

DIRECTOR'S DESK

The ISCS's Chapter on Purvodaya that completes its one year this November, is acting as a perfect medium to showcase culture, rich heritage of the eastern India and also to unveil multiple facets pertaining to trade, economy, growth and several others through discussions, webinars and this (English/Odia) Bi-Monthly. Over a span of one year, the institute's initiatives have gained enormous support from eminent academic forums and have turned into a paradigm of engagement and involvement of multi-sectoral stakeholders from the region itself and playing an important role in the growth perspectives.

The given edition is yet another very interesting one as it captures how BBIN as an international policy is driving India to transcend its relations with other countries especially the neighbouring ones and together trying to develop a potential gateway to South East Asia. The bulletin details how the Data Science Foundation inbred in Eastern India has now become a flywheel of growth and digital transformation.

Readers fascinated about the magnificent culture and tradition that the Eastern belt of our country perceives, would be excited to know about how Buddhist Monasteries continue to exercise their legacies through architecture and network of cultural exchanges across South and South-East Asia. Also about the cultural heritage of Odisha, reflecting its rich assortment of vivid art and diverse artistic achievements within the country and beyond.

To know more and to contribute your thoughts and experiences of the country's east, write to us and keep scrolling to your web page.

— Arindam Mukherjee, Director, ISCS, India



Dreamstime

REINVIGORATING THE BBIN: CONNECTIVITY AND SUB-REGIONALISM

Sohini Nayak*

Geographically placed in a categorical and unambiguous setting, the South Asian strategic domain has always helped itself to create a distinct niche of cynosure in the wider global Asia. Consequently, there is a perpetual renewal of cooperative constructs and narratives in this domain, aimed at widening the pursuit for the entire region to move towards deeper integration and balance. The development of ideas related to the creation of multilateral platforms of amalgamation along with regionalism and sub-regionalism, provide such instance.

The Bangladesh-Bhutan-India- Nepal (BBIN) geostrategic narrative has been envisioned as a similar growth quadrangle that has endeavoured to address the complementarities of the region with the utilization of mutual assets like rivers, energy, infrastructures, solidified through a common framework of guidelines. Primarily a coordinative architecture that operates through the 'Joint working Groups' (JWG), it comprises of the official representation from each of the members to formulate, implement and review the quadrilateral agreement. The BBIN cradles tremendous potential in bringing about an incremental boost in every sphere of

development, from political, to economic and cultural, especially congenial to the eastern part of India, which has been considered incremental in strengthening India's Act East Policy, with its association with the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). Right at this juncture comes the relevance of the north-eastern part of India, which will function as one of the viable nodal points for connecting India to the other stakeholder countries and together function as a gateway to the south – east. This idea must bring in the realization that the process of coming together is inevitable for the collective growth of the four BBIN countries and also the region as a whole.

Even though the BBIN has been met with a stalemate since the non-conformity of Bhutan regarding the BBIN Motor Vehicle's Agreement (BBIN MVA) with regard to the country's environmental concerns, the revival of concerns regarding the Memorandum of Agreement (MoU) in 2022 has been keenly noted by the global theatre at large. As all the four countries congregated on 7-8 March 2022 to actualize one of the long pending connectivity aspirations of South Asia, in New Delhi, the ratification of the BBIN MVA is no longer seeming to be a distant reality. The meeting had put on the table a very crucial issue of commencing seamless Passenger and Cargo Protocols for the regulation of Passenger, Personal and Cargo Vehicular traffic between the four respective countries, as had been signed on June 15, 2015. It must be mentioned at this juncture that Bhutan's attendance for the discussion was only as an observer participant. Even now, whether the Himalayan kingdom agrees to lend a hand or opt out shall affect the process intrinsically, along with robbing the country of the mutual developmental benefits that could be sourced in returned. As it seems even now, the country is unable to give its sanction, making the process tedious.

Nonetheless, what India has been envisioning is a meticulous utilization of its north – eastern corridor, significantly, easing the movement of goods from mainland India to its Northeast economic centres, namely Agartala (Tripura), Guwahati (Assam), and Shillong (Meghalaya) along with the cross-country routes, majorly through the landlocked countries of Nepal and Bhutan. Furthermore, the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority and the Inland Waterways Authority of India, through the BBIN can strategically manoeuvre, beyond the bilateral dynamics that it shares. The economic benefits of this initiative will inadvertently support Bhutan and Nepal as well, through port connectivity, addressing their landlocked nature. Similarly, the transit rights shall also be recognized that remains in a deadlock. Poor infrastructure, difficult terrain, insurgent politics and geopolitical constraints have thus far kept India's Northeast region underdeveloped and isolated. However, these states are important given their natural resources and international border access. Again, Under the MVA agreement, the Chittagong and Mongla port might become the gateway for the Northeast Indian states, Nepal and Bhutan. The Bangladeshi policymakers have begun to realise the importance of transport integration as an effective tool for market integration to attract investments for export-led growth. However, to operationalise this subregional initiative, the establishment of necessary infrastructure and better connectivity within the region will be vital. The BBINMVA is a framework agreement that needs tools to be operational. The International Road Transport System (TIR: Transports Internationaux Routiers) can allow freights and containers to move across countries with one single document to ensure customs formalities are performed at origin and destination. This will streamline border-crossing 13 procedures and ensure a uniform and transparent payment system. In this case, Kolkata can be portrayed as a major hub of connectivity,

trade and commerce, giving the eastern region its due credit in the long run.

Additionally, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been agile for a long time to incorporate stability in this particular aspect, with the provision of technical and knowledge support. All the four countries have been suggested to take the full advantage of 'tourism potential' with rich natural and cultural attractions, including many of the world's major Buddhist sites. It is very recently that an amount of USD 57.5 million have been approved by the ADB Board of Directors in the form of grants and loans for the South Asia Tourism Infrastructure Development Project, in order to establish new and improved infrastructure along with the traditional services for key tourism sites in the four countries. If this sector brings about enhancement with the help of this investment, it would inevitably bring about an increment in the capacity of sector agencies for the sustainable management of these historical sites. At the same time, there would also be a sound involvement of the local people here, with the local communities, which again would be signifying a bottom-up approach of integration.

Since the number of members are relatively lesser in number, the process of addressing the diversities seems to be faster with a comparatively lower cost of investment. Such cooperation reflects a non-exclusionary nature as they do not compete with the larger regional arrangements, of which they might be a member as well. There is also a transfer of skill and technology from the more developed countries to the lesser developed countries through the spill-over effect, which facilitates the up-gradation of skill sets and local labour force among all the partners. Such sub-regional concepts also help in developing the backward and forward linkages in the national economy thereby acting as a catalyst for triggering

development in other parts of the economy as well.

