their lives. The author of the novel, Monoranjan Lahary is able to clearly highlight the various social issues in the Bodo society through his social novel *Dainee?*. He is able to clearly show the characteristics of the people, their habits, thinkings, beliefs, culture etc. of the Bodo society. He has brought awareness among the people in the Bodo society and has indirectly tried and brought consciousness regarding the various ongoing social issues and evils.

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A STUDY ON SOCIAL REALISM REFLECTED IN THE NOVEL - "DAINEE?"

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Abstract

Social Realism is a literary movement which concentrates itself the daily activities of human life. It is a way of representation in literature, art, movies and plays which reveals the daily life and experience of the poor and the working class. It is a way or a manner of representing the real life of a family or the society as a whole. After the WW II and the Industrial Revolution a lot of writers concentrated their writings on creative literature and fiction which are based upon Social Realism. In the same way Mr. Monoranjan Lahary too, through his fictional work "Dainee?" showcased the social reality of the Bodo society, Through this literary piece, Mr. Lahary indicated the superstitious beliefs prevalent in the Bodo society, mainly witchcraft and also the hunting and brutal punishments and killings for those who are believed to be the practitioners of witchcraft. He highlighted the negative impacts on the society due to the lack of education and attempted to bring awareness about it in the Bodo society.

Keywords: social realism, Bodo society, witchcraft, education, women

Introduction

Realism is a literary movement dealing with everyday experiences of real life, which emerged against the dramatizing and romantic ideals. Realism means 'real' which occupies place in everyday's real life situations. It depicts the daily experiences of man in real life. It reveals the thoughts and ideologies of the common men, places and their struggle for existence in life. In this perspective, the life of the lower class and the middle class is clearly portrayed. According to New Standard Encyclopedia, realism is "a pre-presentation of object and conditions in the way they appear to the senses as opposed to the ideal and fanciful."

In literature, realism is the theory or practice of commitment to nature or to factual life and to precise portrayal without glorifying the way of living. The 18th century works of Daniel Defoe, Henry Fielding and Tobias Smollet are among the earliest examples of realism in English literature. It was consciously adopted as an aesthetic program in French in the mid 19th century, when previously neglected aspects of contemporary life and society drew interest in recording it. In art and literature, realism aims to depict life as in reality. It conveys the real life situation. It demonstrates both the ugly and painful sides of life without glorifying anything.

Social realism means a type of realism that focuses on the lives and living condition of the working class and the poor. The term social realism has been derived from two words 'social' and 'realism'. The word, 'Social' refers to subjective matter relating to society or its organization. 'Realism' on the other hand refers to the attitude or practice of accepting a situation as it is and way of thinking and acting based on true fact or what is possible. Social realism seeks to draw attention of the actual social - political condition of the working class.

Social realism is also known as socio-realism. It is also an artistic movement which is demonstrated in the tactile and other realist arts, which portray social and racial injustice, economic misfortune etc. These are often exposed through unadorned picture of the struggles of life of the middle and lower classes, illustrating the struggling labors as a heroic. Social realism is a feature which provides a truthful realistic account of the people and their lives. It is concerned only with the reality of life and simply aims to expose the flaws of human being.

Encyclopedia Britannica defines the term Social realism as "Social realism as a trend in United States originating in 1930, toward treating themes of social protest – poverty, political corruptions, labor – management conflict in naturalistic manner."Realist movement came to its growth in the mid 19th century in France. It then spread to countries like England, Russia and USA.

Honore-de-Balzac, Gustave Flaubert from France, Even Targenev, Fyodr Dostoevsky from Russia, Charles Dickens, George Eliot from England and William Dean Howells from US pioneered the use of this art in their fictional works. They have committed to use realism or the social realism in their creativity. Industrial Revolution and World War II have laid immense impact in the field of literatures where the writers have depicted in their writings about the wide differentiation of the rich and the poor caused by the Industrial revolution and the dreadful and grimy situations caused by the World War II, thus creating consciousness among the masses.

The birth of social realism in Indian fiction can be found only in the 20th century through the works of Mulk Raj Anand, which later on widespreaded from the hands of Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar, Khuswant Singh, Sarad Chandra and Premchand. Mulk Raj Anand, Premchand and Sarat Chandra brought a new direction to Bengali, Hindi and English literature respectively. They have created a theme of poverty, famine, caste system and women's position in society and people's economic condition in their writings. They choose their writings in literature as a medium of the social awareness and social reforms.

