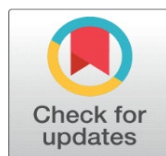
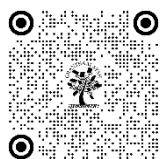


FICTIONALIZING HISTORY: VIDYASAGAR NARZARY'S MALOTINI DAO MWINA

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ABSTRACT

Vidyasagar Narzary's *Malotini Dao Mwina* occupies a critical position in Bodo literature as one of the first novels to blend history and fiction, focusing on the cultural and political events of the 15th century. It depicts the confrontation between the Kachari and Ahom kingdoms, centered around a love story between King Kumuri and Maloti, his love interest. The novel's title, which includes the Myna bird (Mwina), serves as a symbolic representation of the interplay between personal and collective histories. While remaining faithful to historical truths, Narzary's work reclaims and reimagines Bodo heritage, filling the gaps left by historical records and preserving oral traditions. The novel's rich narrative draws from myths, geography, and Bodo cultural customs, intertwining them with the broader political landscape. Through imaginative storytelling, Narzary not only celebrates the essence of Bodo identity but also highlights the politics of representation. His work contributes significantly to literary studies by emphasizing the resilience, traditions, and agency of the Bodo people, transforming history into a powerful medium of cultural preservation and literary expression.

Keywords: Bodo Literature, Vidyasagar Narzary, Historical Fiction, Cultural Preservation, Kachari-Ahom Conflict

1. INTRODUCTION

The novel *Malotini Dao Mwina* by Vidyasagar Narzary represents a monumental effort in Bodo literature, blending historical events with fictional storytelling to reflect the identity, culture, and traditions of the Bodo community. At its core, the novel narrates the historical clash between the Kachari and Ahom kingdoms during the 15th century while weaving in a fictional love story. The historical context is established through the refusal of the Kachari king to pay tribute to the Ahoms, which led to a fierce battle. Narzary's narrative skillfully combines historical accuracy with creative elements, allowing the novel to transcend mere storytelling and serve as a cultural and historical document.

The clash between the Kachari and Ahom kingdoms forms the backdrop of the novel. This conflict, rooted in political and territorial disputes, is a significant event in northeastern Indian history. The Kachari king's refusal to pay tribute to the Ahoms triggered a series of events that culminated in a decisive battle. The Ahoms, led by Suhungmung, were initially confident of victory but faced a crushing defeat at the hands of the Kacharis. The conflict ended with the Ahoms being forced to concede, symbolized by the offering of a princess to the Kachari king as a gesture of reconciliation (Daimari, 45). This historical framework provides the basis for the novel's narrative, which intertwines personal and political histories.

The title of the novel, *Malotini Dao Mwina*, holds symbolic significance. The name "Maloti" refers to the central female character and love interest of King Kumuri, while "Mwina" denotes the Myna bird. The Myna bird, often associated with love and longing in Bodo folklore, serves as a metaphor for the intertwining of personal emotions and collective identity. Through this title, Narzary encapsulates the essence of the novel: a story that bridges the intimate and the historical, blending the personal struggles of its characters with the broader cultural and political narrative of the Bodo community.

While historians have extensively documented the Kachari-Ahom conflict, literary works addressing this period are scarce. Narzary's novel fills this gap by offering a fictionalized account that is deeply rooted in historical truths. Through vivid descriptions of the geographical and cultural landscapes, the novel brings the 15th-century Bodo kingdom to life. The customs, traditions, and daily lives of the Bodo people are intricately woven into the narrative, providing readers with a comprehensive understanding of Bodo society during this era (Daimari, 89). One of the most remarkable aspects of *Malotini Dao Mwina* is its ability to merge historical truths with creative imagination. Narzary's portrayal of King Kumuri and Maloti's love story is not just a romantic subplot but a vehicle for exploring deeper themes of loyalty, identity, and cultural pride. The relationship between these characters symbolizes the resilience and unity of the Bodo community, which has historically faced numerous challenges. Through their story, Narzary underscores the importance of preserving Bodo traditions and values in the face of external pressures.

The cultural richness of the novel is evident in its detailed depiction of Bodo customs and traditions. From the rituals performed during festivals to the symbolic significance of objects and animals, every aspect of Bodo life is meticulously portrayed. For instance, the Myna bird, which features prominently in the novel, is a recurring motif in Bodo folklore, representing love, freedom, and resilience. By incorporating such cultural elements into the narrative, Narzary not only enriches the story but also ensures the preservation of Bodo heritage for future generations.

In addition to its cultural significance, *Malotini Dao Mwina* is a deeply political novel. By reclaiming and reimagining Bodo history, Narzary challenges the marginalization of the Bodo community in mainstream historical and literary narratives. The novel serves as a powerful assertion of Bodo identity, highlighting their agency and resilience in the face of historical adversities. Narzary's decision to fictionalize historical events reflects his commitment to preserving and celebrating Bodo culture while addressing the politics of representation.

The works of Vidyasagar Narzary, including *Malotini Dao Mwina*, are characterized by their ability to bridge the gap between history and fiction. While his novels are not historical accounts in the strictest sense, they are deeply rooted in historical truths. Narzary's imaginative storytelling allows him to explore aspects of Bodo history that are often overlooked or dismissed as myths. By doing so, he not only preserves the collective memory of the Bodo people but also gives them a voice in the literary world.

The narrative scope of *Malotini Dao Mwina* is vast, encompassing various aspects of Bodo life, from their myths and legends to their struggles for representation and recognition. The novel's portrayal of the Kachari-Ahom conflict is particularly significant, as it sheds light on a period of history that has been largely ignored in mainstream historical discourse. By bringing this era to life, Narzary challenges the erasure of Bodo history and asserts the importance of their contributions to the cultural and political landscape of northeastern India.

Narzary's works are also notable for their emphasis on the resilience and strength of Bodo women. In *Malotini Dao Mwina*, the character of Maloti is more than just a love interest; she is a symbol of Bodo identity and heritage. Through her story, Narzary highlights the role of women in preserving and transmitting cultural values, emphasizing their importance in the broader narrative of Bodo history. This focus on female agency is a recurring theme in Narzary's novels, reflecting his commitment to addressing gender dynamics within the context of Bodo society.

The reception of *Malotini Dao Mwina* has been overwhelmingly positive, with literary critics praising its ability to blend history and fiction while remaining true to Bodo culture. The novel has been recognized for its rich narrative and vivid portrayal of Bodo life, earning Narzary a prominent place in the literary canon of northeastern India. Its significance extends beyond the realm of literature, as it serves as a cultural artifact that preserves and celebrates Bodo identity.

In conclusion, Vidyasagar Narzary's *Malotini Dao Mwina* is a groundbreaking work in Bodo literature that combines historical truths with creative storytelling to celebrate and preserve Bodo culture. Through its vivid portrayal of the Kachari-Ahom conflict, the novel highlights the resilience and agency of the Bodo people, offering a powerful assertion of their identity and heritage. By intertwining personal and political narratives, Narzary creates a work that is both

deeply personal and universally relevant, ensuring the legacy of the Bodo community is preserved for generations to come.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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None.

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