

***THE LIBERTY OF UTTERANCE, THE EMANCIPATION TO THINK:  
GOUTAM KARMAKAR IN CONVERSATION WITH NANDINI SAHU***

**By Goutam Karmakar**

**About Nandini Sahu**

Dr. Nandini Sahu's preoccupation with poetry began very early in life, and today she is a major voice in contemporary Indian English poetry. A double gold medalist in English literature, she was award winner at the All India Poetry Contest, has been honoured with the *Shiksha Ratna Puraskar*, *Poiesis Award of Honor-2015* and has to her credit the coveted *Bouddha Creative Writers' Award*. A doctorate in English literature from Visva Bharati where she worked under the tutelage of eminent poet and academic, Late Prof. Niranjan Mohanty, Nandini's creative output has been widely published in India, U.S.A, U.K., Africa and Pakistan. Her published volumes of poetry include *The Other Voice*; *The Silence*; *Silver Poems on My Lips*, and *Sukamaa and Other Poems*, and *Sita (A Poem)*, and most recently an edited anthology of women poets titled *Suvarnarekha*. Presently, she is Associate Professor of English at the School of Humanities, Indira Gandhi National Open University [IGNOU], New Delhi, where she has designed academic programmes on Folklore and Culture Studies, Children's Literature and American Literature. Broadly, her research interests pan across Indian Literature, New Literatures, Folklore and Culture Studies, American Literature, Children's Literature and Critical Theory. As a serious academic, Dr. Sahu has presented papers on various subjects in India and abroad. She has authored/edited volumes like *Recollection as Redemption*; *Post-Modernist Delegation to English Language Teaching*; *The Post Colonial Space: Writing the Self and the Nation*; *Folklore and the Alternative Modernities* (in 2 Vols), all titles that cumulatively bring out the range of her oeuvre! She is the Chief Editor/Founder Editor of *Interdisciplinary Journal of Literature and Language (IJLL)*, and *Panorama Literaria*, both bi-annual peer-reviewed journals in English. Her most recent poetry collection *Sita (A Poem)* promises to be a whole new

take on the Indian epic. Nandini's is a mind that is incessantly at work, and snippets of this can be seen at [www.kavinandini.blogspot.in](http://www.kavinandini.blogspot.in)

In an exclusive interview with Goutam Karmakar, Dr. Sahu rather an eco-feminist reveals her thoughts on her concept of poetry along with other issues related with feminism. Really the readers can get a Margaret Atwood in India also. Hope this interview will be an inspirational document for not only women but also for men in general.

### **THE INTERVIEW**

**GOUTAM KARMAKAR: Hello Dr. Sahu. Before posing my queries can you tell a bit about your family, early childhood, schooling and educational life? Are there any memorable incidents in your childhood days that inspire you to become a writer in later age?**

**NANDINI SAHU: Hello Goutam! Let me try to give you a picture of my childhood. I was born in rural Odisha in a family of half a dozen girls, in a society where girl children were a taboo. We were fortunate to have parents, specially my father, who never differentiated between the genders. I learnt the first lessons of gender solidarity from my late father Sri Krushna Chandra Sahu, a school teacher, who was a visionary in his own rights. But as it were, the near and dear relations would visit our place in regular intervals and create mental pressure at home about the prospective marriages of so many girls, which never created any hazard in our education and upbringing. We had just one room for all six girls, to study, rest, play and chat. There was only one study table, which was rightfully occupied by my eldest sister, who was very senior to me. So there was no scope of asking for equal rights and sharing (smiles). Thus, I had created a space for myself under the bed, which was rather high, enabling me to lie on my stomach and study, resting on the elbows. That was my world of imagination, like Alice's wonderland, where I voyaged, virtually, to one region every day through the tenor and vehicle of a book.**

