



Anuradha Sharma Pujari and her contribution to contemporary Assamese Fiction: A study

Dr. Sunita Sarmah

Assistant Professor

Dept. of Assamese

Kokrajhar Govt. College, Kokrajhar

Abstract

Anuradha Sharma Pujari is an influential Assamese journalist and author. She is the editor of Assamese monthly magazine Satsari and the highest circulated Assamese weekly Saadin. She has written many fiction and essays in Assamese Literature. 'Hriday Ek Brigyapan'- is her first novel. This novel became very popular among the youth of Assam. She has written 11 novels, 04 nos of short-story collections and 06 nos of autobiographical non-fiction. She is honored 'Kumar Kishore Memorial Award' by Assam Sahitya Sabha in 2003. In the year of 2021 she won the prestigious Sahitya Academy Award for her novel 'Eyat Ekhan Aranya Asil'. Her every fiction focuses new concept to our society. She focuses various social issues which arouse the interest of the readers.

Keywords: Contribution, Feminism, Assamese literature, Society

Aims and objectives: The main objectives of this paper is to search out the contribution of Anuradha Sharma Pujari to contemporary Assamese Fiction.

Methodology: The study is mainly based on primary data. It includes chosen work of the author. The secondary data includes research article, journal and internet sources which are related to this subject.

Introduction

Anuradha Sharma Pujari was born in 1964, at Jorhat, Assam. She studied Sociology at Dibrugarh University and Journalism at the Birla Institute of Liberal Arts and Management Sciences, Kolkata. She has been called 'one of the most popular writers of this generation'. She is the most eminent female editor whose golden pen did not stop for last three decades. Her works touch upon Assamese history and culture, addressing the lives of people from middle and lower Income brackets, and focus specifically on concerns of women, violence and insurgency. Literary Composition: Anuradha Sharma Pujari is the most popular novelist amongst the youth generation of Assam. She got her fame for her novel 'Hriday Ek Bigyapan'. This fictional debut is translated to English

which was named 'The Heart's a Showbitz' in 1998. This novel is based on her experience in media and advertising in Kolkata city. This novel broke the earlier popularity of novels in Assamese Literature. Her another novel 'Ejon Iswarar Sandhanat' was published in the same year. It became equally popular amongst readers. For these novels she immediately became a respected and popular name in Assamese Literature.

Her another novels are Kanchan(2001), Sahebpurar Baraxun(2003), Boragee Nadir Ghat(2004), Naharar Niribili Chan(2005), Raag-Anuraag(2007), Mereng(2010), Xon Harinar Chekur(2012), Neel Prajapati(2013), Jalachabi(2014), Eyat Ekhan Aranya Asil(2018). Her short story collections are Basantar Gaan(1999), Ejan Axamajik Kabir

Biography (2001), Cathrinor Xoite Eti Nirjan Duporiya(2005), No Man's Land.

'Hriday Ek Bigyapan' was her first novel. Here the name of the main character is Bhaswati. She starts working in an advertising firm in Kolkata. In recently globalized economy, characterized by speed, commodification of women's bodies and consumerist culture, Bhaswati in an increasingly disillusioned misfit. But her life changes one day when she finds Mahua Roy- a former copywriter of the company, whose desk now Bhaswati uses. The employees of the company are tight-lipped about Mahua - who was immensely successful in her career, but left for reasons they don't want to tell her.

One day, after finding a poem written by Mahua in her drawer, she decides to go in search that will take Bhaswati to the mysterious lanes of Kolkata, meet a new people who sacrificed immensely for the same values that she finds are eroded in the newly globalized India.

Her 'Kanchan' is the most popular novel in Assamese Literature. This novel depicts the life of a girl named Kanchan, who is incessantly cheated and sexually harrassed by some narrow minded men folk. The novel narrates the upheavals caused in her body to make a living for herself and her family.

Kanchan foregrounds the experience and struggles of its marginalized protagonist who attempt to circumvent her destitute situation by using her body. In this novel Kanchan is ostracized as she is seen as someone who had bartered her sexuality in exchange for familial and professional stability. The novel ends with Kanchan still living in her private fantasy world which constitutes of a relatively carefree life away from the

exploitations and deprivations of her adult life.

'Sahebpurar Baraxun' brings the light an adventurous journey of social workers specially in a village named Sahebpura from Bihar. Here the author describes a life journey of a brave Assamese girl 'Barasha'- who dedicates her life for society. The book unfolds the story of our protagonist 'Barasha' and her journey with an NGO which relentlessly works for the socio-economic development of the poor and faces numerous hurdles doing so.

The story is primarily set in a socio-economically backward and agricultural hostile village of Sahebpura in Bihar, and culturally rich and agriculturally fertile Majuli Island of Assam. The author beautifully and brutally portrays the contrasting societies and the harshest truthsabent crime, corruption, torture and exploitation by the ones with ill-gotten money and power. The story also focuses on highlighting the strength and resilience of people who are destined to work tirelessly for other people, who are not only in need of strategic and emotional support but also moral upliftment to grow and survive in the society suffocated by those people in power along with the elements of nature. It also focuses on the friendship, love and relationship that is cherished among the characters of the novel and doesn't fail to hit hard with the dark side of society and what is expects a relationship to be.

'Naharar Niribili Chan' is based on a story where Anuradha Sharma Pujari was directly involved to it. Here the author describes all her experiences which were faced by herself while she was reading in

Dibrugarh University. The characters of this novel she met and all the events that occurred on these two years are clearly mentioned in this book. The author is nicely able to express all the experiences she encountered during those days.

