REFLECTION OF TRIBAL LIFE IN MAUNA ONTH MUKHOR HRIDOY: A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Novel is a relatively long work of narrative fiction, written in prose form. It deals imaginatively with human experience, usually through a connected sequence of events involving a group of persons in a specific setting. Novel can be considered as the mirror of a society. It's a best way to reflect the social systems. Novel is an integral part of literature hence the novel has immense importance. Since the last part of the nineteenth century novel has been becoming an integral part of the Assamese literature. Various novelists are enriching the Assamese literature through their novel. Yeshe Dorje Thongchi is one of the novelists who through his novels contributed to the Assamese literature. His Mauna Onth Mukhor Hridoy is one such novel which elaborately depicting the tribal social life of Arunachal Pradesh.

Key words: Tribal, Social, life, Assamese, language, Novel, Yeshe Dorje Thongchi

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1. INTRODUCTION

Literature has different components. Short story, Poem, Drama and Novel are the integral component of literature. All of the components have their own structure. Out of these Novel is significant. Novel is typically published as a book. The word novel is an Italian word *novella*, which denotes short story of something new.[1] It can be considered as a social document. It's also known as mirror of the society because novel is intrinsically related to life of human being. The novelist tries to provide an artistic analysis of the details of life. So every great novel is a realistic representation of human being and society.[2] Victorian period is the remarkable period regarding the literary history; because since then novel has emerged as popular literary forms, which replaced poems and drama. The main reason behind it was novel able to reflect the life of the majority people of the society. The popularity of novel has started due to the inclusion of characters and stories about the middle and working classes. It means middle and working classes became the centre point of novel.[3] Novel came into popular towards the end of the 17th century, due to growing middle class with more leisure time to read and money to buy books.[4]

In the context of India, in the later part of 19th century novel as a literary genre have started to become popular. In India novels are being published in every language, Assamese is also not exceptional. Towards the end of the 19th century, novel had started to become an important component of Assamese literature. The colonial period can be considered as the root of Assamese novel. With the publication of Jatrikar Jatra the formally the history of Assamese novel has started. Padamanta Gohainbarua and Lakhsminath Bezbaruah; duo can be considered as the beginners of Assamese novel. Gohainbarua wrote two novels i.e. Bhanumoti and Lahori and Bezbarua wrote *Padum Knowari*, these novels were published in the last decade of 19th century.[5] Later steadily the numbers of Assamese novelists have increased which have started to write novel on various theme.

In Assamese novel contemporary society of Assam has been best reflected by the novelists. The Assamese novel has significantly contributing to the development of Assamese literature. In different periods different novelists have wrote novel on varied themes. In this aspect the Assamese novelist have been writing novel on reflecting the tribal life and society. It was Rajani Kanta Bordoloi who first wrote novel on tribal life in the last decade of 19th century, since then various novelists have written novel on tribal life and its society. Among the novelist who wrote novel on tribal life Yeshe Dorje Thongchi is eminent one.[6] He was born in West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh in 1952. By birth he is a native of Arunachal Pradesh but he did his Master degree from Gauhati University of Assam in Assamese literature. He started to learn Assamese language in spite of his mother tongue Sherdukpen, because Assamese was the medium of instruction in the schools of erstwhile North East Frontier Agency (Present Arunachal Pradesh). He has so far written dozens novels, and numerous short stories and plays, all in Assamese language. Out of his novels *Mauna Onth Mukhar Hriday*(Silent lips, murmuring hearts) is the most popular one. For this novel he was awarded with Sahitya Academy award in 2005. In his novels Thongchi tries to highlight about the little known communities of Arunachal Pradesh. He even considered as the first author to have taken their inside stories to the outside world.[7] His other novels are *Sanam*, *Aakou Janam Lom*, *So Kota Manuh*, *Bishokoinyar Dexot*, *Missing* etc are remarkable. *Mauna Onth Mukhar Hriday* was first published in *Prantik*, an Assamese fortnightly magazine. In 2001 the novel published as a book. In the novel, the novelist has elaborately written about the social life of different tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, but he especially highlighting the tribal life and society of Sherdukpen and Bangni tribe.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the paper are to study about the tribal life and society reflects on the *Mauna Onth Mukhar Hriday* novel of Yeshe Dorje Thongchi.

3. METHODOLOGY

The present paper is based on analytical and descriptive method. The data and information are collected from various books, magazines, journals and internet etc.

4. TRIBAL LIFE REFLECT IN MAUNA ONTH MUKHAR HRIDAY

Mauna Onth Mukhar Hriday written by Yeshe Dorje Thongchi is a social novel portraying on tribal life and society of erstwhile North East Frontier Agency and present Arunachal Pradesh. All of the novels written by Thongchi are based on tribal life of Arunachal Pradesh who very enthusiastically narrates the life and society of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh.[8] In his *Mauna Onth Mukhar Hriday* he has beautifully and elaborately describes the life of the simple and innocent tribal people of the state who discovers the outside world after having engaged in a construction of road into the mountains. The story of the novel revolves around two

different tribes of the state, the Wangni (Nyishi) and Sherdukpen. Both of the tribes came together to construct a road from Bomdila to Dirang. Rinsin (hero) and Yama (the heroine) are the two star-crossed lovers to meet during the construction of the road.[9] However both of the tribes were opposed their affairs as they opposed inter tribe marriage. Their love trespasses all the barriers that had been erected by their tribal society. The novel not only expresses the eternal and undying love between them but at the same time, it focuses on how the lovers were ruthlessly and savagely separated because of the strict social norms forged by their orthodox and conservative society. The novel presents how these two tribes tried to maintain their identity by becoming an obstacle to both the lovers.[10]

In the novel Thongchi vividly portrays the tribal social life of Arunachal Pradesh especially the tribal social life of Sherdukpen and Wangni tribe. In this regard he clearly mention about the traditional customs, folklore, dressing pattern, ornaments, food habit, language and socio-economic aspects of both of the tribes.

