CHAPTER - III

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Literature is the expression of social consciousness. Both direct and indirect result of social thought and consciousness are reflected in literature. The main characteristic of novel is its close relationship with life. Man is in its root. This branch of literature tries to highlight the wholeness of life under the periphery of time and place. Novel is a great epical form of struggle of man against society and nature. Before Renaissance it could not take its complete form, yet it has spread the mental consciousness of man gradually. So the role of man in the circle of man, human relationship and social life is explained by Leo Tolstoy in his book *What is Art* as,

The life of man in two fold—one side of it is his own personal experience, which is free and independent in proportion as his interests are lofty and transcendental, the other is his social life as an atom in the human swarm which binds him down with its laws and forces him to submit them. For although a man has a conscious individual existence, do what he will, he is but the inconsistent tool of history and humanity.

In fact, man is a social animal and social dependence is an irresistible natural event in case of man. The modern mind accepts the social dependence of literature and wants to see the whole society in realization of literature. The importance of literature is unbounded in realization of the relationship of history, society and man. This sociability creates a new interest of life in literature.
The family was matriarchal in aboriginal communistic social system. The patriarchal social system took birth as quickly as the production facility bloomed. The working periphery of women became gradually limited and men stepped into the age of slavery, and the women-oppression started.

Here it may be mentioned that,

With this, the position of women started gradually degrading in the society due to the influence of feudal system since the sixth century. Since then, widow-marriage etc. became banned in the society.

And,

Even the position of widow became miserable. In spite of their obedience to their husbands, they became total vegetarian, and gave up all the comforts and lived a restrained life. Polygamy, child marriage and dowry system were in vogue in the society.

There is no specific change in the feudal social system of Bengal till the British era. These extreme curses on the woman were still there.
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Widow marriage was a problem in Assamese Brahmin society but it was not the problem of the other caste.

There was not any bindings to follow the path of widowhood, if anybody did willingly. Yet there were some problems that the widows had to face in the society. Similarly, child marriage, polygamy, dowry system were in vogue. It was also recorded that there was no Kulinism.

Again,
The problem of these widows were discussed for the first time in the novels of Bankimchandra. At the beginning of his career as a novelist, he started writing romantic novels.

After these, he started to write novels on other social problems. In his *Bislekha* and *Krisnakantak* the two social novels, he postulated the problems of the widow. He also wrote about widow-marriage in his article *Raja*.

Even in the character of Kunda and Hira in *Bislekha* and Rohini in *Krisnakantak*, the problems of widow were discussed. Kundanandini comes to the family of Nagendra, Nagendra is fascinated by her beauty. Suryamukhi comes to know this. On the other hand Kundanandini thinks that,

> সূর্যমুখীর সঙ্গে বিয়ে না হয়ে যদি আমার সঙ্গে হতো।

Here it may be mentioned, the writer has envisaged widow marriage in his work but his moral philosophy that works behind it too can not be ignored.

> এই উপন্যাসে বিবাহ-বিবাহ প্রবেশনের মাধ্যমে বক্তিমূলতঃ তার বিচারিতাত্মক করেছেন নারীর ব্যক্তিবিশ্বাসগ্রন্থের বীৰীতির বিগতে রায় দিয়েছেন।

Here we mention that,

> বক্তিমূল পাশ্চাত্য হরদেব যোয়ালের পাত্রগুলির মধ্য দিয়ে প্রমাণ করতে চেয়েছেন নগেন্দ্রনাথের 'কুশীনিনী বিবাহ করা সর্বাপেক্ষা প্রাক্তিক কাজ' বা রুপবত্তীর রূপেয়োগলাঙ্গার ভালবাসা নহে।

In this novel twenty years old,
And this unlucky young widow gave up her virginity for set fire of jealousy and revenge. She is attracted by Debendra but Debendra is devoted to Kunda. Hira is only a slave. At last, she gave Kunda poison to punish Debendra. Kunda committed suicide by taking that poison. After that Hira becomes mad and says, Debendra,

আশীর্বাদ করি, নরকের মেয়ে তোমার স্থান না হয়।'

Again widow Rohini in Bankimchandra's কৃস্কাতের উইল,

বৈধব্যর অনুপস্থিত অনেকগুলি দোষ তাহার ছিল। দোষ, সে কালো পেঁজে ধূতি পরিত, হাতে চুলি পরিত, পানও বুরি খাইত।'

Here it can be mentioned that Rohini was very much talented also,

এদিকে রসকেন্দ্রে সে স্ত্রীপদবিশেষ সুলভহার হয়; লোহ, অমল, চড়চড়ি, মড়সড়ি, ঘটা, দালনা ইত্যাদিতে সিদ্ধহস্ত; আবার আলপনা, খয়েরের গহনা, ফুলের খেলনা, সুচির জাজ তুলনারহিত। চুল বাঁধিতে, কন্যা সাজাইতে, পাড়ার একজনে আলাদান।'

But Bankimchandra could not give up a focus on her sensuality.

