

**CHAPTER-I**

**MAMANI RAISOM GOSWAMI AS A**

**NOVELIST**

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### 1.01. INTRODUCTION

Mamani Raisom Goswami is one of the most celebrated Assamese Novelists. She is a pioneer in giving a new direction to Assamese novel. She started her literary career quite early writing shortstories when she was in school and started writing her first novel *Chenābar Sōt* when she was 22 years of age. Though her collection of short stories is not bulky, she has written some quality short stories like *Sanskār* (English Translation- *The Offspring*), *Pashu* (*The Beast*), *Riniki Riniki Dekhiso Jamunā*, *Udang Bākoch* etc. She has also written poems of high quality. However, Mamani Raisom is known as a Ramayana scholar and chiefly as a novelist. Mamani Raisom has written fourteen novels. Selection of new themes unaddressed hitherto in Assamese literature like- Sexuality of women, decaying morale of the higher class and religious institutions, increasing class difference expressed in her inimitable bold language and evocative style immediately catch the attention of the readers. Through her creative writings, Goswami offers Assamese reader new insights, provokes debates over issues related to lives of ordinary men and thus leaves a positive impact on development of Assamese literature and society.

### 1.02 MAMANI RAISOM GOSWAMI -THE NOVELIST

During her literary career spanning over four decades, Mamani Raisom Goswami has, in different interviews and writings, acknowledged how different factors have shaped her

literary career. Firstly, so overpowering is her urge to tell a story that life and literature have become one and the same for her. In an interview with Homen Borgohain(1932- ), a noted critic and intellectual, Goswami has clearly acknowledged that contribution of literature to her life is much more than anything else. She cannot imagine her life without literature. She admits that literature has been the pushing factor for her against all odds and only literature has kept her alive. Her writings have stabilized her unstable mind.<sup>1</sup>

She also says that all her writings are part of her life and her novels express her mental condition. For her, writing was a medium to give vent to her frustrations and anger. It also enables her to face hardships of her life.

Again, Mamani Raisom Goswami in her own inimitable style has presented a wide variety of themes in her writings. The settings of her novels are pan Indian. However, this is not the only unique quality of her writings. The way she presents different bold issues like sexuality of women, superstitions in the name of religion through her story, portrays the characters, uses language and highlights the cause of the downtrodden- everything is unique. There are only a few Indian writers who have boldly presented the whole gamut of Indian women- childhood, puberty, unfulfilled dreams, widowhood, exploitation and oppression of women by different agencies, bodily desire, untouchability etc. Mamani Raisom Goswami is surely one of them.

The amount of research that Goswami does before writing a novel, especially the later ones, brings her work closer to reality. In her novel *Chinnamastār Mānuhto*, with her

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<sup>1</sup> See Hussain, Nikumoni. *Mamoni Raisomar Abha Aru Pratibha* 2011, p- 28. The original Assamese interview was first published in *Satsori*, an Assamese magazine and then was included in Nikumoni Hussain's (ed) *Mamoni Raisomar Abha Aru Pratibha*.

extensive research she boldly establishes that animal sacrifice at MaaKamakhya's altar is not the only way to worship the goddess. Mamani Raisom usually takes two to three years to write a novel. Collecting all the materials relevant to her theme, meeting people who crowd her novels to understand their culture and society and to study them thoroughly make her writings realistic. Her protagonists represent a class .In this connection, she opines,

*While writing about a family one does not want so much study. But generally I write about a class. About the labourers, about widows; such topics demand hard work and thorough study.*<sup>2</sup>

Once as demanded by the subject of her story, she even visited a morgue in Delhi to produce the real effect<sup>3</sup>. On many occasions, MamaniRaisom becomes one with the downtrodden class of the society, whom she reflects in her works. In the words of Ranjita Biswas,

*Mamani believes in collecting material for her novels firsthand instead of shutting herself in some ivory tower to let her emotions flow. That is why her akademi-winning novel MamareDharaTarowal ("Rusted Sword") seems so authentic, so piercingly touching.*<sup>4</sup>

