Representation of Youth Psychology in the Stories of Manoj Kumar Goswami: An Analytical Study

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Abstract

Among the distinguished contemporary Assamese story writers, Manoj Kumar Goswami occupies a significant position. Alongside his professional identity as a journalist, he has also established himself prominently in the field of Assamese fiction. The themes and subject matter of his stories attract readers deeply, while the diversity and originality of his narrative techniques lend a distinctive character to his literary creations. A notable aspect of Manoj Kumar Goswami's stories is the vivid representation of the condition and psychology of youth. Although he began writing stories during the final decades of the twentieth century, the socio-political realities of that period profoundly influenced the mentality of the younger generation. Assamese society at the time was undergoing political, economic, and social instability, and these circumstances found meaningful reflection in his literary works through the experiences of young individuals.

This brief research study aims to examine the various dimensions of youth psychology portrayed in the stories of Manoj Kumar Goswami. The study has been conducted with the help of analytical and descriptive methodologies.

Keywords: contemporary society, value crisis, alienation, despair, frustration, loneliness.

Introduction

In contemporary Assamese literature, Manoj Kumar Goswami is recognized as a distinguished short story writer. In addition to his role as a journalist, he has made substantial contributions to Assamese fiction by introducing innovative themes and perspectives. Following the postmodern trend in Assamese short fiction, he played an important role in shaping new forms and narrative structures.

Society forms the foundation of literature. No literature can exist independently of society. Since literature reflects social life and its realities, literary works inevitably embody the conditions and experiences of the age in which they are created. One of the primary objectives of literature is to raise awareness among readers regarding various social problems. Manoj Kumar Goswami may therefore be regarded as a socially conscious writer.

His stories reflect the turbulent socio-political atmosphere of Assam during the later decades of the twentieth century, including the social consequences of the Assam Movement, personal crises, value disintegration, and social fragmentation. As a journalist, Goswami closely observed contemporary realities, and consequently his stories present a subtle and profound representation of human experiences. Through his sensitive literary vision, he was able to depict the crises, conflicts, and psychological tensions of his time with remarkable depth and realism.

The research entitled "Representation of Youth Psychology in the Stories of Manoj Kumar Goswami: An Analytical Study" attempts to analyze how the socio-political and social crises of Assam during the final decades of the twentieth century affected the younger generation psychologically, economically, and emotionally. The study also highlights the growing uncertainty, frustration, and mental conflicts experienced by youth during that turbulent period. In contemporary Assamese short fiction, the stories of Manoj Kumar Goswami hold a significant place. His stories portray the transformation of modern lifestyles, changing human values, value disintegration, violence, and the complexities of materialistic existence. These literary works contribute substantially toward generating social awareness and critical reflection.

The study has been prepared with the assistance of various relevant sources. As primary materials, the short story collections of Manoj Kumar Goswami have been consulted, while several critical and secondary texts have also been referred to as supporting sources.

The Nature of Manoj Kumar Goswami's Stories

In the history of Assamese literature, Manoj Kumar Goswami emerged as a writer who introduced a new dimension to short fiction through his sensitive literary consciousness. His notable story collections include *Uprabahinita, Barudhin, Samiran Barua Ahi Ase, Bazaror Samay, Trainor Alit, Bhul Satya, Vivek aru Anyanya, Maranotnor Ghora*, among others.

The thematic foundation of Manoj Kumar Goswami's stories is deeply rooted in the social realities of the 1980s and 1990s. As a witness to the events of that era, he absorbed the experiences of his time with great intensity, which later became artistically reflected in his fiction. The political history of Assam, the Assam Movement, and various incidents that shaped Assamese social consciousness are profoundly represented in his stories.The moral degeneration and emotional emptiness of modern human life are also central concerns in Goswami's fiction. His stories remain significant because they portray human relationships, social interactions, and psychological reactions with exceptional realism and sensitivity.