কি অপরাধে এ বালীধারী আমার অদৃষ্টে ঘটিল? ...এই গোবিন্দলাল বাবুর নবী—

তাহারা আমার অপরকা কোন গুণে গুণক্ষী ... আমার সকল পথ বদ্ধ কেন?'

Being impelled by malice she went to Gobindalal. Even she thought,

হে জগদিশ্রী ... আমার হৃদয়ের এই অসহ্য প্রেমবহি নিবাইয়া দাও ... আমার প্রাণ স্বর্ণ কর—আমি এই যজ্ঞে আর সহিতে পারি না।'

But,
At last, Rohini was killed by Gobindalal because of her betrayal. Her ever-thirsty pain finds a touchy expression,

марিও না, মরিও না, আমার নবীন বয়স, বুকন সুধ। ... আমায় মরিও না?  

Here we may also note that,

ইই উপন্যাসের প্রথমেই নারীর ব্যক্তিত্বের প্রতি উপন্যাসিকের যে আধুনিক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গীর লেখককে অবশ্যই ছিল, ক্রম তা সম্পূর্ণ ভাগ করে তিনি সামগ্রিক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গী নারীরিত্বের সমস্যার সমাধান খুঁজতেন না। ... সমাজের বিধ্বস্ততা যুবকীরা কিছুতেই বাল হতে পারে না।— লেখকের এই বদ্ধমূল সংস্কারে পাঠকদের সত্তা বলে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করতেই বার বার রোহিনীর দেশ দেখিয়েছেন।

Rohini's fondness for Gobindalal and Gobindalal's thirst for beauty these two could never be united in Bankim's imaginative world.  

In his novel Bankim is seen at his endeavour to give widow marriage a social status in a restrained social system of protected Hindu society. Not directly but quite individually, he presented his plea to the heart of the people of the society. He willingly set the character of Kunda skillfully and made her a widow. Through her premature death, he wanted to establish a positive meaning.

বিধ্বস্ত বিবাহে অধিকারিণী বরে কিন্তু এই নৈতিকতা অদায়ি এদেশে সচরাচর বীর্যত হয় নাই।...... তাহার কারণ, সমাজের ভয়।

Infact, Bankim wants to show that suffering must come if someone sacrifices the complete welfare merely for the sake of self-satisfaction and is always ready to face its consequence to get the desired benefit.
On the other hand, in the beginning of novel writing of Assamese literature, we can find A.K. Garni’s *এলোকেশী রেখাব কথা*, where he focused the widow’s problem.

At last, being helpless and diseased, she got admitted to Hospital. There a pious Christian lady who inspired her to became converted to Christianity, and she did it and spent happily the remaining days of her life. Though, these novels like, deal with the various women’s characters but only *সূচনায় উপাখ্যান তানুভূতি, লাহরী* tries to establish the social status of women, besides this hardly focused problem of the widow.

Rajanikanta Bardaloi the famous novelist of Assam was inspired by Bankimchandra’s novels,

Initially he started writing novel paying attention to social life of the Miri tribes, who follow the free community life, not described in Manu’s scripture. He could not at first work out a solution to the motionless diseased, contemporary Assamese society. Again,

Later in his historical novels like *বহৈদী লিগরী*, he discussed the status of women in the society and their love related problems, but hardly took a glance at the problem of the widow:
On the other hand, in Bengal, Rabindranath Tagore wrote dealing with the problems of the widow. A difference of thirty years may be seen between Rabindranath work and Bankim’s. Rabindranath Tagore wrote in his article about the critical problem of widow marriage in a joint family.

Like Bankim, Rabindranath could not get Binodini married to Bihari or Mahendra. Here it may be mentioned that,

It is also true that Rabindranath Tagore, though could not show the exact way leading to recovery of woman’s condition from contemporary hesitations and doubts, has represented the exact contemporary problems women had to face, specially in his novels. According to some critics,

In an article entitled The Plays of Rabindranath Tagore Dr. D. V. K. Raghavacharyulu says "...Tagore effected a fruitful synthesis in his career and achievement between our Renaissance and Reformation. As a child of the Indian Renaissance, he emphasized the values of intellectual and
imaginative creation. As a product of the Indian Reformation, he stressed the need of relating the enlightenment of outward nature with the illumination of the inner spirit. All the artistic output of his long life was a projection of this quick pulp of national consciousness into the enduring moulds of vital imagination." This is no less true of Tagore, the novelist. Living in the turbulent times of the late 19th century and the early 20th century, Tagore naturally reflects the contemporary ideas and counter-ideas in all his works—more particularly in his novels.

