

Anti-Communal songs of Bhupen Hazarika: An analytical study

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0.0 Abstract:

Looking back to the history of Assamese Literature, we get that there is a long history of lyrical composition in Assamese Literature. Counting from the orally transmitted folk verses to the contemporary composition, Assamese Lyrical Literature has tossed across various phases. On this vibrant enriching the lyrical Literature in different periods. It is remarkable that, due to efforts of some of the prominent lyricists, Assamese Lyrical literature started to proceed a more sophisticated tune from the mid-twentieth century. Among those, Bhupen Hazarika was one of the best persons whose contributions have left sheds for ages. Dr. Bhupen Hazarika was not only a lyricist or composer—but a conscious figure bearing the feeling of social responsibility towards Assamese culture. He had always eyes for a society out of the social evils such as social exploitation, fraudism, murder, hatred etc. We could not remain silent after expressing the social degradation of his contemporary Assamese society. Rather, those incidents and events had awaked his artist-soul. Those sufferings emerged from his contemporary social issues made him, to pen down many the heart-touching songs which have proved to be persistent over time. We may trace pictures of many communal riots happened in Assam in his songs. Actually, Hazarika has not limited himself in portraying the communal riots, but also has made people to be aware of the danger of such communalism. How the ill-effects of the various communal conflicts occurred in not only of Assam, but also in the whole country has impacted the social growth and unity is also portrayed through imagery narratives in his lyrics. He always had dream for building a society in Assam which is peaceful land contented out of the communal discrimination. The Assam in his dream had no room for races and religions; but for human being only. Even, he had also warned so that the pure human soul does not become polluted by cheap politics. This led to the reflection of pictures of unity and integration among the tribes and races of plain and hills of 'Bar Asom'—the greater Assam (including the seven sisters states) in his songs. He has also portrayed the unity among Hindus and research regarding this aspect of his songs. From this viewpoint, there is need for further deep studies. with his objective, in this proposed paper, it has been tried to analytically discuss the Anti-Communal Songs (Lyrics) of Bhupen Hazarika.

Key words: Anti-Communal, Songs etc.

1.0 Introduction:

1.1 Preface to the topic:

On the sky of Assamese Lyrical Literature, Bhupen Hazarika is regarded as ever-shining star, He has immense contribution towards Assamese Lyrical Literature for an era which has been discussed and analyzed by various authors and scholars. There are various aspects to analytically study his lyrics. In his songs, a global view is expressed counting from the folk, simple life of Assamese society to the global life. Such lined of global philosophy expressed in his song has enhanced and fertilized the vast field of Assamese lyrics in contrast to the racial narrowism. Hazarika had never eyed of building a society with the communal mind-set; rather he had favoured a humanistic approach with flow-falling togetherness and love. Through his songs, he has appealed to be a human out of the narrow boxes of communal and racial thoughts. He was ready to accept none of the religions, demographical, social or political communalism. Whenever, wherever he had had witnessed the social degradation led by communal hatred, he sang for unity and togetherness. He dreamt of a society free of any kind of discrimination. How such anti-communal thoughts are expressed in his song—is analysed in this paper.

1.2 Need of the study:

Bhupen Hazarika is the unforgettable figure in the field of song and Lyric composition of Assam. There is need of detailed study of his songs and lyrics as they possess high literary value. As a socially concerned person, he always spoke of equality in the society. He had never praised the communal thoughts. He just tried to unite all the tribes of Assam where his weapon was love only. There are various philosophical thoughts expressed through his lyrics. There is a wide scope to study how the humanistic approach of forming society has been reflected in his lyrics. Moreover, it is also important to study how communalism has created social destruction, situations like mob-killing murder, hatred which has been well-depicted in his lyrics.

1.3 Method of Study:

On preparing this proposed paper, the analytical method has been adopted. On need, the narrative method is also applied. To title chapter and sub-chapter, the decimal system has been used.

1.4 Scope of study:

In the proposed paper, to study on the anti-communal lyrics of Bhupen Hazarika, many books and magazines have been considerably taken as reference. In this paper, an analysis has been compiled on the religious, racial and linguistic anti-communal

lyrics composed by Bhupen Hazarika. Though there is a vast scope of tracing various other species of his lyrics, but only few selected aspects has been considered relying upon the limited scope of the paper.

