

‘Women Short –Story Writers of Assam’: A Golden Bond of Friendship with the Neighbouring Literature

Abstract

Translation is a growing and popular field of literature in any language. Translator should always be aware of the fact which he or she wishes to translate and should be faithful to the original text of the subject. Presentation of the literary work should be representative and acceptable. Anjali Lahiri's book is an example in this direction

Keywords: Translation, Women Writers, Short-Stories, Assam.

Introduction

Translation is undoubtedly the most acceptable and greatest form of literature. The world literature is widely recognised by the readers of the world through translation only.¹ And translation is, therefore, the main vehicle of literary communication amongst the different class of people across the continents. Thus, translation of literary works from one language into another is a very special branch of literature. Allegations are brought against translation on the ground that it does not bear the original spirit of the literary creation which is transformed in this process. Critics are of the opinion that 'literature' is what is lost in Translation. Though, there is plenty of support for a faithful translation of any famous work of any famous writer. One such translation of a popular and widely circulated book is that of Anjali Lahiri's 'Assmer mahila kathakar', a collection of short stories by reputed women writers of Assam being translated from Assamese into Bengali. The main objective of this translation work is to establish a communication between the neighbouring language and literature, its people and place. Its struggle and sufferings, in order to make people aware and enthusiastic about the vast and beautiful literary tradition of Assam.

Aim of the Study

An introductory note has been written by Malini Bhattacharya, the director of the school of women studies and the preface is written by a famous Assamese writer Homen Borogohain. Author Anjali Lahiri herself has written a precise note on the need and objectives of her work.

The author believes that Indian literary firmament is studded with brilliant stars in the area of short – stories, novels, dramatic works and non – fictions. A wide spectrum of cultural diversities is the priceless assets of India's social and literary heritage. Unfortunately, a bounded limitation is seen everywhere when to look through the spectacles our own mother – tongue. Every Indian language has a rich tradition and a vast store -house of Literary assets, but we are quiet ignorant about it and vice versa.² All these contributes to what we see today as the force of separatist movement .particularly in the north – eastern part of this sub continent. It could have been avoided if we had tried long earlier to prepare our mind and soul to know the linguistic and cultural entity of those neighbourhood states and people. Had we knew our neighbours, their language, beliefs, literature, customs, and above all their mythology, have been a little bit different. An exchange of ideas and sharing attitude in the time of difficulties would have paved the way for a better understanding and peaceful co- existence amongst varieties of ethnic elements spread over a long vista of the North –east . Anjali Lahiri's book 'Assmer Mahila kathakar' is an unique attempt in this direction.

The present work of translation from Assamese into a Bengali serves two objects in a nut -shell. On the one hand, it creates an inquisitiveness and awareness in the minds of it's readers particularly of among the non- Assamese about the vast literary field of Assam and the sentiments of their culture and tradition. And secondly it conveys a message to the neighbouring people about the independent and important



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place of women writers of Assam especially in the field of Short Stories. There has been an attempt to highlight the continuous stages of development and growth of Assamese literature. In the first place, the stratification relates to the ancient period of Assamese literature and has been marked 'adiyug', the next period of it as middle of age or the 'Modhya yug'. 'madhya yug' or the middle age consists of 'pre – Sankari times and Shankari period. There is a distinct division of nineteenth century literature and the present time of it. Other than this, recent development has been categorised as per the trend and type of literary significance, such as 'jonaki yug', Ramdhenu yug',³ women's writings as a special social phenomenon and the modern age of Assamese literature which is marked from 1940-1998 time period without any outstanding point of explanation but what is very valuable in this work is the list and personality presentation of women writers of Assam. Names of both writers of the initial period such as Chandraprava Shaikiyini, Nirupoma Borgohai, Sheha Debi, Mamoni Roysom Goswami and writers of recent times like Arupa Pataniya kolita, Anuradha Sharma pujari are mentioned with due importance and respect.

So far women writes of Assam is concerned Chandraprava Shaikiyani is the stalwart in this field. She has remained to be the icon of women empowerment and is marked as a rebel personality in her times. So in Mamoni R goswami famous for her literary works as well as indigenous social and political responsibility. In 1960's a galaxy of promising women writes and literary personalities appeared in the stage of Assamese literary field. They came from various corner of the society. For example, some of these were medical personalities some were legal practitioner, teachers, technologists or simple house wives and theatrical activists.⁴ They all are enriching the Assamese literature and thereby serving the Indian literature in their best manner. This collection of

short stories of Anjali Lahiri bears a mark of continuity and coherence. It begins with Chandraprava Saikiyani's story and others follow her chronologically like Sneha debi Nirupama Borguhain, Preety Barua, Mamoni R Goswami etc. A series of names of modern Assamese women writers mentioned earlier follows the list. Homen Barogohain the celebrated Assamese writer has praised this endeavour like anything by saying that amidst a dark wave of separatism among the different ethnic establishment spread over this country irrespective of regional varieties in order to build a bond of friendship and brotherhood.⁵ Literary works as this one by anjoli Lahiri will remain to be a path finder to the coming generation of young men and women.⁶ This Bengali translation work will help Assamese and Bengali speaking people to come closer and help building a better tie of understanding and friendliness.

Conclusion

Finally one should be optimist enough when one could critically analyse the points of view as it is embodied in these short stories discussed in this collection. It touches the heart of readers with a sense of sharp psychological vision of humanitarian compassion. The book 'Assamer Mohila Kothakar' along with its valuable narratives has build up a golden – bridge between the literature and cultural sphere of both Bengal and Assam.

References

1. <http://dictionary.cambridge.org> see for more details about translation.
2. Anjali Lahiri, *Assamer Mohila Kothakar*, dey's publishing, Kolkata- 700073, school of women's studies, jadabpur university, February 2003, page.15.
3. *Ibid*, p. 24 and 29.
4. *Ibid*, p. 35.
5. *Ibid*, see *Mukhobanda (Preface)* p.9.
6. *Ibid*, see *Bhumika*.