Books were my recluse; they were indeed my consolation and stay. Fortunately my father was in charge of his rich library at Hubback High School, G. Udayagiri, which was established in 1936 by the British. Baba wanted someone to help him for cataloging the books, and that was my chance to be introduced to the enormous world of books. In the long summer afternoons, during two months of vacation, when everyone would be snoring to glory, I would merge into the books, neatly dusting them, placing them in the categories creatively imagined and of course reading a bit of each one of those — irrespective of the subjects—literature, sciences, homeopathy or agriculture. That is when I was introduced to Shakespeare, Shelley, Keats and Byron. Those were my formative years when I took no time to realize that books were my first love. I studied up to graduation in the rural village, after which I got fellowship, being the topper in the college, and went to urban Odisha for higher education. Then I did PhD under the guidance of Late Prof. Niranjan Mohanty from Visva Bharati, who himself was a major poet in Indian literature. During that period, I took great interest in the poetry of Late Prof. Niranjan Mohanty, poet Padmashree Jayanta Mahapatra and Bibhu Padhi, poets from Odisha, writing in English. I came to Delhi as an Associate Professor of English at IGNOU, the world's largest open university.

**GOUTAM KARMAKAR: At which age have you responded to Muse' call? Who are the authors whose writings left a lasting impression upon you?**

**NANDINI SAHU:** I remember, I wrote my first poem when I was just seven years old, on a rainy day when we were sleeping inside the quilt, cozy and comfortable, but the farmers were toiling the soil to give us food and a contented life. I was a very sensitive child, as my father would say. "*Sabko aanand dene wali Nandini*"—that is how he would define my name.

I grew up reading Julian of Norwich, Margery Kempe, Juliana Berners, Mary Sidney Herbert, Isabella Whitney, Aemilia Lanyer, Elizabeth Cary, Mary Wroth, Anne

Bradstreet, Jane Lead, Katherine Philips, Mary Rowlandson, AphraBehn, Lady Mary Chudleigh, Anne Killigrew, Delarivier Manley, Mary Asteel, Eliza Haywood, Anna Letitia Barbauld, Charlotte Smith, Frances Burney, Phillis Wheatley, Mary Robinson, Helen Maria Williams, Maria Edgeworth, Dorothy Wordsworth, Jane Austen, Rebecca Cox Jackson, Mary Shelley, Sojourner Truth, Elizabeth Berrett Browning, Margaret Fuller, Harriet Beecher Stowe (Uncle Tom's Cabin), Harriet Jacobs, Bronte sisters, George Eliot, Florence Nightingale, Emily Dickinson, Christiana Rossetti, Louisa May Alcott, Alice James, Kate Chopin, Mary Elizabeth Coleridge, Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf, Rebecca West, Elizabeth Bowen, Elizabeth Bishop, Mary McCarthy, Margaret Walker, Gwendolyn Brooks, Nadine Gordimer, DensieLevertov, Patricia Beer, Anne Sexton, Adrienne Rich, Toni Morrison, Sylvia Plath, Margaret Atwood, Linda Hogan, Rita Dove, Cathy Song. Among Indian women writers, I have extensively read Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu, Ashapura Devi, Mahasweta Devi, Kamala Das, Bharati Mukherjee, Prativa Ray, Anita Desai, and recently, Arundhati Ray and Jhumpa Lahiri. Theoretically, I have read enough of Sandra M Gilbert, Susan Gubar and Simone de Beauvoir. This helped me in framing a fair idea of women's literature and shaping up my own literature.

Gabrial Garcia Marquez, Herman Hesse, Walt Whitman, Sylvia Plath, Salman Rushdie, Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, Rabindranath Tagore and Amitav Ghosh are among the writers who have influenced me a lot.

**GOUTAM KARMAKAR: Are you completely aware of the contemporary Indian poets writing in English?**

**NANDINI SAHU:** Contemporary Indian poetry has evolved from experimentation to maturity. The poets are serious about their trade, are conscious about their historiography. Indian poetry, both in English and Bhasha literatures, is at par with world literary trends;

or I would rather say, now the West is looking at us with awe and inspiration due to the remarkable output that we have.