It seems relevant to mention here the same kind of aspiration by China as well, which has tried to focus on the tourism sector in South Asia with the help of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). There are thousands of Chinese tourists who come into these countries every year, either for a pilgrimage or for simple tourist attractions that have become quite popular. The probable rail connection, would simply add on to this trend. For example, the bilateral trans-border rail connectivity between India and Bangladesh through Haldibari, 75 kms away from Chilahati across the border in Nilphamari district, has been refurbished after 55 years. In such a scenario, the idea lies in the integration if all the four countries in developing a separate sector of tourism of their own with flow of Chinese tourists and also the other tourists from the rest of the world in accessing more economic benefit. This is especially true for the landlocked countries of Nepal and Bhutan, whose major part of the national economy is generated from tourism.

South Asia has witnessed the failure and stagnation of regional and subregional organizations in the recent past as well because of the lack of cooperation in upholding a common vision. However, time seems to be ripe to engage in micro level projects like the BBIN, right at the Track 1 level, manifesting the visions that have been in the pipeline for operationalization for years now.



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Dreamstime

CREATING VALUE OUT OF VOLUME OF DATA AND BUILDING INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY – CRITICAL NEED FOR IT/ITES SEGMENT IN INDIA

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Why is Intellectual Property so important?

With the world's largest IT workforce, India still do not command the reputation of having built either products, software engineering frameworks, standards, methodologies, or even open-source GNU/GPU/MIT License packages which are popular world-wide.

While it is of primary importance to build, sustain and grow businesses in any domain, and hence create job, wealth and skill, it is also of critical importance to create intellectual properties (IP) in different form and manner in that domain to inspire talent, creativity and innovation. The best part of developing IP is that it benefits individuals, business, fraternity and the demography from long term prospects-economics of sustained growth of business; developing and establishing thought leadership and fostering research without losing the rights on the hard-work driven outcomes but allowing reusability with proper and agreed upon equitable credit.

Otherwise, the economic development will be fragile for a region in long term as it is then based only on training of low to moderate skills of coding/programming/algorithms and more based on cost arbitrage of outsourcing.

Coming back on data, it is a well-accepted fact today that data is the cornerstone of an organization - whether a business, a government or a social venture - for understanding its customers, vendors, supply chain and delivering better products and services. Though the field of data science is budding across the world, and there will be similar opportunities (like what we have witnessed in IT/ITES world in past) in India to take a lead in creating a large workforce in either creating and support services, development for either product or services, there remains a huge opportunity to create intellectual properties in this field for India and take a dominant position in the world.

Through my entrepreneurial journey I have been trying to make a change and contribute to intellectual property in data science.

How my journey in data started?

During my corporate stint at Fidelity and Accenture, I used data to drive operational excellence and business growth. So when I founded Business Brio (www.businessbrio.com) in 2013, I thought of extending my skill and understanding of working with data to corporate clients. My co-founders also had a background in data and we started helping companies to derive business value out of volume of data with our data science, data engineering and AI services. We have worked with many corporate clients across the globe in USA, UK, Europe, India, Middle East and helped them harness data for driving top line

and bottom line. We also worked with state and central governments in various projects in India.

We have a young and passionate team that works with our clients in implementing data strategy and applying ML/AI algorithms to fuel their growth engines. Business Brio is the recipient of NASSCOM Analytics Innovation award in year 2015, has been short-listed by Red Herring as the finalist in top 100 Asia Companies in 2017, is featured among the top 10 data science solution providers in CIO Insider magazine in 2018 and recognized as Times brand icon award in 2021. We also believe in creating a strong eco-system of partners and we are tied up with our partners for upstream and downstream integration in digitization and IT workflows. This helps in creating a winning strategy for customers.

Formation of Data Science Foundation International

During the early years, we witnessed the hype and wrong expectation from data science and AI by the CIOs and CXOs in the companies as a panacea of all problems! So I established Data Science Foundation International (DSFI) as a not-for-profit organization to raise awareness about how to use data, share best practices, develop standards, identify the failures of data science projects and how to avoid it. Data science is different from the deterministic approach of IT projects and needs a research-oriented mindset while applying algorithms to address business problems/challenges. DSFI (www.datasciencefoundation.org) has an executive council with leaders from corporates in India, Switzerland, Ireland, UK as well as eminent experts from research institutes to drive and propagate it.

DSFI started organizing International Data Science Summit (DSS) (<https://www.datasciencefoundation.org/summit>) since 2014

to bring thought-leaders from the industry, research and academia on a common platform across the world.

DSFI, supported by NASSCOM, STPI and the West Bengal Government IT Department, organized the 7th International Data Science Summit in Kolkata in 2019, India which was attended by more than 300 senior-level delegates from across the world. The 8th summit was held in virtual mode in 2021 with more than 3500 participants globally. 9th International Data Science Summit crossed boundaries of India and was successfully held in Dublin, Ireland in May, 2022 in collaboration with H2020 European Union supported project StandICT.eu. Eminent speakers from UK, Europe, India and North America like Technology Ireland, Shutterstock, E&Y, Siemens, Globe North, System, European Commission Director of the Data Directorate, Data Spaces Association, EU Observatory of ICT Standards and others participated as speakers.

Creating Intellectual Property

Like many historic, epoch-making contributions in the field of Mathematics (particularly in Geometry, Trigonometry, Algebra and other branches of Mathematics), Indian contributions to Statistical theories and their applications are noteworthy, and worth discussing even now. Though there are many notable contributions and contributors, among them, three legendary figures are worth remembering, for such Indian contributions. They are P.C. Mahalanobis, C.R. Rao and Pathani Samanta Chandrasekhar. Among many others, Mahalanobis' pioneering work on residual-distance statistic, better known as Mahalanobis D statistic is notable. Prof Rao was instrumental in the establishment of Statistical Institute for Asia & Pacific, Tokyo.

Cramer-Rao bound and Rao-Blackwell theorem are some of his best known discoveries, in the field of Statistics. Chandra Sekhar innovated three principles, i.e. Tungatanra, Pakshika and Digamsa to know the exact longitude of moon. These three formulas are verified to be correct and they hold good in every respect. He had devised many formulas for ascertaining the exact longitude of other planets.

While we do have a legacy of success in the field of algorithms and statistics from individual prodigies, modern corporates and entrepreneurs have a key role to play to take this forward and help India take a dominant position in the world of data and technology.

I have been passionate about creating a global standard in big data analytics from India. I conceptualized, proposed and drafted the first global standard on big data analytics capability assessment from India as a project editor (under ISO/JTC1/SC42 for AI) with participation from 24 member countries of ISO with the index IEC/ISO 24668. I have been the Chair of Big Data subcommittee of LITD30 of BIS, Government of India from 2018 to 2021 and am currently the convenor of WG2 under LITD30. I am also a member of AI Expert panel of the European Observatory of ICT Standards for AI as sponsored by European Union since close to 2 years now and a contributor to the first AI landscape report by Stand.ICT.

