



A study on Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's Relevance of humanism in this devided world in present time

Dipak Baruah

Asstt. Prof in History

Kalabari College

Biswanath, Assam

Abstract :-

Dr. Bhupen Hazarika (1926–2011), the legendary cultural icon of Assam, was a visionary artist, thinker, and social reformer whose philosophy was deeply rooted in humanism. His creative works consistently emphasized the values of universal brotherhood, compassion, equality, and social justice. In the present era, marked by global conflicts, political polarization, religious intolerance, racial discrimination, and widening socio-economic inequalities, Dr. Hazarika's humanistic vision holds immense relevance.

Humanism, as reflected in Dr. Hazarika's songs and writings, places human dignity above all artificial divisions such as caste, creed, religion, language, and national boundaries. His famous compositions, including "Manuhe Manuhor Babe", advocate empathy, coexistence, and moral responsibility toward fellow human beings. Through his art, he gave voice to the marginalized, the oppressed, refugees, and victims of war, transforming music into a powerful medium of social consciousness.

In today's divided world, where hatred and violence threaten peaceful coexistence, Dr. Hazarika's message serves as a moral compass. His opposition to war and exploitation highlights the need for dialogue and understanding in resolving conflicts. Furthermore, his belief in cultural unity beyond borders challenges narrow nationalism and promotes global human solidarity. At a time when material progress often overshadows ethical values, his humanism reminds society that true development lies in compassion, justice, and mutual respect.

Thus, Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's humanistic ideology transcends time and geography. His life and works continue to inspire humanity to resist division, uphold peace, and reaffirm faith in shared human values. In the contemporary world, embracing his humanism is essential for fostering harmony, inclusiveness, and sustainable global coexistence.

Keywords: Humanism, Universal Brotherhood, Social Justice, Global Harmony, Peace, Divided World , unity .

I) Introduction :-

Dr. Bhupen Hazarika (1926–2011) stands as one of the most influential cultural figures of modern India, revered not only as a legendary musician and lyricist but also as a profound humanist thinker whose ideas continue to resonate in the contemporary world. Popularly known as the Bard of the Brahmaputra, Dr. Hazarika used music, poetry, cinema, and literature as powerful instruments to express deep concern for humanity at large. His creative vision went far beyond regional identity and artistic excellence; it was firmly rooted in the philosophy of humanism, which emphasizes the dignity, equality, and unity of all human beings. In the present time, when the world is increasingly divided by ideological conflicts, religious intolerance, racial discrimination, political polarization, and social inequality, the relevance of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's humanistic ideals has become more significant than ever before.

Humanism, in its broadest sense, upholds faith in human values such as compassion, empathy, love, justice, and mutual respect. Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's understanding of humanism was deeply experiential and socially engaged. Influenced by global humanist thinkers and artists like Paul Robeson, as well as by the lived realities of poverty, exploitation, and suffering he witnessed across societies, Hazarika developed a worldview that placed humanity above all man-made boundaries. His songs repeatedly emphasized that human beings exist for one another, not to dominate or destroy, but to support and uplift. This belief is powerfully articulated in his iconic song "Manuhe Manuhor Babe" (Man is for mankind), which encapsulates the essence of his philosophy and continues to inspire millions across generations.

The contemporary world is often described as a "divided world," fragmented by conflicts and contradictions. Despite unprecedented technological advancement and global connectivity, societies are increasingly marked by intolerance, hatred, and mistrust. Religious fundamentalism, ethnic violence, aggressive nationalism, and economic inequality have intensified divisions among people and nations. Wars and armed conflicts continue to displace millions, creating humanitarian crises that challenge global conscience. In such a turbulent global environment, Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's humanism offers a powerful ethical framework for understanding and addressing these challenges. His works remind us that violence and hatred only deepen human suffering and that peace can be achieved only through empathy, dialogue, and mutual understanding.

Dr. Hazarika's humanism was not confined to abstract ideals; it was deeply grounded in the realities of ordinary people. He consistently gave voice to the marginalized, including laborers, farmers, refugees, and victims of social injustice. His songs reflect a profound sensitivity toward human pain and a strong protest against exploitation and inequality. In today's world, where the gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen and where millions remain excluded from the benefits of development, his emphasis on social justice and human dignity remains highly relevant. His humanistic approach challenges societies to rethink development not merely in terms of economic growth but also in terms of ethical responsibility and inclusive progress.

