



The social image that reflected in the short story Dumphaoni Phitha: A discussion

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Abstract: The Bodos are belong to the Indo-Mongoloid group of people and they are the great community among the Indo-Mongoloid group. Nowadays they are living in different state of the country and abroad, and these are Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, West Bengal, and neighboring countries like Nepal, and Bangladesh. The Bodos are a great community with their own language, rich and multifaceted culture. The Bodo peoples are used to live in society since they are settled on this earth and they work in together in their society and in addition to these they worship their religion, they have own custom, where they were living peacefully since the inception of time. The social image of a community is the events that repeatedly happened in a community. So with reference to this social image of a community, here in this article it is going to discuss the social images found in the short story “Dumphaoni Phitha” from the short story book “Dumphaoni Phitha” written by Janil Kumar Brahma.

Index Terms: Social, custom, religion, culture, community, peaceful.

1 Writer’s Introduction

Janil kr. Brahma was born at Naigaon (Tipkai), a village in Kokrajhar District on 30th December 1951. The writer is one of the prominent writers of the Bodo literature, apart from the short story writing he contribute his writing in many areas by writing poem, prose and historical life cycle etc. to the Bodo literature. He contributes a lot to the Bodo literature by writing short stories though his contribution to the Bodo literature is tremendous as he wrote many articles in different field to keep upward of the Bodo literature. He printed and published three numbers of Bodo short stories. These books are respectively – Dumphaoni Phitha (2005), Mwider Muhini (2007) and Japanni Swima (2009). It can be mentioned that the writer can attract readers to his short stories as the short stories are full of sweet and sour, and very interesting. That’s why he got the prestigious award Sahitya Akademy award in the year 2009 for his contribution of short story “Dumphaoni Phitha” to the world of Bodo literature. The reflection of social image is found in the short story book “Dumphaoni Phitha” which is a very interesting Bodo short story book as the social images of the Bodo society is found in different short books written by the writer. And in this article it is going to discuss about the social images that reflects in the short story “Dumphaoni Phitha” from the short story book “Dumphaoni Phitha” written by Janil Kumar Brahma.

2.0 Story

The “Dumphaoni Phitha” (rice cake of Dumphao) short story is the first story of his short story book “Dumphaoni Phitha”. The main character of this short story is Dumphao and her husband Somen, where the social images of the Bodo society are clearly reflects through the character and events of their living. Both Dumphao and Somen were the people who are living in a village. Somen, husband of Dumphao, works with hearth and soul for the development of Bodo language, literature, and culture in spite of his duty as a school teacher in a private school. That’s why he found some difficulty in running his family. And for this reason Dumphao have to run their family herself by tolerating many difficulties. That’s why the quarrel and debates was found off and on between husband and wife. Dumphao was reared animals and birds for running their family, so one day she met her school mates Gaodang and Sarala at the tea shop of Bahadur Mepal when she went for tea at the market where she took hens for selling in the market. Sarala and Gaodang became very much difficult to recognise Dumphao as they met after long time. Dumphao who is living at the village has changed very much her appearance. Gaodang talk to Dumphao though she was puzzle in recognition of her “O! No, are you not Dumphao”. Dumphao replied in deepness voice “Yes”. Sarala also said to her in the way of Gaodang “Dumphao, O! No, you mad; you became so bad on your appearance. Earlier you were much better beauty than us.” Gaodang and Sarala also enquired to whom she married and whether husband does.

Dumphao feels very bad and sorrow on hearing their words. Dumphao told to them that she married a person of the village before three years who is serving in a private school in their own village. She also said that her husband has no asset and property, a

landless person and very poor. She could not control herself on her painful mind and she left the tea shop by taking three bundles of thread that she bought it by selling her three hens and said to them that they may believe their future in peaceful life. Once upon a time they were intimate friends, so Dumphao did not think that she will hear such words from her friends. She could not control herself and weeps her tears on the way to home as she feels very sorrow on their words. She was very much stressed with sorrow and broken mind on the words of her friends and her mind could not remain stable so Dumphao falls on the bed as soon as she reached her house.

