CHAPTER - VII

CONCLUSION
After a long discussion it can be noticed that, the lives of Bengali and Assamese woman are surrounded by many problems. The respective societies as well as literatures of both Assam and Bengal are witness to these problems, and there may be seen a keen consciousness being at work since ages as to find out both the root and solution to these problems.

It has been seen that though the Vedic society was patriarchal, the position of women in that society was quite stable. They occupied high position in the family and economically also, their position was fair and honourable. At the same time, however it is also true that the condition of women started deteriorating in this age itself. After Vedic age, women’s condition was gradually compressed by the effects of various Smriti-Sastras, male dominated feudal social system, various foreign invasions, Darshana monistic philosophy of Sankaracharya etc. and with this, many problems found their access to the lives of the women. The life of women in Bengal was not an exception. Here woman’s life was crushed by the pressure of many social rules and customs. On the other hand, woman’s problems were relatively less in Assam because of the weak position of Brahminism and feudal system, and also because of the influence of matriarchal and tribal social system.

Indeed, it may be noticed that the problems of women’s dependency and alike are found in the literatures of both areas. Of course, sometimes the literatures of these areas also show that women are trying to get
themselves free and independent. During the first half of the 19th century, Assamese society was influenced by Bengal as well as Bengali society in some respects, but the Bengal’s influence could not bring in any satisfactory change to the condition of Assamese women, for Bengal itself suffered from in this regard. During this time social reforms had started in Bengal and Assam too. Now women's lives were also influenced by a new consciousness and with this emerged many novels where women's problems were focused against the background of the new challenges of reformation and changes.

In chapter-II, we have found that the 19th century Renaissance along with elements like the introduction of western education, advent of nationalist ideas and thoughts, and changes in the socio-political and economic aspects – all these had greatly influenced both life and literature in both Bengal and Assam. With this, many novelists emerged for highlighting the problems of women in this new social scenario and framework. It is important to note that the crude as well as crucial picture of the woman self amidst problem like polygamy, widowhood, dowry, child-marriage and so on has been delineated strikingly by Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, Rabindranath Tagore, Saratchandra Chattopadhyay in Bengal and by Rajanikanta Bardaloi, Dandinath Kaliata, Daibachandra Talukdar, Birinchi Kumar Baruah etc. in Assam.

In Chapter-III, we have noticed that the growth of patriarchal feudal system over the matriarchal society is one of the main reasons of various women problems in Bengal. Here special focus has been made on the problems of the widow, child-marriage, polygamy, dowry system etc, as
they have been reflected in the novels of these two areas. But after long
discussion, we notice that the novelist of these areas could not give the
right solution to the problems of widow.

In Bengal, Bankimchandra focused on the sensuality of the widow
and he killed them thoroughly dominated by prejudices.

বন্ধুমন্ডল চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের উপন্যাসে বিধবার প্রশনের বর্ণনা থাকলেও বিধবার
বিবাহ হয়নি।

For solving the widow problem Rabindranath presents Binodini as Devi,
and he tries to solve the widow problem through remarriage of Damini with
Sribilash. Later Saratchandra is seen to send Rajlakshmi to Patna and
Kiranmayee and Abhaya to Burma, and Rama and Sabitri also could not
meet their lovers.

On the other hand, Daibalchandra Talukdar in Assam has not
mentioned about the marriage of Aikan with Kanak in the novel আয়োধ্যাবি.
Only Snehalata Baruah has shown the marriage of the widow Bina with her
lover.

Beside this, in 19th century,

পৌরাণিকের রেওয়াজ ছিল জোরাল, তাই মেয়েদের কুমারীজীবন ছিল একসাই
ক্ষুদ্রায়।

Both Rabindranath and Saratchandra have selected only a few
unmarried girls who belong to Brahma family. Hemanalini of নৌকাড়ুবি,
Sucharita, Lalita of গোরা, Bijaya of দত্ত, and Achala of গৃহদাহ may specially
be mentioned. Even though some novelists are seen to be eager to solve
women's problems, yet finally they often take up an oscillating position in
thought and remain dominated by prejudices. In Bengal,
Rabindranath Tagore is also seen to be all against the dowry system in his writings, but this system was in vogue in his family. In this context, Lakshminath Bezbaruah wrote in his সৌম্য জীবন সৌরবগী,
In Chapter-IV, we have seen that portrayal of conjugal problems remains more faithful and accurate in Bengali novels than in Assamese novels. Though no fixed solution to the various conjugal problems have been offered, yet we find that so many women (Bhramar, Shaibalini, Kumudini, Abhaya) have merely embraced the base of love and belief in conjugal life and it is on this base that they have ushered in their voices of protest against the problems of their lives. Most of these protesting women however are seen to meet almost tragic ends; some of them die pathetically, some of them return to their husbands, some of them lead themselves to far off remote areas.

On the other hand, in Assamese novels only Bina of Daibachandra Talukdar may be seen as an exception. Bina wants to spend her life in hermitage. Even Birinchi Kr. Baruah's,

Tagar's conjugal problem was not properly solved in the novel. Problems of love are all alike for everyone: whoever she may be, a virgin, a widow, or a married woman, the socio-political and economic factors of the age are always there on the realization of the bliss of love. In many cases, Assamese women,
Only Rahadoi Ligiri of Rajanikanta Bardaloi is seen to be the voice of her own by dint of her determination to be herself against all odds set by so many pressures, some familial, some political.

Dandinath Kalita’s Prabhavati also deserves mention at this point,

On the other hand the problem of friendship between a man and a woman and its result as represented by Debdas-Parbati, or Janki-Panei, also again and again many faced the different social factors responsible for the ongoing chaos as well as frustration.

In the Chapter-V, we have discussed the economic problem of women in Bengali and Assamese novels. It has been seen that the Assamese women, in comparison to the Bengali women, engage herself in various works to get relief from various economic problems, women have to face in their life. Many Assamese novels have portrayed this well. In Bengal, Rabindranath laid importance on self reliance of women, but other novelists have not laid such importance in their novels.
In the Chapter-VI, we have taken up the problems of Muslim women, indigenous women and prostitutes as represented in Bengali and Assamese novels. It is seen that only a few novelists have attempt to solve the problems of Muslim women in their novels. But it can also be noticed that the position of indigenous women are almost good. In Bengali novels some prostitutes may be seen to raise their voices for their own rights. The prostitutes depicted in Assamese novels are not protestive in that way.

In the end, it can be mentioned that at the backdrop of the 19th century, it was not possible for the novelist of both the areas, to show the exact path to the problems, women had been suffering in the society. Saratchandra, himself admitted that the writers were only writers: they were not social reformers.

Years have passed but yet, still at the backdrop of a new age so full of the cries of the feminists for emancipation and freedom, it is not possible to trace out the right path to the solution of the problems of women. It must be said that though no exact way to any kind of solution has ever been offered, the novelist of both the areas of those times (up to 1950) remain sensible enough to different question of the woman. And sensibility, of course, matters a lot. It can not be denied the slender attempt to solve this problem of the novelist of these two areas.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES:

1. Dr. Dilip Majumdar: *Bangla Sahitye Pragati Chinta*, P. 153.


11. Ibid, P. 93.

12. Ibid, P. 93.


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