



REFLECTION OF NATURE IN BIHUGEET: A CRITICAL STUDY

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Abstract

Folk music is a vital part of the culture of any community. It describes the traditions, lifestyle, history and mythology of the community; Bihugeets are no different. Bihugeet is one of the oldest versions of Assamese folk music. The definite period of origin of Bihugeets is unclear, but we can find evidence of Bihugeet before Assamese literature was in manuscript form. Bihugeets contains with simple, beautiful melodies and rhythms that are generally concerned with the themes of nature. Bihu is associated with agriculture and BihuGeets are the heart of Bihu. So, the description of nature in Bihugeets is very common and popular. But love, interpersonal relationships, religious and cultural festivities and customs also reflects in some of the Bihugeets. For the keen desire to analysis and explore the description of nature in BihuGeet, the researcher selected the topic "Reflection of Nature in BihuGeet: A Critical Study". In the full paper, the researcher will try to elaborate scientifically with proper field study.

Keywords: Bihu, Bihugeet, BohagBihu, Bihu Naas.

1.0 Introduction

Assam is based on agriculture. The three phases of Agriculture are preparation for cultivation, possibilities of the growing crops and the hope under the harvesting joy. These three phases came for all the folk groups of people who constitute the greater Assamese society. The paddies produced food habits, freedom of mind and soul, bravery, kind heartedness etc. are similar qualities among the folk inhabitants of Assam and virtually whole north east India. Based on these phases, the folk customs are developed. The folk customs are expressed as the Bihu festival with community definite conditions in all the groups. Therefore, the folk customs of Assamese society are mainly agricultural customs.

There are the three Bihu observed in three seasons in a year. BohagBihu, Kati Bihu and MaghBihu. BohagBihu is the festival of cheerfulness, singing, dancing, and performing Husari, expressing love and honour, mental preparation for the whole upcoming New Year etc. BohagBihu is the spring festival and it observed for seven days. Kati Bihu is the festival of hope. On the other hand, MaghBihu is the harvesting festival with satisfaction after gain of harvesting.

Nature sows the seeds of new encouragement, excitement and imagination in the mind of the Assamese people whenever they cross the rivers, hills, forests and fields for their livelihood. Assamese people have the nature gifted sense to skillfully enjoy the messages of Nature's beauty and taste, spirit, perfume and sounds as they have been spending all the moments of their lives in the open fields, river banks or in the green fields. These all are reflected in the Bihugeets in a very systemic and melodious way. We are very much thankful to nature for bless us with such melodious Bihugeets. BihuGeets are the spirit of natural life of the primitive men of Assam.

2.0 Importance of the Study

Bihu festival has been closely linked with the agricultural people of Assam from the ancient time. It is basically related to the agricultural rural lives of Assamese people. Bihu is observed in three parts and each part coordinates with the time of one specific period of cultivation of paddy during an agricultural year. There are appreciations as well as irritation among the inborn people as regards the nature of the changes observable in the present tradition of the Bihu festival. Still almost all the natural activity is available in the Bihugeets. All these aspects naturally stimulate a lot of attention to carry out a study on the subject.

3.0 Methodology

The methodology of this paper is descriptive and analytical in nature. The data has collected from various primary and secondary sources.

4.0 Objectives of the Study

The Study was conducted keeping certain objectives in view. These objectives are as follows:

1. To find out how BihuGeets are closely bonded with nature.
2. To analysis of various Rivers in the BihuGeets.
3. To find out the reflection of Mountains and Hills in the BihuGeets.
4. To analysis reflection of different flowers in the BihuGeets.
5. To find out the reflection of various species of Birds in the BihuGeets.



6. To find out the reflection of various Trees, Paddy fields & cultivation in the BihuGeets.
7. To identify what are the Musical instruments use in BihuGeetswhich are derived from the nature.

