EIGHT
CHAPTER

Comparative study of the Religious and Spiritual Aspect of middle and lower class life as depicted in the stories of SHIVPRASAD SINGH and MAHIM BORA.
India is a secular country. Each of the religion has been respected here. Each of the religion has its own rites, conviction and norms. All these rites have been made by the people themselves. The belief that has been running traditionally has become superstition sometimes. The people in the society are associated with it. Each of the religion has its own deity. This deity led to the rising of sacred ritual among the people. Either sorrow or happiness this deity, is prayed by the people and they obeyed certain ritual being belief on him. Having inspired by this, there emerged superstition in the society. Most of the Hindi as well as Assamese story writers are dealt with the superstition related to the religion of Hinduism. Approximately in the 1950’s stories, depiction of the incident were in relation to the Post-Independence situation while there has been made oppose under the influence of western education as well as modernism against “the religious attitude like the worshipping of the statue, pluralist worshipping, hereditary prieicraft”. At that very moment under the impact like protest against castism, equal right of the women, abolishment of the child marriage, supporting and regulating of the widow marriage, superstition in the society was strived to reduce to some extent. But in the rural background this evil aspect still exists. Most of the story writers, believing the traditional religious ritual have been creating their stories but among them, there are some writers who indeed introduced the superstious belief in their stories. But having the question mark over those aspects and showing their evil impact, they have also made protest against those social evil. The creative writers are of the opinion that due to the effect of religious superstition, the
social standard turned disrupted too much. Under engulf of ill reformation, social life moves not in to prosperity, but into destruction, under the circumference of religious ill-notion, people forsake their life unknowingly. They have not the strength in themselves to fight against the unusual circumstances. Having tied up in the marital knot, women have been treated as a good of auction. The ill society has compelled one wife to get relationship with five-seven brothers and reinforced her life to live like a curse. To get life free from the gulf like castism, untouchability, religious principles, fake respect and immorality was the chief intension of the new writers. Therefore the story writers at that particular time through the stories tried to expose the religious superstition. The two writers of my concerning research work, have been introduced the aspect of superstition in their stories. But although they have introduced the evil aspect of the superstition, they have also shown the way as to get away from such evil design of the society.

*Mahim Bora*, the Assamese story writer has introduced the religious superstition that happened to be seen in the Assamese social life where as *Shivprasad Singh* has introduced the evil superstition of the Hindi domain society in his stories. Both of them have given the suggestion to believe the unseen as an awaited observation. They also sharply ridicule at the false acceptance and on the immortality. They have indeed the aspect like blind tradition, rugged ritual but treated them with a vibrant opposition. Both of the story writers earnestly strived through their artistic presentation to create a superstition free urban and rural life having a healthy social life there.
8.1 An estimate of the Religious and Spiritual aspect of the life of the middle class and the lower class as depicted in the stories of Shivprasad Singh.

As Shivprasad Singh deals with the depiction of the rural lower class life of the North- Indian society in his stories, therefore the religious superstition related to this people are brilliantly reflected in his memorable stories. His stories also dealt with the middle class religious superstition. The subject matter of some of the stories is based on such religious superstition. Along with the reflection of the religious superstition, he has also given the advice of getting away from it.

“Shivprasad Singh ka byakti apni samast durbalataao ebang biradhi batawaran ke babajud in andhabishwaso ko nakarta ishwario astitwa par prasna sinha lagaata marks, satra, kamu kafka ke byakti ki pangti me kharaa ho jaata he. Unka bishwas he ki ishwario, abatario, andhabiswario by apar ke tute bina shoushit apnaa bhabisya nehi sudhaar saktaa.”(I) (“Inspite of his whole weakness and opposing atmosphere, the attacking of the personality of Sivprashad Singh on such superstition having question mark on the godly existence also stood alike with the personalities like Marx, Sarte, Camus, Kafka. He is of the view that without the abolishing of Godly, superstitious business, the exploited would never reform their future.”)

Indeed the personality of Shivprasad Singh himself too was engulfed in a superstitious background. On this ground although his characters were shown as typically weak characters, but under the scientific observation of the writers they became successful

1. Kahaaniyon Ka Astitwa Badi Sandarbh, Dr. Madhu Sandhyu
to step themselves into the world of triumph.

In the story ‘Dadi Maa’, being got ill the protagonist some invisibly powerful antelope had been thrown into the mouth and after then became attached it on the head. This reflects some rural ritual visible in the life of the lower class.