Business Brio is ISO 27001 certified on data security and is actively involved in creating Intellectual Properties in the domain of data engineering, data science and AI in forms of publications, standards, innovations and patents. We have multiple copyrights and patents on AI and analytics systems. We have also contributed to python open-source community by creating re-usable libraries using MIT licenses for the

fraternity to consume globally. One of the key advantages of Business Brio is understanding how AI/ML projects differ from the bespoke IT projects and how to avoid the critical failure modes of such AI/ML projects in terms of bias, transparency, explainability, over-reliability, decision oversight and trustworthiness. Business Brio is the first data science company in the world to be certified on ISO 56000 – Innovation Management framework.

The work of the company has already been featured by news media giants like Economic Times, Forbes India, Financial Express, Mint, Boston Herald, NBC WRDE channel, Gulf Today and others for their contribution and leadership in the field of data science and AI.

I have been invited for delivering many talks and chairing discussions in industry bodies of IEEE, CII, NASSCOM, ICC as well as academia platforms of IIM Ahmedabad -

India, Indian Statistical Institute Kolkata - India, George Mason University Washington DC - USA, Cranfield University - UK, Cambridge University - UK, Imperial College, London etc. Through these interactions I also try to proliferate the various opportunities that exist in the field of data strategy, data lifecycle, AI project implementation for creating intellectual properties.

Data science and AI is the flywheel of growth and digital transformation. While we should focus on diversifying current IT companies' portfolio, foster start-ups in offering products and services, have strategies to attract venture funds and private equities to invest, multiply valuations of entities in this domain, we should also have the endeavor to contribute meaningfully to the intellectual property creation which will help the fraternity, corporate world and the country to sustain the leadership much better from long term perspective



Dreamstime

** Managing Director, Business Brio
Director, Data Science Foundation International*



Ruins of Nālandā mahāvihāra, Nalanda, Bihar

MAHĀVIHĀRA(S) OF EASTERN INDIA AS KNOWLEDGE CENTRES

Azad Hind Gulshan Nanda*

India has been known as the land of knowledge seekers. It always preferred enlightenment over wealth and kingship. Buddha and Vishwamitra are some examples of heroes who left their kingship in search of knowledge. Education thus always remained a valued subject over material well-being. While both formal and informal systems of education have existed since ancient times, the systematisation of knowledge at a huge scale and the emergence of educational establishments as big academic enterprises was a late phenomenon that began with the establishment of *mahāvihāra(s)* in Eastern India during the Gupta period.

The ancient Magadha in Eastern India, comprising present-day Bihar, Bengal, and Orissa, witnessed an exuberance of educational activities in the post-Gupta period. A large number of monastic institutions stood up that served as an archetypal model of the pre-modern education system. The institutional complexes such as Nālandā, Vikramśīla, Odantapuri, Somapura, and Jaggadala emerged as eminent seats of higher learning. These

institutions catered to numerous students from near and far afield and monks/teachers from different parts of Asia. This cosmopolitan and ethnic assemblage accorded these monastic edifices a supra-region or international outlook.

The larger *mahāvihāra(s)*, such as Nālandā and Vikramśīla, exerted a radical approach to maintaining close relations with other parts of Asia. They encouraged greater mobility of monks, scholars, and pilgrims over open-ended networks of Asia-wide circulation of goods, texts, and ideas. The Buddhist monks and travellers from these institutions enjoyed special privileges on the network of trade routes as they were constantly received by the various polities of east and southeast Asia. The literary references and the archaeological vestiges discovered from the ruins of the monastic sites are a rich testimony of the historical, pedagogic, and cultural efflorescence of these institutions in the early medieval period. Primarily inclined towards the Buddhist faith, these *Mahāvihāra(s)* were modelled as ancient knowledge centres and are a precious common heritage for the people of Asia.

Much of the information about their early foundation and daily activities has been heavily drawn from the descriptions provided in the foreign travellers account. The Chinese accounts like those of Faxian, Xuanzang, and Yijing vividly locate the monastic establishments in the larger socio-cultural, political, and religious milieu of the Buddhist ecumene. The epigraphic, archaeological, and artistic sources bespeak the role of patrons, statecraft, and the cultural linkages they maintained both locally and transregionally.

While much of the scholarly debate so far has focused on corroborating, the discovery

of material remains with those of Chinese accounts; little attention has been paid to the questions of how the scholarship was produced at these monastic sites. What was the model for the monastic organization, and how was the knowledge system intricately linked to the larger need of local, regional, and transregional societies? These questions still beg for a more scientific perusal, given the fact that the question of the revival of many such ancient institutions looms over the current political arena.

Monastic institutions such as Nālandā and Vikramśīla excelled and championed in all subjects such as agriculture, astronomy, medicine, philosophy, mathematics, archery, military arts, surgery, futurology, magic, commerce, music, and dance. The Chinese travellers Xuanzang and Yijing have given a detailed account of the curriculum and courses taught at Nalanda. Apart from the core Buddhist texts, the student admitted also had to master non-Buddhist works such as Panini's Sanskrit grammar *Astadhyayi*. At Nalanda, the five major 'disciplines' that were taught are: *śabdavidya* (discourse analysis); *śilpasthanavidya* (arts); *cikitsavidya* (diagnostic medicine); *hetuvidya* (logic, epistemology); and *adhyatmavidya* (metaphysics).

Besides learning, the resident monks, pilgrims, and students followed the highest moral conduct and engaged themselves in the pursuit of knowledge while upholding the idea of faith, peace, and harmony. The knowledge produced at these monastic sites and the scholarship administered conform to the notion of all-inclusiveness.

As the ancient monastic establishments shared close similarities with the present education system, a few scholars like J.N. Samaddar and R.K. Mukherji have suggested that the

institutions such as Nalanda *Mahāvihāra* may easily be described as a 'University' even by the modern definition. While other scholars suggest, it should be regarded as a monastic town which served the specific purpose of accommodating elite intellectuals and monks coming from diverse religious traditions in the ancient world. These labels seem problematic as they do not elucidate their true character in terms of their unique position within the local, regional and supra-regional or international context. Secondly, the received wisdom about the monastic institutions comes from a meagre amount of archaeological evidence and textual sources without paying much attention to its social and environmental context.

Little is known about the early evolution of *mahāvihāras* in ancient India. Although the larger monastic establishments such as Nalanda began not before the inception of the first millennium AD, the origin is very much rooted in the early formation of Sangha. The rapid growth of the Bhikkhu Sangha post the nirvana of Buddha, and the development of innovative customs like Nissaya, Abhidhamma, Kathina and Uposatha Pavarānā no longer allowed a dispersed mode of living among the wandering monks community. Further, the temporary settlement in āvasas or Upāthānasala during the rainy seasons encouraged a settled condition of life. General dispersal after the vassāvāsa and the continuous influx and outgoing of Bhikkhus in the Sangha created disturbances in maintaining and following the regular customs and proper code of conduct. To ensure the continuity of the Sangha lifestyle, it was necessary to build permanent residences, which later shaped vihāras. *Mahāvihāras* were thus large institutional complexes meant for accommodating numerous such kinds of

vihāras. It is important to note that while viharas stood for practising monkhood and promoting Buddhist ideas and beliefs, mahāvihāra, on the other hand, emerged as efficient academic seats of learning.