1.5 Hypothesis:

- (1) To conceptualize the characteristics of Bhupen Hazarika's lyrics as a whole along with a brief analysis regarding his position in Assamese Lyrical Literature.
- (2) To analyze the abte-communal lyrics and songs of Bhupen Hazarika.

2.0 Anti-communal Lyrics of Bhupen Hazarika: An analysis

Community refers to the group of people, generally, having common traditions, customs, religious practices and linguistic introductions defining communalism. The western authors and scholars have stated that it is the emerged feeling with firmness of a group of people for indiscriminated recognition in the political field. Though 'Nationalism' and 'communalism', these two terms seem to be same, but there are differences in the interpretation. Stelin, who had defined 'Modern Races' has vied two major elements for formation of a 'race' or 'Nation'—One is common language and the another one is combined geographical region or demography. But, in case of communalism, religions sensation plays the vital role. Growing differences or discriminations between two groups living in the same society as caused by religion. Growing of communal sensors is rooted in considering own group as different from the other in the religious aspect and as deprived of justice and dignity. Through, language may also be considered as another factor, but there is seen language transmission or combination among the people speaking different languages. But, unity among two different religions group can hardly be expected.

Sometimes such communal sense extreme and results in violent situations. It leads communalism to narrowism and makes the society unstable and insecure. Sometimes, racial or anthropological elements also functions in communalism.

2.1 Lyrics against Linguistic Communalism:

Bhupen Hazarika has spoke aloud against narrow communalism through his many of the lyrics. Communalism leads to conflicts, mutual distrust, violence and social imbalance. Hazarika had composed his lyrics with the objective of forming a peaceful balanced society. Therefore, his most of the lyrics refers a vast ray of global-love and serenity. Even, in his patriotic lyrics also, he has learned to love the world by loving the Assamese people. It comprehensive way including all the tribes. Hindus, Muslims living in the hills and plains. On this regard, he stated, 'We will have to change the socio-economic structure of Assam; I am agree with that, I am not talking of Assamese revolution, Bangla revolution or Bihari revolution, it is the revolution of the deprived peoples. Government has to integrate it. Today, the new generation is misled by the leaders. Someone is advising them to be a patriot, someone is suggesting to be narrow. Whether it is in India or in Assam, youngstars are walking on the roads opened by the great forefathers—Karl Marx or Gandhi. We have a grief of not having regionalism. It must be shaped in a positive way by integrating with national perspective. (Dr. Bhupen Hazarika—Rajniti Aru Jatiyatabad—Nilmani Sen Deka/ Biswa-shilpi Dr. Bhupen Hazarika Sandhanot—Mousum Gogoi edited). Bhupen Hazarika desired India to be a place united by all the inhabitants being out of the boxes of communalism. After the murder of Ranjit Barpujari-Surja Borah in (Movement for Language) 'Bhasa-Andolon' of 1960, he compiled the lyric 'Padmar Dhumuhai Uruai Nisile'. To establish peace and unity among the Assamese and Bengalis in the midst of insure, unstable situations due to emerged linguistic communalism, he used to room singing this song with Hemanga Biswash from place to place. He has reminded that the Nation India is formed of the migrated people. All the inhabitants are today here after migration from differents margins of the world. He has remind that people from the bank of Padma river had come and got settled on the bank of the mighty Brahmaputra considering it as own land. He has appealed of re-unite---

Tumiye-MoyeDekh-khongorhote

JodiheKesaghamXore

DuyureGhamoreMiloneDekhiba

Buranjirosone Kore.

Ganga, Padma, Krishna, Godavari

Brahmaputra, Kaveri

SobeMili Bharat Mohasagoroloi Jay.

RonogoteBagoriBagori.

(If you and I have to sweat in building the nation, see our sweated drops get unite and creates the history. Ganga, Padma, Krishna, Godavari, Brahmaputra, Kaveri all the rivers goes into 'Hindu Ocean' with joy.)

The Linguistic conflict among the Bengali-Assamese of1960re-emerged during the 'Medium Movement of 1972'. Bhupen Hazarika had always tried to end up the violent nature of this conflict. He could not tolerate the shedded bloods of the martyres during the 'Medium Movement, So, he composed—

Ronga ronga tez sana

Deha duti pori rol
 Balin are Pramod Borar
 Tar protibad Swarope Sunisilo Sangwad
 Mahanta Bagori Porar
 Bhasar Samantabad Puronikoliahol
 Kimanaru Koro Hunkar.'

