

# A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE FEMALE CHARACTERS IN FOLK TALES (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE FOLK TALES OF LAXMINATH BEZBARUAH)

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## Summary:

Folk tales are a major component of folk literature. Folk tales reflect the customs, ideas and imaginations of a nation. In other words, the overall nature of the national life of a nation can be contained in fairy tales. Therefore, the fairy tales prevalent in the Assamese society are naturally involved in various aspects of the Assamese society. Folk tales are an important part of Assamese folk literature and children's literature. The paper attempts to examine some aspects of the female character reflected in fairy tales based on the folk tales of Laxminath Bezbaruah. Many folk tales in Bezbaruah that feature female characters as the main characters. It is worth noting that most of the folk tales in Bezbaruah's 'Burhi Asir Sadhu' are female characters. These include 'Tejimla', 'Silonir Jiyekor Sadhu' ( 'The Tale of the Daughter of Black Kite'), 'Tula aru Teja', 'Champavati', and 'Paneshai'. These folk tales mention women's activities such as singing, cooking, weaving etc

. Other folk tales also mention female characters and various activities of women. In addition to the qualities of women such as honesty, tolerance, sacrifice, etc., the fairy tales also reflect the aspects of women such as jealousy and suspicion. It attempts to analyze the various characteristics of women, the overall status of women characters, the acceptability of character aspects, etc. based on the folk tales of Laxminath Bezbaruah.

(Seed words: folk tale, Bezbaruah, female character, positive, negative, status, acceptability)

## 0.0 Introduction:

Folk tales are a major component of folk literature. The term 'folk tales' includes English tales, legends, myths, etc. Many people say that this category of stories is named fairy tales

because they contain honest or moral advice. Some believe that the word 'Saud katha' and 'folk tales' originated from the strange stories told by the Saudis who once went on trade. However, folk tales that are passed down orally can be called 'fairy tales' However, they have later been written down by various people. Folk tales are a collection of beliefs, ideas, thoughts, ideals, etc. of folk life.

Different types of fairy tales in Assamese society. Many folk tales that Laxminath Bezbaruah collected from the mouths of various people and published in new forms with his own creativity. It is noteworthy that folk tales, like other literary works, have preserved Laxminath Bezbaruah's own style of writing or expression. In addition, like other creative literature, Bezbaruah emphasized character creation in folk tales. In this regard, the diversity of female characters in folk tales is particularly noticeable. Therefore, this discussion attempts to analyze the characteristic aspects of female characters in folk tales, the position of women and the acceptability or relevance of female characters in folk tales even today It's been.

### 1.0 Purpose and Importance:

The main purpose of studying the subject is to get an overview of how female characters are portrayed in folk tales. The importance of this study is that since, on the basis of folk tales, an attempt will be made to examine the character of women from the perspective of contemporary society and time, it will also be possible to learn about the place and social status of women in the era of oral folklore. This is the importance of studying the subject.

### 0.02 Scope and Methodology:

The scope of the study of the topic of female characters in folk tales covers the two books 'Burhi Aair Sadhu' and 'Kakadeuta and Natilora' by Laxminath Bezbaruah

. The method of studying the subject is descriptive and analytical. For bibliographical and reference notes the style of the seventh edition of the 'MLA Heobuk has been followed.

**1.0 Female Characters in Laxminath Bezbarua's Fairy Tales:** The folk tales that have been passed down orally in the Assamese society. Laxminath Bezbarua played an important role in influencing Assamese folk literature and children's literature by providing written and published forms. These fairy tales are of undeniable value as precursors of Assamese short stories. Three books of folk tales written by Bezbaruah – Burhi Aair Sadhu (1912), Kakadeuta aru Natilora (1913) and 'Junuka' (1913).

*Burhi Aair Sadhu* is collection of 30 tales. Each of these fairy tales, including 'The Monkey and the Fox', 'Tejimala', 'Sabjan', 'The Dog', 'The Tale of the Chilni's Daughter', etc., is widely read and popular.

*Kokadeuta Aru Natilora* is a collection of 29 folk tales. The stories in the book are presented in the style of a grandfather telling stories to his grandson. These folk tales are written to entertain children and teach them morals. These include 'Nomal aru Sonpahi', 'Bamun aru

Bamuni', 'Devangbhushan Bastra', 'Shankhina aru Shankhini', 'Junuka' is a collection of ten folk tales. The folk tales are published in both prose and verse.

