



A STUDY ON THE KAMRUPEE AND GOALPARIYA LOKAGEET AND ITS PRESENTATION IN ASSAMESE FILMS.

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Abstract: Assamese music is composed of a variety of genres. Assamese music passed a long journey from the devotional music of Srimanta Sankardeva to the Assamese modern trend that started from the beginning of the last century. Before Srimanta Sankardeva the prevalence of *Charyapada* is known in this geographical area. Assam is the homeland to many tribal and non-tribal groups. Every group has its own folk music. So, Assamese music can be said as a treasurer of a variety of genres. Two such kind of musical genres of Assam are Kamrupee Lokageet and Goalpariya Lokageet. They are originated from the places that adjacent to their names. As like other folk genres of Assam those above mentioned genres are also presented in Assamese films as playback songs. But the journey of the recognition of those regional folk genres is not so long. Assamese films helped them to reach to a larger audience. This paper discusses about some filmy songs belongs to Kamrupee and Goalpariya Lokageet and some other filmy songs that influenced by them.

Key words: Kamrupee, Goalpariya, Genre.

The synonyms of folksong in Assamese are *Lokageet*. Many Assamese musical genres fall under the word Assamese folk song. They are like *Bihunaam* (Bihu Song), *Biyanaam* (marriage song), *Dehbisar Geet*, *Ainaam*, *Dhainaam*, *Nichukani Geet* etc. Assam is habited by numerous ethnic and tribal groups. Those groups have their own folk festivals and music. Generally they are practised in their own languages and dialects. Thus, Assam can be said as a treasurer of varieties of folk music.

But a special genre of Assamese folk music is also called *Lokageet*. Two sub-genres fall in the category. Those are *Kamrupee Lokageet* and *Goalpariya Lokageet*. They are named according to the place of its origin and development. The name Kamrup refers to the areas Adjacent to present Kamrup district. Present Barpeta is an important part of it as far as the origin of the genre is concerned. But it was not known as Kamrupee music in the initial stage of recognition. The history of the development of those genres is not so long. Researcher in Assamese Loknath Goswami says about those genres of music as,

“Namani Asomor Phale Kamrup anchalat chala Lokageetsamuh Kamrupee Lokageet hisape chali asil jodiu taru anusthanik swikriti prathame nasil. Trisar dasakar majbhagar pora gramophone recordot ane dharanar kichuman geet Asomiya silpi sakale banibadhwa karisil jodiu Bhatiali, Dehbisar, Tokari Geet hisapei namakaran kora haisil. Akedore abibhakta Goalpara anchalat Aji Goalporiya hisape janapriya hoa geet bilak prantiya Desigeet hisapei juge juge chali asil. Kintu anebilak thalua geetmatar kono pranalibadhya adhyayan, anushilan athaba sanrakshan byabasthya purbe nasil.” (Goswami, 2016)

(The folk songs of the Kamrup region in southern Assam were known as ‘*Kamrupee*’ folk songs but they were not officially recognised at first. Some of these songs were recorded on gramophone records by Assamese artists from the mid-1930s but were named as *Bhatiali*, *Dehbichar* and *Tokari* songs. Similarly, the songs that is popular today as ‘*Goalparia*’ in the undivided Goalpara region have been used as marginal *Desi* songs for centuries.).

Goalpariya Lokageet developed in the areas of present Goalpara, Dhubri and adjacent areas. The songs are sung in Goalpara sub-language. The term of Goalpara Lokageet embraces some genres which are named as Bhawaiwa Geet, Mahaut Geet etc. *Goalpariya Lokageet* reflects the folk life of the undivided Goalpara region. Saying about the importance of those songs in those societies Dwijen Nath wrote,