With the institutionalisation of Buddhism in eastern India and with the rise of Guptas in Magadha, the consolidation and organisation of knowledge became a needed requirement for the ease of accumulation, dispersal and circulation of canonical texts, ideas and beliefs.

The emergence of temple-centred social and administrative structures also helped in the significant rise of mahāvihāras in eastern India. Theories have come up with regard to the sustainability of such an economic framework which centred around religious institutions like temples and monasteries. The region of Magadha saw an extensive change in the political structure in the post-Gupta period, marked by the decentralisation and disintegration of power leading to the rise of the feudal polity. The new feudal polity supported monasteries such as Nalanda and other religious establishments through land grants and share in powers. As trade became more localised, the changing socio-economic situation left the people with sufficient surplus time for intellectual as well as religious activities, which were further supported by royal feudal lords. Monastic establishments such as Nalanda and Vikramshilatao arose during the emergence of the new temple-centred society and received royal grants and endowments from various rulers.

The tradition of establishing Buddhist monasteries witnessed roaring prosperity during the reign of Pala and Bhaumakara rulers. The two dynasties revitalised and reinvented the structural, artistic, and architectural compositions to befit the changing ideologies and doctrinal

values within Buddhism. Under the prevailing influence of monarchy, the institutions emerged as scholastic knowledge centres that played an influential and authoritative role in the political and socio-cultural dynamics of the Buddhist kingdoms.

The Buddhist monasteries exercised their cultural legacy to extend influence in South,

Southeast, and East Asia in various fields such as art, architecture, and aesthetics. This led to the increased movement of human agents, such as artisans, pilgrims, travellers, monks, etc., on the networks of cultural exchange. The rulers located on these networks patronised these Buddhist establishments and appropriated such patronage with the cosmopolitan vision of the state.



Ruins of Nālandā mahāvihāra, Nalanda, Bihar

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ଗାଆଁ: ବଦଲୁଥିବା ଛବି ଓ ତ୍ରିଶଙ୍କୁ ମଣିଷ

ପ୍ର. ଅଜିତ ମହାନ୍ତି



ଦେଶର ପ୍ରଗତି ସହିତ ବଦଳୁଛି ଗାଆଁମାନଙ୍କର ଛବି । ଅର୍ଥନୀତି, କୃଷି, ସଂଚାର, ଶିକ୍ଷା ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ସାଧାରଣ ଜୀବନ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ବୈପ୍ଳବିକ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ଏବଂ ତା ସହିତ ବଦଳୁଛି ଗାଆଁର ଜୀବନଶୈଳୀ । ତଥାପି ଗାଆଁରେ ବଢ଼ି ବଡ଼ ହୋଇଥିବା ଲୋକେ ଅଧିକାଂଶ ସହରମୁହାଁ । ଗାଆଁର ମଣିଷମାନେ ସହରୀ ଜୀବନର ଆକର୍ଷଣରେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ । ସହରର ଚାକଚକ୍ୟ, ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳ ଜୀବନର ସମ୍ଭାବନା ଗାଆଁର ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କୁ ଟାଣିଆଣୁଛି, ନିଆଁ ପତଙ୍ଗମାନଙ୍କୁ ଟାଣିଲା ପରି । ତଥାକଥିତ ଆଧୁନିକତା ଓ ପ୍ରଗତିର ଆକର୍ଷଣରେ, ଭିନ୍ନ ଏକ ଜୀବନଶୈଳୀର ମୋହରେ ଗାଆଁର ପରିବାରମାନେ ବିରୁଦ୍ଧ; ଗାଆଁର ଲୋକେ ସହରରେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ – ସ୍ଥାୟୀ ଭାବରେ ବା ସାମୟିକ । ଗାଆଁରେ ନିଜ ଚେର ଛାଡ଼ି ଆସିଥିବା ଏଇ ପ୍ରବାସୀମାନେ ଏକ ଭିନ୍ନ ଶ୍ରେଣୀର ମଣିଷ – ଜୀବନ ସହରରେ, ମନ ଗାଆଁରେ । ସହରର ଆକର୍ଷଣରେ ଅଟକି ଯାଇଥିବା, ଗାଆଁ ଛାଡ଼ିଥିବା ମଣିଷକୁ ଗାଆଁ ଛାଡ଼େ ନାହିଁ ।

ସଭ୍ୟତାର, ସଂସ୍କୃତିର, ପରମ୍ପରାର ଓ ଚଳଣିର ଚେର ତ ଗାଆଁରେ । ଆଧୁନିକତାର ବାତ୍ୟାରେ ଗାଆଁର ମଣିଷ ସେଇ ମୂଳରୁ ବିରୁଦ୍ଧ ହୋଇ ଅସ୍ଥିର ଏକ ଚାକଚକ୍ୟ ଭରା ଆଲୋକିତ ପୃଥିବୀର ସନ୍ଧାନରେ, ଏକ ଅପହଞ୍ଚ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନରେ । ଗାଆଁ ଛାଡ଼ି ସହରୀ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନରେ ଭାସି ଚାଲିଥିବା ଜୀବନମାନ ଗୋଟିଏ ଗୋଟିଏ ବିଚ୍ଛିନ୍ନ ଏକକ, ସହରର ଭିତରେ ହଜି ଯାଉଥିବା ନିଃସଙ୍ଗ ମଣିଷ । ସହରରେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ମଣିଷମାନଙ୍କର ମନ ମିଶେ ନାହିଁ; କାରଣ ସେଠାରେ ସମସ୍ତେ ଧାଇଁଛନ୍ତି, ସମସ୍ତେ ନିଜ ନିଜ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର ଅନୁଗାମୀ । ସହରୀ ଜୀବନଶୈଳୀରେ କାହାରି ସମୟ ନାହିଁ । ଦଣ୍ଡେ ସାଥୁ ହୋଇ ଦି'ପାଦ ଏକାଠି ଚାଲିବା ପାଇଁ; ସମ୍ପର୍କମାନ ଅସ୍ଥିର ଓ ମତଲବୀ – ଆଜିର ତଟପେନ ବା ଦିନିକିଆ ଖୁଅର ବେତ୍ତ ଭଳି ବ୍ୟବହାର ଅନ୍ତେ ପରିତ୍ୟକ୍ତ ହେଉଥିବା ସାମୟିକ ଅସ୍ଥାୟୀ ସମ୍ପର୍କ । ସହରରେ ଗାଆଁର ଗ୍ରାମୀଣ ଅନୁଭୂତି ମିଳେ ନାହିଁ । ଗାଆଁ ଛଡ଼ା ପ୍ରବାସୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ମିଳେ ନାହିଁ ଗ୍ରାମୀଣ