The presence of Social realism can be seen in the Bodo novels too. Various aspects of social, cultural, political and economic movements and its gruesome impacts upon poverty, thoughts and mindsets of people in the Bodo society etc. are depicted in the Bodo novels. For instance, the use of social realism can be found in the works of Chitaranjan Mushahary, Monoranjan Lahary, Diganta Lawary, Katindra Swargiary, Nandeswar Dwimary, Rita Boro and many others. Through their writings, they attempted to create awareness among the Bodo society and tried to throw light on the ethnic identities of the Bodos.

Aims and Objectives of the study:

The main purpose of the study is to exhibit and explore the realism of the Bodo society as reflected in the selected novel – Dainee?. It is also aimed to study the social issues of the Bodo society as reflected in the novel.

Research Methodology:

The proposed topic has been studied by the analytical method. In this study, data has been collected from both primary and secondary sources. For the primary source data will be collected from the textbook and the secondary data will be collected from magazines, journals, dissertations, thesis etc.

Result and Discussion

One of the prominent writers of Bodo literature, Monoranjan Lahary was born in the year 1936 at Bamunkura village in Gossaigaon. He has a strong contribution in different genres of literature. From his student life onwards he was in touch with the art of writing and has contributed lot in various activities for the upliftment of the society. He has identified himself as one of the prominent writers through his various works on different genres like prose, poetry, essay, short stories, novels and plays. Among his seven novels, "Dainee ?" is his fifth novel form. He was conferred a 'Sahitya Aakademi' award for this work by the govt. of India in the year 2009. The novel can be regarded as a social novel for it represents the contemporary situation of witch hunting and their retributions in the society. Various evil practices like witch hunting, superstitious belief, educational backwardness in the society, economic problems, religious discrimination, suppression of the poor by the higher class and the position of women in the society are depicted in this novel. So it can be considered that the presence of social realism is clearly represented in the novel. The novel is divided into twelve parts. Through this research article, attempt has been made to analyze and interpret on the presence of social realism in the novel Dainee?.

Story of the novel:

The main protagonist of the novel Durmao is an Ojha (medicine woman). She is from Bethmari village, a small family comprising of herself, her son Ojor and her daughter Nijira. Durmao's husband Ramsreng passed away some years back. He was also a practitioner of Ojha (medicine man). After the death of her husband the family has fallen into a miserable condition. Therefore, Durmao has to take the place of her husband as a practitioner of Ojha. She had learnt from her husband the various types of mantras and the preparation of various herbal medicines which are made from herbs, leaves, peel of skin from trees and plants etc. She also had learnt about the type of medicines to be used for different types of diseases. As day after day she treats people with diseases with her herbal medicines, she finally took up her profession as an Ojha. But she could not continue her work for much long. There lived a rich contractor and businessman named Bilasu from Jharbari village who with his illegal trade of trees and logs identified himself as a rich man of the area. Bilasu began to suspect Durmao as a witch. And he without any clear proof, to his own suspicion, spread Durmao as a witch throughout the society and complained to the headman of the village. The reasons for Bilasu's suspicion of Durmao as a witch are – a) Transformed into a ghost Durmao would get on his bike and terrify him. b) A charming medicine given to Arangbir to fall in love with Nijira. c) An incantation spread at Bilasu's house resulting to the death of Bilasu's son.

The village folk due to lack of scientific enlightenment, educational backwardness and filled with blind and superstitious beliefs also believed in Bilasu's suspicion and fear arose in everyone's mind thinking Durmao to be a witch. She was held responsible for the death of village children, though they died of various diseases. In this way Durmao was alleged as a witch by the rich persons like Bilasu, Sandwb, Dilsrwn, Joysrwn and due to the strong allegations put up by the villagers, the poor widow was considered by everyone as a witch and without proper proof and justification, she was brutally murdered. This way the novel takes a tragic end.

Plot construction of the novel:

The novel "Dainee?" indicates two plots:- main plot and the sub plot. In the main plot the novelist has portrayed the contemporary pictures of superstitious belief among the Bodo society like witch hunting and brutal punishments and killings for those who are believed to be the practitioners of witchcraft. Since the ancient times, in the rural Bodo society, the poor class people become the main target as the practitioner of witchcraft and they are brutally tortured and are butchered without any proper proof or evidence by the privilege section of the society. So the novelist has created his novel taking these incidents in his plot. The main character of this novel, Durmao is the one who has to face the immolation due to such incident. The plot of the story is centered on the village named Bethmari, situated near the forested regions of Jharbari towards the north of Patgaon where backwardness prevails still in this world of scientific and technological development. The entire region is covered by these dark and gloomy elements like the lack of educational institutions, transport facilities, health care centers, electricity power supply, educational backwardness and superstitious beliefs etc.

