CHAPTER-VII

SOCIAL REALISM AND THE BODO NOVEL:

Most of the Bodo novelists have attempted to look at life in its bare reality. Through them social realism finds a wide expression in Bodo literature. It is said that a successful writer should be capable of representing life in its objective reality without any bias. The essence of life can be reflected in literature only against the background of reality. In this context Howard Fast has rightly said "Realism brings that literary synthesis which through selection and creation heightens for the reader his understanding of reality." The most noteworthy achievement of some Bodo novelists has been their ability to give a realistic picture of social life, after having analysed its various aspects. Different novels have been written for this purpose of which some are idealistic, others are explanatory of social changes while some others just give an accurate picture of the society. On account of widely spread realistic outlook of the writers, the literature took a different turn. Along with the changes of society the ideological climate had also changed. From the very beginning the Bodo novelist portray the picture of real village life and gradually due to the progress of economical, political and educational background they possess realism of the modern people. Initial Bodo novelist combines Freudian psychology with a Marxist influence under current in so far as it nourishes an never easing complaint against almost everything in the social setup in their writing.

1. It is condition, sine quanon of great realism that the author honestly record without fear or favour everything he seen around him - Lucacs George, Europian realism P -137-138
This psychological environment of hopelessness has profoundly influenced the outlook of the present generation. But traditional as well as humanistic social values have not lost the validity in their eyes. The various imbalances like the gap between the upper, middle and lower classes and the prevailing economical, social and political environment compelled the writers to become very realistic and they gave a living portrayal of life in their writings. Literature, however cannot be real if only bare facts are represented without taking care of art. Since life and art are closely related to each other, the ability to portray life's reality through the garb of artistic beauty in the true mark, of a successful realistic writers. On the other hand in order to produce realistic literature it is essential for the writer to be acquainted with real experiences of life. In this context Arabinda Podder's comment about Tolstoy in very explanatory. As he observes "The main reason for Tolstoy's success was perhaps his ability to merge with the sea of his country, society, time and common life. The artist's individuality become one with the society and its masses. His comprehensive mind could accommodate the heart-throb of every one. It is the varied experiences of life which give immortality to Tolstoy with his writings. A novel after all is a work of art which introduces us into a living word resembling the world we live in, but with an individuality of its own. The imagination of the writer apprehends reality in such a way as to present us with a new vision of it. The artist must always stick

3. Art grows out of life, it is fed by life, it reacts upon life. This being so, it cannot disregard its responsibilities to life - Hudson W.H. An Introduction of Study of Literature P-170.
4. Podder, Arabindo, Adhunik Upanyashe Manab Pratyay P -19
to his range. Robert Liddel too advocates the cause for the confinement of the writer to his experiences. According to him "The range of the novelist, that is those parts of his experience which he is able to use creativity, is probably a matter over which he possesses little control. It has generally been dictated to him by his nature or his early environment. The importance of early environment in determining a writer's range could be provided over and over again. The novelist generally wants to write about his own country's mental disposition and attitudes, social or geographical environment and no other is equally interesting to him.

A great many of Bodo novelists have tried to compose novels exceeding the limits of their own experiences and insisting themselves upon superficialities. The number of experiences based on realistic novels in Bodo language are less in comparison to Assamese and other novels written in different Indian languages. To begin with, most of our novels appear to be interpreted that these are just an extension of the short story. The vast setting and broadly loaded view of life which are expected from the beginners as the root of Bodo novels but these are very scarce in them.

The failure of the writers to realise the past, present and the future of their age or their region through experiences, makes their compositions vaguely realistic. The theme of realism is found in the novels of Chittaranjan Mochahari's Jujaini or; 'Girls Hostel Vol. I-II-III; 'Golab Bibamisu', Manaranjan

5. Liddel, Robert, Treatise on the novel P-43
6. The artist reaches down to the complexity of his relations with his own past, present and even future experience - Lukacs, George, The meaning of Contemporary realism. P-18

