

Self-Assertion And Empowerment Of Women In Two Famous Novels Of Sabitri Roy: “Pakadhaner Gaan” And “Meghna-Padma”

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Abstract: Sabitri Roy was one of the most famous women authors of undivided Bengal who were directly linked with the Communist Movement. Sulekha Sanyal and Chhabi Basu were other two eminent women litterateurs who had been much more active in political movements and politically motivated processions but Sabitri due to her health issues had to confine herself within the four walls of home and to try her level best to maintain her conscious spirit intact. Sabitri, sister of revolutionary leader Debaprasad Sen, married Shantimoy Roy, friend of her brother in his life behind bars and successfully maintained her identity in their joint conjugal life busy with socio-political endeavours. She combined feminist ideology with Communist consciousness in her reputed novels namely ‘Pakadhaner Gaan’ and ‘Meghna-Padma’. In ‘Pakadhaner Gaan’, the author skilfully depicted peasant’s uprising in undivided rural Bengal during the decades of 1930s and 1940s against both British imperialism and oppressor landlord class. The Swadeshi upsurge moulded by revolutionary spirit and leftist ideology had been meticulously upheld through this novel. According to eminent historian Tanika Sarkar, no history of the turbulent period of the Tebhaga Movement was written when the author Sabitri produced her novel partially based on Tebhaga. In ‘Meghna-Padma’, Sabitri had drawn the picture of non-violent movements of Congress as well as revolutionary movements and women’s issues were also depicted like the other novel. Subaltern historians can find enough research materials in her novels like ‘Meghna-Padma’. Trauma of creative women confined within the domestic sphere was expressed in her soulful writings and this thorough depiction could be compared with Ashapura Devi’s ‘Subarnalata’ and Suchitra Bhattacharyya’s ‘Hemant Pakhi’. In this article, I have tried my best to uncover the excellence of her two novels mentioned above.

Keywords: Women empowerment, Communist Party, Progressive Movement, Social realism, Feminist outlook.

I. INTRODUCTION

Sabitri Roy, born on 28th April, 1918, in Dhaka, and educated through Bethune College and University of Calcutta, became engaged in the profession of teaching in Madaripur, Munsiganj and Kolkata. Sabitri, herself a leftist intellectual, and married with Communist Shantimoy Roy, friend of her revolutionary elder brother in his imprisoned life, wrote nine novels till her death on 8th December, 1985. The famous epic-novel entitled ‘Pakadhaner Gaan’ had been published in three volumes – first part in 1956, second volume in 1957, and the

third one in 1958. Another reputed novel entitled ‘Meghna-Padma’ was produced in three parts – first part in 1962, second volume in 1965 and the third one namely ‘Samudrer Dheu’ in 1968. The author also like her husband did not approve confinement of political knowledge in elite study circles but engaged herself in taking classes in Union of labouring class in 1939. She became member of Communist Party of India in 1945 and participated in peasant conference of Netrakona also in 1945. In that conference, she came to know grievance, trauma and triumph in struggle of Hajong women comrades and her hard-earned experiences had been

skilfully reflected in her novel 'Pakadhaner Gaan'. Sabitri did not support the theory of separation between politics and aesthetic literature and so her creative world could be compared with Manik Bandopadhyay and Mahashweta Devi.

In 'Pakadhaner Gaan' novel, regional features and local customs had been depicted meticulously by the author and feudal oppression, social conservatism, miserable condition of agricultural labourers, violence on women, patriarchal hegemony, endeavour for maintenance of social status –quo and rigidity for females within domestic sphere, Hajong rebellion of 1945-46, World War II, famine, dominance of black- marketeers and corruption were also upheld with commitment as well as perfection in this village- oriented Saga. Gender discrimination deeply disturbed psyche of Sabitri Roy and she besides depiction of class struggles of Partha, Sulakshan, Sarathi, and Shankhaman, valorised struggle for existence of several women characters to overcome domestic violence and sexual exploitation - Bhadra, Debaki, Lata, Meghi and Saraswati. Renowned historian Tanika Sarkar acknowledged importance of this novel in writing history of the Tebhaga Movement. Social Realism could be discovered in novel of Sabitri, who according to Tanika Sarkar, was both trauma- stricken as well as mesmerised by observing women's immense labour in day-to- day domestic life within four walls of household under patriarchal dominance.