## **1.02. MAMANI RAISOM AND FEMINISM**

All her novels work through a feminine consciousness. MamaniRaisomGoswami has very poignantly presented various aspects of womanhood in novel after novel. Be it the horrible lives of widows, the glory of motherhood and the challenge of rearing the child

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<sup>2</sup>See Hussain, Nikumoni , Opcit, pp-34-35

<sup>3</sup>See Gogoi, Hridayananda, *IndiraGoswami: In Search of Modernity*,p-249

<sup>4</sup> Hussain, Nikumoni ed., opcit, pp-429-430

amidst extreme poverty, the hope of salvation infused into the poor women's mind through religious discourse and the ultimate realisation of its hollowness, puberty, sexual assault, inhuman customs related to menstruations, the biological need suppressed by customs – everything finds authentic representation in her novels. The female in her comes very vividly to the forefront when she deals with these issues. Yet like Shashi Deshpande (1938- ), another Sahitya Akademi award winner novelist, she does not consider herself a feminist. Deshpande in an interview has said,

*A woman who writes of women's experience often brings in some aspects of those experiences that have angered her, roused her strong feeling. I don't see why this has to be labelled feminist fiction.*<sup>5</sup>

Despite her deliberate and repeated disclaimer, readers always feel the presence of the feminist in her writings. Many go a step further to term her writings as feminist writing. However, when asked in an interview by Chandra Prasad Saikia (1927-2006), a noted Assamese litterateur, whether it is necessary to be a humanitarian writer or a feminist writer Mamani Raisom has expressed in clear terms that for a writer the first priority should be to be a humanitarian writer and feminism is a part of humanism.<sup>6</sup>

A concern for women is the common thread in all the writings of Mamani Raisom Goswami. Manifestation of self is clearly visible in many of her characters. Many of the women characters are modeled upon her relatives and known figures. But as Malashri Lal (1949- ), a renowned professor of Delhi University, has pointed out that

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<sup>5</sup>Deshpande Shashi, *The Dilemma of the Woman Writer in Literary Criterion*, 1985, p-33

<sup>6</sup> See Bharali, Hemanta Kumar. *Mamani Raisom Goswami Rachana Samagra*, 2011, p-555.

despite various complexities, Mamani Raisom has moulded several facets of women empowerment into creative form.<sup>7</sup>

#### **1.04. MAMANI RAISOM GOSWAMI-A GREAT REALIST**

One of the major factors that make her writings so popular is her realism. The characters, settings, themes, language and literary devices-everything complement each other. With an interesting mingling of past history, myth and present happenings the novelist captivates the attention of her readers. Her use of language is also true to her characters. Moreover, the direct use of language by her rustic characters adds to the reality of her fiction. For her different themes and settings, the novelist has used different similes and symbols and these are all drawn from the settings and they are never out of context. She is equally apt at drawing poignant pictures of her native land as well as that of far off places. If rural South-Kamrup comes out vividly in the novel *Datāl Hātir Uye Khowā Houdā*, the landscapes of Madhya Pradesh and Kashmir along with the labourers of the work sites are presented vividly in the novels *Ahiran* and *Chenābar Sōt* respectively.<sup>8</sup>

In the three novels that highlight the lives of the poor labourers, the machines, construction tools, cement all these have been mentioned in such a way that these things related to their profession becomes an extended part of their lives. *Datāl Hātir Uye Khowā Howdā* and *Nilakanthi Braja* the novelist has used similes drawn from the

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<sup>7</sup> See Lal, Malashri, *Indira Goswami and Women Empowerment* in Nikumoni Hussain's (ed) *Mamoni Raisom Aru Pratibha*, 2011, p-313

<sup>8</sup> See Hussain, Nikumoni ed.. *Opcit*, p-429

setting itself. Her representation of the truth is direct and there is very less stylistic and authorial intervention.<sup>9</sup>