(The two bodies with red bloods lying are of Balin and Pramod Borah. In it's protest I heard a sound that Mahanta fallen down)

India is a multi-lingual country. In the various regions people with different languages are inhabiting India. Likewise Assam is also a multi-lingual state, still, different linguistic groups migrated in different times has accepted the Assamese language and got included under the umbrella what we call 'Assamese'. But there are some people who want to form racial identity with political games. As a result, Assamese language has to fight from time-to time for own identity. Bhupen Hazarika had warned such people who wanted to divide in terms of linguistic variations---

'Punorgothon buli punor bhangon kora
 Sokranta ase jar jar
 Sakiao aye xekh bar'

(Those who want to re-divide and deteriorate in the name of the unite, be careful. I am warning for the last time, don't try to play with fire with your red eyes.)

2.2 Lyrics against religious and racial communalism:

Bhupen Hazarika had tried to establish unity among all the people of Assam as well as India in aspect of religion by dint of his songs and lyrics as like as he tried for linguistic entity. Though, the constitution of India shouts the nation as secular, but religious communalism and riots are noticed in the different parts of the country which react chaotic situation and spread violence interrupting the cohesion between two religious groups. In the soil of India, Hazrat Mahammad, Gautam Buddha, Chaitanya Dev, Sankardeva had sown and spread religious cults with the message of peace and unity, even Assam is called the country of Sankar and Ajan (Sankar0Ajanar Desh). In Assam, Sankardeva, innovating the Neo-vaishnavism had made each and everyone- Hindu, Muslim, tribal to sit at the same line with same dignity. Azan Fakir, who came from Baghdad in the in 17th C. had spread the message of unity through his 'Zikir' songs. During the period of communal violence and terror, Hazarika is reminding the common people about this unity and cohesion of past. In this regard, he has stated in his biography, 'To establish cultural unity in the society. We must have to dig up the traditional culture of our old community. Cultural based upon foreign cult's cannot impact and impress the native minds. We speak on cultural development, sing songs, but never talk of the economic aspect. If economic deprivation is realised, the grief of deprivation becomes extreme writing and singing are our early weapons- with this we try to unite. But if economic deprivation divides this unity, violence arise among brothers. In this course, If the cultural unity gets break. Then we have to re-build it up. So, ours is more difficult than the persons bringing economic and political changes. (Indirect source- Biswa-shilpi Dr. Bhupen Hazarika Sandhanat, ed.- Mousumi Gogoi). One of the remarkable objectives of his lyrics was to establish unity reducing the differences.-

Xudur kanya Kuvjar para Barabhuya Ahisil
 Xei bongkhote Sankardeva iate janamile
 Marur dekhare Ajan Fakire madhur jikir rasile
 Dillir diloware ahi hastiputhi aankile
 Pamha nadir Tek Bahadure Dharamar xetu gorhile
 Xomonnoyor dekhuali koto prokakh swataspurta.

(The Bara Bhuyans came from so far Kanya-kuvja and in that dynasty Sankardeva was born here. Azan Fakir from the country of desert came and composed the swal 'jikir'. Dilwar from Delhi came and illustrated the 'Hasti-puthi', the book on elephant's. Let Bahadur from the land of five rivers had built up the bridge of religion. All these are different spontaneous expressions of unity.)

Many limes, communal roots grow due to socio economic and political factors. The community suffering from economic deprivation and incited by the political divisional motives expresses aggressiveness demanding own rights. Hazarika had tried to bring changes in people's mind and socio-economic changes' cohesion.

Jati-dharma-bhasa nirbixekhe
 baidha xata nagarik,
 xoshan-bihin mahamantra Rocha
 Aansoni Artha-samajik
 ...
 Xonkirnotar Biporite
 Jibon Buranji porha
 Sankar Ajan Bishnu Jyotir
 Sopun Dithak kora

(Hundreds of citizens are legal irrespective of caste religion language. Design socio-economic schemes with the incantation of without the desire of exploitation.

...

Read the life history opposing the narrow-ness. Make the dreams of Sankar, Ajan, Bishnu, Jyoti real one.)