The heroine of ḍhāṅkhe bālī is a widow. Moreover, Mohini, in the earlier novel krośa and Kusum in the short story ḍhāṅkhe bālī show their pain of widowhood. Binodini starts storm in the conjugal life of Asha and Mahendra. And in the pretext of friendship with Asha, when she listened their love story, her ears flushed red to the tips and her breathing became heavy and fast.

Her marriage has to be done with Mahendra, but it took place with other and she got widowhood. In the imaginary mind of Rabindranath, the incongruous woman is not a symbol of destruction, it is in disguise, an image of pleasing prosperous. This image may be seen in Damdam's garden house.

In Bankim's novel, Rohini wants to marry Haralal before Gobindalal. But Binodini does not do so. She has no such type of mentality. Because she believes that Mahendra is fit for her. Because of ill luck, her condition is so. According to her, Asha becomes unfit for Mahendra. And Binodini went mad like Hira when she realized that Bihari becomes bend towards Asha. She writes to Mahendra,
Afterwards, she found Bihari for giving her respect. In the last script of the novel, the image of Binodini comes out as that of a devoted woman. Rabindranath Tagore pays much respect to the widow by making them free from the scandal of adultery. Bihari wants to marry Binodini, but she says,

So, at last, Binodini sets out for Kashi.

Damini is another widow, in the novel Chhurer. Shibtosh donated all the property along with his wife Damini to master Lilananda Swami before his death. But Damini was not interested to follow the customs of a widow.

Even though,

She wants a peaceful life and her dream person. So after seeing Shachish, she wants Shachish.
Though she does not get Shachish, the pain of widowhood was visible clearly when she was at the sandy land with Thali of food for Shachish.

Lastly she took pleasure of life by making Sribilas as her life partner. Here it may be referred that,

After this, Mejorani is a childless and ill-lucky widow in the novel. Bimala writes in her Autobiography,

And her feelings towards Nikhilesh was not hidden. She always feeds Nikhilesh by cooking herself. Nikhilesh is very important to Mejorani. Even she scolds Bimala for her negligence towards Nikhilesh, Nikhilesh said about her,
And he also said that their life is a gamble of luck and Mejorani is the victim of this helplessness.

Then mention may be made of the widow is Shyamasundari. Madhusudan used his elder brother's widowed wife for his interests. But, God knows, Shyamasundary loves Madhusudan. She sits on the road Madhusudan used. The picture of lust has been visible in the character of Shyma. Moreover, Yogamaya in the story becomes widow at the tender age, but possesses progressive thoughts. Here it is also remarkable that,

Although Saratchandra shows the pressure of social rituals through the widow, Hem's mother said, Saratchandra painted appealing pictures of fallen widows, their mute sufferings, and their frustrations and even their supersubtle suppressed feelings.
says, তোমি বড়দিদি। She replies, আমি মাঝে। It is the last moment of his life. So, Madhabi’s love could not be fulfilled and her sadness remained as it was.

Rama in পশ্চিমসাগর is also a child-widow who loves Ramesh since her childhood. But she protests against him to protect the property and to abide by the customs of village society even though she has love for him.

বাইরে রমা রমেশ বিরোধী চক্রান্তের একজন, কিন্তু অন্তরে অনুভূতির তীর বেদনায় ক্ষতিগ্রস্থ। Sabitri of চরিত্রহিনী is another example. Mokshada says about her,

কুন্দীন বামুনের মেয়ে বরু, আসল কুন্দীনের মেয়ে। বাছা নবজীব বয়সে বিধবা হয়ে ঘরেই থাকে, এই মুখপোড়া মিনসে বিয়ে করবে, রাজরানী করব বলে তুলিয়ে বের করে নিয়ে এসে শেষে হাড়ি হাল করে ফেলে পালানো। Sabitri loves Satish but could not accept his love because of Hindu tradition. She says to Satish,

এই দেহটা আমার আজও নষ্ট হয়নি বটে, .... তোমার পূজা হবে না। According to Sabitri, real love is a kind of worshipping. At last she left with Upendra after handing Satish over to Sarojini.

Rajlakshmi of স্বীকার is a Brahmin’s widow. She was attracted towards Srikanta at the childhood. But she was neither as possessive as Lalana nor like Sabitri. She tries to make love successful in selfless service and pure love. Rajlakshmi is the representative of these qualities.

রাজলক্ষ্মী অশ্রুন দিব্যমূর্তি অমদাদিদি নয়, বিরোধিনী অভয়া নয়, সাধকীও নয়—পরস্পর বিলোকের মিলনে এক চতুর্থ ধারা—সমাজ সংস্কারে যা অবরুদ্ধ হয়েও উচ্ছুলিতা।
She got the opportunity by keeping the lover along with her to fulfill the thirst of love, but Hindu customs was in her blood. She was disinterested to enjoy the undignified love. Srikanta confessed her love, but she could not, because she is a mother of Banku. Yet her love sometimes comes to light.