“Ate hi unhaune sar, haath, pet, chue. Bahut hi dhire se budbuda kar kuch bouli, saayad ki Devi devta ko jaan ke badle jaan dene ki minnat rahi ho. Phir aasal ki gaath khaul ki adrishya saktidhaari ke chabutare ki mitti muh me daali, maathe par lagaai.....Sar par daal chini ka lep karti, aur bisau bar sar chu-chukar jwar ka anumaan karti.” (1) (After coming, he has touched the head, hand and the belly. Very slowly, something speaking in his mind began to say, possibly praying for the sacrifice of life for the life’s sake as to nourish the soul of any God and Goddesses. After then opening the knot of the cloth, some powerfully invisible portion of antelope drawn in to mouth, attached with the head.)

The story ‘Papjibi’ also depicts about the larger than five hundred parti lands of the Barom Baba where nobody dare to go. Because during the old time, some unknown Brahman was killed here by the thakur. This religious superstition are later on proved utterly meaningless in the proceeding scenes of the story in which the parti land of the Barom Baba was auctioned by the Govt. On that spot after then reconstructed buildings by the thikadar also and he had not found any disturbance. Badlu, the protagonist, then understand about the ending power of Barom Baba.

1. Andhakup, Dadi Maa, Shivprasad Singhji Ki Kahaania-1, Page-21
Indeed, through the story, the writer with an intention to throw away the traditionally running superstition has acquainted the readers with the brutality of life with a complete new outlook.

The story ‘Reti’ deals with the rustic superstition that the women are the root of every evil like flood, illness, incident etc. The shadow of women even considered to be fatal. She also made other women evil. Along with her mother-in-law, she even do not come close to her own mother too. This is how the life of women became destructive. Having undergone her life through such evil impact of superstition, evil Ganga due to bless of the village people became pregnant. This is too a story of the lower class of people.

‘Kalanki Abtar’, an another illustrious story of Shivprasad Singh reflecting the terrible impact of the superstition relating to the religion in the life of the lower class of people. This story depicts that the belief of Roupanwari is sticking on Ghanashyam, upadhyai, the sacred man of the place thakurwari. The sacred man informs that in the age of Kaliyug, God will take the Kollanki abtaar in which riding on horse and with sharp sword in his hand, God will destroy the evil. And accidentally having seen one day, a black person riding on horse, the body of Roupanwari tended to be trembled. His hands automatically attached each other in the gesture of pray having seen such a huge son. His abtaari shape has indeed been arised.

In this story too, Shivprasad Singh critically exposed the superstitious attitude of the simple minded rustic people. The believing of the rustic people on the abtaari lesson of the priest regarding the new form of the almighty is undoubtedly an ill effect of the superstition on the illiterate rural people.
In the end of the story, Roupanwari discovered all the false lesson of the priest. He became aware of the fact that the one whom he was considering being the Kalki abtaar and by whom he decided to give Bhedu Singh punishment was actually the negotiators of the son of the Jamidaar for the hand of his sister. In this story through the character of Shobhan, Shivprasad Singh has expressed his bitter contempt against the evil superstition.

"Hame Avtaar nehi kartar chaahic. Aurtaryani apna haath hi tarega, ha."

(We do not need avtar, but need reformer.)

‘Karmanasha Ki Haar’ is a brilliant instant of the superstitious exploitation in the life of the lower people. The story highlights how due to the coming of the flood in to the river Karmanasha, people wished to sacrifice Fulmati along with her illegitimate child.

But having fought against such evil social ritual, Bheirov Pandey has saved the beloved of his younger brother with her illegitimate child.

"Karmanasha ki barh dudhmuhe bache aur ek abalaa ki bali dene se nehi rukegi. Uske liye tumhe pasinaa baha kar bandhau ko thik karna hoga.”

(The flood of the Karmanasha will not be ceased with the sacrifice of a body and a weak lady. To solve this we have to work hard for the repairing of the embakement.)

The character of Bheirov Pandey is indeed a brilliant portrayal always at war against rugged social norms. A man living his whole life for the cause of truth, Bheirov Pandey has given the ray of light of the inevitable death of so many children.

