

# Novels' Theme of Mr Lahary: Critical Study

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**Abstract:** *Monoranjan Lahary is a popular name of Bodo literature. As a novelist, he observes the society very carefully and he tries to portray the realities of villagers and villages in his novels. He selects real stories of Bodo villagers and uses simple words which common people use in daily conversation. He always avoids the artificial words. His narration, method, technique are always simple and he links it to play in novel. Though Bodos are the first indigenous community of Assam (India), they do not remain in a particular place for long time. They move here and there like other tribal communities. Dark clouds of superstition, ignorance, witchcraft are prevented the Bodo society from further development. Lahary gives importance on education for all round development of Bodo society. In this way, he tries to give a right path to the society through his novels.*

**Keywords:** tradition, culture, ritual, custom, superstition, education, religion, migration, medical practitioner, characterless, anti-social, witchcraft, ghost

## 1. Review of Literature

A number of studies in this subject related are found, e.g. Boro Anil, *Boro Thunlaini Mohor Arw Musri* (2008); Chainary Swarna Prabha, *Boro Solomani Bijirney* (2009); Chainary Swarna Prabha, *Journal of the Department of Bodo* (2009-10); Narzary Chinan, *Soloma Arw Boro Soloma* (2010); Brahma Anil Kumar, *Boro Thunlai Bijirney* (2011). In spite of those works, the discussion is highly demanded by the readers. Hence, the proposed topic is brought into the conversation.

## 2. Methodology

For the study, data are collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data are collected by reading origin copy of novels and using personal interviews as well. Secondary data and information are collected from library books, journals, criticism, e-books and websites etc.

## 3. Findings and Discussion

*"The novel is a picture of real life and manners and the real incidents of life"* [Allot Mirrium, *Novelist on the novel*, Routledge Kegan Paul Ltd. London, 1957, P.-14] it reflects in the novels of Lahary when he writes. Such as, *"in the novels of Lahary, the practical gestures of life occupies in his novels. It can view from his use of words, rhetoric, and conversation etc"*. [Chainary Swarna Prabha, *Boro Solomani Bijirney*, Gumur Publication, Gorchuk, Ghy-35, First Edition, February, 2009, P.-113]. The interesting theme and real theme can able to comprehend from his novels; it may visualize as discussed below.

### 3.1 Introduction

Monoranjan Lahary is a popular writer in Bodo literature. He contributed in different fields of literature like poem, prose, short-story, novel, drama, criticism etc. He created nine novels and a translation from English novel. These are- 1. *Kharlung* (1976) 2. *Hayna Muli* (1985) 3. *Dogri* (1996) 4. *Omnath Somnath* (1998, Mythological novel) 5. *Rebeka* (1999) 6. *Alaishri* (2003) 7. *Dainee?* (2005) 8. *Jom* (2006) 9. *Fami* (2008). Besides these, *Don Quixote* (1605) by Minguel

de Cervantes had also translated in Bodo language from English literature through his efforts.

His theme and writing technique of the novels are unique as compared to other Bodo novelists. There is no any caricature behind the portrayal in novels. Actually, basic and real characters of the guys are taken from remote villages basically from Bodo Community. There are no any artificial behaviours. So, the paper will try to provide a lot of preliminary knowledge of mankind. Here the discussion will be made confining the seven novels i.e. *Kharlung*, *Hayna Muli*, *Rebeka*, *Alaishri*, *Dainee?*, *Jom* and *Fami*.

### 3.2 Brief Discussion

3.2.0 **Novels' theme of MR Lahary:** *The novels of Lahary which are brought in the discussion have a good identification. In the ending of twenty century and in the beginning of twenty-first century, Lahary's creations were focused in the Bodo literature. So, his written themes are dynamic and popular as well.* [Chainary, Swarna Prabha, *BORO SOLOMANI BIJIRNEY*, Gumur Publication, Ghy-35, First Edition, February, 2009, P.-111] Both the traditional and the modern facts are placed in his novels. He never tried to portray about the artificial events or fictitious.