5.0 Main Discussion

Bihu is the prime and most popular festival of Assam. Bihu festival has been closely linked with the agricultural people of Assam since the ancient time. The ultimate objective of the rituals is to have rich harvest. Bihu and nature is complementary to each other. The origin source of Bihu can be traced from nature. Astronomically Bihu is synchronizes with different seasons. Bohag Bihu celebrated at vernal equinox (mid -April), Magh Bihu at winter solstice (mid- January) and Kati Bihu celebrated at autumnal equinox (October-November). Among the three Bihus, Bohag Bihu is the most popular festival in Assam. Bohag Bihu is performed at the mid of April when Sun cross the equator of Earth. According to the scholars, *Bishuh* means equator, which means middle day or Sankranti. According to the Indian astronomy the first ten days of 'Baisakh' month creates highest relation with Sun and Earth and Earth gets more enlighten rays from Sun. This natural attraction and relation is reflected in the natural scenario of Earth, the trees newly green and a scene of beauty and the natural happiness spread all over the Earth. The Bohag or Rongali Bihu has great attraction to the youths. Bihu is seasonal as well as an agricultural festival. Celebrations of Bihu festival are associated with different stages of cultivation, production and gaining of crops. The Bihu festival and its associate songs and dances are leftovers of Austro-Asiatic civilization. The Common people created the Bihu songs and music to entertain the young women who are considered nothing but the complement of Mother Earth. 'Bihu was observed by the farmers of ancient time with full faith. They believed that by celebrating Bihu in open field the people can satisfy the god of raining and save their crops from any deficiency. Moreover, dancing and singing in the agricultural field, river bank, *beel* (wet land) etc. increases the fertility of the land. They worshiped the Earth as mother and Sun as father. As per their belief, dance and sing can draw the attraction of Sun and the Earth easily to become more fertile which results good crops. The primitive man regarded fertility as a blessing.

Assamese people have the nature gifted sense to skillfully enjoy the messages of Nature's beauty, taste, spirit, perfume and sounds as they have been spending all the moments of their lives in the open fields, river banks or in the green fields. These all are reflected in the BihuGeets in a very systemic and melodious way.

6.0 Reflection of Rivers in BihuGeet

The deep intimacy between the life of the common people and the river is naturally established in the riverine culture. The observation of nature and love of nature find expression in such songs:

Dhansiri pare hoi dhopoliaaiahilu / Jiralu Kaliaborot,
Tumake Bisarighorebarierilu / Napalu Tumakgharat
(ধনশিৰি পাৰে হৈ চপলিয়াই আহিলো / জিৰালোকলিয়াবৰত,
তোমাকে বিচাৰি ঘৰে-বাৰী এৰিলো / নাপালো তোমাক ঘৰত)

Meaning of this— *"I crossed the river Dhansiri and came very quickly / Took rest at Kaliabar. I left my home to find out your appearance/ but I failed to locate you".*

The Luhit or Luit is another renowned name of the river Mahabahu Brahmaputra. The mentions of the Brahmaputra or the Luit have been made in many Bihu songs. Scenic beauty of the sapari (River Island) created by the river Luhit, makes the mind restless of Assamese people. In this moment, they spontaneously sing like –

Luitorepare-sipare Majulichapori / Majotetumibohithakanirobe,
Moinugoilogamgoimaateoichenaidhan, Moinugoilogamgoimaat.
(লুইতৰইপাৰে-সিপাৰে মাজুলীচাপৰি / মাজতে তুমি বহি থাকানিৰে,
মইনোগৈলগামগৈমতে এঁচেনাইধন / মইনোগৈলগামগৈমতে)

Meaning— *"Majuli Island is situated in the both banks of the River Luit. / You sit in the middle without any sound. O my beloved one, I will reach you and call you / O my beloved one, I will call you".*

The vast and deep stream of the Brahmaputra sometimes also brings the idea of in corporeal gods to the mind of the people who are helpless in comparison with great Nature-

Brahmaputrarkanare Barhamthurijupi / Ami kharilorathai,
Utua ininiba Brahmaputra devata / Tamol di matotanai.



Meaning—“There is a plant called Barhamthuri beside the river Brahmaputra / We collect fuels there, Oh, god of Brahmaputra, do not drift us away / (Because) Nobody remains to worship you, with areca nuts”.

Similarly, one can easily find the significant presence of various rivers of Assam in the BihuGeets. Furthermore, the mention of the names of the river Dihing, Darika, Dicang, Bhogdoi, Diburu, Jhanji etc. are creating concrete images of the landscape of Assam-

SibasagarMohonia, Sorgadewrebaatsora,
NamdangorSilorSakudekhiboloidhunia.

Meaning – “The scenic beauty of Sibsagar is very beautiful, the monuments of Royal Ahom is also beautiful. In the same time, the stone bridge on the Numdung River is really mind blowing”.

6.1 Description of river Dihing

HatatdharidhariDihing par halu /JiraijaoKhagaritalat.

Meaning – “Holding hands together, we crossed the Dihing River,let us take rest on the shade of reeds”.

6.2 Description of river DarikaandDikhow–

DarikaDihing / Panibarhi gale / Dikhow era suti hoi.

Meaning – “The Darika and Dihing rivers, overflowed with water, the Dikhow lost its currents”.