Manoj Kumar Goswami was able to portray social conditions and the reactions of his characters toward those conditions in a highly objective and realistic manner. In this context, Dhruvajyoti Borah observes:

[1]'*…Sahityar mul lakkhya hol manuhor poristhitir anusondhan aru adhyayan. Ei prithibit manuh kune dharanor poristhiti jiyai ase tar anusondhan inquiry in to the human condition.*'[1]

The stories of Manoj Kumar Goswami represent a sincere artistic attempt to fulfill such an inquiry into human existence. His stories moved beyond conventional narrative traditions and continuously experimented with innovative forms and techniques. Although Goswami did not compose his stories on the basis of any particular Western literary theory, his narrative style, thematic concerns, and emotional depth introduced significant originality into Assamese short fiction.

Thematic Discussion

The final years of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s constituted a period of severe instability, uncertainty, anxiety, and crisis within Assamese social life. During this period, not only society as a whole but also individual lives were profoundly affected by various socio-political disturbances. The emergence of liberalized economic policies, the collapse of established ideological beliefs, and the violent aftermath of the Assam Movement deeply influenced the socio-cultural environment of Assam.

Society gradually became divided into different classes and psychological groups. One section of society remained indifferent toward social responsibilities and collective crises, while another section actively contributed to social disorder, confusion, and moral decline. Such developments created a condition of ideological emptiness and instability within society.

Another significant influence on Assamese society during the closing years of the twentieth century was globalization. The rapid advancement of information technology transformed social life and redirected society toward materialistic and consumer-oriented values. The growing dominance of consumerism gradually weakened humanism and ethical consciousness. During this period of social crisis, Manoj Kumar Goswami, as a story writer, captured these realities through a remarkably subtle and penetrating literary vision.

His stories vividly portray the tensions, conflicts, and struggles of lower-middle-class and middle-class life. These life-cantered realistic narratives are clearly reflected through the psychological and emotional responses of the characters. In many cases, the progression of the narrative depends primarily upon the actions and consciousness of the central characters, though secondary characters also contribute significantly to the vitality of the stories.

The characters created by Manoj Kumar Goswami emerge from deep introspection and close observation of life and society. Consequently, they become major centres of attraction for readers. The principal characters in his stories are predominantly male, while female characters generally occupy secondary positions. Nevertheless, the female characters are carefully constructed in ways that illuminate and strengthen the emotional and

[1]Dhruvajyoti Bora, *Onyo Kolom!Aluminiumor Anguli* (Selected Stories), Manoj Kumar Goswami.

psychological dimensions of the male protagonists. Most of his stories portray modern mechanized life and depict psychologically disturbed, frustrated, sorrowful, and isolated young men trapped within unstable social conditions. These characters embody loneliness, despair, emotional suffering, and existential uncertainty, thereby representing the complex psychological condition of contemporary youth.

The socio-political condition of Assam during the 1980s and 1990s was marked by severe crisis and instability. Political and economic disorder deeply affected the educated youth of the period. In many of Manoj Kumar Goswami's stories, the recurring protagonist bears the symbolic name "Anadi." The term *Anadi* literally signifies "endless" or "without conclusion." The character embodies endless sorrow, uncertainty, frustration, unemployment, and psychological instability produced by social alienation and hopelessness. The mental suffering experienced by educated unemployed youth after completing their studies and remaining confined within the household is vividly reflected through these characters.

From 1971 to 1985, Assam witnessed a prolonged phase of political agitation and social unrest associated with the Assam Movement. Feelings of deprivation concerning Assam's resources, lack of employment opportunities, political neglect, exploitation, and economic marginalization generated intense nationalist sentiments among Assamese youth. Many young people gradually turned toward revolutionary ideologies and militant activism in search of radical transformation. As a consequence, insurgent organizations such as the "*Sanyukta Mukti Bahini"*(United Liberation Front of Assam) in short ULFA emerged.