Chittaranjan Mochahary who took the literary world with a thunder storm through his “Jujaini Or ” is considered to be the first realistic novelist among the Bodo writers who tried his best to focus the social realism through his novel. Before him no one novelist could attempt to depict a realistic picture of the joys and sorrows of the human life. But we know that amongst the Bodo writers Monoranjan Lahari could also successfully depict a realistic picture of the traditional habits and customs and the joys and sorrows of the community. He draws his characters from the lowly walks of life and concieves of them as individuals with all joys and sorrows, hopes and fears. Like Charles Dickens in England and Sarat Chandra in Bengal, Chittaranjan Muchahary draws his characters from the lower middle classes but sometimes he took characters from the upper middle classes. His heroes and heroines are generally common people and we can easily imagine and understand about them living in our neighbourhood both as heartily simple and honest as individuals. But the characters in his novel were not drawn from the downtrodden families, although there is some occassional pictures of poverty has
been drawn in his novels. In his "Jujaini Or" Chittaranjan conceives the character of universal standard with common traits, human weaknesses and strengths. It is the real document of the rural society where class conflict was also unavoidable. Such conflict may bring the sorrow in the simple village life. In his novel too class conflict get vast coverage. It also presents the traditional problems of caste and creed prevailed in the society. It is seen in the novel that Alaishree who wanted to marry Ajoy is a girl from a lower class family or the maid servant and therefore her honest will was totally refused by Ajoy's father and mother. It is noteworthy that Ajoy is compelled to reject Alaishree's love although he has sympathy for her. So we find a different sort of conflict between the rich and the poor classes of the society where the former mercilessly exploits the later. Love is not cared for as important and social inequality and distinction between the rich and the poor prevails in the rural society of the Bodos. It is this social inequality that stands as a stumbling block between the lovers. Both the families of Ajoy and Kalpana stood against Alaishree and harmed her; even Ajoy became the victim as both the family were trying to break their love by taking advantage of their misfortune. All these are evidences of the novelist's deep understanding of life and society. Alaishree the heroine is the leading representative of his intimate association with rural poor society. Alaishree is a representative of the poor section of the Bodo society. In place of a life of fulfilment she is a faithful

7. Mochahari, Chittaranjan, 'Jujaini Or'
forebearer in patience and forebearance. The novel gives a realistic picture of disintegration in the Bodo ways of life. The depiction of nature and the houses and families of the village are also realistic. Remarkable picture of nature which creates the required atmosphere in the novel is the erosion brought about by Swrmanga river. It is because of the erosion that Ajoy is drawn to Kalpana’s house. Muchahary in his next novel “Golab Bibarni Su” tries to present the same picture of rift between the rich and poor. But in his novel “Girls Hostel” (Vol.I,II,III) expresses his vast experience of Bodo social life through the character of Chandan who is a real creation of his pen. Here he tried to expresses the reality of life through his personal lense. Chandan in his lonely life met number of Miss and Mistresses and number of boarder in girls hostel since his childhood to the adolescence, where his Alpana madam one day told him that he has already been grown up to adulthood, so he has no service in the Hostel.⁸ It is the realisation that come to him that one can stay with unmarried women till his childhood not after he attains adulthood. Many realisation of the novelist come to light through the observations of the character of Chandan.

Monoranjon Lahari is one of the best depictor of the social realism, through which he depicted the Bodo Society’s traditional customs and habits, beliefs and rites and the real life situation of the village in Bodo society. In his first novel ‘Kharlung’ he depicted the traditional habit of unsettled group

⁸ Mochahari, Chittaranjan, ‘Girls Hostel’ Vol- III P-89
of people who usually change their habitat from one place to another. His hero Gohel a young man of unsettled habit is not happy in any situation. He is not comfortable in any place, any situation; therefore he fled away from one place to another without any settlement of his life like the alienated individual. It is because of this nature that he can not settle any where. He does not fit any where. This nature of Gohel is comparable to the unsettled nature of Bodo society that keep changing their habitats. The title of the novel also imply this nature of the Bodo society and that of the Hero. A graduate, 'Gohel' fled away from home knowing the proposal of his marriage from his old father and afraid of taking the risk of maintenance of family. The characters in his novel "Kharlung" are very familiar characters of the Bodo countryside where we can visualise simple and colourful life of the country folk. In order to produce realistic literature it is essential for the writer to be aquainted with real experiences of life. Such real experiences of village has enabled, Lahari to write a social novel on the rural setting. The novel gives a realistic picture of the simple and traditional way of life of the Bodo society. The majority of the characters in his novel are typical characters, representing the cross section of the Bodo social life. In his another novel "Hainamuli" he provides the taste of the another way of realism through the depiction of social habits, customs and traditions with his life-long experiences. His great achievement as the novelist is only from his second novel 'Hainamuli.' In this novel he depicted
the characters of Bodo society where the traditional habit and the activities are still prevalent. These are not only the habits of forefathers but those that parallely continued generations after generation. This is the habit of using charms i.e. a powerful herbal medicine or magic to win over the heart of some one. It is true to say that the use of charms (medicine) is seen among the Bodos. Ultimate result of the use of charms is very dangerous. The novelist's focus is on the negative impacts of the Hainamuli which has been projected as an evil and a social decease to be fought against. As the novelist with social concern he wanted to make his readers aware of the evil impacts of Hainamuli. Among the Bodo novelists, Lahary is one of the accomplished in the creation of novel. In former two novels he depicted the simple and easy Bodo people's traditional habits and customs and beliefs of the village people through his personal experiences. But in his third novel 'Rebeka' he changed the theme of the novel and shifted the locale to the urban life. Here he tried to draw the inner reality of modern life because he knew the external reality is not the whole truth. This is the reason why a writer need to be very conscious of time, situation and the age in which he lives and even of the past and future. No genuine writer can surpass this boundary of reality. The novel "Rebeka" receives its realistic character on account of Lahary's rich experience which is balanced by a deep realization of life. He gives his artistic expression in the depiction of modern life of Rebeka and her

