CHAPTER-8
CONCLUSION

Assamese song evolves through a long history starting from Charyapadas, scaling the height of the sublimity in the forms of Borgeet of Sankardeva and Madhebdeva, becoming socially more significant in terms of themes and modern in terms of tone and style in the able hand of Jyotiprasad Agarwala and Bishnu Prasad Rabha, and following the trend set by the two, assuming the role primarily of a weapon for social change, a force for humanism, brotherhood and social justice in the hand of Bhupen Hazarika. During this long journey there were many patches of hurdles and obstructions in each way. However, the hard efforts of some people like Prafulla Baruah, Padma Nath Gohainbaruah, Nalinibala Devi, Chandra Kumar Agarwala, Laxminath Bezbaruah, Anandi Ram Das, Ambikagiri Raichoudhury, Rudra Baruah, Parvatiprasad Baruah etc. retrieved the pace and spirit of Assamese song.

An epoch-making change has been brought into the field of Assamese music with the emergence of Bhupen Hazarika. The discussion made so far bears ample proof to call him a musical genius with a great social consciousness and responsibility as well as a very refined and elevated aesthetic sense. With his song he has become a propounder of universal humanism, a force of the proletariat, voice of the poor downtrodden. In many of his songs he identifies himself as a potent force for uplifting the society where the poor and the exploited people of the world will get justice and dignity of living, where there will be a harmony among the peoples irrespective of their different castes and creeds, languages and cultures. He embraces the whole world as his home. He is a nomadic artist; he is a world citizen. Hazarika is an Assamese from heart and soul, but at the same time, he is also a good Indian, and a world citizen. His musical journey covers more than five decades. He sang in the towns and villages of Assam and India. He carried his music to different parts of the world – London, New York, Leningrad, Tokyo etc.
Wherever he went he enthralled the people with his songs. His message of universal love and humanism won the hearts of the millions. His mesmerizing personality and heart touching music was so overwhelming that in 1985 the Mayor of New Jersey conferred on him its honorary citizenship. Hazarika’s song has got special status in Bangladesh. His song “Joy Joy Bangladesh” written during the independence of Bangladesh got immense popularity. The people of Bangladesh still remember how Bhupen Hazarika’s mass-music inspired their freedom struggle. They are indebted to Hazarika, the way they are to the Govt. of India for political support for the Bangladeshis. Bhuben Hazarika was one of the prominent ‘Muktijoddhas’ (freedom fighter) of the freedom struggle. Hence, he is honoured posthumously with the ‘Muktijoddha Padak’, the highest civilian award of Bangladesh by the Bangladesh Govt. On his death Bangladesh’s Foreign Minister Dipu Moni said “Joy Joy Nobojato Bangladesh; Joy Joy Muktibahini…” (Triumphal salutations to newly born Bangladesh; triumphal salutations to the freedom fighters) would ring forever in the hearts of our people…. Bangladesh would also remember ‘Ganga Amar Ma, Padma Amar Ma, Amar Dui Chokhe Dui Joler Dhara, Meghna Jamuna ….. (Ganges is my mother, Padma is my mother, the two streams of tears in my two eyes are Meghna and Jamunna…) It impeccably symbolizes the inseparable bondage of identity and culture of the people across the border of our two countries. The class and quality of his musical creations are of such heights that the people of the region would always remember those with divine passion and respect” (www.thehindu.com). Such is the expansiveness of his world of music.

Man is one of the primary concerns in Bhupen Hazarika’s song. This is not the man of Assam only; it is the man of world. His songs are intended to inspire the people of the world to identify themselves as one kindred, a common community. In this present world where divisive forces are at work to disturb the harmony of people’s socio-cultural existence, Hazarika’s songs can be an effective antidote. The songs like “Manuhe Manuhar Babe” can inspire people all around the world
in all the ages with its fundamental philosophy of man’s social existence. And while talking about man’s life and existence he never forgets its pain, struggle and miseries. But he never teaches people to surrender to all these adversities. Rather, his songs infuse energy and courage to fight off all the adverse destructive forces. This fighting spirit of his songs takes them close to the heart of the people. His immortal numbers like *Agni Jugar Phiringoti, Āh Āh Olāi Āh, Pāneir Poākan* etc. will always remain inspiring for the people struggling against injustice and exploitation.

