

**RECONSTRUCTION OF HISTORY IN *KALPURUSH* BY
DEBENDRANATH ACHARYA**

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ABSTRACT: History is the reconstruction of past. The approaches to the interpretation of the past and the methods of constructing it have differed from civilization to civilization. So too have the methods of constructing it. Novel is one of the popular genres of modern literature. Besides the historians, the novelists have attempted to reconstruct the past from indigenous perspective. Debendranath Acharya is a renowned name of Assamese literature through his novels, short stories, poems and articles. But he is basically known as a novelist. He wrote popular Assamese novels like *Anya Yug Anya Purush* (1970), *Kalpurush* (1976) and *Jangam* (1982). We'll try to discuss the reconstruction of history in *KalPurush* through this paper.

INDEX TERMS: History, Reconstruction, Novel

INTRODUCTION

History is the reconstruction of past. The approaches to the interpretation of the past and the methods of constructing it have differed from civilization to civilization. So too have the methods of constructing it. The aim of the history has been to bare the past completely on the basis of a neatly articulated frame of reference. Each civilization's perception has depended on its peculiar conceptions of time, space, change and self or identity. A historian does not use all the references of the past that he has collected. The constitution of historical facts has always been a matter of selection and point of view. Therefore, the idea is gaining

ground that a wholly objective historical record is a fallacy. There cannot be perfectly true past but only competing construction of it with various levels and kinds of empirical support. History is increasingly being seen as different from the past as only one possible mode of constructing it. There is a close relationship between Literature and History. The historians have to depend on literature while they have written the incidents of past. For example, the Indian *Itihasas* and *Puranas* are set in the timeless dimension of the ever present.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- The aim of the study is to discuss the reconstruction of history in the the assamese novel *Kalpurush* written by Debendranath Acharya.
- The study will also reflect the relationship between history and literature.

METHODOLOGY

- The related data of the study are collected from the novel.
- The secondary data are collected from various published works like *Buranji* chronicles.

RECONSTRUCTION OF HISTORY IN NOVEL

Novel is one of the popular genres of modern literature. Besides the historians, the novelists have attempted to reconstruct the past from indigenous perspective. When a novelist has introduced the incidents of past in his novel, then the three layers of time period have connected there- the determined time period when the historical incidents have been happened, second is the writer's time period and the third is the reader's time period. Sometimes; we have seen the

differences between the writer's time period and the reader's time period distinctly in the novel. That is why a novelist can reconstruct the history by his novel. Sometimes the novelist reconstructs the unseen past with the help of myth and legends. On the other hand, novel is a creative literature, so we have seen the writer's imagination in it. The writers can include different characters, themes and incidents in their novel. Therefore different novelist can adopt different type of skill to introduce the subject matter in their novel. For these reasons, we have seen so many differences between two novels in same background and same subject matter but written by two different writers. The novelists can reconstruct the historical incidents in their novel. The writer's time period, their perception and their writing skill play an important role while they reconstruct the past in their novels. There is a difference between historical novel and reconstruction of history in novel. All historical novels are the reconstruction of past but all the novels where we have seen the reconstruction of past are may not be historical novel.

Sir Walter Scot's *Waverly* (1814) is the first historical novel in western literature. In Indian literature, reconstruction of history in novel is commenced through *Durgeshnandini* (1865) written by Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay. (Sen 2011:165) In Assamese literature, the method of reconstructing the history by novel is commenced through Padmanath GohainBarua's *Bhanumoti* (1814) and Lakshminath Bezbarooa's *Padumkonwari* (1814). The method of reconstructing the history through novel in Assamese literature is established by Rajanikanta Bordoloi. He reconstructed a part of historical time in his novels *Manumoti*(1900), *Rangili*(1925), *Radha Rukminir Ran* (1925), *Nirmal Bhakat* (1926), *Tamreswarir Mandir* (1926), *Danduwa Droh* (19 28) and *Rahdoi Ligiri*(1930).

RECONSTRUCTION OF HISTORY IN *KALPURUSH*

Debendranath Acharya is a renowned name of Assamese literature through his novels, short stories, poems and articles. But he is basically known as a novelist. He wrote popular Assamese novels like *Anya Yug Anya Purush* (1970), *Kalpurush* (1976) and *Jangam* (1982). Debendranath Acharya was posthumously awarded the Sahitya Akademi award in 1984 for his novel *Jangam*. In his novels, Acharya attempted to explain the history with his own perception. We'll try to discuss the reconstruction of history in *KalPurush* through this paper.