In 'Meghna- Padma' novel, nationalist movement of Congress led by non- violent way, movements conducted by revolutionary terrorists as well as the leftist movements had been described and briefly speaking, three main streams of Indian politics from 1920s to 1940s, were reflected in the novel. This rural Saga with epic dimension upheld significance of class struggles against feudalism and imperialism. Structural pattern of this epic- novel could be much more well-organized but it might be true that the author's domestic responsibilities as a woman compelled her to write and finish in a hurried way. Household of Upper class, middle class and downtrodden people, life of both Hindus and Muslims were described in this particular writing and subaltern historians can find research materials in it. Feminist historians can find it useful enough because Sabitri had shown her expertise in depiction of gender- oriented discrimination by struggles of characters like Banya and Banajyotsna. Sabitri actually depicted herself partially through the central character Banya who struggled hard to find time for her creative activities like painting or sculpture due to her heavy workload of domestic chores and family responsibilities. Sabitri was not at all a male- hater but she did not glorify suffering of women due to male oppression in our conventional social structure. Banya, the heroine, was an unwanted child and utterly neglected and rebuked frequently by her mother who always preferred her male children. Contemporary social pattern sometimes encouraged female education but not for economic independence but only for taking care of her husband's household in a more well-organized way and successful motherhood. Sabitri vehemently opposed this conservative thought process and acknowledged women's creative excellence through characters like Banya, Banajyotsna and Irani.

Reflection of socio-political situation in 'Pakadhaner Gaan':

Initially the basic storyline of the novel entitled 'Pakadhaner Gaan' (timeframe was from 1930s to 1940s) must be analysed so that portrayal of contemporary socio-political and cultural scenario can be comprehended. Its central male character Partha was actively involved in armed revolutionary movement of Bengal in 1930s. The novel started with mentioning his militant revolutionary activities and description of life of Debaki, a rural girl of poor family, always rebuked by her mother Subala for her alleged non-chalant attitude while performing various domestic responsibilities in a tender age. Partha had deep sympathy for that girl, daughter of his ex-teacher Dinabandhu and he tried his best so that Debaki could get opportunity of education in school of Ishani Devi. In the novel, scenario of barbaric atrocities of police and colonial administration on families of so-called Swadeshi dacoits was portrayed and ruthless demand for road tax besides constraint on nationalist meetings/ processions was depicted. The Gandhian Civil Disobedience Movement had been reflected in the story. Debaki's extreme urge for being well educated besides her love for Partha was skilfully depicted by Sabitri Roy and she also showed that how all dreams of Debaki were shattered due to her mother's repeated request to her father Dinabandhu to get her married in an affluent family instantly. Partha turned down Debaki's earnest request for marriage and she had been subjected to brutal physical and psychological harassment in her in-law's house after marriage settled mainly by mother Subala without her consent. Her sister-in- law Anna, a widow, had to commit suicide for sustained ill-treatment of mother-in-law. Debaki's infant son also snatched from her by her husband Rajen just to penalise her as she defied his order to return to him immediately from her father's home and she was marked as a characterless woman involved in illicit love affair with Partha. Later after much struggle and even attempt for self-destruction, Debaki obtained employment in Calcutta and found affection in a kind hearted press photographer Kunal Kurup. Meghi, another significant character, was a Brahmin widow, who could find affection only in a kind local Muslim youth Ali and had to leave village permanently due to atrocious treatment of pillars of conservative Hindu rural society. She was physically tortured also for this forbidden love but was saved finally for Partha's timely intervention. After leaving her parental house, she found a happy conjugal life with Ali and emerged as a confident working woman in city of Calcutta. Love episode of Sarathi and Saraswati, rebellious Hajong couple was described with passion and honesty by the author. Partha's love interest was Bhadra, an elite school-teacher, whose husband was involved in extra-marital affair and committed suicide. She gradually became involved in activities of Partha, who turned into a Communist rebel and continued works of Hindi translation for his help taking immense risk. Lata, a well-educated lady, tried her level best to withstand harsh treatment of her mother-in-law after her love marriage with Sulakshan by help of Bhadra and she struggled with abject poverty because her husband was a whole-time worker of the Communist Party without any employment and later immensely involved in the Hajong Movement. Brutal torture of landlord class on poor peasant