Hazarika’s songs, has the ability to guide a nation. His songs written in a different times and situations of Assam and India can still guide the society at the time of crisis. Through his songs he has defined the people ‘Assamese’, its society and culture and its language. And his ideas can solve many conflicting issues even today. He sings of the history of Assamese people, their course of evaluation as a greater Assamese society and the conflicts and socio political crisis it faces over the years. But, Hazarika does not end here. He also tries to direct the future course of the Assamese in his songs like “*Ami Axamiya Nahao Dukhiya*”. And this sense of social involvement gives him a special place in the hearts of the Assamese people which can be said to be the next after Sankardeva.

It is not only his songs and lyrics that earns him love and respect of the people, but also his prose which gives him a special place in Assamese intellectual as well as cultural life. His wisdom and judgments of mind, his social understanding and cultural sense are all amply reflected in his prose writings. As has been said before, Hazarika has developed his own unique way of expression defeating his force of thought and feelings. Indeed, his conversational style of writing leads him to the point where people automatically take him into confidence. And it makes him very effective. With his prose his mode of expression may be different from his songs, but his concern remains the same – the man and society with all varied facets and colours. And as per the manner of expression is concerned, he is very naturally at times poetic, brief and compact. His hammering
short sentences and words make the reader think deep and consider wide. Had Bhupen Hazarika taken to writing only, he would have been a leading authors of the state. His academic knowledge and his wisdom of life beam in every writing by him.

His films are the another important aspect of his life. This is yet again another mode of expression by Bhupen Hazarika. Here also he has been able to set his name as one of the successful film-makers of Assam and India. His contribution to Indian Cinema is well recognized when he was honoured with Dada Saheb Phalke Award in 1992. As has been said before, many of his films got national and international recognition including President’s awards. Every time he made a movie, he had a message in mind. All his movies have their contemporary social significance. They carried the same social and cultural sentiment that Hazarika always tried to convey through his songs and music.

There is no doubt that Bhupen Hazarika established a link between the cultural traditions of the North-East with the rest of India. He familiarized the outside world with the rich music and culture of North-East, especially Assam. And at the same time, he gave the people of the region a national and international exposure in terms of art, culture and music.

His joining politics is in fact a part of his total endeavour to bring out a positive change to society. His political life should not be viewed in isolation from the spirit that makes him a singer, a poet, a film maker, and a journalist. No doubt, Hazarika at times confused people with his changing political ideologies but this should not be brought into consideration while describing him as a man of the masses. And in fact people have never done so. There were many occasions when the people of the state criticized him, for example, when he joined BJP (already mentioned) or went to act in an advertisement of Star Cement. Many might say that was Bhupen Hazarika’s personal life. But people are not ready to accept that. For them the Bhupen Hazarika they love is the one who is their own, their ‘Dada’, their ‘Mama’. They are his own, they are his guardians and they will protect him from
any defaming element. They place him in their heart as a badge of their honour. In fact, the people’s occasional criticism and anger upon him is the result of their solicitous concern and over possessive nature. They always look up to him at the hour of crisis—they wonder “What Bhupen Hazarika will say now?” “What Bhupen da will do now?” There are not many people who have become legends in their lifetime. But Bhupen Hazarika has been so. He is such an original talent, such an influencing personality, such a genuine artist that who can be criticized but cannot be deprived of people’s warmth of love. It is impossible to describe the last six decade’s cultural history of Assam or India excluding Bhupen Hazarika. (Parasar, Anubhab; Goswami, Samiran[ed]: An article by Dilip Borah: 2011: 170)

Bhupen Hazarika may be analysed and explained in a number of ways and at a number of levels. But, all discussions centering him will surely lead to one conclusion—Bhupen Hazarika is a man of the masses, a mass artist, a social activist who can decide and inspire the course of a nation’s sentiment. This is evident when he died on 5th November, 2011. His death turns Assam into one family. All the people, keeping aside their sense of caste and creed, were united to mourn the death of their own loving ‘Bhupen Da’. More than seven laces people gathered in Guwahati to pay their tribute to him. The whole of Assam was drowned in tears and cries. The news of his death was telecast through 153 TV channels all over the world.

However, the great like Bhupen Hazarika never die with their death. They keep on rolling in the spirit of the people. Every man who loves people, who advocates humanity and social justice, who wants to be a force for social change, will always feel the touch of Bhupen Hazarika. Hazarika’s whole life is marked by his ever progressive vision and it defies all hurdles coming its ways. And it makes him ever citable and immortal;

“Priti Digbalayat Gatixil Geet Gāo
Bajrār Garjane Hār Māne
Bristir Trishnāi Mowsumi Khedi Jāi
Āmār Distiyeo Lakhya Jāne.” (Hazarika, Bhupen: 1993:501)