**GOUTAM KARMAKAR: In which ways or how will you differentiate the contemporary poets like you from older generation Indian women poets writing in English? Do you think Indian Women Poets writing in English have gained maturity in their writing?**

**NANDINI SAHU:** To answer your question in the reverse order, what you call as having ‘gained maturity’ is what I would see as having evolved. To domesticate English as an Indian tongue in the colonial and post-colonial phases as done by the likes of Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu or Kamala Das to mention the major poets, would not have been an easy task. They have had to fight not just what is proverbially called ‘double marginalization’ in society but have also grappled with English at a time when Indian English itself was a contested and constantly evolving terminology. So in a sense, when we write today, we have behind us the weight of a tradition that has paved the way. With it, we obviously have the liberty of utterance, the emancipation to think for ourselves and those like us, and of course the widened global audience to look at. I feel proud of being a community of women poets as my edited volume *Suvarnarekha* has shown.

**GOUTAM KARMAKAR: What is the definition of poetry according to you? Why have you selected poetry as your medium of expression and why it is not novel?**

**NANDINI SAHU:** I would rather answer to the first question in my poetic tongue, quoting my poems on poetry, published in my first three collections, *The Silence*, *The Other Voice* and *Silver Poems on My Lips*.

### **Poetry–I**

While words dance  
on my pen’s tongue

I feel language  
is a flooded river  
not to be dammed  
discarded  
and poetry flows  
from the hedges of the mind  
breaking the parapets.

**Poetry-II**

The gentle art of looking through,  
A concrete experience of the abstract,  
the union of life and peace,  
the vision and the visionless  
taken together,  
the song and silence,  
the corners where all the rivers flow  
amid the heart's shadowy floor,  
a rapport with mortality,  
a formula of sight,  
a clarity of light,  
a sign of the heart,  
a look into the night,  
a day that's bright,  
what else is poetry  
but a clear insight?

**Poetry III**

It makes or mars the design  
presents the words nude

yet hides the nudity.

Transmits the vision that  
what cannot be found here  
can be found nowhere.

It is the beautiful damsel  
with voice of a nightingale.

It is eloquent  
and wordless.

Filtered through the brain, it  
hides seconds and centuries  
yet, it reveals  
centuries in a second!!

It's a confluence  
of living and death,  
it reverberates

*'Shantih, Shantih, Shantih!'*

About poetry being my medium of expression, well, I love the language of symbolism and allegory; the rhyme and rhythm of poetry sway me; my thought process is very poetic—but at the same time I am no less a fiction writer. My short stories have been published in magazines and books. Presently I am contemplating on a volume of my stories, and of course a novel in the long run.

**GOUTAM KARMAKAR: Now you are an established poet and short story writer. But behind this is there any struggle of obstacles that you have to face? How do you make a balance between your professional career as a professor and personal career as poet, short story writer and folklorist?**

**NANDINI SAHU:** Rather than calling them obstacles, I would say challenges. Every single individual who has come up in whatever capacity in life has had her/his share of such challenges. They make you what you have become. As for the balance you talk of, well, a creative writer neither drops from the skies, nor is she/he ever an outlandish being away from the surroundings that nurture creativity, whether by way of positive assimilation or discursive thoughts. So I would say my creative career and professional life are a mixed bag from the same stock, and I immensely enjoy it all.

**GOUTAM KARMAKAR: You have written your first poem in Odia. Have you written any more poems in Odia after then? Odisha is the land of nature, myth, culture and poets like Lt. Niranjana Mohanty & Jayanta Mahapatra. So how the landscapes, surroundings and notable literary stalwarts of Odisha cast influence and inspiration in your writing?**

**NANDINI SAHU:** Yes, I had written my first poem in Odia when I was seven, as I said, after which I switched over to English. Since then I have published all my poetry collections, critical books and stories in English. I read a lot of Odia literature, deliver lectures and write research papers on Odia literary traditions—but the language of my creative output has only been English. But honestly, does language actually make any difference in the creative process of a writer? In fact, this tag of Indian English for my credo often feels like a baggage, and I mean it genuinely when I write in my poem ‘Bridge-in-Making’:

“I write in English to free my words  
lying imprisoned in the arms of the heart



Be it Odishan or Indian, but it's out of this earth and wind.”