families of the Hajong area was depicted by the brave author. Sabitri depicted traumatic experience of Ketaki, younger sister of Debaki, after being mercilessly cheated by Dulal Dutta who actually traded with women for his own benefit in business. The bloody unrest during the Quit India Movement and leonine violence inflicted by the British Raj on rebels, indiscriminate firing to murder women also had been described with perfection. The author simultaneously had drawn pictures of large political movements and several issues of day-by-day domestic life of middle class Bengali household besides peasant families with adequate honesty. Her hero Partha propagated necessity of financial independence of women so that they could overcome domestic violence in in-laws' houses. Activities of krishak samiti and torture of landlord family on Hajong peasant rebel Shankhaman was included in the story. Partha, the leader of the Tebhaga Movement, could not translate his love for Bhadra into reality as he was murdered by military in a frontal battle in Hajong area while trying to save pregnant Saraswati, a big supporter and sympathiser of the peasant rebels, from being molested. He always faced a bitter inner conflict because the woman he loved dearly was a close relative of the oppressor zamindar family for which rebel comrade Shankhaman was almost beaten to death. Partha died a premature death but the battle continued and Bhadra, leaving her job as school-teacher, participated in the Hajong Movement of the hilly areas of the Garo Mountains directly. She motivated rural womenfolk there by her lecture with propaganda for armed battle against the colonial police and landlords and gathered support of friends of Partha like Sarathi in her never-ending struggle to maintain ideology of her dead lover intact.

Both Gandhian Civil Disobedience Movement as well as the Quit India Movement and on the other hand the Bengal terrorists / revolutionaries' armed unrest had imprint on this novel. The incident of transformation of some young revolutionaries into dedicated Communists namely Rebat Barman, Bhabani Sen and Saroj Acharyya had been reflected skilfully enough here.

Women comrades of subaltern category of the historic Tebhaga Movement such as Dipeshwari, Joymoni, Buro maa, Rasimoni, Saralabala Pal, Phuleshwari, Budhmoni etc. and well-educated elite leader Ila Mitra of Nachol famous as 'Rani maa' among rebel peasants definitely influenced the author who had gifted a picture perfect scenario of that turbulent period. Several periodicals published under umbrella of the Communist Party such as Chashi Majur, Dinmajur, Marxbadi, Marxpanthi, Ganashakti, Jangi-Majdur also had impact on documentation related to the activities of the particular party in the novel entitled 'Pakadhaner Gaan'.

Depiction of socio-cultural and political scenario in 'Meghna-Padma'

Sabitri Roy made perfect documentation of socio-political and cultural situation of Bengal by drawing pictures of several incidents skilfully keeping in mind the timeframe from 1930s upto 1940s. Courageous self-sacrifice of so-called Swadeshi dacoits, the impact of politics of Gandhian Congress on psyche of middle class of rural Bengal, Kripan's participation in Yugantar Party, pillar of revolutionary terrorism, and determined leader Jagya Sen's strong influence on him in his early youth and later his transformation from an idealist rebel