The narration of the novel *Kalpurush* is starts with the description of the war between Jayantia-Kacharis and Ahoms and it ends with the description of the war time of Mughal and Ahoms in Saraighat. The various incidents of the history of Assam between 1639 AD and 1673 AD are presents in the novel.

The character Nadai *Sanjati* plays an important role in the novel *Kalpurush*. It is also the main character of the novel. According to the novel, *Sanjati* means the most faithful person of the Ahom Swargadeo. The word *Sanjati* have seen in the *Assam Buranji found in Sukumar Mahanta's house* .(Bhuyan 2010:78) The word *Sanjati* is also found in *Ahomor Din* by Hiteswar Barbaruah.(Barbaruah 2013:127). When Lachit Borphukan was sick in the time of the war Saraighat; Nadai *Sanjati* helped him to go to war through the boat.(Rajkumar 2013:551). The Novelist reconstructs the character Nadai *Sanjati* to describe that special time period of Assam History from 1639 AD and 1673 AD. The writer's thinking is also reflects in the novel- "It is not the real history written by the *Likharus* with their own perspective. It is not the real history with the number of horse-elephant or counting of day-month-year or other materials. The real reference of the history is the mind of the people, their thinking, their wish, their greed, jealousy etc." (Acharya 2007:01).

Generally, the political incidents are written in history. There is not found the mental situation of the people. But the novel reflects the mental situation of the characters. For example, Swargadeo Jaydhwaj Singha had sent the *Pikchai Chetia Phukan* into prison. It is the true incident of the history. According to the novel, *Aikunwari* (the queen) requested Swargadeo to make him free from the prison. The novelist describes that there is a relation between Aikunwari and Morongi Patar and Pikchai Chetia Phukan had known about the relation. So Aikunwari requested Swargadeo to free him from the prison. It is the addition of the novelist in the novel. The novelist reconstruct the incident through his imagination. Describing the incident, the novelist also reconstructs some character like Foringa, Gendhela etc. which have not seen in history.

After the death of King Pratap Singha, his son surampha became King. But the *Dangariyas* were displeased on him. So they had to drive away him from the reign and his son Su-Ten-Pha became king. With this true incident of the history, the novelist add some another incidents through his imagination using the character Nodai *Sanjati*.

According to the history, when Mirjhumla invaded Assam, Swargadeo Jaydhwaja Singha had gone away from his Capital Garhgaon. In the novel, the writer describes that before going from Gargaon, King Jaydhwaja Singha had hide his *Hengdan*, *Kalhira* and *Somdeo* to cover with earth underground in the witness of Nodai *Sanjati*. When the King had to abscond from Garhgaon, his mental condition is also narrates in the novel. (Acharya *op.cit*:72)

The novelist tries to draw the mental situation of the historical characters in the novel which is ignored in the history. It is definitely true that there is always

written about the king or nobles in the history, the general people are really ignored. Though the *Sanjatis* are the faithful *Khels* of the Ahom period, but there is no clear description about them in history. The novelist describes the loyalty and importance of the *Sanjatis* during the Ahom period through the character Nodai *Sanjati*.

The novelist narrates the incidents of the novel in first person. Nodai *Sanjati* is the narrator of these incidents. Narrating the incidents through a narrator is an ancient tradition of Assamese folk culture. For example, we have seen this tradition in *Ojapali*, one of the oldest performing arts of Assam. *Ojapali* focuses on the stories from the epics and puranas through the conversations of *Oja* and *Pali*. Similarly, we can compare the character of ascetic in Assamese culture. An ascetic narrates the incidents through the song. To follow such folk cultures, the author used the character named Nodai *Sanjati* who is not so popular in history.

CONCLUSIONS

In the novel, the author analyzed the historical past in the context of present time. The narration of the novel is originated through the recollection of Nodai *Sanjati*. Nodai *Sanjati* narrates his speech by various style of speaking. The historical incidents are narrated by the opinion of a narrator, so the traditional order of describing historical events are not followed in the novel.

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