In the fourth episode, it seems that Rajlakshmi comes out of the hesitations of tradition. But it is not possible in this life, so, she welcomes life after death. Kamallata is another widow who has been exploited, she has an illegal child. Later she joins Babaji's Ashram. Gahar loves her. But she loves Srikanta only. Srikanta is her mental make up and starts a new journey.

Kiranmayee of Chiranjit is a married woman at the first time, later becomes a widow,

Kiranmayee says,

After the death of her husband Haran, Upin gets a place in her mind. Moreover, she had a good relationship with Dibakar and he was attracted to her. In course of events, Kiran took Dibakar at Arakan to punish Upin. But
no relationship was established between them. But her love for Upin comes to light when she hears the news of the illness of Upin. Lastly she goes mad. Again,

‘পরিতমশাই’ উপন্যাসে নারীর স্বাতন্ত্র্যের প্রশ্ন দেখা দিয়েছে কুসুমকে নিয়ে।

In this novel,

হিন্দু বিধবার মতই কুসুমের স্বাতান্ত্র্য বিধবা বিভাগ, হিন্দু শাস্ত্র-শিক্ষালঞ্চ আচারনিষ্ঠা
এবং সংবেদনশীল গুণের আমূলসম্ভাবনার সমস্যা মিলনের পথে কুসুমের মধ্যে
সমস্যা সৃষ্টি করেছে।

She says,

তুমি ভেবেছি, তিনি তাদের মতে তাদের মতই যারে, সে আমি সে কথা কি! ...
আমি বরং এখানে না খেয়ে শুকিয়ে মরব, তবু তোমার কাছে হতে পেতে
তোমার হাসি কৌতুকের আর মাল-মসন্দ যুগিয়ে দেব না।

Kusum’s protest was the protest against the social rules of that time. The problems of the widow are also highlighted in other novels of Saratchandra. Lalana of শুভদা, mother of Jnanada in অরঞ্জীরা are such examples. Again his novel শেষপ্রশ্ন it is shown that Kamal was under the grip of eternal Hindu prejudices. That is why,

প্রতিবাদী নারীকে শেষপ্রশ্নের কমন বিধবার নিদিষ্ট হবিয়ামাই খায়, নিজের ইচ্ছাতেই
খায়।

After this it also can be mentioned that Bibhutibhusan Bandyopadhyay also represented the problems of the widow in his novels. In Bengali Brahmin family a widow was binded by hard rules, but in other communities the rules were not so strict. So it can be said, in the novel of Bibhutibhusan Bandyopadhyay আদর্শ হিন্দু হোটেল,

সে ব্যাপারের বিধবা নয়, মাছ-মাংসে খাইতে তাহার আপত্তি নাই।
Beside this in his novel, the painful life of the widows has been portrayed. The widow has no right to fulfill their desires and had no individual right to choose anything related to pleasure.

On the other hand, a change occurs in Assamese social life. Initially, the problems of the widow were discussed lightly, but later on it becomes the major part of discussion in the novel. Dandinath Kalita, Daibachandra Talukdar, Snehalata Baruah, Birinchi Kumar Baruah—all of them brought new taste to the novel but discuss little about the problems of the widow.

The problems of the widow is seen to be discussed in the novel of Daibachandra Talukdar's. There was a friendship between Kanak and Aikan since childhood. Aikan got married timely. But Shobhan; Aikan's husband fell ill and died after some days. Aikan came back to her own mother's house. Kanak visits her sometimes. Aikan asks him about his marriage, but Kanak says,

Their conversation reveals the love of Kanak for Aikan. Aikan understands the meaning of his words.

Here, the sympathy of the author for the widow is well expressed in his writing.
In the course of time, Aikan's parents died but Kanak can't accept her. Aikan says to Kanak,

আপনার মন মই বুঝে। কিন্তু আপনি সমাজে ভয় করবে। ময়ে সমাজে ভয় করবে, দেশে আচার নীতি আমি পালিবেই লাগিব তদুপবি আপনার সূক্ষ্মত মেব কাব্যন্দে কৃষ্ণ প্রচার হোরা মেব মনত অসহনীয়।

Now Kanak says,

তোব সুখ্যায়, তোব পরিত্যাগ মই চাই থাকিয়ে মেব অনন্দ লাগে যদি সুষ্টি ওলট -পালট হওয়া।

After that she tells Aikan to leave him. But at last he said,

আইকন উত্তিত আহ-মই তোক এবি দব নোরাবো।

Whether they could unite or not, the novelist does not say anything.

The novel, বীণা of Snehalata Baruah also describes the condition of the widow in the Brahmin society. Bina is a child widow in the Brahmin family. Her father Nagen Baruah sent her to school to become financially self supporting. After this, she got introduced with widower Prakash who recently returned from England and gradually a close relationship grew in between them Outcaste and son-disowned Prabash wanted to get Bina as his wife. On the other hand, Bina could not forget the widowhood and social-custom, though she had eagerness to get him.
Ultimately, heart won over the social reformation.