Odisha has always inspired my creative writing—most of my stories use the nostalgic memories of my childhood in Odisha as the plot. I have written numerous poems on Jagannath Cult, Puri beach, the Konark Temple, Khandagiri, Udayagiri and Dhauligiri in Odisha. The poets from Odisha have a lasting impression on my mind even today.

**GOUTAM KARMAKAR: What are the unique poetic features that distinguish Dr. Sahu from other Indian poets writing in English? How far has your forte classical art shaped your writing?**

**NANDINI SAHU:** It's a difficult to remain modest and answer to this question too. My poetry is never diluted, words never minced. I write with utmost honesty, allegiance and commitment.

The most basic works in existence in Greek and Indian literature are epic poetry, which are the classical literatures, which are the backbone to modern literature. Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, or India's *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are the original literary works to survive to us today. These early epics were oral symphonies, the backdrop to our modern written literatures and aesthetics. Any writer worth his/her salt, would believe that s/he belongs to this literary tradition, and I am no exception.

A relatively new discipline within the classics is "reception studies", conceived in the 1960s at the University of Konstanz. Reception studies deal with the research and pedagogy about classical texts and their understanding and interpretation in modern literature. Thus, reception study is involved with a two-way interface between reader and the text, taking place within the historical framework.

Even though the idea of aesthetics *of reception* was first introduced by Hans Robert Jauss in 1967, the principles of reception theory date back much earlier than this. In 1920, T.S.

Eliot wrote that "the past [is] altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past"; and Charles Martindale describes this as a "cardinal principle" for the adaptations of contemporary reception theory.

As a modern writer and critic, I take reception theory perilously, and believe that modern literature is a byproduct of the classical.

**GOUTAM KARMAKAR: How have you shifted your theme and focus in every poetry collections? Kindly describe a bit your all poetic collections within a few sentences. Has there any autobiographical element in your verse?**

**NANDINI SAHU:** I have bared open an independent mind of my own, right from my maiden collection of poems *The Other Voice* in 2004. The poems in this volume flash images of alienation and existential absurdity, interfusing classical art with my personal as well as social consciousness. In most of the poems, the personae seems to rejoice at the beauty of creation: sometimes ecstatic about being a woman, at other times disturbing the slumber of society on sensitive issues like mental slavery of the human, subjugation of women. Whenever time is ripe, a brainchild, a poem is born from my pen's tongue, setting a living, breathing world that adds fiery fresh flood of poems to the world of Muse. *The Silence* is my second collection of poems where I have taken care to include poems dealing with the secret chambers of the human heart that is not so silent afterall! These poems reveal a complex and rich treasure of emotions. As a sensitive poet, I have poured out my concerns, fears and ecstasies through these poems, attempting to trace the contours of the social, philosophical and spiritual environment I inhabit.

In my third poetry collection, *Silver Poems on My Lips*, published in 2009, I pour out poetry that oozes from the secret chambers of the heart, though I know well that in an age of material pleasures perhaps it is difficult for the heart to fit in. Thus, an insecurity and reservation moves me greatly in my expedition through life. My moorings however rotate around a belief in human values. Love and poetry are my therapy to live, breathe and

sing. Yes I have a mellifluous voice to boot as well, though we are given to understand that it is an extremely private articulation!