1. Ek Yatra Sattah Ke Niche, Kalanki Abtar, Shivprasad Singhji Ki Kahaania-2, Page-287
2. Andhakup, Karmanasha Ki Haar, Shivprasad Singhji Ki Kahaania-1, Page-61
"Apke samaj ko karmanasha se kam nehi samajta, kintu me ek ek ke paap gin ne lagu to yaha khare sare laugo ko paribar samet karmanasha ke peit me jaana parega." (1) (Your society is not considered unlike the Karmanasha, but if I got for the account of each of the sins, then all the people along with their families standing here will have to go to the stomach of the Karmanasha.)

In the story ‘Sunow Parikshit Sunow’, the writer has given the focus on the old belief that kaliyug started due to the rising of Mahabharata. In this story Shivprasad Singh also says that the character of Kali often turned in to pieces the old belief.

In the Story ‘Bargod ka peir’ the writer has mentioned about the some means by the lower people as to get well the symptom of illness. This aspect is clearly to be seen in the rural background.

"Deu pandit ko apni bichrut jari ka gun chipana pasand na tha. Bole, 'Sunau Binu yah ustaad ki di hui apamarag ki jar he. Jiddi apadebta iske dar se bandhne wale ke sharir ko chaur kar chale jate he jahaa yah bandhti he." (2)(The deu pandit did not like to conceal his remedical qualities. He begins to say “Listen, Binu this is an ayurvedic therapy given by the ustad. The pride evil angel because of the fear against it, departs leaving the body of the tied up where it entangles.)

1. Andhakup, Karmanasha Ki Haar, Shivprasad Singhji Ki Kahaania-1, Page-61
2. Andhakup, Bargod Ka Peir, Shivprasad Singhji Ki Kahaania-1, Page-27
The story ‘**Hiro Ki Khouj**’ depicts the widow marriage system in the life of the lower class. The introducing of such a theme in his story has indeed proved the writer’s reaction against the social evil and impact of superstition.

“**Chabbi bidhabaa he. Bidhabaa bibaah chamaraau me prachalit he.**” (1) (Chabbi is a widow. Widow Marriage is circulated in the society.)

The story ‘**Uphaar**’ deals with the depiction of the traditional social ritual like child marriage and its bad impact in the society, **Shivprasad Singh** in this story critically exposed the child marriage of the girl child in the life of the rural people.

“**Ek din baje gaje ke bich burhi ne basi ke nanhe hathou ko ucche vi adhik masum haath me chaupkar santosh ki shas li.**” (2) (One day amidst the joyful environment, the old woman having embraced the tender and swift hand of the child in the more soft hand has taken a deep breath of

In the story ‘**Mati Ki Aulaad**’, the writer has presented some aspect of the superstition of the Bhojpur province relating to the lower class of life.

“**Tinni hukka thamaa gai to Timol wese hi bethe bethe kuch souchta rahaa. Uski akhou ke samne bujte hue aawe ki raakh thi jis par dev jeise uske dusre janm ki rekha khich rahaap tha. (Bhoujpur Pradesh me mrityu ke din aawe ki raakh ko dhak kar rakh dete he. Biswas he ki raakh par us jiwa ke perau ke nichaan hote he**

1. Andhakup, Hiro Ki Khouj, Shivprasad Singhji Ki Kahaania-1, Page-35
2. Andhakup, Uphaar, Shivprasad Singhji Ki Kahaania-1, Page-151
This story indeed a brilliant reflection on the regional superstition.

The story ‘Tuttei Tara’ depicts the writer’s contempt against traditional superstitious idea of being happened evil due to the watching of broken star in the sky. In the end of the story after the death of the female protagonist, too, the writer has mentioned the topic of the falling star. “Tabhi asman se ek chamkila taara tuta jeise chandi ka pighla paani dhulak gaya ho. Bagal ki ek chat se do-tin bacho ne dekha aur talia pit kar chilla uthe. Paas beithi burhi aurat ne kaha ‘thu-thu’ aur ladkau ki aur dekh kar boli, “Nanhe, thuk dau, thuk dau! Tare tutne par haste nehi thuk dete he.” (2) Besides the stated above superstition, mention also been made in the stories of Shivprasad Singh about some aspect in relation to the Hindi religion.