The autobiographical elements in her novels also add to the reality. Many incidents from her real life find place in her novels. But with her mastery over the art of fiction writing, Mamani Raisom moulds them into a creative form. In her short stories and novels, there is only a little variation between reality and imagination. Her own words in this connection are noteworthy,

*I try my best to portray the factual reality in literature. But such a method can't be applied in literature as because literature is an art. Some incidents occur in this real world, which are hard to describe. .... In fact, I had to regulate some strange scenes of reality through subjugation of passion.*<sup>10</sup>

Mamani Raisom is deeply entrenched in her roots and her creative pen goes far beyond the mere niceties of language to a reality that is direct and at times raw. With conviction, she authentically portrays the stubborn patterns of the society with all its rawness- like the Brahmanical high handedness, oppression by the powerful class, inhuman superstitions and rituals meant for women, particularly widowed women etc. It makes her writing realistic.

### **1.05. AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ELEMENTS IN MAMANI RAISOM GOSWAMI'S NOVELS**

Mamani Raisom Goswami is different from other contemporary writers on several fronts. She started writing her autobiography *Ādhā Lekhā Dostābez* (English translation- *Unfinished Autobiography*) at an early age and that too when she was a literary nobody.

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<sup>9</sup> See Hussain, Nikumoni ed. Opcit, pp-430-31.

<sup>10</sup> Gogoi, Hridayananda. *Dr. Indira Goswami In Search of Modernity*, 2010 ,p-218

However, the revelation of her private life without holding back anything, had earned her admirers all over India. Originally written in Assamese, her autobiography has been translated into Hindi and English. The projection of the self with all its rawness has been noticed by all her readers and Mamani Raisom has succeeded in projecting herself as a woman where others can see a picture of their own.

In this famous autobiography and several other writings, like *Mor Lekhār Nepothyor Kathā* the writer has laid bare her soul. Much is known about her life and experiences which she has presented in her fiction. As a result of this, there is a growing tendency amidst her readers to find out the autobiographical elements in her fictional writings. Mamani Raisom Goswami has, on several occasions, claimed that her major women characters are reflections of her own life. Giribala in *Datāl Hātir Uye Khowā Howdā* and Saudamini in *Nilakanthi Braja* are, to a large extent her self- portrayal. In her own words,

*The resentment and sorrow of my personal life is intermixed with the female characters of mine. In the same way as those are intermixed with the body of Giribala in Datal Hatir Uye Khowa Houda, similarly the expression of my protest against sacrifice of animals is manifested through Bidhibala in Chinnamosta.*<sup>11</sup>

Moreover, her near and dear ones also enter into the narratives of her novels. There is always a tendency on the part of the readers to relate the events of her novels to her personal life. However, Goswami is a novelist and novel is a work of fiction. With the mastery of her art, she has succeeded in giving a cover of imagination over her real life experiences. Mamani Raisom has said she has written many novels based on real

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<sup>11</sup>Gogoi, Hridayananda, opcit,p-218



incidents and experiences of her life. But like a great artist she has moulded all her experiences- happy and sad, painful and pleasant, horrible and soul touching into a creative whole with her imaginative power.<sup>12</sup>

## **1.06. MAMANI RAISOM'S ART OF STORY TELLING**

MamaniRaisomGoswami has an excellent art of storytelling that enthralls and captivates the readers. Facts and fiction are perfectly blended in her stories that are told directly and powerfully. The novelist has transformed her real experiences into a fine work of art with the help of her imagination and by relating individual experiences into a pattern. That is how she travels from individual to the universalworld.

