

## CHAPTER 3

### SOCIAL ISSUES IN SELECTED BODO NOVELS

#### 3.1 Social Issues:

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 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.”<sup>1</sup> Social issues are deeply rooted in a particular society, in the understanding of an individual or a group of people. According to Shankar Rao, “Social problems are not automatic or accidental developments or happening, but they emerge from different deep seated sources. Some problem emerges at the individual level which poverty, unemployment and such other problems are rooted in economic condition. Specific cultural condition may often trigger problems like widow harassment, prostitution, crime, juvenile delinquency.”<sup>2</sup> From the above definitions it can be said that the social issues affects a huge number of people in the society and they may be sometimes individual, economical and cultural. Social problems are complex and multidimensional. 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. Though India is a fast developing country it has lots of regional, cultural, linguistics and religious diversities. These diversities are also

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<sup>1</sup> Ahuja, Ram. *Social problems in India*. p-1

<sup>2</sup> Rao, CN Shankar. *Indian Social problems a Sociological perspective*. p-1

reflected in each social problem. One of the ways to understand these kinds of social issues and to bring awareness and handle them is through literature. One of the most effective ways to delve into and address different kinds of social issues is literature. In the narratives thematic background stories, poems, plays and other kinds of fictional media are often embodied with some social and cultural concerns. 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.

### 3.1.1 Sanmwkhangari Lamajwng:

Sanmwkhangari Lamajwng is a social novel by Katindra Swargiary. In the novel he depicts the lifestyle of the Bodo villages and at the same time highlights the movement for a separate state by the Bodo in which a lot of innocent people had to lose their lives. Along with this a lot of other issues of the Bodos like socio – economic, political, language, culture etc. are highlighted. In other words, the movement takes place on grounds of political perspectives.

In the novel, the novelist highlights the issues faced by the people in the Bodo community as a result of the movement which was made to protect their language, literature, culture, identity and rights. Since the beginning of the novel the author beautifully presents the beauty of the nature and showcases the lifestyle, culture, beliefs, customs, festivals and forms of entertainment of the rural villagers in a very beautiful way through the local village boys like Gwmsar, Saikhong and others. In other words the ethnicity of the Bodos is seen here. Besides these it includes the hunger, thirst, wins, losses, sufferings and sacrifices of the Bodos. Thus the novelist presents the social movement in the form of a social issue. During this movement a lot of innocent Bodo youths had to suffer and also lose their lives in the hands of the police and military forces and had to flee their houses and join militant/extremist groups. In the novel it is highlighted through the protagonist of the novel Saikhong.

The social movement is not only a social issue but also a national issue as it has a huge impact upon the entire Bodo community. It is because of this movement a lot of Bodo people had to lose their lives, flees form their homes, houses and properties burned and devastated, women and girls were raped etc. As a matter of fact the entire Bodo community had to lead a fearful life under an intense and frightening environment. A social movement is an organized effort that is made to bring changes in the society, political affairs or economic affairs by

campaigning, protesting or advocating. A social movement is a collaborative action by the mass people who experience similar ideas and goals in reaction to social or economic inequality or political oppression. It can take many forms from civil rights, environmental protection, gender equality and women suppression. The new unprejudiced intellectuals conditions which the British rule set against the Bodos made them develop a sense of self respect, identity awareness of their society and soon they began to advocate their community identity by assessing and reforming their lost history, culture, tradition, religion, language, and customs. The Bodos began this movement starting with the Brahma Dharma religion followed by a series of other movements like movement for language, education, economic stability and political autonomy, which unfortunately turned violent in the later periods of time which had a tremendous impact upon the society.

The novel is based upon the nearby villages of Salbari and Simligui village. In that village the young boys like Gwmsar, Saikhong, Gwmbwr, Swmkhang, Ramwnda, Somaishri, Baleng and others resides. Saikhong and Gwmsar are close childhood friends. They go to the same school together, have fun, help their parents together in the fields and pass their childhood joyfully. When they passed their primary school education and go to Salbari High School and enrol themselves in Class V, the Roman Script issue of the Bodos starts. But Gwmsar and Saikhong both do not know what Roman Script is. The Roman Script movement started in 1974 under the leadership of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha (BSS).

As the Assam Government declared the Assamese language as the official language of Assam in 1960, the Tribals, especially the Bodos were strongly offended by the government decision which hurt the very emotions of the Tribals. With the passage of time the Bodos became more responsive their socio – cultural prominence and wanted to raise their status for which restoring the Bodo language became much necessary as it will ultimately unite them, bring all round development and fulfil their ambitions. Thus under the leadership and endeavour of the BSS in 1963 the Bodo language was formally and officially made the medium of instruction in the primary schools. According to Dr. Binay Kumar Brahma, “Since the introduction of the Bodo language as the medium of instruction in Primary school the use of suitable script for Bodo language had appeared as a major organizational issue before the All Bodo Sahitya Sabha.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Brahma, Dr. Binoy Kumar. *Social Mobility: From Tribalism to Indianism: The Bodos: The Aboriginal People of Eastern India*. P-253

From this narrative it can be known that the Bodos, even though being the largest ethnic group in the plains of Assam, did not have a alphabet or script of their own to express their language for which a proper script has to be selected very soon and to solve this issue the Bodos initially selected the Roman script for their Bodo language. This selection of a particular script gave rise to a movement by the Bodos particularly the BSS against the State Government. When the movement reached its peak the State Government referred the script issue to the Central Government. According to Dr. Binoy Kumar Brahma, “The Government of Assam, guided by high caste Assamese Hindu bureaucrats had already become much cautious on the growing Bodo nationality movement and took it as a thread to the existence of Assamese nationality, and always charge for an opportunity to put stumbling block on the way to further development of Bodo community.”<sup>4</sup>

Thus the BSS faced by different circumstances and also upon the suggestion of the Office of the Prime Minister of India and in recommendation of the State Government of Assam, finally had to accept the Devanagri Script instead of the much anticipated Roman Script to represent the Bodo language.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> September, 1974, the Bodo people from Gobardhana, Khariya Bijni and Howli Mouza demonstrated a rally in Barpeta Road. When they went to peacefully interrupt the ongoing classes in the Sajani Kanta High School of Barpeta road, Siboro from Gobardhana area’s Kalapani Asrabari and Amla Boro from Khariya Bijni mouza area’s Helasiguri village have to lose their lives upon the rifle firing of the CRPF. Again on the other side, the young boys and girls, students, men and women from Koklabari, Chapaguri and Manikpur mouza who were demonstrating a rally in the Block Office of Jalahghat were brutally battered by the haters of the Bodo community. The active participators of the movement were arrested, jailed and severely punished; the leaders are searched in their homes, terrorized the Bodo villages, many Bodo women were raped and the young men blinded and crippled by the police and CRPF. Dhubri, Kokrajhar, Rongiya, Tangla, Udalguri, Tezpur, Lakhimpur, Karbi Anglong wherever there were Bodo people are terrorized and punished brutally for which the participators and leaders of the movement had to hide themselves in other villages. In this movement beside Siboro and Amla, many others like Haitharam Basumatary, Bisturam Basumatary, Dinanath Boro, Kanteswar Goyari, Malsing

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<sup>4</sup> Brahma, Dr. Binoy Kumar. *Social Mobility: From Tribalism to Indianism: The Bodos: The Aboriginal People of Eastern India*. P-253

Goyari, Budhbar Boro, Khonsai Boro, Paniram Dwimary, Somabr Moshahary, Angelis Baglary, Nidhiram Basumatary, Narayan Narzary arw Ajendra Basumatary are martyred. In other words during this movement the Bodo people had to undergo a lot of suffering but still they could not achieve the Roman Script as per their demand. This is seen as a serious social issue for the Bodos. The novelist rather indirectly highlights Gwmsar and Saikhong's involvement in the movement through descriptive manner.

Along with the other student of Salbari High School, Gwmsar, Saikhong and Gwmbwr also take part in the Script Issue movement.

“मा राव – बर’ राव, जौनो नांगौ – रमान हांखो, रमान हांखो मोनाब्ला जौ गोजोना ।”<sup>5</sup>

English rendering -

What language – Bodo language; we want Roman Script; we will not rest until we achieve Roman Script.

They use the above given slogan and marches towards the DC office and submits the memorandum in the hands of the SDC for the use of Roman Script in Bodo language and literature.

Gwmsar and Saikhong are close friends and grow into adulthood with the passage of time. Their other friends leave their studies and get into agricultural work to support their families but Gwmsar and Saikhong continues their studies. In the Metriculation exams Gwmsar shines bright with good marks and goes to Cotton College taking Science stream, Saikhong on the other hand somehow passes the exams and has to enrol himself in the nearby college, thus they are separated. Saikhong and Somaishri's childhood friendship blooms into love. Since the time of student Saikhong dearly loves his culture, language and the Bodo literature, for which he often attends the meetings and conferences. He thus attends the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference of the BSS on 9<sup>th</sup> April, 1981 which was held in Dudhnoi, Goalpara district. But the attendance in this meeting brings trouble for Saikhong. Dersung from Saikhong's village is a drunkard who intends to marry Mainao along with her family she also does not approve of him. So to take revenge Dersung accuses both Saikhong and Mainao and spreads the rumour in the village that they have eloped to stay in a hotel in Bongaigaon as husband and wife when they went to attend the meeting and demands a village court to defame them. In

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<sup>5</sup> Swargiary, Katindra. *Sanmwkhangari Lamajwng*.

accordance to the complaint by Dersung, a village court is called to enquire the matter and it is thus proved that both Saikhong and Mainao are innocent. Somaishri also rejects the accusations by Dersung as she does not suspect and completely believes in the man she loves, Saikhong.

With the passage of time Saikhong's best friend Gwmsar completes his MBBS degree. In the meantime the Bodos start a mass revolution in demand for a separate state to protect their language, literature, culture and rights for which an intense heated environment is thus created in the Bodo villages. So his mother does not want her son staying the village because of the repercussions he might face.

The North East region of India is inhabited by different ethnic groups, tribal and non-tribal and multi-lingual states. Thus the largest ethnic group of the plains, the Bodos and other ethnic groups of Assam came to assert that proclaim that they are different people from the mainstream Assamese population with their own and distinctive language, culture, traditions, customs and religion and hence uphold their right for political autonomy. The hunt for a definite identity and ethnicity came as interference among the Bodos and the other Plain Tribal groups of Assam. Thus, out of socio-economic and political disregard and the discrepancies of the state administration they formed a group called the Plains Tribals Council of Assam (PTCA) in 1987 to protect their language and culture and to receive due rights like the other tribals of India. They firmly demanded for an autonomous region which will be called 'Udayachal', meant only for the plain tribals of Assam. During this movement a lot of Bodo and other tribal youths had to shed their blood and lose their lives in the hands of the police forces. With the passage of time the political scenario underwent a lot of constitutional changes and ideological differences among the intellectuals leading to a split of the PTCA into two – PTCA and PTCA (Progressive). When the PTCA failed to achieve the much anticipated Udayachal, the ABSU launched a movement for a separate state Bodoland under the leadership of Upendra Nath Brahma from 1988 onwards. The movement saw tremendous support from the Bodo masses in the form of massive public rallies, meetings and seminars. During this movement and lot of Bodos had to shed their blood, lose their lives, women were brutally raped by the police and CRPF forces, exploited by the other communities, became both hopeless and helpless, had to flee from their homes and thus many joined the armed militant groups.

The protagonist of the novel Saikhong is also victimised in the similar manner. During the movement whether one participates in the movement or not, guilty or innocent, in the eyes of the government police forces all the students were considered to be guilty and extremist and whomever these police forces meets are arrested and brutally punished, accused and victimised for which the students and young men of the Bodo community are unable to stay at home peacefully. Saikhong dreams of leading a happy family by marrying Somaishri but the constant visits and raids by the police forces always makes him flee and stay away from home. It becomes evident through Saikhong and Gwmsar's conversation –

“: माथो बुंभावनो गोमसार । सोरगिदिं माथो खोमसिआवनो खोमसि । जेरावबो गोजोना जाबाय आंनि गोसोआ ।  
न'आवबो गोजोनै थाथेरनो हाला । मा एफा गेदेर दाय मावखोथाइ आडो, सानफ्रोमबो नडाब्लाबो हाबथा मोनसेनि  
गेजेराव खननै खनथाम नागिरकैयो आंखौ रौनियाफोरा । माबामोनसेसो फिसा फिसौ साख्रिआव उरसोथावना थानानै  
गोजोननि उनदै नखर खुंनयानो आंनि जिउनि थांखि । नाथाय...!”

