

Portray of Tribal Lifestyle in Songs of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika

Fancy Chutia

Department of Assamese, Visva-Bharati University

ABSTRACT: North East India is a land of multiple culture and pluralism. North Eastern states, better known as seven sister states are ample expression of 'Unity in Diversity' principle. To showcase the true nature of ethnicities and their cultural representation, 'Bard of Brahmaputra' Dr. Bhupen Hazarika composed many songs. His songs resonates the beauty of North East and its rich plural cultural heritage. This paper is an attempt to analyse the lives of various tribes of North Eastern India and how they have been represented in the songs of Bhupen Hazarika.

KEYWORDS: Bhupen Hazarika, North East India, songs, tribes, culture, Assamese.

Date of Submission: 07-12-2019

Date of acceptance: 18-12-2019

I. INTRODUCTION

Assamese community is a large manifestation of different small big tribes. Due to huge presence of tribal society within the Assamese community, it is alright to say that Assamese are more concerned about their ethnic identity rather than religious identity. We can see that many renowned personalities have always acknowledged the need of tribes in Assamese culture and tradition. Dr. Bhupen Hazarika is no exception to this. He dreamt of a united North East particularly Assam. Assam is land of diverse geography, culture, languages and ethnicities, but still it is united and integrated all over the years. Hazarika with his gifted talent uplifted the legacy of Assam and earned a global recognition. He tried to ensure harmony and tranquility among various tribes of Assam through his many songs.

Aims and Objectives: Bhupen Hazarika who calls himself a vagabond talks about man and life. He not only focused on music and as mere art form. But he believed art should be utilized for betterment of life and humanity. He was a strong proponent of 'Art for life's sake' philosophy. He always stuck to his own roots and endeavoured for a classless, casteless society.

Purpose: For studying the songs of Bhupen Hazarika and critically evaluate the references of tribal aspects, we adapted analytical and descriptive method.

Source: We have taken study materials such as magazines, books about Bhupen Hazarika's song as reference for preparing the article.

II. MAIN THEME DISCUSSION

The 'Bard of Brahmaputra' Dr. Bhupen Hazarika is a legendary musical maestro, lyricist, filmmaker who revolutionized the Assamese culture and its different prospects. He was born on 8th September, 1926 and is considered as 'Demi-God' of music in Assam. He through his songs mainly described and deliberately explored various aspects of socio-cultural life of Assam. His songs talks about man, motherland, the mighty Brahmaputra and human love. His songs preach a message of a casteless, classless, peacefull and non-violent society. He used ordinary expression with extraordinary talent in such a way that it creates magic. We can feel the smell of enriched culture of Assam in his creations.

Tribes and tribal culture are integral part of Assamese culture. Their essence can be reflected in Hazarika's many songs. Those songs represent the idea of communal harmony among different tribes of North East India such a Mizo, Khamti, Misings, Karbi, Khasi, Aka, Dimasa, Rabha etc. The compassionate relationship among tribes of hills and valleys are mentioned in his songs.

“Pahaar Bhoyam Eke Kora Ramdhenurei Dore Tumar Bhakhar Morombure Milan Hetu Gorhe.”

(Song: Axom Amar Rupohi)

Misings are one of the most cultured tribe of Assam. They mainly reside on the valleys near river banks in Upper Assam. They pose a rich cultural heritage and to showcase that aspect, Bhupen Hazarika composed a song called 'O' Missing Dekati'. It exemplifies the festival of 'Ali Aai Ligang' and how Mising people celebrated and enjoy their lives facing every happiness, sorrow and ups and downs. It can be best described through the following song:

“Bulu, O' Mising Dekati
Bojali Je pepati
Xurere Xojali Dekhu

Disang Xuror Nixati”

(Song: O’ Mising Dekati)

Likewise, it is notable that the song tells us about Mising dresscode.

“Mibugaluk sulati

Pererumbang Sadorkhon Kiyonu Pindhili?

Murot Dekhun Dumer Di Gamusa Aatili”

(Song: O’ Mising Dekati)

The ‘Oinitom’ vocal is associated with ‘Ali Aai Ligang’ festival. It expresses curiosity, melancholy and other emotions. The love life of missing young girls and boys are expressed in following song.

“Aru Ture Purukh Dehate Futi Futi Uthise

Heuj Rongor Jiya Jiya Oinitom”

(Song: O’ Mising Dekati)

Tea tribes are inseparable part of Assamese culture and society. They are brought by the Britishers in Assam to work as labourers. They might not be indigenous but have contributed in enriching Assamese society. Therefore, Hazarika composed many songs about their lives and experiences. Some of them are discussed as below:

“ Eti Koli Duti Pat

Ratanpur Bagisat

Lahpahiya Hatere Kunenu Singile

O’ Kunenu Singile?”