to an employee serving under Samsuddin, a pillar of black-market during days of World War II, his wife Irani's participation in drama-performances of Progressive Anti-Fascist Association of Writers and Artists; heroine as well as Kripan's sister Banya's expertise in famine-centric painting and poster-making under supervision of her mentor Jyotirban Moitra who actually was deeply loved by her; threat of Japanese attack during days of the Second World War, speech delivered by Netaji Subhaschandra Bose on radio for inspiring our countrymen for freedom of motherland India, establishment of dharmagola, dominance of krishak sabha, formation of janaraksha bahini, flesh trade during time of World War II and starvation due to devastating famine, abundance of dead bodies on pavements of city of Calcutta during famine, Direct Action Day announced by Jinnah, leader of Muslim League; Great Calcutta Killing due to outburst of communal riots, activities of I.P.T.A, trauma of uprooted Hindus due to emergence of Pakistan as an outcome of Partition, Kripan's initiative to emerge as a leader of the Proletariat after his self-realization and repentance, remarriage of his artist wife Irani with Omar, a reputed poet of Shilpi Sangha, a cultural platform of the Communist Party, heroine Banya's terrible struggle within homefront due to her unwanted existence as a girl child, always rebuked and beaten by her mother Tarulata, but finally successful love marriage with Amlan, her long lasting admirer had been meticulously portrayed by the committed author in this novel entitled 'Meghna-Padma'.

Revolutionary armed movement under inspirational supervision of leaders like Master Da Surya Sen, hero of Chittagong armoury raid and the undaunted Pritilata Waddedar, first woman martyr of Bengal in 1930s against the colonial administration, Gandhian impact on the nationalist movement of Congress, horrible famine of 1943, hegemony of black-market and flesh trade during days of World War II, the activities of the Anti-Fascist Writers and Artists' Association and I.P.T.A, development of famine-centric paintings by legendary artists namely Chitaprashad and Jaynul Abedin, dominance of krishak samiti, bloody communal riots and trauma of Partition of our motherland had been reflected in 'Meghna-Padma' novel with commitment and honesty by Sabitri Roy. Robin Pal in his article entitled 'Swarnaphasali jivan nader mahakavyikata' has rightly opined that- "Janajibaner antarango parichay, rajnaitikotar protyashito prasongikota, rajniti o shilper abhinno lakhyamukhita, gramin, loukik jivan o sanskritir proti nibir mamattva ebang byaktijivaner bedana bishad hotasha o ashar sphuran e sob dikei tini najar dite cheyechhen".

Reflection of tremendous contribution of dedicated women like Reba Roychowdhury and Manikuntala Sen can be observed in this particular novel. After obtaining membership of the Communist Party, Reba left her parental house due to staunch opposition of her father and elder sister towards her political activities and went to Bombay on April 20, 1944 with brother Binay Roy to participate in the Central ballet troupe of I.P.T.A. She took part in shows of Voice of Bengal in Gujrat and Maharashtra for providing help to famine-stricken people of Bengal. She earned immense appreciation for her drama-performances. Sadhana Roychowdhury was also a famous name who participated in Y.C.I, and Cultural Squad of the

Communist Party. She came to the arena of leftist politics for influence of her close relative Chinmohan Sehanabish and was active in drama-performances, singing and dance under umbrella of the I.P.T.A. Manikuntala Sen, a committed Communist leader, was praised for her performance in role of Panchanani in 'Nabanna', a legendary endeavour of the I.P.T.A and this particular character was created as reflection of brave freedom fighter Matangini Hazra. Historian Tanika Sarkar had pointed out the crisis of women artists traumatised due to endless cold war between her very own domestic space demanding her servitude and on the other hand her creativity which did not always fetch acknowledgement from the patriarchal family, and not from even the progressive Left organizations. Historian Anuradha Roy also in her book entitled 'Sekaler Marxiya Sanskriti Andolan' opined that women stalwarts had to go through fathomless deprivation and mental trauma as well as despair because she could never find own space for development of creative spirit even within household of her so-called progressive Communist husband. In Anuradha's language the never-ending problem can be depicted-