His story ‘Bohab-brittri’ exposed some religious aspect like the sacred worshipping at the Dashakhamegh ghat of Benarash in the city of Uttar Pradesh. “Saam ka samay tha. Ham Daswaswomegh ghat par ghum rahe the. Kaphi chahal pahal thi. Tarah tarah ke laug, puja-paath, bhajan kirtan. Tarah-tarah ki bhashau me gaye jane wale kirtan se ghat gunjan tha.” (3)(It was evening. We were walking on the bank of Doswaswomegh. There was complete pleasure everywhere. Different sort of people were busy with devotional worship. The devotional lyric sung in different languages has enriched the bank of the river.)

1. Andhakup, Mati Ki Aulaad, Shivprasad Singhji Ki Kahaania-1, Page-219
2. Ek Yatra Sattah Ke Niche, Tuttei Tara, Shivprasad Singhji Ki Kahaania-2, Page-44
3. Ek Yatra Sattah Ke Niche, Bohab-Brittri, Shivprasad Singhji ki Kahaania-2, Page-56
In the story ‘Tarighat Ka Pool’ mention has been made on the aspect of worshipping representing the middle class family. The enchanting description of the atmosphere of the story has made it striking. Here in this story is to be seen about the regulation of the worship of Tilak’s mother. “Udhar ghanti ki swaaj uthne lagi he.......Maa sayad puja kar rahe he......Uske haath me maa ne puja ka thal thamaa dia he. Arti ki lau maddhim ho chuki he, subas tau wesi hi he. Kamra ek chan ke liye jalte ghi ki sugandh se var jaata he jisme phul aur chandan ki hi nehi, maa ki hathau ki gandh bhi mil gai he sayad.”

(While on the other hand the sound of the bell began to start. Probably mother was busy with devotional worship, mother has placed the that of worship in his hand.)

The story ‘Prayochitt’ depicts the sacred devotion and prays by a woman for the goodness of her son and her husband. Through the portrayal of the character of Ranjana, the writer has shown certain Hindu ritual regarding the devotion towards worshipping.

“Raat ko apne sone wale kamre me Radhakrishna ke chitra ke samne agarbatti lagaate huye Ranjana budbudai, “Bhagabaan, meri khusi ko isthai banao!” aur wah sachal phelaakar pati-putra ke swasthya aur mangal ke liye badi der tak parthana karti rahe.”

(In the night in the bed room before going for sleep with the torching of incense in front of the picture of Radhakrishna, Ranjana began to utter ‘Oh God, please make my pleasure to last’ and she deeply began to pray for the long life of the son and the

1. Ek Yatra Sattah Ke Niche, Tarighat Ka Pool, Shivprasad Singhji Ki Kahaania-2, Page-88
2. Ek Yatra Sattah Ke Niche, Prayachitt, Shivprasad Singhji Ki Kahaania-I, Page-138
husband till a long time.

Indeed the stories of Shivprasad Singh are a brilliant portrayal of the superstition along with some religious lesson relating to the Hindu religion. The presentation of all these aspects is alive itself and which has enriched the taste of the incident and atmosphere of the story.

8.2 An estimate of the Religious and Spiritual aspect of the middle class and lower class of people as reflected in the stories of Mahim Bora.

There is to be witnessed a live picture of Assamese rural society in the stories of Mahim Bora. Indeed the famous numbers of his stories are created around the life of the simple people living in the rural Assamese background. As some of the religious belief and superstition has been running in the Assamese society since the past time, therefore, Mahim Bora, the writer has presented all these aspect in his stories. The stories which are dealt with such aspect reflect the bad impact of those cruel and outdated beliefs along with the remedies to get away from them. Besides he has also mentioned some of the specific lesson related to the Hindu religion along with the mentioning of the Vaishnavite religion as formulated by Sankardeva. Now, I will highlight on the superstition running from the past time in the lives of the middle class and the lower class.

