

PREFACE

0.01. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Indira Goswami (1942-2011), more popularly known as Mamani Raisom Goswami, is a celebrated Indian writer from Assam. Winner of several prestigious awards like Sahitya Akademi award (1982) for *Māmare Dharā Tarowāl*, Assam Sahitya Sabha award in 1988, Kamal Kumari Foundation National award in 1996, International Tulsī award in 1999, the Jnanpith award (2000) and the Principal Prince Claus award (2008), Indira Goswami through her works, speaks boldly and evocatively for the emancipation of women and other marginalized groups across the country. By realistically presenting the burning social issues, Mamani Raisom Goswami has brought to light the social evils that have oppressed the weaker section of the society. The horrid condition of women in patriarchal society and exploitation of the poor and marginalized by the powerful social agencies have been touchingly presented in all her novels. In many of her novels, Mamani Raisom Goswami has effectively projected the ruthlessness of religious orthodoxy in the name of which many women are forced to lead a hellish life, thereby showing her expertise in projecting convincingly the agonized mind of the persecuted women. Apart from highlighting social evils like violence, orthodoxy, superstitions, the pains and misery of the labourers, the caste and class problem etc., an intense desire to make the women free from the shackles of bondage in a masculine environment runs through her novels. However, the novelist always plays a detached role and does not give her weaker characters the authorial voice. Though her characters, at times, protest against the oppression, their protest cannot change or improve the condition. Even their best of efforts and supreme sacrifice cannot bring about a positive change to their lives

and to the society. In postcolonial term, they are called subaltern – a class who is rendered agencyless by the dominance of the powerful class. Famous postcolonial critic Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1942-) intends to convey that the subaltern cries out in various ways, but subaltern talk does not achieve the dialogic level of utterance and thus fail to cause a change. Ranajit Guha,(1923-) the first editor of *Subaltern Studies*, uses the term subaltern to define the general attributes of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way. In postcolonial usage, everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern. The subaltern does not get and cannot form a platform to raise their voice against the exploitation they are subjected to. Mamani Raisom Goswami is an apolitical writer unlike most of the post-colonial writers and that makes it a challenging task to analyze her literary works from post-colonial perspectives. However, the presence of two classes- powerful and powerless, dominance of patriarchy, epistemic violence created by religious and social discourses etc. encourages one to analyze her works from subaltern perspective. Her characters, especially the females, register strong protest against oppression through words and action. But their protests cannot change the situation and so they are subalterns.

0.02. UNIVERSE OF THE STUDY

The proposed study is confined to six novels by Mamani Raisom Goswami viz- *Chenābar Sōt*, *Ahiraṇ*, *Māmāre Dharā Tarowāl*, *Datāl Hātir Uye Khowā Howdā*, *Nilakanthi Braja* and *Chinnamastār Mānuhto*. The first two novels deal with the theme of exploitation of the labourers who are deprived of the basic necessities of life. In the novel *Māmāre Dharā Tarowāl*, apart from showing the miseries of the labourers, the

novelist has also raised the women issue. The next two novels of the list expose the inhumane torture meted out to the widows, even the young ones, in orthodox Vaishnavite *sattras* and holy places like Brindaban. In *Chinnamastār Mānuhto*, the novelist has exposed how ignorant superstitious people are misled by various agencies in Kamakhya temple. In all these novels the sufferers try to raise their voice of protest against the oppression and exploitation they are subjected to. It has also been observed that the dominant powerful group in the society uses different kinds of discourses to suppress the weaker section. While many of them internalize the discourses, few others raise their voice of protest.

0.03. OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the study is to understand the different kinds of subalterns in the novels of Mamani Raisom Goswami. Focus is also on their effort to raise a voice of protest against the oppression they are subjected to.

0.04. METHODOLOGY

The proposed study being post-colonial is contrapuntal in nature. From theoretical perspective a combination of approaches like Comparative, New Critical and Psychological have been used in the proposed work for organizing research method. Moreover, different readers have been interviewed for accumulating attitude and responses on the proposed novels and their responses are analyzed. Apart from the writings of the novelist, critical essays, articles and research based writings on the novels of Mamani Raisom Goswami have been used as secondary data for supporting the analysis.

0.05. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

The main hypothesis of the study is- while a section of the subaltern in the novels of Mamani Raisom Goswami silently bears the oppression, some others register their protest against the oppression of the powerful class through their words and actions. However, both these sections fail to bring a change to their lives and the society. Those who remain silent continue to lead life of drudgery and those who protest have to face humiliation and some even perish.

0.06. SCHEME OF CHAPTERS

For a systematic study this dissertation has been divided into five interrelated chapters. The first chapter is introductory in nature and throws light on the chief features of Mamani Raisom Goswami as a novelist. A brief discussion on the existing literature on the topic has also been made in this chapter.