Another crucial aspect of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's humanism is his belief in cultural unity beyond borders. He envisioned art and culture as bridges that connect people across regions and nations. His engagement with diverse cultures and his popularity across India, Bangladesh, and beyond reflect his commitment to universal human values. In the present time, when narrow nationalism and identity politics often threaten global harmony, his inclusive outlook serves as a reminder that cultural diversity should be a source of unity rather than division. His life and works demonstrate how art can transcend political boundaries and foster a sense of shared humanity.

Furthermore, in an age dominated by materialism and rapid technological change, moral and emotional values are often sidelined. Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's humanism calls for a return to ethical consciousness, urging individuals and societies to prioritize compassion and responsibility over selfish interests. His vision underscores

the idea that true civilization is measured not by power or wealth, but by the capacity to care for fellow human beings.

In this context, an exploration of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's relevance of humanism in the present divided world becomes both necessary and meaningful. His life and creative legacy provide enduring lessons on how humanity can confront division, injustice, and conflict with empathy, tolerance, and solidarity. By revisiting his humanistic ideals, contemporary society can find guidance in rebuilding trust, promoting peace, and reaffirming faith in the shared values that bind humanity together. This paper seeks to examine the relevance of Dr. Hazarika's humanism philosophy in the contemporary divided world in present time.

II) Aims and Objectives of the Paper :-

This paper has some important aims and objectives. These are as under

1. This paper tries to examine the relevance of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's humanistic philosophy in the context of the present-day divided world. It seeks to understand how his ideas of universal brotherhood, compassion, peace, and social justice can address contemporary issues such as violence, intolerance, social inequality, and cultural fragmentation.
2. To analyze how Dr. Hazarika used music and art as tools to promote human values and ethical consciousness among people.
3. The study also aims to highlight his role as a voice of the marginalized and oppressed, and to evaluate the significance of his humanism in fostering harmony beyond regional, national, and cultural boundaries.
4. Another objective is to assess the continuing influence of his humanistic vision in guiding society toward coexistence, inclusiveness, and moral responsibility in the modern world.

III) Methodology of the paper :-

The study adopts a qualitative and descriptive research methodology. It is based primarily on secondary sources such as Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's songs, lyrics, speeches, interviews, and literary works. articles, books, journals, and critical essays related to his life, philosophy, and contributions are also consulted to support the analysis. Content analysis is employed to interpret humanistic themes reflected in his creative expressions. In addition, a contextual approach is used to relate his ideas to contemporary global issues, enabling a comparative understanding of his relevance in the present divided world.

iv) Discussion & Analysis :-

Dr. Bhupen Hazarika (1926–2011), often celebrated as the “Bard of the Brahmaputra,” was a multifaceted personality: a singer, lyricist, filmmaker, social thinker, and humanitarian. While he achieved global recognition for his musical and cinematic contributions, his enduring legacy lies in his unwavering commitment to humanistic ideals. Humanism, as Hazarika envisioned it, is the recognition of the intrinsic dignity and equality of every human being. It is a philosophy rooted in empathy, compassion, social justice, and universal brotherhood, emphasizing the moral responsibility humans have toward each other, regardless of religion, ethnicity, language, or nationality. In the present-day world, characterized by political polarization, religious intolerance, racial discrimination, cultural fragmentation, and growing economic inequality, the principles of Hazarika's humanism have become more relevant than ever.

It explores how his ideas of universal brotherhood, compassion, peace, and social justice can help address pressing societal issues such as violence, intolerance, inequality, and cultural fragmentation. Furthermore, it

analyzes how he employed music, poetry, and cinema as instruments of social consciousness, using art to inspire ethical awareness and emotional sensitivity among audiences. Additionally, the study highlights his consistent advocacy for the marginalized, oppressed, and disenfranchised, showing how his humanism transcended regional, national, and cultural boundaries. Finally, it assesses the continuing influence of his vision in promoting coexistence, inclusiveness, and moral responsibility in modern society.

Humanism, in Hazarika's perspective, is more than a philosophical stance; it is an actionable ethic guiding individuals to live with empathy and moral responsibility. His most iconic song, (Manuhe Manuhor Babe), encapsulates this ethos:

(“Man is born for mankind, He must live and die for others.”)

