

# Social awareness and Role of Women Reflected in ‘Abari’ and ‘Dumphaoni Phitha’ short stories published in “Hathorkhi Hala” and “Jugami” magazines: A study

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## Abstract:

In the history of Bodo literature ‘Abari’ short story written by Ishan Chandra Muchahary considered as the first Bodo short story with required characteristics of a short story. In 1940 it was published in “Hathorkhi Hala” magazine edited by Promod Chandra Brahma. The depicted pictures of the story were social awareness and role of women.

“Dumphaoni Phitha” short story was written in 1985 by Janil Kumar Brahma and published in “Jugami” magazine edited by Bireswar Basumatary of Udalguri in 1988. Struggle for the development of Bodo language and literature and struggle of workers for their sustainable economical condition are depicted in this short story.

The messages of both the short stories are awareness to develop Bodos by empowering women through social awareness. A developed society is helpful in development of its language and literature. Development of a community depends on development of society and its language and literature, so in this study importance is given to bring awareness on positive role of women for the development of Bodo society.

**Key words:** Language and literature, awareness, role, women and empowerment.

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION:

Renowned writer Kamal Kumar Brahma said that, “Bibar” is the first published magazine of Bodo language. Through this “Bibar” magazine they were created poetry, song, prose and short stories with their intellectual mind. Story of deep philosophical language ‘Rongdsi Phagli’ of Satish Chandra Basumatary was published in “Bibar” magazine. The Bibar era of Bodo literature is considered from the year 1920 to 1940.<sup>1</sup>

“Hathorkhi Hala” magazine was published during ‘Bibar’ era in 1940 by Promod Chandra Brahma. The writers of the magazine were Ishan Chandra Muchahary, Ananda Muchahary, Kali Kumar Lahary and Munindra Sumphramary. This magazine contributes in the development of Bodo language and literature.

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<sup>1</sup> Brahma, Riju Kumar, Boro Thulaini Jarimin arw Thunlai 2007. Page no 59

“Hathorkhi Hala” magazine is remarkable in the history of Bodo literature, where first Bodo short story ‘Abari’ written by Ishan Chandra Muchahary was published. The Bodo literature begins with publication of “Bibar” magazine and its development started through the publication of “Alongbar” and “Hathorkhi Hala” magazines. “Hathorkhi Hala” magazine was published by using Assamese script.

Social picture of the Bodo society is depicted in ‘Aabari’ short story written by Ishan Chandra Muchahary. It is the first short story in the history of Bodo Literature. It has required characteristics of a short story. Guneswar Muchahary considered ‘Abari’ as the first short story and he said that, “Abari short story has all the essential ingredients of a story, it is well knit both in execution of theme and characterization.” and it is reflected in the following fraction of his prose ‘Boroni Sungdo Solo Arw Soloma’ published in “Laithun” Second Edition, 1994

‘Dani sungdo soloni abung Akhuwa bwi ‘Bibar Muga’ niphrai nujabwdwng. Khonthaigiri Ishan Muchaharyni ‘Abari’ anw bini anggw arw gwgw nerswn. Bithang Muchaharyni sigang gubwi sungdo solokhou nunw mwna. Bithangni ‘Abari’ aonw sungdo soloni aakhu, agor akhaya mwjangwi berkhangdwng.<sup>2</sup>

English rendering:

The present short story of full characteristics begins since ‘Bibar’ era, ‘Abari’ short story written by poet Ishan Chandra Muchahary is his own clear example. Before his creation no short story having complete character was seen. The characters and pictures of short story were reflected clearly in his ‘Abari’ short story.

“Dumphaoni phitha” is a Book of collected short stories written by Janil Kumar Brahma which were published in different magazines. The book of collected short stories is name after a short story ‘Dumphaoni Phitha’. In the preface of the book writer Janil Kumar Brahma said that, he has written the short story “Dumphaoni Phitha” in 1985. Later, in 1988 it was published in “Jugami” magazine which was edited by Bireswar Basumatary of Udalguri during modern era of Bodo literature. Bodo Sahitya Sabha was formed in 1952 at Goybari near Basugaon, at present which is under the Chirang district of BTR, Assam (India). Modern era of Bodo literature began since formation of Bodo Sahitya Sabha in 1952.

Short stories published in different magazines were collected and published in a book form naming “Dumphaoni phitha”. The book “Dumphaoni phitha” is a collection of short stories written in Bodo by Janil Kumar Brahma was published by Bani Kanta Goyari on behalf of Sijou Publication Board, Bijni-783390, Chirang, Assam (India) in February, 2005.