6.3 Description of river Jhanji–

Einoiaamare, Seinoiaamare, Jhanjinoiaamarenoi.

Meaning – “This River is ours, that river is ours, the Jhanji is our river”.

6.4 Description of river Dichang –

Jape nu dim Dichangot / Dichangorvorabanot,
UtiUtilagimgoi / oijaan noire balisorot.

Meaning – “I will jump down into the Dichang River when it became overflow by flood andcurrent of water will carry my body into an unseen unknown place”.

BihuGeet is just a way to express love to his/her beloved one. It indicates that both are bonded with one piece of string,both are important for each other. Withoutone,life isincomplete.

Even the small things available in our surroundings become the theme of BihuGeets. In the sun light Sand becomes blossoms and the creator get attracted for it. His minute observationshelp him to create such beautiful Bihugeet - Luitarebalibogidhakedhaki / KachoiKani Pare lekhi.

Meaning – “The sands of the Luit are very white, the tortoise lays eggs counting”.

Luitenajabibalimorcenaiti / Luitenejabibali.

Meaning – “Do not go to the Luit, Sand there, O darling,Sand there, do not go”.

7.0 Reflection of Mountains and Hills in BihuGeets

Pictures of mountains and hills beautifully reflected in the Bihugeets. Assam and North-East is surrounded by plenty hills and mountains. Mountains and hills are closely associated with various activities of the common people of Assam. People use to compare their daily activity with the nature. It may be any joyful or sorrowful condition, struggle for survivals, gratitude of courageous activities, in nostalgia of the golden past etc. all areopenly describing through the BihuGeets. Such as –

PorbotePorboteogaboparumoi, Lotanubogaboloitaan,
BoliaHatikubolaboparumoi, Tumak nu bolaboloitaan.



Meaning– “I find it easy to climb on the mountains, but difficult to climb creeper, I can easily handle a wild elephant. But it’s quite difficult to agree you”.

Similarly,

Porbotoredhekia, lihiriPotia,
Botahotjenekoi hale, Dhulorecaporotturelahikokal
duseu-tiniseu koi vage.

Meaning–“The dhekia (ferns) with small leaf on the mountains start to dance in the wave of wind, similarly after hearing the melodious sound of Dhol, you become crazy to perform dance”.

Another Bihugeet is **UkhoPorvat Himalaya**. It’s a symbolic comparison between The Highest peak mountain Himalaya and the deepness of true love. This song is completely dedicated to dearest one. The song is like that-

OkhoPorvat Himalaya, Moromlagetumaloi
Moromlagetumaloi, OiJaanloi jam aamarghoroloi

Meaning – “As you aware The Himalaya is the highest mountain peak, as long as my love is concern, I love you that much, O my darling, I will take you to my home one day”.

8.0 Reflection of Flowers in BihuGeets

Spring rejuvenates the mind. It’s the reality. Spring refers to the season of ideas for rebirth, rejuvenation, renewal, resurrection and regrowth. In this season, nature became colorful and decorative with various blossom flowers. ‘Nahar’ flower spreads the sweet smell everywhere. Everybody is waiting with lots of curiosity to welcome the Bihu which comes in the spring season. Usually, The Nahar flower breaks the curiosity by conveying the message that Bihu is on the way-

AjiBihuBihu Kali BihuBihu
Naharphulphulibarbaratar
NaharorGondhepaiLaharir tote nai
GachakotbhangileJatar.

Meaning–“To day is Bihu, tomorrow is 'Bihu', It is the time for the Nahar to bloom. Having smelt Nahar, special someone (Lahari) is fickle, and breaks the spinning wheel, Stepping on it”.

Noipaniborhanai/ Nahorphulfulanai
Bihubihuloganai/ Gate murchenaiOi, Bihubihuloganai Gat.

Meaning – “Water level of rivers is in balance, Nahar is yet to bloom. My heart not yet indicates the fillings of Bihu, Oh my darling, not yet indicates the fillings of Bihu”.

Bihugeet was treated as the finest way to convey any kind of messages or information to the society as well as individuals-

KunjalataKopouPhulPhuliAase
NachonitumakDhuliaiMatiAase.

Meaning – “Oh Kunjalata, foxtail orchid is blooming, Oh Nachoni (dancer), Dhulia (person who play drum) is waiting for you”.

Here, Kunjalata refers to a young girl. One mediator informed her that her dearest one is waiting to perform Bihu dance together.

Similarly, end numbers of BihuGeets are there, where one can find flowers as a prime subject. For example-

Madhoi Maloti KopouPhul, BothahotHalise-Jalise
PrakitirBukuloiBasantaKaalAahise.