"Nijeder paribarik bhumikar proti jathasadhya subichar kore bairer karmakhetre aste hoto bole eder daihik o manasik dik diye tyag korte hoyechhe prachur, protidane peyechhen khubi kom. Sanchayer theke hoyto apachay hoyechhe beshi. Asachhandya o ashantite bhugechhen anabaroto. Uttaran hoy ni. Manikuntala Sen ba Usha Dutter smriticharanay jemon spasto asantosh. Meyeder byaktitobodher swikriti mela kothao sahaj noy. Tai meyeder shilpi hoye othao dushadhho. Holeo ta hote hoy anek byarthatabodh o jantranar modhyo diye."

Women as embodiment of self-respect and self-conscious assertion in two novels:

In 'Pakadhaner Gaan' one can observe story of self-assertion and struggle for establishment of self-respect of not only elite but also downtrodden women of subaltern population. Sabitri Roy did not try to glorify women's conventional lifestyle in feudal household pattern being confined within thousands of domestic chores and responsibilities. Debaki, a woman of poor family of rural background, had to withstand brutal domestic violence after her marriage in an affluent family and her mother also did not provide her required psychological support when she returned in her paternal house after being tortured by her husband and in-laws. Her infant son had been snatched from her by her husband who marked her as a characterless woman involved with peasant leader Partha of her own village. But in spite of all hardships she never gave up and finally this abused woman with meagre education obtained employment in urban sphere. She found affection in journalist Kunal Kurup but this mutual love and respect could not find conventional fulfilment in marriage. Besides, Bhadra, a school- teacher of urban elite background and widow daughter- in- law of an affluent zaminder family, left her job and dedicated herself in activities of the Communist Party during the Hajong Movement connected with the struggle of the historic Tebhaga uprising. She went through a phase of complete transformation for her deep love and devotion for rebel peasant leader Partha, who was murdered by bullet of the military personnel during the Hajong Movement. Bhadra did not hesitate to go to the bloody

battle's area and delivered inspiring lecture to motivate Hajong women for frontal armed struggle. Widow Meghi had to face ruthless treatment in her village for her love towards a local Muslim boy with whom at last she left her parental household and found employment as well as shelter in city life of Calcutta. Lata, a well-educated woman, dedicated herself in her love for Communist worker and revolutionary leader of the Hajong Movement Sulakshana. She got her husband's love and affection but had to withstand malicious treatment of her mother- in-law. In spite of abject poverty she never left her poor and dedicated Party worker husband.

In 'Meghna-Padma', the author had honestly depicted the troubled existence of a girl child within conventional lower middle class joint family where even mothers always preferred sons and their all- round well-being. Its central female character Banya never got expected love and affection from her mother who was happy while taking care for her sons but utterly neglected, frequently rebuked and physically assaulted her unwanted daughter. Stalwarts of contemporary society could not think of female education as weapon of women's financial independence. According to their viewpoint, female education was required only for strengthening well- being of domestic space. Banya could gather support of her father and later established herself as an educated working woman with aesthetic expertise in painting and art of sculpture. She found her soulmate within Amlan and could overcome trauma of her loneliness. Sabitri always preferred financial empowerment for women and fathomless pain felt by her observing gender inequality was reflected within her female characters. Irani left her domestic life, children and even crossed religious barrier after being victim of abuse due to suspicious nature of her over-possessive husband Kripan. The author wanted to establish the fact that man-woman relationship is not always confined within sexuality but can be based on unadulterated friendship which actually existed between Amlan and Irani. Sabitri Roy even dared to show that women could express her love/ devotion towards such a man who was not her husband expected to be blindly worshipped according to traditional domestic ideology. She acknowledged the necessity of developing women's own creative skill or nurturing hobbies within domestic space and established her thought process through painting of Banya, poetry of Banajyotsna and songs as well as drama-performances of Irani in her novel. But the author never disrespected women like her character Uma, who found happiness only within the four walls of her home being always engaged in her day-by-day domestic responsibilities. Sabitri Roy herself nurtured a question within her mind that whether female characters like Uma were really contented in their confined life after marriage, and so she raised the query through heroine Banya in her novel about Uma, who once actively supported revolutionary activities against the British colonial administration by hiding confiscated books and pistols given by Kripan to keep secretly in her custody. Here the author's own language can be quoted –

