

## **Saurabh Kumar Caliha's 'Ghulam' as a Satirical Assamese Short Story : A Review**

**Dr.Daljeet Kaur<sup>1</sup>, Dr.Gurpreet Kaur<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1,2</sup>Guru Kashi University, Talwandi Sabo

### **Abstract :**

Saurabh Kumar Caliha was one of the most notable writers of the Ramdhenu Era, whose works have left an indelible effect on current Assamese storey fiction. Saurabh Kumar Chaliha's stories were given a new depth by the subject matter of quick transition of city life, topic selection, unique phrases, and representation of the mechanical internal state of modern lives. By eschewing established methods, Chaliha's stories portrayed modern city life. In his stories, he uses a mosaic pattern of intense and quick vocabulary, sometimes indisciplined, and seemingly random imagery that appear to have no significance. In compared to other stories, Saurabh Kumar Chaliha's stories are unique in modern Indian literature in terms of concepts, subject matter, and voice. Chaliha, who began his career as a Marxist writer in his adolescence, was a true artist who sought to express himself via his work. His paintings presented an entirely new subject matter to the world. In his stories about Guwahati, he beautifully depicts the lifestyle of the people that live there. Despite his familiarity with the lifestyles of other nations, he never failed to accomplish all of life's moral standards. He was not unconcerned with the suffering that was inherent in human situations. His stories give off an evident sense of societal concern. 'Ghulam' is an appropriate narrative in this setting. His narrative "Ghulam," which appears in his book "Ghulam," essentially portrayed a concealed irony. This narrative was written and designed to convey the administration's sardonic perspective during the post-independence period. The purpose of this article is to explore Saurabh Kumar Chaliha and the aspects that were featured in his narrative 'Ghulam.' The descriptive approach will be used to accomplish this research report.

**Key words :** Ramdhenu Era , Inward condition, traditional, modern lifestyle, Marxist, miseries, human, irony etc.

### **0.00 Preface:**

#### **0.01. Topic Identity:**

Though the tradition of fictional literature was ancient but the creation of short stories are new. Like drama and fiction , short stories got recognized during the second half of the nineteenth century. These short stories were mainly born and increased through the publications in magazines and were primarily published in parts in order to express the experiences of human lives. Assamese short stories are the result of the influence of the western short stories. Not only in the context of short stories but towards the end of the nineteenth century , through 'Jonaki' the newly introduced Assamese literature was the result of the complete reformation of Indian ideologies influenced by the western viewpoints. This influence made all the poets and authors to view the world in a different way than they used to do before. In 'Jonaki' itself the Assamese short stories were first introduced by

Sahityarathi Lakshminath Bezbaruah. Though he was the creator of Assamese short story but he never used the term short story. His stories were sometimes named as folktales or sometimes fiction.

Lakshminath Bezbaruah in his stories through irony expressed the good and bad qualities of the Assamese Community. Along with that he also illustrated the picture of deep human qualities like weep and laugh, happy and sad in his stories. In his first creation, he emerged as Kripabor Borbaruah in front of the readers. Through his stories, literary philosophy got completely expressed. It is notable that the irony and comic elements which Lakshminath Bezbaruah used in his stories during the nineteenth century, was also continued to flow in the stories of the Ramdhenu Era. The story of Saurabh Kumar Chaliha's 'Ghulam' is the best example in this context. Almost in every page the administration during the post independence period is ironically expressed in the story. As if the administration became a matter of laughter in every step. The main idea of this story itself is ironic where it not only amazes the readers but it ironically criticises the ideologies of the protagonist of the story as well as the Assamese Community.

#### **0.02 . Purpose of the study:**

Saurabh Kumar Chaliha was a writer who interjected a new point of view in the modern Assamese story literature. His one of the successful stories is ' Ghulam' . Through the study of the story 'Ghulam' by Saurabh Kumar Chaliha, his ideas, characteristics, irony, and the lives of people which were devastated by the administrative arrangements of the post independence period are adequately expressed among the readers. To concentrate on new viewpoints for compositions and making the upcoming administration aware is the main purpose of this research paper.

#### **0.03 . Content and scope of the study:**

'Ghulam' is a Satirical story. While discussing the Assamese short story 'Ghulam' as a satirical story, for the main content the researcher took help of the story 'Ghulam' from the book 'Ghulam' that was published in the sixth decade as well as other essays and books as secondary content.

#### **0.04. Record of previous studies:**

In many books there were references of Saurabh Kumar Chaliha's 'Ghulam' . Some works like 'Axomiya Sutigolpor Adhyayon' by Prahlad Kumar Baruah and ' Axomiya Sutigolpor Goti Prakriti ' edited by Aurobindo Rajkhowa are notable in this context.

