

Image of Women in Assamese Proverbs found in Assamese Language: Analysis of Patriarchal Society, Assam

Rashmirekha borgohain

Ex-student, Department of Political Science, Dibrugarh University rashmirekhaborgohain@gmail.com

Abstract:

The main objective of this paper is to describe and analyse how Assamese proverbs found in Assamese language creates women's image in society of Assam. Descriptive and analytical methods have been adopted for this paper. In preparing this study secondary sources including use of journal article, internet source etc are used. Proverbs is an important genre of folklore that represents a particular society. It is a verbal form which plays an important role in confirming traditional ideas of a particular society. It is one of the most important bearers of moralities that prevalent in society. It is like moral and educational lesson for a folk society. It is produced through the experience of people in a society. It is used to spread knowledge and to guide the new generation by the elder people in a society. Proverb plays important role as an informal education among literate and illiterate people in a society. It shows representation of gender in a society. In Assam, Assamese people use different proverbs. Assamese proverbs is known as 'Jojana', 'Prabachan', 'Prabad vakya', 'Lokokti', etc. It is also known as 'Dakor Bochan' or 'Prabad Probochan'. The Assamese proverbs are created on the basis of Assamese life, Assamese customs, manners, religions, ideologies and usages. Assamese proverbs are sign of feelings and experience of rural folk. These proverbs portray women in different roles in society. From the Assamese proverbs found in Assamese language there is seen patriarchal notion that is practiced in the society of Assam. Through Assamese proverbs found in Assamese language women's images are seen as they are weaker, loving, caring, emotional, brutal, cruel, sacrificing, jealousy, selfish. To introduce these features society relates women with men or to other women. Throughout the paper, try to describe and analyze how women play different role in a patriarchal society of Assam.

Keywords: Assam; image; patriarchal society; proverb; women.

Date of Submission: 06-10-2020

Date of Acceptance: 20-10-2020

I. INTRODUCTION:

Society is an organization formed by group of individual through performing their relationship. In performing their relationship, increases gender differences. In patriarchal society women are recognized as other, secondary section of society. Men are treated as heads of household whereas women are treated as care taker of other members of family (Social Status of Women, n.d.).

Through socialization process people are learnt how to behave in society. In patriarchal society socialization process is based on concept of masculinity and femininity which is created in a fixed manner where people should follow certain specific norms for getting categorized as normal person and if they are unable to follow such norms are categorized as abnormal person in society (Construction of Womanhood, n.d). On the basis of their behaviour and attitude, activity and performance of people in society patriarchal society judged people.

Folklore is an important part of traditional knowledge system of society. Proverbs is an important genre of folklore that represents particular society. It is one of the most important bearers of moralities that prevalent in society. It shows representation of gender in a society (Construction of Womanhood, n.d). Through use of proverbs it is also easy to understand that how women's images are generated in particular society.

OBJECTIVE:

Main objective of the paper is to describe and analyse the image of women in Assamese proverbs found in Assamese language.

METHODOLOGY:

In this paper descriptive and analytical methods have been adopted. Secondary sources like journal article, internet sources etc.

ABOUT PROVERBS, ASSAMESE PROVERBS:

Proverbs is a part of oral literature, created by folk society (Deka, 2019). Proverb is a verbal form which plays important role in confirming traditional ideas (Deka, 2019). It is produced through experience of people in a society. Proverbs is like moral and educational lesson for a folk society; used to spread knowledge, to guide the new generation by the elder people in a society. Proverbs play important role as informal education among literate and illiterate people in a society. Proverbs can be divided into following sub-genres: proverbs relating to agricultural activities, proverbs relating to women, to preparation of food, to medicinal herbs, remedies and dietary habits, to house building, to journey, to philosophical thoughts and ideas, to character of men, proverbs relating to history and proverbs relating to superstition etc (Deka, 2019).

Assamese proverbs is known as 'Jojana', 'Prabachan', 'Prabad vakya', 'Lokokti', 'Dakor Bochan' or 'Probad Probochan' (Origin and Development, n.d.).

Assamese proverbs are created on the basis of Assamese life, Assamese customs, manners, religions, ideologies and usages etc. Assamese proverbs are sign of feelings and experience of rural folk (Assamese Proverbs, n.d.).

IMAGE OF ASSAMESE WOMEN IN ASSAMESE PROVERBS FOUND IN ASSAMESE LANGUAGE: ANALYSIS OF PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY, ASSAM:

In Assam oral literature plays an important role. People frequently use proverbs. Proverb is known as representational medium of society. Through Assamese proverbs women's images are seen as they are weaker, loving, caring, emotional, brutal, cruel, sacrificing, jealousy, selfish. To introduce these features society relates women with men or to other women.

Some of Assamese Proverbs and how it creates image of women in society are described as follows:

Lao jimanei dangor hauk; Sadai pator tolot (the size of a gourd is immaterial; it always be under the leaves)

This proverb implies that women are under the veil. Whatever a women might have acquired higher degree or achieved a lot of big honour their rank in patriarchal society is situated after man in a hierarchal order of social structure, like the size of a gourd is immaterial it always be under the leaves.