The condition of widow was pathetic in the society, they were not given any room in any welfare function of a society. Amiya—a liberal-minded women also criticizes after hearing the love-story of Bina.

In the novel of Dandinath Kalita’s, after the death of Jali, his wife Subhadra became helpless completely. Yet she lives her life with her daughter Kapahi keeping in the memory of her husband.

In his another novel, the problem of the widow Malabika has been highlighted. Two women Pratima and Malabika come in contact with Madhab in this novel. Pratima invites destruction to her life following the call of physical feelings and lust. On the other hand, Malabika is just the opposite. She loves Madhab.

But she was married to Damodar Sharma and after some days, he died. A change came to Malabika’s life. She lost all happiness. Suddenly, she met Madhab. On the other hand, Madhab is in favour of reformation of the torments upon the widow. He says,

And he wants to marry Malabika. But Malabika is a widow. How can she sacrifices the customs and traditions? Madhab says,
After some days, they were tied with the cord of marriage. The unfulfilled desire of a tragic hungry heart got fulfillment.

It can be mentioned that Assamese novelists like Snehalata Baruah, Dandinath Kalita have tried to solve the widow problem by remarry them. On the other hand in Bengal, Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay also took up the same endeavour in case of Kundanandini and Rabindranath in case of Damini but their marriage life ended within a short time span. That the Bengali novelists had hesitations in their minds regarding this may easily be understood from this. On the other hand, the courageous steps of the Assamese novelists in this regard is praiseworthy.

Except this, the painful life of Tagar in जीवन बाटे is always to be remembered in our mind. Tagar is an incomparable creation of the novelist Birinchi Kumar Baruah. The four chapters: pre-marriage, post-marriage, motherhood and widow are revealed through the character of Tagar who has to face a lot of conflicts. After the death of her husband,

Even though,
After this, Tagar with the help of Dharani's doctor Golap employed herself at Shipini Trust and try to earned. Once again, she met with her first love Hakim Kamalakanta.

Tagar was convicted of stealing the ornaments of Kamalakanta’s wife Suprabha and her house was searched. Moreover a rumour was spread that she had an illegal relationship with Golap doctor. Tagar’s daughter Kamali says to her,

Kamalakanta got back his first memory of youth having seen the ring at Tagar's house. In this way different problems came to her life and made her life pathetic and painful and touching. After all, Tagar's character stands as the medium for manifestation of the tragic life of the widow. In this regard some widows in Bengali novels may be seen trying to get rid of their helpless tragic condition. Some of the widows in Bankimchandra, like Kunda, Rohini etc. are relieved from their tragedy by death, but in Rabindranath's Binodini, Damini has tried to get rid of those problems. Saratchandra's Sabitri had not accepted her love but Kiranmayee wanted to spend her life in Burma.

Again Tagar's mother-in-law, Ahini of this novel,
Her life is totally surrounded by her only son Dharani. When Dharani got married with Tagar, a baseless jealousy grasped her mind that her daughter-in-law might keep away Dharani from her and only for that reason she tried to ruled Tagar, so that she might not raise her voice.

After that, he became changed when Kamali was born. Kamali took the place of Dharani and her loneliness remained no more.

Although,

Grief-pride, envy-jealousy, love fondness,—all these find vivid expression in the character of the widow.

Along with the problem of the widow, the problem of polygamy also affects the life of women. Its influence is seen widespread over the society of Assam and Bengal. The novelist of these societies tried to free the society from its ill-effect. After all Bankimchandra in his novel, बिष्युरुक्ष अधिकांश शोभकेल अनिष्ट। तुम यदि पुरुषे दुई विवाह नीति बियुक्त बियेनोन कर, तबे देखाओ वे, इहा अधिकांश लोकेर अनिष्टकर।

Topsy-turvy comes to the life of Nagendra and Suryamukhi not only because of restricted widow marriage, but also because of polygamy supported by society. Suryamukhi protests against such supported tradition of polygamy,
Harial of कृष्णकांतरे उमुल has no objection to marry second time. Again Ramsadaybabu's wife, Labangalata of রজনী,


Once again this novelist, Bankimchandra tries to make free the society from the disease of polygamy another dimension in his novel, দেবীচোরুলী.

He says about this,


In the novel of দেবীচোরুলী at the request of Kulinism, father Haraballabh allows as well as inspires his son Brajeshvar to polygamy.

The novelist is a representative of Renaissance period but he does not take the responsibility to abolish the disease of polygamy.

Even though the writer mentions the pain of co-wife, Brajeshvar goes to marry for the third time already, having two wives at his expense. When Sagar hears all about this,
In the novel ீැශතරාම, Sitaram left his first wife based on the prophesy of a future teller and again he marries for the two times. Here Bankimchandra is seen to speak against polygamy.