: नाथाय आरोबाव मा सायखं ?

: बेबादियै दाय गैया, फोदोर गैया माबोरै नागिरजाबाय थानो गोमसार ? <sup>6</sup>

English rendering –

: What to say Gwmsar, my life is surrounded by darkness. I don't find peace anymore. I cannot stay peacefully at home too. I feel what crime have I committed? Why do the police come searching for me two three times a week? I just want to do a small job and lead a small and a happy family. But...!

: But what else Saikhong?

: How long will I be victimized and flee from home without committing any crime?

Thus the above conversation reveals that even though Saikhong is innocent and has not committed any crime the police forces often come looking for him or raids his house for which he has to always flee from home. These circumstances happening in his life deeply saddens Saikhong but he remains helpless. He also cannot surrender because he knows very well that if he does so he will be framed, victimized and might even be encountered by the police forces. He expresses his ordeal as –

“थानायाव गावखौ गथायहैनाया जागोन मोसानि खुगायाव गावनो-गाव बारस्रोमनानै लानाय बाश्रासो । मानोना, दायो  
रावखौबो फोथायजाया । नों खोनायाखै होमबा, दरं जिलानी कालायगावाआव गोजौ फराइसालिनि सासे फराइसाखौ

<sup>6</sup> Swargiary, Katindra. *Sanmwkhangari Lamajwng*. p-164

थानायावनो खुगानि रावजों बुंफोरनो हायि उदखार खालामनानै सिथारनायखौ । आं थानायाव गावखौ गथायहैब्ला मा जागोन नों मिथिबाय गोमसार, जाय बाश्राफोरनि आं जेबोखौनो मिथिमारा बेफेरखौ सोडै सोडै आंखौ साजा होनानै बुथारगोन बिसोर । बिजिरनाय गैया ।”<sup>7</sup>

English rendering –

Surrendering myself will be like standing in front of a hungry tiger because now-a-days you can't believe anyone. Have you not heard about the incident of Kalaigaon from Darrang district where a student from a high school is accused and encountered inside a police station. If I surrender myself to the police do you know what will happen to me Gwmsar, they will accuse me of something I don't know at all and punish me and even murder me.

The above narratives of Saikhong from the novel make it evident how the Bodo students were victimized and how they become helpless, stop their studies and flee from their home. From this point of view the character Bigrai from Tiren Boro's novel Bigrai and Dwisrai is comparable to Saikhong's character where Bigrai is depicted as most wanted by the police and is always on the hunt. When the movement began to gain its momentum the environment and circumstances in the Bodo village too began to get more and more intense and heated. In order to stop the movement and bring law and order the police and military are deployed and they began to arrest and batter and put in jail whomever they find. Finding no other means and in order to protect the rights of the Bodo community the Bodo youths and students take up arms and began to join militant groups and organization. The protagonist of the novel Saikhong comes across similar circumstances where he has to flee and stays away from home since 1989. When he decides to join the militant group he discloses this to Mainao where she also decides to join him. It becomes evident through their conversation –

“: माइनाव, आं बाश्राखौ थि खालामबाय । दिनैनो थानोसैबो आं ।

: आदा, आंबो नोंजों थंफागोन आदा ।

: माइनाव, नों गोसोखौ हमथा । नों नखरखौ गारनानै थंबोला बे नखरनि बयबो दुखु-जारलायाव गोग्लैनांगोन । ...

माइअनाव, नों फाग्लि बोरनो नाडा । जों हौवा हारिआ जेरावबो गिदिं-गिदा ओंखाम खबसेखौ बुथुमनानै जाबो हागोन ।

गुबुन फारसेथिडै नों हिन्जाव हारि । दुखु-जाल्हा सहायनो हाँआय नडा । माइनाव, बे लामाया जोबोर खैफोर गोनां आरो

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<sup>7</sup> Swargiary, Katindra. *Sanmwkhangari Lamajwng*. P-164

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. P-176

English rendering –

: Mainao, I have decided on the matter, I will go today itself.

: Brother, I will also accompany you.

: Mainao, hold your heart. If you leave the house everyone will be concerned and fall in trouble. Don't be crazy Mainao. We the men folk can roam around and somehow get a mouthful of food. But you are a girl. You will not be able to tolerate the circumstances. This path is very difficult and...

As a matter of fact, Saikhong leaves his home and also his beloved Somaishri and once he flees from home he does not look back and return after which Somaishri becomes like crazy engrossed in his memory and thoughts and deeply looks forward to his coming back home to her and fulfil their lost dream. Seeing her condition Mainao too looks forward for his return and searches him in different meetings that she attends but there's no shadow of Saikhong.

On the other side, Gwmsar completes his MBBS degree and opens a private nursing home in Salbari. On the auspicious day of the wedding of Gwmsar and Haina, he suddenly disappears from the wedding venue and is now where to be found. The members of the family are in turmoil and the bride's family members also come to collect more information of the situation. But Gwmsar is in his nursing home treating his childhood friend as he lays unconscious with two bullets on his body. He gives his best efforts to operate on his body and remove the bullet. He becomes so engrossed in saving his best friend that he forgot even his own marriage. When Haina comes to know that Gwmsar has not yet arrived and out of despair she drinks poison to kill herself. Even after successfully operating on his friend and saving him, Gwmsar is heartbroken upon seeing the condition of Haina and proceeds towards the medical. On the way he tells Somaishri the ordeal of Saikhong after which she becomes crazy and runs towards Saikhong to see him. She weeps deeply and talks to him –

“आय’ आंनि जिउनि अनसेमा सायखं, नों गमामायैनो जोबोर दुखुथिया । नों दुखारु । नों नोंनि जिउआव गोजोननि मोखां नुमारनंलिया नामा ! आय’ आंनि जिउनि अनसेमा, नों आंखौ नोंनि गुवार बिखायाव खनसे बजबना लानानै आंनो मोजोमसे अननाइ होलानोबो सम मोना दा ?? आय’ अनसेमा आंनि...।”<sup>9</sup>

English rendering –

Oh my dear love Saikhong, you are truly unlucky. Will you ever see peace in your life! Oh my dear love, don't you have even a little time to hug me and give a little of

<sup>9</sup> Swargiary, Katindra. *Sanmwkhangari Lamajwng*.

your life? Oh my love...

Somaishri's expression itself signifies that Saikhong's life is truly unlucky where he does not find any peace and has to struggle for the sake of his community. In fact, a lot of young men and students of the Bodo community like Saikhong had to bear a lot of torture and sufferings and had to flee from their homes, village, parents and dear ones. Thus the circumstances of the Bodos are really saddening and based upon which the novelist has curved this novel to depict the struggle and sacrifices of the people in the Bodo community in order to protect their Ethnic identity or Ethnicity. It is highlighted as a grave social issue of the Bodo community which has not only affected one or two persons or families, but the entire community as a whole. The prime reason behind all these circumstances is political contradictions and political power.

It is indeed a precious novel of the Bodo literature as it highlights the revolutionary movement of the Bodos demanding for a separate state and also about the young men who sacrifices their life during this movement. The author presents the real life situation and social issues of the Bodo people and their struggle for identity and rights. He highlights the economical, social and political issues of the Bodo people which gives rise to social organizations. Through the novel the author indicates how the different militant groups come into being during that time period. He also presents on how the Bodo people struggles to get the Roman script for the Bodo language; the formation of Bodo Sahitya Sabha and their various activities conducted to protect and revive the Bodo language and literature.

### 3.1.2 Khwmsinifrai Swrangthing:

The novel Khwmsinifrai Swrangthing authored by Katindra Swargiary is social novel which based upon communal violence. In this novel the communal violence between the Bodos and the Muslims is clearly illustrated. This incident occurred in the Barpeta district during the last decade. The author highlights a true picture of this incident through this novel in which the people loses their humanity and many people lost their lives in the society. Beside this the fear of losing one's society, religion and identity of their culture is seen in this novel. At the same time pictures of Bodoland movement is also seen in this novel.

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 fury 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.”<sup>10</sup> 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.

When a close examination was done it has been found that communal violence carries certain features such as:

- i) Communal riots are more politically motivated than fuelled by religion.
- ii) Besides political interests economic interest too plays a vigorous part in fermenting communal clashes.
- iii) Communal riots seem to be more common in north India than in South and East India.
- iv) The probability of recurrence of communal riots in a town where communal riots have already taken place once or twice is stronger than in a town in which the riots have never occurred.
- v) Most communal riots take place on the occasion of religious festival.
- vi) The use of deadly weapons in the riots is on the ascendency.<sup>11</sup>

In the novel *Khumsinifrai Swrangthing*, the concept communal violence has taken its place as its storyline because of a few rivals in the society who are quite selfish just after fulfilling

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<sup>10</sup> Ahuja, Ram. *Social Problems in India*. p-155

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*. p-164

their needs. It is because of these kinds of people that the other members of the society faces hurdles in their daily life and peaceful villages are destroyed.

Communal violence starts in the novel *Khwmsinifrai Swrangthing* when the protagonist Rakheb keeps a slain cow's head in Beldang Gambra's well of Simligudi village. Following this incident suddenly the people in the Bodo community feels awareness about protecting against the dangers arising their religion. This incident is a religious conflict and has created suspicion, conflicts and hatred among the Bodo and the Muslim people. The Bodo people put great value to their cattle and they will never slay any cattle and discard its head in anyone's well. This is illustrated in the fifth chapter of the novel and is known through Moulobi Rafiq Ahmed's words –

“दाया जॉनिसोरबा सासेनिनो जानांगौ । मानोना रावबो बर' सुबुआ गाव हारिनि धोरोम बेरेखा खामानि मानो हाया । बाश्राया जाबाय गोथां एबा गोथे जिखिआनो जायार्थो मानो बर'आ मोसौनि खर' दानसनो हाया ।”<sup>12</sup>

English rendering –

The culprit is someone amongst us because no individual of the Bodo society will betray his own religion. The point is whether dead or alive the Bodos will not slay any cow/cattle.

Following this incident Menda, the village teacher says that the culprit of the incident is from the Muslim community and is seen through his words –

“गोदो गोदायनिफ्रायनो जॉनि हारिनि दोहोरोमआव आखाइ होबोदों बिसोरो । बिसोरनि बेबादि उदखारखौ सहायनो हायिआवनो जॉनि हारिनि गोबांआ गाव-गावनि न' गामि, जोनोम जायगाफोरखौ नागारनानै दैयां, रेंमा, मिमां गहपुर, सिलाफोथार बाइदि बाइदि गुबुन जायगाफोरसिम खारलांदोमोन दैयां रेंमायाव नागाफोरजों दानथारजादोंमोन । दाबो बे रोखोमसे सोलोजोंनो जॉनि हारिनि सायाव उदखार जोंखौ जायगा नागिरनानै खारहोनो खैसार खालामबाय थायो बिसोरा।”<sup>13</sup>

English rendering –

They have been disturbing our religion since the ancient times. Unable to tolerate their violent behaviour many people from our society has to leave their houses and village to distant places like Diang, Rengma, Mengma, Gohpur, Silafwthar etc. and were also tortured by the Nagas in Diwang and Rengma. Again they are starting to create that same type of rampage to chase us away from our motherland.

<sup>12</sup> Swargiary, Katindra. *Khwmsinifrai Swrangthing*. p-37

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. p-23

This incident has given rise to an intense situation between the Bodo and the Muslim community where the Bodo people catches the Muslim people coming to the market to thrash them and destroy their shops for which not a single Muslim person could go to the market. According to the storyline, in 1979 during the Assam Movement under the leadership of All Assam Students Union even though a resolution and passed to deport away illegal immigrant from other communities from Assam, in the day to day happenings such communal hatred was not seen among the Bodos and the Muslims at that time. Similarly in 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 1987 under the leadership of All Bodo Students Union the Bodoland movement started in order to create a separate state and accordingly on the 20<sup>th</sup> February, 1993 the Bodoland Autonomous Council came to be formed. Even though this social movement started since a long time there was no communal hatred seen between the Bodos and the Muslims. But the hatred and communal violence started to appear amongst the society members when a few rivals started creating misunderstandings amongst themselves.