Sisir kr. Das (1936-2003), a critic of international repute, after reading her *Datāl Hātir Uye Khowā Howdā*, has rightly observed,

*When I had read the novel "Dantal Hatir Une Khowa Howdah" for the first time, I was struck by the magnitude and density of the narrative. .... I felt that a great story- teller had arrived in our midst.*<sup>13</sup>

Combining both history and myth, Mamani tells her story without much narratorial intervention. Her characters are local and yet they have the universal appeal. With the help of her intense research, high sensitivity and powerful language, she creates hauntingly graphic narratives of harsh reality that does not allow the attention of the readers to divert. With her strong conviction MamaniRaisom presents the natural instincts of human beings especially of those who are oppressed in the society by religious, social, patriarchal or other kinds of discourses and she does that with the zeal

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<sup>12</sup> See Hussain, Nikumoni ed., opcit, p-214

<sup>13</sup> Das, Prof. Sisir Kumar *A Great Narrative* in Ibid, p-351

of a true activist. Mamani Raisom uses the choric characters like Hardy to provide a conventional reaction to events so as to circumvent expected audience response and to make them appear crude.

However, her fictions never appear propagandist. Her detachment with the theme of her novels makes them great work of art. At the beginning she is an outsider and slowly but steadily she enters into the main theme. However, since her characters do not get the authorial voice, her protagonists always meet a tragic end and despite their best of efforts, cannot bring about a positive change in the society. Giribala in *Datāl Hātir Uye Khowā Howdā* and Saudamini in *Nilakanthi Braja* have been portrayed as strong women. But they meet tragic end in the novel and even their supreme sacrifice does not bring any change to the society.

Mamani Raisom can also be termed as an Iconoclast. All her novels give us the impression that life is a journey full of obstacles and the story of life is tragic. The continuous tragic note without comic relief makes her novels rather heavy. Men and women in her novels are destined to fight a lone battle against a benevolent society where even Gods, Nature and other forces that literature describe as kind and helpful, do not play a part. Hiren Gohain( 1939-), a noted critic, has termed her fiction ‘Harrowing of Hell’. Saudamini is given the opportunity to start life afresh with her Christian lover by her own father. She goes to meet him, but unexpectedly prefers death to a life termed immoral by religious and social discourse. Likewise, Giribala also chooses death over an oppressed life. Moreover, her treatment of Nirmala in *Ahiraṇ*, Sonie in *Chenābar Sōt* and Bidhibala in *Chinnamastār Mānuhto*, also prove her as an iconoclast. Nishikanta Mirajkar(1942-), former H.O.D., Department of M.I.L.&L.S. of Delhi University has commented,

*Climaxes of Indira's novels are often melodramatic, but at the same time they are powerfully symbolic.*<sup>14</sup>

### **1.07. MAMANI RAISOM'S CRAFT**

Mamani Raisom Goswami has learnt her craft from many masters of world literature. Like a naturalist she takes extreme care in painting the details of her canvas. In many of her novels the background of action is a work site of Construction Company in far off places where people live a camp life, and she delights her readers by bringing superb description of nature. Her narrative is often symbolic and the use of language displays her mastery in the use of image and symbol. The fact that she writes from the first hand experiences of her settings and characters accounts for the purity, freshness and intensity of her craft. She uses images and symbols to suit her settings which are different for different novels. Aruni Kashyap (1984-), in his introduction to *The Blue-necked God* ( English translation of *Nilakanthi Braja*) writes,

*The unique aspect of Goswami's similes and metaphors was that she used them not just to describe a scene. She extended them to etch the mood of the atmosphere, create contrasts.*<sup>15</sup>

Mamani Raisom herself admits that a particular situation creates several emotions in her mind in the course of writing a story or a novel. Some of the emotions erupt out of the

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<sup>14</sup>Hussain, Nikumoni ed.. Opcit,p-389

<sup>15</sup>Goswami, Indira, *The Blue-necked Braja*,2013,p-xi. MamaniRaisomGoswami's novel *NilakanthiBraja* was translated into English by Gayatri Bhattacharyya under the title *The Blue-necked Braja*. All the lines from the novel in this dissertation is taken from this translated version.