The subplot is constructed through the love relation of Arangbir and Nijira. Their relationship also contributed in the development of the main plot. In the preface of the novel, the novelist writes: "The novel tells about gruesome and awful incidents of murder of men and women (mainly women) suspected of practicing witchcraft. The brutal and inhuman butcher of alleged witches, without any valid proofs, is a dangerous social menace. The love affair of the young man and the young girl was portrayed in this horror story to ease out the tragic intensity."

Social Realism reflected in the novel "Dainee?":

Belief in Witchcraft:-

Belief in the practice of witchcraft within the Bodo society is like an incurable disease. The gruesome and brutal murders of alleged witches without proper evidence and proof have been in practice since ancient times, which laid an immense impact on the society. In the Bodo society, incidents such as any person believed to be a witch being tortured and murdered brutally and thereafter his or her family members being harassed as well as their households burnt to ashes are

still in existence in the present time. This is because of the belief in superstition, illiteracy and unwillingness to accept the growing impetus of the scientific development. In this novel too, the novelist has represented the true realistic picture of brutal murders of alleged witches practiced within the Bodo society, which can be seen in the awful doom of the main character Durmao. Durmao is an Ojha (medicine woman) from Bethmari village. She, in order to look after her household after the demise of her husband took up her profession as Ojha. She used to collect roots, leaves and herbs from trees and plants and use as medicinal purpose to cure different diseases. In this way, within a short period she became a famous Ojha of her region. But because of her practice she has to face various difficulties and hardships. Society is blended by two types of people: good or positive minded and evil or negative minded individuals. A contractor from Jharbari by the name Bilasu suspected Durmao to be a witch. He was doing an illegal trade of wooden logs through which he identified himself as a rich man. Without any proper proof or evidence, Bilasu had widespread Durmao as the practitioner of witchcraft. The village folk whose mind is filled with the superstitious belief also believed in Bilasu's allegations and alleged Durmao responsible for the children's death in the village. In this way due to lack of proper judgement, Durmao was brutally tortured and murdered without proper evidence of being a witch. Also both her son and a daughter were also killed and their house was demolished. The picture of Durmao's torture can be seen in the words of Durmao as – "Hogar, hogar. Angkou hogar phapi. Angkou sitarnaia nwngha phap nangwn. Nwng mwrwnao twigwn. Angkou dainee sajainaia nwnghw Phapitiya. Aydwi, aydwi. Angni akai tainwikoubw dansobai. Raijwphwr gamiao mwrwn habgwn. Aywi aywi".

English rendition:

Held me free, you sinner. You will commit sin for killing me. You will be cursed to die. You are the sinner who alleged me of witchcraft. Aydwi Aydwi (yelled in pain). Both my hands are chopped. The village will be under cursed. Aywi, aywi (cried and yelled).

It is an awful and gruesome situation. It is true and realistic picture of Bodo society which has been in existence since past among Bodos. Apart from Bodos, these incidents can also be witnessed among the other tribals as well. The novelist has highlighted through the novel, the true and realistic picture of the village life: the narrow mindedness, false allegations, superstitious beliefs, illiteracy and their way of living, various gruesome experiences etc. are clearly portrayed. The novelist thus puts a satire on the Bodo society's condition and tries to create awareness in the society.

Class conflict:

The division of people into low, medium and high class can be seen in every corner of the world. Class conflict is also one of the themes of the realist writers. This issue is prevalent in the Bodo society too. The negligence and dominance of the lower and middle class by the upper class have been in existence since past. Class differentiation always exists through the medium of thoughts and actions, which is one of the social issues and problems. Lahary too, highlights the presence of class differentiation among the Bodo society. In the novel, Durmao, Mularam, Anaram and Jakhor Ojha were from lower and poor class of the society. They sometimes let the day go without having a food though they work for the whole day. The novelist thus described their conditions as –

Durmao's House: "Beraphwra jihong pahong jajwbbai. Ukhumao khamiphwra nujabai. Dorjaya thuri jigabni. Khamsalia haidudu, footseanw janai nonga. Bebw rugung ganai." (P – 81)

English rendition:

Durmao's house: "The walls are torn in several places. The roof rails can be easily seen. The door is made of wild grass. The verandah is short and stout, not even a foot wide. That is also eroded."