In the second chapter, an attempt has been made to analyse the subaltern theory and understand Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's famous essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Since the whole study is mainly based on this essay by Spivak, this chapter is the theoretical backbone of the whole study.

The third chapter forms the main body of the study. An in depth analysis from subaltern perspective of all the six novels chosen for the study has been made. Different classes of subaltern have been analysed from a critical viewpoint. Moreover, the psychological aspect of different subaltern has been examined. Childhood, puberty, gender discrimination, unfulfilled dreams, widowhood, darker side of holy places like Brindaban, oppression and exploitation of the weaker by different agencies, the rules of

orthodox Hindu society, the quest of the subaltern for a space of their own etc. have been taken into consideration in this analysis.

The fourth chapter is an effort to understand the voice of protest of the protagonists and also of the minor characters of the novels. The characters in Mamani Raisom Goswami's novels do protest against the oppressive religious and social conventions. Some characters speak out boldly and some others register their protest by their silent act. Both these mode of protest have been analysed in this chapter.

In the fifth chapter, a logical conclusion to the study is drawn taking the previous discussions into account.

0.07. RESEARCH WORKS DONE ON LITERARY WORKS OF MAMANI RAISOM GOSWAMI

With her inimitable style and bold themes, Mamani Raisom Goswami has drawn the attention of both readers and critics throughout the nation. Various scholars have done research works on her writings in different universities of India throwing light on different aspects of Mamani Raisom's writings. A list of research works done on Mamani Raisom along with the researcher and the university is given below.

Topic/Title	Researcher	University
1. Mamani Raisom Goswami Upanyasat Nari (Women in the Novels of Mamani Raisom Goswami)	Sailendra Narayan Thakuria	Gauhati University
2. Indira Goswami		

Upnyasat Samaj: Eti Bisleshan (Society in the Novels of Mamani Raisom Goswami: An Analysis)	Punyeswar Nath	Gauhati University
3. Mamani Raisom Goswami Aru Nirupama Borgohainr Upnyasat Nari : Eti Tulanamulak Adhyan (Women in the Novels of Mamani Raisom Goswami and Nirupoma Borgohain : A Comparative Study)	Labyana Hazarika	Gauhati University
4. Mamani Raisom Goswamir Upnyasat Pratibadi Charitra (Characters that Protest in the Novels of Mamani Raisom Goswami)	Nayan Jyoti Das	Gauhati University
5.Mamani Raisom Goswamir Srijonisheel Rachanat Asomiya	Dhanakshi Buragohain	Tezpur University

<p>Sanskritir Pratiphalan (Reflection of Assamese Culture in Creative Writings of Mamani Raisom Goswami)</p>		
<p>6. Mamani Raisom Goswami's Upanyas : Eti Samalochanatmak Alochana (Novels of Mamani Raisom Goswami: A Critical Discussion)</p>	<p>Tutumoni Barua</p>	<p>Dibrugarh University</p>
<p>7. Translating Indira Goswami's Assamese Novel <i>Ahira</i> and A Study of the Problems concerning Translability</p>	<p>Baharul Islam</p>	<p>Jamia Milia Islamia, New Delhi</p>
<p>8. The Moth Eaten Lives in the Saga of South Kamrup</p>	<p>D.S. Vinay</p>	<p>Mar Ivanios College, Kerala University</p>
<p>9. Voicing the Silence: A Study of Marginal Voices in</p>	<p>Debajit Bora</p>	<p>Jamia Milia Islamia, New Delhi</p>

<p><i>Moth Eaten Hauda of The Tusker and Ahiran</i> by Indira Goswami</p>		
<p>10. Women in Conflict Situation: A Study of Nalbari District in Assam</p>	<p>Sanghamitra Choudhury</p>	<p>Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi</p>
<p>11. Exploration of Self in the Writings of Indira Goswami and Lalitambika Antarajan</p>	<p>Shyam, B.K.</p>	<p>Delhi University</p>
<p>12. Representation of Women in Indira Goswami's Novels</p>	<p>Mitali Barman</p>	<p>Delhi University</p>
<p>13. Sampratik Kalar Mahila Oupanyasikor Upanyas : Eti Adhyan (Novels by Women Novelists of Contemporary Times : A Study)</p>	<p>Mouchumi Bardaloi</p>	<p>Gauhati University</p>