This song, widely considered his anthem of humanism, directly challenges the prevalent mindset of selfishness and division. It urges listeners to recognize that humanity's survival depends on mutual care and compassion. Today, when societal divides manifest as communal violence, refugee crises, political polarization, and ethnic conflict, Hazarika's message remains profoundly relevant. His song serves not only as a cultural artifact but as a moral guidepost, reminding humanity that peace and coexistence emerge from empathy, not dominance or prejudice.

In addition to promoting compassion, Hazarika's humanism emphasizes social justice and equality. His works frequently spotlighted the struggles of marginalized communities, the poor, and the displaced. In an era where income inequality and social exclusion are escalating globally, his philosophy challenges societies to prioritize equity and dignity over narrow self-interest. Hazarika's commitment to social justice aligns with the contemporary vision of human rights, advocating for systemic reforms that ensure fairness, opportunity, and respect for all members of society.

One of the hallmarks of Dr. Hazarika's humanism was his innovative use of music and art as instruments for social change. Unlike abstract philosophical discourse, songs and films engage emotions directly, allowing audiences to internalize moral lessons through empathy and reflection. Hazarika's compositions frequently highlighted human suffering, social inequality, and the consequences of division, while simultaneously inspiring hope, resilience, and moral responsibility.

For example, his Assamese song (Bistirno Parore – Beyond the Wide River) portrays the universality of human struggle and the necessity of solidarity:

(“Beyond the wide river, the water flows,

People move forward, carrying new hopes.”)

The river symbolizes the challenges and obstacles in life, while the people's movement reflects human resilience, unity, and collective hope. In the present world, where millions of people face displacement due to war, climate change, or political persecution, this song resonates as a call for empathy, humanitarian support, and global solidarity.

Similarly, in “O Mur Apunar Desh” (O My Beloved Country), Hazarika combines regional pride with universal human values:

(“O my beloved country,

May peace forever flow under your green skies.”)

While the song expresses love for Assam, it transcends regional identity to advocate for peace and harmony. In today's climate of growing nationalism and identity politics, the song reminds us that cultural pride need not lead to exclusivity or intolerance; instead, it can coexist with universal humanism, fostering unity beyond borders.

Hazarika's works also emphasized environmental and social interconnectedness, blending ecological awareness with moral responsibility. His song "Ganga Amar Ma" (Ganga is Our Mother) frames the river Ganga as both a symbol of life and a metaphor for humanity's shared responsibility:

(“Ganga is our mother, keep her alive,
She must flow as a river of human love.”)

Here, Hazarika extends the principle of humanism to include environmental stewardship, illustrating how ethical consciousness encompasses care for both humans and the natural world. In a time when climate crises threaten millions of lives, the song underscores the inseparable link between human welfare and ecological sustainability.

A central element of Hazarika's humanism was his advocacy for marginalized communities. Throughout his life, he highlighted the struggles of tea garden workers, farmers, refugees, and victims of social and political oppression. By giving voice to the voiceless, Hazarika transformed music and art into tools of social justice. In his songs and films, he portrayed human suffering not as abstract tragedy but as a call to action, urging society to confront inequality, exploitation, and discrimination.

For instance, in the Hindi song "Dil Hoom Hoom Kare", Hazarika reflects the pain of loss and injustice in war-torn regions, emphasizing human empathy and solidarity. Similarly, his Assamese songs often depicted regional struggles in ways that resonated universally, reminding audiences that social responsibility extends to all humanity, not just one's immediate community.

This advocacy is particularly relevant today, as global inequality, systemic discrimination, and human rights violations continue to divide societies. Hazarika's humanism challenges individuals, governments, and institutions to prioritize human welfare and moral responsibility, demonstrating that progress is meaningful only when it benefits all members of society.

Dr. Hazarika's philosophy consistently promoted cultural inclusivity and universal humanism. He believed that art, music, and literature are bridges that transcend geographic, linguistic, and political boundaries. His collaborations with artists in India, Bangladesh, and other countries reflect his commitment to building shared human understanding.