Dumphao did not reply any words to her husband when her husband asked for food after he came from participating the meeting of Bodo Sahithya Sabha at Tharaibari area. He asked to his wife Dumphao that what happened to her as she did not reply after asking about three times as he asked for food since he is hungry. But Dumphao replied to her husband with painful mind and stressed health that there is no rice in the home and she said if her husband do only the meetings for the society then how will the family will run and she also said to her husband as useless. She also said that husbands of Sarala and Gaodang earn good amount of money and became rich man, on the other hand you are only busy in the meetings of the society and did not have any interest of the family, I am feeling very much shame on your activity, Dumphao said. Somen replied to his wife that if her luck was good then she may not be married with him and on the other hand as the luck of Sarala and Gaodang is good so they got good husband who earned lots, and if her luck was good then her marriage was not happened with him and she has not to deep in the ocean of sorrow. If rice was not why did not tell you in the morning, he said. You told me in the morning that you are going to the market to sell hens. She replied to her husband that how much money I get by selling three numbers of hens, and with this money which I have to buy, either thread for dokhona or rice, may I not wear dokhona. You are cheating me since inception, you cheat by saying that you will give me job at the L. P. School, till today you could not serve me good meals for the days. What do you have got profit by doing works for the society anytime, is the society feed you. Somen could not reply single words on the words of his wife Dumphao.

Somen remains silent for a moment, and said to her that it is very difficult to get job now a days. Over all of these my job is not regularised till today. You scold me everyday for doing work for the society. But, in this age all people are busy for the development of their own society. Our Bodo society only remains underdeveloped and other are reached to developed status. If we the literate person do not think about the society then who will think about it and do for the development of the society. Shivaram, Amlaram became martyrs by fighting to keep live culture, language of the Bodo society, but what do we contribute for development of our society, you Dumphao tell me, - Somen said to her.

Somen slept suddenly on the veranda with hungry health of the house by taking the tablet as pillow after he lost to convince his wife. The words that told by her husband Somen came to her mind like slight clear memory. Warm tears came down through her eyes. She awake her husband and request him to remain this night by taking the fried popcorn which she fried in the day time. She kneels down on her husband by saying these words. She promised herself internally that she will help her husband in the social work for the development of Bodo society. She also thought that if the women of other caste can live their life by doing business of tea, nut betel shop then why not the Bodo women. So, she wants to start a business of shop of tea and betel nut, and she start the action as she thought. On the very next morning, she for market by taking her rearing big hen for selling and the money she got by selling her hen she brought rice and small picture for opening tea shop. On the next day, she selects a place for starting her tea shop on the road side of the Samthaibari market through which people goes for the buying and selling of vegetables and etc. She could one, then two and then three and many rice cake at her shop on the first day of her business. She got profit in the tea shop such that she could by about two kilograms of rice. So Dumphao remain busy on her business by rejecting her shame feelings. The people who went through the road became their habit to have the rice cake and tea at the tea shop of Dumphao. The profit of the shop of Dumphao is increasing day by day and with this profit she builds a hut at that place to start her tea shop by taking a maid for helping her in her business. The people who came to the bazar entered to the tea shop of Dumphao and have tea and rice cake. Dumphao could earn huge money from her tea shop business.

The school of Somen, husband of Dumphao, also became Government after six months. Somen now gets salary on every month as his school teacher job is regular now. Dumphao's tea shop also developed day by day. Dumphao bought three numbers of Usha sewing machine by the money she earned from her shop. After that she started a tailoring shop name as Dumphao Tailoring at the Samthaibari market with the young boys and girls from her village. They bought paddy land and build a standard house for them by the money they earned. And in addition to these they bought the important materials that they need for running their family. The people of the area discussed about the development and living of Dumphao's family when the people come get together for job of helping each other and etc. Somen did not leave the job of social works in addition to his school service. Now a days Dumphao also do not defend the social works of her husband. Dumphao donate five thousand rupees to Sonam Babu who is preparing statue for the martyrs who lost their live in the fighting of Roman script. The committee for the inauguration of statue invite Somen to inaugurate the statue. Somen went to inaugurate the statue as per the invitation of the committee. And Dumphao also left for the inauguration with her husband. Both of them are felicitated by the committee with the flowered Gamusha Pali. In this way the peaceful life in the life of Dumphao's family from their sorrowful life is seen in the story due to their hard work with health and soul both of them. In addition to this the different social images reflected through the story is seen. These are discussed one by one in the following paragraph.