In the story ‘Toop’ the writer through the portrayal of the character of Haribaul Koka, has mentioned about some of the belief that has been running traditionally in the rural Assamese society for a long time. All these belief’s in due course of time has attained the form of superstition. Infact these superstitions have still been running traditionally in
the rural Assamese society for a long time. All these beliefs in due course of time have attained the form of superstition. Infact these superstitions have still been running in some of the religion part of the state and in a moment in which the world has progressed in to complete modernity under the influence of science. The character of Haribaul Koka in the story is indeed an epitome of superstition and round whom certain superstitious episodes have moved regarding his nature and activities. "Sallis bashar bayashar para gaonar emahliaa kesualoike, ene ejan manuh nai jar janmar samayat maake burhar haatar dul ba majiar maati gula paani edhuk khua nai. Bhumikampa hole majiar paraa datere kamuri maati aniba laage, sei maati burhai jaari diye. Taar paani khale su prasab hai." *(1)* (From a forty years old person to an one month baby, there was none such a person in the village, who have not taken the 'dul' made by the oldman and have not drunken a soil mingling portion of water prepared by the old person during the time of their birth. While occurs earthquake, the soil should be spin out with the teeth. The offering of coal mingling soil by the old person means well birth.) Moreover the writer also stated some superstitious ritual like selecting the day for fishing and which are infact obeyed by the village. "Aaji maache nekhaaba habala. Barkoi kamaise." Pratham jane maat lagale. "Tate bartu hol shanibaar. Shanibaare shingi pukhurit maache nukhute, dekh dekh katha..."Tate sukat dawareu dekha dise. Dawarar gundha paleu maache nekhai. Ausi purnimatu nakhai. Edin bhulate purnimat ahi dintu nasta karilu. Darabat dibaloi jadi sengeli etau." *(2)* (Today possibly will not be eaten up by the fish.

1. Golpa Samagra, Toop, Dr. Hiren Gohain, Page 15
2. Golpa Samagra, Toop, Dr. Hiren Gohain, Page 19
They have been striking largely. The first man voiced “Indeed the day is Saturday. On Saturday the fishes don't strike at the singi pond.” Indeed at the far end, the cloud also appears. The fishes even don't eat while bear the smell of the cloud including during the time of ‘ausi purnima’ too. Have been spent the day idle coming on the time of purnima by mistake.

The story ‘Keya Angooli’ is indeed a brilliant portrayal on the evil superstition. Under the influence of evil superstitious idea, the middle class people, in their social prospective believe the too long little finger of the legs of the newly married wife of Suneswar are a sign of omen. The matter became popular among the different group of women gradually. People’s bitter comment on this matter made the mind of Suneswar too bitter. He got married with great expectation. But ill luck has knocked at his door. At the very moment, he also became pleased having heard the supportive advice from the mouzadaraani. She in her comment said to Suneswar that newly married wife of Suneswar was truly epitome of Goddess Lakshmi. But dramatically his eyes also glanced at the little finger of the Mauzadaroni too. He became wondered having seen this mystery.

Indeed, Bora has tried his best to distract way the effect of the bad superstition from the life of the rural Assamese society. This is indeed a successful document on overthrowing devilish ritual.

In the story ‘Rosh’, the writer has presented some rural belief which is oriented with superstitious dogmas the story describes, Bhota, the village youth would bring honey climbing the demon gulfed tree. But remembering about the moonlight night, the heart of everybody became dampen. Everyone believes that on the day of the Purnima, the bee quenches the ‘Rosh’. Therefore there is of less hope of gaining the rosh from the honey
comb. The traditional belief has been outlined here by *Mahim Bora* to be true that the bees on the day of the Purnima quench the honey from the hive”. Whatever, writer *Bora* having unbelieved the superstition too, he has also shown it to be true. The line from the story suggests “Purnimar mu puwatei pariba lagisil, Raas bahut itimadheyei shuhili, dinar baaki samai khinit sampurna suhilheten”.(1)(The honey during the purnima had to be picked up in the very morning, most of the honey have already been quenched, in the rest of the mid-day time, much would have been quenched.)

All such kind of belief coming from the tradition is being circulated among the village young generation too. The youth like *Ratna, Bhota* too believe such belief or superstition. But the writer has shown in the story that having avoided all such superstition, *Bhota* having climbed the big tree has brought the honey. But this also mentionable for the day of Purnima, the bees have already quenched the honey.

Besides the writer, through the character of *Ratna* has described about a traditional belief regarding the bite of the honey. According to traditional belief on the day of the Purnima the bees never bite anybody. But he also fears for the fact that if the bees do not obey such regulation in the noon time and if Bhota had been overthrown from the tree with the attack of the bees. All these traditional beliefs have been presented before the readers through the portrayal of the character of *Bhota*.

In the story “*Maach aru Manuah*” the writer has presented some traditional superstition running in the society. When the protagonist *Jibakanta* had been able to pass

1. Golpa Samagra, Rosh, *Dr. Hiren Gohain*, Page 72
the rope through the throat of the big fish, then the village people advised him to give up
his expectation of being got it. They used to call him the fish not to be a god fish. They
called the fish as a sign of carrying demonic message.