In a world increasingly marked by xenophobia, ethnic conflict, and nationalistic isolationism, Hazarika's vision offers an alternative: a global humanism rooted in empathy and ethical responsibility. By embracing cross-cultural dialogue and celebrating diversity, societies can cultivate social cohesion and peace. Songs like "O Mur Apunar Desh" and "Manuhe Manuhor Babe" exemplify how local identity can harmonize with universal human values, offering a model for inclusive global citizenship.

The contemporary world faces unprecedented divisions. Wars, terrorism, political polarization, racial and religious intolerance, economic inequality, and climate-induced displacement fragment societies and strain global solidarity. Dr. Hazarika's humanistic philosophy provides a moral framework to navigate these challenges. His emphasis on empathy, compassion, and social responsibility encourages dialogue, understanding, and cooperation as solutions to conflict. His songs teach that real peace is built not on domination or coercion but on mutual respect and care for human dignity.

For example, Hazarika's song "Bistirno Parore" reminds us of our shared struggles and collective responsibility, while "Manuhe Manuhor Babe" urges active moral engagement. In a time when social media often spreads hate, and divisive politics prioritize self-interest, Hazarika's humanism offers a counter-narrative: that ethical values, empathy, and justice must guide human action.

Furthermore, his integration of ecological awareness, social justice, and universal love highlights the holistic nature of humanism. He demonstrates that ethical consciousness must encompass not only interpersonal relationships but also our responsibilities to society and the environment. In the current era of climate crises, mass migrations, and global inequalities, such an integrative vision is crucial.

Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's humanistic vision continues to inspire contemporary society. His songs are not mere cultural artifacts; they are ethical lessons that remain relevant across generations. Educational institutions, social organizations, policymakers, and artists can draw inspiration from his philosophy to cultivate empathy, ethical awareness, and social responsibility.

For instance, youth movements advocating for environmental protection, human rights, and social justice echo Hazarika's humanistic ideals. His emphasis on cultural inclusivity, peace, and moral responsibility provides a roadmap for navigating a divided, globalized world. By revisiting and embracing his teachings, society can cultivate a culture of coexistence, tolerance, and compassion, essential for sustainable peace and harmony.

➤ Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's Relevance of humanism in this devided world in present time

In an era characterized by increasing polarization, hyper-nationalism, and social fragmentation, the voice of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika resonates with a renewed and urgent clarity. A polymath—lyricist, musician, filmmaker, and scholar—Hazarika was, above all, a "Jajabor" (wanderer) of human emotions and a steadfast advocate for universal humanism. His philosophy, rooted in the soil of Assam but stretching toward the global horizon, offers a vital blueprint for healing the rifts of the 21st century.

Hazarika's humanism was not a passive academic concept; it was a rhythmic, lived experience. He famously sang, "Manuhe manuhor babe..." (Man is for mankind). In this simple yet profound lyric, he encapsulated the essence of his worldview: that if a human does not feel the pain of another, then who will? This perspective mirrors the African concept of Ubuntu—"I am because we are." In a world where digital silos and political borders increasingly isolate us, Hazarika's insistence on mutual empathy serves as a necessary corrective.

Today's world is deeply scarred by the "Us vs. Them" narrative. Whether it is religious intolerance, ethnic cleansing, or class warfare, the root cause is the dehumanization of "the other." Hazarika's life and work were a direct assault on these boundaries. Having witnessed the struggles of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States while studying at Columbia University, he was heavily influenced by Paul Robeson. He brought that spirit of resistance back to India, translating the struggle against racism into a struggle against casteism and communalism.

In his songs, the Brahmaputra river is not just a body of water; it is a witness to history and a symbol of a syncretic culture. He challenged the river—and by extension, society—to not remain silent while "humanity is being

trampled upon." His humanism was inclusive, embracing the marginalized, the tribal communities, and the downtrodden, teaching us that a society's strength is measured by how it treats its most vulnerable members.

Interestingly, Hazarika's humanism extended to the environment—a highly relevant theme in the current climate crisis. He viewed the natural landscape of the Northeast not as a resource to be exploited, but as a silent partner in the human story. By emphasizing the symbiotic relationship between the land and the people, he advocated for a "planetary humanism." Today, as we face ecological collapse, his call to respect the "mother earth" that sustains all humans regardless of their creed is a powerful reminder of our shared destiny.