“Goalparat prachalit bhivinna Lokageetar vitarat premmulak lokageet khinir akhani bisesh ashan ase. Ujani Assamar Bihugeetar darai ei srenir geetatu sengra sengri arthat deka gabharur Milan bashana aru birah bedana bar sundarbhave prakash paise. Bihugeetat premar mancha pathar nair chapari ahatar tal barir chuk adi huar dare Goalpariya geetatu premar manchrupe ullekhit hoise dhalla ,tolla, raydak adi nadir ghat, mohar bathan rajhawli, hatir mahal adi. Bihugeetat premaspadak chenai , mainajaan, sonai s,kechasun, dhan adi sabdare sambodhan karar dare Goalpariya lokageetatu premikai Bawra, Bandhu, sakhi, patidhan, jiban, kajal, bhumora adi matere premikak sambodhan karise.” (H. K. Sarma, 2018, p. 269)

(The songs that based on love songs still have a special place in Goalpara. Like the Bihu songs of Upper Assam the union desire of the boys and girls is beautifully reflected in the songs. Like the paddy fields which were the places of expressing love in *Bihu* songs, the rivers like Champa, Balla, Torsa Raidak and the buffalo sheds, royal palaces were done the same in *Goalpariya Lokageet*. Like *Bihu* songs where the girls addressed her loved one as *Chenai, Moinajaan, Sonai, Kechasun, Dhan*, In *Goalpariya Lokageet* the same is done with the words like *Baura, Bandhu, Sakhi, Patidhan, Jiban, Kajal Bhumura* etc.)

Some characters that very common in the rural society of Goalpara found place in *Goalpariya Lokageet*. *Mahut* or elephant rider, *Maishal* or buffalo rider, *Baisal* or ferry rider were referred frequently in the songs of this genre. *Dotara, Tokari, flute, Dhuloki* are generally played with the songs. Pratima Pandey Baruahhh was the person behind lime lighting this genre to the masses. She hails from the royal family of Gauripur. She did not learn music formally. Saying about her contribution behind lime lighting the genre, Simona Sarma says,

“As soon as the songs reached a larger audience, Pratima Pandey’s position in the context of Goalpariya lokageet changed significantly. The Assamese population across the nation began to associate her with the ‘ideal’ singer. Women from different strata and backgrounds, belonging to diverse communities, began singing the hitherto marginalized Goalpariya folk songs.”(S. Sarma, 2019)

Bhupen Hazarika met her in 1955. That connection became an important event for the future of *Goalpariya Lokageet*. Loknath Goswami narrates,

“Pratham Erabator Sur pasot mahut bondhu re r joriyote Pratima Pandey Baruahhh parabarti kalate egoraki kingbadantiawarup lokageetar shilpi hoar path prasastha hai. HMV companier pora Pratima Pandey Baruahhr geetar gramophone record pratham prakash pai 1975 sanat. Akashbanir Goalpariya lookageetar shilpirupe niomiya swrikriti labh kore 1976 sanaa porahe. Iyar agaloike ei geetsamuh desigeet hisapei prasalit asil. Shilpigorakir nijar bhashyamote Goalpariya lookageet namere geetsamuh aru prasarat Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, Purusuttam Das adir obodan anaswikarya”(Goswami, 2004)

(First ‘Era Bator Sur’ and later ‘Mahut Bondhure’ made Pratima Pandey Baruahhh a legendary singer. HMV Company first released a gramophone record of Pratima Pandey Baruahh’s songs in the year 1975. From 1976, she was recognised as singer of *Goalpariya Lookgeet* by All India Radio. Earlier those songs were known as *Desi Geet*. According to the artists own commentary, the songs were named and promoted as *Goalpariya Lookgeet* by Bhupen Hazarika and Purusottam Das, whose contribution is undeniable).

In the initial period of the recognition of the genres, two new-born media film and radio took a crucial role. The endeavour of Purosottam Das, the then program executive of All India Radio Guwahati, for promoting the genre was noticeable. He took initiative for recording Goalpariya Lokageet in the voice of Pratima Pandey Baruahhh. Surya Das, the former station director of AIR, Guwahati wrote,

“1948 sanat akashbani Guwahati kendra sthapan hoat Asomor lokageetsamuhar sangrah aru pracharar kshetratu akashbaniye batkotiyar bhumika palan koratu ek ullekhjyogya ghatana. Pruosottam Dasar netritwat keigorakiman sangeetpremi loke bibhinna anchalar pora lokageet sangrah sangrah kori ani ei byapak janapriya madhyamtir jogedi pracharit howar sujug dan korisil.”(Das, 2022, p. 229)

(The Guwahati Radio Station was established in 1948 and played a pioneering role in the collection and dissemination of folk songs of Assam was an important event. Some music lovers under the leadership of Purusottam Das collected folk songs from the different places and gave the opportunity in spreading through the very popular medium.)