*Kharlung* is the most extraordinary novel among his own creation and his contemporary novels. In the first attempt of his writing career, he has brought a new trend of Bodo novel which reflects the real picture of the society. Gohel is the central character of the novel. The instable mind and imbalance thinking of Gohel is the main theme of the novel. But there is no any fixed or detailed story like other novels, so it can be said as the character based novel. Therefore, there is no distinct unit in the novel. The beginning, raising and ending of the novel is not static. As the novel reflects the flow of mind and psychology of the central character, but there is no proper begining, development, ending as well as a fixed location. Therefore, it can be said that the novel focuses on the fulfilment of different controversial issues of social life. The flow of time can bring sorrow, poverty, mental stress, unacceptable tradition, wrong direction, self controversy and failure in life. These are the themes of the novel. Thus, there is no distinct theme but covers various themes which are related to life and society. Gohel is a

romantic as well as handsome young boy. He had loved relation with different girls in the story of novel. MR Lahary, the novelist wants to give the message that love is not a main issue for a young boy but it is just a part of life. As a writer, he believes that he must do some important works for the social welfare in practice. "The theme of this novel has some similarities to an Assamese novel named '**Kesa Pator Koponi**' written by Prafulla Dutta Goswami published in 1952. The role of Utpal is same as compared to Gohel of **Kharlung**. Both of them are not static minded. They would like to be free from the binding of rules and regulations of the society. So, both of the novels can be said as open novel". [Chainary Swarna Prabha, Op.cit, P.-112] Because both of the characters do not like confinement of the society.

In his second novel **Hayna Muli**, the novelist presents a pen picture of tradition. A powerfull of herbal medicine is the prime theme of the novel as it is focused. The meaning of **Hayna Muli** of the Bodo language is *the powerful and charming medicine* composed from herbs. "The medicine can do some strange and wonderful impact; which normal people generally can't do, but it is simply done by the power of the medicine. It means, it is shown that there is supernatural power behind the medicine. The illiterate person believes, the power of the medicine is impacted in every villages. The main theme is that the common people cannot believe the modern or scientific methods perfectly." [Ramchiary Dewbar, & Basumatary Romakanta, LAITHUN, 21<sup>st</sup> issue, Barama Offset Printers, Baksa, 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2009, P.-24]

The herbal medicine had spoiled lives of all the family members of Gorgoram (an important role). The useness of **Hayna Muli** is a bad practice for the society as accepted by the people. Rago (a brutal character) used the **Hayna Muli** to get Manasi as his wife. But the **Hayna Muli** created negative impact upon Rago, and finally she suffered in depression and became mad. Udli is a brutal female character of the novel. She was famous as a practitioner and composer as well of the **Hayna Muli**; and she was recognized as witchcraft in the surrounding society. She had become target of common people. The society declared her as witch hunter and she was killed brutally by different persons. "The novelist gives the message that the **Hayna Muli** is destructive for the user and to whom it is used. He also gives the message that **Hayna Muli** is destructive for those who manufacture it. This is the main theme of the novel". [Ramchiary Dewbar, & Basumatary Romakanta, Op.Cit., P.-24] On the other, the role of **Dayna-Dayni** (male and female witchcraft) had also brought negative environment in the society. The villagers believed that **Dayna** and **Dayni** may harm them by chanting mantras.

**Rebeka** is a popular and famous novel of Lahary. The novelist highlights on the life of Rebeka who has illegal physical relationship with many people. She had no economic crisis in her life. She could do many creative and positive social works because the environment provided her everything. But she had not done any good work for the society and for her own future life. According to her, people's life is a drama of enjoyment and she enjoyed physical relation with different person. In actual sense, she is

a goer. People disgust for her dirty character and behaviour as well. The civilized society never likes such kind of person. The Bodo society considers illegal relationship of man and woman as unsocial and it is punishable offence. "The misdeed of Rebeka hurts in the sentiment of common people and they avoid her. The common people begin to hate and recognize her as a prostitute." [ibid., P.-24] Finally Rebeka suffers in depression herself and commits to suicide. The life of Rebeka warns everybody not to involve in any unsocial deeds. Her life gives a lesson of morality to the younger generation of modern age that not to indulge ownself in such kind of neglected task.

**Alaishri** is also another interesting novel of MR Lahary. "Like the **Rebeka**, the novel **Alaishri** brings out various important issues regarding women." [Chainary Swarna Prabha, Op. Cit., P.-113] Alaishri is the central character of the novel. She was a student of Kokrajhar College. She wanted to become an IAS officer and she read sincerely. She took part in every competition of the college and finally became a good player. But, time did not allow her to live peacefully. She was raped by Molen who was from an aristocratic family. She approached the village court for the justice. The villagers could not give justice to her, and the villagers had no courage to fight against the family of aristocracy. Therefore, Alaishri decided to fight alone against the injustice. At last, she got the justice after a long struggle. She is the symbol of purity and power of womanhood. She is an example that woman can fight against the exploitation and misbehave as well. She is a model character for the young generation. Alaishri is opposite of Rebeka. Rebeka reveals the destructive power of woman. On the other hand, Alaishri reveals constructive power of woman. The novelist, MR Lahary reflects that women are not weak and some women never fear the wound, rather he encourages that the women can win if they challenge.

