



The Gynocentric Study of Indira Goswami's Novel: *Ahiron*

Jayaben C. Patel
Research Scholar,
Pacific University,
Udaipur, Rajasthan (India)

Abstract: *The present paper is an attempt to study the novel Ahiron of Indira Goswami at the gynocentric point of view. Gynocentric theory is based on the four pillars - biological, linguistic, psychoanalytical and cultural. How Goswami has presented her female characters in the Indian male dominated society. Her protagonist Nirmala and other female characters have perfectly launched in the novel.*

Key Words: *gynocentric theory, biological, linguistic, psychoanalytical, cultural, male dominated society*

I. INTRODUCTION

Indira Goswami was born in Guwahati on 14th November, 1942 and died on 29th November, 2011. Umakanta Goswami was her father and Ambika Devi was her mother. The entire family of Indira Goswami was intensely associated with Sattra life of the Ekasarana Dharma. Indira Goswami is also known as Mamoni Raisom Goswami and popular as Mamoni Baideo. She is an Assamese editor, scholar, professor, poet and writer. She is one of the most celebrated and famous writers in India.

II. THE GYNOCENTRIC STUDY OF *AHIRON*

Gynocentric theory is based on four pillars - biological, linguistic, psychoanalytical and cultural out of these here we are going to discuss cultural and linguistic models in detail of *Ahiron* novel. To understand Indira Goswami's work the study of these four models of gynocentric theory are very necessary. Having read her all works we may say that she is gynocentric writer by every inch. She is very simple in her writing so there is no problem to understand her language. She doesn't write but she narrates and describes her works in such a way that entire picture is seen in front of readers' eyes. In Indira Goswami's works, how women have been harassed in the patriarchal society both, biologically and linguistically are reflected very clearly. It is also shown how their body and language are immense source of inspiration and energy to them. In this chapter this point will be discussed in detailed by analysing Indira Goswami's *Ahiron*.

The entire novel focuses on the camp life of the engineers looked after by servants and surrounded by unpredictable labourers. Drink and sex came as a relief to the male dominated society. Goswami narrates a positive love affair of a couple in conscious pursuit of fulfilment. In this novel, the love affair between Harshul and Nirmala is narrated fantastically. Harshul is a thoughtful, serious and humane elderly manager of the establishment. Nirmala was formally known as Mrs. Pandey who has been recently widowed. Harshul married her beloved Nirmala but due to inadequacy in his sex life his loneliness increased and he began to leave Nirmala too freely with his younger assistant engineer Mr. Thakur. This happiness does not stay long last for Nirmala. The deeper trouble was that Nirmala herself feared that perhaps she could not conceive. She had an elemental urge to test herself and went out with Thakur to watch Hashdeo River in full spate.

To understand the biological study of *Ahiron*, Rich asserted:

In order to live a fully human life we [women] require not only control of our bodies, we must touch the unity and resonance of our physicality, the corporeal ground of our intelligence (Rich: 1986, 39).

Ahiron is the reflection of Indira Goswami's self-experience while she was living in Madhya Pradesh. In many of her novels like *Ahiron* and *Mamare Dhara Troroval* she has poured out her own experiences. While Indira Goswami was living in Madhya Pradesh, a bridge was being constructed over the *Ahiron* River which she had observed from close quarters and has been incorporated in her novel *Ahiron*. Her husband was an engineer so she has obviously observed the whole construction business through her own eyes. She appears very knowledgeable in all these matters but the main focus of her fiction is the suppression of women. In *Ahiron*, Goswami has used many words and phrases like 'a nude female form' (158) 'Haven't my breasts nine a pair of ripe melons?' (158) 'a fallen woman' (168), 'aided of clay' (158). All these phrases indicate how Goswami's mind has been conditioned by patriarchy which presents women's such inherent experiences as hateful, shameful, filthy and disgusting. She is almost echoing men's opinions and thoughts.

If we read *Ahiron* from the gynocentric point of view, Goswami has described the positive aspect of woman and her body. She appreciates the courage of both and Nirmala. Through the description of Nani and Nirmala, Goswami has described that those women behaved and done what they wanted to do, not ding to the norms of patriarchy. When Nani had taken bath with Mansa, there was a fight between Mansa and Chota Sahib, between two men, for a woman. But none of them bothers to ask the desire of a



woman. The fact is that she has voluntarily taken bath with Mansa. Nani does not want to obey anybody, she only thinks about her happiness and her happiness is with Manasa. So, she takes bath with Manasa, not with Chota Sahib though he desires her and wants her. With a voice barely under control, Mansa started screaming in his defense:

It is true I hold her hand. But we know each other since we were so high and bathed together naked in the Ahiron at Charpara.... What had intention could I have sahib (Goswami: 2004, 128).

The situation of Nirmala is very pathetic at the end of the novel. Indira Goswami has portrayed the character of Nirmala as a woman who was raped by a student lover became a widow, loved Harsul and conceived the child of Thakur sahib. There are so many ups and downs in her life. She suffers a lot, bears pain and miseries given by patriarchy. But her strong will power led her towards victory. And at last, Nirmala achieved what she wanted, what she desired. She did what she felt. She did not bother about the views and comments of the patriarchal culture. Indira Goswami appreciates the thoughts and ideology of self-fulfilment of Nirmala in the following way:

A woman like her was totally free to love and bear children as she wished. Was it not a common truth applicable to both Nirmala and Isadora (Goswami: 2004, 208)?

III. CONCLUSION

To conclude we may say that Indira Goswami is a real gynocentric writer in her projection of female characters. *Ahiron* fulfills all the conditions of gynocentric theory. *Ahiron* is the masterpiece of Indira Goswami in which she has narrated her known experience too.

REFERENCES

1. Rich, Adrienne. *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*, New York and London W.W. Norton, 1986.
2. Goswami, Indira. *Ahiron: A Novel. Selected Works of Indira Goswami*. trans. Pradipta Bargohain, 2004.