

Representation of Rural Bodo Society in Chittaranjan Mushahary's 'Jujaini Or'

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ABSTRACT

This paper represents the portrayal of agrarian and economic life, community life, the role of women in society, traditional beliefs, and the marriage system in the novel Jujaini Or. Mushahary depicts the Bodo people connected with land, culture, and community life in the village. He explores the issues of Bodo society such as poverty, education, gender role, marriage system and the pressures of modernization. Moreover, he provides a vivid representation of Bodo village life – its values, and struggles. In addition, he shows how both women and men participate in household activities and help each other. Furthermore, the Bodos also live in a community where they support and cooperate with one another. He also portrays how men and women share responsibilities in household work. Here, Jujaini Or depicts the realities of rural Bodo society, their relationship, and the conflicts that arise from modern influences.

Keywords: Chittaranjan Mushahary, Bodo society, agrarian, economic life, community, women, traditional beliefs, marriage system.

I. Introduction:

Chittaranjan Mushahary is the first Bodo novelist in Bodo literature. He also known as the Samarat of Bodo novels. He was born in 1945 in Belguri, located in the Kokrajhar district of Assam. His father's name was Lankeswar Mushahary, and his mother's name was Durga Devi Mushahary. He contributed so many short stories and novels in Bodo literature. He has written over 60 novels in the Bodo language and four novels in the Assamese language. He has also written short stories and drama in Bodo language. His notable works include Jujaini Or (1962), Banashri

(1955), Phulmati (1981), Fwimal Mijing (1985), Sujata (1986), Daokani Baha (1987), Sarmistha (1988), Bari Khonani Bibar (1995), Dukhuni Lwithw Barui (2002). His first novel, Jujaini Or (The Fire of Husk) was published in 1962. Jujaini Or is a social-based novel that belongs to the rural Bodo society. The novel portrays the lives of Bodo people, their culture, and the challenges they face. It highlights agrarian life, economic struggles, community life, women's roles, traditional beliefs, and the marriage system. In this paper, the rural Bodo society as depicted in the novel Jujaini Or is discussed.

II. Rural Bodo Society in the Novel Jujaini Or:

Chittaranjan Mushahary vividly portrays the agrarian and economic life of rural Bodo society in the novel Jujaini Or. He depicts the Bodo people as having their own land, where agriculture is a main source for livelihood. Moreover, they grow paddy and vegetables on their land. In this novel, the problem of the economy of the Bodo people are shown. The Bodos are very poor in their economy. They rear cattle and silkworms at home for financial support and make their needed things like traditional dresses, hand fans and winnowers at home are shown. However, agrarian life for the Bodo people is not easy to live; it is hard and full of struggles. Mushahary represents the economic problems faced by the people due to poverty and the lack of modern tools. This novel is about Alaisiri and Ajoy's love story, where both live an agrarian life. Alaisiri is skilled in handcrafting. She makes handmade items for others at home. Alaisiri is busy with her craftwork when Ajoy asked to her father:

“Grandfather, where is Alaisiri?” Ajoy asks Madaram. “At home, crafting Birna's hand fan.”

International Research Journal (Jujaini Or, Page 22)

The novel shows the equality, togetherness, and cooperation among the Bodo people. In times of sadness, they support one another and help each other during difficult and dangerous times. Moreover, they assist one another in times of need – ploughing, personal struggle, spinning, silkworm rearing, and farming. He also shows how people come together to help a family when someone has no money for studies. Their yearly festival, Bwisagu, strengthens their social bonds and unities the community. Furthermore, he shows how they respect elders and celebrate festival together with people from neighbouring villages. The villagers also come together to discuss the problems of their society. Therefore, Jujaini Or portrays the unity and love among the Bodo people. Additionally, Ajoy asks about Alaisiri's mother's well-being. He helps Alaisiri's mother feel better and comfort her through his kind words:

“Don't think like that grandmother, you will recover! even after recovering with Oja i will still bring good doctor.”

Mushahary highlights the traditional division of labour, where men are primarily involved in farming, fishing and ploughing, as well as winnowing and other tasks, while women manage household activities such as – hand fan crafting, silkworm rearing, mustard drying, and spinning. Moreover, women are depicted as strong, and resilient; they work alongside men to contribute to family and community life. Thus, he represents both the strengths and weakness of women's positions, whereas women support each other, and influence the moral life of the village.

The novel depicts the villager's deep faith in nature and traditional beliefs. The Bodo people mainly worship Bathou daily, but they also worship Lord Krishna and Goddess Lakshmi in their everyday lives. They practice daily rituals, ceremonies, and moral decisions in the community guided by the faith of old man. Their traditional faith influence values such as honesty, respect, and mutual support. Ajoy shows his faith in superstition through the advice he gives to Alaisiri:

“Chee: Sad! Don't be it's bad being sad makes a person fall ill more easily let's go to grandmother!”

(Jujaini Or, Page 43)

The novel highlights how marriages are not only a personal choice but also a social institution. In many cases, the family members force a man to marry a girl chosen by them. However, but the son doesn't agree to marry according to his mother's choice. Instead, he wishes to follow his own decision. Moreover, the mother wants him to marry a girl whose father help her son financially. Mushahary portrays that arranged marriages are common in the village. The elders of the family play a significant role in selecting suitable partners. They always consider family history, caste, and reputation as important factors. For instance, the following line shows where Ajoy's mother, Gosati, tries to persuade her son Ajoy to marry Alaka:

Say say son why do you stay silent? i gave birth to you, i adopted you, i made you a man, you see this world of your father's love. Why don't you understand.....? If you don't marry Alaka i will die by jumping into the water. Because..... the child who destroys oath of mother fathers, the child who breaks mother fathers hope, it's better to die than to keep seeing such a child. Say say why are you silent?

(Jujaini Or, Page 51)

III. Conclusion:

Chittaranjan Mushahary's Jujaini Or depicts the agrarian and economic life, community, the role of women in the family, traditional beliefs, and the marriage system of rural Bodo society. Moreover, agriculture is the main source for livelihood for the villagers. The Bodos depend on agriculture and cultivate their needed vegetables as mustard and paddy. However, they are economically very weak and have little money to buy what they need. Therefore, they earn additional income by selling some household products and rearing cattle and silkworms. Furthermore, the Bodo people live together in harmony within their community. They are always ready to help those in need. Their behaviour is admirable, and they always respect their elders. Women also work alongside men, performing similar tasks. Although the Bodo people in the villages face many difficulties, their unity, hard work, and dignity help them preserve their culture and traditions.

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