



BHUPEN HAZARIKA'S CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS SOCIAL HARMONY IN NORTH- EAST-INDIA

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Abstract: Bhupen Hazarika was a stalwart in the annals of India's cultural heritage, the lyricist music maestro, singer, film maker, an icon in the cultural world. He was born on September 8 in 1926, parented by Nilakanta Hazarika and Shantipriya Hazarika. Bhupen Hazarika was born while Sadiya was under British rule. The place was badly devastated by the earthquake of 1950. As Sadiya was situated near the mighty Brahmaputra it had an impact on Bhupen Hazarika during childhood and developed attachment to the mighty river. The Brahmaputra induced him to compose a number of songs on the river.

Bhupen Hazarika worked tirelessly throughout his life to create a bond of fraternity and dignity between the people of different communities of Assam and the North-East-India.

Key words: Bhupen Hazarika, contribution, North-East-India, social harmony

Introduction

Bhupen Hazarika was a stalwart in the annals of India's cultural heritage. He was a lyricist, music maestro, singer, film maker, an icon in the cultural world. He was born on September 8 in 1926, parented by Nilakanta Hazarika and Shantipriya Hazarika. His mother Shantipriya Hazarika belonged to a cultural family of Bharalumukh, Guwahati. His father Nilakanta Hazarika worked at Sadiya, which was earlier known as, "Sadiya Frontier Tract, under the control of British political Agent. The area around Sadiya was covered by forests. Sadiya was important geographically, politically, historically and socially. It was inhabited by different communities and tribes like Adi, chutia, Khamti, Deori, Koivotra and Nepaliese along with a few Marwarees." Bhupen Hazarika was born while Sadiya was under British rule. The place was badly devastated by the earthquake of 1950. As Sadiya was situated near mighty Brahmaputra it had an impact on Bhupen Hazarika during childhood and he developed an attachment to the mighty river. The Brahmaputra induced him to compose a number of songs on the river.

Bhupen Hazarika worked tirelessly throughout his life to create a bond of fraternity and dignity amongst the people of different communities of Assam and the North-East-India. He was the heart throb of all these people. If this bond of love and fraternity does not exist among the various communities living in Assam like Bodo-Kacharies, Lalungs, Miri-Mikirs, Tai-Ahoms, Rabhas, Hajongs, Deories, Chutiyas, Morans, Koch-Rajbonshis, Tea-Tribes and other people belonging to different religions, castes the state cannot remain a healthy one. Bhupen Hazarika had a strong belief that steps have to be taken to develop the language and cultural of each and every community for building a greater Assamese society and that music was a very strong device. Bhupen Hazarika simultaneously worked for the progress of the neighboring states of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur and Mizoram. He made serious efforts through songs and visits to make people of the region aware of these issues.

Objectives

Bhupen Hazarika was a multitalented person. Therefore it is not possible to discuss all factors of his life and activities in this research paper. The main objective of this research paper is to briefly discuss some elements which contributed towards the social harmony of the state of Assam as well as North-East-India. The objectives of the study are as follows.

* To evaluate the impact of social and cultural life in Assam by Bhupen Hazarika.

* To analyse the socio-cultural Assimilation in different songs of North-East-India by Bhupen Hazarika.

Methodology

In order to analyse the contribution towards social harmony of Bhupen Hazarika in the state of Assam as well as North-East-India secondary data from different sources has been used. The data for the study has been collected from various books, journals, etc.

Contribution To Society Through Songs

Bhupen Hazarika is not only a name, he is an institution in himself he kept the audience in Assam, India and the World over spellbound with his soul-stirring songs. He made sterling contributions through the hundreds of songs that he composed and sang. He thought, his mentality that were expressed through his songs are difficult to find in any other singer. "It may be relevant to quote Dr. Homen Borgohain here who said in Bhupen Hazarika's vast array of songs, there has been recorded an expressive picture of the hopes

aspirations of a generation of Assam's history. There is not a single community of Assam about whom he has not sung. No other Assamese poet or singer can claim to have done anything similar."