#### **0.05. Methods of the study:**

In this proposed research paper methodically analytical and critical viewpoints were used.

#### **1.00. Introduction of Saurabh Kumar Chaliha as a storyteller:**

One of the most prominent storytellers of the Ramdhenu Era was Saurabh Kumar Chaliha. When he was a student he put his first step in story writing. In a magazine namely 'Parijaat' his story 'Punjab Simantor Xahajatree' was published. After that, through stories like

'Censor', 'Bihu Dhonotondror Sat', 'Karl Marx', 'Era' which got published in Sadiniya Bahi, and 'Rivhaan', 'Dinababu', and 'Tinilakh Bonua' etc that got published in Jayanti, Saurabh Kumar Chaliha for the first time did his self publications.

The two story books published by Saurabh Kumar Chaliha were "Ashanta Electron" and "Duporia". In these two books the use of different art techniques and skills were clearly visible. His most of the stories were published in the magazine 'Ramdhenu'. While the descriptions of fragmented experiences as well as uses of scientific opinions and terminologies in his stories made it difficult to understand but at the same time attracted the readers also. Infact in most of the stories his expertise of mindfulness, uses of words, centralisation of the ideas were clearly manifested. His many stories set examples of scientific thoughts and ideas. He believed that if he described the human mind through a scientific way then the inner beauty of human ideas and thoughts will come out from the veil. While writing stories, Chaliha never gave importance to the environment but always focused on the mental condition of the character.

The other two books of Saurabh Kumar Chaliha were 'Ghulam' and 'Ehat Daba'. In both these books the success of the writer in selecting the plot and use of skills were completely visible. Five stories which were included in these books are - 'Ashanta Electron' (1960), 'Deuta Aru Aami' (1961), 'Ehat Daba' (1966), 'Ghulam' (1969), and 'Bina Kutir' (1971). Through the continuous evolution of the characters and plot of these five stories which were published from the year 1950 to 1971, the picture of restlessness of modern city lives and transformation of the lifestyle were nicely executed. From these five stories it was proved that the writer was not sensitive regarding the changing consciousness of the society. Chaliha's 'Ashanta Electron' was an exciting story. The story 'Ashanta Electron' that received the first prize in story writing competition of Cotton College in the year 1950 portrayed the scientific rationalist life of people in contrast to the youthful vivacity of the college going boys. Similarly in the story 'Ghulam' also a concealed irony was seen. In many of his stories the rich and highly educated fraud, dominating and exploiting characters were poignantly mocked.

## **2.00. A Review of the main topic :**

The contributions of Saurabh Kumar Chaliha in the field of modern Assamese story is especially notable. His story 'Ghulam' which is included in his book 'Ghulam' is a successful creation. The use of skills and techniques in this story is quite noticeable. In the story two different pictures were portrayed- one of Guwahati and another of Germany. Both these places were completely in contrast to one another. The environment of one place is colourful, bright, joyous and the other is dirty and unhygienic. The garbage, mosquitoes, flies, caterpillars, leeches, insects etc made the picture of the streets of Guwahati horrible. The context of slavery gave power to describe these two contrary pictures. In the story the irresponsibility of the government and administration towards the unhygienic condition of Guwahati could be easily found out. There was no one to notice the outsiders who came from somewhere and made the environment unhealthy by excreting in public places. Government and administration also stayed away from it. They pretended to be unseen even

after seeing it also. If someone could join the municipality, they would only fix the street that went to their homes. The issue of corruption in this story only pointed out towards the narrow sensibility of the people. The administration showed as if they were unaware that all the communication and transportations were possible only through streets. The story basically mocked all the people who thought to achieve everything with a narrow mindset.

" I can guess what he will do after leaving me in the airport . He will enter our bylane by scolding the municipality department to rot in hell by flaunting his stain of mud which was dredged by the motor vehicle." Page 345 (Choi Doxokor Golpo)

In the picture of Guwahati , we could see that there were no social responsibilities for one another ; but in the picture of Germany we could see that the children were taught social responsibilities from a very young age.

In the story 'Ghulam' he disclosed the slavery attitude of Indian people and encouraged readers to laugh those attitudes. The Assamese people were the first readers of the story. As a reader when we laughed at the slavery of the story teller , actually we laughed at our own slavery. Sarcasm awoke our wisdom . The protagonist of the story is a person of Assamese community who lived in Guwahati. He went to Germany for his higher education . So he had to sit for an linguistic examination. In that examination the protagonist was asked to write an essay on the topic 'Our City' in order to know German. The protagonist copied a German essay ' Snow of Our City' and wrote it in his own words. Only he replaced 'our city' with 'Guwahati'. Through the essay the protagonist described the dirty and unhygienic condition of his residential area in Guwahati. The sarcastic element of the essay was that the protagonist exactly copied the condition of snowfall of Germany in his essay too. So the snowfall in Guwahati and replacing 'Our City' with 'Guwahati' made the essay more sarcastic which ironically pointed out our cheating and slavery.

