

# Women's Lives In The Selected Novels By Nirupama Borgohain

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## Abstract

Nirupama Borgohain is one of the most prominent feminist characters in Assam. This paper explores how Nirupama Borgohain presents women's issues in her novels. In addition, this paper discusses five female-dominated novels by Nirupama Borgohain. Since the beginning, she has focused on various issues of women and published them through her writings. Till today, she continues to protest against some of the immoral behavior of patriarchal society. She has contributed to the world of Assamese literature through creative writing for a long time. She has written many powerful novels based on realism in which she discusses in conscious detail the inequality between men and women in society and its problems. She herself reveals this discrimination as one of the best examples she has encountered. She has received various awards and accolades including the Sahitya Akademi in recognition of her outstanding contributions. She won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1994 for her novel *The Explorer*.

Her outstanding novels on women include "Anya Jivan", *Sei Nadi Nirabhadi*, *Abhiyatri*, *Iparor Ghar Hiparor Ghar*, *Champavati*, etc. Most of these novels are written about the lives of middle-class women. In these novels, the author observed the situations faced by women and was determined to fight against them as a self-respecting person. The novels address several contemporary concerns such as domestic concerns of violence, gender discrimination, sexual discrimination or discrimination, and class representation.

**Keywords:** Discrimination, Patriarchal, inequality, tradition, feminine.

## Introduction

Sahitya Akademi award winner Nirupama Borgohain is a well-known figure in the field of Assamese literature. She is a writer who start her literary career in school and made her debut in the 7<sup>th</sup> decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. She is a short story writer, novelist, essayist, and autobiography writer, translator, travel stories, children's literature, etc. at the same time. She writes more than thirty novels. She achieved the prestigious Sahitya Akademi award for her outstanding biographical novel "Abhiyatri" (*The Explorer*, 1996) in 1994. She has been able to carve her name in the field of Assamese literature with her unique employment of situation and subject matter. Her favorite depictions are women pushed to the periphery by gender. She was fascinated by literature from an early age. It has been focusing on the problems of society in general and women in particular. She is still actively involved in solving women's problems. Being a born rebel and visionary at all times, she is in favor of a crusade against all social

inequalities. Her works are sincere efforts to eliminate all that is man-made. Cases of harassment and oppression while discriminating between people, she does not bow to anyhow. This proves to her how firmly she discusses certain issues. She incorporates hope for justice and equality in her writing, reflecting a deeper connection to society.

She describes women as the main characters in her novels. Her novels show that she completely transforms the heroine from the initial stages to the end. The heroine of “Sei Nadi Nirabhadi” Lakshmi wants to resume her education and become a teacher. However, due to the floods where her young son has been swept away, her wishes go unfulfilled. Thus Pateshwari and other female characters in “Iparar Ghar Hiparor Ghar” could not break social chains and establish their identity. But in “Abhijatri” (The Explorer) her magnum opus, the issue of women’s plight finds a new dimension. This biographical novel is about an unusually brave heroine of Chandraprabha trajectory who not only fights for her dignity but also awakens the entire Assamese women about their deprived dignity. Her works widely discuss the identity of women, but “Anya Jivan” (Other Life) satisfactorily reflects feminist themes. Professor G.P Sharma rightly comments that “Nirupama Borgohain is the first novelist in Assamese literature to write consciously feminist novels.” Nirupama Borgohain's works seek their own voice and identity against the identity imposed by patriarchy.

#### **Objectives of the Study: -**

- ❖ To explore the place of women in a patriarchal society.
- ❖ Discussion of how women are considered as commodities in capitalist societies.

#### **Methodology: -**

This perusal is based on descriptive and analytical methods. It’s prepared with the help of Critical essays, articles, and research writings on the novels of Nirupama Borgohain and used as primary secondary data for supporting the analysis.

#### **Discussion:**

One of the famous women-centric novels of Nirupama Borgohain is “**Sei Nadi Nirabhadi**” which is published in 1963. this is the first novel of Nirupama Borgohain. The main driving force behind the novel "Sei Nadi Nirabhadi is the Pagladia River. The novel beautifully portrays the problems caused by Pagladia in the tributaries of the Pagladia River and the relationship of the people of that area with Pagladia. There are also several social problems. These include the presentation of some issues related to women's or patriarchal societies. The main female character of the novel is Lakshmi. Little Lakshmi is the daughter of the Mauzadar. Lakshmi is independent, fearless, and playful. In a male-dominated society, to be a suitable woman, you are told to be fearful, calm, humble, shy, submissive, and quiet. But Lakshmi does not possess such qualities. Lakshmi's father tells Pramod Deka about Lakshmi: “dear Pramod, this is my daughter Lakshmi. She has studied till school. I couldn't get the pass anymore. She left school after an argument with the Pandit.” The fact that she left school as a child after quarreling with Pandit proves that Lakshmi is not femininely calm and docile. Instead, she is masculinity fierce. Such behavior of Lakshmi is an obstacle to the creation of femininity.

“**Abhiyatri**” is recognized as the magnum opus of Nirupama Borgohain. This novel covers a total of 135 chapters in both volumes. There are many characters in this novel. They are Chandraprabha Shaikiani, Rajaniprabha, Gangapuria, Yogmaya, Bhatoupuria, Rukmini, Shanti Parvati, Apeswari, Miss Dau, Induprabha, Hiranyamayi, etc. The novel is characterized by a variety of women, but Chandraprabha is portrayed as the heroine. The novel is based on the rich and varied life of Chandraprabha, who was born in 1901 AD. The novel covers the entire life of Chandraprabha from her adolescence to her death. “The character of Chandraprabha, who opened a school and became a teacher at the age of thirteen, has many qualities beyond the grasp of women then and now. The author herself says, “The presence of the heroine Chandraprabha was so widely felt at the time of writing the novel that she did not feel the need to create any more fictional characters.