(Flower Madhoi Maloti and Kopou is blooming and moving in the wave of wind, which indicates the news of spring come to the Earth)



9.0 Reflection of Birds in BihuGeets

The love of the birds is compared with the love and desires of the young boys and the girls. In the peaceful environment of Assam, thousands of birds' species are there. During the spring season, birds use to make pair and falls in love with each other. The birds thereby encourage the human youths to think why not to do love. Such as –

Aebeliahudhanpaniyemarle
Patharatgajilemami;
SaraiSirikatiPiritikarile
Taarumaannahaloaami.

Meaning–*“This year, the Ahu rice cultivation is destroyed by flood water. Mami, i.e., weeds are growing in the paddy field instead of the rice. The birds have done love. But we could not become as like the birds.”*

The narrator expressed his feelings with crying, because due to loss of crops for flood, the narrator is not able to marry his/her beloved. In the other hand, birds have successfully done their love with love one in the same season. Therefore, it is said we cannot become as like the birds to succeed love.

Another BihuGeet –

NilaNilaChorai Nil AakashotUraNai,
NilaNilaChoraiDalot Pori MotaNai.

Meaning–*“Neither the Blue colouredbird is flying in the sky nor twittering by siting in a branch of tree”.*

PrakitirBukuloi Na-BarasunAahile
Gasor Dale DaleKulieMatile,
O, mur Dhulia....

Meaning–*“Sprig has come to the Earth carryingwith the lovely rain. All the trees filled with Cuckoo bird and the surroundings become pleasant by their melodious twitter”.*

Na-BarasunParile, KunhipaatUlale
Kuli-KetekieJaanOienalebinale.

Meaning–*“We are enjoying the lovely rain of spring and the melodious twitter of Cuckoo and Keteki bird”*

BihuGeet bears the reference of various species of birds. Classification of various birds is found throughout the BihuGeet. Some such birds are; Ganga Silani, Shen, Hetuluka, Kapau, Sakai-sakua, Jili, Dauk, Darik, Kuli, Matiyasilani, Kamsarai, Dhupalika, Tuni, Karsankanuwa, Bag, Kauri, Darik, Saliki, Dahikatar, Hah, Paro, Bhadarkali, Kukura, Moupia, Maina etc. and many more which are frequently seen in the surrounding of the human habitat in Assam and have major presence in BihuGeet. The tragic love is also there in BihuGeet with reference to the birds. In one of the geet, it is said that the Kapau bird has cried as KuhuKuhu sound; the Dauk bird has cried on staying motionless. Similarly, the daughter has cried embracing on neck of the mother; on being separated from the Dhani.e., the beloved. The Geet is –

KuhuKuhuKariKapautiKandile
DaukeKandileRai;
MakarDingitDhariJjiyekeKandile
DhanareAtarHoi.

Similarly,

BihuwaSoraie / KareBihuBihu
BinareNala Jen Maat / GachateLataie
HalicheJjaliche / DdhariSeujiaPaat.

Meaning–*“The Bihuwa bird sings of Bihu, the voice is like the harp. The creepers on the trees are dancing with green leaves”.*



KuliKetekie / Janaidilehi
BahagePalehiBuli

Meaning-“The Cuckoo and Keteki bird bring the messagethatBahag has come”.

PubareArune / Pacimatghurile
MalayatGhurile Bog / ManareKothati
ManateGhurile / Kaboloinepalo log.

Meaning-“The sun of the East has gone to the West. The crane flies in the air, the word of my mind is silent. I could never meet one,to speak out my mind”.

10.0Reflection of Trees, Paddy Field and Cultivation in BihuGeets

The celebration of GachBihu shows the vital relation of nature and men. Bihuwan, a specially woven towel to offer in BohagBihu is an integral part of this festival. The farmers and other people offer bihuwanto the trees also. By offering bihuwan, people express their love andrespect for the trees. During the time of offering bihuwanto the trees people sings like-

Gacharedalatebihuwanarilo, pichaloinachaloghuri
Habidangariadainadharibagaijaonamareguri

The meaning of the song is:“Bihuwanis hanged on the branch of the tree. Without looking back, o the god of forestpleaseforgives us for the faults”.

Bihu festival is associated with different stages of cultivation, production and gaining of crops. BihuGeet and paddy field or cultivation is very close to each other.

AmonaDhanokeDaboloigoisilu,
BauliBothahe Pale
KaasiDoli Mari HabiteXumalu

Meaning- “Storm has come when I was in the paddy field. For fear of it I threw the cutter and take shelter in a jungle”.