9. The novelist, therefore, has a special responsibility both to the present and the past of his country, what he inherits from the past is important because it shows what are the section of his country's cultural heritage which have meaning today what he says of the present is important because he is assume to be expressive what is most vital in the spirit of his time - Fox, Ralph, The Novel and the People. P-55
society. Through the character of Rebeka, Lahary expresses the nature of modern people and how the underlying truth of human nature compelled them to realize themselves. It is the fact of the inner quality of men and women. It is true that the thinking of the modern people becomes full of complexity and artificiality. Their complex nature can not be understood through their external behaviour. Lahary has skillfully portrayed the character of Rebeka as seen from inside. Rebeka is the type of the sexy and notorious or spoilt girl; but she is not without individuality.

Few novelists in the Bodo have focused on the rift between the Bodos and high caste people and the divide between the Christian Bodos and non Christian Bodos. Nandeswar Daimary is one such novelist. In his novel “Manjubala Devi” Daimary has presented a fictional snap shot of such a situation. Along with his novel Daimari tried to portray the class conflict between the lower middle and middle classes in the society. In his observation he depicted the Bodo Christian society and the Brahmin society. Here Abhinash belong to the Bodo Christian society and Manjubala belongs to Brahmin society. Nandeswar Daimary has tried to depict the picture of discrimination of Brahmins upon the Bodo society in his novel. It's noteworthy that, Abhinash and Manjubala loved each other for which Abhi in confidence went to Manjubala's house to drop her. It is clearly depicted in the novel that Abhi could clearly understand their negligence at the time he visited
Manjubala. It can be mentioned because Manjubala’s mother offered him meal separately not along with Manjubala and their family members. After meal he got experiences that her mother placed utensils or dishes separately and cleaned the eating place with the feelings of hatred and negligence after knowing Abhinash as the Bodo youth. Due to the role of Sanskritisation the feelings of the people changed. But the experience of Daimari being recorded as the pillar of the discrimination upon the lower class is to be counted the profile of the whole society for the present and the future generation. “Novel is the document of the changing atmosphere and the creation of the new situation through writer’s experiences”. So here in his novel, Daimari focuses on some inner realities through the views of their hero and heroin. “people of lower caste could not sit together and eat together, with the Brahmins, although in the purpose of cremation and other customs they never feel shy to ask for wages or materials from any caste whether may be lower or below poverty”. Brahmin society’s social realism also found in his novel. It is the profile of realism of the Boro society during that particular period that the Bodo tribes were mercilessly neglected by the Brahmins and the other middle classes of people at a period of time. At the same year Dharanidhar Wary brings one of the new theme in the Bodo novel i.e. the reginal theme. Dharanidhar Wary, while depicting social reality he at the same time becomes over emotional and as a result his works turns in to mere propaganda. This is a kind of

10. Daimary, Nandeswar, ‘Manjubala Devi’ P-26
11. Daimary, Nandeswar, ‘Manjubala Devi’ P-21
powerful flow in his art. The deep relationship which exists between nature and man has been woderfully delineated against rich scenic background of the Manas Sanctuary in his 'Mwihuri'.

It is quite natural that the writers of novel always pick-up their characters from the society around them and known to them. There is universality in the hopes and sane aspirations, love and despair, enjoyment and sufferings of a regional character.

It should, however be mentioned that inspite of the efforts of the novelist to depict realistically the rural life they are not being able to devote proper attention to the hopes and aspirations of the people dwelling on the side of the Manas Sanctuary and whose lives and destinies are inalienably linked with this Sanctuary. Many urban writers have written about the village, although it is to be noted that whether they have been successful in giving vivid and true picture it is a matter of conjectures. But it would be wrong to say that any rural writer could penetrate the true picture of the natural life, some are unable to express the complete picture of the rural life. Specially about the writing of Dharanidhar Wary we can say that he could properly express and depict the true picture about the socio-economic condition of the Bodo people living around the Manas Sanctuary.