The story *Samiran Barua Ahi Ase* is composed against the backdrop of insurgency and terrorism. In this widely discussed story, the writer portrays the fear-stricken condition of the middle class living under the shadow of militant violence. Throughout the story, the conflict between dream and reality, hope and despair, becomes clearly visible. Through the unemployed youth characters Ajit, Dulu, and Bipul, the story expresses dissatisfaction with the prevailing social order. One passage reflects their frustration in deeply ironic terms:

Samagra galpatot majere kalpana aru bastab, pratyasha aru asha bhangar boiporityor sanyog ghota porilokkhito hoise. Galpatot dekha diya kormohin juwak Ajit, Dulu, Bipulor majere procholito samaj byabosthar biruddhe khobhor udgiron. 'Panch bosoror pasot jetiya ghuri ahiba tetiya dekhhiba iyat sokolu sol paltai gol. Ek quintal saulor dam matro esho taka, ei je ponchas takar modor botol tar dam me-xi-ma-m ponchas taka, cigarette free, gabhoruhote biya koraboloi bisariba bekar juwakok, botahot sora patar dore uri furiba taka, mane yak koy Ramrajya, karon ami gom pai goiso.'

(Manoj Kumar Goswami, *Samiran Barua Ahi Ase,* p. 15)*"*

This passage vividly captures the emotional suffering and psychological unrest of unemployed youth.

Another important story, *Surjor Pohorat Ejon Atotayi* narrates the tragedy of a poor family consisting of two brothers, their father, and a sister. The younger brother becomes involved in revolutionary militancy, while the elder brother, Niranjan, struggles to support the family. He worries about arranging his sister's marriage and sustaining the household through a small shop. However, the possibility that his militant younger brother may return home creates fear and uncertainty that threaten to destroy the fragile stability of the family. The burdens

of family responsibility gradually harden Niranjan emotionally. Even after the death of his younger brother, whose body remains abandoned near a railway track, the family is unable to publicly acknowledge him due to fear and political pressure. The story thus reveals the devastating psychological and emotional impact of terrorism and insurgency upon ordinary middle-class families.

The story *Mapet* portrays the struggles of a middle-class family. Its protagonist, Anadi, symbolizes the helpless educated unemployed youth of the period. At the very moment he completes his degree, disaster strikes the family. On one hand, his father retires from service; on the other, his mother becomes seriously ill. Anadi's father desperately attempts to withdraw the money accumulated in his provident fund in order to sustain the family and manage the growing crisis.In order to bear the expenses of his mother's treatment, Anadi desperately searches for employment and finally accepts a small and humiliating job. At social gatherings and parties, he is expected merely to entertain others. Outwardly he appears cheerful and sociable, but internally he carries intense frustration, emotional emptiness, and a profound sense of failure. During this period, he also discovers that his father, Sarbananda, had been preparing to steal money from the office due to unbearable financial hardship. Although Anadi silently suppresses his emotional pain, his father's eventual confession compels him to confront the harsh reality of their condition.

Through *Mapet*, Manoj Kumar Goswami sensitively portrays the shattered dreams and emotional collapse of the lower middle class. The story becomes a moving representation of the psychological crisis of economically vulnerable educated youth.

Another significant story, *Gharmua*, centers on Anadi, a defeated man struggling within married life. Intense psychological conflict and growing emotional distance from his wife transform him into a rebellious figure opposing both society and his surrounding environment. Anadi and his wife had only one child, named Pinu. However, their domestic life suddenly collapses, and neither is capable of controlling the situation.

Anadi eventually returns to his mother in the village. Unable to tolerate the oppressive and exploitative behavior of his company's superior, he resigns from his job in anger. The story vividly reveals the inner psychological conflict of Anadi's character. On one hand, he loses his employment and becomes directionless; on the other, his relationship with his wife and child disintegrates. His rebellion against the existing social order becomes increasingly visible. The cruelty of the police administration eventually destroys Anadi's life completely. Society fails to understand the mental suffering and frustration that consume him, leading ultimately to his death. Through this tragic portrayal, the story demonstrates how numerous young minds were psychologically shattered under the pressure of a rigid and oppressive social system.