In every society both good thinkers and bad thinkers are found. The good thinkers are the social builders who always look on the positive aspects and try to build and develop a healthy society while the other one always looks on the negative aspects and harming the members in the society. In the novel this becomes clear through the discussion and debate when the members of both the communities gather for a meeting upon the recent incidents. During this meeting many members of both the communities becomes eager for a clash. But Beldang Gambra's son Bilifang thinks that one problem paves the way for another. He says that the crime has been committed by someone from both the community and punishing the entire community for the crime committed by person will be a mistake because if there arises a clash amongst themselves then both the members of the community will have to suffer, lose their life and properties etc. so he requests the members of both the communities to solve the problem peacefully. So by the greater interests and wellbeing of both the communities the situation becomes peaceful again.

Similarly after a year another similar incident occurs where this time a pig's head is found inside the Masjid which angers the Muslim people and they began to attack the Bodo people. They chase away the Bodo villagers cultivating near their villages. The Bodo people respond to this by retaliating and by thrashing and attacking any Muslim people they see on the road.

The main culprit involved in this incident is Kasem Ali, Gofur Ali Khan and Rakheb. Rakheb

belongs to Ouwabari village. He involves himself in the Bodoland movement and has to discontinue his studies for which fails to get a job. In order to overcome his grief he takes to drinking and gambling and to continue these habits he needs money regularly and to get easy money he does certain activities contrary to his religion and culture. Kasem Ali wants to marry Gofur Ali Khan's daughter Sahjadi. But on the other side Sahjadi falls in love with Beldang Gambra's son Bilifang of Thajouguri village. So in order to break their relationship Gofur Ali Khan plans to create communal tensions between the communities. In this matter Kasem Ali greatly helps Gofur Ali Khan mainly for two reasons. Firstly, he does not want to marry off his daughter Sahjadi to other religion and secondly, he also plans to marry for the third time and here Rakheb is manipulated for fulfilling their motives. In this regard Swarna Prabha Chainary says –

“बेखौ नायोब्ला नुयो, मोनै हारिखौ हाथियार महै लानानै गफुर आलि खान, कासेम आलि खान राखेब बयबो गावबागावनि थांखिखौ होसोदों बेसिम सहैनो नारानाथा नाजादों।”<sup>14</sup>

English rendering –

It is thus observed that Gofur Ali Khan, Kasem Ali Khan and Rakheb are using the two communities to fulfil their desires anyhow.

Even though there seems to be no clash and communal tensions between communities even after placing a cow's head in the well and a pig's head in their Masjid, Kasem Ali again makes another plan. This time he murders Rwndao and which he creates misunderstandings between the youth of his own community. This becomes clear through Gofur Ali Khan's words in the novel –

“दायो जौनि मावनांगौ खामानिया जाबाय बर'फोरनि हेंथायै जौनि हारिनि साफ्रोमबो सुबुंनि गोसोआव अर सुना होनो नाजानाय।”<sup>15</sup>

English rendering –

Now our prime job is to create fake narratives and bring misunderstanding against the Bodo community among the youth of our community.

In the words of Ram Ahuja, “In communal violence the involvement of people is mobilized against another community. The movements here are unpredictable, uncheckable and carry an emotional theory and violent expression which take the form of rioting.”<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Chainary, S P. *Boro Solomani Bizirnai*. p-100

<sup>15</sup> Swargiary, Katindra. *Khwmsinifrai Swrangthing*. p-72

In this way it becomes clear through this conversation that they are trying hard to create communal tensions between the two communities. One day when Hafang was returning home after attending a marriage ceremony Kasem Ali and others allegedly rapes her and assuming her to be dead they dump her body near the stream.

When Hafang tells them that Kasem Ali is the culprit who murdered Rwndao and raped her allegedly, Rakheb and the other Bodo youth decides to attack Kasem Ali and the whole of Holongbari village. Rakheb later realizes his crime, regrets deeply and confesses in front of Hafang and goes to attack the entire Holongbari village. In this way because of a few rival individuals of the society the entire village is burnt and everyone has to suffer. In the words of the novelist –

“हे आल्लाह ! सानैसो काफेर आरो जल्लादफोरनि थाखैनो दायगोयै सुबुंफोरा औरैनो थैनासिगोन ।”<sup>17</sup>

English rendering –

Hey Allah! Because of a culprit the innocent has to lose their lives.

The pivotal reason behind all these incidents can be traced to Bilifang and Sahjadi's relationship and to separate them from their relationship both Kasem Ali and Gofur Ali Khan decides to create communal riots between the two communities by they secretly carried out many illegal activities contrary to both the community.

Similarly, economic issues and lack of unity among the Bodo people can be seen in the novel which helps in progressing and developing the storyline of the novel. Further, it can be known from this how social issue like communal tensions and riots affect the growth of a community, how it destroys peace and hampers its growth, how it creates fear amongst its members, how it develops hatred amongst themselves and destroys faith in each other etc. for which the community has to suffer from quite many losses.

The novel shows the three egocentric persons creating nuisance and problems just to fulfil their selfish desires. Gopur Ali Khan plans to end her daughter's relationship with Bilifang and marry her off to a man from his community and he decides to marry a third wife. Kasem Ali flatters and pleases Gopur Ali Khan and marries her daughter Shahjadi. On the other hand Rakheb's greed for money to drink and gamble and to marry urges him to help Kasem Ali

<sup>16</sup> Ahuja, Ram. *Social problems in India*. p-154

<sup>17</sup> Swargiary, Katindra. *Khwmsinifrai Swrangthing*. p-119

and commits the crime which goes against his community. Rakheb is the man who once was a firm social worker; an advisor for the people has now forgotten his principle and is now living amidst drinking and gambling and does not even dare to move back from the task, which is against the race and the religion. On the other side, the scenario and ideology of Bilifang and Shahjadi is different. There is no such discriminations and negligence on the basis of religion, race and caste between them. Through the love relationship of Bilifang and Shahjadi, the novelist tries to remove the discriminations and feeling of negativity among the races.

In this novel, the novelist portrays the picture of the conflict caused between the Bodos and the Muslims in Barpeta region. Therefore it is a novel reflecting the picture of realistic society. The novel shows the picture of misfortunes and the loss of the property, loss of humanity and the loss of faith to each other which is caused due to conflicts. Along with this, some historical aspects like the clash between Bodos and Nagas, Assam agreement, Bodoland movement and BAC agreement are also depicted through which the novelist's thought on Nationalism is represented and along with it the consciousness of the religion of the two communities also can be witnessed.

### 3.1.3 Alaishri:

Lahary's Alaishri is a female oriented novel which depicts that violence against women is a grave social problem which devastates the life of an individual and at the same time impacts the society in a negative way. Through the novel the novelist has selected violence against women as the theme and thus stands up against it and clearly articulates women empowerment and women's voice. In other words, the Bodo women have had a strong struggle with the society in order to maintain their dignity and existence within the society.

Violence against women is not a new phenomenon and it is a serious social issue. In the contemporary times, women are faced with new situation regularly and are trapped by new problems and encounters with many challenges and obligations. Violence against women is prevalent in all cultures, societies, religious communities and region. Women are getting affected by various kind of violence almost every day and they have become victims of violence both inside and outside their families. The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women provides the following definition – “The term

violence against women means any act of gender- based violence that result in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.”<sup>18</sup>

According to Ram Ahuja – “Women in Indian society have been victims of ill-treatment, humiliation, torture and exploitation as for long as we have written records of social or organization and family life.”<sup>19</sup> Violence against women includes those damages which are caused by physical and psychological roughness against women of any age, caste, class, region or religion.

The pages of history show that women have been subjected to oppression, suppression and injustice since the ancient times. The traditional paternal society poses some problems to women which are really challenging for them to achieve equality. In different periods of times women has been facing challenges like physical, mental, psychological and emotional. Various kinds of violence against women are eve teasing, molestation, bigamy, fraudulent marriage, adultery, enticement of married women, abduction, kidnapping, rape, harassment of women at working places, domestic violence, dowry abuse, female child abuse and abuse of elderly women.

Violence against women is the most shameful violation of human right and a grave issue of the society. Ahuja divides crime against women in three categories –

1. Criminal violence – rape, abduction, murder etc.
2. Domestic violence – dowry deaths, wife battering, sexual abuse, maltreatment of widows and/or elderly women etc.
3. Social violence – forcing the wife/daughter-in-law to go for female foeticide, eve teasing, refusing to give a share to women in property, forcing a young widow to commit sati, harassing the daughter-in-law to bring more dowry etc.<sup>20</sup>

In this case, the event that has occurred in the life of the protagonist in the novel *Alaishri* which is to be studied can be kept under criminal violence.

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<sup>18</sup> <https://plan4womenssafety.dss.gov.au>

<sup>19</sup> Ahuja, Ram. *Social Problems in India*. P-283

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*. P-286

The novelist traces the timing of the events of the novel during the time of Bodoland Movement in which the agitated Bodos demands for a separate state. During this period out of agitation and to show their anger they began to destroy many government properties like block offices, schools, hospitals, offices, court buildings etc. by burning or breaking them down. Thus, to bring the situation under control and maintain law and order the government orders strict action against any agitators and as per order the police and armed forces began to arrest and torture the Bodo people by battering the men folk and raping the women. The authorities announces curfew in major areas to avoid gathering of people. Frightened by this extreme torture by the police forces the mass people began to return home early by 3 or 4 o'clock in the evening. As the sun sets the roads turn empty and the village become quiet and calm indicating an intense and frightening environment.

Taking advantage of this situation certain people began to do some anti-social activities. The character in the novel Molen also takes similar advantage. On that particular day Alaishri becomes late on returning home from college. As she is returning from college from Kokrajhar town to old Titaguri the sun is already setting and is getting dark. As it is during the period of movement not a single person is seen on the roads and only a few vehicles of the CRPF is seen occasionally. Taking advantage of the situation and to fulfil his lust he attacks Alaishri and she tries her best to escape from him. She shouts at him –

“हगार आंखौ हगार, गुन्दा, बदमाइस, लाफांगे, लासुनिया, मोरोन मैखारि, मदारि, जुयारि । नोंहा नोमा गैया ? बिबाजै गैया ? बिनानाव गैया ? थां बिसोरनावनो । आंखौ नों मानो थांखिदों ? आंनि इज्जतखौ नों दासिमफ्राइ । उ !”<sup>21</sup>

English rendering –

Leave me, leave, goon, gangster, hoodlum, sinner, drunkard and gambler. Don't you have mother? Don't you have sister-in-law? Don't you have sister? Go have fun with them. Don't destroy my respect. Oh!

Despite trying hard to escape from Molen, Alaishri is physically weaker and could not protect herself and falls prey to his lust and at that moment his consciousness tell him –

“आलाइस्त्रिखौ दानो फोजोबदो । अखानाइब्लानो दाउराव जागोन दि – आलाइस्त्रिखौ गुन्दाया रेप खालामबाय होन्नानै । अब्ला राइजोफोरा नोंखौ सन्देह खालामगोन आलाइस्त्रिखौ रेप खालामनाय गुन्दाया नोंनो । नों हमजागोन पुलिसजों । केस जागोन ।”<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Lahari, Monoranjan. *Alaishri*. P-7

<sup>22</sup> Ibid..P-9

English rendering –

Finish her right now. Otherwise until tomorrow if everyone comes to know this there will be a huge crowd and everyone will know that Alaishri has been raped. That she is raped by me. You will be arrested by the police and a case will be registered.

As per his evil conscience he tries to wrap her scarf around her neck to make it look like she has committed suicide but seeing Alaishri become senseless like a dead body he leaves her alone.