In my fourth poetry collection, *Sukamaa and Other Poems (2013)*, Sukamaa is my folklore and the poem is an outcome of my concern for the ‘other’ – the rural, poor tribal woman Sukamaa who is evenly poised between oblivion, nostalgia and an ever hovering presence that impels me to retrace her contours. Thus, my fourth poetry collection *Sukamaa and Other Poems* is a tribute to the marginal. Most poems in this volume are the utterance of a revolutionary zeal to straighten out the record between the less and the more fortunate – thereby to set up an inclusive standpoint within the matrix of a complex identity politics.

*Sita (A Poem)* is my maiden foray into the long narrative genre, published in 2014; its subject takes off from our epic traditions and takes the discourse much further. The poet-thinker-ecofeminist in me has designed this magnum opus which has always been shaping itself in my subconscious, the writing act of what promises to be a whole new take on the Indian epic has come about when I am convinced that my thoughts have readily found utterance. *Sita* is, in no way, a retelling of *The Ramayana*. It is penned rather as a poetic memoir of the heroine of the epic, Sita, told in the first person narrative. It carries my convictions and is the result of an organic fusion of my roving mind.

My edited anthology of women poets *Suvarnarekha (2014)* is named after the river flowing from the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal in India. The origin of the river is *River Saraswati*, which borrows its name from Goddess Saraswati, the fountain of all wisdom. *Suvarnarekha* is like a woman—life-giving, eternally-flowing, nourishing, a source of ecstasy and beauty, an epitome of mysticism and sustenance. This anthology validates a new dimension to our approach to women’s poetry in English in India.

My sixth poetry collection, **Poems, as I Grew Up** is under publication; it may be in print any time now. As the title suggests, the poems in this volume are my grown-up, not growing-up, poems.

About the autobiographical elements in my poetry, well, every writer pours out a bit of the 'self' in his/her writing. But good literature has a universal approach—and I believe the way my readers connect/ identify with my characters/personae, I have succeeded in going beyond a narrower 'self' through my pen.

**GOUTAM KARMAKAR: How have you presented the women in your verse? You have somehow deconstruct the idea of feminism in your works where as empowerment and authority take prime concern and here you differ from Sylvia Plath, Emily Dickenson and Kamala Das. So would you like to call yourself a postmodernist in this aspect? Give arguments ma'am.**

**NANDINI SAHU:** Just as poetic thoughts and expression have evolved in me over the years, so has the presentation of women evolved? Having seen a large panorama of life from tribal Odisha through a life of over a decade in a metro like Delhi, I do not consciously believe in any 'isms'. So women in my poetry also come from varied spheres of life; show human responses to different situations; voice interiorized thoughts and existential angst; as also very strongly celebrate the creative joy of womanhood.

**GOUTAM KARMAKAR: Gender equality is the capital theme of your writing. How will you want to justify it? What kind of efforts does your poetry give to sensitize the society about solidarity?**

**NANDINI SAHU:** Writers have a prudent way of addressing a people. The margins of the society might change with every generation. But good literature goes beyond that subjective cause; a mature writer maintains a healthy writer-community relationship. By tradition, men create and women recreate. But a writer without gender bias should be able

to do both. Men have been kept away from women's movements; very few male students take up a course on feminism or feminist theory. This is not a healthy practice and it is essential for the feminists to brush up their approaches and ensure the presence of men in humanist missions rather than narrowing down their ideas. Feminism is after all a significant feature of humanism and condemnation of one gender is of course not going to make the circle complete and successful. Gender Equality - that is the spirit of my writings. I try to sensitize the society about solidarity. My idea of feminism is three-dimensional—Feminist Studies, Masculinity Studies and Queer Studies.

**GOUTAM KARMAKAR:** *Your Sukamma and Other Poems* is a tribute to the marginal. So what is your definition about marginal? Is there any Eco-Marxist approach that you want to show through your domestic childhood help Sukamma?