In *Anadir Kahini* , the writer again uses the character of Anadi to depict the helplessness and emotional suffering of educated youth during the 1990s. The story presents the contrast between two generations and two entirely different lifestyles. One side is represented by Anadi, while the other is represented by Pintu, the twenty-five-year-old only son of MLA Dipankar Goswami. On one hand, the story portrays a luxurious life shaped by social privilege and wealth; on the other, it depicts the deprived and uncertain life of Anadi, an educated science graduate

unable to secure employment despite attending numerous interviews. Through a relative, Anadi is brought into the household of MLA Goswami.

Anadi's simplicity and sincerity quickly earn the trust of the MLA, who assigns him the responsibility of supervising Pintu. His duty is to observe and report every action of the young man, who lives beyond the control of his father. Despite receiving only a small amount of money in return, Anadi silently tolerates Pintu's reckless and undisciplined lifestyle.

The wealth that Pintu wastes extravagantly stands in sharp contrast to Anadi's own poverty and humiliation. In order to survive, Anadi sacrifices his self-respect, moral values, and personal dreams. Through this contrast, the writer reveals the moral and emotional decay of society. Ordinary human values such as dignity, love, morality, and ethical responsibility appear to have disappeared, while mere survival becomes the central reality of life.

Like an honest and responsible elder brother, Anadi never hesitates to place his own life in danger in order to protect Pintu. In the story *Mok Juihola Bahat Diok* , the central character Anadi represents an individual tormented by instability, fear, and anxiety during a period marked by terrorism and violence. Through the character of Anadi, Manoj Kumar Goswami portrays the painful psychological condition produced by a disturbed and uncertain age. The character reflects the consciousness, anxieties, and emotional suffering of ordinary people trapped within the unstable social realities of the 1980s.

The lives of the characters in Goswami's stories are not marked by harmony or fulfillment; rather, they embody emptiness, bitterness, frustration, despair, and the harsh realities of emotionally exhausted existence. Regarding literature and life, Manoj Kumar Goswami writes:

"Hoyto sahityoi aji aru jibonok probhabit nokore, borong jibonehe sahityok gobhirbhabe probhabit kore. Sahityoi jonmokalor pora eiporyonto jimanbor soundorjo sristi korise ajir manuhor jibonot tar kono chap kiyo nai? Ajir jibonot dhormo jiman byartho, simanehoi byartho sahityao, jibon aji bonchito, khondito anondo borjito."

. (Manoj Kumar Goswami, *Trepiziyam*)

Conclusion

The characters in the stories of Manoj Kumar Goswami are predominantly male, while female characters generally receive comparatively less emphasis. Although male protagonists occupy the central position in the narratives, female characters are carefully constructed as supportive presences that help illuminate the psychological dimensions of the male characters more clearly.

In many of his stories, the protagonist is symbolically named "Anadi." Through this recurring figure, the writer represents the frustrated, unstable, and psychologically disturbed youth of contemporary society. Although these characters often appear emotionally shattered and psychologically conflicted, they nevertheless retain an inner strength that allows them to endure difficult circumstances. Even when confronted with repeated suffering and crisis, the characters preserve a deep sense of hope. Their ability to maintain emotional resilience amid despair becomes one of the most significant qualities of Goswami's fiction.Through his characters, the writer penetrates

deeply into the inner consciousness of human beings and reveals dimensions of life that are ordinarily invisible to the human eye.

Final Observation

As a socially conscious short story writer, Manoj Kumar Goswami examined society and human life with a sharp and critical vision. His stories were composed on the basis of direct observation and lived experience. Consequently, his fiction presents an authentic and realistic portrayal of social reality, psychological suffering, and the emotional condition of contemporary Assamese youth.

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