ଜୀବନର ଆନ୍ତରିକତା, ସାମୁହିକ ଓ ଦୀର୍ଘସୂତ୍ରୀ ସମ୍ପର୍କର ସମ୍ବେଦନଶୀଳତା। ସେଇଥିପାଇଁ ସବୁ ଆକର୍ଷଣ ଓ ସାମୟିକ ମୋହ ସତ୍ତ୍ୱେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ମନ ଗାଆଁକୁ ଛାଡ଼ିପାରେ ନାହିଁ। ଗାଆଁର ପାରମ୍ପରିକ ଜୀବନ ଓ ଚଳଣିରେ ଥିବା ଆପଣାପଣିଆ, ଅବୀରତ ପ୍ରୀତି ଓ ସମ୍ବେଦନା ସମ୍ପର୍କ ସହରୀ ଜୀବନରେ ମିଳେ ନାହିଁ। ଗ୍ରାମୀଣ ଜୀବନର ସାଧାରଣ, ସ୍ୱାଭାବିକ ଆପଣାପଣ, ପଡ଼ୋଶୀ-ସଚେତନତା ଓ ସମ୍ବେଦନଶୀଳତାର ଅଭାବରେ ସହରୀ ଜୀବନ ରିକ୍ତ; ସହରୀ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ମଣିଷ ଆନ୍ତରିକ ସ୍ତରରେ ଶୂନ୍ୟ ଓ ହତାଶ।

ସହରୀ ଜୀବନ ଓ ଗାଆଁରେ ବନ୍ଧା ପଡ଼ିଥିବା ମନ ନେଇ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ପାଇଁ ଗାଆଁ ଏକ ଅନନ୍ୟ ପ୍ରତୀକ। ଅନୁଭବର ଓ କଳ୍ପନାର ଅନେକ ଛବିକୁ ନେଇ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ମନରେ ଗାଆଁଟିଏ, ଆଉ ସେଇ ଗାଆଁର ନାଆଁଟିଏ। ପୃଥିବୀର ଯେଉଁ କୋଣରେ ଥିଲେ ବି ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ମଣିଷର ପରିଚୟରେ ନାଆଁଟିଏ ଅଛି, ଗାଆଁଟିଏ ଅଛି। ସେ ହେଉଛି ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିର ଐତିହ୍ୟ, ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିର ମୂଳାଧାର। ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ପାଇଁ ଗାଆଁର ପ୍ରକୃତ ସ୍ୱରୂପ ତା ନିଜ ମନରେ ଗଢ଼ା ଛବିଟିଏ। ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକଙ୍କ ଅନ୍ତରରେ ଗାଆଁର ଏକ ଅନନ୍ୟ ଛବି, କାରଣ ସେ ଛବି ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିର ନିଜସ୍ୱ ଅନୁଭବ ଓ କଳ୍ପନା ସହିତ ଜଡ଼ିତ; ତାହା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଗତ ମାନସିକତା, ଆବେଗ ଓ ସ୍ଥିତି ସହିତ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ। ସେଇ ଛବିଟି ‘ଛୋଟ ମୋର ଗାଆଁଟି’ ଭଳି ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ପାଇଁ ଆତ୍ମ ପରିଚୟର ମୂଳ, ତାର ଆଧାର। ଗାଆଁ ଏକ ମାନସିକତା, ଏକ ରୂପକଳ୍ପ, ଯାହା ଅନିବାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଭାବରେ ଯୋଡ଼ା ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ମଣିଷର ଆତ୍ମ-ସତ୍ତା ଓ ଅସ୍ଥିତା ସହିତ। ଗାଆଁ ସହିତ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟକ୍ଷ ସମ୍ପର୍କ ଓ ତାର ଗଭୀରତା ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟରେ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ବୟସ୍କ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିର ଆନ୍ତରିକ ପରିଚୟ ଗାଆଁ ସହିତ ଜଡ଼ିତ – “ମୁଁ ଅମୃତ ଗାଆଁର। ସହରର ଠିକଣା ଯେତେ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଧାରିତ ଏବଂ ସ୍ପଷ୍ଟ ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ପ୍ରାୟ ସମସ୍ତେ ପଚାରି ଦିଅନ୍ତି, “ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଗାଆଁ କେଉଁଠି?” ଗାଆଁ ନାଆଁ ନ ଥିଲେ ହୁଏତ ପରିଚୟ ଅସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ। ଅବଶ୍ୟ ଏଇ ପରିଚୟରେ ନିଜର ଗର୍ବ ଓ ଗୌରବ ନିର୍ଭର କରେ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିର ମାନସିକତା ଉପରେ। ତଥାପି, ନିଜର ମୂଳ ବାସ, ନିଜ ଗାଆଁକୁ ନେଇ ମଣିଷର ପରିଚୟ ସାର୍ବଜନୀନ ଓ ବିଶ୍ୱବ୍ୟାପୀ। ସେ ପରିଚୟର ସଂଜ୍ଞା ଗାଆଁ ନିଜେ ଗଢ଼େ ନାହିଁ, ତାହା ଗଢ଼ା ହୁଏ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ମଣିଷର ମନରେ। ଗାଆଁରେ ବଢ଼ିଥିବା, ଗାଆଁରେ ନିବିଡ଼ ଅନୁଭବ ଥିବା ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିର ମନରେ ଗାଁର ଘର, ବାଡ଼ି, ପାଣି, ପବନ, ପ୍ରକୃତି ଓ ପରିବେଶର ଅନିଭୋଗରୁ ଅଙ୍କା ହୁଏ ଗାଆଁର ଛବିଟିଏ ଯାହା ରହିଯାଏ ମନରେ – “ମୋ

ଗାଆଁର ଛବି ।” ତେଣୁ ମଣିଷ ମନରେ ଗାଆଁର ଛବି ସ୍ୱୟଂସମୂତ, ସ୍ୱୟଂସିଦ୍ଧ, ସ୍ୱତଃସ୍ପୁର୍ତ୍ତ ଏବଂ ଅନିବାର୍ଯ୍ୟ । ଏ ଛବି ନିରୁତା ଆତ୍ମୀୟତାର ଏକ ସମ୍ବେଦନଶୀଳ ଛବି, ଏକ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ ରୂପକହ ।