Hazarika was successful in giving the voice of the new age to the society through his songs. Issues like labour's dignity, the rights of people, communism, universal brotherhood, the question of right and wrong were shown by him to the people as novel steps. "The dignity of labour witnessed in the song. *Autorickshaw chalu aami duyoy bhai, Guwahati karu gulzaar, BA fail moi saru bhai MA pass*, the universal awareness seen in Mahashunyat *upagrah haji eye gan-sanjog koruwar jug* the timely questioned raised in *Sathor bhora nikha mur hon hobo baidho ki aboidho ki prashna hobo*, or the progressive thoughts reflected in *Nohole aamar rajior nai buli biswai borke haanhibo* or *Aami biswar usarat pongu anga hola, Biswoi jaanu bhal paabo*, reflect the internal thoughts of a society, globally aware poet"

Some of his songs are a critique of the prevalent customs and rules of a society, some of his songs speak about the society's weakness, some paint a vivid picture of life etc. The increasing desire or greed for money or property instead of love for a human being or to bury all morality in the name of getting happiness or pleasure, Bhupen Hazarika has expressed through his songs beautifully. Consciously or unconsciously his songs have painted many pictures of a social life or living. *Jiyati thaki ekhoni samaj gohibor mur mon aasa*, *Jot sonotkayoh manuhor daam olop halew besi aasa*, *Meetha-telot beeh dhaaliboloi guruya shikha nidila*, *Samaje sabotibo manaboto mahaan manabota*, *Bigyaane aanibo jowar* etc. are some songs in which the social angle is seen to large extent. He contributed in this manner to the society through songs.

Contribution towards social harmony in North-East-India

Bhupen Hazarika worked for the society in this manner. When he went to Arunachal Pradesh, he got assimilated with the local people there. He built a bridge of love between the people of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. When he came back from there, he heard his Arunachal friends called him, 'Hey! Please wait! Go back and tell the Assamese – today the hill has been the heart of the valley. He created the bond of friendship between the people of the hills and plains.

To create a bond of friends between the people of Assam and Nagaland. Bhupen Hazarika imagining himself to be Gadapani proposed love to Dalimi of Tuensang and made her the bride so that Dalimi sang excitedly that she was a daughter-in-law of Assam to which Gadapani responded that he was the son-in-law of Tuensang and in their unison, the hills and dales sang out aloud, 'We together are the living symbols of harmony of east and we repeat the songs of old.

The ties between the Assamese and Khasi people are very ancient. Due to political reasons, the communities have been set apart. Bhupen Hazarika in the following words tried to blind the two societies with the thread of love.

He he he dhola dogore

He he he hiyaar umere

Nadekha enajarire

.....

Barhaon Asomir mahan akotak

He made remarkable contribution towards strengthening the bond of unity between the Assamese people and other communities. Bhupen Hazarika warned against the attempts of a section of people believing in militant Assamese nationalism to impose Assamese language upon others. He always asked the people of Assam to remember the rain fold contributions made by the different caste-communities to the social life of the Assamese people.

Bhupen Hazarika was himself strictly against any difference in caste, community or religion. He played a leading part in strengthening the age old ties of friendship and love between the Hindus and Muslims of Assam and he composed the song *Ramzanore roza gol* (Ramzan's roza have finished) as a warning to those people who tried to harm these relations. He had pro claimed very early in his life that history says that there was an army of Lachit Barphukan, who fought for maintaining the autonomy of Assam intact. History warns when rivers of blood flowed in other parts of the country during communal clashes in Assam there was never any incident of any clash between Hindu and Muslims. Today when some conspirators try to divide the two, they may learn from the song.