"Hathat ki jigyasay thamke jay Banya. Ei ki cheyechilo Umadi. Tetul gachher chhayay, Jafri kata rode ghatlar sirite bose Anandamath porto Sejdar sange,- sei Umadir – brishtite bhije kosha nauko beye chola, chhora khelay puraskar paoa Umadir sudhu shashurir hate sonar chiruni diye chul bedhe shashurer pater kache dudher bati egiye diye ekti ekti kore

jivaner sobdin phuriye jabe. ... Kebali mone hoy, Umadir shashur barir meye boura – ki jeno ekta mosto paona theke banchito. Kintu se banchanar khabor ora nijerao jane na.”

Reba Raychowdhury's 'Jivaner tane Shilper tane' and Manikuntala Sen's 'Sediner Kotha' as well as Kanak Mukhopadhyay's 'Narimukti Andolan o amra' can be thoroughly studied and consulted for full-fledged comprehension and in-depth knowledge about Sabitri Roy's characters like Bhadra, Devaki, Lata, Banya, Banajyotsna and Irani.

In 'Pakadhaner Gaan', we can find perfect scenario of women's participation in the historic Tebhaga Movement and characters like poor Hajong woman Saraswati draws our attention. Bhawani Sen's comment can be quoted here – "Sabcheye abadamito, padadalito, pashchadpad o nirakshar krishak ramani dhan rakshay, tader ghar-bari- samman rakshay ar raktapataka rakshay ek gaurabojjol bhumika grahan kore". Women like Comrade Dipashwari, Saraladi, Bimala Maji, Joymoni, Phuleshwari, Budhmoni, Jamuna, Bhandani and Rohini Barmani, Hajong woman rebel Rashimoni, Ahalya, Uttami, Batasi and Sarojini were exemplary characters of the history of the Tebhaga uprising. Krishnavinod Roy and Rani Dasgupta acknowledged and praised fighting spirit, courage, intelligence and strategy of collaborative struggle of revolutionary peasant women. Historian Kunal Chattopadhyay has rightly suggested that the Tebhaga Movement indeed started a new era not only in relationship between the landlords and the peasantry but also in man-woman relationship. Chiraranjan Pal- edited book entitled 'Tebhagar Nari' included some significant essays/articles from which Rani Dasgupta's 'Tebhagar laraiye krishak meyeder bhumika' and Suprakash Roy's 'Shahid Rashmonir Kahini' can be utmost significant for in- depth analysis of portion related to the Hajong Movement and overall history of the struggle of Tebhaga in 'Pakadhaner Gaan' novel. Especially the reflection of the true incident of the War of Baheratali in Hajong area where Rashimoni and Surendra became martyrs in frontal battle against Eastern Frontier Rifle Bahini to save molested peasant woman Saraswati from barbaric army personnel's clutches is quite noteworthy.

II. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

According to my observation, the novel entitled 'Pakadhaner Gaan' is better than the other reputed creation namely 'Meghna-Padma'. The historical value of this epic-novel 'Pakadhaner Gaan' is definitely much more significant than the other one and it must be clarified that the novel was produced in such a time when there was no written account on the Tebhaga Movement. It was the first novel which portrayed the bloody and turbulent episode of the Hajong Movement of 1945-46. Saroj Acharyya and Aruna Halder praised this Saga based on rural background and according to Rabin Pal, author of the article entitled 'Swarnaphasali jivan nader mahakabyikata',

'Pakadhaner Gaan' chashi sangramer aparajeyo gaan o tar tatparjya prakash kore ebang tar madhya diye berie ase manushyatter ahuti ja phute othe bishal canvase.”