In different periods of time many incidents are seen where the victims are murdered in ways unthinkable. Some are raped and killed and the dead body is put in sacks and dumped into rivers; some are strangled to death and their body is dumped in forests; some are hanged to death; some are raped and tortured vigorously and are left to die and many more incidents. Similar incident is seen in the novel also where Molen rapes Alaishri and tries to kill her and make it look like suicide. Thus, this is a grave violence against women and a serious social issue.

Alaishri is an outspoken, straight forward, frank, well disciplined and a clean hearted girl. She dreams of becoming an IPS, IAS officer in the future. She is a determined girl where losing does not defeat her and obstacles do not stop her. But unfortunately Molen rapes her and brings a turning point in her life shatters all her dreams. The greatest wealth of a woman is her dignity and virginity and in the society a raped woman is often considered to be a social stigma. In the paternalistic society it is highly unacceptable; the society begins to hate her, neglect her, looks with an evil eye and marriage for that woman becomes difficult and a distant dream. Alaishri knows all these facts of the society and mourns deeply and talks with her mother –

“: आइयै आंहा मा जाबावनो?

: नोंहा जेबो जायाखै फिसा । नों थिकयै दं ।

: आं माबोरै थिक थाखो आइ जिनाहारि खालामजानानै ?”<sup>23</sup>

आलाइस्त्रिया बुंभावो –

“माबोरै आइयै, माबोरै ? कलेजयाव आं मा मोखांजों नुजाहैबावनो ? पिन्सिपाल सार, प्रफेसार सारमोना आंखौ नुनानै

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<sup>23</sup> Lahari, Monoranjan. *Alaishri*. P-24

बिसोर आंखौ मा सानगोन ? कलेजनि फरायसा आरो फरायसुलिमोना आंखौ मा सान्नानै लागोन ? IPS IAS नि थाखाय आन्जाद होना नै गिदित अफिसार जानायनि आनि थांखिया बे जाथायानो थेर-बेथेर सिफायबाय । इराजि अनार्सआव मोजां क्लास लानानै डिग्रि लानो सान्नाया, नाजानाया सिमाडावबो जाननै नंलिया । हारि आरो माहारिनि नोजोराव आं जाबाय खालाय, मालायनि खालाय, बि मोरोन मैखारि गुन्दानि आद्रा, हाय खाफाल ।<sup>24</sup>

English rendering –

: Mother, what will become of me now?

: Nothing has happened to you, you are fine.

: How can I be fine mother, I am raped.

She further speaks her ordeal -

How Mother, how? How can I go back to college? What will my Principal sir and the Professors think of me now? What will the students in the college start to think of me? My dream of becoming an IPS IAS is now shattered. My dream of taking a degree with honours in English has become a dream. I have become a leftover now in the eyes of the community because of that hoodlum. Oh my fate!

The above quotes of Alaisri show that being raped by Molen devastates her dreams and aspirations and makes her unable to face the society with the same dignity as earlier. The news spreads far and wide in the surrounding villages many gives mix reactions to the incident. Many are saddened and are concerned about women's freedom and dignity while some expresses that even though the men are guilty of rape or accused of any crime in the paternalistic society they remain innocent and lead their life comfortably. The quote likewise – “बे जुगाव हिन्जाव हारिया गोथारै थानाया गोब्राबसै ।”<sup>25</sup>

English rendering –

Now-a-days, the dignity of women is highly unpredictable.

Though this incident shocks many the idea of a few demeaning the freedom of women is also seen in the novel through the narratives –

“गै दागै, आथिखाल बर’ हिन्जावफ्रा सान-हर, बाजार, गला सिनेमायाव थांग्रा हुदाया बाया जाथारबाय । हारसिडै हरमानि बेराइग्रा हिन्जावफ्रा गुन्दाजो जिनाहारि खालाम जागोनआनो ।”<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Lahari, Monoranjan. *Alaishri*. P-25

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. P-25

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. P-43

English rendering –

Whether rich or poor, the habits of Bodo women roaming around freely these days in the markets, malls and cinema halls day and night have increased. If any woman roams around freely at night is sure to get raped by some hoodlum.

From these narratives it becomes evident that whether they are guilty or not women have to endure all the accusations and through this gender discrimination also becomes evident. But Alaishri after being raped remains strong and firm from being dominated by the men to save herself and decides to take a bold step. Thus the quote from her –

“आं सान्दोंसो आरो सानै सानै आं गरन्थायाव फैबाय – आं सेलेन्ज खालामगोन । हौवा हारिया हिन्जाव हारिखौ जोबोत लोर्बा सानि । हिन्जावफोरनि मोदोमया गुरै जानो हगौ नाथाय, गोसोया स्टिल लहाबादि थां थां गोरा ।”<sup>27</sup>

English rendering –

I have thought over and over and come to a decision that I will challenge. The men folk consider that women are very weak. Women may look soft and physically weak but their heart is strong like steel.

When a meeting is held at the New Titaguri together with the Old Titaguri village regarding the crime committed by Molen and with the strong evidence of Alaishri being raped she tells him to marry her as his punishment. The main motive of Alaishri taking this bold decision is to protect other women from Molen from being raped. She speaks publicly –

“जाय गुन्दाया आंखौ जिनाहारि खालामनानै आंनि जिउखौ बरबाद खालामबाय, जाय गुन्दाया बारफुनाय बिबारनि रसखौ सोबख”नानै लरहाय होबाय, दाग फुनानै होबाय, कलेज गारहोनांबाय, बि मलेन गुन्दायानो आंखौ हाबा खालामनांगोन; बि आंखौ हाबा लायाब्ला, आंनो बिखौ हाबा लागोन: थामहिनबा बिखौ हाबा खालामगोन । बेनो आंनि जोबथा गरन्थ आरो बे गरन्थनिफ्राय आं आसुगुर गावगासेबो दोरोतनाय नडा ।”<sup>28</sup>

English rendering –

That hoodlum who have raped me and devastated my life, that hoodlum who sucked the nectar of a pious flower, scared me for life, made me leave college, that hoodlum will have to marry me; if he does not marry me I'll marry him. That is my final decision and I'll not move an inch from it.

The above narrative depicts the firm determination and courageous nature of Alaishri and

<sup>27</sup> Lahari, Monoranjan. *Alaishri*. P-49

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. P-110

highlights women's voice against suppression of the patriarchal society. And accordingly Alaishri's marriage takes place with Molen but however Molen's family does not welcome her properly. Her husband Molen, father-in-law Badol and sister-in-law Durjang tortures her regularly and make her life difficult. Not only this upon the conspiracy and plan of Durjang, Molen and Badol tries to kill Alaishri in different ways like poisoning her milk, stabbing her with knife, releasing a snake in her room and hitting her with a bottle. The prime reason behind these conspiracies is Durjang's greed for property of her father-in-law. She dreams of marrying her sister with Molen and sharing the entire property. But her dreams shatter when Alaishri marries Molen so she manipulates Molen and her father-in-law to torture and kill Alaishri.

Badol is a rich merchant in the locality who became rich by illegally selling valuable timber from the nearby forest. He can also influence the police and authorities with his money whenever he gets in trouble. He highly despises and discriminates Alaishri as she is from a poor family and does not accept her as a daughter-in-law, further fuelled by Durjang he even tries to break her marriage with his son and kill her. Later he realizes his mistake and commits suicide.

Every member of the society has equal rights. But here Alaishri is never accepted and respected as a daughter-in-law of the family instead her in-laws including her own husband treat her like a house maid. They call her with harsh nick names, scold her often and even batter her. This highlights domestic violence that often happens in the society which is a grave social issue. But Alaishri never loses her heart. She struggles with pure determination with an aim to overcome the shame, humiliation, subjugation met out to her from her in-laws and finally wins over the evil. It is due to her strong determination to fight for her right that her husband Molen finally realizes his mistake; and on the other hand her father-in-law Badol comes to know about the reality he is unable to overcome his humiliation and hangs himself to death. Thus PC Basumatary says –

“सलमायाव बिफाव लाहोनाय सोल्लोथाइ गोनं आलाइसि आखला गिबियाव लोरबांमोनब्लाबो सम, थासारि आरो जुजिनायनिफ्राय मोननाय रंमोनथायइया बिखौ फोरोदों गोख्रों जानो । बियो बिग्रायदों मलेननि अगेन आखु, नोजोर, गादबनाय सानसिनि बेरेखायै आरो उनाव देर्हादों आइजोनि गोख्रोंथिजों ।”<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Basumatary, Phukan. *Boro Solomayao Aijw Garang*. P-69

English rendering –

An educated protagonist character Alaishri who is initially weak becomes stronger from the experienced gained with the passage of time, situation and determination. She rebels against Molen's attitude of pride, vision, oppression and later wins with strong determination.

Truly, Lahary's novel Alaishri is a novel of violence against women where a lead woman protagonist stands against the male subjugation and raises a voice for women empowerment. It is not the time anymore to be dominated by anyone like the rapist Molen rather it is time to stand up against such oppression and stand up for one's equal rights. It is the time to challenge and fight back with the paternalistic society and protect women's dignity so that every woman can live peacefully with equal rights and freedom.

In the patriarchy society, women are treated as timid, kept under the sole of foot and were deceived by the men. But in society women too have equal rights, have equal strength and have equal values. To show this the novelist pictures the character Alaishri. From this point of view it can be said that Alaishri is a daring, patient and an educated girl. Starting off from the marriage day Alaishri, her in-laws mistreats to a great extend and even makes plans to kill her. But Alaishri still does not lose her heart and give up. She maintains her patience level and in time of need she responds back to her in-laws and husband. She protects herself in every inch of her life. Though her husband, father-in-law and husband sister-in-law does not accept her as a family member but still she accepts them as her own family. She does every household works from cleaning, cooking and directing the maids and servants properly. She has an aim of changing her husband and her in-laws to good and kind hearted. For sure, Alaishri at last fulfils her wish through her determination, courage and patience.

### 3.1.4 Dainee?:

The novel Dainee? by Lahary represents about the belief on witch and witchcraft and highlights the witch hunting of the innocent people. In the novel the witch belief or witch hunting has become one of the social issues where it is seen that a family is being brutally and mercilessly destroyed.

The belief in witchcraft is being followed since ages by the people of various religions

around the world. The belief in witchcraft covers even the developed or the developing countries like America, South Africa, England, India and many more. The belief in witches is like one of the incurable disease which spreads from one place to another. As it gets birth in a place it spreads from one village to another, from one society to another and from one country to another. According to people's faith a witch is a person who have a supernatural power and who can harm people as well as the area. The acts done by the witch is the witchcraft. According to Levack, "In the most general sense a witch is a person who possesses a supernatural, occult or mysterious power to cause misfortune or injury to others."<sup>30</sup>

Witch and Witchcraft believe is one of the superstitious beliefs where someone is framed as a witch and punished without any proper evidence or proof or even killed brutally is called as the witch hunting. In the contemporary times witch hunting has become a dangerous social issue. Whereas in the 21<sup>st</sup> century too the witch hunting is increasing and in this case especially the women are the ones who are conspired and framed to be a witch and are seen to be sacrificing their life. It is seen that the women are mostly targeted to be a witch. So Manjushree Pathak says that –

1. Single women.
2. Widow.
3. Elderly parents, who are deserted by their children, to grab the land of the old couple some people make plan to remove such couple from the world in the name of witch.
4. The 'Ojah' or quack or traditional practitioners of local medicine and
5. People who have intense faith on worshipping in particular faith.<sup>31</sup>

Anju also expresses through her article "Daina, Daina Kanthi Arw Daina Butarnai" as –

“अजा एबा अजा नडै गोरिब, लोरबां, जाडलिया, गोनां एबा गोहो गोरा मांसिनि सुथुर आरो सम्पति मोन्नाय रान्दि एबा आइजोफोरा गोरलैयैनो दाइना बुथारनायनि बोलि जायो।”<sup>32</sup>

English rendering –

Either an oja or not, the poor, weak, mentally disordered or the enemies of the rich and powerful people, wealthy widowed are easily conspired and framed to be witch

<sup>30</sup> Levack, Brian P. *The Witchcraft source book*. Routledge. London. p-2

<sup>31</sup> Pathak, Manjushree. *Witch Hunting, A Comprehensive Study in Global Persapective*.