**Dainee?** is also a valuable novel of Lahary. The novelist highlights on 'witch hunt' which is a burning problem of Bodo and many other tribes of Assam. The title of the novel is significant from the literary point of view. The villagers believed that **Dayna** and **Daynee** may harm them by chanting mantras. The title contains a single word 'Dainee' and a question (?) mark. The question mark of the title arises several questions regarding Dainee system in the mind of the readers. Durmaw is the Dainee of the novel. She is an old woman of a backward village. She was a popular oja/conjuror (an expert of mantras). The villagers believed that Durmaw could recover them from fever and any other evil events. Suddenly rumour had spread that Durmaw could do anything according to her wish. The villagers suspected to her as a witch hunter though someone died for different reasons. Later on, the majority of the villagers considered her as a Dainee (witchcraft) so far. The villagers accused Durmaw that she had spread disease surrounding the village. They feared that she could do more harm for every personal life. Therefore the villagers killed her cruelly. The novelist draws the poor and backward condition of tribal villages of Assam. Many people are deprived of proper education. And also they are deprived of medical treatment in the age of science and technology. The novel gives the message that every educated man must work to remove the ignorance of

the villagers. The novel *Hayna Muli* also creates awareness on the Dainee system among the readers.

*Jom* is also another famous novel of Lahary. The meaning of Bodo word *Jom* is 'ghost or evil doer' in English. There is a traditional belief in Bodo society that when a man dies in accident, or killed by others or commits suicide, they can't go to the heaven. Because this is unnatural death. The soul of such death do not get place in heaven or hell for long tenure. Therefore the soul of death has compelled to remain in the world by the spiritual authority. The Bodo people call it and recognize it as ghost. However, the Bodo people believe that a man goes to the next world if he dies naturally. The novel begins with a death of a man in street accident. His name is Nalson. Dabu is the villain of the novel. He murders his two wives. Besides them Moriom (daughter of Nalson) and Onathi (wife of Nalson) were also murdered by him. MR Lahary wants to express that there is no any ghost in the world. According to him, inhuman people like Dabu are the ghosts of our society. He gives a clear message that existence of ghost is nothing but a superstition. The narrator introduces himself as a reporter in the novel. He exposes conspiracy of Dabu and focussed him approach to the laypeople who spreads terror of ghost in the village. Dabu, the villain of the novel wants to be powerful man of his surrounding villages by creating horror of ghost. At the end of novel, Dabu dies for the bold step of the narrator and rescues the society from further violence. The novelist tries to removes ignorance of the common people and teaches them to fight against antisocial activities.

*Fami* is a modern novel of MR Lahary. The theme of the novel is on high education. The story of the novel creates a strong awareness that education is necessary for all round development for the people. Mithinga, the hero of the novel is a Ph.D. scholar. On the other hand, the heroine Fami is a university student. Thomen, the villain of the novel could not tolerate the progress of Mithinga and Fami in their life angles. He tries to murder Mithinga. Yet Mithinga and Fami over come out from all the problems and they had completed the education carrier with good result. They become an example of inspiration for the society. The novel encourages the young generation to keep patient in study. It is education which can help for the development of individual and society.

#### 4. Conclusion

The village life or village instances are the main source of the novels of MR Lahary. He writes about tradition, culture, ritual, custom, superstition, education, religion and many other important issues of Bodo people. He wants to give the light of science and technology. He wants to make the villagers logical and practical person. In *Kharlung*, the writer teaches that the Bodo people should change their old habit of migration. They change their residents frequently. According to Lahary, a base is necessary for any kind of development. A person who changes his place frequently can never get a base. In *Hayna-Muli*, he brings out the ignorance of villagers. Udli represents the Ojas and Kobiraj (conjurer) who exploit the common people by introducing themselves as a medical practitioner. He reflects the miserable conditions of the villagers who are deprived of

minimum human rights. The novel *Rebeka* highlights that good character is essential part of life. There is no place for the characterless people in the villages basically in Bodo society. On the other hand, *Alishri* is opposite of *Rebeka*. Alaisri proves that girls can also fight against anti-social elements. The novel *Dainee?* brings of many unknown things of witchcraft which is a burning problem of backward villages. Again the novel *Jom* is on ghost which is nothing but a superstition. Finally, *Fami* is on education. MR Lahary advises villagers to be educated for the development of every person and society as well. The seven novels are brought in this discussion written by MR Lahary. The themes of the novels of Lahary are brought from practical society. The instances are still frequently happening in the society. So, the stories of the novel are very important and interesting as well. People can hope for rescue some controversial problems are arisen in the society through the messages of the proposed novels.

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