Saroj Acharyya opined that the excellence, vast canvas of storyline, dealing with several political issues effectively and varieties of themes and characters in this particular novel was greater than creations of eminent novelists such as Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyay, Tarashankar Bandopadhyay and Manik Bandopadhyay.

Its heroine Bhadra, part and parcel of an affluent zamindar family, left her coveted job as a school-teacher and emerged as a leader of the Hajong peasantry during the famous Tebhaga Movement of 1940s after her tragic love episode with peasant revolutionary leader Partha, who had to die a premature death due to excessive firing of military personnel against the rebel subaltern people. She told in her lecture before the rural audience of the rebellious area that- "Mayera, badhura, bonera, tomader santander shantir ghum kere niyechhe jara, tader prithibi theke nishchinha korar shapath niye tomader santander swamider bhaiyeder pashe ese darao. Tomader dolna dolano hate barsha tule nao.”

Saroj Acharyya had declared without any hesitation that- ".... Satyer sarthak mulyayane o shilpa pratisthar charam parakashthar bichare ei janagoner upanyastir pratidwandi ba samakaksha apar kono upanyas Bangla sahitye nei.”

'Meghna- Padma' had also epic dimension and historical significance also because famine of 1943, hegemony of black- market, formation of peasant militia, activities of the Anti- Fascist Writers' and Artists' Association and I.P.T.A had been reflected in it but its heroine Banya, though exceptional woman for her artistic endeavour, did not transform herself into a revolutionary leader like Bhadra. Ideology of class struggle and class hatred were not portrayed in famine- oriented paintings or sculptures of Banya. In this specific sphere, 'Pakadhaner Gaan' is advanced creation than 'Meghna- Padma'.

But Maitrayee Mitra had noted an important point that Banya's character had striking similarity with the author's personality. In Maitrayee Mitra's own language it can be described- "Banya charitratir madhye srishtikarinir charitrer ekti abhas paoa jay. Banyar motoi sansarer nana kajer madhye samay kore niye take likhte hoyechhe. Lekhar jonyo upajukto parisar, paribesh ba samay konotai tini panni. Kintu tari madhye chole tar niralas prachesta”.

So, 'Meghna- Padma' is significant also from gender perspective and can be compared with stories of life –struggle of heroines created by Ashapura Devi and Suchitra Bhattacharyya.

III. CONCLUSION

Sabitri Roy's remarkable novel entitled 'Pakadhaner Gaan' was like an epic of three volumes which started its story from the last phase of the revolutionary movement of colonial Bengal and completed its journey in the bloody battlefield of the Tebhaga Movement in the hilly terrain of the Garo Mountains. Evolution of a commonplace rustic boy from revolutionary leader to the backbone of the Tebhaga uprising, emergence of self- respect and self- consciousness within a terribly insulted rural girl who found opportunity of employment later; transformation of a well educated urban woman of affluent family from a conventional school- teacher

to a part and parcel of the Tebhaga uprising due to the exceptional power of her love and dedication towards a peasant leader had been the central theme of the novel. Violent class struggle, and battle against sexual exploitation were depicted in its story with utmost perfection. In 'Meghna-Padma', one can observe scenario of famine of 1943, dominance of black-marketeers, lustful military personnel in streets of Kolkata, establishment of *dharmagola*, propagandistic role of krishak sabhas, communal riots, activities of the Anti- Fascist Writers' and Artists' Association as well as I.P.T.A etc. were described with keeping in mind the smallest details.

Author Sabitri can be compared with Ashapura Devi, Bani Basu and Suchitra Bhattacharyya and her novels can be extremely important in history of politics of gender. Extensive research is necessary for unfolding her significance in subaltern history and Feminist Studies.

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