Her presentation of the situations and the conversations among the characters is really amazing. Apart from that, she is able to express her views on different human problems properly. By the help of the characters, she is really able to show the other side of the 1983's so called "Bideshi kinda Andolan". Lots of people died and lots of people's education life was ruined by that. But the author is able to show how it went negative for the people of Assam. She is able to express how Prafulla/Bhrigu could not utilize their power in proper way. How they could have created a better Assam with the help of Bodo and Missing community united together. Why lots of young students preferred to join a terrorist group ULFA. How the power and money in hand changed the leaders mind etc. Here, the author said about the 'Lesbian' in a brief format. This novel shows different prospective of life.

Anuradha Sharma Pujari's another novel 'Mereng' is still a masterpiece. It is based on the life journey of Indira Miri. Indira Miri was the wife of first Forest Conservator of Kaziranga National Park, Mahichandra Miri, who could put Kaziranga at the esteemed place in the world map at which it is standing now. He died at a young age, but Indira Miri despite all the odds of life could rear her society with forte. By this biographical novel Anuradha Sharma Pujari traced the life of Indira Miri, an Assamese woman par excellence, is indeed what women today

need to look up to their journey to self-assertation. Indira Miri not only stepped into the world usually held by men but proved herself to be a successful educationist.

Anuradha Sharma Pujari, without doubt has paid the best homage ever to this great Assamese Lady Indira Miri. Anuradha Sharma Pujari herself felt great respect to Indira Miri, known as Mereng. Mereng is the result of intense love and in depth research of the period which she belonged too, and the society and culture of that period.

"The novel is set in the pre-independence Era when women's education became a reality and educated women were making an impact on Indian Society. "(1)

In her another novel "Neel Prajapati", she describes all the complexities of love among the married couples. This is about life of these days in its most complex self yet depicting with a simple insight the entire process of human struggle sometimes against time, situations, fellow human beings and sometimes against the self. 'Xon Harinar Chekur' is her another famous novel. It is dedicated to the youth who are very serious and tensed about their career and often commit suicide when they failed.

Through this novel she gives a message to all the young generations that life is a very interesting journey and they shouldn't die before their death.

'Jalachabi'- is her another novel. This novel is very heart-touching and reveals the social communities of the writer.

This book has a single theme- "Has Old age become a curse in the contemporary times?" This novel has 19 chapters. Here the author describes the life journey of Subarnajyoti Devi, a simple ordinary middle

class woman but extra ordinary in her attitude of life. After three long months of painful stay in the hospital she dead. Here, the author describes the conversation between Subarnajyoti Devi and her daughter Mani. Anuradha Sharma Pujari reflects the relationship they shared just before her death.

"A relation that turned upside down because of Subarnajyoti's mental illness, which had reduced her just to a 'Jalachabi'(water image) of her earlier self. She had lost her memory, she became fragile, and extremely suspicious living on the haze of familiarity and unfamiliarity.

The novel is a pen picture of Mani's psychological predicament in dealing with the situation arising from her mother's wounded sense of pride and realization of her unavoidable depending of another on a daughter and the ultimate loss that leads Mani to listen to the ashes that still whisper."(2)

By writing four nos of Short story collections, Anuradha Sharma Pujari has won the heart of readers of all ages for their striking focus on varied social issues which arouse the interest of the readers. Her short story collections are 'Basantar Gaan', 'Ejan Axamajik Kabir Biography', 'Catherinor Xoite Eti Nirjan Dupariya', 'No Man's Land'.

Anuradha Sharma Pujari got inspiration from Homen Borgohain who called her novel 'Hriday Ek Brigyapan' - a contemporary classic as it raised some basic questions about Modern Assamese life and the complexities of the glamorous corporate world that no other writer had raised before her in fiction other than Monisankar.

Conclusion: Anuradha Sharma Pujari is the most popular novelist in today's Era. Her popularity is the real reward that came from

the readers of all age groups for the wide range of her subjects which never be wane also in future.

For her novel 'Mereng' she got Bishnu Prasad Rabha Award. She was honoured with Kumar Kishore Memorial Literary Award from Axom Sahitya Sabha. Axom Sahitya Sabha declared 'Jalachabi' - as the 'Novel of the Year'. She received Chandranath Sarma Award for her lifetime achievement and contribution to Assamese Literature. Lekhika Samaroha Society concerned on her 'Sahitya Sanmaan'. In 2021 she got the honourable Sahitya Akademy award for her popular novel Eyat Ekhan Aranya Asil.

Besides all these the readers give her the best award that is her popularity.

References:

1. Rashmi Buragohain, Mereng : Changing Perceptions of Women, NEZINE, www.nezine.com
2. Dr Ratan Bhattacharjee , source: internet, nenow.in

Bibliography

1. Sharma Pujari, Anuradha: Sahebpurar Baraxun, Banalata, Panbazar, Ghy-1, 10th edition
2. Sharma Pujari, Anuradha: Naharar Niribili Chan, Banalata, Panbazar, Ghy-1, 17th edition
3. Sharma Pujari, Anuradha: Mereng, Banalata, Panbazar, Ghy-1, 10th edition
4. Sarma, Gobindaprasad: Feminism in the post-war Assamese Novel, Dr Sukdev Adhikary (Ed) Naaribad aru Asamiya Upanyash, Jacaranda Sahitya Prakashan , Niva Enclave, Yasowanta Road, Panbazar, Ghy-1, 1st edition, 2.