In the short story “Dumphaoni Phitha” writer of the short story depicted the picture of Bodo language and literature of that era. Enthusiastic workers were engaging in developmental activities of language and literature ignoring their self problem. The major problem of active workers was their poor economic condition so they got forbidden from their family members. This poor economic condition was a source for writer were he used it as a weapon to motivate women to come forward to help their husband to improve economic condition of their family. After motivated and knowing the importance of Bodo language and literature Dumphao the main woman character of “Dumphaoni Phitha” wife of Samen a teacher of venture school as well as social worker come forward to help her husband by doing small business of pitha shop (rice cake shop) and then she did not forbade her husband in doing social activities. The positive role of woman bring turning point to their family.

In this study importance is given on the social awareness and role of Bodo women through the short stories ‘Abari’ written by Ishan Chandra Muchahary and ‘Dumphaoni Phitha’ written by Janil Kumar Brahma published in “Hathorkhi Hala” and “Jugami” magazines respectively.

## 1.2 METHODOLOGY

Descriptive method has been applied in this research study.

Both primary and secondary sources have been collected for the preparation of this research study. Primary sources have been collected from the selected short stories published in “Hathorkhi Hala”, “Jugami” magazines

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<sup>2</sup> Hazowary, Mangal Singh, Laithun, Bodo, 1994 Page No 32

and “Dumphaoni phitha” a text book of collected short stories of Janil Kumar Brahma. The secondary sources have been collected from reference books related to subject.

### 1.3 OBJECTIVES

Following are the objectives of study to explore the important points which were reflected in selected short stories of this study.

- i. Encourage women to take responsibility.
- ii. Information of first publish Bodo short story.
- iii. Explanation about compulsion reason of Kharsonnanwi haba janai (married by entering to house of bride groom) by an aged girl and marriage custom.
- iv. Importance of mutual understanding between husband and wife and a positive role of women in supporting her husband and family.
- v. Importance of social work for the development of society, language and literature during the demand of time by the Bodos of every category.

### 2.1 DISCUSSION

Aabari is a main character of ‘Aabari’ short story. She is an elder daughter of Gujri. Uli is his elder brother and Maiphri is her younger sister. Ishan Chandra Muchahary depicted the life of young Bodo women through Abari. In her life social marriage did not favored in right age due to her physically challenge condition. She had cancelled one social marriage for the reason the young man who was to be bride groom was physically challenge, he could not do any work and he was dependent to others. On the other hand Abari could do any work, though she was also physically challenge. So, Abari the main character of the short story was taken decision on her marriage.

Instead of social marriage, Abari accepted the offer of a young man Kharsonnai Haba (A marriage where bride goes to bride grooms house for marriage). Elder brother and mother did not take responsibility since Abari had forced them to cancel her social marriage by return of bracelet (Ashan Phinphinnai). So, Abari has taken decision regarding her marriage, she accepted Kharsonnai Haba (A marriage, where bride goes to bride grooms’ house for marriage) offered by a young man of Shumliguri village.

Abari was expert in cooking, weaving and domestic works. In one year, in the competition of weaving subject she won first prize. She feels herself as unlucky because one of her leg was not strong as other normal people, yet she has no problem for moving to do any works. Due to physically challenge Abari’s social marriage with physically sound person was not fixed. Girls of her village and equal to her age were got married and her younger sister was also got married. Now she become young woman and her friends were married women.

Being the elder sister of Maiphri during marriage ceremony of Maiphri Abari did not show her sorrow rather she freely participated as participated in others marriage. A positive role was taken by Abari in her younger sister’s marriage keeping her own sorrow aside.

No further opportunity of social marriage came in her life till marriage of her younger sister Maiphri was over, yet she did not take any wrong decision because she love and live for her mother. It is a firm and positive role of Abari and it is reflected in following fraction.

Nowao sukh janaibaidi biyw jebw maonw sanw nathai maonw haya. Manwna bimakhou biyw nagar haya.<sup>3</sup>

English rendering:

For the peace of family she wants to do various actions but she could not do. Only because of her mother, Abari could not go away.

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<sup>3</sup> Brahma, Promod Chandra, Hathorkhi Hala, 2021 Page No 20

Abari got information that, a young man of Shumliguri village want to marry her if she willingly comes to his house. Abari knows the young man and she decided to go to his home to get married with him, because now she has no shyness, she stands on herself. In the evening of one good day she went to get married and she had one Dokona, a necklace of artificial jewelry on her neck, one artificial bracelet on her hand and nose ring. She was happy, though she had limited cloths, costume and jewelry. Though it was late yet, Abari got relax at the eleventh hour of her life as a result of her patient and positive role.