The advice was actually given to Jibakanta by an old man of the village who was
expert in catching fish. When the old man made such remarks to Jibakanta all the
attendant villagers along with Jibakanta became dried up.

“Saat baar maan bur diar pisatu jetia maachtur galedi rashi sumuaba nuarile, burhai
phupai phupai Jibakantak kole, ‘Jiba iar asha eri de. Ie elapesa maach nahai. Ei bilar
kalika lagaa maach. Taahanire paraa iat ase...............Taahanie bule kunuba
ejanar palat parisil, rakhiba nuarile. Sei raatir paraai vayankar jar hoi esaptaahat
manuhtu maril. Maachar kathai bhram bakisil, aru maaje maaje chak khai jikaar
maari disil. Bej, mantra, phahati ekuai eku nakarile.” (i) (Despite being attempted to
plunge for seven times, while Jibakanta had not been successful to pass the rope through
the throat of the fish, the oldman began to say with deep breath “Let’s forgive its
expectation Jibakanta. It is not a common fish. This is a demonic fish of this river and it
has been here from the old time. Indeed in the old time, it had entangled in the ‘Polo’ of
someone, but could not keep it. Since that night, having suffered from serious illness, the
man died in a week. He had been spoken illusion, and sometimes, having shocked struck
hard. Quack, mantra could not do anything.) Being a master fish man the speaking of the
old man can not be neglected. Everybody has heard about the demonic spirited fish and
therefore they could realize formerly about the coming destiny. Besides

1. Golpa Samagra, Maach aru Manuah, Dr. Hiren Gohain, Page 76
the story depicts some outdated superstitious belief in the mind of the common people. All these have been brutally engulfed the entire Assamese rustic society. Therefore the writer has expressed all these in his story realistically.

In the story 'Aakhej' there are partial description about the superstitious belief. Here in this story, the writer has mentioned that the lower class of people, on the Saturday does not do any new work and do not use any new articles.

"Mur kaapur bhalkoi bole kailoi ulaaba. Kintu shanibaaar parile dekhihe. Parahilo katiba paarim." (1)(My clothes will be come out tomorrow if it is waved well. But as it is Saturday, then it can be found the day after tomorrow.) This is indeed a rootless adoration of the traditional belief as the writer thinks.

In the story 'Harmaal', Mahim Bora, the writer has mentioned about the “Gopine Sowah”, ‘Aai Sawah’ which have been running in the Assamese since the time immemorial. The story also beautifully deals with the depiction of the older’s advice to dedicate a ‘Sarai’ in the Namghar along with the opening of an Ankiya nat for the good health of the sufferer.

"Gupini sabaah, aai sabaah, jiye ji upadesh nirdesh dise arambhanir paraa ekeraahe khati hua nai. Dui ejan burha methaar upadesh krame raajahua naamgharat bhaadamahia gurujanaar tithit ankiaea naat ekhan meluar babeu aag kari thale." (2)(The reference of ‘gopini sawah’, ‘ai sawah’, whatever suggested have been suggested who ever, have not been gone useless anyhow from the beginning. Some of

1. Golpa Samagra, Aakhej, Dr. Hiren Gohain, Page 105
2. Golpa Samagra, Harmaal, Dr. Hiren Gohain, Page 125
them, according to the suggestion of the village old people, have already decided for the staging of an ‘Ankiya naat’ on the occasion of the anniversary of the saint during the month of ‘Bhada’.

All these beautifully reflect the middle class belief in their social life. The beliefs that have been described in the story are entirely religious.

The story ‘Eta Natun Khuj’ too deals with the depiction of some superstitious ideas. These stories have brilliantly espoused the fact that superstition can engulf the literate persons too. “Juar aagmuhurtat baidewek aahi thia hol. Akaal badhyabyar bedanaat seta mukh ekhan, katu haahi ba anandar dhulikanaa etau nai, bagaa kapaal khanat nai sendurar chin.....Chaakarir shes sidhanta haba ei saptahate. Ene eta jaatrar aagmuhurtat baideweke sanmukhat dekha nidia holei.....” (1) (Before the departure, his sister stood before him, under the pang of immature widowship, there was not a least sign of laugh and pleasure in the pale face of his sister, there was not the sign of vermillion in the bare forehead. The ultimate decision of the job will be finalized within this week. During the moment of a journey like this, if the sister had not shown her appearance.)