The characters in Bezbaruah's folk tales come from the world of nature and the supernatural world as well as human characters. Therefore, along with human characters, dogs, cats, monkeys, foxes, flowering trees, eggplants, beetles, fish, frogs, even ghosts and demons of the supernatural world are also characters in Bezbaruah's folk tales. All these characters come alive in Bezbaruah's folk tales.

Folk tales are not created in one place. Fairy tales flow from one place to another, whether through word of mouth or otherwise. Similarities between folk tales from different parts of the world. Bezbaruah has written fairy tales with unique creativity and has also published fairy tales that have always flowed in this way. However, in doing so, he presents them in his own way, in plain Assamese language. The language of the fairy tales is made interesting by the Jatua style of narrative with proverbs, sayings, parables, etc. Therefore, the language of Bezbaruah's folk tales shows indigenous and homely expressions.

Folk tales are part of children's entertainment and children's education. Bezbaruah's collection of fairy tales combines various characters from the natural and supernatural worlds as well as many important human characters. It is possible that in ancient times the wise men of Assam used this kind of entertaining oral fable to give good advice to the people and their children and he called it fairy tales, because he taught them morals.

It is important to understand the importance of these stories in the life of children. In short, Bezbaruah's folk tales are an important part of Assamese folk literature and children's literature. Such fairy tales are 'Tejimla', 'Silonir Jiyekor Sadhu' 'The Tale of the Daughter of Chilni', 'Tula aru Teja', 'Champavati', 'Paneshai', 'Kanchani', etc. These fairy tales mention women singing, cooking, weaving, and sailing. Other fairy tales also mention female characters and various activities of women. Therefore, it is important to consider the characteristics of women reflected in the fairy tales of Laxminath Bezbaruah and the position of women in two broad categories.

### 1.01 The characteristics of women reflected in Bezbaruah's fairy tales:

Aspects of women's characters, such as honesty, tolerance, sacrifice, jealousy, suspicion, etc., which are reflected in many of the stories contained in these two books of fairy tales by Laxminath Bezbaruah. The positive characteristics of women are reflected in the fairy tales. Negative characteristics are divided into two parts.

#### Positive female characters:

##### Integrity and sacrifice

The main character of Bezbaruah's 'Burhi Aair Sadhu', Kanchani, is a wonderful example of the honesty and sacrifice of women. The character of Kanchani's mother is equally honest. One day, Kanchani's mother picked up the dog that had fallen from her hand repeatedly while flowing there and jokingly promised to marry her daughter there if she was born.

Many reasons why a woman should marry her daughter to a dog. Similarly, Kanchani has obeyed her mother and agreed to marry a dog and serve him as her husband. Kanchani was always conscious of keeping her character clean. one day while bathing the dog, he removed the thorn in his ear and became a young man, but Kanchani is not overwhelmed by the joy of maintaining her pure character. Instead, she tells her husband, who has become a man from a dog, "If I take you to our house like this, my brother, mother and other people in the neighborhood will think that I killed the dog and took it with a young man. Then it would be a matter of great disgrace. And they don't believe me when I tell them the truth. So I'll kill this kite in your ear again, and I'll make you a dog again and take you home.

"The character of Kanchani is also an example of women's sacrifice. When she learns that her husband has been put in a shawl by the king, she gets up from the weaving sheet and puts her head in the shawl along with her husband The character of Kanchani is still alive in 'Burhi Aair Sadhu' as a symbol of honesty and sacrifice like the ideal Indian woman.

### **Courage:**

Laxminath Bezbaruah's folk tales portray female characters as brave women. Among such characters is the character of Sonpahi in the fairy tale 'Nomal and Sonpahi' in the book 'Kakadeuta and Nati Lara' Despite being a woman, Sonpahi was able to overcome all obstacles despite being disoriented and losing everything in the cycle of circumstances. When he found him alone, he dared to take revenge on the robbers who wanted to harm him. Sonpahi even ruled a country as a king in the guise of a man. All this was possible because of his courage. As a result of Sonpahi's intelligence and courage, she was able to regain her lost husband Nomal and her lost home.