**NANDINI SAHU:** *Sukumaa and Other Poems* is my fourth collection of poetry. I am a poet in search of the distant frontiers that lie beyond a picture perfect realism, where the currents of heritage of a lost world continue to amend the present. In the ephemeral times, what remains eternal is the petrifying charisma of death, the dark elegiac elegance. I am a voyager in this physical as well as the metaphysical, I focus dramatically on the edgy exchanges between unusual human feelings. I blend poetic tales into epochs in a vast, ostensible narrative of Indian English poetry. I seek to create a constellation of memorable images in my poetry, set against the augmented canvas of Nature at its raw. My poems are about confusion, then making peace with myself; misunderstandings, understandings and changes—all of which are played out in a world that's always capricious, ever-silting, and in which the prey and the pursuer persistently shift positions. My poems are, in a way, the manifestation of the voyage of a lifetime. This collection can be called the lyrical biography of a woman. Sukumaa is the metaphor for innocence, dedication, unconditional love.

**GOUTAM KARMAKAR: More than a poet you are an Eco-Feminist by nature. Would you like to agree with me?**

**NANDINI SAHU:** In my poetry, love carries diverse moods such as compassion, communion, happiness, joy, separation, agony and loneliness. A person in love is prone to practice all these feelings in his/her life at some time or the other. The joys and perils of love go hand in hand. In a woman's life there is always love--filial love, motherly love, love for her man, love that comes out of compassion for those who are helpless, love for the world of Nature and love for the creator of this world—all those assets that an eco-feminist can have.

My poetry gives an evidence of the deep observation of human life and its different traits. I have dipped my pen into the ink that contains humanity, love, empathy, peace for the universe and solidarity. There is very little separation between my poetic self and the personal self. I observe the prevailing corruption and problems of the society and handle the issues in a satiric and ironic manner. For me, it's not so much the ideas but it's the way of expression which is important. Because most often cutting-edge ideas come to us after they have become redundant elsewhere. Anyway, I love to articulate the feminine sensibility in a feminine way. For me, the world is breathtakingly beautiful. Through poetry, I hope to illustrate a great degree of calmness and sincerity woven on the frame of my experiences.

**GOUTAM KARMAKAR: How far does your poetry relate the culture and the society in which you belong? Would you like to call yourself a social reformer?**

**NANDINI SAHU:** Poetry is never a conscious vehicle of social reform for me; I feel that would demand a very conscious craft of creation which in a way would distance me from my poetic subject. Conscious propaganda to my mind does not make good art. Since poetry comes spontaneously to me, it is the expression of both beliefs and feelings – to allow the liberty of a coinage, of my me-ness! It is obviously a part of the culture and

society to which I belong, in the sense that it is either birthed in my milieu or is a critique of it. There is no politics in this – poetry remains the medium of expressing relational values to society and culture that is both here and now as also a temporal.

**GOUTAM KARMAKAR: How do you want to relate the gender issues with folklore? What do you want to tell in your *Folklore and The Alternative Modernities*?**

**NANDINI SAHU:** There are folk tales and myths in every country, which are not a part of history. England does not try to prove Robin Hood a historical character, but in India, we forget the thin line between myth and history and question mythical characters, because they live in the collective consciousness of us.

Researching in the area of folklore and culture studies confronts a lot of disputes. The foremost challenge is the inevitable question --- What is 'pure folk'? What is the difference between culture studies and cultural studies? What is the difference between folklore and myth? Can modern literature using the folk elements be called a part of folk literature? This area of study needs a pragmatic depth and sensitive understanding of the issues related to folklore and culture studies. Moreover, it also needs a perfect equilibrium between the compassion and understanding of the researcher about the lives of the folks who are a section of the society kept away from the mainstream since time immemorial with a plea that their literature cannot be / need not be a part of the mainstream literature, because once we document the oral literature, it no more remains as 'folklore'. Another entreaty is that the quality of the folk is lost with the loss of orality. Anyway, it is a welcome fact that most modern folklorists and researchers are strongly supporting that to push folk to a period of oral literatures is a kind of treating it as a marginal literature. And that, folk is not something out there in a museum, to be seen and appreciated from a distance. Rather, it is a part and parcel of our modern and post-modern literatures, inspiring and influencing our modern literatures in a way that our

classical literatures have done. This is the point of debate in my book, *Folklore and the Alternative Modernities*.