<sup>32</sup> Anju. *Daina, Daina Kanthi Arw Daina Butarnai*. P-243

and are being hunted as witch. Sometimes due to superstitious belief or sometimes to fulfil their wants some people are hunted as witch and killed brutally and mercilessly and all these practices create a dirty environment for the people, region and society.

The main protagonist of the novel *Dainee?* is Durmao, a poor widow. Durmao has a small family, a son and a daughter and lives a very miserable life. The name of Durmao's son is Ajor and the name of her daughter is Nijira. To fulfil the needs of the family Ajor has to work as a servant at Laoga mahajan's house and is unable to educate her daughter, so she sent her to uncle's house. But after her father's demise Nijira returns home. During his lifetime Ramsrem works for the contractors as wood cutter, as labour, also sold fire woods in the market and in this way he looked after his family. Along with that he also learnt the skill of oja from Gobda, an inhabitant of Bismuri Amburi, he acquired the knowledge of oja for curing pain and other small diseases which also help him earn a little money to look after his family. With his skill of oja, he could cure different kinds of diseases and also have done some good works and help the people. But unfortunately Ramsrem was killed by other oja out of jealousy. From that day onwards has heavy responsibility of leading her family. So she prefers to be a oja as a source of livelihood to provide the necessities of her family. Durmao learnt the skill of an oja from her husband about the medicines and the mantras and she learnt a few other skills through her dedication and experiments. In this way by using the various parts of different plants like roots, stem, leaves, skin etc. she could cure various diseases and is able to help many people. She could even cure people from snake bites, she even helped many childless couples to get a child which turn her be a renowned oja in that area.

From the beginning of the story line of the novel the novelist presents Durmao as the protagonist she was being doubted as witch and is hunted and mercilessly killed by the end of the novel. This act of suspecting her to be a witch, hunting her and brutally killing has a tremendous effect in the society. Through this novel how the belief and faith in witch and witchcraft takes its place in the society, how the innocent people are framed and how it negatively affects the society is clearly highlighted by the various incidents and characters in the novel. That is why the novelist presents a crucial environment right in the beginning of the novel where he presents the hatred among the Bodos and the Santhalis where the rivals as seen setting fire on each other's house, killing each other, where a group of people is seen to be roaming around with rifles, AK 47 and grenades as soon as it gets dark. No people are able to travel as no vehicle is able to ply; the situation becomes intense. At this outbreak the belief

in witch and witch hunting got its birth in the Bodo society among the people. All these is presented in the novel by the novelist as –

“दा सान्दि थासारिया जोबोद गुदुं । मोनसेआ सावथाल – बर’ हांगामा आरो गुबुन मोनसेआ जायगा जायगा बर’  
गामिफ्राव दाइना – दाइनि बुथारनाय दुहुम ।”<sup>33</sup>

English rendering –

Now-a-days the situation is very dangerous. On the one hand revolt between the Bodos and the Santhalis, and on the other hand is the merciless witch hunting in the society.

In other word, it becomes evident that just like the other countries and communities in the Bodo community also allegedly killing of women by suspecting them to be practicing witchcraft is seen where many innocent women has to lose their lives. Witch hunting has been a burning issue for the last three decades in the north – eastern regions of India, very high particularly among the Bodo community of Assam with evidence from media texts.<sup>34</sup>

The prime reason why people suspects Durmao as a witch is when she scares Bilasu from Jharbari village as a ghost. Once when he was returning home from Serfanguri a woman on the way asks him to stop his vehicle and drop her till her village. Due to the prevailing darkness Bilasu does not see her face clearly but can recognize from her voice that she is Durmao from the nearby village. Later upon the arrival of the forest guards in their vehicle and with the brightness of the headlight they could see that the woman on the bike with Bilasu is not a human being but a ghost. Bilasu later hears the same from them and realizes that the woman is no longer on his bike behind him after which he is deeply sacred and starts suspecting Durmao to be a witch without any proper evidence. Secondly, one day Bilasu sees his nephew Arongbir and Nijira, Durmao’s daughter together and chitchatting by the river back. So, Bilasu thinks that Durmao gave Love Dose to his nephew Arongbir to fall in love with her daughter Nijira. Thirdly, by cursing a bad omen in his family and killing his son Laobwr. In this way Bilasu’s suspect for Durmao finds its roots and slowly spreads the same around the village. In the narratives of the novelist –

“दुर्मावआनो बिराखौ हगारहरदोमोन आंनि न’आव । फिसाज्लाखौ सिथारनानैसो बिखौ बियो जाइखारहोबाय ।  
दुर्मावआ दाइनिसो । आंनि गथ’खौ बियो जाजेनबाय । बिदिनो बियो फारि सोरनिबा फिसा-फिसौफोरखौ जागोन । बेनि

<sup>33</sup> Lahary, Monoranjan. *Dainee?*. p-2

<sup>34</sup> Swargiary, Dina. *Witch hunting among Bodos of Assam*. P-5

सिगां बिखौ फोजोबग्रोनांगौ ।”<sup>35</sup>

English rendering –

Durmao has spread bad omen (Bira) in my home and taken it away only after killing my son. She has first killed my son and will start to kill everybody’s sons and daughters one by one. So it is necessary to kill her first.

One reason for her suspicion is that she is an Oja and a helpless widow and Ojas are generally suspected to be witches. Ojas are generally called as Medicine Man who prepares medicines from plants and herbs and treats different illnesses and diseases. According to Anju –

“बुंनो थाडोब्ला अजा आरो दायनानि गेजेराव खानाइ दोसेनिल’ फाराग थायो । मानो होनोब्ला गोहो आरो बिद्यानि बेलायाव अजा आरो दायना सानैबो समान, फाराग थायो बेफोर गियान आरो बिद्याखौ मा थांखियाव बाहायगोन बेनि सायावसो । बेफोरखौ मोजां खामानियाव बाहायब्लानो सासे मानसिखौ अजा बुंनाय जायो आरो गाज्जि खामानियावन जैरे सोरनिबा खहा खालामनाय खिथेर होखारनाय बायदि हाबायाव बाहायब्ला सासे मानसिखौ दायना होनानै बुंनाय जायो ।”<sup>36</sup>

English rendering –

As a matter of fact there is no much difference between an Oja and a Daini (witch) because both power and knowledge are similar and the difference occurs for which purpose they use their power and knowledge. When they use their knowledge and power for good reasons then they are called Oja but when they use it for negative purposes like to harm somebody then they are called as a Daina/Daini.

The activities or practices that a Daina/Daini carries out is generally called as Black Magic or something that has evil power and brings harm to someone.

Durmao the protagonist of the novel *Dainee?* is a good oja and serves the society by giving naturally prepared medicines to cure illness and diseases, helps conceive to childless couples, cures snake bites and many more and that is why the people in her society think that she posses supernatural power and extraordinary knowledge. This seems to be the root cause of people suspecting her to be a Daini and that she practices black magic to harm people and this belief among the people in the society is like an infected disease. Gradually, the villagers began to see her with a negative light. Unfortunately, one day Dilsrwn’s son from Bilasu’s

<sup>35</sup> Lahary, Monoranjan. *Dainee?*. P-41

<sup>36</sup> Anju. *Daina, Daina Kanthi Arw Daina Butarnai*. P-241-

village falls ill. He consults many ojas and doctors but is unable to cure his son and finding or other means he approaches Durmao. But when she checks on him, his son is already in coma so Durmao says that she won't be able to cure him and leaves after some time and within one hour after her departure Dilsrwn's son dies. Dilsrwn out of despair puts all the blame upon Durmao and accuses her of being a witch. Likewise the quote from the novel –

“दुर्मावआ दाइनि । बियो आंनि फिसाखौ राइनानै फोथैबाय । आमुखिखौ बुंदोमोन आं – बिखौ लाइनाडो होन्नानै । आं थाडैआव गावनो सिखाउ सिखाउ थानानै दुर्मावखौ लाइथारदो । दाइनिआदि आंनि फिसाखौ जाबाय । आर सोर सोरनि फिसाखौ जाबावगोन बेनि हिसाब गैया ।”<sup>37</sup>

English rendering –

Durmao is a diani (witch). She has murdered my son. I told her to not bring Durmao but she quietly called her and brought her here. That witch has killed my son and I cannot say how many children she will murder.

A week later after this incident a child dies in a family after being ill for over about three days. Even though Durmao has no relation to this incident however the members of the family suspects and accuses her that she has showered black magic upon their child and kills him. They suspect her because on the day their child falls ill Durmao comes to the jungle near their house to look for some medicinal herbs. In this way some people start doubting that Durmao showers black magic whenever she passes by anyone's house in the village. Since then the people accuse and frames her to be a witch practicing witchcraft and dark magic to harm people. The quote from the novel for instance –

“दुर्मावआ अजागिरि खालामफ्ला खालामफ्लि राइनानै मानसि फोथैनो हमबाय । फुंसे रावजो - दुर्मावआ दाइनि ।”<sup>38</sup>

English rendering –

Durmao is starting to use black magic in the name of oja to kill people and spreads the rumours – Durmao is a witch.

Thus Dilsrwn spreads a rumour that Durmao is a witch where he is also supported by his brother Joysrwm. Their rumour gets stronger because Bilasu also already complains to the village head of Betmari against her and a crucial environment gets birth in the village.

<sup>37</sup> Lahary, Monoranjan. *Dainee?*. P-70

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. P-71

In the present times witch hunting is a serious social issue and a crime. Witch hunting not only devastates the wealth of the people but also ruins the happiness of a family and the society loses its peace. It not only increases the crime and injustice but also creates chaos in the environment of the villages and an intense and fearful set of circumstances is generated. There was a system in the ancient times in the Bodo community about punishing these witches practicing witchcraft by making them pay hefty fines, isolation and even expulsion from the village/society and only under a few circumstances extreme physical tortures like brutal killing, burning and burying alive, slaying off limbs etc. are given for which people refrain from practicing witchcraft. But in the present times witch hunting and extreme punishments are largely seen due to the growing economical, political and personal issues in the society. These happen largely in the rural societies primarily due to superstitious beliefs, lack of education, poverty, inability to identify diseases due to lack of health facilities and hospitals and lack of scientific reasoning.

In the novel *Dainee?* also such kinds of issue is seen where the people in the village suspect Durmao to be a witch practicing black magic and witchcraft and many people opposes against her and that is how they call for a village court is against her.

In the village court both the assailant and the victim are made to speak their opinion but later without any proper analysis and solid evidence the village head announces Durmao as a witch. The village head coughs and clears his throat and after adjusting his scarf he announces a capital punishment to thrash her and bury her alive, kill her two children also and bury them along with her. The quote from the novel –

‘राइजोफोर । दुर्मावआ दाइनि नंगौना नडा आं सालिख’ नाइजोबबाय । नोंसोर फोर्मान समेत दुर्मावआ हेंथा बुंबाय । दुर्मावआ माबादि साजा मोनथावगौ - बेखौबो नोंसोर बुंबाय । आनि रायजितखौ नोंसोर खोनादो । आनि रायजितआ बेनो – दुर्मावआ दाइनि । बिखौ बुग्लि-बुग्ला खालामनानै थैहां-बरबहां खालामनानै गोथां गोथां फबनांगौ । बिनि फिसा सानैखौबो बुथारनानै बिमार्हो फबफानांगौ ।’<sup>39</sup>

English rendering –

Dear villagers, I have decided whether Durmao is a witch or not. You all have spoken your view with proof and also requested for punishments for her. My opinion is that Durmao is a witch. She must be beaten up brutally and buried alive. Her two children should also be killed and buried along with her.

<sup>39</sup> Lahary, Monoranjan. *Dainee?*. P-88

The above narrative signifies the shallow mindset of the Bodo community and their lack of proper rationality where the village head without any proper evidence and analysing the matter properly announces that Durmao is a witch and orders such a merciless capital punishment to be given to her and her children. The novelist expresses the ordeal of Durmao through the following lines –

“हगार, हगार आंखौ हगार फाफि । आंखौ सिथारनाइआ नोंहा फाफ नांगोन । नों मोरोनआव थैगोन । आंखौ दाइनि साजाइनाया नोंनो, फाफिथिया । आइदै ! आइदै !! आनि आखाइ थाइनैखौबो दानसबाय । राइजोफोर । गामियाव मोरोन हाबगोन । आइयै आइयै !!”<sup>40</sup>

English rendering –

Leave, leave me alone you sinners. You will be gravely sinned if you kill me. You will be cursed and die brutally. You are the one to blame me as a witch. Oh God! Oh God!! You have cut off both my arms. Villagers, the village will be deadly cursed. Oh God! Oh God!!

