

Aesthetic of Bihusong

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Abstract:

The cultural tradition which has developed in Assam from ancient times and which has come down to us to the present day is very rich and varied. Among a large number of song and dance performances of the folk category, perhaps the most attractive and typically Assamese example is provided by Bihusong and dance associated with the springtime Bohag Bihu festival, which has been extremely popular, particularly among young men and women in Assam. As the springtime Bohag Bihu is the most characteristically typical Assamese festival, so are Bihusongs (Bihunam/Bihugeet) the most distinctive type of folk song of Assam, both for their literary content and musical mode.

Aesthetic is the theory of art. Since there are different arts theories might change from art to art. It considers art as a special form of human creativity. It explores the beautiful and valuable art, the essence of artistic creation and the impression of the work of art. Folk performing art have an aesthetic purpose. As the folk performing art of Assam, Bihu has also an aesthetic purpose. In Bihu, the aesthetic dimension is one of the most important ones, because Bihu represent a source of aesthetic urges and feelings. This research work will evaluate the aesthetic value of the Bihu song. The concept of Aesthetics, a significant part of Bharatmuni's *Natyashastra*, has been outlined and illustrated through the Bihusongs. For Indian Aesthetic one simply has to go to Rasa, Chanda, Dhvani, and Alamkāra theories. Bihu songs are called orature, as we know, which is a product of common folk people and it lives in people's hearts and gets carried from generation to generation through word of mouth. The Aesthetic quality is the charm of the Bihusong. Indian aesthetic theory is not applied to Bihusongs with a plan, but it is located spontaneously by the folk poet.

Key Words: Aesthetic, Bihusong, Rasa, Chanda, Alamkāra.

1.0 Introduction:

As the springtime Bohag Bihu is the most characteristically typical Assamese festival, Bihusongs (Bihunam/Bihugeet) are the most distinctive type of folk songs of Assam, both for their literary content and musical mode. The Bihusongs are normally quatrains with alternate rhymes. Sung antiphonally, Bihusongs are excellent poetry. The poet describes beauty, both of nature and the loved one, expresses adoration of sweetheart and speaks of frustration and sorrow, but above all, they glorify youth and love and express the yearning for union. There is another type of song Husari, sung on the occasion of the Bohag Bihu, the character of which is very different from typical Bihusongs. Husari songs are sober and serious compositions, often approaching hymns sung by a group of men in the courtyards of villagers when the various households are visited to wish good luck for the new year.

Traditionally, aesthetics is the branch of philosophy dealing with beauty or the beautiful, especially in art and with taste and standards of value in judging art. Aesthetic consists of the sense of beauty. It is characterised by the love of beauty. It means, broadly, a devotion to beauty and primarily to beauty as found in art and in whatever is attractive in the world around us. So, any study of beauty be it natural or manmade, can be called Aesthetic. The adjective 'aesthetic' from a Greek word meaning 'sense perception' comes to us from a German philosopher who used it for a theory of the beautiful. From this technical sense, it soon came to refer to good taste and artistry in general; if something has aesthetic value, it has value as a work of art. In 1735 'Aesthetic' word was for the first time formally used by Alexander Baumgarten in the sense of 'Science of sensitive cognition' in the field of arts. Aesthetic is a particular theory or conception of the beauty of art. Aesthetic studies means how artists imagine, create and perform works of art; how people use, enjoy and criticize art; and what happens in their minds when they look at paintings, listen to music, read poetry and understand what they see and hear. It also studies how art can affect their moods, beliefs and attitudes towards life. Since there are different arts, the theory might change from art to art.

Arts can be classified as underperforming, literary and fine arts. But they may also be classified differently on a different basis. In the Indian context, we have simply borrowed the term 'aesthetic' and broadly applied it in the field of Indian art and thus we say 'Indian Aesthetic' generally refers to the art appreciation and art experience of art form. In India, the study of aesthetics was at first restricted to drama and dance. The most ancient available text on dramaturgy is *Natyashastra*

(4th and 5th century A.D.) of the mystic Bharata. Indian poetics broadly developed into four theories – Rasa, Alamkāra, Rīti and Dhvani- corresponding roughly to the Western theory of pleasure, rhetoric/figures of speech, oblique poetry, statement poetry, propriety and suggestion.