3 Social Images

The Bodo people were living in team forming society since they were started to live on this earth. They were living their society with their own language, culture and different customs which are followed by the Bodo people in their daily life. The event happened repeatedly in a society or community is known as the social image of that society, as for example the daily works of a family, eating or food system, dresses that they wear, worship of religion, custom of that society and etc. The social images of the

Bodos are found in the short story “Dhumphaoni Phitha”. The social images found in the short story “Dumphaoni Phitha” is going to discuss step by step in the following paragraphs-

3.1 Images of poultry rearing (Dao Phisinai saogari)

Bodos are agriculture-based community and their life depends only the paddy crop that they got from their cultivation. In spite of this, they rear poultry, pig, duck, goat and different domestic animals for their eating purpose and if they feel needs of money to run their family then they earned money by selling the rear animals. This kind of event is found in the short story “Dumphaoni Phitha” as Dumphao left for market by taking few numbers of big hen that she reared for selling and she bought rice and picture that she got money by selling hen and this clearly reflects the social image of the character of rearing poultry by the Bodo women through the story.

3.2 Images of weaving (Si danai saogari)

Bodo women have been the habit of weaving cloths for their use and for the members of the whole family since inception of time. This event is seen in the story when Dumphao met her class mates Sarala and Gaodang at the tea shop of Bahadur Nepal in the market and her class mates said to her that her health became worse as compare to earlier. Dumphao feels very much shame on the words of her friends and left the place by taking the thread she bought by the money she got after selling her hens and said to them that I left for home. The reflection of weaving cloths is clearly found through the story as Dumphao left the tea shop with the thread she bought for the purpose of weaving for her and other family members.

3.3 Use of wood in the Bodo society (Boro somajao dongphang bahainai)

The Bodo people are generally depending on the nature and they use the material got from nature in their daily life from early time. They are using till today the material they got from nature in their daily life for different purposes and these are trees and plants, bamboo, cane and etc. though they are using the vegetable that they got by collecting from the nature. Among these, the wood is generally used in their daily life. They uses different utensils made from the wood in their daily life in spite of the unavoidable device that made from the wood is the tablet. The tablet is used in two purposes by the Bodo people. One is the use for seating in daily life and if some guest come to a house, then it is given for seating and to have rest. Second use of the Gamari tablet is use for the puja worship and in the marriage purpose where the tablet is made from Gamari tree and nail less. In this way, in this story Somen master has to listen many words from his wife Dumphao as he could not run the family well. So the use of wood for making tablet is clearly reflects as the Somen master slept at the veranda by taking the tablet as pillow and in addition to this the wood is used in different purposes though it is used for making tablet for seating purpose and through this in the story the social image of use of wood is clearly reflected.

3.4 Co-operative work of the Bodo society (Boro somajao saori badali janai)

The habit of helping to each other is found among the Bodo people as the single family could not complete the job like paddy cultivation, harvesting crops, marriage ceremony, death ritual ceremony and etc. So, the co-operative work habit is found among the Bodo people. This kind of cooperative work increase the strength of unity of the Bodo people. This kind of event is found from the character of Dumphao and Somen where they tried hard to raise their family to erect as a rich family and that’s why they are appreciated by the people of the village as well as from locality. So, people -“*Nubaitho? Mansiya najaywbla makhou haya ?Gao thik thaywbla khwmsini gejerjwngbw swrangkhon nunw mwnw. Somen Dumphao mwnha gwdwmamwn da ma jakhw?*” (2005:6) (“Have you seen? What can not do if people tried? If people remain stable then it can be seeing the rays of light through the darkness. What was the status of Somen and Dumphao earlier, and now what status they got)? The people are discussed about the story of Somen and Dumphao when they come together in the co-operative works and this sentence of the story reflect the social image of the Bodo people of working in co-operative mode for helping each other.