(Tea tribe women were dancing in Ratanpur tea garden and delicately plucked the leaves.)

Some songs like ‘Asom Dekhor Bagichare Suali’, ‘Ashwin Mache Durga Puja’, ‘Jigija Gijao’ also portrayed lives of tea tribe women.

Nepalese traditionally make their livelihoods by dairy farming. Therefore, lactating cows are very dear to them. When one day a young Nepali girl lost her cow on the banks of Kapili river, she expresses her grief through this song:-

“Fut Gadhulite Kapili Xutite

Kun Gorkhali Gabhorure Gaijoni Heral”

(Song: Fut Gadhulite Kapili Xutite)

The Karbi people of Assam have a much enriched culture and literature. They celebrate their festival ‘Somangkan’ very passionately. Actually ‘Somangkan’ is an annual funeral ceremony observed in Karbi villages to pay tribute to people died in that same year. Bhupen Hazarika has written a song beautifully describing the significance of this unique festival. ‘Somangkan’ is a festival of music, dance and enjoyment.

“Somangkan Utsavat Nas || Somangkan Hoi

Deka Gabhoruwe Nasi Dharitri Kopai”

III. POTRAYAL OF VARIOUS TRIBES OF NORTHEAST IN BHUPEN HAZARIKA’S SONG

Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh :The songs which were composed basically on the theme of tribes of Arunachal are ‘Siyangar Galeng’ and ‘Tirapa Ximanta’. These two songs glorify the unity, friendship and brotherhood among tribes of Arunachal Pradesh.

“Aaji Pahare Bhoyamor Koliya Sinise

O’ Shedukpen Aru Tangsai

Oka Aru Borire

Seneh Enajorire bati Karhise”

(Song: Siyangar Galeng)

The song ‘Tirapa Ximanta’ tells about the lifestyle of tribes of Arunachal and how they lead their lives in austerity.

“Xouwa Tirapar Wangshu

Tar Muthit Junga Jathi Pakmu

Dingit Likmoni Murot Kasha

Xoru Fanot Mari Nasise Shuwan

Sutikoi Mithare Awora Kokal

Bhahi Bhangi Gabhoruwe Diye Kinu Taal?

Boyaboh Paharok Xaboti Dhori

Suma Khai Thoka Dawor Aarot

Surujti Osposto”

(-Tirapa Ximanta)

Tribes of Meghalaya: 'O' Shillongore Monalisa Lyngdoh' is the song which can at best be described about the tribes of Meghalaya. The song resonates the nomadic life of Lord Krishna with the tribe itself and also focuses on Khasi Women.

"Monot Asene

Duyu Gorokhiya Sharatir Xure Xure

Kin Kin Borokhune Bhija

Shillong Pickot Xei Deobar Puwa"

(Song: O' Shillongore Monalisa Lyngdoh)

Tribes of Nagaland: The song presenting the references of Naga tribes actually is an attempt to understand the cordial and lovable relationship between people at the valley and people of hills. It is being done through the story of Dalimi and Godapani. Dalimi is actually a replica of 'Lucy' of Wordsworth and 'Godapani' was a famous Ahom king.

"Moi Kohimare Adhunika Dalimi

Moi Godapani Aadhunika Bhoyamor"

If we clearly look into Hazarika's song, we can see an attempt by him that he treated all man as equals and he believed that god created each one of us equally irrespective of caste, creed, religion, sex. And this message is the sole purpose of his songs.

IV. CONCLUSION

Bhupen Hazarika tirelessly work for Assamese culture and literature all his life. He wanted in diversity in the North East India. He on his magazine 'Amar Pratinidhi', openly declared that tribes like Wanshu, Monpa, Shingpho, Khamti are part of Assamese society. It shows his generosity and acceptance of diverse cultures. He himself was a son of soil and therefore, he strived for unifying the north eastern states as seven sister states. His songs possess versatile themes and the mention of different cultures, tribes etc escalate the resonance of his songs.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Kalita Pulin (Edited): "Biswanagorik Bhupen Hazarika", Chandra Prakashan, Guwahati-1, 2007.
- [2]. Barua Jerina: "Dr. Bhupen Hazarika Geetot Xangskritik Setonar Xondhan", Rekha Prakashan, Guwahati-1, First Edition, September 2018.
- [3]. Hazarika Sujyo (Edited): "Dr. Bhupen Hazarika Geet Homogro", Bani Mandir, Dibrugarh-1, Third Edition, 2010.
- [4]. Hazarika Manasmita (Collected): "Bhupen Hazarika Jaouti Jugiya Geet", Bani Mandir, Second Edition, 2012.

Fancy Chutia "Portray of Tribal Lifestyle in Songs of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika" International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention (IJHSSI), vol. 08, no. 12, 2019, pp. 55-57