### **Intelligence:**

Folk tales in which women are portrayed as intelligent. 'The old woman in the story of the *old woman and the fox* (Burha Burhi Aaru Siyal) is such an intelligent woman. It is because of her intelligence and ability to face all dangers that the old woman goes to her daughter's house despite knowing the danger of falling into the mouth of the fox and thanks to her intelligence she can survive the impending death of the fox. Similarly, the same intelligence is applied to a female character in the fairy tale who covers her cut nose with *Kharoni* (Indigenous ingredients made from banana peel). The woman can escape from the mouth of a bad man by disguising herself as a man. In addition, they cut off the nose of the man with dishonest intentions who was listening to domestic conversation by inserting his nose through a hole in the wall. These aspects show the intelligence of women, their ability to face any situation, etc.

**Simplicity:**

Simplicity is one of the characteristics of women. Among Bezbaruah's fairy tales, *Silonir Jiyekor Sadhu* ("The Tale of the Black Kite's Daughter") reflects this strength. They considered the simplicity of Chilni's daughter as a weakness and could do her harm. But for the simplicity of the mind. She had no injustice towards others, so the harm of her daughters-in-law did not harm her much.

Such simplicity can be found in some parts of the character of Teja in the fairy tale 'Tula aru Teja'. She is always looking at the evil intentions of her aunt who wants to harm Teja with her simplicity. When his aunt's daughter Tula asked for Teja's jewelry for her evil purposes, Teja said with simplicity of mind, "Wear it, wear it, see what happened to you." Teja took off his earrings and put them on Tula. In this fairy tale, Teja is saved from danger despite being in danger for his simplicity.

Although the character of Teja in 'Tula aru Teja' seems to be a character played by others, Teja maintained her position by being aware of her equal property rights with her men even though she was a woman. Teja said ---AAire dinore Sokuri Jopa, Tare tini kuri moihe pau, ..., (I get sixty of my mother's 120 boxes) aaire dinore sokuri baati tare tini kuri moihe pau..., (I get sixty of my mother's 120 bowls),

**Efficiency:**

In addition to cooking, women performed various occupations such as weaving and fishing. it is important to understand the characteristics of women as workers.

**Negative characteristics of women:**

Bezbaruah's fairy tales reflect the positive aspects of female character as well as the negative aspects of female character. The distribution of such heads is mainly due to women's jealousy, suspicion, anger, and anger at wealth. There are many examples of how these things have made a woman cruel and harsh.

Some of the fairy tales that beautifully reflect the jealousy of female characters are *Champavati*, *Tejimala*, *Tula aru Teja*, *Silonir Jiyekor Sadhu*, in which the cruel acts of the daughters-in-law beat and killed Black Kite. The story of Champavati expresses the excessive attachment of women to ornaments, earrings, etc. Therefore, it is said that the dragon was jealous of Champa's jewelry and offered his daughter to a live snake in the hope of getting the jewelry. The character of *Bamuni* in the fairy tale 'Bamun and Bamuni' in 'Kakadeuta and Nati Loba' also shows an excessive greed for wealth. Many stories about the dissatisfied mentality of women. The character of Champavati reflects this aspect. After all, after getting a god as her husband from a snake, Champa insisted on seeing the world inside her husband's mouth. When her husband asked her if she wanted to see the world, she replied, 'I want you to see the world too. Champa's husband left her and became a god and went to heaven for many years because she was not satisfied with what she had and wanted more.

The character of "Sarabjan's wife. They gossip about a small matter in the house and eventually the king hears about it. In the character of Sarbjan's wife The fairy tale depicts the negative aspects of female character.

### **1.02 The overall position of the female characters reflected in Bezbaruah's folk tales:**

Understanding the position of women in the contemporary society reflected in the folk tales written by Bezbarua. In many fairy tales such as 'Mekurir Jiyekor Sadhu (The Tale of the Cat's Daughter)', 'Tejimla', 'Tula aru Teja', 'Champavati', etc., the same Saud marries a total of seven women. In other words, in the society reflected in the fairy tales, men could treat women as they wished and this was the rule of that society. However, in the fairy tale 'Tula and Teja', the daughter-in-law appears as a protesting woman when the king is about to marry her. Ragi has openly declared rebellion by expressing his anger against Teja through his actions. Bezbaruah portrays women in many fairy tales in a strong way. 'Nomal aru Sonpahi', 'Kota Juwa Naak', 'Kharoni di Dhak', etc. present the woman in a very brave way. In the fairy tale 'Nomal aru Sonpahi', Sonpahi was very beloved as the youngest daughter-in-law of the family. The character of Sonpahi, who has never worked hard, can face all situations. The fairy tale initially attributes the character of Sonpahi to a brave and strong female character. That is why, despite losing everything, she is able to face all the dangers alone and finally take over the rule of a country. Similarly, the brave female character in the fairy tale who covered her cut nose with salt was also the numb daughter-in-law of the household. After being kidnapped by a stranger, she cleverly dresses up as a man, rides a horse, and later cuts off his nose to punish him for his crime.