ଗାଆଁର ଚେତନା ପ୍ରବାସୀ ମନକୁ ଜଡ଼େଇ ଧରିଥାଏ; ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଆକର୍ଷଣ ଓ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ନେଇ ଗାଆଁ ଛାଡ଼ିଥିବା ମଣିଷର ହୃଦୟରୁ ଗାଆଁକୁ ଦୂରେଇ ହୁଏ ନାହିଁ । ଗାଆଁର ମୋହ, ଗାଆଁକୁ ଝୁରିବାର ଏକ ଅବ୍ୟକ୍ତ ଭାବ ପ୍ରବାସୀମାନଙ୍କ ମନକୁ ଆକ୍ଷତ କରି ରଖିଥାଏ । ସେଇଥି ପାଇଁ ସହର ଓ ବିଦେଶରେ ଥିବା ପ୍ରବାସୀମାନେ ନିଜ ନିଜ ବସା ଅଞ୍ଚଳକୁ ନେଇ ଆସନ୍ତି ଗାଆଁର ଅନୁଭବ, ଗାଆଁର ଚଳଣି, ପରମ୍ପରା, ପର୍ବପର୍ବାଣୀ । ତେଣୁ ଦେଶର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଅଞ୍ଚଳରେ ଏବଂ ବିଦେଶରେ ମଧ୍ୟ, ଗାଆଁ ଛାଡ଼ିଥିବା ପ୍ରବାସୀମାନେ ନିଜ ନିଜ ପ୍ରବାସରେ ଗାଆଁର ପୂଜାପର୍ବ, ଓଷାକ୍ରତ, ଗାଆଁର ପାରମ୍ପରିକ ଦୋଳଯାତ୍ରା, ଦୁର୍ଗାପୂଜା ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ପାଳନ କରନ୍ତି ଅନେକ ଧୂମଧାମର ସହ, ଆଡ଼ମ୍ବର ସହ । ଦୋଳ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣମୀ ଆଗରୁ ଗାଆଁର ଠାକୁରମାନେ ଘରେ ଘରେ ପାଳି ଅନୁସାରେ ଭୋଗ ଖାଇବା ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଏକ ଗ୍ରାମୀଣ ପରମ୍ପରା । ଏବେ ସହରର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଅଞ୍ଚଳରେ ସେଇ ଅଞ୍ଚଳର ଠାକୁର ଏକ ପୂର୍ବ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ସୂତା ଅନୁସାରେ ଘରେ ଘରେ ଭୋଗ ଖାଇବାର ପରମ୍ପରା ପ୍ରତିରୋପିତ ହୋଇଛି । ଏମିତି ଅନେକ ଗ୍ରାମୀଣ ଚଳଣି ଓ ପର୍ବପର୍ବାଣୀମାନଙ୍କର ପ୍ରତିଫଳନ ପ୍ରବାସୀମାନଙ୍କ ସହରୀ ଜୀବନରେ । ପରସ୍ପରକୁ ଜାଣି ନ ଥିବା, ସମ୍ପର୍କ ନ ଥିବା ସହରର ପ୍ରବାସୀ ପଡ଼ୋଶୀମାନେ ହଠାତ ସ୍ଥାନୀୟ ଦୋଳଯାତ୍ରାରେ ଫଗୁ ବୋଳାବୋଳି ହୁଅନ୍ତି, “ହାପି ହୋଲି” କହନ୍ତି । ସେମିତି ସ୍ଥାନୀୟ, ଆଞ୍ଚଳିକ ପୂଜା ଉତ୍ସବ, ଦୁର୍ଗା ମଣ୍ଡପ ଓ ମେଡ଼ମାନଙ୍କ ପରୁଆର ଦେଖିଲେ ଭ୍ରମ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୁଏ ଯେ ବହୁ ଆଡ଼ମ୍ବର ଓ ଚାକଚକ୍ୟ ସହିତ ଜୋର ଜବରଦସ୍ତି ଚାନ୍ଦା ଭେଦରେ ପାଳିତ ହେଉଥିବା ଏହି ଉତ୍ସବମାନ ଗୋଟିଏ ଗୋଟିଏ ଗାଆଁର । ଏ ଆଞ୍ଚଳିକତା ଗ୍ରାମୀଣ ଗୋଷ୍ଠୀର ନୁହେଁ; ଏହା କେବଳ ପ୍ରବାସୀମାନଙ୍କ ମନ ଭୁଲେଇବା କଥା, କାରଣ ଏ ସହରର ଏ ଆଞ୍ଚଳିକ ବାସିନ୍ଦାମାନେ ଗାଆଁ ଛାଡ଼ିଥିବା ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଏବଂ ଗୋଟିଏ ଅଞ୍ଚଳର ପଡ଼ୋଶୀ ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ପରସ୍ପର ଠାରୁ ବିଚ୍ଛିନ୍ନ ।

ଗାଆଁ ଠାରୁ ବିଚ୍ଛିନ୍ନ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିମାନଙ୍କ ସହରୀ ଜୀବନରେ ଗାଆଁ ଛାଡ଼ିଥିବାର ଗ୍ଲାନି ରହିଛି, ସତେ ଯେମିତି ଆମେ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ସହରିଆ ଆମ ନିଜ ନିଜ ଗାଆଁ ପାଖରେ ଦୋଷୀ । ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ମନର ନିତୁତ କୋଣରେ ଥାଏ ଗାଆଁକୁ ଝୁରିବାର ଏକ ଅବ୍ୟକ୍ତ ବେଦନା । ସେଇ ଦୋଷୀପଣିଆରୁ

କିଞ୍ଚିତ ପରିମାଣରେ ନିଜ ମନକୁ ଭୁଲେଇବା ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରବାସୀମାନଙ୍କର ସହରୀ ଜୀବନରେ ଗ୍ରାମର ପରମ୍ପରା ଓ ଚଳଣିର ପ୍ରତୀକ ଭାବରେ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପୂଜା ପର୍ବମାନ ପ୍ରତିରୋଧିତ। ଗାଆଁର ପରମ୍ପରାମାନଙ୍କୁ ସହରରେ ବାନ୍ଧି ରଖିବାର ପ୍ରୟାସ ରହିଛି, ଅଥଚ ଗାଆଁର ଆନ୍ତରିକତା ଓ ସମ୍ପର୍କ ନାହିଁ। ଦେଶ ବିଦେଶରେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆ କିମ୍ବା ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଭାରତୀୟମାନେ ଏମିତି ଗାଉଁଲି ମନ ନେଇ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପର୍ବ ପର୍ବାଣୀ ମନେଇପାରେ, ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପାରମ୍ପରିକ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନମାନଙ୍କ ପାଳନ କରିବାରେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ମନ୍ଦିରଟିଏ ନିର୍ମାଣ କରିବାରେ ପୁନର୍ଜୀବିତ କରିବାର ପ୍ରୟାସ କରନ୍ତି ଗାଆଁର ଚଳଣି, ଗାଉଁଲି ମାନସିକତା। ଏସବୁ ସତ୍ତ୍ୱେ ଗାଆଁର ଅନୁଭବ ସହରରେ ମିଳେ ନାହିଁ।

