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CHANGE OF PEOPLE IN AN EVOLVING MANIPURI SOCIETY AS DEPICTED IN
ARIBAM CHITRESHWAR SHARMA'S "LUPTHAKHRABA HINAO"

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ABSTRACT

Aribam Chitreshwar Sharma is one of those writers of Manipur who witnessed the great 2nd World War. He got Manipur State Kala Akademi Award for his work "*Lupthakhraba Hinao*" in 1989. In 1991, he got the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award for his book "*Tharoshangbi*" given by Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi. In the book, "*Lupthakhraba Hinao*" the author beautifully portrays the type of Manipuri society where people are always in the festive mood and merry making. On one hand the books depicts the influx of foreign people and dominating the indigenous people, the status of women is portrayed beautifully and on the other hand the ugly mindset of the people on the widow is clearly shown. Further, the exploitation of the poor by the rich is also clearly portrayed. The words used by the author are clear, simple, concise and truly remarkable. Lastly, the mindset of various people in the society is also clearly seen in the book.

Keywords: Dance, Motherland, Disperse, Unsecured Body, Prostitute

I. INTRODUCTION

Aribam Chitreshwar Sharma is a great writer who portrays how the society has changed from good to worse in terms of human relationship with nature. Most of his novels and short-stories talk about how humans tend to forget nature which had given him the comforts of life—food, water, air and shelter. He further suggests that if human wants to live a better and good life, the only way of achieving it is to have a good and caring relationship with nature. Aribam Chitreshwar Sharma is one of those writers of Manipur who witnessed the great 2nd World War. He got Manipur State Kala Akademi Award for his work "*Lupthakhraba Hinao*" in 1989. In 1991, he got the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award for his book "*Tharoshangbi*" given by Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi. In the book, "*Lupthakhraba Hinao*" the author beautifully portrays the type of Manipuri society where people are always in the festive mood and merry making. On one hand the books depicts the influx of foreign people and dominating the indigenous people, the status of women are portrayed beautifully and on the other hand the ugly mindset of the people on the widows is clearly shown. Further, the exploitation of the poor by the rich is also clearly portrayed. The words used by the author are clear, simple, concise and truly remarkable. Further, his personal experience adds more beauty to his works. The use of simple and easy words makes his works simple and easy to understand. Lastly, the mindset of various people in the society is also clearly seen in the book.

II. ABOUT THE BOOK

The book *Lupthakhraba Hinao* or "*The Sunken Small Boat*" has won prestigious State Sahitya Akademi Award in 1989. The book has twelve short stories in which relationship between nature and human is beautifully described, the change of mindset of people is also shown, the status of women is also discussed and the condition of the educated unemployed youths is beautifully shown. Further the book also contains the evolution of Manipuri society in terms of religion, culture and mindset of the people.

III. CHANGE OF MINDSET IN AN EVOLVING MANIPURI SOCIETY

The story *Haraobungda* (Celebration Place) talks about the deteriorated Manipuri society where people are in the festive mood and too much believe in god. The greed of human over their fellow mates is beautifully displayed and that of nature too.

Umang Lai haraoba is an ancient tradition of Manipur where people pray to ancestral fore-father god. This was usually performed nearby forest or place where lot's of greenery. Here the author wants to show that people in the name of tradition take chances to glorify themselves as a dance teacher with some certificates and earn a lot. In the name of the festival, people use to clear forest and build temple and platform where they can perform rituals and dance. With the increase in the festivals in different parts of the society various greenery portions are carved out thereby hampering the natural environment. On the other certain people in the society take chances in the name of festivals. So, the author wants the readers to realise the need of natural conservation and be less attractive to festive mood.

"With the certificate, he was famous in each locality as a **dance** teacher for the traditional festival of "Ancestral fore-father god". (2) This line shows how a person can become a dance teacher and earn profit easily. The festival of "Ancestral fore-father god" has evolved to a greater extent such that the mind of the people are indulged in the merry making including dance and music rather than understanding the importance and meaning of observing such festivals.

Further in the story, *Hangoi gi Leibakta* (In the land of Frogs) is beautifully crafted by the author to show how unity bring the strength and fall as divided among the people. The story is about how the foreign person slowly and steadily captures the indigenous land of the native people. The leader warns the leaders of the native people that they can reclaim their rights and can revolt against them only when they are united and have the sense of feeling oneness.