On 25th December, 1971. Bangladesh earned its sovereignty. After the division of India. It was included in Pakistan but could not survive with military harassment. At that time, India displayed its liberal greatness. Bangladesh was constructed as single lingual nation. India is a multi lingual nation. Still India was the first to provide recognition to Bangladesh with money, people and military force. In that context, Bhupen Hazarika had sung 'Jai Jai Bangladesh' energizing the relationship between the two nations.

Jai Jai Nabajata Bangladesh
 Jai Jai Mukti-Bahini
 Bharatiya Sainyar xote rosila
 Moitirir kahini.
 Dharmandhatar Biporite Dharma-Nirapekhata
 Bivedkami Saktir Saloni
 Ganga-Padmar ekta.

(Praised to newly born Bangladesh, praises to the Mukti-Bahini, you have created the story of unity with the Indian military, secularism in place of Padma against the divisioner forces.)

Hazarika had continued a struggle through his lyrics. This struggle was of wide and vast love instead of narrow love, of unity instead of diversions. On some lyrics, he had expressed gratitude towards the unity among the diversities existed in Assam and India. In some lyrics, he had commenced revolution against the forces that incentivies people for divisions. This revolution is not of violence— but of changing attitude and perspectives. To remind the sources of unity amidst the social differences, he had taken up the history also. He has re-composed Rabindra Nath's 'Dibe ar nibe, milabe milabe jabe na fire' as— 'Kisu lobo lage, kisu dibo lage, jin jabile hole/ Milabo lage, milibo lage, Rabindra Natheu kole. (You have to take and give if you have to get mixed up. You have to make unite if you have to be united. Rabindranath as also saying so). In Assam, unity was established during Ahom's reign during the Neo-Vaishnavism cult among the tribes of hills and plain. He has reminded people about it—

Ahom Swargadeur Dinote
 Lon bandhi namisil Nakte
 Tahanir Sri Ram Atai
 Nakte Nripatik disile Xaran
 Kori Nakte Xishyar Namkaran
 Nararo Uttam 'Narottam'
 Koisil manuh manuh hol
 Ejone xijonok xabotile

(During the reign of Ahom 'Swargadeu' the Nakte bought salts. Sri Ram Aata accepted and enlightened the Nakte king defining as 'Narottam'— the best of male and said humans are human and gave hug to each other)

By birth, Hazarika got the chance to maintain close relation with the inhabitants of Nafa. He used to get feed breast milk by the tribal women during his boyhood in Sadia. In his book 'Dihinge-Dipange' that I have a very close relationship with hilly peoples. Even, today also I feel, it is', (Indirect source— Biswasilpi Bhupen Hazarika Sandhanat, ed.- Mausum Gogoi.) In most of the lyrics the essence of unity among the hilly and plain inhabitants is reflected once, Nagaland, Arunachal, Meghalaya etc. North-East States used to be a part of Assam and the tribal inhabitants of these states used the Assamese language as 'Connecting language', But, political games arised dividation among them. They started to feel neglected and the demand of separation was emerged. As a result they acquired recognition as separate states. Hazarika always tried to bring back the common brotherhood among the people reduce ethnic dividends.—

Ektar beha kari bhavilo obhanta
 Ubhatie sai dekho ahise sihoto
 Ringiai kole mok: Kisu beli robi
 Ubhoti goi asomike kobi—
 Aji pahare-bhaiyame kaliza sinise
 O' Serdukpen aru Tangsai
 Aonka are Bariye
 Seneh-enajorire bati katise

(After having the business of unity I thought to return. Looking baack I saw they were also coming back and said 'wait a while. Going back tell Asomi (Mother Assam) that today, hearts are recognised in the hills and the plains, the Serdukpen and Tangsi Aonka and Bari have waved a way of love and affection)

In the article 'Jalukbarit Ekhantek Thomoki Row Ahok' Phanindra Kumar Dev Coudhury has stated. ' He is the most powerful personality of this century who has the capability to build a bridge up from the hearts. He has pure emotions like a child. A bridge of love and contentment was built among the common people of Assam and the tribes with the touch of his unlimited love and sensitivity.' (Biswa-silpi Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, ed.- Mauchum Gogoi.)

