



## Reflections of tribal life in the songs of Dr Bhupen Hazarika

**Utpala Das**

Department of Assamese, Gauhati University, Guwahati, India

### Abstract

The north east region of India is the abode of various caste and community living harmoniously. Asom ratna Dr. Bhupen Hazarika who was a minute observer and thinker of life and society had given a message in his each and every song. The subjects of his song are a wide field of study. He travelled from place to place and tried his best to re-establish the common binding of brotherhood among the different tribes living in Assam. In this paper, we are trying to explore the kind of songs that Dr Hazarika sang and composed in which he had reflected the social life of various castes, communities and tribes. The simplicity of rural life and the socio-culture of the tribal societies of Assam have been clearly reflected in his songs. He has not only shown the differences of folk culture of these tribes but also tries to establish a friendly relation among all these tribes living in Assam.

**Keywords:** Dr Bhupen Hazarika, tribal life, reflection, Assam

### 1. Introduction

Dr Bhupen Hazarika was stern sensitive not only about the people of Assam but also about every man in this earth. Artist of the common mass, Dr Hazarika was a writer, lyricist, composer, singer, film-maker etc. and a man of diverse quality and huge personality. His every song is very touching and sensitive. How much concerned he was about the society is reflected in each and every song of Dr Hazarika. He was greatly influenced by Sri Sri Sankardeva ever since his childhood. This may be the sole reason behind the theme of unity in his songs. With the theme of unity from Sankardeva and harmony from Jyoti-Bishnu Dr Hazarika tried to rebuild a bridge between the tribal people of the hills and the people of plains. In this paper we will try to explore the kind of songs that Dr Hazarika sang and composed in which he had reflected the social life of various castes, communities and tribes for which he became popular among the mass.

### 2. Analysis

#### 2.1. Subjectivity of Dr Hazarika's songs

The subject of Bhupen Hazarika's song is a wide field of study. Dr. Hazarika who was a minute observer and thinker of life and society had given a message in

his each and every song. If we look at the versatility of subject matter of Dr Hazarika's song we can notice that he had composed song on every aspect of the society. He had dreamt of a social change with the help of songs. Dr. Hazarika was an artist of deep social concern and responsibility. Social turbulence, hatred, corruption etc. had been discussed in his songs.

#### 2.2. Song of Dr Hazarika and tribal Life

The north east region of India is the abode of various caste and community living harmoniously. Once all the states of north east formed the Greater Assam. Dr. Hazarika was deeply influenced by the rich inherited culture, traditions and simplicity of the people of this region. He took initiative to establish a fellow-feeling, harmony and brotherhood among the people of these states. Assam too got independence when India became free from the colonial domination of the British. In the post-independent Assam home war arose among different communal societies and on the basis of religious differences. The land of Assam had to behold blood strains on her heart. Contributions of great souls like Sankardeva, Ajan Fakeer seemed to be neglected. The string with which all the caste, community, tribe etc. were bound united was trying to be broken into

pieces. Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, an artist of the common masses, a lover of humanity, believer of harmony and integrity could not tolerate this breaking down of Assamese society. He travelled from place to place and tried his best to re-establish the common binding of brotherhood among the different tribes living in Assam. As result of his indomitable spirit and zeal a number of meaningful, melodious and worthy songs came to exist.

He has called the 'Burha Luit' (Old Brahmaputra) the old pilgrimage of greater harmony for the people of entire North East. The simplicity of rural life and the socio-culture of the tribal societies of Assam have been clearly reflected in the songs of Dr. Hazarika. Talking about the theme of harmony in Dr. Hazarika's song Dr. Dilip Dutta said, "*Dr Hazarika knew well that without harmony between the hills and plains the beauty and future of Assam will be endangered. An appeal for establishing this harmony is heard in many of his songs*".

The Assamese language and nation is enriched by all the regional dialects of different tribes of Assam. So Dr. Hazarika has given due respect and importance to all the tribes of Assam in his songs. As he mentioned of Sri Sri Sankardeva, he has not forgotten Bishnu Rava's contribution in the formation of the great Assamese nation.