Moreover, the supremacy of Kulinism can be noticed in the novel কপালকুণ্ডলা with reference to Mrinmayi’s sister-in-law Shyama. Kulin males have many wives. They spend their jobless life moving one father-in-law’s house to another. But wives are always unnoticed.

Rameshchandra Dutta in his novel সংসার, also portrays the picture of polygamist Brahmans – how they ill-treat with their wives. Kalitara is a victim of Kaulinya dynasty. For marriage purpose, the selection of the bride should depend upon the quality of Kaulinya, but in a Kulin Brahmin family, the only key to judge the bride is Kulin dynasty.

বিলাম। ... আছে শরত্বাবু, তেমনি মা দেখে শুনে এমন ঘরে বিয়ে দিলেন কেন?

...তাঁর সংসারের অনেক দাস দাসীর মধ্যে দিদি একজন দাসী মাত্র।

Tragic condition of polygamy is also highlighted in his novel সমাজ. Tarinibabu – the old man decided to marry for the second time in the pretext of serving his first wife and protecting dynasty etc. Leaders of party and society inspire him. Having seen such fraud old persons, the mother of Gopabala becomes excited and says,

বলিয়ে কি পোড়ারমূখী, আমার মেয়েকে জলে ভাঙাইয়া দিব? ...অমন বুড়োর মুখে আগুন।

Of course, after some days of marriage, Tarinibabu becomes penniless, all his property came to Gopabala with the help of Gokulchandra.

On the other hand, in the novel of Rabindranath Tagore, the ill-custom of polygamy was not discussed specially. Niraja in his novel মাল্লঙ্গ,
When she became dead, she says to Sarala,

"Jaya gaye hobe na toya rakshini, Jaya gaye hobe na. Aami thakbar, thakbar thakbar." 98

Besides other novel of Saratchandra, like Bhumner's maye, highlights the followness of Kaulinya persons. In a Kulin family, Brahmins married so many and as such they could not contact directly with their wives. After a long time they went to their father-in-law house and spent there one or two days and took money and clothes and left and nothing else. They even collected money from their father-in-law's house conspiring with others. In this novel Mukunda Mukherjee with the help of Hiru-barber collected money. Golak Chaterjee is much more rude than Hiru-barbar. He wanted to marry the daughter of Priya Mukherjee, Sandhya, but he could not. He expressed unfulfilled desire at the marriage pandal. Though Golak Chaterjee takes Hariname, he does many evil works in disguise. So, the mother-in-law of Jagadhatri says,

"Ye sammaro prastha horechil koro iti anacharo upor, toye bitoree mirhote or, oye bitoree mirhote or, oye bitoree mirhote or, oye bitoree mirhote or. Jodi jano de de, tahole aaj oye korte tomerader ekti muhini kore rokheche, chuduk kore sone julo nor, —chotijamata bolbe oye dutoko oye dutoko oye dutoko oye dutoko. Dile toye dhana jhori korte tomerader lachay maatha keite hote." 99

Our head bends down because of ill-works of Golak Cheterjee and ill-customs of Kaulinya.

Indir Thakuran in pote parshali of Bibhuti Bhusan Bandyopadhyay is one of the wives of Great Kulin family the victim of the Ballali Pratha,
After the death of her parents, she started to live in her brother's house.

Beside this,

ইচ্ছামতী উপন্যাসের তিনি ভর্তী তিলু, বিলু, নিলু কোলিন্যা প্রথায় বলি।

It has been observed that,

উনিশ শতকের বাংলায় নারীনিষ্ঠার জটিলের ঘটনাগুলো সত্তীদাহ, বিধবাগণ্য ও নির্বাচন, বাল্যবিবাহ, কন্যাকর্ম, কন্যাপণ, বপন বিবাহ ইত্যাদি প্রতিরোধ ঘটত, যার কারণ ছিল হিন্দু সমাজের কোলিন্যা প্রথা।

Of course the tradition of polygamy was in vogue in Assamese society. In the novel বহিলী of Rajanikanta Bardaloi, Maniram Medhi father of Santiram,

তেতেরো প্রথম পত্নী চুকুকরত তেতেরো দ্বিতীয়বার বিয়া করাইল ছিল।

Chintaharan Patgiri's সংসার চিত্র is a fine example in this regard. It is the story of Amulya and his wife Pratima. Amulya's mother wanted a literate bride for her son. And so,

অমূল্য দেউতাকে তেতেরো পত্নী শীতলক করা যে বিয়া পাঁচ অমূল্যের বিয়া করবে হোরলীজনী ভাল নালাগুলো অমূল্য আকো দ্বিতীয়বার বিয়া করব পারিব।

Fedua is the character of the novel সাধনা, written by Dandinath Kalita. He lives in a Brahmin family. He also marries twice. Moreover, his descendent Paniram has also two wives. Beside this, Lakshmikanta wanted to marry Prabhavati, even though he was a married person. He says,
In this way it has been seen that polygamy created lots of troubles in woman’s life in the social system of Bengal as well as Assam. In Bengal Bankimchandra or Saratchandra has portrayed the pictures related to this problem, but they have neither offered any proper path to solve this problem nor have protested against. Rabindranath tried to highlight his protest through Niraja in this regard. Saratchandra’s Abhaya is seen to start her family life with other in Burma. Yet it must be said that these novelists are of course very much sceptic in this regard.