1.1 Objectives:

The main objective of this research work is to analyse the aesthetic value of Bihu songs. This research work attempts to give a connected and systematic aesthetic study of the Bihu song. This study aims-

- Find out the Rasa of Bihusong.
- Find out the Chanda of Bihusong.
- Find out the Alamkāra of Bihusong.
- Find out the Symbol of Bihusong.

1.2 Methodology:

The main research method used in this work is an analytical method. The study is confined only to field-based work and library work. This work is based on data collection from primary and secondary sources. Different methods are used for collecting data. Primary data is collected from active bearers of the tradition through interviews, questionnaires and observation. The secondary data is collected from audio-visual works and other printed materials.

1.3 Relevance of the Work:

From ancient times Bihusongs have enriched the Assamese society with their value of social, cultural, musical and literary content. There have been some efforts made by several scholars in the study and analysis of Bihu. But most of the works done so far lack of systematic and scientific analysis of Bihu. Still, no brief collaborative research work has been taken and done on the aesthetical study of the Bihu song. This study will help to know the aesthetic value of Bihusongs which not only means the lyrics, tunes and performing style but also the ethnic pattern of people who are involved with Bihu performances, their social perspective, psychological perspective, occupation, cultural pattern etc. This study is unique in the sense that it is a primitive study which tries to understand Bihusongs from a different perspective. It will be the systemic and scientific aesthetic of the Bihusongs. It will also open the route for the research of the aesthetical study of other folksongs.

1.4 Plan of the Work:

This research work is arranged under some different meaningful chapters relevant to the topic-

- Introduction,
- Rasa in Bihusong,
- Chanda in Bihusong,
- Alamkāra in Bihusong,
- Symbol in Bihusong,
- Conclusion.

1.5 Area of the Work:

Assam is situated in the Northeastern part of India extremely rich in folksongs is almost inexhaustible. Traditionally Bihu is developed and performed in upper Assam from the ancient times. But there are some unique and special patterns and performing styles in every area. The selected areas for the field study are- Jorhat, Sivsagar, Moran, Dibrugarh, Tinisukia, Sadia, Kakapathar, Tezpur, Jamugurihat, Gahpur, Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Dhakuwakhana etc.

2.0 Aesthetic of Bihusong:

The song can tap into how we feel, how we perceive life and what we think. When we listen to a piece of song, we recognize a certain characteristic that provides value to our musical sensibilities. This artistic value is an aesthetic. The concept of aesthetics is one of the most important elements to study the musical tradition of folk songs. The aesthetic is often tied to artistic beauty. Music aesthetic is a philosophy that considers the source, type, development, performance, perception, significance and intention of the musical composition. Like any other heteronomous art form, the practitioners of folksongs aim at expressing emotions and creating the aesthetic or the beautiful.

The concept of aesthetics, a significant part of Bharatmuni's *Natyashastra*, has been outlined and illustrated through the Bihusongs. For Indian aesthetic one simply has to go to Rasa, Chanda, Dhvani and Alamkāra theories. Bihusongs are called orature, as we know, which is a product of common folk people and it lives on in people's hearts and gets carried from generation to generation through word of mouth. The aesthetic quality is the charm of Bihusongs. But Indian aesthetic theory

is not applied to Bihusongs with a plan, it is located spontaneously by the folk poet.