3.5 Use of embroidery designed phali (Agor phalli bahainai)

The Bodo women have been weaved their wearing clothes with designated embroidery since they settled on this earth. These clothes are used in the home use and in addition to this they use for felicitation if guest visit their home as well as for felicitation the guest in the meeting, the embroidery clothes are used. The social image of use of the designated embroidery clothes is clearly reflects as the people of Samthaibari felicities Somen and his wife with the ‘Bibariphali’ (designated embroidery cloth) as they are invited as guest in the celebration of the martyr’s day for the people who expired by fighting for the Bodo language and literature.

3.6 Use of betel nut (Goi phathwi bahainai)

It is seen that Bodo people eat betel nut in their life though they eat many other things in their living. When they eat the meal of fish and meat then they eat the betel nut to clear their mouth from bad feeling. In spite of this, the Bodo people has been used the betel nut when guest visit to their home, puja worship, and etc. The earning of money by selling the betel nut and running of a family is seen among the Bodo people though it is used daily in the home for eating purpose. So the family which has no garden of betel nut and leafs, then the family is considered as poor family among the Bodo society and the family with their daughter does not will to marriage their daughter with that family also. So in this way in the story it is found that, Dumphao run her family by selling betel nut and tea at her shop and through this it is reflecting the social image of use of betel nut by the Bodo people.

3.7 Cooking of rice cake (Phitha songnai)

The Bodo people have the habit of eating of rice cake and fried rice (sourai) in spite of eating steam rice. This rice cake and fried rice are used as breakfast in the morning and in the Magw domasi (magh bihu) and Bwisagu (bahag bihu) festival also it is used. These are used to eat in the time working like plantation of paddy sapling and rice crop harvesting. It is also seen that people are used to sell by making rice cake as business nowadays though it was cook for eating at home only. In this story also it is seen that Dumphao used to sell rice cake at the road side of Samthaibari market for running her family and this reflects the cooking and eating of rice cake by the Bodo people.

3.8 Use of clay pottery (Hani aijeng aila bahainai)

There is no habit of making pottery from the clay in the Bodo community or they did not make it by themselves. But they use the pottery material made from clay in different purposes in their daily life. They have been use the pitcher pottery for reserving water, making rice cake since inception of time. In spite of this, the rice beer has been using as primary drinks in the Bodo community since inception of time. This rice beer is prepared by cooking rice, then cools it and mixed with the spice (emao) and kept in the pitcher pottery, so the use of pottery pitcher made from clay is seen in the Bodo community. In spite of this Bodo community have been using the pots for lighting of light during the worship of God. In this way, the use of pottery made from the clay is clearly reflects as the social image of the Bodo people as Dumphao bought pitcher from the market for the purpose of cooking rice cake and to sell it at her tea shop as per the story.

4.0 Conclusion

The Bodos are the prime branch of the Indo-Mongoloid groups of people as per the discussed above. Nowadays, their spreads in different places are found in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, Nepal, Nagaland, Bangladesh and etc. Bodos are a great community which has their own language, culture. They were living peaceful life by forming society since they were settled on this earth and in spite of this, they are also following the religion, custom in their life. The social images are the event that happened repeatedly in a society and by observing in this side of the discussion, the short story “Dumphaoni Phitha” from the short story book “Dumphaoni Phitha” written by Janil Kumar Brahma has been studied and discussed thoroughly that the social images reflect through the story. In this way, the different habit of the Bodos are found in the story and these are rearing of poultry, uses of wood in different purposes, co-operative works among the people, weaving of clothes, use of betel nuts, use of pottery and etc. as well as these are reflects clearly the social images of the Bodo society.

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