Through the songs, he gave a brilliant exposition of the situation and made the people recollect the bond of harmony and integrity that existed between the Hindu and Muslims of Assam. Even after all these, violence and tensions keep on rising among the people, the string of friendship threatens to break loose. Bhupen Hazarika kept on working to reconstruct the broken foundation. The songs he sung all his life were songs of unity and harmony. Today he is not present physically but his thought, work, views make his presence felt very strongly. He taught to people to love breaking the narrowness of the mind and coming out of the mindset of violence by obliterating the divisions created by caste, community, religion and language. There are among his most notable contribution towards the Assamese society. Every person living in this region should take Hazarika's view as his own and work accordingly for the betterment of the society.

Indian people theatre association (IPTA) and Bhupen Hazarika

Bhupen Hazarika got intimately connected with the IPTA and the IPTA Movement. Through this, he immensely contributed both directly and indirectly to the Assamese society. In 1943 with the birth of the IPTA in Bombay, a new thinking started to take roots in the minds of Assam's artist and literatures. The Guwahati Branch of IPTA came in to existence in 1944 when Bhupen Hazarika took the B.A Degree from Banaras. He contributed to the Guwahati branch along with people like Brojen Barua. After completing his post-graduation in 1946. He good very actively involved in the social and cultural fields.

The IPTA movement had played a very important role in invigorating the contemporary Assamese society in the social and cultural fields. In the 1950 two extraordinary personalities straddled the IPTA movement. Hemanga Biswas and Dr Bhupen Hazarika Biswas's organizational acumen and Hazarika's charismatic personality had managed to attract many persons towards the movement. Hazarika himself said once, an IPTA conference was organized in Guwahati. Balraj Sahni came of the whole of Assam was invited. Everybody came due to our appeal." "In fact Moghai Ojah, Narahari Baruah, Bhakat, Partima Boruah etc. Folk artiste came to the IPTA platform because of Hemanga Biswas and Bhupen Hazarika. All the artiste who came to the IPTA conference like Brojen Baruah, Ramen Baruah, Hireen Choudhary etc. were not members of the communist party nor were they admirer of communist ideals. But the concept of humanism and healthy nationalism and the artist personalities attracted all towards it." In this manner, Bhupen Hazarika contributions his mite to the IPTA and the people's theatre movement and in the process made unmatched contributions to the society in general.

Conclusion

The real successor of Kalaguru Bhishnu Prashad Rabha and jyoti Prashad Agarwala was Bhupen Hazarika. Bhupen Hazarika had an incomparable personality. The artist of Bhupen Hazarika was universal. He was a singer, music composer, journalist, prose writer, poet, film maker, artist, director, folksongs collector and educationist. His talent was versatile. However, he was very well known throughout the country and abroad as a music composer and singer and was the heart throb of the people of Assam.

Bhupen Hazarika's creative motive in the field of music, culture, cinema etc. has a great significance in our society, and will have significance in future. After his death, people paid tributes to him in a very emotional manner. With his death, an era came to an end. Physically he may not be with us, but the genuine love expressed by lakhs and lakhs of people have given him immortality. The people's artist Bhupen Hazarika will remain alive in the heart of every Assamese like the petal of a flower and his admirers hope that the future of Assamese language, culture and music will brighten further. In the absence of this world famous artist, the Assamese community, the government, his countless fans have a lot to do.

Suggestion

There are several areas to study the achievements or contributions of the artist of international fame, Bhupen Hazarika. To conserve his valuable work for all times to come and to publicize and popularize them, it is the need of the hour to take various steps. His songs have always spoken for unity among the people of various castes, tribes and communities living in Assam. Hazarika's songs have to be researched and analysed and taken before the new generation. The government should take all measures needed to get his songs translated in to English and various other languages and place them before the world. The state government has already preserved his various creative works, awards, prizes, memorial signs etc. at the Srimanta Sankardev Kolakshetra in Guwahati. Various organizations have already set up his statues at Lakhimpur, Bihpuria, Bokakhat, Dargaon, Sivasagar etc. His Samadhi near the Guwahati University has been constructed beautifully by the Assam Government. To keep Bhupen Hazarika alive, some of his creations may be included in the syllabus of either schools or colleges. The government should take some steps so that the new generation can have a feel of his life philosophy, thinking, viewpoint, his creative works etc.

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