Even though Ajor and Nijira were also supposed to be killed in accordance to the orders given by the village head they somehow rescued themselves with the help of Biringung and Arongbir. Such incidents of accusing and framing to be a witch someone innocent like Durmao and murdering them not only ruins a family but also devastates the peace of the society.

The prime reason of such incidents happening in the society is the lack of education, poverty, superstitious beliefs, lack of health facilities and hospitals and the lack of scientific knowledge and understanding. Similarly, in the region of Jharbari and Betmari village people lack education and dwells in poverty. The example of this is Arongbir as he is the only person with an MA degree in that area and he alone cannot make the people understand about the harm of superstitious beliefs. Even after knowing that Durmao is not a witch he could not stand for her against the villagers when they frame her and the head pronounces her as a witch. Even after achieving proper education unlike the others he could not reform the society. He could only save Nijira and fulfil his desire. In other words Arongbir is not able to bring any change to the society which lacks education. Along with this another reason for the growth of belief in witch and witchcraft is the lack of health facilities and hospitals and the lack to identify diseases. When they are unable to recognize any diseases they assume that a

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<sup>40</sup> Lahary, Monoranjan. *Dainee?*. P-88

witch has showered black magic and to cure such diseases they approach different ojas. The illiterate Bodo folk generally suppressed by superstitious beliefs have great faith in these ojas and whatever they say they believe in their words. In such cases when these ojas are also not able to cure these diseases and the victim who is already suffering from a serious disease dies, they start accuse any of these ojas to be a witch practicing witchcraft. The reason for the lack of education and medical facilities is that people in these rural areas dwell in poor economic conditions. People are not able to afford proper education as they dwell in utter poverty and Nijira and Ajour are such examples. Though Nijira stays in her uncle's house for her education she has to come back home after her father's death. As a matter of fact, due to poor economic conditions the people in the rural areas are not able to avail proper medical facilities to identify and cure certain disease which ultimately results in the belief in witchcraft and witch hunting.

Other than these reasons in the belief in witchcraft and witch hunting one of the reasons worth mentioning is where the rich class people accuses and frames the poor class people in the society using their power and influence as witch; sometimes to take personal vengeance, sometimes out of jealousy, sometimes due to financial matters and to grasp their property and sometimes to when they are not able to satisfy their sexual demands and favours especially from helpless widows, where they are accused as witches.

The novelist expresses this through the characters Sandrwb and Bilasu where they are the wealthy people of Jharbari village and followers of Christianity. Sandrwb deals in illegal timber wood business where he cuts precious trees from the nearby forest and sells them illegally to Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and other states to earn huge money and become wealthy man in the area. Bilasu is the brother of Sandrwb. He steals timber from his own brother to sell and make money illegally. He is a goon who suppresses, loots and exploits the poor to become rich. He is the first person to accuse Durmao as a witch to hide his illegal timber business. In other words, under many circumstances the rich and elites of the society suppress the poor in an attempt to actualize their personal beliefs and attitudes as the rich are always believed and the poor are neglected whether they are guilty or not and have less value in the society. In the novel too the same happens in case of Durmao. Even though she speaks and struggles to prove her innocence her words has no value and utterly neglected by the members of the society whereas the words of the rich like Biilasu and Sandrwb are believed and accordingly she is brutally punished, the reason being she is a poor and helpless widow.

The novelists narrates this as –

“खैफोदआ निखावरि फोरनाव बांसिन साफियो । दाय था बा दाथा, सुबुंनि गात्रि नोजोरआव गोम्लैयो । लोरबांफोरनि सायाव बांसिन हामला आरो जुलुम जायो ।”<sup>41</sup>

English rendering –

The poor and helpless always attracts plight. Whether right or wrong, they become the prey of the society. The weak are always subjected to oppression.

In other words, suppression and violence against women that usually happens in the society is highlighted through the character Durmao. He depicts Durmao as an honest, hardworking and a courageous woman who struggles and fights for her rights and highlights the voice of every woman. She clearly speaks –

“नोंसोर खोमसि फोथयनायखाय आंखौ नानान-बानान बुंनानै दाय फुनदेरनानै दाइनि साजाइनो नाजाथारबाय । आं सैथोनि थाखाय थैनो गया । आं दाइनि नडा । आंनि न'खरनि निखाउरि । बोराइ थैनानै आर गात्रिसिन जाबाय । एफा-एनै बेज-बेजलि खालामनानै बोथिसे खुनो-रोखोम जादों । अखनबा रसानांदों । आं हागौमानि राइजोनि उफ'खार खालामदों बेमार-आजार सोखानानै । नोंसोर बुंदों-आंनि बार नांभ्लानो लोमजायो, साजायो, खिसे-गोबासे जायो । बिदि जायो मोनब्ला आं जाइनाव-जाइनाव थांदों आंनि बार नांनानै मुरुन थैजोबसिगौमोन । ठीक नोंसोरनि सान्नाय ! धिक नोंसोरनि आसार-बिसार !! धिक बर' माहारि !!”<sup>42</sup>

English rendering –

Because of your superstitious beliefs you have tried to frame me as a witch by accusing many charges. I am not afraid to die for truth. I am not a witch. My family is already poor and after the death of my husband my condition has worsened. I prepare some medicines to sell and to eat a mouthful. Sometimes I sleep hungry. I try my best to help the society to cure them from diseases and you accuse me that wherever I go people suffer. If it is true whomever I have treated their families would have all suffered and died. Shame on your thoughts! Shame upon the Bodo community!!

Durmao tries her best efforts to prove her innocence but she losses upon the shallow judgement and oppression of the rich and powerful.

Through the novel the novelist depicts that framing and accusing an innocent person as a

<sup>41</sup> Lahary, Monoranjan. *Dainee?*. P-75

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. P-82

witch and punishing or killing him/her is a serious punishable crime because nobody has the right to harm anyone's life and family. It becomes evident when towards the climax of the story when the police raids the villages accountable for the crime and puts those who are involved in jail. In other words witchcraft and witch hunting is a grave social issue which keeps on repeating in the society and has a negative impact on the growth and development of society for which the novelist says –

“The novel tells about gruesome and awful incidents of murder of men and women (mainly women) suspects of practicing witchcraft. The brutal and in-human butcher of alleged witches, without and valid proofs, is a dangerous social menace.”

The novelist indirectly highlights the same superstitious belief prevalent in the society and aims to bring consciousness in the minds of the people and prevent such hateful crimes committed against innocent lives. In the novel the novelist increases the focus on Durmao as a witch through the other characters of Bilasu and Sandrwp, who constantly misleads the people in the society because of their superstitious beliefs and false accusations in order to fulfil their hidden desires. The people of the lower class are often the victims of witch hunting who are falsely accused even though they are innocent and are suppressed by the rich class. Durmao also faces the same conditions as she is a low class and a poor widow, and not even a single word of her is being listened and believed by the people in the village.

Through the novel the author has prioritized and clearly presented on how the superstitious beliefs in witch- craft affects the society, how it pollutes the minds of the people, how violence and chaotic situations occurs in the society and how the people are often misled. The root cause of all these are nothing but superstitious belief and have dominated those societies with no education and no access to science and technology.

### 3.1.5 Thwisam:

Thwisam is a second creation novel by Rita Boro. The novelist has constructed the plot of the novel based upon the contemporary situation of Bodo the society depicting the helpless of the new generation due to influence of modern times and character and struggle of the middle class Bodos. The plot of the novel has a close resemblance and intertwined to the Bodo community. That is, this is a modern novel based on social reality of society. This is because

the novelist clearly portrays the struggles and sufferings of the parents and young people in the modern times through Theleb and Ansai.

The main plot is about Theleb studying at 10<sup>th</sup> standard who could not continue her studies due to torture from her step mother and married to Shikhiram soon after. Shikhiram is a driver of the district President of ABSU. They were leading a happy family life and Ansai adds beauty to their family. The couple has beautiful dreams on their son Ansai by educating him and making him a good citizen. But unfortunately an obstacle comes up at this moment which is the movement of the Bodos demanding a separate state Bodoland, and the situation is at its worst condition. Thus in the heat of the moment, the president of Bodo students union along with Shikhiram was shot death in front of Tangla College. Still with all these troubles Theleb moves forward with the dreams and hopes they had for their son Ansai. To run their life and to look after the study of her son, Theleb starts working in “Alaishri” industry where she weaves clothes and sells them. During this time socio cultural issues appears and Theleb and others has to struggle with it. In other words upon the influence of modernisation, globalisation and western culture the Bodos also seemed to slowly divert away from their traditional culture and began to assimilate with the western culture for which their cultural identity is slowly fading away. When Theleb is working in the Alaishri industry as a weaver and saleswoman of the industry, some leaders of the women organization comes to buy some dokhonas. During that time, by thinking about the future of the Bodo traditional handloom and home production Theleb requests the women leaders to stop buying dokhonas weaved with machines by the other communities. She says so because the women of the Bodo community are seen to neglect the traditional handloom products and accept more of the machine weaved dokhonas by the other communities. As soon as the Bodos begun to buy and wear those poor quality dokhonas, there is a loss of income, culture and traditional handloom productivity and if this continues very soon the Bodos will forget and fail to weave their traditional clothes. In the words of Theleb –

“: मा बुंनो गाबसुलि, जों दिने बेआव एथ’बां खस्त खालामना जि दादों, जोंनो नांगौ बेसेनखौ बिसोर होनो बायो नाथाय नायनायसाय, जेंलाब जेंथाब खिबौ नुजानाय दखनाखौ बर’ आइजोफोरा गलानिफ्राय नैरोजा गाहाम होना गानो । बेनि जाहोना जाबाय बाब्ला-बाब्लि बे मिलाव एरनाय आगरफोर । थारैनो सिरि सिरि सानो आं बर’ आइजोफोरा सानसे आगर एरनो, थावखित लुनो, जि दानो बावगार मारसिगोन...। नाइबाय था नोंसोर बे थेलेब बुंनाय बाश्राखौ ....।”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Boro, Rita. *Thwisam*. p-10

English rendering –

What else to say Gabsuli, today we are working hard and weaving dokhonas, and look they are not willing to pay the price, but are willing to pay high price for poor quality machine made dokhonas. The reason is the use of bright colors in designs. Truly I believe that one day the Bodo women would forget skills of extracting fibres from silk, designing patterns on clothes, remember Theleb's words.

In fact, in the present times this poses as a grave social issue by which the novelist suggests the people in the Bodo community to become conscious about it through Theleb's character.

Theleb dreams on Ansai by educating him and making him a good citizen for which she feeds him and sends him to school before going to the industry to work. As time passes by Ansai grows through the struggle and care of his mother but his behaviour begins to change. He starts talking rudely and quarrelling with his mother, gets angry over food and starts to come home late which saddens his mother deeply.

Ansai and Thulunsi are childhood friends. Thulunsi is the daughter of the owners of Alaishri Industry. Their friendship starts when Theleb often takes him in the industry along with her when she goes to work. They go to the same school and together passes HSLC exam and both enrolls in HS taking up science stream. When they go for a picnic from his college to Bhairabkunda, a brawl erupts between Ansai and Aron for the sake of Thulunsi. When Aron says – “बे जोनोमाव नडा सात जोनोमावबो नोडो थुलुनसिखौ मोना ।” (Not only in this birth, but in seven births you will not get Thulunsi), Ansai takes these words in a pessimistic manner without thinking otherwise as he considers himself downtrodden amongst his friends. He feels why he should not get Thulunsi – is it because of his poverty, lack of bike and mobile phone or whether because his mother works in the industry belonging to Tulunsi's family. So he decides to buy a bike with the money that they got for rehabilitation after his father death or his mother should stop working in the industry because he is ashamed of their poverty and at the same time by buying a bike he also wants to take his revenge because Robet, Argeng, Bimal, Milan and others often makes fun of him and to show them that he is not poor. This becomes clear through the argument between Theleb and Ansai –

“: नों बावला जादों नामा अनसाय ? बाजि रोजा रांखौ मोनोब्ला आं खामानि गारनो एबा नों बाइक बाइनो ? बेयो बबेनि खोनाफेरै बाश्रा ।

: औ आयै, नों जदि सानो बे रांजों गोदान फालांगि खालामनो अब्ला आं जोबोद मोजां मोनगोन । आरो जेबो खालामा अब्ला आं बे रांजों बाइक गंसे बाइनो सानदों, मानोन आंनि लोगोफोरा बयहाबो बाइक दं ।<sup>44</sup>

English rendering –

: Have you gone mad Ansai? If we get the fifty thousand rupees I should quit the job and you will buy a bike? What kind of nonsense is this?