<p>14. Asomiya Lekhikar Upnyasat Naribad : Eti Bishlesanatmak Adhyayan (Feminism in the Novels of Assamese Women Writers : An Analytical Study)</p>	<p>Khanjan Kr. Nath</p>	<p>Gauhati University</p>
<p>15. Axir Dashakar Asomiya Upnyas : Eti Adhyan (Assamese Novels of Eighties : A Study)</p>	<p>Tanay Jyoti Duarah</p>	<p>Gauhati University</p>
<p>16. Asamiya Upnyasat Anchalik Bhasar Prayog(Hitesh Deka, Mamani Raisom Goswami aru Shilabhadrar bishes ullikhan Saha) (Applicaltion of Regional language in Assamese Novels with special reference to Hitesh Deka, Mamani Raisom Goswami and Shilabhadra)</p>	<p>Manoj kr. Sarma</p>	<p>Gauhati University</p>

17.Mamani Raison Goswami Aru Shilabhadrar Upanyasat Upabhasar Upadan (Elements of Dialects in the Novels of Mamani Raison Goswami and Shilabhadra)	Mani Choudhury	Gauhati University
18. Mamani Raison Goswamir Gadya Sahitya : Eti Adhyayan (Prose Literature of Mamani Raison Goswami: A Study)	Binita Saharia	Gauhati University

0.08. REVIEW OF LITERATURES

Franz Fanon's epoch making book *The Wretched of The Earth* (1963), (translated from French into English by Richard Philcox) throws new lights on the colonial subjects. A man who always questions and who is known for his true democratic opinion like 'the last shall be the first', Franz Fanon through his writings have exposed the hollowness of several claims made by the West. With Foreword by Homi K. Bhabha and Preface by Jean-Paul Sartre, this book widens the horizon of the readers regarding the colonial

people and how the discourse of the West try to infuse a sense of inferiority complex into the minds of the colonized.

New World Literature Series: 12 *Selected Works of Indira Goswami (Mamani Raisom Goswami)* (1988) is a precious collection of English translation of her works. The translated version of the first part of autobiography under the title *Life is no Bargain* by Prafulla Kotoky and *Ahiran*, the novel, by Pradipta Bargohain have been included in the work. Foreword by Vishnu Prabhakar and Introducing the Author and her works by Prafulla Kotoky are of great help to understand Mamani Raisom Goswami as a novelist.

R. S. Pathak's (ed) book *Indian Response To Literary Theories* (1996, Vol-I&II) is of great help in order to understand the literary theories in Indian context. Volume I deals with the theoretical positions both Western and Indian. Essays included in the volume like *The New Critical Theory and Formalism* by Tejinder Kaur, *The Death of the Author: T.S. Eliot and Contemporary Criticism* by Rajnath, *New Historicism and Interpretation of the Text* by Prafulla C. Kar, surely help one to form ideas. Likewise, the essays included in the second volume, namely, *Dynamics of the Reader-Response* by R.S.Pathak, *Theory of the Novel* by Kapil Kapoor, *Linguistic Approach to Literature* by Arjya Sircar have been instrumental in preparing this dissertation.

The Novels of Shashi Deshpande in Postcolonial Arguments (2000) by Mrinalini Sebastian beautifully analyses arguments of the major postcolonial thinkers like Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi K. Bhabha. Her interpretation of Spivak's argument, particularly the essay *Can the subaltern Speak?* and its application in analyzing the novels of Shashi Deshpande has been a guiding force while discussing the novels of Mamani Raisom Goswami from subaltern perspective.

KaikosBurjorSatarawala's (compiled) *Indira Goswami (MamaniRaisomGoswami) & Her Fictional World- The Search For The Sea* (2002) is a rich treasure on the works of Mamani Raisom Goswami. It is a collection of Goswami's different works translated into English by the author herself and different other writers. The English Translation of Mamani Raisom's novel *Chenabar Srota* by Nibha Rani Gogoi has been used for quotation while discussing the novel. Moreover, scholarly articles *Some Remarks on the Major Fiction of Indira Goswami* written by eminent critic Hiren Gohain and *Mamani Raisom Goswami: The Insistent Pattern* by D.K. Baruah are illuminating.

Stephen Morton's *GayatriChakravorty Spivak* (2003) beautifully introduces Gayatri Spivak, an authority in Post colonial literature to the readers. Spivak is known for her opaque style of writing. With her wealth of knowledge and using deconstructive methods she questions the literary blind spots in different texts. This book helps the readers to understand Spivak's approach to different critical theories like deconstruction, subaltern etc. It is of immense help to understand her most famous essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?*

Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin's (ed) *The Post-colonial Studies Reader* (2003) is a theoretical statement on several issues related to postcolonial studies. Writers, who are considered authorities in postcolonial studies and theories, have enriched this work with their thought provoking essays. Path breaking Essays by writers like Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Homi K. Bhabha , Edward Said, Chinua Achebe, Franz Fanon widen the horizon of readers' knowledge. The essays are divided into fourteen different parts. Parts like Issues and Debates, Postmodernism and Post-colonialism, Nationalism etc. have been illuminating.

