

BOOK REVIEW

Book Title: *Sreejhara*

ISBN: 978-93-89914-33-7

Author: Dr. Meenakshi Das

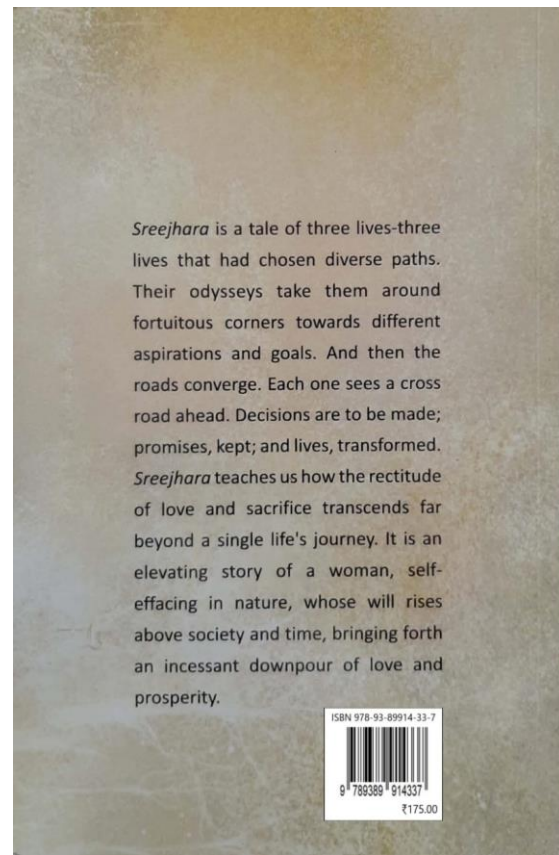
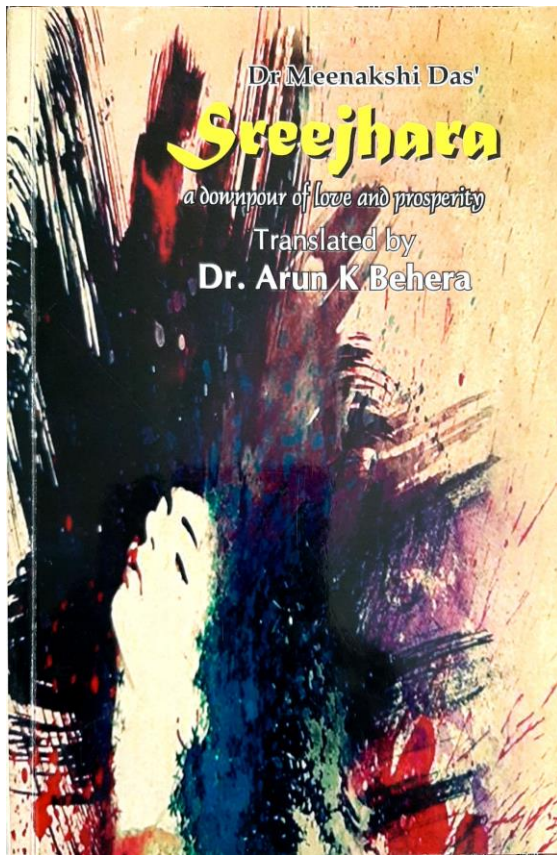
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Translated by: Dr. Arun Behera

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Translation is an art that dexterously presents an original text in another language without losing its sense, meaning and flavour. Further, the translation also determines the command of the translator over the original language in which the work is created and the language to which it gets translated. But only the knowledge of a language would not make one an able translator. To translate a work of art into another language is a herculean task as for that the translator ought to understand

the culture, customs and traditions, the phrases and idioms, the background in which the work was created. At the same time, he ought to have the knowledge of the same in the translated language too. It goes without saying that it is a recreation or a rebirth of a work.

Sreejhara is a novel transcreated by Dr. Arun Behera who has seven books to his credit. He is also the editor/reviewer of nine peer reviewed national and international journals. With a number of awards for academics and research under his belt he is perhaps the strong shoulder to yoke the task of translation of a typical Odia novel by Dr. Meenakshi Das who is undoubtedly a voice to reckon with in Odia. The novel throws light on the plight of women in our society. It presents the painful existence of women in a world devoid of meaning. It begins dramatically with a Victorian elegiac mode of self-pity when the posthumous award is being given to the key character of the novel Meera and introduces to the world where she lived in and the people around her. The meaningful art on the front cover of the book tells the story of the entire novel at a glimpse. A woman with dishevelled hair with straightened back symbolizes the epic struggle of a woman. The mood of the story is implied here in the beautiful painting. It is proved that a book should be judged by the cover. The title of the novel also reflects the thematic design and the plot.

Besides, the blurb of the novel also reveals that it's 'a tale of three lives' who in their long 'odysseys' of life find themselves completely transformed. It is a discovery in a trajectory path of rise and fall of human values. It is the story of the love and sacrifice of a woman named 'Meera' who meets her tragic end. However, her epic struggle to uplift women in a pretentious society is recognized at the end though after her death.

It is, of course, an exploration into the psychic world of women who face various oddities and eccentricities in their day to day life. The feminist perspective is in prominence here, which is the theme of the most of the recent novels and stories. An array of women writers in India starting from Toru Dutt to Kamala Das and from Sarojini Naidu to Arundhati Roy has raised their voice against social and cultural inequalities that constrained women to sustain and lead a free life. Most of the feminist literature highlights the socio-economic condition of women in India. The women protagonists of most of the feminist writers live in a perpetual dilemma as 'Meera' in *Sreejhara*.

At the outset of the novel *Ratikant*, Meera's husband and one of the key characters receives the Indira Gandhi National Award for social service on behalf of Meera on whom the coveted award is conferred posthumously. He repents that he as a husband could do no justice to Meera, who

the entire nation was proud of. He feels guilty and realizes the importance of his wife. He admits unpretentiously that she is 'a symbol of sacrifice'. Her piercing ability to introspect and elevate the 'Self' is perhaps the stunning trait in Meera who founded 'Sreejhara', an organization through which she served for the cause of women. Ratikant admires his wife as 'a woman is an unmatched creation of God'.

It would be an irreverence if the artistry and maturity of the translator is not recognized for Dr. Arun Behera has conveyed the sentiment, emotion and language properly. The archaic style and the powerful rendering of the translator in flowery and appropriate language confuse the readers with the original one. Dr. Behera, who has a great command over English language and literature, has perpetuated the work. I hope it will get readers' approbation as they can finish the novel from cover to cover in one go.

Note: This book will be available in ebook format shortly.