theme and settings. Objects of Nature like sky, air, rivers, mountains etc. create beautiful picture in her mind and she preserves some of the descriptions live.<sup>16</sup>

Certain images appear again and again in her novels like a refrain and these images provide a unity to her vision of life: thorny bushes, snakes, birds and beasts of prey, tortoise, bats, elephants in musth, and, of course, rivers. All her stories are enacted on river banks. Her first two novels are named after two rivers- Chenab and Ahiran. In *Māmare Dharā Tarowāl* and *Nilakanthi Braja*, readers experience the animated presence of River Sai and Yamuna respectively. River Jagalia is an integral part of the novel *Datāl Hātir Uye Khowā Howdā*. Likewise, the mighty Brahmaputra provides the background for the novel *Chinnamastār Mānuhto*. To quote D.K. Baruah,

*For her, the river is the symbol of desire and freedom. Her Nature is not surely as malevolent as Hardy's, but it certainly has similarity with Hardy's portrayal of Nature.*<sup>17</sup>

In Mamani Raisom's novels river appears as an archetypal symbol and it represents free moving forces of mighty Nature. All the man made objects like Aqueducts, bridges and dams can not stand the onslaught of the river. In a sense Nature represented by river stands for truth and in sharp contrast to this truth is falsehood represented by temporal man made objects. Mamani Raisom's portrayal of rivers with their varied moods becomes an extension of her characterization.

The titles of her fiction are often symbolic. The title *Datāl Hātir Uye Khowā Howdā* is highly symbolic and it offers a contrast to catch the attention of the readers. Gobinda

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<sup>16</sup> See Gogoi, Hridayananda, opcit, p-219

<sup>17</sup> Baruah, D.K. *Mamani Raisom Goswami : The Insistent Pattern* in Kaikos Burjor Satarawala's (comp.) *Indira Goswami (Mamani Raisom Goswami) and Her Fictional World- The Search for the Sea, 2002*, pp-20-21

Prasad Sarma (1940- ), a famous critic and retired professor of Gauhati University, has beautifully observed,

*An elephant with tusks suggests strength while the hauda on its back hints at the richness of its owner. But that hauda is now worm-eaten and this speaks of the waning glory of the wealthy owner. The theme of the novel is thus suggested by the title*<sup>18</sup>

The title also hints at the moral and social decay. Likewise, the title *Māmare Dharā Tarowāl* hints at the unsuccessful efforts of the labourers to fight against the oppressions of the owners of the company. The rusted sword is a symbol of the feeble effort of the poor and weak labourers to raise their voice of protest.

Mamani Raisom's use of language is also unique. Sometimes, she uses the local dialects to create a desired effect. Her dialogues are often short and direct. The rustics use a kind of dialogue that educate the readers about the situation, creates a furore when needed and prepares ground for the future course of action. According to Gobinda Prasad Sarma, Mamani Raisom is a pioneer in the use of magic realism in Assamese fiction.<sup>19</sup> By intermingling history, myth and fiction, she creates a kind of narrative that at once attracts the readers.

### **1.08. MAMANI RAISOM AS A HUMANIST**

Sympathy for the weaker class has always been the driving force of Mamani Raisom's novels. The labourers, sweepers, widows and animals all have been treated with the same sympathy in her novels. *Nilakanthi Braja* and *Datāl Hātir Uye Khowā Howdā* realistically present the horrid lives of the widows in the *Sattras* and the holy

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<sup>18</sup>Sarma, Gobinda Prasad. *The Worm-Eaten Howdah of a Tusker* in Hussain, Nikumoni ed., Opcit, p-325