Assam is an agriculture-depended state. As a riverine country, here, agriculture has been the chief mode of livelihood. The agriculture-depended Assamese people observe Bihu festival with enormous joy. The different tribes migrated to Assam in different periods have adopted agriculture as the chief mode of livelihood. Therefore, they also observe the customs related to agriculture. The Bohag Bihu is like the spirit for the Assamese people to be engaged in the rice-producing fields with great energy. It ties the Assamese people together—

Bohag Matho Bihutoli Nohoi
 Nohoi e nixa phula phool
 Bohagei aani diye xomodol goti
 Neosi Jati-kool
 E prabhedok korehi nakh

(Bohag is not only the ground of Bihu, neither it is a night-blowing flower. Bohag brings spirit reducing cast barriers. It destroys the dividers.)

Bhupen Hazarika is desiring to create an Assamese race where there is no place for narrow communalism. From that he is proceeding to the concept 'global citizen' through Indian identity and Asian cult. The dividing forces are warned through his lyrics—

Buddha Gandhik padaghat korili
 Bixal Asiar rongote naxili
 Tor garba kharba haba
 Dambha tarka jasa
 Bharat-Singha aji jagrata hoi
 Proti rakta bindute xohosro swahidor
 Xahor aitisya ujjal hoi

(You are kicking Buddha, Gandhi and insulting the ‘Panchaxil’ five guidelines of moral behavior as ‘fear’. You are declining the unity of the vast Asia. Your proud will be torn apart. Today, the lional spirit of India is emerging. The glory of courage of thousands of martyrs is shining in each drop of blood.)

The lyrics of Hazarika nowhere reflects narrow communalism. Even, he had tried for mutual relationship between Maharashtra and Assam. He has reflected it through the lyrics of the song ‘GodavariNoire.’ The very first stanza gives the message of unity—

‘Godavari noire parore pora
Asami aioli jaso pronam
Xeikhon dekh mor nedekha dekh
Tothapi sinaki xuwoni naam
Asami aailoi jaso pronam’

(From the bank of the Godavari river, I am offering my respect to ‘Mother Assam.’ I have never seen that country, still a beautiful, known name it is, I am offering my respect to mother Assam.)

Bhupen Hazarika had honoured Gandhi’s steps for creating a nation removing the communal riots between Hindus and Muslims. During the partition, in 1946 he had encountered the dividing situations between Hindus and Muslims. Therefore, he wrote—

‘Mahatmai hasibole— Ram o’ Rahim
Bandh rakh o’ Rahim
EkelogeEkexonge bandhob patim
Hai hai Ram o’ Rahim’

(Smiling Mahatma has said— Hey Ram, Rahim, hold the tie tight, we will make friendship together; Alas! Ram, Rahim.)

In some of the love lyrics of Hazarika, the tune of anti-communalism is also echold . Though love between a male and female, and communalism— these two are separate subjects, but the dream of creating an equal society had inspired him to search unity amidst personal love. Even, in talking about the togetherness among the hilly and plain areas tribes, he was longing for removing the barriers of marriage. He is reflecting the same in the lyrics of the song ‘Moi Kahimare Adhunika Dalimi’ —

‘Aji moi holu Asomor na-bowari
Jonwai holo moi Tuensangor
Ami duyo purba Bharatire
Jiya pratik samannyor’

(Today I have become the newly married son-in-law f Assam. I have become the daughter-in-law of Tuensang. We two are the live symbol of unity of east India)— It refers to the love story of Godapani and Dalimi.

The caste system creates barriers in case of marriage also. But, marriage ties up two different families. Therefore, the lyricist is considering marriage as source of unity or togetherness. To forward everyone on the path of progress, the only weapon is togetherness.

3.0 Conclusion:

In this proposed research paper, discussing the anti-aommunal aspects of Bhupen Hazarika’s lyrics, the following findings are drawn up—

- (1) Analysing the overall characteristics of Bhupen Hazarika’s lyrics, it is found that he had a vital role in the upgrade of progress of Assamese lyrical literature.
- (2) Analysing his lyrics composed against religious communalism, it is found that he desired for a secular Assam as well as India free from religious communal prejudices and differences in attitude.
- (3) From the analysis of the lyrics against linguistic communalism, it is evident that he had tried for removing the conflict between the Assamese and Bengali. He tried for unity among the multi-lingual Indians through his lyrics.
- (4) In the lyrics against racial communalism the pride of the multi-facated Assamese identity has been echold including all the tribes of hills and plains. Likewise, he is also appealing for the multi-cultural India to remain it one and unite.

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