2.0 Rasa in Bihusong:

Rasa at one time meant 'water', 'juice' or 'wine'. At another time it is in the field 'essence'. In another context, it meant 'relish' or 'savouring' as a meaningful word that has floated in the air of ancient India for a very long time. It figures in *Rigveda*, it figures in the *Upanishads*. It is also to be figured in our ancient treatises on chemistry and medicine. But the particular 'rasa' with which we are concerned came much later and is to be found in *Natyashastra* of Bharata – a work on art in general and dramaturgy in particular. The first entrant work in which rasa has been used in aesthetic content and with an aesthetic purpose is *Natyashastra*. The rasa theory of Bharata– “Vibhāvanubhāva vyabhicārī-saṁyogād rasa-niṣpattiḥ.” (Barlingay,159) The sthāyībhāva, through vibhāva, anubhāva and vyabhicārī *bhava* takes the form of *rasa*.

Bhāva

Bhāvas are the basic elements in the phenomenon of rasa. Bharata explained rasas in terms of bhāvas which included sthāyī bhava, vibhāva, anubhāva, vyabhicārī bhava and sāttvika bhāvas. They required some organization either in the form of svabhāva or vibhāva. Bhāvas describes sthāyī, sañcarī and anubhāva. **Sthāyī bhavas** stand as the ground or primary motives of artistic creation. There are eight sthāyī bhāvas- rati(pleasure), hāsyā(laughter), śoka(grief), krodha(anger), utsāha(enthusiasm), bhaya(fear), jugupsā(aversion) and vismaya(wonder).

Vibhāva is used in the sense of the manifestation. The vibhāvas are two types-Ālambana vibhāva and uddīpana vibhāva. Ālambana vibhāva means a person or persons concerning whom the emotion is manifested. Uddīpana vibhāva means the circumstances are cooperating with it. It is easier for a man to be attracted towards a woman of young age if they are thrown alone and there is beautiful scenery before then, the moon peeping through the clouds, the fragment breeze blowing, and the like. Any one of such circumstances may be regarded as uddīpana vibhāva, whereas both the man and the woman are ālambana vibhāva to each.

Anubhāva means bodily expression by which emotion is expressed. Thus, the arch glances of a lady and her inviting smile may be regarded as anubhāva.

Vyābhicārī and **sāttvika bhavas** are those states in which the *sthāyī*

bhāvas are expressed.

Natyasastra has listed eight rasas – *Śṛṅgāra* (erotic), *Hāsya* (comic), *Karuṇā* (compassionated), *Roudra* (furious), *Bīra* (heroic), *Bhayānaka* (terrifying), *Bībhatsa* (disgusting) and *Adbhuta* (awesome). But the ninth rasa, *Śānta rasa* is the later addition. In Indian literature, rasa is explained as an important part. By the creation of a miraculous joy. Based on the theory of rasa in Indian aesthetics we can evaluate the aesthetical value of Bihusongs. The *Śṛṅgāra* rasa is the main rasa of Bihusongs although the other rasas are also explained in Bihusongs.

Śṛṅgāra Rasa

Rati is the *sthāyībhava* of *Śṛṅgāra* rasa. Rati means pleasure, delight, satisfaction, joy, fondness for, devotion or attachment to. *Śṛṅgāra* rasa in *Natyasastra* has been broadly divided into two categories-Sambhoga *Śṛṅgāra* (love-in-union) and Bipralambha *Śṛṅgāra* (love-in-separation). Both Sambhoga and Bipralambha *Śṛṅgāra* rasas are mostly reflected in Bihusongs. Example-

yovāto bihute *gaganā khujilo*
eibeli nidilā sāji.
tomāre gaganā *āmāko nelāge*
diyāgai sijanīk sāji.

In this song, the heroine asked her lover to make a Gagana (jew's harp) for her in the last Bihu festival. But the hero did not make it to this festival. That's why the heroine said that she doesn't need the Gagana and also said to the hero to give his Gagana to the other one. In this song, the jealousy of heroin and the separation of love are reflected as Bipralambha *Śṛṅgāra* rasa.

luitar bāli *bagī dhakedhakī*
kāchai kaṇī pāre lekhi,
gāte jui jaliche *sariyah phuṭiche*
dhanak pānī ghāṭat dekhi.