: Yes mother, if you start a new business then I have no objection and won't do anything. But if you don't do anything with it I am thinking to buy a bike as all of my friends has one.

The reason behind the change in Ansai's behavior is the impact of modernization, globalization, influence of bad company and inability to control his desires. This is a grave social issue of the present generation of youths. It is as known fact that modernization and globalization affects the society both positively and adversely. In the contemporary times, the adverse affects of globalization is seen much more in the society because even after knowing their family conditions the present generation youths threats and blackmails their parents to fulfill their desires. They often remain distracted from their studies and are addicted to drugs, drinks and gambling which evades the peace in a family.

In the novel Ansai also falls in similar trap of evil company where even after knowing the condition of his family and to come at par with his rich friends he tries to fulfil his desires. He comes under influence of Rabet, the son of a rich and wealthy family and has no shortage of money who can buy whatever he wants. Even after knowing that he belongs to a lower middle class family Ansai wants to have a lifestyle like the rich and wealthy Rabet for which he begins to misbehave his mother, quarrels with her over petty things and starts demanding a bike. In today's times how such acts of their children hurt the parents are known through Laheram's words –

“मा बुंनो बाजै, आथिखालनि गथ”फोरखौ बिसोरनि लाइफ स्टाइलखौ, आखल आखु अगालेसो मोन्नाय जायो । आंहानोबा फिसाज्ला सासेआ मा मा जाथाय खालामबाय थाया । दाखालैसो बाराव जौ लोंनानै बुज्जायनायनि थानायाव दोनहैजादोंमोन, एम.एल.ए. साराअसो असिखौ फन खालामनानै हगार होदों । दे बाजै मोनाबाय आं थांनोसै ।<sup>45</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Boro, Rita. *Thwisam*. p-28

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. p-25

English rendering –

What else to say sister-in-law, about their life style, fed up of their behaviour. My own son creates a lot of nuisance. Just a few days back he fought and created a ruckus after being drunk and was put in the jail, MLA sir called the OC and released him. Ok, sister-in-law, it's getting dark I should go.

In this way a gap is thus created between the mother and son, i.e. Theleb and Ansai where he starts neglecting his own mother for disregarding his opinion to use the money and tries hard to convince her. Theleb knows what's good and bad for his son so she disregards his opinion and understands that that Rs.50,000/- is not sufficient for his studies. So she decides not to waste the money otherwise. After the declaration of the HS final examinations Thulunsi hurriedly goes to check the result in the result board and find that she passes with first division. When she checks Ansai's roll number on the board she finds it missing. Thus Ansai fails in the final examinations due to his lack of interest in studies. After getting his result Theleb is deeply saddened, her dreams, hopes and aspirations have been devastated. But Ansai has no concern for his results instead speak rudely with his mother. Then his mother sadly says –

“: अनसाय नों मा खालामखो ? नोंखौ लानानै आनि सिमां मोन । गासैबो फेलें जाबाय । नोंनो आं मा होवाखैमोन । नाथाय नों अब्लाबो मानो ?  
: आंखौ लानानै सिमां नुदोंब्ला नों आनि लुबैनायखौ मानो सुफुडाखै । फिसाबि लुबैनायखौ सुफुनो हायाब्ला फिसा जोनोम होनानै मा लाभ आयै ।”  
: सासे बिमाया फिसानि थाखाय मा मावनो हाया, नों बेखौ मा मिथिनो । दिनै आं देहा गारना नोंनो नानाय गासैबो होनो नाजादों ।  
: बेखायनो आयै नों आनि रिजाल्टखौ मोजां लुबैदोंब्ला आंनो नैजि रोजा रां हर । आं दान मोनसेनि उनावनो ....<sup>46</sup>

English rendering –

: Ansai, what have you done? I had dreams for you. Everything is over now. What have I not given you, but why have you now?

: Mother, if you have seen big dreams for me then why are you not fulfilling my demands. If a mother is not able to fulfill the demands of their child then what is the use of having children.

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<sup>46</sup> Boro, Rita. *Thwisam*. p-54

: What can a mother not do for their child, how will you know. Today I have sacrificed so much to provide you everything.

: That is why mother if you want good result give me twenty thousand rupees. After a month I will ...

These words from their own child are unbearable for a mother for which Theleb slaps her son. Ansai's character of arrogant, non-compassionate and disrespectful nature dissolves the entire value and meaning of a mother, who has taken care and taught her child from birth till adulthood with utter hardship, thus becomes evident. In order to fulfill his selfish demands and false desires he foils the dreams and begins to ignore the hardship and sufferings of his mother.

Thus, whilst returning home after collecting his result, Naren, Raben and Manoj while having tea in a tea stall shames Ansai and gives him the idea to procure fake certificate for which he demands twenty thousand rupees from his mother. But as it is an illegal act Theleb disregards Ansai's words. When he fails to get the said amount from his mother he then steals thirty thousand rupees and flees from home. This brings a turning point in his life he loses his path of life. He gets lost in the whereabouts and later in order to fill his stomach he begins to work in a cement factory in Delhi. He remains involved in alcohol and gambling and a person always looking for sexual pleasure. He gets into brawls and thus some enemy throws acid on him. In this way after 6 years he somehow manages to gather Rs. 10,000/- and decides to give the money to his mother. But then as he was returning home by train some miscreant intoxicates him, steals his money and dumps him in an unknown train station. But fortunately in that station Aron happens to meet him and takes him to his house. It is only when Ansai meets Aron that he realizes his mistake, feels ashamed of his own actions, feels his mother's concern, sacrifices and failures and deeply remembers her and longs to be beside her and decides to go home anyhow. Accordingly he proceeds towards his home but unfortunately, it is too late and Ansai loses his dear mother.

From the time Ansai left home, Theleb, despite trying hard in fulfilling her dreams in upbringing her son to become a good citizen fails and thus is filled up with deep sorrow and pain. After about five years she donates her property to an Ashram and finally takes her last breath. Ansai comes to his village and enquires about his mother. Later when he gets the news of his mother from the inauguration of the ashram he feels concerned that his parents

might even lose their self respect so he does not introduce himself to anyone, and later becomes a bus conductor, unknown to anyone. But one day when Thulunsi happens to travel in the bus, she recognizes Ansai from his voice and requests him to go back to his house but he declines her and tells her not to reveal his identity to anyone. This becomes evident through their conversation –

“: अनसाय, नों दाबो न’आव थौफिनदो ।

: न’ ? आंहा बहा न’ दं । आंनि थं, आंनि सिनायथि गासैबो आइआ दुखुजों थप्ला बोनना लाना थांबाय । नों यदि आंनि मोजां हासथायोब्ला प्लिज नों बे अओनसोलाव आंखौ थांनानै दड होन्ना रावनोबो दा खिन्था, नडाब्ला आइ आरो आफानि गासैबो इज्जताव दुसुमाइ नांगोन, प्लिज नों दा खिन्था ।”<sup>47</sup>

English rendering –

: Ansai, you go back home even now.

: Home. Where is my home? My address, my identity are all taken away by my mother’s misery. If you truly want my good, kindly do not reveal my identity to anyone in this region otherwise, my father and mother’s respect will be scared, please don’t tell anyone.

Thus, because of his short temper and arrogant nature Ansai has to lose everything and become helpless. The novel *Thwisam* is the true picture of today’s society, where it is seen that parents are seen struggling day and night to provide everything for their children and make their future bright. But on the other hand the children are seen turning rude with the influence of bad friend circle, they are also seen to be drug addicts, demanding for expensive bikes and mobile phones, often fighting and quarrelling among themselves and also their families often breaking different stuff when their demands are not fulfilled. Instead of choosing the right path most of the children are seen choosing the wrong path of life and are seen helpless. Such kinds of behaviours besides bringing sadness and despair in the hearts of their parents and family, also devastates the peace of the society. Thus through the novel and through Ansai’s character the novelist gives a message to the young boys and girls of the present generation so that because of their arrogant nature they do not become helpless and miserable like Ansai and their parents to do not die alone miserably like Theleb. The novelist succeeds in presenting the plot of the novel as the life of the youths of the present generation and their problems.

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<sup>47</sup> Boro, Rita. *Thwisam*. P-94

### 3.1.6 Swmaosarnaini Orgeng:

Rita Boro's Swmaosarnaini Orgeng is based upon the heated and intense circumstances during the time of Bodoland movement in which the Bodos had to shed their blood and sacrifice their lives, lose their loved ones, women folk raped and stripped off their dignity, villages and properties destroyed, Bodo youths had to flee from their homes and hide themselves in forests and join in militant and extremist groups etc. The novelist portrays these kinds of incidents in her novel.

Social movement is serious social issue. Every community is well aware and conscious in protecting their culture, literature and fighting for their civil rights. Social Movement is a form of 'Collective Behaviour' in which a large number of people are organized or alerted to support and bring about or to resist 'social change'. Revolutions and reformations are general types of social movements.<sup>48</sup> Similarly, the Bodo are also in order to protect their language, literature and culture and to achieve their civil rights underwent social revolutions in different periods of time and these revolutionary movements brought a lot of sufferings and sacrifices in their lives. During the times of movement in the demand for a separate statehood, there occurred countless incidents and events in different periods of time spread in different regions of the state for which thousands of innocent Bodo people faced financial hardships, lose educational benefits, many Bodo people sacrificed their lives, many Bodo women were raped and stripped of their dignity, many became crippled and many innocent were framed and arrested and put in jail.

Even though the Bodoland movement is spread far and wide in the entire state, this novel is based mainly in the incidents happening in the Tangla region of that movement. The novelist portrayed Agoli alias Anita from childhood till adulthood to become a women president, leader and a revolutionary in that prolonged time period in which quite a number of issues relating to language, religious conversion, second marriage, drinking habits and the intense heated environment created as a result of the demand for a separate state by the Bodos.

Agoli is a daughter from a family depending upon agriculture. She is quite good in her studies and expert in the daily household chores. Her happy and contented family consist of her father, mother, elder brother, younger sister and her younger brother. In the novel it is

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<sup>48</sup> Sharma, L. *A Comprehensive Dictionary of Terms in Anthropology*. P-406

found that most of the people during that time lack sufficient education and many of them have studied only till standard one or two. The problem is some lacks of interest in studies, long distance from home to school and quite a many of them remain busy in household agricultural activities. In other words it can be said that the prime reason is mainly due to lack sufficient number of schools in the society and the inability to understand the importance of education. One more problem worth mentioning is keeping the girls away from school and studies. Hence, in the earlier times of the society the women folk usually are kept at a distant from school education. They remain busy in daily household chores or sent to become house maids and child caretakers. In the novel it becomes evident through the conversation between Agoli's mother and Dubri. When young Agoli comes out to go to primary school and her mother watches her down the road then Dubri says that instead of sending her to school she should be sent to become a child caretaker to earn some money. Their conversation is –

“: ए हनै खिंखिया फरायसाकलियाव थांनायखौ नायहरदों र’ आं ।”

साउलिया फिन्नायसै ।

: ए नंगौ, जोंहानिखौबो थांनो होदोंमोन मोराय मास्तारा । हगार हरा हाय आं । बखालि दोन्ना जानांगौ आंहा ।”<sup>49</sup>

दुब्रिया इसे काब्रांहैनो फिन्नायसै ।

English rendering –

: Oh, I am watching Khengkhri (Agoli) go to school.