Jar gharat matamuwa tiri; Tar gharat nai cirri (Houses consisting of women having masculine appearance have no prosperity)

This proverb shows that women should acquire femininity character to get things normal in patriarchal society. So, people should act in society with the norms formed by particular society. Society articulates features of masculinity and femininity in a fixed manner.

Kutkura culi khajatir guri (women having curly hair are supposed to be quarrelsome by nature)

It states that girl should seem with straight hair to fulfil so called beauty concept. Otherwise they are sign of bad things. Women with curly hair are represented as quarrelsome through the medium of proverb.

Nijar nak kati satinir jatra bhanga, (cut one's own nose to prevent the co-wife from travelling)

In Assamese proverbs image of co-wife and step mother are poor. Co-wife hates other co-wife. They are jealous for each other and can create any problem for one another. This proverb implies that to hurt other co-wife or to create danger in her life one can even hurt herself. They can cut their own nose to prevent the co-wife from travelling.

Dhankherar juye mahi air marame saman (there is similarity between simmering husk and the step-mother's affection)

Ataitkoi tita nemu tengar pat; tatkoi tita mahi air mat (lemon leaves taste is bitter but the step mother words are far more than that)

Above two proverbs show that step mother faces gloomy situation in society. It is said that step mother cannot give love and affection to children like biological mother. The folktale story of 'Tula and Teja', 'Tejimola' wrote by Lakshminath Bezbaroa also show this idea. Though step mother gives that much of love and affection gave by biological mother society does not value it. Society always tries to give a lower position to step mother. Society states that step mother words are far more than lemon leaves taste which is bitter.

Air saman haba kon?; Nair saman baba kon? (Who will be similar with river and who will be similar with mother?)

In Assamese proverbs role of mother among women is represented as the best. Women as mother enjoy respected position in society than any other role women play. So, in Assamese proverbs image of women as mother is well represented in society. They are regarded as creator, producer and maker of society. In this proverb role of women as mother is compared with the river. As river flow eternally and it never stops like that mother affection towards their children is beyond countable.

Make sai mukholoi; ghainie sai hataloi

It reflects mother's love and affection towards their children. They always think about well-being of their children. But wife's concern is towards their husband's property. After coming back to home from office or other professional work mother see to her son's face whether he feels fatigue or smiling but wife see to her husband hand whether he come with some household belongings or not.

Mace garaka anja khaba, Sahue garaka bowari paba

It states that daughter-in-law is trained by a mother-in-law like a fish curry cooked with vegetables. In Assamese proverbs image of mother-in-law is not good like mother. They are represented as bad-mannered, rude, cruel person of society. Here they are portrayed as dangerous lady who wants, loves torture her daughter-in-law. Though all mother-in-law's behaviours are not like that but society creates image of mother-in-law such a way in society.

Kacu hale khajuwai; Sahu hale nacuwai (Like Kacu, the arum plant creates itching sensation; mother-in-law makes daughter-in-law dance to the tune her music)

It states same as above proverb.

Burha kathalar murha; Jakarowa gharaloi sowali nidiba; Dhekie kariba burha (A daughter-in-law is subjected to greater tortures if there are many members in her in-laws' house)

It shows gloomy picture of daughter-in-law after marriage. It states that women enjoy happiness before their marriage which after marriage they have to leave their happiness in parents' home. After marriage daughter-in-law face many problems in in-laws house. They have to follow various norms, rules and regulation after marriage for which they have to lose their freedom.

Jome nileu niya; jowaye nileu niya

It shows how society believes in women's fate. It is believed that marriage is all about women's fate. If after marriage women face problem, they are not happy in their in-laws, they are punished parents have no longer any responsibility regarding that. They thought that it is women's fate. Though all members of society do not believe this most of the people thinks like that. People believed that death of women in the hands of Yama the Hindu deity of death and in the hands of son-in-law is similar. So, it is depends on women's fate that either she is died in the hands of Yama or in the hands of their husband.

Jowai kola mola ageye nakola; talaike aideuk dila; aideur kapale ji haise haise; purbate bhaigat likha (there is no use crying over the ugly looks of the husband. It was the result of a preordained destiny)

This proverb also shows similar ideas as above proverb that marriage is all about women's fate.

Po-nati dhare ati; ji nati japana kati (the grandchildren from the son's side take the responsibilities of the later generation but the grandchildren from the daughter's side should be treated as outsiders)

Ji-ti lokar; po-ti bukur (daughter is for other but the son is one's own)

Above proverbs show that in society image of boys and girls are different in society. After marriage daughter have no responsibility towards their parent home. They have responsibility towards their in-laws. After marriage daughter is for others that for son-in-law, in-laws and son is always for parent's own (Construction of Womanhood, n.d.).

Mati kinniba maj khal; Chowali aniba mak val (Buy land which slopes towards the centre; and marry a girl whose mother is good)

This proverb states that before marriage a girl to be bride is judged by the bridegroom or his family. A girl good or bad it is proved by judging her mother's character. If her mother's character is good it is believed that girl's character is also good where father's character is not judged by the society (Moran, 2019).