Jakhor ojha's House: "Dera gajrab no gongse. Ukhumni khamiphwra srao nujajwbbai. Beraia goblong jwbbai. Dabnwi dabtam jaigaiao goy kolthani thali gwglwibai. Barandayao aim gongthamjwng hwthenanwi wngkham songra khalamdwing. Lanthaya bwrai burijwng unduphayw. Ha hu bungwbla bithalo. Bebw phuase ni khaoklabse." (P- 33)

English rendition:

Jakhor Ojha's house: "The house is small, windowless and half broken. The roof rails can be seen clearly. The walls are torn. Betel leaves have been used to block two or three holes in the wall. Three beds have been used for the separation of the kitchen. Lantha sleeps with his old parents. Property consists of only the house plot which is only a few yards.

Through this explanation, the condition of the poor people of the Bodo village is well understood. Lahary has very clearly highlighted the realistic aspects of the life of the poor people, their means of livelihood and their hard labor to overcome various hardships and obstacles. He has also shown that the sacrificial death for suspicious witchcraft like Durmao comes from inferior section of the society. In the novel, it can be seen that Durmao, because of her poverty and low social status could not withstand the false allegations put against her by the people of the society.

On the other side, the high or rich class family is represented by the characters like Sandrwb and Bilasu. They are strong and dominant as their status is high. No one can question, blame or withstand against their evil deeds. The novelist has depicted the corruption and dominant attitude of the rich and high class people towards the people from poor and weaker section of the society through the characters Bilasu, Sandrwb and others who belong to the wealthy class. This is conveyed by the novelist through the words of Sandwb as – "Ojha Buri Durmaoni pisajw samokha gathwnao lrgw rajlainaikou nwngh khwnaiakhwi? Dinwi jabla gabwn janw mwna. Nikhaori buri thunthini ni phisajwkhouw haba khalamnw hasthaidwng nwnghsajlaia. Burikhou gamini mansiphra maba mabi sanw. Bilasua bikhou swithara, Bilasua bikhou dainee sanw. Sanwlo nonga bungbaibw. Bira habhwanwi bini pialakhou phwthwibai". (P -48)

English rendition:

Haven't you heard Old ojha, Durmao's daughter called to go to the bank of Samoka? Your son is trying to marry that old cunning woman's daughter. People from the village speak about her. Bilasu doesn't like her. He suspects her as a witch and he even told to people that she is a witch. She has also killed his son by incantation sent over his house.

Through these humiliating words spoken by Sandrwb, it can be seen that there is no value or worth of the lower class people in the eyes of upper class.

Movement and communal conflicts:

Movements and communal conflicts bring immense impact on a society. It brings fear in everyone's mind and creates gloomy situations at times. Every community holds various forms of movements to protect and preserve their indigenous rights and ethnic identities. So Bodos are also striving for separate state Bodoland, through which Bodos can identify themselves as indigenous tribe. But the movement has caused immense effect on the lives of the village people: destructions of various kinds of institutions; women are widowed losing their husbands and children; raped and face various kinds of torture. The novelist has represented all these realistic pictures and communal conflicts which create a violent and fierce situation have been highlighted as well through this novel. Communal conflicts like clash between two communities, burning and destruction of households and properties, destruction of public properties and institutions etc. has also been highlighted. Communal conflicts between the Bodos and the Adivasis has been clearly highlighted in this novel.

The writer narrated as – "Dasandi thasariaa jwbwr gudung. Mwnseaa Saothal – Bodo hungama arw gubun mwnseaa jaiga jaiga boro gami fwrao daina dainee butharnai duhum. National Highway nifrai Jharbari gamisim ji/jise milese jagwn. Sanao gongfa gongnwi scooter, motor cycle, cycle arw jeep gari kharw. San habba thai be lamajwng sase bw mansi thabaya."(P -2)

English rendition:

The writer narrated as – "The situation is very intense as of now. One is Bodo – Adivasi uproar and the other is the hunting and murdering of witches in different Bodo villages. The distance from the National Highway to Jharbari will be 10/11 miles. A few vehicles like scooters, bikes,

bicycles and jeeps ply during the day and when the sun sets and darkness prevails not a single soul can be seen through this road."