Saoli says,

: Oh Ok, I was also told by the old teacher to send my daughter also in the school. I won't send her. I have to send her to be a child caretaker and earn some money.

Dubri replies back in a rather pessimistic manner.

Further when Agoli passes her primary schooling and decides to go to a government school in the nearby town, her mother stops her and says –

“दे थोसिगोन । दानिया मावनाय दांनाय फारसे गोसो होदो । हिन्जावनि फिसा ।”<sup>50</sup>

English rendering –

Ok. It is sufficient. Now give interest in learning household chores. You are a girl.

From the above narrative it becomes clear that the rural people fail to understand the importance of education in human life and even though Agoli is stopped from further

<sup>49</sup> Boro, Rita. *Swmaosarnaini Orgeng*. P-12

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. p-66

continuing her studies she goes to school due to her strong determination. Times pass by and she passes her high school and college. At that time the circumstance of the movement intensifies. When the PTCA demands a separate region for the Plain Tribals of Assam named as 'Udayachal' then quite a number of Bodo folks had to sacrifice, battered by the police and CRPF and had to lose their lives. During the time of Udayachal movement, in order to protect and develop the Bodo language, literature and socio culture the Bodo Sahitya Sabha (BSS) demands and starts Roman Script movement. During that Roman script movement quite a number of people from Betaibari village are arrested and tortured by the police and CRPF and has to face injustice. Among them is Agoli's father who becomes seriously injured and has to suffer for the rest of his life. In the words of the novelist –

“मोनबारुआ गामिनि हाल सालफोरखौ गावनि बिसिजों राज्लायो । दुखु खालामो र'मान हांखोनि दुखु दाहायानो जोबना थायाखै । पुलिस्जों हमना लांजाना बुजानायफोरानो दाबो साखाडो ।”<sup>51</sup>

English rendering –

Mwnbaru discusses the situation of the village with his wife. He feels sad that the issue of Roman script is not yet over. The torture of the police still pains his body.

It thus becomes clear that the Bodos had to undergo and suffer a lot during the movement for achieving their civil rights one after another movement is fought by them. The movement of the PTCA intensifies gradually with a lot of rallies and processions conducted in different times. Anita's elder brother and many others from their village are taken to Guwahati to take part in the movement. Over the time the ideologies among the leaders changes and the out of lack of unity the students union divides into two groups – one is Brahma and the other is Ramchiary. During the discussions regarding the matter by the administrative conflicts starts to arise among themselves which makes the circumstances much more worse.

The year is 1988 and the month of December. One fine evening a huge fire erupts in the Mwiguri High School located on the north Bataibari village by which the people in that area are much concerned and races about to find the matter as to what happened, who did and how did the incident occur?

The incident frightens the residents of Bataibari village and alerts everyone in the families to stay together. Mwnbaru is also unable to sleep the whole night and has seen a lot of

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<sup>51</sup> Boro, Rita. *Swmaosarnaini Orgeng*. P-9

movements in his entire life. So he is frightened about the situation if anyone happens to burn his house when they are asleep and feels concerned about what might happen to his family members. Thus through Mwnbaru's character it comes to light the circumstances endured by the people in the Bodo community as a result of the movements.

In this manner after various movements and struggles by the Bodos, the Central Government and the State Government decides to have a discussion and find solutions to the ongoing problems. In this discussion along with the president of ABSU Upendra Nath Brahma and 40 other members took part in Delhi. Even though discussions are taken place in Delhi to find a possible solution the State Government has not stopped torturing the innocent civil life of the Bodo community. After passing the Assam Disturbed Areas Act in 1955 the Bodo people are tortured ruthlessly where their houses burned and properties destroyed by which the Bodo people had to lead lives as refugees in camps where innocent men are charged with TADA case for which they had to hide themselves in forests resulting in decline of men folk in Bodo village and household.

Upendra Nath Brahma is a true nationalist and his ideology is quite clear and strong. He requests the entire community to be united in this fight for one's rights and tries to build a bond among each and every Bodo citizen. During the talks and discussions pertaining to the Bodoland movement Upendra Nath Brahma unfortunately falls sick and tragically upon the woes of the entire Bodo community dies and raises a question in the minds of every one as to who will lead the movement and fight for the rights of the community. The quote likewise during rallies and meetings –

“थांखि, नोजेर आरो गोसो दात थानाय गोख्रोंग जांखिथायारि थाबला सोमावसारनायखौ रावबो होबथानो हाया ।  
पुलिस मिलिटारिआ सुबुं हानजानि गोसो आरो हासथायनायखौ अराय समनि थाखाय दबथायनानै दोननो हाया । ग'न  
बिप्लब एबा mass revolution नि गोहोखौ पुलिस मिलिटारिआ फोजोबसांनो हाया ।  
अब्ला बर' फोरा मानो जांखिखांनानै देरहाया ? जों मानो जांखिथायारि जाया ? देरहानायानो जोंनि थांखि । Long live  
Revolution !”

English rendering –

If the aim, ideology and mindset is strong and determined no one can suppress the revolution. The police and military cannot forever oppress the demands of the mass people. Police and military can never end mass revolution.

Then why can't the Bodo masses be alert? Why are we not united? Winning is our goal. Long Live Revolution.

An intense and fearsome environment is thus created for which no one able to move freely around. Shortly after the demise of UN Brahma, the CRPF, PTF and APBN together rapes 12 women of the Bodo community in the Baghmara village of Barpeta district. As a matter of fact even the minor girls were also not spared in their hands which is a very tragic incident for the entire Bodo community and human rights. When Mwnbaru was deep engrossed in such thoughts he suddenly hears a loud blast. Saoli and Anita also hears the blast, wakes up and runs hurriedly together towards the Haogri river on the west. On the other hand, Muruli, his wife and her parents gathers in the courtyard out of fear. At the same when Anita and her parents comes running to Muruli's house and they hear stepping sounds in the water and becomes more frightened, just as they were about to run in the forest nearby Anita's brother Khada and Muruli speaks out identifying themselves and reassures not to be frightened. Mwnbaru speaks his ordeal in the moment as –

“हनै हनै सोरबा फैदों, दै बारदों । पुलिस फोरसो खोमा, खारदो खारदो ।”<sup>52</sup>

English rendering –

Look someone is coming, crossing the waters. May be the police, run, run !

Khada comes and informs them the incident that when they were guarding their village the police comes and attacks them. He further says that Benga is shot that during that attack. From this it thus becomes clear that during the revolutionary movement the Bodos had to pass their days and nights in frightening situations, remain hungry for days while hiding in the forests.

After the demise of UN Brahma, Bwisumuthiary takes the role to lead the movement as the president and to achieve their long standing goals and demands began to work the students union and the women organization. The more they created awareness and consciousness among the mass to leave the habits of drinking, gambling, superstitious beliefs and second marriages to reform the society the more are the people attracted to such habits. They began to secretly prepare and sell wine among the masses. That's why the students union and the women organization has decided to take strong action against such antisocial activities

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<sup>52</sup> Boro, Rita. *Swmaosarnaini Orgeng*. P-126

because these are bad habits which hamper the growth and development of a society and community as a whole. For this purpose Anita also takes an active participation with the leaders and for which the people in the society began to hate her, scold her and even curse her.

After many attempts, struggles and sacrifices there arises a possible solution to the mass movement for which a three member expert committee is formed to examine the problems of the community and find ways to solve them. Here to showcase the culture, religion and customs of the community they organize an exhibition in Bonorgaon of Udalguri district. In this exhibition Anita comes across and meets Mithisar and just like her he is also a nationalist.

Thus after a prolonged struggle and sacrifices of countless events and with the collaboration of the Students Union and the State Government arrived at an agreement and an accord has been finally signed to form the Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC). Compelled by the circumstances, the State Government and Bodo leaders (ABSU-BPAC) finally arrived at an agreement to end the pending dispute. A Memorandum of Settlement (Mos), popularly known as the 'Bodoland Accord' (Bodo Accord) was signed on 20<sup>th</sup> February 1993 in the presence of the representative from the Centre, Rajesh Pilot, creating a 'Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC).'<sup>53</sup>

After achieving the BAC accord an interim council is formed to manage and lead the community and Bwisumuthiary is given the responsibility of the Chief Executive Member and a political party became necessary for the survival of the community. Accordingly Bodoland People's Party (BPP) is formed. But soon after the formation of the BPP the conflicts between the Bodos began to grow where everyone struggles with their own ideologies.

In this prolonged time frame Anita loses her father. During this time she was studying BA degree and at the same time was conferred the Secretary of the Anchalik Women Welfare. As she was continuing her studies along with social works a tragic incident occurs, a group of young men comes out of now where and raids Anita's house and batters her and her mother

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<sup>53</sup> Pulloppillil, T & Aluckal, J. *The Bodos Children of Bhullumbutter*. P-92

cruelly in the name of stopping of selling and drinking wine. This incident leaves Anita sad and speechless. Even after working tirelessly in the name of the reformation of the society, today she becomes in need of an identity. The prime reason behind this is political conflicts, personal differences and lack of unity for which it becomes difficult to identify and understand what right and wrong, who is right and who is at fault. Mithisar comes to know about the incident of Anita and her mother and is shocked and deeply saddened by the reasons behind for which he also becomes fed up of working for the welfare of the society. He expresses himself to Anita through a letter –

“जाय बेबस्थाया जॉनि खावसेनि खावसेखौ सुफुंनो हाया बेखौनो लानानै बेसेबा गुलुं गुजुं । साफ्रोमबो गावबा गावनि आइदलजिजो जुजियोब्ला बे हारिया थानाय नडा । बेफोर गासैबो सोरखारनि डिभाइड एन्द रुल मिनथिबाय अनिता । इंराजखौ होखारबाय नाथाय बे हादोरनि बेगिरिफोर बे पलिसि खौ बजबना लाबाय ।”<sup>54</sup>

English rendering –

They are in conflicts with those solutions which cannot fulfill even a quarter of our demands. Of everyone is follows their own ideology then this community will not survive. All these are the strategies of the government of divide and rule. They have chased away the British but are still following their policies.

Seeing the problems faced by the Bodos and the conflicts among leaders Mithisar gets fed up and decides to leave his home. On the other hand, Anita also never expected such kinds of conflicts among the Bodos and their leaders. In this way many common Bodo people and leaders are shot, bombed and killed in front of Anita. Many leaders and social workers express their dissatisfaction with the BAC and through the leadership of Hagrama Basumatary and after four years of another rigorous movement with his newly formed organization namely BLT, the BAC is dissolved and on the 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2003 an agreement is passed and signed between the Central Government and the BLT. The newly formed agreement is Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC). After achieving this milestone of BTC everyone expected peace in the region but the conflicts and issues among the Bodos never ended. As for instance, one night a revolutionary namely Sombar is raided in a camp by the Army during the All Clear Out operation and has to escape and come to Anita’s house seeking for help. Any revolutionary person is a criminal in the eyes of the government and in this instance, Anita’s house providing help to Sombar becomes critical for them. Anita suggests him to surrender.

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<sup>54</sup> Boro, Rita. *Swmaosarnaini Orgeng*. P-174

The prime reasons behind the incidents among the Bodos during the movement of demanding for a separate state are mainly because oppression by the government, suppression by the other communities, personal conflicts and lack of unity. At the same time lack of education especially for women, poor economic condition, religious conversion is also seen in the novel.

### Summing up:

Social issue is a serious problem which tremendously affects a society. In the day to day life every individual in the society comes across such problems. Such problems create consciousness and awareness in the minds of the people in the society. The writers of the novels are members of the Bodo community and have selected the themes of their novels from the sufferings of such issues. Such problems are not only of the Bodos but the entire nation as a whole. Thus in the novels movement for the demand for a separate state, communal violence, suppression of women, superstitious beliefs, witch craft, witch hunting and the issues of the present generation youths takes the place of social issues. These problems not only affect one person or community but the entire nation as a whole in a much adverse way. At the same time the other existing problems of the community such as poverty, illiteracy, gender discrimination, political issue, religious issue, corruption and so on. Based on all these issues, the novelist tries to create awareness and consciousness in the minds of the people in the Bodo society.