

CHAPTER-V

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5.01. SITUATING MAMANI RAISOM GOSWAMI IN

POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE

The study begins with the presupposition that Mamani Raisom Goswami is a postcolonial writer because chronologically she belongs to the post-independence India and as such the focus on the marginalized and downtrodden class in her writings has a subaltern perspective. However, it is difficult to trace postcolonial elements like subalternity in the writings of an apolitical writer like her. No doubt, political issues find place in Mamani Raisom's narratives, but her political awareness is not propagandist like that of the famous postcolonial writers like Salman Rushdie who focus on nation and national experiences.

Again, history plays an important role in postcolonial literature and an intermingling of historical facts with fictitious present is a common feature of their writings. Mamani Raisom Goswami also delves deep into history and myth in her fiction which can be considered a fact finding mission.

Mamani Raisom Goswami may not fulfill all the requisite qualifications of a postcolonial novelist in the rigorous sense of the term, but certain aspects of postcolonial writings are clearly present in her novels. Her humanitarian approach to the issues raised in her novels certainly has postcolonial dimensions as the novelist plays a detached role and that makes her novels fit for postcolonial interpretations.

In her essay *A Literary Representation of the Subaltern: Mahasweta Devi's 'Standayini'*, Spivak shows the difference of historical and literary approach to subaltern representation. She points to the different approach of a historian and a teacher of literature towards the issue of subaltern. While a historian reads between the lines of a text to find out materials relating to the subaltern and thus tries to assign anew subject-position to the subaltern, the teacher of literature approaches a text where the subaltern has been represented to bring to light the subject-position.¹ The second approach, pointed out by Spivak can be applied while discussing the novels of Mamani Raisom Goswami from subaltern perspective.

Mamani Raisom Goswami's writings exhibit the socio-political oppression in its varied forms. The two fold relation and the conflict between the 'superior' and 'inferior', 'dominant' and 'dominated' and 'stronger' and 'weaker' form the themes of all her novels. Systematic victimization of women by patriarchal institutions, deprivation of the weaker through various manipulations, failure of political freedom to bring prosperity to the lives of the downtrodden, effort to merge heterogeneous identity of the weaker section into homogenous one by the powerful section of the society, creation of rules and restrictions for the weaker class by the dominant group through discourses are some of the issues related to subalternity and these issues have been highlighted by Mamani Raisom Goswami in her novels.

5.02. OBSERVATIONS

After a close study of the selected novels of Mamani Raisom Goswami from subaltern perspective, the following observations can be drawn.

¹ See Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty *A Literary Representation of the Subaltern: Mahasweta Devi's 'Standayini'* in Guha Ranajit (ed) *Subaltern Studies V*, 2008, p-91

- i. In all the novels selected for the study, patriarchy appears as the most dominant force and it dominates women through a network of created knowledge. The dominance of patriarchy proves Spivak's statement that women are doubly effaced as they are exploited both by the dominant group and patriarchy.
- ii. Even though all the women suffer because of the dominance of patriarchy, they fail to raise their voice of protest in unison against the suppressive patriarchy. Many women internalize the discourses of patriarchy and try to implement the oppressive rules for other women.
- iii. Several characters in the novels of Mamani Raisom Goswami remain subaltern even after political independence. Rise of communism, formation of labour union fail to change their condition.
- iv. As mentioned by Ranajit Guha, three dominant groups can be observed in the novels of Mamani Raisom. The dominant foreign group (or its equivalent group), the dominant indigenous group at the all India level, the dominant group at the regional and local level.
- v. Many characters that appear as groups in Mamani Raisom's novels are more vulnerable to the hegemony of the dominant class. These characters do not have individual identity and they become the victim of the tendency of the powerful class to give the weaker section a homogenous identity ignoring their heterogeneity.
- vi. The characters that do not protest and internalize the dominant discourses lead a less troubled life. Their adaptability to the situation does not improve their condition, but make them fit to survive. On the other hand, those

characters that protest against discourses, are forced to lead a more troubled life and few of them even perish.

- vii. There are several occasions in the selected novels where the weaker classes are endowed with power, though momentary. Michel Foucault's bottom up concept of power explains this variation.

5.03. SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDY

Mamani Raisom Goswami's literary works have been studied from various angles by different scholars. Her prose style, use of language, portrayal of women characters, issues related to marginalized class of the society have been discussed by scholars in different universities of India. However, a detailed study on the use of History and Ethnography in her novels can be done. Relatively recent issues like Eco-feminism, Green Peace and Animal Rights in Mamani Raisom's novels can also be carried out. Moreover, study on the problem of motherhood in an unconducive atmosphere, mother-daughter relationship, women as enemies of women etc. will throw more light on Mamani Raisom Goswami as a writer.