Shashi Deshpande's Fiction – A Study in women Empowerment and Postcolonial Discourse (2003) by P.G. Joshi is another book that applies postcolonial theories to interpret novels. This book throws sufficient light on subalterns from different perspectives.

David Ludden's (ed.) theoretically grounded book *Reading Subaltern Studies* (Fourth impression, 2004) is a pioneering work in defining the term 'subaltern', tracing its evolution and contesting ideas regarding subaltern theory. David Ludden's *Introduction: A Brief History of Subalternity* throws light on historical origin of subaltern and influence of insurgency and nationalism on it. *Subaltern Autonomy and the National Movement* by B.B. Chaudhuri relates the rise of subaltern thoughts to the national movement of India. This book also works as a readers' guide to the Subaltern studies volumes.

Neil Lazarus' (ed) theory based approach *The Cambridge Companion To Postcolonial Literary Studies* (2006) can be considered a hand book for any work on postcolonial literary work. Essays included in the work like *Introducing Postcolonial Studies* by Neil Lazarus, *Post structuralism and postcolonial discourse* by Simon Gikandi and *Reading Subaltern History* by Priyamvada Gopal are quite helpful in the analysis of the novels of Mamani Raisom Goswami.

Prof. Gobinda Prasad Sarma's theoretically grounded critical work *Upanyas Aru Asamiya Upanyas* (2009) beautifully traces the evolution of novel from the very beginning. It also throws light on the theories related to fiction. Placing Assamese novels in the backdrop of World literature, Prof. Sarma has beautifully analyzed some of the famous Assamese works. Two articles on two novels by Mamani Raisom

Goswami , namely- *Nilakanthi Braja* and *Datāl Hātir Uye Khowā Howdā* throw new lights on her works. With proper examples and quotations from the text, Prof. Srama has shown the use of magic realism in *Nilakanthi Braja* and socialism realism in *Datāl Hātir Uye Khowā Howdā* .

Hridayananda Gogoi's book *Dr. Indira Goswami: In Search of Modernity* (2010) is an attempt to critically analyse the various trends of modernity in the fictions of Indira Goswami. Interview of Mamani Raisom with the writer reveal her own views on her writings. With proper examples from her fictions, Mr. Gogoi has analysed her prose style, themes, use of similes and several modern trends in her writings.

Nikumoni Hussain's (ed) book *Mamani Raisom or Abha Aru Pratibha* (Second Edition, 2011) is a collection of articles written on Mamani Raisom in English, Assamese and Bengali, by different scholars. The book, apart from placing Mamani Raisom in the international arena, brings together views of various writers and famous personalities of international repute on this celebrated novelist from Assam. The two interviews with the novelist by Homen Borgohain , a famous litterateur of Assam throws lights on various facets of the writer. Various interpretations put forward by eminent literary scholars of the country like Hiren Gohain, Gobinda Prasad Sarma, Bhishma Sahni, Sisir kr. Das, Rajul Sogani, Nishikanta Mirajkar etc. add new dimensions to the study of Mamani Raisom's novels.

Hemanta Kumar Bharali's (Comp. and ed.) collection *Mamani Roisom Goswami Rachana Samagra* (2011) helps readers to understand various facets of her persona and also several factors that have shaped her as a writer. Interviews and her autobiographical writings bring to light various incidents that have influenced her writings. Moreover,

articles written on Mamani Raisom by different famous personalities help readers to delve deep into her writings.

Dr. Pori. Hiloidari's article *Mamani Raisom Goswami Galpa-Upanyasat Narir Nimnabargiya Avijnatar Pratifalan'* (2012) published in *Gariyoshi*, Vol.XIX Issue No.5, edited by Lakhminandan Bora is an attempt to study the gendered subaltern in the novels of Mamani Raisom. This short article discusses the traces of subaltern in her fiction.

Subaltern Studies (Vol I –X) is a systematic effort to understand and analyze the subaltern themes in the field of South Asian studies. With the intellectual guidance of Ranajit Guha , the editor of the first six volumes, this group is the Indian version of the 'History from the Below'. With the essays published in the ten volumes, these writers have challenged the dominance of the elite in the Indian historiography. Ranajit Guha has pointed out several other sources for collection of material to recreate an authentic history free from the elite bias. Other writers like Partha Chatterjee, Gyanendra Pandey, David Arnold, David Hardiman, Gautam Bhadra, Ramachandra Guha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak etc. bring to light several dimensions related to subaltern studies through their research based essays.