In a present-day context where art is often used for propaganda or mindless entertainment, Hazarika's legacy reminds us that the artist has a social responsibility. He used his music as a weapon for peace and a bridge for dialogue. During times of ethnic tension in the Northeast, his songs acted as a unifying force, reminding warring factions of their shared linguistic and cultural heritage. His relevance lies in the belief that culture should be a "bridge-builder," not a wall-constructer.

v) Conclusion :-

From the above going discussion it is quite clear to us that Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's humanism stands as a timeless and powerful response to the crises of division, intolerance, and injustice that characterize the contemporary world. As this study has shown, Hazarika was not merely an artist of exceptional talent but a committed humanist whose creative expressions were deeply rooted in ethical consciousness and social responsibility. His songs, films, and writings consistently emphasized the dignity of human life, the necessity of compassion, and the moral obligation of individuals and societies to stand against oppression and inequality. In an age marked by ideological polarization, religious extremism, racial discrimination, and growing socio-economic disparities, the relevance of his humanistic vision has become even more pronounced.

One of the most significant aspects of Dr. Hazarika's humanism is its universality. He rejected narrow boundaries of caste, religion, language, region, and nationality, asserting instead that humanity is bound together by shared emotions, suffering, and aspirations. His iconic composition "Manuhe Manuhor Babe" encapsulates this worldview by affirming that human beings exist for one another and that empathy is the foundation of peaceful coexistence. This message directly challenges the forces of hatred and division that dominate much of present-day global discourse. At a time when societies are increasingly fragmented by identity politics and exclusionary ideologies, Hazarika's call for universal brotherhood offers a moral alternative grounded in inclusiveness and mutual respect.

The study also highlights Dr. Hazarika's deep commitment to social justice. His humanism was not abstract or idealistic; it was firmly connected to the lived realities of marginalized and oppressed communities. Through his art, he gave voice to laborers, farmers, refugees, victims of war, and socially excluded groups, transforming music into an instrument of protest and awareness. In the contemporary context, where economic inequality continues to widen and millions remain deprived of basic human dignity, his emphasis on justice, equality, and human rights remains profoundly relevant. His works remind us that true development cannot be measured solely by economic growth but must also be evaluated in terms of ethical responsibility and social inclusion.

Another crucial dimension of Dr. Hazarika's relevance lies in his belief in cultural unity beyond borders. He envisioned culture and art as bridges capable of connecting diverse communities and fostering mutual understanding. His engagement with different linguistic and cultural traditions across India and neighboring countries demonstrates his commitment to global humanism. In today's world, where aggressive nationalism and cultural intolerance often threaten global harmony, Hazarika's inclusive outlook provides a model for coexistence

rooted in respect for diversity. His legacy illustrates that love for one's culture need not result in exclusion or hostility toward others, but can coexist harmoniously with universal human values.

Furthermore, Dr. Hazarika's humanism extends beyond social and cultural concerns to include ethical responsibility toward nature. His songs reflect a deep awareness of the interconnectedness between human life and the natural environment. In the present era of climate change, environmental degradation, and ecological crises, this aspect of his vision assumes critical importance. By linking human welfare with environmental sustainability, Hazarika anticipated contemporary debates on ecological humanism and sustainable development. His works urge humanity to recognize that the survival of future generations depends on compassion not only toward fellow humans but also toward the natural world.

In the contemporary divided world, marked by violence, conflict, and moral uncertainty, Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's humanism serves as a guiding moral compass. His life and creative legacy demonstrate how art can function as a force for peace, dialogue, and ethical awakening. The continuing popularity of his songs across generations is evidence of their enduring relevance and emotional power. Educational institutions, cultural organizations, and social movements can draw inspiration from his philosophy to promote values of tolerance, empathy, and social responsibility among individuals, especially the youth.

To sum up, Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's relevance in the present time lies in his unwavering faith in humanity. His humanistic vision transcends time and geography, offering enduring lessons for addressing the challenges of a divided world. By embracing his ideals of compassion, justice, cultural inclusivity, and moral responsibility, contemporary society can work toward building a more humane, peaceful, and harmonious global order. In a world desperately in need of ethical direction, Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's humanism continues to illuminate the path toward shared human dignity and collective coexistence.

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