The writer Janil Kumar Brahma spread social awareness messages through his 'Dumphaoni Phitha' short story. His intention of spreading messages was to bring awareness among Bodos to inspire them in the developmental activities of the Bodo community. Along with awareness on social activities, awareness on women role to encourage them to become economically sustainable in their life is seen in the story.

Samen was a teacher of Boro Jwhlwao Gudi Phoraoshali (Bodo Jwhlwao Lower Primary School). It was a venture school which was provincialised six year later from the starting of his wife Dumphao's Pitha shop (Pitha means rice cake). Though Samen was not a leader but he engaged himself in various activities of Bodo Sahitya Sabha. Enthusiastically he contributed services for the development of Bodo language, literature, culture and society.

The turning point comes in Dumphao's life from meeting her class friends Gaodang and Sarola in the tea shop of Bahadur Mephal (Nepali) in Shyamthaibari bazaar (market). Both Gaodang and Sarola were busy in appreciating their own husbands and their income. They did not forget to appreciate their children and their life style. They were wives of government employees, but Dumphao was wife of a teacher of venture school. She came to Shyamthaibari bazaar to sell three chickens to purchase Khundung (thread), rice and vegetables. Dumphao was insulted by her class friends in their meeting at tea shop by saying that, why she lost her physical beauty, whom did she married and what a bad luck in her life. They were proud and overconfidence about their status of life.

Discussion between Gaodang and Sarola and their appreciation about their children and husband is not positive sign for development of their family. Instead of depicting only positive role of women writer depicted that weak picture to motivate Bodo women. It is clearly reflected through the following conversation of Sarola.

“Jwngni jiukhou bungnangouni jebw bathra gwiliyahay Dumphao. Jwng mwjangkhaswi oraibw. Pha nwnng nwnngni phisaihkou jwngni babu biphamwnbaidi townao thanw mwnnai mwjang sakhrphwr nagirnw thinnw haya hwmba?”<sup>4</sup>

English rendering:

Dumphao, you need not say anything about our life. We are always in good condition. You ask your husband to search good job like our husbands where you can live in city.

Dumphao never expected such kind of comment from her class friends. When she return from bazaar, on the way to her home she was weeping with deep sorrow and she feel angry on herself for her bad luck. Just after reached her home she felt down on bed with deep sorrow. In the evening her husband comes at home from the meeting of Bodo Sahitya Sabha held at Tharaibari with empathy stomach. He asked her two or three times to prepared rice because he was hungry but she remain silent, so he went near to his wife. She started to abuse her husband by saying that, she never gets peace in life by getting married with Samen. She added that, she got only suffering from poor in her married life. She used to abuse her husband that, what benefits will he get by serving for the Bodo society and will the society look after his future life. First of all Samen listen silently and then try to clarify Dumphao that, the luck of everybody is not equal and nobody become poor willingly. Samen said that, he is continuously trying to get a job.

In the case of social work regarding development of Bodo language and literature Samen try to clarify Dumphao that, he could not contribute for the society rather just assisting the social worker. In present day, everybody of other communities is busy in their developmental works. Only our Bodo community left behind to others. If

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<sup>4</sup> Brahma, Janil Kumar, Dumphaoni phitha, 2005 Page No- 02

everybody of us remain silent for our poor economic condition of personal life, then when and who will work for development of our community. Following fraction of the story is meaningful clarification of Samen to his wife Dumphao. In the story it is clarification to Dumphao by her husband and on the other hand writer of the story wants to Motivate Bodo women in the field of Bodo society and their economic condition.

“Nwngnw nubai Dumphao, dani mugayao boybw subungphranw gao-gaoni harikhou dikhangnaini simang nubai. Boynibw hariyanw gwjouyao gakhwnw habai. Jwngni Boro hariyalo gahayao gwglaiswna thlangbai. Nikhaori hwnna jwng boibw jona thabwla, hariya bwrwithw thangna thabaonw? Nwng lekha gerwng hinjao Dumphao. Nwng ang arw jwng boibw epha epha harikhou bwkhangnw najayaba malaya swrthw bwkhangbaonw Dumphao? Boro harini rao-harimu phwthangna lakhinaini rwnao Shiboram, Amlaram mwnha dinwi thwigarlangbai, jiu baolangbai, Boro bimakhou sbinw thulunga hwlambangai. Nathai jwng harini thakhai ma hwnw hakhw. Bung Dumphao nwng.”<sup>5</sup>

English rendering:

Dumphao you seen that, in present era everybody are busy in developmental work and they have dream to develop their community. Every community becomes developed. Only our Bodo community left underdeveloped. If we stay silent without doing anything by saying that, we are poor, then how our community will survive? You are literate woman Dumphao. If, all of us including you and myself do not try to work for development of our community then who will come forward to develop? In the battle of survival of language-culture of the Bodos Shiboram and Amlaram were sacrificed their life. They inspire us to work for the Bodos. But, what contribution is given by us. You tell me, Dumphao.

