
BHULE THAKA GOLPO: FORGOTTEN TALES ABOUT THE PREFERABLY FORGOTTEN PEOPLE A BOOK REVIEW

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Bhule Thaka Golpo is a collection of short fictions of Syed Manzoorul Islam, a Bangladeshi literary genius, who achieved the Ekushey Padak and Bangla Academy Prize along with others for his great contribution to the literary world of Bangladesh. There is no story in this book resembling the title but it bears ample meanings of this collection. *Bhule Thaka Golpo*, forgotten stories in English, is all about the stories that have likely been forgotten by the storyteller. Here I am addressing the storyteller instead of fiction writer as Mr. Islam has not written but told the stories. He writes in the format of speaking and gossiping. He was about to forget these stories but has saved them in this collection by remembering. Another meaning can be bore with the title, that is there are lots of stories shattered around us and we hardly remember them or even if they come to our eyes they are preferably neglected or not heard as these are the stories of the unvoiced, as these are the tales of the subaltern, as there are the voices against the patriarchal oppression prevailing in our societies, countries and above all our lives.

Bhule Thaka Golpo contains fifteen stories. *Oporahner Golpo*, story of Afternoon in English, is the first story

which deals with the journey of the narrator of the story, his meeting with a woman beautiful enough and finally facing Abdul Kader who knows the past clearly. The narrator raises a question about Abdul Kader but what we can understand is that this signifies the forgotten identity.

Goni Miar Pathor, stone of Goni Mia in English, is about the belief of common people to stone as the life changing and controlling force. But Mr. Goni knows ins and outs of this stone but nobody can deny him, even cannot accept him. In Bangladesh stones are treated to be holy and so “holy things are beyond examination”. It is said that people even got promoted in service sector by touching this stone. This stone was inscribed with Arabic alphabet that people thought to be Islamic, religious and antique something and urge for their advancement in life. This stone is really powerful as this self-made stone helps Goni earn around two lacs in each month. This story signifies the common sympathy and blind faith for sacred things. People think that each and every Arabic writing is holy and they start worshipping in order to be blessed.

Ferighater Rannabanna, *Cooking of Ferighat*, deals with the implied power-

play of our society. Amzad, a retired Police officer, wants to give Sultana a great lesson but rather he was cooked and his people were treated with his flesh. This is total power play. If one is in power, one can do anything. This story also speaks for the emancipation of women as Sultana would not be suppressed and controlled by Amzad but she controlled, manipulated and even killed him for her sake, for her safety.

Paritasher Payer Nicher Mati, Ground under the feet of Paritash, tells the story of an unvoiced who is constantly losing ground under his legs. He cannot stand strongly and comfortably as most of the subaltern with no voice and wealth can do.

Apekkha, Waiting in English, is about waiting of Bakul Farazi for a white dressed man with a box who will rescue him. He keeps waiting for this dream-like-person though his wife learns him. Finally his wife wearing white dress with a box knocks at the door. He took her as the rescuer though not as a friend but in the form of his wife. Here the box signifies prosperity and progress.

Astra, weapon, is another interesting story of *Bhule Thaka Golpo*. The protagonist of this story is Panir, a very young boy, who had a book containing greatest speeches of greatest people and he had a weapon. At the end of the story he threw the book into the drain and started walking with the weapon. He was going to his destination with the weapon as the book failed to provide him with success.

Lash, A dead body in English, is about the dead body of Raju. He has been shot and his parents have come to the Police Station to get his dead body. Here his mother cried out by thumping her breast. To the journalist, her cry was not a matter of concern but her unclothed and naked breast. By the way, finally students gathered to take the dead body and they wanted to slant slogans but his father wanted to get him. Finally Raju's mother found out that this is not the dead body of Raju but of his friend. She started to cry out again. Here dead body can be an element of politics and rights but to parents all these are useless and they would like to bury it with comfort and last prayer.

Ferguson Dinnerwalar Golpo is about a cooperator of Razakar, supporter of Pakistan during the liberation war of Bangladesh. But finally what is seen is that Ferguson dreamt a dream that his father ordered him to dive in water. While diving in the river, he found freedom fighters were there. Thus the life of a Razakar lost in vain. This also gives voice to the subaltern and natural punishment to the Razakar.

Kanch Vanga Rater Golpo deals with a family where conjugal love is the prime concern. Paroloukik is another prominent story dealing with the justice of the subaltern and unvoiced. Maya, a village girl, was beaten up heavily and killed finally but it was announced that she died of getting beaten by town people as she was involved in extramarital affair.

Her father is good for nothing in this regard and started to sit beside Maya's

grave and keeps crying and praying all day long. When Shahed, younger brother of the house owner where Maya worked as a maid, came to visit the grave of Maya with bonalim chocolate but he noticed with surprise that it was vanished. He wandered and said to his elder brother. He along with his brother came and the same thing happened. Then the hand of Shahed got vanished, then another hand, leg and finally the entire body of Shahed. No earthly law could do justice for Maya as no one could raise their voice against this super power and elite. But the narrator of this story uses magic realism and did justice to the exploited. It is one sort of protest against oppression.

Again let me connect this theme with the title of the book. *Buas* or working maid in the cities are thus facing oppression for ages but there are very few, almost no people are raising voice for their justice. People preferably forget or pretend to forget these happenings around us.

Syed Manzoorul Islam is one of the practitioners of magic realism in Bangla literature. He wrote in several articles and even said in interviews that magic realism is not just an escape, it is rather a means of doing justice. All the time what he wants is to end a story optimistically.

Another significant issue about Syed Manzoorul Islam and his book *Bhule thaka Golpo* is that he is a storyteller. This

tradition of oral literature is not common in our literature; rather it is the primary way of literature in any literature of the world. He said recently in an article published in *Golpopatra*, "I am not demeaning the fiction writer as they follow the writing trend but as telling stories is the basic and primary source of our literature. I try to do so." Thus he has told stories. When readers read, they mainly listen to the stories.

Another criterion is that Syed Manzoorul Islam has demolished the distinction among the storyteller, characters and readers. All are present even at the same time in his stories. So everyone feels the dire urge to be a part of his stories.

To sum up, all the stories compiled in *Bhule Thaka Golpo* have different stories with different sort of crisis but almost all of them end with optimistic view. In the forgotten stories, Syed Manzoorul Islam has done justice for the subaltern, unvoiced, marginalized and preferably forgotten and neglected people in this collection of stories. So, in short it can be said that *Bhule Thaka Golpo* is the forgotten tales about the preferably forgotten people.