Lack of education:

Education shows the way of knowledge and wisdom to man. It gives man strength to think and reflect deeply on what is good and evil. Since the past, Bodo Society is lacking behind in the field of education and till today it is not developed as should be. Negligence of the value of education and economic problems are the factors leading the Bodos behind in the field of education. Belief in Superstitions and witch hunting occupy a place mostly in societies lacking in education. Most of the villages depicted in the novel are without the system of education. Because of the lack of education and proper judgment, the innocent Durmao has been put to false allegations as witch and is brutally murdered. An example of judgement put forward by the village headman to the villagers goes as - "Raijwphwr, Durmaoa dainee nongwu na nonga ang salikhou najwbbai. Nwngswr phwrman somet Durmaoni hengthaywi bungbai. Durmaoa mabaidi saja mwnthaogwu bikhoubw bungbai. Angni rajitkhou nwngswr khwnasongdw. Angni rajita benw Durmaoa dainee. Bikhou bugli bugla khalamnanwi thwihang borobhang khalamnanwi gwthangwi phobnangwu. Bini phisa sanwikhoubw butharnanwi bimajwng phobphanangwu". (P – 88)

English rendition:

People, I have analysed whether Durmao is a witch or not. You have accused Durmao as a witch and you have also decided about the punishment. Here, now I am giving you my allegations and I tell you that Durmao is a witch and she should be beaten and buried alive. Her son and daughter also should be killed and buried along with their mother.

This conversation or the allegations put forward by the village headman shows the narrow minded thoughts and lack of proper judgment and this is because of the lack of education.

Religious issues:

Every community has got its own firm religion. Bodos' base religion is "Bathou" religion. The Bodos have been practicing this religion since time immemorial. But with the passage of time, there can be seen the emergence of Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and many others among the Bodos. Many Bodos embrace these religions leaving behind their own firm religion and as a result there can be seen the feeling of hatred, jealousy and indifference etc. among the Bodos. In the novel, the novelist has depicted the religious conversions, ill- feeling, hatred and jealousy, feeling of indifference etc. which are the true realistic pictures of the Bodo society. Durmao's family belongs to Bathou religion on the other hand Bilasu and Sandwb family are of strong Christian faith for which the marriage of Durmao's daughter Nijira to Arangbir is not possible. Moreover, the religious conversion is represented through the characters - John, Bilasu and Sandrwb. This has been narrated by the novelist as - "Noao Swupwipinnanwi Bilasua bida jwng rajilaibai birakou hwkarnw ojha tinlangnai mote garja hwnw. Bidaia gamini sase bwraijwng Bilasukou suburun lanw tinbai. Biyw garja puja hwgra douri bwraini noao tangbai. Bini munga khristan Dhwrwm lanaini unao Douri bwraini bodolwi John Bsumatary jayw. Biyw jwbwd Ghorami Bathou sibirimwn. Da biyw Ghora Khristan."

English rendition:

On reaching home, Bilasu discussed with his brother about the rituals to be performed as suggested by Ojha to remove the incantation. His Brother told him to contact an old man from the village. So he went to an old priest who performs the rituals. The old man's name was changed from Dhouri bwrai to John Basumatary after he was converted to Christianity. The old man was a firm and strong believer of Bathou religion but now he is a Strong Christian.

These lines show that Bodos, along with religious conversion, also have adopted the culture, ideologies and names of other religion or communities. For example, an old man whose was called Dhouri Bwrai changed his name to John Basumatary after his conversion to Christianity from

Bathou religion. In this way, the novelist has depicted in his novel, the social realism of the Bodo society.

Economic conditions:

Economic condition is highly necessary for the growth and development of a community. Due to lack of proper education, the economic condition of people in the Bodo society is downtrodden. Due to lack of proper and quality education, people are neither able to hold jobs nor are they able to set up well established business which leads to poor economic conditions. The novel also presents the poor economic conditions of the society. For which Durmao, Jakhor, Mularam and Anaram have to take up the profession of Ojha (medicine man) and depend also on collecting firewood from the forest and sell them in order to look after their families. Young men like Ojhor have to spend their life living in someone's house as housemaids and servants. Young students like Nijira have to leave her study due to poor economic condition. This is the true and real aspects of the Bodo society.