<sup>19</sup> See Sarma, Gobinda Prasad. *Upanyas Aru Asomiya Upanyas*, 2009

Vrindaban. *Chenābar Sôt*, *Ahiran* and *Māmare Dharā Tarowāl* depict the struggles and difficulties of the lives of the company labourers. These three novels are set outside Assam and rather than telling a story that moves smoothly, these novels present certain episodes. On reading her first novel, *Chenābar Sôt*, one feels pity for the workers engaged in the construction of a bridge over the Chenab River in Kashmir. Despite doing hard labour they fail to manage two square meals. Moreover, there is a constant uncertainty about their future. Once the project is complete, the company authority throws them out. The image of the 'torn shoes' (*fota Juta*) has been used by the novelist to narrate their condition. The novel *Ahiran* has been set in Madhya Pradesh where company workers are engaged in building an aquaduct in the river Ahiran. The novelist movingly depicts the drudgery and exploitation of labourers. A strike called by the labourers engaged in the construction of an aquaduct in river Sai in RaiBarreily, Uttar Pradesh is the central theme of the novel *Māmare Dharā Tarowāl*. The novel *Chinnamastār Mānuhto* presents the superstitions of Hindus in the name of religion and how animals are sacrificed to please Mother Kamakhya. In this novel, the animal lover in her comes to the forefront. With proper research and study of religious scriptures, the novelist has shown that animal sacrifice is not the only way to please Mother Kamakhya. Malashri Lal observes,

*Indira's research into history and ethnography showed no religious sanction for blood rituals. She was appalled by the orgies of the flesh and the celebrations of frenzy.....Again I am amazed by Indira's foresightedness. Eco-feminism, green peace and Animal Rights are relatively new slogans.*<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Hussain, Nikumoni ed.. Opcit,p-312

In an interview with HridayanandaGogoi, MamaniRaisomGoswami boldly states that she does not need to learn humanity from others as she has inherited it and humanity for her is an inborn flow of the heart.<sup>21</sup>

The activist in Mamani Raisom often comes to the forefront be it regarding animal sacrifice or the insurgency problem of the North East region. It is because of her strong humanitarian feelings. Human sufferings in all forms have been the focus of her writingsand that also reveals her humanitarianism.

### **1.09. THEME OF MAMANI RAISOM'S NOVELS**

The themes of her novels are varied. Themes hitherto unexplored in Assamese novels like emotions , passions , anger and struggle for mere survival of the poor industrial workers, greed , lust and the exploitation by the rich owner, widowhood, patriarchy and other dominating agencies, hollowness of the religious organisations, dark realities of the Holy places etc. have found place in her novels.

D.K. Baruahin his essay, *MamaniRaisomGoswami: The Insistent Pattern* has opined,

*....what occupies her most is with the unfolding of desire in a protagonist and often, or, rather invariably, in a woman character and the hazards of her existence. That to me seems to be the central theme of MamaniGoswami's novels.*<sup>22</sup>

She is a pioneer in the field of Assamese fiction on several fronts and one of them is her selection of theme. By authentically portraying the various facets of womanhood, Mamani Raisom poses certain important questions that are pertinent to understand the position of women in society. The question of self fulfillment for a women in a

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<sup>21</sup> See Gogoi, Hridayananda. Opcit,p-228

<sup>22</sup>Satarawala, KaikosBurjor (comp.) ,opcit,pp21-22

suppressive society, the problem of establishing an independent identity for a woman in patriarchal society, the problem of motherhood, women sexuality etc. add new dimension to Assamese literature. Moreover, the downtrodden class with all its problems and their effort to adapt to hostile living conditions add variety to her theme making her canvas vast. The novels that address the issues of the labourers show men as an extension of machine.<sup>23</sup>

Her narrative is strengthened by extra ordinary suggestive power. Through perseverance and hard labour, Goswami has created her inimitable style which is enriched with similes and images as demanded by the story.

### **1.11. MAMANI RAISOM'S CHARACTER PORTRAYAL**

Hardy's characters can be divided into three categories - i) protagonist or major characters, ii) minor characters involved in the action, iii) rustic bystanders who provide comic relief.<sup>24</sup> Such a categorization can also be tried with regard to Mamani Raisom Goswami's characters. However, the rustics in her novels are never a source of comic relief; rather they make the macabre theme of her fictions heavier with their raw experiences of lives. All her major characters are either her self- portrayal or taken from her real life. The women protagonists like Saudamini and Giribala partially reflect the novelist's own inner turmoil. In this regard Mamani Raisom's words are mention worthy.