ମାନବ ସଭ୍ୟତାର ସାମୂହିକ ଅବଚେତନରେ ଗାଆଁ ଗୋଟିଏ ଅଦମ୍ୟ ଚିତ୍ରକଳା। ତେଣୁ, ଗାଆଁ ଓ ଗ୍ରାମୀଣ ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ସମ୍ୟକ୍ ଅବତାରଣା ଓ ବିଚାର ବିନା ଆଧୁନିକ ମାନସିକତା ସହଜରେ ବୁଝି ହୁଏ ନାହିଁ। ମଣିଷ ଯେତେ ଯେତେ ଆଧୁନିକ ହେଉଛି, ସେତକ ଦୃଢ଼ ହେଉଛି ଗ୍ରାମୀଣ ସଚେତନତା ଓ ଗାଆଁର ପରମ୍ପରାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଧରି ରଖିବାର ପ୍ରୟାସ। ଆଧୁନିକ ଅର୍ଥନୀତି ଓ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନର ଭେଦରେ ମଣିଷ ବଦଳୁଛି, ବଦଳୁଛି ଗାଆଁ, ବାସ ଓ ଜୀବନଶୈଳୀ। ଏଇ ଆଧୁନିକତା ଓ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ଭିତରେ ମଣିଷ ଅଧିକରୁ ଅଧିକ ଆତ୍ମ-କୈନ୍ଦ୍ରିକ ଏବଂ ଯା ସହିତ, ଏକୃତୀୟ ହୋଇଯିବାର ଶକ୍ତି ଓ ଭୟ। ଆଧୁନିକ ସହରୀ ଜୀବନଶୈଳୀରେ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଏକ ବିଚ୍ଛିନ୍ନ ଏକକ ଭାବରେ ଧାଉଁଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ, ଅହରହ ଘାରିଛି ସାହଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ, ଆନ୍ତରିକତା ଓ ସମ୍ବେଦନଶୀଳତାରୁ ଦୂରେଇ ଯିବାର ଭୟ; ଅବଚେତନ ମନରେ ବିକ୍ଷିପ୍ତ ବିରୂପ ହୋଇଯିବାର ଗ୍ଳାନି। ଗାଆଁ ହେଉଛି ସେଇ ଗ୍ଳାନି ଓ ଭୟକୁ ଭୁଲେଇବାର ସାହାରା। ସହରୀ ମଣିଷ ମନର ସବୁଠାରୁ ବଡ଼ ବିତ୍ତ୍ୱୟନା ହେଲା ନିଜ ଠାରେ ସମ୍ବେଦନଶୀଳତାର ଅଭାବ ସତ୍ତ୍ୱେ ଅନ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ସମ୍ବେଦନା ନ ପାଇବାର କ୍ଷୋଭ। ଗୋଟିଏ ପଟେ ନିଜକୁ ବିଚ୍ଛିନ୍ନ କରି ଆଧୁନିକ ଘୋଡ଼ାଦୌଡ଼ରେ ସାମିଲ ହେବାର ପ୍ରୟାସ ଏବଂ ଅନ୍ୟପଟେ ଏକୃତୀୟ ହୋଇଯିବାର ଭୟ। ପାରମ୍ପରିକ ଗାଉଁଲି ମାନସିକତା ଓ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ସହରୀ ଜୀବନ ମଝିରେ ତ୍ରିଶଙ୍କୁ ମଣିଷ। ଆଧୁନିକ ମଣିଷ ମନର ଏଇ ନିରନ୍ତର ଦୃଢ଼ ଭିତରେ ହଜିଯାଉଛି ଗାଆଁର ଛବି, ଗାଆଁର ଆପଣାପଣିଆ ଓ ପାରମ୍ପରିକ ସମ୍ବେଦନଶୀଳତା।

ଗାଉଁଲି ମଣିଷର ସମ୍ବେଦନଶୀଳତା କଥାରେ ମୋ ମନକୁ ଆସିଯାଏ ଏକ ନିଆରା ମଣିଷର ସ୍ମୃତି, ମୋ ଗାଆଁ ଜୀବନର ଅଭୁଳା ଅନୁଭବ, ଆପଣାପଣିଆର ଏକ ମୂର୍ତ୍ତିମତ୍ତ ରୂପକଳ୍ପ । ସେ କଥା ମାଳତୀ ମାଆର ବାଲ୍ୟ ବୈଧବର ତାଡ଼ନାରେ କୌଣସି ଏକ ଭିନ୍ନ ଗାଆଁ ଓ ପରିବାରରୁ ବିତାଡ଼ିତା ମାଳତୀ ମାଆ ଆମ ଭାଇଭଉଣୀଙ୍କ ଜନ୍ମ ଆଗରୁ ଆଶ୍ରୟ ନେଇଥିଲା ମୋ ଗାଆଁର ଆମ ପରିବାରରେ । ଏଇ ପରିବାରକୁ ସିଏ ନିଜ ଆପଣାପଣିଆରେ ଏମିତି ବାନ୍ଧିଥିଲା ଯେ ସିଏ ଥିଲା ଆମ ପାଇଁ ଅତି ଆଦରର ସ୍ନେହମୟୀ ମାଆ, ଆମ ଜେଜେମାଆ ଓ ସାନମାଆଙ୍କ ପରି ମାଳତୀ ମାଆ । ଅନେକ ବଡ଼ ହେବା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଆମେ ଜାଣି ବି ନ ଥିଲୁ ଯେ ମାଳତୀ ମାଆ ଆମ ପରିବାରର ନ ଥିଲା । ଏଇ ନିରକ୍ଷର ମଣିଷଟି ଥିଲା ସ୍ନେହ, ଆଦର, ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧା ଓ ଆନ୍ତରିକତାର ଏକ ଚଳନ୍ତି ପ୍ରତିମା, ଯାହାର ନିଃସର୍ଭ ସମ୍ବେଦନଶୀଳତା ଥିଲା ବ୍ୟାପ୍ତ ଓ ସମ୍ପ୍ରସାରିତ । ଆମେ ସବୁ ସ୍କୁଲ ଛୁଟିରେ ଗାଆଁକୁ ଆସିଲେ ଖୁସିରେ ତା ଆଖିରୁ ଲୁହ ଝରିପଡ଼େ; ଆମେ ଧୂଆ ଧୋଇ ହୋଇ, ଖାଇପିଇ ସାଷ୍ଟାମ ନ ହେବା ଯାଏଁ ସିଏ ଥାଏ ଆମେ ପଛେ ପଛେ । ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ଆଉଁସି ପକାଏ ଏବଂ ସବୁଥର କହେ ଆମେ ଝଡ଼ି ଯାଇଛୁ, ଶୁଖିଲା ଦିଶୁଛୁ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି । ଚିକିଏ କଥାରେ ମାଳତୀ ମାଆର ମନ ଡରଳି ଯାଏ । ଆମ ବାଡ଼ି ପୋଖରୀରେ ଗାଧୋଇ ଫେରିଲା ବେଳେ ଅନାବନା ଗଛଟିଏ ଝାଉଁଳି ପଡ଼ିଥିବାର ଦେଖିଲେ ସିଏ ଅଟକି ଯାଏ, ଲୋଟାରେ ପାଣି ଆଣି ଗଛ ମୂଳେ ଢାଳେ । ଆମର ଚାଷୀ, ରଇତ, ଖମାରୀ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଏବଂ ଗାଆଁର ସାନବଡ଼ ଯିଏ ଆସିଲା ଯଦି ମୁହଁ ଚିକିଏ ଶୁଖୁଥାଏ, ମାଳତୀ ମାଆ ତୁରନ୍ତ ସୁଖଦୁଃଖ ପଚାରେ, ଭୁଜା ଚିକିଏ, ପାଣି ମୁହିଁଏ ବଳେଇ ବଳେଇ ଦିଏ । ଚିକିଏ ଦୁଃଖ ଦେଖିଲେ, କାହାର ଜ୍ୱର ବାଧୁକା ହେଲେ ତା ଆଖିରୁ ଲୁହ ଝରିପଡ଼େ; ତାର ମନ ସମ୍ପ୍ରସାରିତ, ସମ୍ବେଦନଶୀଳତା ସର୍ବବ୍ୟାପୀ । ଆମକୁ ଦେଖିଯିବା ପାଇଁ ସହର ଘରକୁ ଆସିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସେଇ ଆନ୍ତରିକତା, ସମସ୍ତେ ତାର ଆପଣାର, ତାର ସମ୍ବେଦନା ସର୍ବପ୍ରସାରୀ । ପରୀକ୍ଷା ବେଳେ ଆମ ଭିତରେ କେହି କେହି ରାତିରେ ଉଠି ପଢ଼ିବା ପାଇଁ ଘଣ୍ଟାରେ ଆଲାର୍ମ ଦେଇଥାଆନ୍ତି; ଆଲାର୍ମ ବାଜୁଥାଏ, ନିଦ ଭାଙ୍ଗେ ନାହିଁ । ମାଳତୀ ମାଆର ମନ ଥୟ ହୁଏ ନାହିଁ, ସକାଳୁ କହେ, “ଆହା, ସେଇଟି ରାତିରେ କେତେ କକରଥନିଆ ହୋଇ ବୋବାଉଛି, ତମେସବୁ ଉଠିପଢ଼ି ତାକୁ ବନ୍ଦ କରୁନ ?” ଏ ପ୍ରକାର ସର୍ବବ୍ୟାପୀ ଆନ୍ତରିକତା ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନର ଜୀବନରେ ଦୁର୍ଲ୍ଲଭ ।