On the other hand in Assam also there is rare evidence for any solution to this problem. The novelists have only tried to focus on the existence of polygamy around the society in brief, and therein they have finished all their responsibilities.

Along with polygamy, child-marriage was also in vogue in the society. Many families were wasted just because of the curse of child-marriage. Because of child-marriage, the number of child-widow increases. Many opinions are found on the age of marriage of a girl.

Of course, Child marriage accepted by the Shastras has so many problems. For instance, Rohini of Bankimchandra’s novel is a child widow, got married of early age.

সে অল্পবয়সে বিধবা হইয়াছিল।
This Rohini of কৃষ্ণকাঙ্গের উইল destroys the happy family of Bhramar and Gabindalal. Bhramar is also a কৃষ্ণনারীরা বালিকা. 108 Kundanandini of বিষমুক্ত aged thirteen, got married to Taracharan and after three years, she becomes widow. Even though Praphulla, Suryamukhi are young ladies. On the otherhand, while focussing to Rajani, it has been said,

রজনী আধুনিক কালের। রজনী কুমারী অবস্থায় বিশ্ব বসন্ত কাপিয়েছে। 109

Somewhere Rabindranath Tagore is seen to come out of the culture of child marriage in his novel. For example, Binodini of চোখেরাবালি was a young girl. This is also reflected in other characters of Rabindranath Tagore's novels, named Damini, Sucharita, Bimala, Labanya etc. Even though Mejorani of ঘরেরাইয়ে is also a victim of child marriage.

In Asha,

কেহ তাহার বয়স স্পষ্ট করিয়া বলিত না। অত্যস্থরী বলিত এই বারো-তেরো হইবে।’ অর্থাৎ চোখ-পায়েরা হওয়ার সজন্মই অধিক। 111

The number of child widow in the novels of Saratchandra is many because of child marriage. Madhabi of বড়দিদি, Rama of পারীসামাজ, Sabitri of চরিত্রহীন Lalana of শত্রু-সকলা—all are child widows. All of them are oppressed and outcaste in the society. They have no right to live. They have to face so many problems. Saratchandra was not suppressed at all by social customs and reformation. He thought that these child-widows had the right to love and get love. After all, he believed in the importance of sacrifices and
perennial Indian concept of reformation. So, Sabitri, Rama, Madhabi did not get their loved ones. Sabitri says,

"They lived in the hope of finding their beloved ones, but in vain. So, Sabitri, Rama, Madhabi did not get their loved ones. "

So, she went with Upin. Here we may notice that,

"The tradition of child-marriage was not so much prevalent in Assam."

At that time, if a girl gets maidenhood before marriage, she was seen as fallen in the parentaged society. Here lies the cause of child-marriage. Just like Kulin tradition of Bengal, here Era Biya was run in the society. The rare Assamese novel of M.R Das described how child marriage was prevalent in Assam.

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In Dandinath Kalita's novel, Phulleshwari was fourteen years old.

Prabhavati of Sādhana,

As child marriage remained far behind, she never got married in her life. Even, the age of Usha was fifteen. In the novels of Daibachandra Talukdar, like Bina, Aikan got married in maidenhood. Here Aikans mother says,

রাগিন মূলতিয়া আক সুদবী, বয়স সোতর্কি কি গোঠব বছর হ'ব।

Again Tagar of Bina Baruah was mature age. For that in the novel of it is said,

দ্বিতীয় দশকেই অসমত ছেলেবার্তাব বালা বিবাহ কলিতা আক কায়স্কলব মাজত বিশেষ ধরণে কমি আহিতুল। কমলাকান্তব লগত প্রমত পিঠব পরিতৃত তত্তত পূর্ণ বিয়ন্ডা গাভক আহিতুল।

And when she was married to Dharani, Gosai said

ছেলেরবার বয়সতু বিয়া হ'ল । তেমাজব হাক-চাচন মান চলিবলে ঠান পাব।

In fact, the picture of child-marriage and the problem of child marriage was marginal in the Assamese novels.

Beside these, the dowry system also has to be seen prevalent with all its ill effects in the society of Bengal and Assam. Much before the women were to attain maturity and bliss, they had to face destruction and loss.

Besides this,
Many women died only for dowry.