Violence against women:

The Bodo society is a patriarchal society. In a patriarchal society, women are dominated by men and are always considered inferior to their male counterpart. In human society as a whole, women also have the same and equal rights to that of men. The whole world has been experiencing the subjugation, brutal rape and murder and various forms of atrocities applied upon women. These are the problems and issues of the society, which the women are still not freed from and this brought the ideology of Feminism. The novel presents the picture of subjugation and atrocities on women through the main protagonist of the novel, Durmao. Durmao is a poor widow but brave and courageous woman. She has struggled against her battle of life. She chooses her way of livelihood by being an Ojha. But the jealousy and greed of the society led people's envious eye on Durmao, which became an obstacle for her growth and development. The feeling of envy and jealousy is the nature of human being and it is through this that Durmao is alleged as a witch and has been buried alive. It is because that Durmao was a poor widow, the privileged persons of the village like Bilasu, Sandrbw and others got the best opportunity to put false allegations against her. Generally this is the way how poor widows have to meet their doom because they cannot withstand against the false allegations bestowed upon them as witches by the wealthy and privileged persons of the society. Their voice or claims as innocents are not listened or are not given importance and are not valued by the society for they are poor and helpless. In the novel, the claim for her innocence is not valued and accepted by the society. No one listened to her voice. Her words go as – "Nwngsini khwmsi phwthainai khai, angkhou nanan banan bungnanwi dai phundernanwi angkhou dainee sajinw najatharbai. Ang swithwni thakhai thwinw giya. Ang dainee nonga. Angni nokhora nikhaori. Bwrai thwinanwi ar gajrisin jabai. Epha enwi bej bejali khalamnanwi bwthise kunurukum jadwng. Akhonba rosa nangdwng. Ang hagoumani rajjwni upokar khalamdwnge bema ar swkhananwi. Nwngswr bungdwng angni bar nangblanw lwjmayw, sajayw, khise gwbase jayw. Bibdi jaywmwnbla ang jainao jainao thangdwng angni bar nangnanwi murun thwijwbsigoumwn. Dhik nwngswrni sannai, Dhik nwngswrni asar bisar. Dhik Boro mahari." (p-82)

English rendition:

Because of your belief in superstition, you have put false allegations against me and tried to accuse me of being a witch. For the cause of truth I am not afraid to die. I am not a witch. My family is poor and after the death of my husband it has been to worse. I have managed from hand to mouth with my small earnings. Sometimes we have to sleep with an empty stomach. I have done as much as I can for the village by helping the people to recover from their diseases. I have done as much as and fall into different diseases wherever I go. If it is so, whosever house I have visited till now, they would have by now completely finished facing their death. See your thoughts and feelings. See your customary laws. See Bodo Community.

Through this conversation it is clear how a poor widow was dominated and suppressed by the society and how she had to struggle throughout her life. The novelist has presented her status in the society. So the presence of feminism can be felt in this novel.

Apart from these themes, the Bodo society's social conditions, culture, folk belief, customs, humanism etc. are depicted in the novel. The novelist has conveyed realistically these themes through characters, dialogue and through his use of narratives.

Conclusion

Through this discussion, it can be viewed that the novel "Dainee?" is a social novel. The novelist has created it with different themes based on Bodo society's belief in witchcraft, superstitious belief, the issues on religion, economics and education, class conflict, violence against women, humanism, social condition, culture etc. The novel presents the realistic picture of Bodo rural society and their thoughts and issues. Moreover to preserve and safeguard its own language, literature, culture, religion and identity, the movement for separate state Bodoland and its gruesome impact on the society is clearly represented in the novel as the novel is an art through which one can express his thoughts and feelings and his cultural habits and practices. His character portrayal and conversations are taken from the common people through whom he has vividly portrayed the emotions and desires of the common people. His philosophy to bring awareness in the Bodo community is clearly represented in the novel. This fictional work depicts the extreme level of suffering of the main protagonist without any crime and own fault. His novels explore the various subject matter of the social truth. After the analysis, it reveals that "Dainee?" is a realistic presentation of the moral, cultural chaos and social condition of the Bodo society. Lahary is a famous social novelist who is concerned with exposing the values and process of society. His novels are the greatest contributions to the Bodo society but it also spread awareness among the people who are ignorant of the consequences of social evils and the related history.

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NATIONAL SEMINAR

on

SOCIOLOGY IN LITERATURE: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVE



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