Indian folkloristics is the most subtle example of gender equality. In the folk stories of the marriage of Shiva and Parvati, the words of praise for Shiva are *shastra* oriented but the words of praise for Paravati, who is the mother of the universe, are folk in content. My thesis in the book is, in the making of modern literatures, both classical and folk exchange hands, liberally.

**GOUTAM KARMAKAR: IGNOU is giving Post Graduate Diploma in Folklore and Culture Studies. I am also pursuing this. But I have noticed that almost no one is interested to do this diploma. Can you please discuss the importance of it and its future?**

**NANDINI SAHU:** I am afraid, you are ill informed about it. I have designed this Diploma course, and this is running successfully from IGNOU. The results are visible to academia. Students are doing outstanding work for the project paper, MFCI-005. I am amazed at their creativity and enthusiasm. Yes, this is of course not one of the high enrollment programmes like M.B.A. or B.Ed, for obvious reasons. This is, after all, not a professional course. Its takers are qualitative. If you are sincerely pursuing the course, you won't have this point of view at the end of the semester.

**GOUTAM KARMAKAR: What are the reasons of your deconstruction of the character Sita from Ramayana in your *Sita-A Poem*? This long poem also shows you as a poet of tonal variations and lyricism. How will you justify it?**

**NANDINI SAHU:** Yes if you look at it as conscious art in the sense of the reading back of several forms of Ramayana literature that has gone into the making of *Sita – A Poem*, it is deconstruction. But as I have indicated in the Preface, it raises questions that have always been with me as a human being and not necessarily as a woman opposed to a



man. The tonal variations and lyricism you talk of have naturally accompanied the poetic treatment of the theme as it took shape in the long poem. It is a delight to know that though I have never really spoken about it in the stage of its making with contemporary women writers across India, similar thoughts on Sita of the Ramayana have been voiced elsewhere in India too. I see it as part of a developing cultural ethos where gynocriticism gets a very Indian turn.

**GOUTAM KARMAKAR: What is the status of man in your verse? Do you really see a biased one?**

**NANDINI SAHU:** From the concept of the *Ardhanarishwar*, man force and woman force are complementaries that go into the making of any creation, whether life or art. My poetry over the years has ensconced different male figures – father, sibling, lover, care giver, errant et all. I do not in essence see a bias; for as a creative writer there is as much of a man-mind as a woman-mind that inheres in me. I have tried to look at man through the prism of the Indian cultural construct; upheld what is positive in it and decried what is negative. For one thing, I do not believe in generalizations – so it has been as it has come, not any unchangeable ‘status’ as you put it.

**GOUTAM KARMAKAR: What will be your advice to the emerging Indian poets writing in English? And what will be your message to your readers and to the humanity in general?**

**NANDINI SAHU:** Every poet has to evolve into an idea. Every reader should read with an open mind. And to humanity, my message is, love, nothing but love.

**GOUTAM KARMAKAR: Thank you Dr. Sahu for answering all my queries as it will make readers more interested about your works and about the status of women in general.**

**NANDINI SAHU: Thank you Goutam. Go ahead with your culture and folk studies.**

**Bio**

Goutam Karmakar is currently working as a PhD Research scholar at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences in National Institute of Technology Durgapur (NITD), India. He has attended seminars and conferences on English literature across the country. He has published articles and research papers in many international journals. He has taken interviews of notable Indian poets writing in English. He loves to read and write poetry and his debut poetic volume is going to publish. He seeks interest in Indian English poetry, Postmodern and Postcolonial literature, gender studies, queer theory, eco criticism, folklore and culture studies.