In the novel of Bankimchandra's Gopal Basu - a married person wants to marry the blind Rajani, only in the hope of getting money. With this in the novel, Brajeshvar also wants to marry Sagar for getting money. Sagar says,

Haraballabh once again told Brajeshvar to marry Praphulla. In this regard, he says,

Of course,
In Rabindranath Tagore's *Chhor* the cause of late marriage of Asha is the money of dowry.

It was only due to money that the marriage of Binodini also was late.

In the novel, Saratchandra portrays a village wife named Biraj who is very much devoted to her husband. She thinks herself as the property of her husband. She has to face so much pain, given by her husband because of false conviction. Yet she does not give up her husband's house. On the otherhand, her cause of pain was poverty. His younger brother Pitambar separates her from her husband. Nilambar becomes indebted to collect the money of dowry for the marriage of his younger sister Hiramati. Hiramati's father-in-law sucks her just like a leach. So, Biraj has to face sufferings and pain.
In the novel, once again we may see the problem of marriage of an ugly girl in a Kulin family. Here it has focused the problem of the marriage of Priyanath’s only daughter, Jnanada. On one hand, she is ugly, on the other the family has financial weakness; because of these, even an old bridgegroom in the fourth stage of his life too does not want to marry her. Because of poverty and ugliness, she has to suffer much. Even though she thought of committing suicide, she could not, only because of her mother.

It is also seen that even after receiving the dowry, the husband sometimes leave the wife. For example, Rajlakshmi, in Assamese, was married to a Kulin husband. He left her only after two days of marriage, that too after receiving the dowry of rupees seventy. Rajlakshmi’s maternal uncle arranged the marriage of two sister’s after a long bargaining and recommendation to Birinchi Dutta’s pachak, Bhangā—a Brahmin. Lastly Rajlakshmi does not get any way to become a harlot. In this novel, it is shown that a father could not get married his daughter because of poverty. For example, the father of Puti who is a clerk at a railway department who earned forty rupees per month. Because of poverty, he failed to arrange the marriage of his daughter. He even tried to show his daughter as a twelve or thirteen aged girl, hiding the real age of seventeen or eighteen. He even tempted Srikanta with lots of money.

In this ways, the disease of the dowry system could be noticed in different novels. Even in the Assamese family, it is noticed. Along with Bengal, the influence of dowry system also affects the Assamese society. Even now the dreadful evidence of dowry system may be noticed being prevalent. It was not so in Assam earlier.
Lakshminath Bezbaruah said in his Autobiography,

> Assammit Assammita manetupat dhon lei charal biya kobora pratha nahi. ... bherirat de dhon-bit kichibi sei karya kobirele oborit nahi.¹³²

Nabinchandra Bhattacharya's Chandrahoi is a prominent example in this regard.

> Kobor Kobora notre ke chaudha prathab bolit hobar lagii hechhili tab samakha 'chandrahoi' diye.¹³³

Chandraprabha was insulted in every step at her husband's house, because, she did not come to her husband's house with heavy ornaments and valuable properties etc. She therefore, the prey of her sister-in-law's conspiracy and returned to her own parent's house.

Even in the novel, Samsaar-Chitra, the tradition of dowry system has been taken up as a focus,

> Halbad chaudhorey pratimab deothak nirolkomlon tureab prashar prahem kobihil eito kambonite ke pratimab deothak ejan abhashopona tukil ahechh ak totem amulyab birab salko jaatitai kee bhan kowirele samadhe hechhili. Tutoobhi halbad chaudhorey pratimab lagat bhan kobona-pati dib bolitob ahe cha kobihirl.¹³⁴

Dinabandhu of Dandinath Kalita's Sambha censures this system.

> Dinan ıtaka le kobora prathato ahat bhan lagah, i aagaye bhasheshet ahechh, etitya sobh sobh kobipratinob ahechhha. Itahak prasha niti Kobina kobari pari ahatbhalay matha kubob oochtih. Mih kobitiya biya kobalob charal biya upayuktah chah, dhon Kobonob natao.¹³⁵
On the other hand, Rupahi of Assam was late in marriage because of the same reason of dowry. The system of Ga-dhan was also in vogue there. Rupahi got such a bridegroom who would give five hundred rupees Ga-dhan.

Daibachandra Talukdar also portrays such types of problems in his novel. It was the tradition of offering dowry at the time of marriage.

Much dowry was given even at the time of marriage of Tagar in the novel. Yet Aihini was not satisfied.

Yet there is no change; change comes only when Kamli was born.

At last, it could be said that the feudal system of society is responsible for these problems in woman’s life. On the other hand, the social system of Assam is influenced by the social system of the Tribes. So, these problems are marginal in the lives of Assamese women as compared to the Bengali women. Later on, however, these problems are gradually seen to embrace the platform of Assamese life also but there are other reasons responsible for it.
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