"The right of freedom is given to all the citizens by the constitution. We will rule our own **motherland**. No outsiders should lay hands on the lakes, rivers, ponds and sewage of the land. Our land has been made by our ancestors". (9) Here, the dissatisfaction of the native leaders over the rule of their land by the foreigners could also be seen. The leaders were talking about their claim on land given to them by the constitution. The native leaders doesn't want their beautiful natural landscapes given to any other person for they know are going to be destroyed and create a risk among the natural environment as well as to the natives. They further claim that the lands are made by their ancestors so the foreigners need not take claim over their rights. The author further views the destruction of natural environment as the foreigners would destroy it in the name of the development and try to extract as much as profit they can from without caring them as their motives are mainly based on profit maximization. They will neither care for indigenous habitant nor for the natural environment. So, the author wants the people in the society to realise this.

Another story in the book entitled "*Fate*" is about a young widow who sells blanket in *Khwaيرانban* market. Here the author portrays how the society views a widow from different angles. In the story, there is a conversation between the widow's brother and his wife. Where the former tells to the later that the colony is telling ill about their sister and the former gives a reply that there was nothing wrong in their sister and tells him that seeing and hearing is different things. The author tries to show how a widow is seen by various people in the society of Manipur. If the widow starts earning and takes good care of their family then, the people in the locality would feel jealous and talks of rubbish and unrelated makeup theories about the widow which in turn will bring confusion among the family members. Seeing such confusion, some of the people in the society specially people in the locality feel the pleasure while others spread wrong ideas on why such a family gets disturbed in their own story.

“In an angry mood and shrilling voice mother said, “Who...Who is trying to drag sister in the hell -- world of **prostitute?**” turning towards father she shouted – “A lady knows the character of her kind.” (14)

Women’s Day is another interesting story in the book about women in Manipur society. In the story, there was a function of selecting office bearers of the women society. In the early morning when the function started, the function place was crowded with women. They talks about the freedom of women given in the constitution and certain rights they should enjoy equally with their male counterparts. But as the function ends, by evening all the brave words are gone in an instant and everyone was getting busy for their return to home. The story reveals that though the women in the society know about the rights but still they could not exercise because of cultural restrictions.

“In this dark hour, no one praised the courageous lady. The most astonishing thing was that, some women folk started to leave the place without listening the dialogue. Some of them started to prepare for closing the ceremony. The spirit of women folks began to **disperse** when it was getting late.” (33)

To cause havoc is about the story of how rich people play with the life of poor people and shows how men use nature as a means of profit. The story opens with the beautiful description of a garden filled with various kinds of flowers, fruits and fish ponds. The garden was guarded by a Nepali boy, a gate keeper and his wife. The owner of the garden arrives with his friends to show them his garden. He tells the gate keeper to prepare something for the party since the boy was on leave. He quickly calls out for his wife and caught some fishes and starts cooking. The owner and his guys already started the party and shortage of red liquor is found. The story also talks about how the owner of the garden along with his friends rapes the wife of the gatekeeper who was sent to fetch some liquor for them. This shows how the value of a person is degraded when they could no longer see another person in good way. The increase use of intoxicated drinks can sometimes lead to unwanted incidents and so there should be a limit to such things.

“Immediately, Chaoba went to the next room leaving his dogs behind with full of surprise. At that instant he could see the **unsecure body** of his wife lying above the couch.” (62-63)

Conclusion:

Thus, the author wants to show that our evolving Manipur society needs to change socially, culturally and literally. If we want to develop our society, then we should try to change our mindset first on how we look at fellow mates or citizens and only then, we could change the society. We should not believe in false practice of religious elements but rather try to visualize the internal meaning of it. Change could be brought in the society only when we start appreciating the works of other rather than talking ill about them. Lastly, we should always remember the saying “United we stand, divided we fall.”

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Nongmaithem Suraj Kumar was born as the eldest son to Nongmaithem Hemantakumar Singh and Nongmaithem (Ongbi) Rajkumari Somola Devi on 1st April, 1990 at Sagolband Nepra Menjor Leikai. He did his schooling from Tiny Tot’s Unique School (T.T.U.S), Dewlahland Imphal and his higher secondary schooling from Brighter Academy, New Checkon, Imphal. He completed his Graduation in English Literature, acquired a Diploma in Communicative English from Bishop Appasamy College of Arts and Science (B.A.C.A.S), Coimbatore and from the same college he acquired a Masters Degree in English Language and Literature. He holds a B.Ed degree from I.G.N.O.U, Imphal and acquired a Diploma in Multilingual Office Automation (D.M.O.A) of C-DAC, GIST from North East Institute Of Information Technology, Imphal. He is currently pursuing his Ph.D in English Literature at Nagaland University, Kohima Campus, Meriema.