Bhupen Hazarika first introduced *Goalpariya lokageet* in the movie ‘Era Batar Sur’. It was sung by Pratima Pandey Baruahhh and Bhupen Hazarika himself. ‘That song ‘Dung nari dang’ was the first experience of Pratima Pandey Baruahhh in playback singing. Bhupen Hazarika used only a *Dotara* with the song.

Again Bhupen Hazarika added the *Goalpariya lokageet* ‘Sonar baran pakhi’ for the movie ‘Maniram Dewan’ (1961). Lyrics of the song were orally transmitted. Jayanta Hazarika and Syamal Mitra lent voice for the song. With the traditional instruments *Tabla* was played in that song. Jitu-Tapan composed the song ‘O ki veloa kandish’ in their music directed movie ‘Marichika’ (1972). The song was sung by the Bengali folk singer Nirmalendu Chaudhury.

The nature of *Kamrupee Lokageet* is devotional. Stories from *Puran* and *Upanishada*, from *Ramayana* to *Mahabharata* found place in the songs. Sometimes the stories of *Ballads* found place in the *Kamrupee Lokageets*. The story of *Sati Beula* is an example of it.

Use of some lines like ‘O Hari ye’, ‘O ki o’, ‘He Ram Ram’ in between the song is common in *Kamrupee Lakageet*. *Ektara*, *Dagar*, *Dotara*, flute are accompanied in those songs. Now a day *Tabla* and other western instruments is seen played with the songs in stage performances and in recordings. Like we know Pratima Pandey Baruahhh for her endeavour towards *Goalpariya lokageet* same responsibility was taken by

Rameswar Pathak and his wife Dhanada Pathak for *Kamrupee Lokageet*. Rameswar Pathak appeared in the audition for modern song in in Guwahati Radio Centre. But after hearing his typical voice quality that sweetable for folk song, Kirti Kamal Bhuyan shifted his direction from modern song to *Kamrupee lokageet*. Like other folk songs lyrics of *Kamrupee lokageets* are also orally transmitted. But most of the songs of that genre that screened in the films are newly penned. As far as screening in films is concerned it is difficult to draw a strict line between *Kamrupee Lokageet* and Assamese modern song.

Kamrupee Lokageet was first screened in the movie '*Bhakta Prahlad*' (1967). It was the first devotional movie in Assamese language. In his own composition Brajen Baruahhh sang the song '*O hari charan diya hain*'. As like Bhupen Hazarika, the initiative of Brajen Baruahhh in presenting Assamese folk music in Assamese film is noticeable. The song was written by Keshab Mahanta.

Bhupen Hazarika screened a *Kamrupee Lokageet* in his movie '*Maniram Dewan*'. It is noticeable that one from both genre of *Kamrupee Lokageet* and *Goalpariya Lokageet* were found place in this movie. That song '*He mai Jashowa he*' was sung by himself. The lyrics of the song were orally transmitted. With Assamese folk instruments Bhupen Hazarika used some other instruments like table, violin and sitar in the song.

Anima Chaudhury's first song as a playback singer for Assamese movie was a *Kamrupee lokageet*. The music of that film '*Mukuta*' (1970) was directed by Ramen Baruahhh. Lyrics of the song were orally transmitted. That song '*He pran Gopal patila mayare khela*' was accompanied with folk instruments like *Dotara* and *Dagar*. The pieces of flute in the interludes of the song increases enhance the beauty of the song. The composer kept the distinguished characters intact in the song.