In this way, it can be seen that some of Bezbarua's fairy tales portray women as weak as well as brave and strong female characters. Needless to say, the female characters are presented in this way because the story is written mainly for the purpose of entertaining and advising or educating children.

### **2.00 Acceptability of female characters in Bezbaruah's folk tales:**

Before considering the acceptability of the female characters in Bezbarua's folk tales, it is necessary to clarify that fairy tales are fictional works. Everything is possible here as far as the imagination can reach. However, the acceptability of some aspects needs to be considered as the education of children is also involved.

In general, the aspects that have been properly educating the society are considered acceptable for any time. Non-violence, compassion, forgiveness, love, etc., as well as the victory of truth, the defeat of falsehood, the suppression of evil, the establishment of culture, etc. are such aspects. Also, aspects of the female characters in Bezbarua's fairy tales that will remain relevant forever. For example, the character of Kali is a picture of love and sacrifice. The characters of Kanchani and her mother reflect the love and equality towards animals, although it is only possible in fairy tales to adopt even a small dog as their husband. This mentality of treating animals on an equal footing with humans will always be relevant. Similarly, the qualities of



Sonpahi's character, such as her courage and the intelligence of the old woman who bravely faced the fox, are also acceptable.

Even if it is a fairy tale, there are doubts about its acceptability in aspects that are likely to have an adverse effect on the minds of children. For example, the cruelty and harshness imposed on the character of Tejimala's second mother can often have a negative impact on the minds of children. The physical and mental abuse of Tejimala by her second mother has turned her into a heartless and cruel woman. Therefore, the behavior of the second mother towards Tejimala can never be acceptable. Similarly, the advice of the Bamuni to make money by reciting false verses because she could not accumulate wealth is not an acceptable aspect of female character. Excessive weakness towards non-ornamental dress is a major aspect of female character. This weakness caused the death of Champavati's grandmother's daughter.

So, the aspects attributed to female character have the potential to bring positive messages to society. There will always be acceptance of those aspects and aspects that have a negative impact cannot be accepted. The same applies to the female characters in Bezbaruah's fairy tales in general. However, in the case of fairy tales, female characters can sometimes be presented in exceptional ways if necessary, and it can be said that Bezbaruah portrayed female characters in fairy tales in the same way.

## **Conclusion**

After presenting the topic 'Female Characters in Laxminath Bezbaruah's Folk Tales: An Analytical Study', several conclusions can be reached. They are given below—

### **Decision:**

(A) Many of the folk tales written by Laxminath Bezbaruah depict female characters as the main characters. In the name of women among the named fairy tales are Paneshai, Kanchali, Tejimala, Champavati, etc. In addition to these women-centric fairy tales, other fairy tales also mention female characters and describe various activities.

(B) The female characters in Bezbaruah's folk tales have diverse characteristics. Love, sacrifice, etc. are equal to the inherent qualities of women. The fairy tales also reflect the negative characteristics of women such as jealousy, suspicion, etc. Along with the courage, intelligence and skill of women, the cruelty of women's characters is also expressed in the fairy tales.

(C) There are two positions of women in the contemporary society reflected in Bezbaruah's folk tales, strong and weak. It is noteworthy that the awareness of the female character 'Teja' about the rights of daughters to the property of the father's household as well as that of sons helps to maintain the position of that character.

(D) The acceptability of female characters in Bezbaruah's folk tales shows that aspects such as love, sacrifice, honesty, truthfulness, etc. are considered relevant for all times. Because the

directions they leave bring positive messages to society. However, negative aspects such as jealousy, cruelty, suspicion, etc. cannot be accepted. There is no doubt that the cruelty attributed to the character of Tejimala's second mother has adversely affected the minds of children.

(E) Many of the female characters in the fairy tales contained in the two folk tales '*Burhi Aair Sadhu*' and '*Kakadeuta and Natilora*' are traditional. Although presented as idealistic women, some female characters go beyond that tradition as protesting women. They are trying to express themselves. In short, the female characters in Bezbaruah's folk tales take on a variety of forms.

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