Johadhanorkothiya
Ruba nu ghonekori
Tehepabaaaghot,Tehepabaaaghotdhaan.

Meaning- “Plant ‘Johaa’ (Scented rice) in close space,so that you can reap a good harvest in November”.

Sawnorpotharotbhuiruithakiba,
TumihobaruwoniMoihomhaluwa.
Kothiyabharbulai dim guchi nu ghuchikori
TololoimurkoriRubaheranaachani
Tololoimurkorirubaa.

Meaning- “Keep transplanting paddy in July (And) You will look a beautiful planting girl. I shall be with the plough nearby I shall lighten your seedling (Paddy) load So that you can plant effortlessly”.

(Girls)Haalbaihaalowa
gharaloinajaba,
Kathiyaruboloibaaki,
Kathiyadibapatharat
Aamiroomebokatenaami

(Boys) Maasemaariboloindiotomakjaboloi
Bukapanilagibogaat
Gharatethakibaepodum, ulaihumaitakiba
Eipodummoromereogabamaat.



Meaning-“(Girls) do not go home just after completing ploughing the field. Transplanting of paddy seedlings is still left. Seedlings are to be carried to the field, So that we can complete transplanting.

(Boys)I shall not allow you to go for fishing, because for fishing you need to get touch with mud. You just stay at home and care me well.”

Interestingly, almost all the musical instruments use in the Bihugeets always carries the folk identity of Assamese culture. Therefore, the impact of nature is also seen in such instruments. Assam is one of a largest bamboo producing state. Hence, most of the musical instruments of Bihu like *gagana* (jaw herp), *taka* (bamboo clapper), dhol stick etc. are made from bamboo. On the other hand, *pepa* (aero phone) is made from buffalo horn, *Dhol* (drum) is made from wood with animal skin stretched over its open ends and the dhol is played using one stick, usually made out of Bamboo. Besides bell metals are the traditional raw materials of Assam use in preparing these instruments. So, it is seen that Assamese society, its culture and tradition are intimately related to nature reflected through the Bihu festival.

11.0 Conclusion

Natural beauty of Assam and North-East is really awesome. Agriculture is the main source of income for most of the people of Assam. Preparation for cultivation, Possibilities of the growing crops and the hope under the harvesting joy can be consider as the three main phase of agriculture for greater Assamese society. Based on these phases, the folk customs are developed. So, the attachment with nature and human is very close. Nature sows the seeds of new encouragement, excitement and imagination in the mind of the Assamese people whenever they cross the rivers hills, forests and fields for their livelihood. Assamese people have the nature gifted sense to skillfully enjoy the messages of Nature's beauty and taste, spirit, perfume and sounds as they have been spending all the moments of their lives in the open fields, river breasts or in the green fields. These all are reflected in the Bihugeets in a very systemic and melodious way. We are very much thankful to nature for blesse us with such melodious Bihugeets. BihuGeets are the spirit of natural life of the primitive men of Assam. It is not symbol of Sensible artistic intelligence of the creator but also gentle expression all about activity of day-to-day life. But unfortunately, the originality of BihuGeets is starting to change its track and we are responsible for it. The origin or creator of BihuGeets is indefinite. It conveyed verbally. Earlier, cultivators or the uneducated common native of Assam were connected with nature. Nature was their working place. Bihugeets or festivals were an entertainment during their leisure time of busy life, by which they get more energetic, motivated and spirit for the next level. Due to that reason nature is the prime subject of almost all the Bihugeets. 'Bihu was observed by the farmers of ancient time with full faith. They believed that by celebrating Bihu in open field the people can satisfy the god of raining and save their crops from any deficiency. Moreover, dancing and singing in the agricultural field, river bank, *beel* (wet land) etc. increases the fertility of the land. They worshiped the Earth as mother and Sun as father. As per their belief, dance and sing can draw the attraction of Sun and the Earth easily to become more fertile which results good crops. The primitive man regarded fertility as a blessing. But gradually, the Bihu festival transformed from open field to sophisticate stage, traditional instruments replace by modern instruments and surprisingly, Bihugeets also change its originality. It may be due to globalization, development of science and technology and ignorance for attachment with nature. We should think about it and prepare ourselves to maintain the balance between human and nature. We should remember that Nature is our future. Without nature any organism is meaningless.

From the above discussion the researcher come to the conclusion that impact of nature in the Bihugeets is really a vast subject. There are plenty of opportunities for further research on this topic.

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