After hearing clarification of her husband Dumphao understands the importance of social work and from her heart she promises to help her husband in any work in their life. This successful awareness message was depicted by the writer through the difficulties face by Samen and Dumphao and it was turning point in their life which is reflected in the above depicted pictures of the story.

Dumphao think that, if women of other caste can engage in betel and nut shop, tea shop and lead their life then why Bodo women cannot lead their life through business. Dumphao think to start small business so, in next day she went to market to sell her two or three hens then she purchased rice and Thingkhli (an earthen pot jar) to prepared Phitha (rice cake). From the next morning she started her business with a tea and Phitha (rice cake) shop at Shyamthaibari local market closely situated with national high way. Thus she became a successful business woman in her life. Being a successful business woman she contributed rupees fifth thousand in the construction of Martyrs Tomb in the name of hero who have sacrificed their life for the development of Bodo community. After six years Dumphao has started her business her husband Samen's venture school was regularized by the government. A positive role of woman was taken by Dumphao so, Samen and Dumphao could overcome from problems in their life. Through this story, writer spread motivational message to Bodo women that, they can help their husband like Dumphao.

Different types of people are there in every society, in Bodo society there also different types of people. Some people engage themselves in social developmental activities. On the other hand some people do not think and contribute for the development of their own society. Even they do not know and try to understand the standard or status of their own society. They have no relation with the developmental functions of the society, except their family life and enjoyment. They neither contribute physically, mentally and financially. People of such character are reflected in the short story through the conversation between two characters Gaodang and Sarola.

Sakhriniphrai suthi lana phwinai phisaiphwrjwng Gaodang arw Sarola mwnhabw be melao nujaphwidwngmwn. Mani thakhai esibang gidir mel juthumkhw beni jebw udish mwnakhiswi biswr. Dumphaonithing mijlou mijlou naihornanwi Sarolani khwmayao srwd bungdwng Gaodangya- “Aayu mathw Dumphaowabw guphung

<sup>5</sup> Brahma, Janil Kumar, Dumphaoni phitha, 2005 Page No- 04

jatharbailayw. Phagliyakhau Sinai hornwsw halaitharakwi hang.” Sarolayabw laswinw phin hwdwng Gaodangni khwmayao- “malai mansi gidir jabai nalai bal. Thu thangdini.” Sanwibw jonainiphras dubphung sikharw. Thangnai namwinw Gaodangwa bunglangyw- “mithing janaikhounw aanglai maniba phuja, mela, gan-bajwnasw jagwn sandwngmwn. Bibdi hwnnanwi mithiywba phwigrangtharamwnhang.”<sup>6</sup>

English rendering:

Both Gaodang and Sarola were present in the meeting with their husbands who were come in their home on official leave from their duty. They did not know the purpose of the big meeting, why it was held. By seeing towards Dumphao Gaodang was whispering to ear of Sarola that, “Oh, Dumphao become healthy. I could not identify her a little time before.” Sarola slowly replied by whispering to ears of Gaodang that, “She become leader. Let us go.” Both of them get up from sitting. They back from the meeting and in the min time Gaodang said that, I would not think that was meeting but think that, there will be held worship of God (puja), festival (mela), theatre and music (gan-bajwna). If I would come to know that it was meeting I would not come to here.”

From the conversation of Gaodang and Sarola it is understand that, social awareness in each and every where and for each and every Bodos is most important. If maximum of Bodos understand regarding their family and community and try to help in the developmental activities of family and society directly or indirectly then it will be helpful for the development of family and Bodo society.

If maximum of Bodo women try to come forward and cooperate in the development of their own family and Bodo society then there will more possibility to work for the development of Bodo language and literature.

#### CONCLUSION:

In early era proficiency in weaving and various domestic works was given very important. Abari was expert in weaving and various domestic works. Abari’s marriage was not held before the marriage of her younger sister Maiphri so she got nervous, yet she did not taken any wrong decision such as suicide. Patient of Abari bring turning point at the eleventh hour of her life and it becomes an example of positive as well as good role of women.

Difficulties in life helps Dumphao to become economically sustain through small business and she understands importance of mutual understanding and cooperation between husband and wife. Since when she was understood and becomes economically sound she comes forward to help morally and financially for the development of Bodo language and literature. It was possible for Dumphao by understanding the importance of women empowerment and implemented it in practical in her life.

These are messages of women awareness to Bodos through main characters Abari and Dumphao of ‘Abari’ and ‘Dumphaoni Phitha’ short stories by depicting clear and positive role of women.

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