The novel portrays the rigidity, firmness, and dynamism of Chandraprabha’s personality. Chandraprabha jumped like a heroine in the country's liberation struggle. With the same courage and determination, she spent her life fighting for women's education and women's social rights. At the time of Chandra Prabha's birth, there were no facilities for women's education. It is a great pleasure to pass MV from a rural village like Chandraprabha and her sister Rajni Prabha Daishingari. However, their parents also supported them in their education. Interested in education, Chandraprabha started a primary school at “Akya” near the village. After a few days, the school inspector Nilkant Barua visited the school. He visited the school and met her and gave Chandraprabha a scholarship to study at the Mission School in Nagaon.

Chandraprabha's entire life is conflicting. She was seen as a rebel and feminist until she attended the Mission School in Nagaon. The novel contrasts Chandraprabha's rebellious attitude on the one hand and the compassion of the female heart on the other. Chandraprabha has been speaking out against injustice and injustice against women since childhood. She played a pioneering role in proving that a woman is no less than a man. After wandering through the restrictions and authority of the patriarchal society in women’s education, marriage, and movement, willingly or unwillingly forbidden, Chandraprabha broke the marriage bond forced upon her by her family as a teenager and became a school teacher. Chandraprabha, who rides her bicycle to school or other work, is seen by the villagers as saying various things but she does not pay attention to them. Chandraprabha thought of women's liberation by changing the attitudes of society with the cooperation of both men and women.

In the novel “**Iparar Ghar Hiparar Ghar**” (1979) by Nirupama Borgohain, we can also observe the acceptance and rejection of socially specific behaviours among men and women in a patriarchal society. Through Anjali, Rekhadi, and Pateshwari, the novelist sheds light on the suffering life and mental reforms of women in a patriarchal society. In the novel, Anjali is an educated progressive girl. Anjali feels sorry for women who have to live a miserable life due to the traditional attitudes of a patriarchal society. They also felt a strong rebellion against the patriarchal society. In patriarchal societies, women are considered as a 'body' rather than a mind or self-knowledge. A woman's chastity becomes the scales of judgment. But Anjali judges people's good and bad by their selfishness, heartlessness, hypocrisy, etc. rather than physical purity. Therefore, Anjali is not without characters like

Rekha or Pateshwari. Anjali wants a protesting being like Rekha, who is a victim of the consumerist mentality of a male-dominated society.

**Anya Jivan** (1987) is another successful novel by Nirupama Borgohain. "Anya Jivan The novelist beautifully presents the reasons behind the inequality between men and women in the patriarchal society and the main cause of the patriarchal society. Similarly, it has been shown that the socially specific behavior of men and women also plays a major role in gender inequality. "Anya Jivan" is the first feminist novel to be detected as a conscious expression of feminist consciousness," says Govind Prasad Sharma. The novel is a beautiful portrayal of how the female characters Anima, Icon, Putli, Makan, Anima's mother-in-law, Bihpuriani etc. accept and reject the masculine society-specific behaviours. The main female character of the novel, Anima, is an educated woman. Anima is fearless, protesting, outspoken and determined to judge right from wrong. In a patriarchal society, women are always ordered to stay indoors. The woman is confined within the walls of the house and kept busy with household chores and raising children and caring for her husband. The woman doesn't get the deserve importance despite her hard work day in and day out. Anima is aware of this issue. The housewife does all the housework, provides food for everyone, and does not care what the housewife eats. Anima has seen this in her mother-in-law and urges her husband to be aware of his mother and blames her for his lack. However, Anima understands that women's own self-sacrificing spirit also plays a role in this regard. In a patriarchal society, gentleness, affection, generosity, sacrifice, etc. are considered essential for femininity. In fact, through it, patriarchal society paves the way for opportunities for men. Women also master everything mentally through the socialization process.

Borgohain's novel "**Champavati**" (1993) also beautifully presents the femininity and masculinity given by the patriarchal society. Champavati, Sadri, Revati, Champavati's grandmother, and Champavati's mother-in-law are the female characters in the novel. The acceptance and rejection of femininity among these characters are noteworthy. Champavati is the main female character of the novel. Champa is a flower, Soft and fragrant. The Champa of the novel, however, is not as soft as the Champa flower. Champa is protesting, brave, and conscious of her personality. Champavati is the only child of Jivanath Kakati. A figure of fatherly affection. Champavati, who accepts her father's ideals and thoughts, is not a victim of traditional thinking like other women in society. Champa does not have the feminine behavior prescribed for a woman in a patriarchal society. Champavati is not afraid when Golak Shaikia's naughty son Surya teases her from the middle of the jungle on the basis of ancient stories. Instead, he has responded to the sun by using his intelligence.

### **Conclusion:**

Based on the above discussion, everyone must agree that a meaningful change in the status of women can only be achieved through liberation in a profound psychological sense. For a successful realization of her true identity, a woman must be conscious, determined, self-reliant, and believe in the inner strength of femininity and these can only be achieved through education. According to various literary critics, Nirupama Borgohain's novels will contribute significantly to a gender-free society of the future. The novels suggest the coming together of

women not as rivals to men, but as friends and companions and partners in life. Overall, these novels have carved out a distinct place among readers due to their feminine sensitivity to female experiences. These novels not only depict the problems of women but also advocate a new society based on mutual respect and understanding. The novel suggests that women in our society can be instruments in achieving the desired equality between Marxist women and men.

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