The time mentioned in the story 'Ghulam' was the post colonial period. At that time Europe was more developed than our country. The subject matter of this story is not easily understood. To acquire the subject matter of this story one should take help of their wisdom. Actually the main idea of 'Ghulam' is to mock the administrative systems of the post independent period. Along with this the narrow mindsets of Assamese as well as Indian middle class educated people were mocked. To achieve a mere certificate of business administration , the protagonist went to Germany from Guwahati . This made his teacher ask - What is the profit that you will make for you and your country with this diploma? It is very difficult to answer this question . So why it can't be answer a reason for that was clearly stated in this story-

" What can be the answer to this question? Somehow I will take this diploma to my country and will flaunt it in front of everyone. A foreign diploma- success is inevitable. For some days I can not buy any property like land, car etc but my return is more important. Ram, Shyam and everyone returned for various reasons. Either I will trick but I will not lose hope . Otherwise there is no use of this life . " Page 342

From this speech the narrow mindsets of the educated middle class people were clearly visible. Through the mindset of the character the writer mocked others who returned from the foreign with a narrow mindset of establishing themselves.

'Ghulam' is a critical story. In this story the protagonist was seen to be aware of his slavery attitude. But considering everything to be good in Europe and bad in his own place was also a kind of slavery. Though the storyteller ridiculed his own slavery in the story but the readers found it difficult to accept him as a slave. He engaged himself in his own criticism who was a self conscious person and an impassive critic of his thinking and works. Although he never directly talked about his city, neighborhood and family, it got expressed through his own sensibilities only. He was not only against corruption but was also rigid against his own slavery. But there was no option to overcome this slavery attitude. Because of the irresponsibilities of the ruling administrative system of post independent period, the description of unhygienic condition of Guwahati was so real that it forced to criticize the responsible departments like municipality. The sarcasm of Saurabh Kumar Chaliha is not direct but it is indirect -

" Due to heavy rain the cultivation of the area was spoiled, flood, flood, flood. There is scarcity, here plague and again there is epidemic. So the price of rice will again rise. The roads are devastated, the bridges are broken, every bus station, railway station is flooded with water for which no passengers can travel. Even rickshaw pullers ran away - train closed, post office closed, transportation closed."

So as a whole in this story through the self sarcasm and self criticism of Saurabh Kumar Chaliha the problems of modern people, their uncertainty, hesitation etc were clearly executed.

### **3.00 . Conclusion:**

Saurabh Kumar Chaliha's contributions to Assamese narrative writing are unquestionable. His usage of caustic components in stories differs from those of the Abahan Era's satirical works. Saurabh Kumar Chaliha's sarcasms were well-developed and rich. Characters of the Abahan Era were openly criticised, but there was no blatant irony in Saurabh Kumar Chaliha's writings. The protagonist of the narrative 'Ghulam' has an attitude that is nothing more than enslavement. The main point of this narrative was to make fun of that mindset. This narrative teaches readers how to explain things in a reasonable manner, create a meaningful setting, think carefully, and express themselves intelligently. On the other hand, it was a work of art that delighted the readers. 'Ghulam' is a tremendously rich work by Saurabh Kumar Chaliha as an Assamese satirical short tale.

### **Contextual References:**

1. Goswami, Ashok Kumar (Gen.Editor), Goswami, Ranjit Kumar Dev ( Editor) : Axomiya Sahityor Buranji ( ninth edition), Sutigolpo, Uday Dutta page : 413
2. Gogoi, Leela ( edited) : Adhunik Axomiya Sahityor Parichay  
Page : 191

**Bibliography:**

1. Goswami, Ashok Kumar ( asst. editor) Goswami, Ranjit Kumar Dev  
( editor) : Axomiya Sahityor Buranji (fifth edition) Anandaram Baruah Language and Art  
Cultural Association, Assam, Rajdowar North Guwahati, Guwahati- 30
2. Gogoi , Leela ( editor) : Adhunik Axomiya Sahityor Parichay  
Banlata, Dibrugarh-1 Guwahati-1
3. Chaliha, Saurabh Kumar : Choi Doxokor Golpo , Students Stores , College Hostel  
Road , Guwahati- 781001 , Second edition : September 2011
4. Baruah, Dr Prahlad Kumar : Axomiya Sutigolpor Adhyayon  
Banlata, third edition 2008
5. Borgohain , Homen ( editor) : Axomiya Sahityor Buranji ( sixth edition) Anandaram  
Baruah Language and Art Cultural Association , second edition 2012.