The voice of Anima Chaudhury again can be heard in a *Kamrupee Lokageet* in the movie '*Pranganga*' (1972). The song was '*Nubuju tomar maya he prabhu*' was penned and tuned by by Dr. Upen Kakati. The voice of Anima Chaudhury was gradually accepted as a *Kamrupee lokageet* singer by the listeners. The singer sang another *Kamrupee Lokageet* '*Brindrabana teji Krishna*' for the movie '*Putala Ghar*'. Lyricist of the song was written by Tafajjul Ali. The song was started with a prelude of flute and dotara. A single stroke

of *khutitaal* can be heard in between every round of the rhythm. The composer was successful in keeping the song in the line of the folk genre.

Inspired by the tune of *Kamrupee lokageet* Ajit Singha composed the song '*Prabhu mor tumiye srajila*' for the movie '*Bhaity* (1972)'. Arati Mokherjee lent voice for the song. The song creates an environment of devotion. The composer tried to give a folk shape by playing dotara and flute with the song. But as far as the tune is concerned the song is looked like more close to the Assamese modern song.

A *Kamrupee Lokageet* sang by Namita Bhattacharya was screened in the movie '*Maram*'(1978). The composer Ramen Baruahhh used folk instrument like *dotara* and flute in that song. That song '*Runu junu runu jnu ghungura bojai*' was written by Keshab Mahanta.

The song '*Tumi henu karuna sagar*' of the movie '*Mainajaan*'(1980) is based on the conventional tune of *Kamrupee Lokageet*. Khagen Mahanta composed the song on the lyrics of Keshab Mahanta. With Assamese folk instruments other Hindustani instruments are used in this song. But to present it as a film song the composer used the interludes which are not generally played in a *Kamrupee Lokageet*. The tune was beautifully fitted in the voice of Archana Mahanta.

A song of this kind can be heard in the movie '*Bowari*'. Lyrics of that song '*Prabhu tumi karuna sagar*' is similar to orally transmitted devotional *Kamrupee Lokageets*. But the tune didn't follow the general note pattern of *Kamrupee Lokageet*. It was sung by Santa Uzir. The song was composed by Dr. Upen Kakati. The special feature of his music lies on blending folk tunes with modern tunes which makes the song appropriate for movie. An another song of the same movie '*Kirtan Dasamar Sankar guru*' is also influenced by Assamese folk of that kind. That song was rendered by Malabika Bora. This song was again written by the composer Upen Kakati. With the folk instruments sitar was a part of the song. The composer used both flute and sitar in the interludes of the song.

Ramen Baruah composed a *Kamrupee lokageet* in the movie '*Manashi*'. That song '*Radhai bole dekha dekha*' was sung by the composer himself. Instruments accompanied the song is limited to mainly Dotara, flute and Tabla. Singer that known for *Kamrupee Lokageet*, Rameswar Pathak sang one of the most popular

Kamrupee Lokageet for the movie '*Antony Mor Naam*'(1986). The song was '*Sankar guru amare*'. Ramen Baruahh composed the music of this movie. The composer used *Nagera*, *Khol* and *Bartaal* in this song. The composer used a group voice as the song was presented like a *prasang* (prayer in group) in the film. Use of two tempos in the same rhythm increases the beauty of the song. The song was lipped by Biju Phukan in the film.

Following the characters of *Kamrupee* lokageet, Ramen Baruah composed another song '*Runu junu runu junu ghungura bojai*' for the movie '*Maram*'(1978).The song was written by Keshab Mahanta. Folk instruments like *dutara*, *ektara* are accompanied with the song which was sung by Namita Bhattacharya. A shadow of *Kamrupee Lokageet* is seen in the tune of the song '*Oi kinu maya sansharate*', which was written by Nagen Bora and sung by Pulak Banerjee and. But instead of folk instruments the composer used tabala, and mandolin. Use of *khol* and *Bartaal* In the last *antara* of the song increases the beauty of the song.

Assamese folk and folk based songs were always given importance by the music directors throughout the years. But *Kamrupee* and *Goalpariya Lokageets* were not seen in the picture after 1990s. A change of singing and performing style is seen in those genres after the advent of cassettes, prime aim of which was making profit. Use of non-conventional instruments is common with those genres now a day. Besides, experiments with those genres as fusion are done by many singers which were also accepted by the listeners. But in such situation extinct of folk elements and distance from originality is noticed in those songs.