Social Customs- Every tribe has their own social customs. So accordingly the Sherdukpen tribe has also own customs. In the winter the Sherdukpen goes to the relatives of them whose resides in plain and they carry dry chilli and dry reddish with them to give their relatives. As an exchange they get betel nut-bettel leaf, paddy, Gamosa etc from their relatives. Again according to established customs if the Sherdukpen people offer *Laopani* (traditional wine) to guest; then the guest are compelled to take the *Laopani* three times.[11] In the marriage ceremony of Sherdukpen, they first follow certain rules after that the Groom's family carry the bride to their home. In the novel when Siring Jangmu enter the camp of Rinsin Norbu then Rinsin told her that they were yet to become husband and wife as his family has yet to carry Jangmu to his home.[12] It's a belief of every tribe that the tribe itself is the superior among of all the tribe. In the novel it has seen that Wangni considers themselves as the superior then the Sherdukpen. In the novel Tadak has said to Yama that he himself belong to superior tribe and the Wangni are inferior tribe. [13]According to the customs of Wangni tribe the groom's family need to provide Methun and Pig to the bride's family as a price of the bride and this price is determined by the bride's family.[14]

Folk Belief- The tribal people have folk belief. The Serdukpen beliefs that forest man is exist, when Yama hugs Risnsin in twilight then others have considered Yama as forest man as she also short like forest man. The Serdukpen also beliefs in dream. They consider that dream has its result. When Rinsin has seen Yama in his dream then he feels that he has done wrong thinking about Yama.[15] Wangni tribe considers the existence of ghost; they worship through giving sacrifice of Cock and Pig to be secure from ghost. They belief, if someone cries in the forest then ghost would appear immediately and the ghost would affect the man.[16]

Song and Dance- In the novel novelist also mention about the song and dance of both of the tribes. The Sherdukpen has different kinds of colourful dance like Yak dance, Aajilamu dance and Senge dance. They perform all of these dances in different events. In the novel it has shown that during the inauguration day of Saku-Sangu road having seen the dance performance of Sherdukpen the Wangni became astonished.[17] The Wangni has their own song. In the novel the Wangni girls teach the Sherdukpen to sing the song. The Sherdukpen has also their own folksong.[18]

Dress pattern and Ornamanets- Every tribe has their own dress pattern and ornaments. The dress and ornaments indicates the identity of the tribe even the tribe has their belief in particular dress and ornaments. In the novel novelist has mention about the dress and ornaments of two tribes. The Wangni woman wears tasang gems on chest and black cloth. The Sherdukpen woman covers their head through headgear which is known as sanap. They

also wear **edi sador** and their dress is known as *sinko*. The Sherdukpen man wear *gordum* cap in their head.[19]

Food Habit- Through the novel the readers able to known about the food habit of Sherdukpen and Wangni tribe. Both of the tribe consume meat of deer, wild goat and wild pig; also consume fish. They also engage in hunting like other tribe. The Wangni tribe consume rice whereas the Sherdukpen consume millet as the Sherdukpen area is not suitable for paddy cultivation. Both of the tribe drink traditional wine.[20]

Language- Language is an integral part of any tribe and any society. In the novel it's clear that the different tribes of Arunachal Pradesh have different language. Both of the Sherdukpen and Wangni tribe don't understand the language of each other. Even Rinsin and Yama fall in love without understanding the language of each other. But both of the tribe learn to speak Assamese mixing with tribal language. In the novel the influence of Nefamis language has seen; Nefamese is the lingua franca of Arunachal Pradesh. Although the tribes have spoken Nefamese, the language has increased the beauty of the novel. [21]

Besides these the Wangni tribe has their customs like if the girl denies going to the groom's house after providing the price of the girl then the groom's family has the authority to bring the girls to their house forcefully. They even treat the girl as slave for which the groom's family has already paid price of her.

5. CONCLUSION

The novel Mauna Onth Mukhar Hriday has beautifully reflecting the contemporary society of Arunachal Pradesh in 1950s. From the above discussion it can be assumed that each of the tribes has their own tribal social life. In the novel Both the Serdukpen and Wangni tribe have their distinct tribal culture which is differ from each other. The social system of tribal is completely unique. They are accustomed with such social life because generation after generation, the tribal has been following same customs. They are rigid regarding their own tribal life. The novelist eloquently portrays a picture of tribal social life i.e. traditional customs, dress pattern, food habit, language, song and dance. So in the novel the novelist wilfully ignores the economic-political and educational aspect of both of the tribes.

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