ମାଳତୀ ମାଆ ସାଧାରଣ ଗ୍ରାମୀଣ ଜୀବନରେ ସମ୍ବେଦନଶୀଳତାର ଏକ ଅସାଧାରଣ ପ୍ରତୀକ, ଯାହା ମୋ ଗାଆଁର ଚେତନା ସହିତ ଅବିଚ୍ଛିନ୍ନ ଭାବରେ ଜଡ଼ିତ । ତା ଜୀବନ କାଳରେ ପାଠପଢ଼ା ଓ ଚାକିରି ଏବଂ ସହରର ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଜୀବନ ସତ୍ତ୍ୱେ ଗାଆଁ ମତେ ଛାଡ଼ି ନ ଥାଏ । ଉଚ୍ଚଶିକ୍ଷା ପାଇଁ ବିଦେଶ ଯିବା ଆଗରୁ ଖୁବ୍ ଅଳ୍ପ ସମୟ ହାତରେ ଥାଇ ମଧ୍ୟ ମୁଁ ଗାଆଁକୁ ଗଲି ମେଲାଣି ନେବାକୁ – ଗାଆଁରୁ, ଗାଆଁର ପରିବାର, ଘର ଓ ମାଆମାନଙ୍କ ପାଖରୁ, ବିଶେଷକରି ମାଳତୀ ମାଆ ପାଖରୁ । ମାଳତୀ ମାଆ ବୁଝି ନ ଥିଲା କାନାଡ଼ା କେଉଁଠି, ସିଏ ଖାଲି ଜାଣିଲା ଯେ ମୁଁ ଦରିଆ ପାରି ଯାଉଛି, କେବେ ଫେରିବି ତାହା ଅନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ । ବିଦାୟ ନେଇ ଘରୁ ଆସିଲା ବେଳେ ସବୁ ଥର ପରି ମାଳତୀ ମାଆ ମୋ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ଚାଲିଥାଏ ଗାଁର ଠାକୁରାଣୀ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଯାଏଁ, ମତେ ଆଉଁସି ଆଉଁସି, ଆଉ ଆଖୁରୁ ଲୁହ ଝରେଇ, ଝରେଇ । ମୁଁ ଜୋର କରି ତାକୁ ଫେରିଯିବା ପାଇଁ କହିବାରୁ ସିଏ ଠାକୁରାଣୀଙ୍କୁ ମୁଣ୍ଡିଆଟିଏ ମାରି ମତେ କହିଲା, “ଆସିବୁ ଭାରି ଶୀଘ୍ର । ବିଦେଶରେ କିମିଆଁ କରି ରଖୁ ଦିଅନ୍ତି, କାହା ହାତରୁ ପାନ ଖାଇବୁ ନାହିଁ, କିମିଆଁ କରିଦେବେ ।” ସେ ହୁଏତ ବୁଝିଥିଲା ଗାଆଁ ଛାଡ଼ି, ଦେଶ ଛାଡ଼ି ଯାଉଥିବା ଲୋକେ ଲେଉଟନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ଅଜଣା ହାତରୁ ପାନଖିଆ ତା ପାଇଁ ଥିଲା ଏକ ଭିନ୍ନ ଜୀବନର ମୋହ, ଅବାଞ୍ଛିତ କିମିଆଁ । ଏକଥା ସତ ଯେ ଗାଆଁ ଛାଡ଼ୁଥିବା ଲୋକେ ପ୍ରାୟ ଫେରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ ଏବଂ ଏଇ ଅଣଲେଉଟାଣି ଭିତରେ ଗାଆଁମାନ ମଧ୍ୟ ବଦଳି ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । ବଦଳିବାର ଏଇ ନିରନ୍ତର ପ୍ରକ୍ରିୟା ଭିତରେ ହଜି ହଜି ଯାଉଛି ଗାଉଁଲି ଜୀବନର ଆପଣାପଣିଆ ଓ ନିଛକ ଆନ୍ତରିକତା । ମାଳତୀ ମାଆର ମାନସିକ ପୂରଣ କରି ମୁଁ ବିଦେଶୀ ପାନଖିଆ ଆକର୍ଷଣରୁ ନିଜକୁ ମୁକ୍ତ କରି ସପରିବାର ଫେରିଆସିଲି ସତ, ହେଲେ ସେଇ ପାଞ୍ଚ ବର୍ଷରେ ମୋ ଗାଆଁ ବଦଳି ଥିଲା, ବଦଳିଥିବା ମୋ ସହର, ମୋ ଜୀବନ, ଆଉ ହଜିଥିଲା ସମ୍ବେଦନଶୀଳତା । ଗାଆଁରୁ ସହରୀ ହୋଇଥିବା ମୁଁ ତ୍ରିଶଙ୍କୁ ମଣିଷ । ମୋ ପାଇଁ ସମ୍ବେଦନାର ଚଳନ୍ତି ପ୍ରତିମା ସେଇ ଗାଉଁଲି ମଣିଷ ହଜିଥିଲା; ମାଳତୀ ମାଆ ଆଉ ନ ଥିଲା ।



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