Political movement and social uprising are important sources for writing novel. Like Tolstoy's 'War and Peace', various novels have been composed against the background of economic and social revolution. The efforts of the Bodo
novelist in this direction can be seen in Tiren Boro’s “Bigrai-DwisraF” and in Jwngsar Bodosa’s ‘Jariminni Fwisali’ written against the background of Bodo rebellion. But the case is different when we look at the great Indian struggle for independence. The high hopes and aspirations of the agitating masses could not be accurately represented by the novelist in their writings. Only Tiren Boro in his novel “Bigrai DwisraF” could highlight certain aspect of the contemporary unhealthy social condition of the time. Why one of the healthy community was suppressed or deprived from their political, economical and educational and human rights? Why could not they stand with the achievements in their education with their mother language? These are the questions which arise in the mind of the heros of ‘Bigrai DwisraF’. In this novel the author takes a socialistic view of various problems of the Bodo society and suggests the ways for solving them. The causes behind have come to focus through the conversations of the hero and his parents and also through Dwisrai’s way of thinking. The reality comes true through the picture depicting some rebellions activities and sorrowful life of the rural people during the time of Bodoland movement. Many rural life was mercilessly punished by the police force of the Assam Government against the demand of the human and political rights.

Magesh Narza Boro’s “Gwthar TulungsF” depicted the realistic picture of the social problem of the Bodo society. Here Narza Boro has tried to portray the religious conversion
problem of some Bodo people at a period of time for which the hero of the Novel Gwthar had struggled to set up the origin Bathou Religion within the Bodo society. It was true that most of the Bodo people inclined to Eksharan dharma due to coax of the religious preacher Bamun Gohain. In his novel Narza Boro represent the character of Gwthar as the emiment religious lover who had been struggling for existence of the present and future generation and try to convince the village Bodo people and his parent to keep dignity and the identity of the Bodo society. It was the fact of the Bodo society that occured in some district of Assam. But it is not true that whole of the story of the novel could portray the real picture. Only the social problem taking the religious conversion of Bodo people has been taken up in this novel. Novelist's imaginative picture could not bring the social realism of the entire Bodo society.

One of Samjit Kumar Brahma's novel "Hinjao Gwdan" is remarkable in the depiction and description of the real picture of the Bodo community. Social law is the offensive in the degradation of one's individuality and the personality and resort some one to revenge against the traditional law of the society. Such case happened in Samjit Kumar Brahma's "Hinjao Gwdan" and it was the real social customary law of the Bodo society. It is existing in practice still now in different places of the Bodo dominated village areas. The law of the land is not in favour of the poor and the penny less. But it is remarkable that the prestigious or the innocent always drown
to downward and offensive goes to upwards. For which most of the people are compelled to drive away their moral character in danger or turn themselves into a convict due to the partial judgement. Rume was a deprived and helpless women who tried to challenge the injustice of the society. She completely transformed her life to adjust with a servant Bergo in fulfilling her sexual urge. In his novel Samjit Kumar Brahma has examined directly the various phases of the evils in the society with the help of the speculative mind of Ashari who felt sympathetic about the helpless life of Rume. Here is a remarkable influence of both Marxian ideology and the passionate sex-psychology of Freud.

It may be mentioned here that Bodo novelists have viewed the complexities and struggles of lower-middle class life and it has been reflected in the real picture with the traditional habit of drinking wine and how can it destroy the prosperous life and property. Anil kr. Basumatary's "Khorosani Mandali" depicted the picture of some Bodo people who were living with the habit of intoxication of wine and usually quarelled with their son's, daughter's and wifes and destroy their own well made property, individuality, morality and destroyed the future dream of their sons and daughters due to their extreme habit of drinking. The picture of these social evils depicted in his novel is the real picture happening in a society. The similar social reality has been depicted by the novelist Ramani Bilash Muchahari through his novel "Thogaisuli Hadwd". It is true
and real that for the maintenance of the family of lower class people, the parents were compelled to keep their sons and daughters as servants and the maid-servants in the family of rich host or master avoiding the interest for their education. This is a serious social problem that is still prevailing in Bodo society. The novelist has drawn our attention to such problems.

Thus, we find that most of the Bodo novelist have reacted in their respective ways to the curious aspects of reality and quite a good number of young writers have registered their promise for the society.

It should however be mentioned that our novelists are still immature in representation of the various aspects of life. The main cause for this seems to be writer's confinement to his own middle class social status. Most of the novelists missed the valuable traditions of the social customs, rites and laws confusing themselves and the intimacy with the lower middle class dwelling in the village area. But with the swift shifting of interests and subject matter of the novel the concentration of the writers was adversely affected. Some novelists have endeavoured to depict the social reality in their novels, but the presentation of their social reality is either shallow or incomplete. Most of the novelists have focused attention on the rural life and the problems of the lower middle class and the peasantry. While doing this they have depicted the social cultural life of the people in divers colours. Only a few novelist concentrate on the urban and semi urban life of the middle
class. Till date no significant novel has been written on the ethnic movements in Bodo society. It can be said that the hope lies with new generation of novelists who are turning their attention to new and widening areas of the contemporary society of the Bodos.