Sarat, the protagonist of the story reads at the city. He is indeed a literate boy, but having seen his widow sister, his mind became dried up. He was also at that time touched by the idea that to see a widow before going for a good deed is a bad sign. But later on when he realized that this widow sister of him asked him to advance her marriage ornament then he became ashamed of himself. The appearance of his sister

1. Golpa Samagra, Eta Natun Khuj, Dr. Hiren Gohain, Page 207
which he thought as a bad sign, that sister had actually helped him. Sarat ashamed of himself that being literate too, he acted like an ignorant person. He repented his growth in the background of evil belief. “Ei hen maatri samaa baidewekak jaatrar samayat dekhi alap aagate si mantu kusari kari pelaisil. Chih chih ki kusanskarar maajat dangar hoise si. Si henu shikshita.” (1) (Having seen the appearance of his mother like sister during the moment of his journey, he had darkened his mind. “Ah, what a shame! What is the evil environment under which he has been grown up. He has indeed been called educated.)

The story ‘Deha Goroka Prem’ deals with the depiction of the rural numerology through the portrayal of the characters like Baluram and his wife. The presentation of such rural superstition in the story has indeed heightens the beauty of the story. “Kaaran ratipuare paraa suchakutu naachi aasil, tirutaar suchaku nachaa beya. Suhaatar taluakhanu maaje maaje khajuai ache. Keibadinu suhaatar talua khajuale dhan jaai. Bauhaatar talua khajuale dhan ahe.” (2) (Because the right eye has been moving since the morning. It is a bad sign if the right eye of woman moves. If the lower part of the right hand is itched for many days, then the money is wasted. The itching of the lower part of the left hand has lost the money uselessly.)

In the story ‘Gabeshana’, the writer has depicted about the traditionally running social ritual like “Mangal Chuwa” in the social life of the Assamese people. “Maanuh jan kintu achal atal. Teu noir alap daphaalaloi naami goi paanir talar paraa alap alap baali loi daatbilaak ayamere naana bhaajat ghahibaloi dharile .......................alap

1. Golpa Samagra, Eta Natun Khuj, Dr. Hiren Gohain, Page 207
2. Golpa Samagra, Deha Goroka prem, Dr. Hiren Gohain, Page 216
The man is indeed firm and determinate, plunging into the deep level of the river and taking a portion of the sand from the bottom, he began to brush the teeth in different position straightly. Like the running of a machine, playing the figures in the mouth, he has stopped for a moment and made only a sound “Umm”. After then, plunging into the water, the man began to wash his fate body creating different sound. As the man opened his mouth to say something, he told “You will get your cattle, within three days, three months, and three years.” The story describes when the protagonist of the story after loosing his newly bought bull had come in to the feet of baliya baba. And after then inquiring about the bull to a man meeting on the way and finally found out the bull is the basic essence of the story.

Indeed this story is entirely based on the traditionally running religious superstition. The writer has presented all these aspect in the particular story accurately.

In the story ‘Risto’, the writer has described about the rural astrology and the belief associated with it. All the stated above stories are the excellent reflection of the belief and superstition in the social life of the Assamese people. In some of his stories also depicted about the sacred book like the ‘Shastra’ and about the mighty power of the Almighty.

1. Golpa Samagra, Gabeshana, Dr. Hiren Gohain, Page 332
In the Story 'Ekhan Nadir Mrityu', the writer through the character of an old man has presented certain sacred lesson from the greatest 'Dasham Puthi' composed by Sankardeva along with the mentioning about the 'Lila' of Almighty God. For instance, In the Kaliyug nobody will listen to anybody. Nobody will believe in the lesson of the older and will be started fight among the people due to the cause of money. All these have been beautifully presented through the slooks as articulated by the old man.

Besides, the story also described about the 'Kaal' as mentioned in the Hindu religion. The presentation of the death bed condition of the Kolong River is indeed a symbolic reference of the destruction of the entire humanity in the gulf of "Kaal".

In the story 'Harmaal' too reference has been made on some superstitious idea related to the Hindu religion. Here in this story is described about the pilgrimage during the old story of life along with the idea of having heavenly bliss with the death during the way of Pilgrimage. Besides the idea of giving ashes by the son accordingly to Hindu religion is also mentioned here in this story.