*"Bodo, Rava, Misingar rupe-raxe varpur  
Jiya jiya amar vaxa  
Likhabur kiya baru parhi parhi  
Suwa nai pamegam Bishnu Ravar"*

Bishnu Rava's contribution in the formation of the greater Assamese nation is confessed by Dr. Bhupen Hazarika in his one of the evergreen song 'Mahabahu Brahmaputra' saying—

*"Kirat putra  
Bishu Ravai  
Matir krsiti jiyale  
Xamanyayar dekhuale kata  
prakax swatwohsfurta"*

The definition and dimension of Assam and Assamese were huge and wide for Dr Hazarika. He had his own perception and viewpoints about it. He has expressed this through his song...

*"Nana jati upajati  
Rahaniya Kristi  
Akuwali loi hoisil srusti  
Ai mur Axom desh  
Bived parihari  
Nij hate sram kari  
Dexak nagarhile  
Ai desh habo nixesh"*

### 2.3. Life of the Mising Tribe reflected in the Songs of Dr Hazarika

The Mising Tribe is one of the indigenous community of Assam living in different parts of the land. In the ancient time they lived in the hills of the north-east region. At present Mising people are living in some parts of Sonitpur, Lakhimpur, Dhemaji. The contributions of the Mising people in the formation of the greater Assamese society can never be ignored. The life of this community was first brought into the arena of literature by Rajani Kanta Bordaloi through his novel *Miri-Jiyari*. The rites and rituals, manners and customs, attires and attitude etc. of the Mising people are brought to light through the love story of Janki-Panoi. Bringing this story into his song Dr Hazarika dreamt of a harmonious relation of the Mising people with the other tribes of Assam. So he sang:

*"...A Janki panoir Mising xamaj  
Nijai disang abung hoi  
Axomire bor luitor xut -ti barhabo  
Maramere ai jugti !"*

### 2.4. Tribal People of Arunachal Pradesh in the songs of Dr Hazarika:

Bhupen Hazarika, an artist of the common masses considered Arunachal as the heaven on earth. He had composed many songs on the tribal people of this hilly region. They are very simple and hardworking. They have the great tradition of hospitality. So he had sung...

*"Siyangore galong  
Luitore khamti  
Aru tirapore bansuye muk kiyo matise ?  
Axomire paduli uduli je muduli  
Maram senehere hat bahise !"*

The song "Siyangore galong" was composed by Bhupen Hazarika in the year 1961 in Along. He had shown the harmonious relation of different tribes living in Arunachal since time unmemorable. Moreover, he composed songs to establish friendly relation between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.

### 2.5. Life of the Tea Tribes in the Songs of Dr Hazarika:

The tea tribe of Assam was brought to this part of land from different regions of India by the British to work in their Tea Estates. Though they are not the indigenous people of Assam still they have made a huge contribution to form the multicultural Assamese society. Dr. Hazarika has presented the honesty, simplicity, culture and all the social values of this tribe in his songs very beautifully. To describe the hard work of these people he sang... "ati koli, duti pat". This is not the only famous song of Hazarika written on the

Tea tribe but also the song...

*“jagija gijao jagija gijao ranga jaba ful  
Chuto-boro-gorib nai, nai jati kul !!  
Upor mahal nisor mahal kunu bived nai  
Ai assamot jiman asu sabai bhai bhai”*

Moreover, “*axom deshor bagisare suali, sampa nahay mure nam sameli...*” is also a very popular song. Here he has shown the pure love of the serene hearts of the Adibashi youths.

*“A radhasurar ful guji  
Radhapuror radhika  
Sah bagisat jumur nasi  
Jugnuk nase fatika  
Xeï fatika prem fatika  
(tat) vejal tezal aku nai !!”*

### 3. Conclusion

The songs of Dr Hazarika reflect social life of almost all the tribes of North east India. Apart from the tribes already discussed, Dr Hazarika also composed songs on other tribes living in Assam like Karbi, Bodo, Kachari, Khasi, Garo, Mizo, Dimasa etc. He had made minute observation on the lives of the different tribes and has presented them in his songs. He has not only shown the differences of folk culture of these tribes but also tries to establish a friendly relation among all these tribes living in Assam. Forgetting about variations of language, culture, rites and rituals Dr Hazarika called all tribes to come under the same roof of brotherhood.

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