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<sup>23</sup> See Hussain, Nikumoni ed., opcit,p-428

<sup>24</sup> See Saxena Alaka and Sudhir Dixit, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*,p-150



*The resentment and sorrow of my personal life is intermixed with the female characters of mine. Often I feel that reality is much more effective than imagination.*<sup>25</sup>

While her women protagonists Giribala in *Datāl Hātir Uye Khowā Howdā* and Saudamini in *Nilakanthi Braja* represent the author's denial of the social construct of widowhood, her strong protest against animal sacrifice is manifested through the character of Bidhibala in the novel *Chinnamastār Mānuhto*

Then there are minor characters who are very much involved in the action. These characters help the story to progress either by playing a part in leading the story to its culmination or by appearing as a contrast to the protagonist. Indranath and Mark Sahib are two characters from the novel *Datāl Hātir Uye Khowā Howdā*. They, by their act or inability to act, play instrumental role in the ultimate outcome of the novel. Likewise, Shashi is a character from the novel *Nilakanthi Braja*. She plays a perfect foil to the protagonist of the piece Saudamini. By using this device of contrast, the novelist has portrayed her characters more convincingly.

Next there are the rustic characters in Goswami's novels. They often appear as groups without individual identity-be it the labourers in novels like *Chenābar Sōt*, *Ahiron* and *Māmare Dharā Tarowāl*, the *Radheswamis* in *Nilakanthi Braja*, the opium eaters in *Datāl Hātir Uye Khowā Howdā* or the superstitious people in *Chinnamastār Mānuhto*. These rustic characters play several important roles and one of them is surely that of educating the readers about the surroundings and all the possibilities that a certain action might cause. The rustic characters in the novel *Chinnamastār Mānuhto* add to the

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<sup>25</sup>Gogoi, Hridayananda, opcit,p-218

mysticism of the holy place and also inform the readers about various rituals and superstitions related to the temple.

Her rustic characters also provide authenticity to the settings of her novels. Apart from providing a perspective to the readers by their comments, they also create an atmosphere to introduce the harsh realities in her novels. They are realistic in another sense as well. Hardy like Wordsworth believed that the conduct of the upper classes is screened by conventions and thus the real character is not easily seen; where as in the lower classes, conduct is a direct expression of the inner life and hence character can be directly portrayed and analysed.<sup>26</sup> In the novel *Datāl Hātir Uye Khowā Howdā*, Indranath is a strong character. This would be Adhikar (head) of a Vaisnavite *Sattra* (monastery) is introduced as a liberal young man who has the courage to challenge the religious orthodoxy and the mind to uplift the condition of the poor and down trodden. But the story clearly reveals how religious orthodoxy gets the better of liberal humanism. Indranath cannot freely express his love for Elimon, because of his high social status. Likewise, he cannot stand against all the nonsense done in the name of religion. He cannot express his emotions freely. But the rustics like the opium eater express their desire directly.

The rustic characters in Goswami's novels are true to the settings of the novels. If the starving labourers in novels like *Ahiran* and *Māmare Dharā Tarowāl* clearly show the exploitation of the powerful classes, the rustics in *Chinnamastār Mānuhtowith* with all the superstitions and strange rituals, add to the mysticity of the whole atmosphere surrounding the Holy Kamakhya temple. Likewise, the rustic characters in the novel

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<sup>26</sup>See Saxena Alaka and Sudhir Dixit, opcit, p-161

*Datāl Hātir Uye Khowā Howdā*, reveal the strong superstitions prevailing in the decaying society.

MamaniRaisomGoswami uses the choric characters to provide a conventional reaction to events so as to circumvent expected audience response and to make them appear crude.