"Duyu maati baari bikri kari Puri, Jagannath ba Parashuramkundaloi guchi jaabagoi. Tirthat marile swarga laav. Putrar pinda bule napaleu haba." (1)(After selling the land, properties both of them will be marched forward to Puri, Jaganath and Parasuram Kunda. If they will die in the pilgrimage, then there will be acquired heavenly bliss. There need not any necessity of the ashes of the son if donot get.)

1. Golpa Samagra, Harmaal, Dr. Hiren Gohain, Page 120
In the story ‘Chakrabrat’ there happened to witness the pray remembering God by the wife if her husband would get the job or not. This is indeed a dedication towards the ethics of religion.

The story ‘Rosh’ deals with the depiction of some supernatural activities that have been running in the social life of the Assamese people continuously. For instance the reference like “deu lagaa mou”, “deu lagaa gach”, “burha daangaria thakaa gach” symbolized the story of homeless spirit as felt by the rural people.

The word ‘Haridhawani’ in the story ‘Maach aru Manuh’ is associated with some ideas related to the Hindu religion. The reference of the ‘Haridhawani’, in the story is brought while going for the cause of any good work. Besides Jibakanta’s prayer to catch big fish reminds the readers with the religious belief of the Hindu religion.

In the story ‘Rati Phoola Phool’, the writer deals with the issue of destiny, re-birth etc which is important feature of the Hindu religion.

“Sei bilaak udaharanaloi chaale bia je sachaakoiye purbajanmar katha, vagyar kathaai ei kathaai swikaar kariboi lagiba. Imaan dine ‘Vaagya’, purbajanma aadi shabda bilaakak si itiking kari aahichil —aaji ei muhurtat si hathatei vagyabadi boi gal.” (If made a glimpse over those examples, then it will certainly to be accepted that marriage is indeed a matter of pre-birth and of destiny. He had been ridiculing at the words like destiny pre-birth— today aidently in this very moment, he became a luck hunter.)

1. Golpa Samagra, Rati Phoola Phool, Dr. Hiren Gohain, Page 166
Here in this story is described, how Basanta an educated youth was going to believe the idea of destiny, rebirth all these religious dogmas.

The stories of Mahim Bora are indeed a brilliant reflection of the religious superstition. Most of his story have been reflected this aspect very realistically, as in his real life too, he believes in such ideas therefore inevitably comes those aspect in his stories. Besides he has presented the form of the Assamese superstition in front of the readers in the form of a story. But at that very moment he also goes to look at those superstitions scientifically.

8.3 **Comparative study of the Religious and Spiritual aspect of the middle class and the lower class as reflected in the stories of Shivprasad Singh and Mahim Bora**

As the stories of both the writers are primarily centered round the middle class and lower class and as both these classes obey the religious superstition coming from the tradition, therefore all those aspect found reflection in their stories.

Because of the distraction of the lower classes from the scientific lesson they obey the religious superstition blindly. Mahim Bora, through the portrayal of the characters of the middle and lower class, has presented in his stories the religious superstition relating to these classes in the Assamese society. On the other hand, Shivprasad Singh has depicted in his stories the religious superstition of the middle class and lower class living in the North-Indian society. In contrast to the stories of Shivprasad Singh, the depiction of the religious
and spiritual aspect in the stories of Mahim Bora is larger. There are no any traces to deal with the aspect like destiny in the stories of Shivprasad Singh as in the stories of Mahim Bora. The story ‘Karmnasha Ki Haar’ by Shivprasad Singh and the story ‘Keya Angooli’ by Mahim Bora is entirely based on the spiritual or superstitious ideas. All the religious and spiritual aspects that are described in the stories of Shivprasad Singh are associated with the lower class of people unlike the middle class treatment of the superstitious aspect in the stories of Mahim Bora. Both the story writers are dealt with the rural spiritual aspect in their stories unlike the depiction of the urban life. Although both the writers have introduced the rootless spiritual aspect in their stories, they have not accepted it hundred percent at all. Exposing the evil impact of such disastrous aspect, they have stressed the need as to get away from those. Moreover, both of them have mentioned about the worship, devotion towards the God in their stories. Both the writers indeed want to give the message through the medium of their stories to the readers that there is such an unseen power which controls everybody. Indeed through the creation of the middle class and lower class of stories, the two writers having mentioned such incident, have expressed their observation. Comparatively it can be asserted that both the writers have mentioned brilliantly the religious and spiritual aspect in their stories in which the position of Mahim Bora is far greater than that of Shivprasad Singh.