From the above discussion it is seen that Assamese proverbs found in Assamese language portray women as secondary section, vulnerable section of society. Their positions are situated after male member of society. They are portrayed as weak, emotional, creator, maker, loving, caring, jealously, terrible; not as courageous, powerful, strong, brave etc. Above proverbs show various norms, rules and regulation created by a patriarchal society of Assam on the basis of masculinity and femininity concept in fixed manner. If someone tries to break it society see them as abnormal person. Though in Assam somehow now through spread of education some of proverbs are not relevant for some people but some proverb is relevant for some people till now. People do so because they inherited it through socialization process. So, to get the right to equality people should internalize that everyone is equal there is no difference. They should imagine a particular thing beyond fixity.

II. CONCLUSION:

It is seen that proverbs are representation of gender in a society. In patriarchal society everything is judged through fixed concept of femininity and masculinity. Assamese proverbs found in Assamese language also reflected ideas of patriarchal society, gender differences. Therefore, in present time everyone should come out from concept of fixity to make society equal where everyone can freely enjoy their liberty.

REFERENCES:

- [1]. Chapter II, Assamese Proverbs, (n.d.). Shodhganga, www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/71893/8/08_chapter%25202.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwjBoLKFxbHrAhWE63MBHcMVD7gQFjACegQIAhAI&usg=AOvVaw3yeoRVVPucniMq-Pivaxm1&cshid=1598193122266 Accessed 28 June 2020.
- [2]. Chapter- II, Origin and Development of Bodo and Assamese Folk Literature, (n.d.). Shodhganga, www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/71893/8/08_chapter%25202.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwjBoLKFxbHrAhWE63MBHcMVD7gQFjACegQIAhAI&usg=AOvVaw3yeoRVVPucniMq-Pivaxm1&cshid=1598193122266

- pdf&ved=2ahUKEwjGylvzyLHrAhXtIbcAHfkxC98QFjABegQIAxAI&usg=AOvVaw3yeoRVVPucniMq-Pivaxm1
Accessed 27 June 2020
- [3]. Chapter IV; Social Status of Women in Assam, (n.d.). Shodhganga, www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/69486/1/11_chapter%25204.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwj2nKaa0rHrAhVEyJgGHblzC3wQFjAAegQIBBAC&usg=AOvVaw06yBkj_n3hH13XauhamhCW
Accessed 25 February 2020.
- [4]. Chapter V, Construction of Womanhood in Assamese Proverbs, (n.d.). Shodhganga, www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/97339/1/11_chapter%25205.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwjnqozs1bHrAhURyzgGHZzjBu8QFjAAegQIAxAB&usg=AOvVaw0tPf3p52GVWIAwUz_WVgFv
Accessed 8 March 2020.
- [5]. Deka, Dr. Kabita (2019). Assamese Oral Literature: A study. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, vol.8, no. 8, 2019, pp. 51-55. [www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=http://www.ijhssi.org/papers/vol8\(8\)/Series-1/H0808015155.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwiPw8vwgrTrAhW67HMBHUqMAV4QFjAAegQIBBAC&usg=AOvVaw2vNuBifT_-NlmX14k98K5T](http://www.ijhssi.org/papers/vol8(8)/Series-1/H0808015155.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwiPw8vwgrTrAhW67HMBHUqMAV4QFjAAegQIBBAC&usg=AOvVaw2vNuBifT_-NlmX14k98K5T)
- [6]. Deka, Dr. Kabita (2019). Status of Women in Assamese Proverbs: An Analytical Study. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, vol. 8, no. 6, 2019, pp. 51-53. [www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=http://www.ijhssi.org/papers/vol8\(6\)/Series-3/J0806035153.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwiJ4prLxrAhUYzTgGHEtAV8QFjAAegQIChAH&usg=AOvVaw3RygehNzrfU4FOA_eAu7n&cshid=1588248657673](http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=http://www.ijhssi.org/papers/vol8(6)/Series-3/J0806035153.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwiJ4prLxrAhUYzTgGHEtAV8QFjAAegQIChAH&usg=AOvVaw3RygehNzrfU4FOA_eAu7n&cshid=1588248657673)
- [7]. Moran, Mridul (2019). Gender Issues in folklore: A study with Special Reference to Some Assamese Proverbs. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, vol.8,no.3,2019, pp.60-64. [www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=http://www.ijhssi.org/papers/vol8\(3\)/Series-2/J0803026064.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwi19qf8yLXrAhVCwjgGHVQdC4IQFjAAegQIARAB&usg=AOvVaw1MGpYXFst27B8Vs5_wGvKC](http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=http://www.ijhssi.org/papers/vol8(3)/Series-2/J0803026064.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwi19qf8yLXrAhVCwjgGHVQdC4IQFjAAegQIARAB&usg=AOvVaw1MGpYXFst27B8Vs5_wGvKC)

Rashmirekha borgohain. "Image of Women in Assamese Proverbs found in Assamese Language: Analysis of Patriarchal Society, Assam." *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention (IJHSSI)*, vol. 09(10), 2020, pp 37-40. Journal DOI- 10.35629/7722