Here the lover mentions that her body burns with desire because she sees her lover at the bank of the river. It has a clear connotation of both sexual desire and fertility.

hāh hai parimgai *tomāre pukhurīt*
pāra hai parimgai chālat,
ghām hai somāngai *tomāre śarīrat*
mākhi hai cumā dim gālat.

Like the others, this song celebrates the erotic and creates romance between the lovers, the volume of sexual desire doesn't undermine the overwhelming amount of romance in these songs. Here, the lover states how he shall transfigure

into a duck to swim in the pond of her home and then a pigeon to perch on her rooftop, he expresses that he wants to enter her body as sweat and also wants to kiss her becoming a housefly. Here the desire of the lover creates Sambhoga Śṛṅgāra rasa as the lover expresses his feelings through the imagination.

Hāsya Rasa

As for the Hāsya rasa, it consists of the primary emotions of laughter, smile, joy and merriment. It arises from such vibhavas as wearing clothes and ornaments that balcony to someone else or do not fit, shamelessness, greed, tickling sensitive parts of the body, telling fantastic takes, seeing some (comic) deformity and describing faults. The sthāyībhāva of Hāsya rasa is hāsa generated by things that do not fit. Hāsya rasa is reflected through the Bihusong-

*budhāto budhāto dhendelā budhāto
udhānat khundā khāi mara,
cakure nedekha kānere nuśuna
chovālī bicāri phura.*

Here, it is mentioned about a very old man who is not able to see well and also not able to listen clearly but he is seeking for a girl to marry again. This type of attitude of the old man is very funny and this way this Bihusong express the emotion of hāsya rasa.

Karuṇā Rasa

Śoka is the sthāyī bhava of karuna rasa which means sorrow, grief, distress, affliction, lamentation or anguish. It has for its central emotion sorrow or pathos. Karuṇā rasa arises from the permanent emotion of sorrow. It proceeds from vibhāvas such as curse, affection, separation from those who are dealt, downfall, loss of wealth, death and imprisonment, or contact with misfortune. Sthāyībhāva of Karuṇā is śoka or sorrow. In other words, the emotion or the mood that is generated and which persists throughout is that of unhappiness. Karuṇā rasa in Bihusong–

*uri jāo bagalīr lagat ai maramī
puri jāo bagalīr lagat,
tomāre santāpat thāko kene kari
maio jāo cenehīr lagat.*

Here, the male lover cannot control himself as his girlfriend dies. He has no interest in life. Because all of his hopes and aspirations have gone with his girlfriend, therefore, he also wants to go with his girlfriend to heaven. The

sorrowful emotion of the hero is reflected as Karuṇā rasa in this song.

Vīra Rasa

Utsāha is the sthāyībhāva of Vīra rasa. Vīra rasa is properly acted out with patience, heroism, pride, dynamic energy, bravery and profound emotions. It is all about determination, energy and self-confidence and is expressed with the widening of eyes and expansion of nostrils. Bīra rasa in Bihusong–

jarā khāi bākali daliyāi pelābā
kāmuri nekhābā jim,
āie bopāie ji kare kariba
tomāk biyā kari nim.

Here, the hero is not afraid of the society or the family of the heroine. He said that he would marry the girl in any situation. Here the heroic action of the hero reflected the Bīra rasa. In addition, the Bīra rasa is also reflected in the Janāgābharur geet, Phulkonwarar geet etc. which is performed in the Husari performance.

From the above discussion, it can be assumed that the nine rasas of Indian aesthetical theory are reflected very clearly through the Bihusongs. The Śṛṅgāra rasa is the main rasa of the Bihusong, but the other rasas are also seen through the Śṛṅgāra rasa. But in Husari songs which are a part of Bihusongs, Śṛṅgāra rasa is not reflected. Because there is no place for love in Husari songs, completely bhakti-related songs are performed in Husari traditions. Example–

prathame pranāmo āi Sarasvatī
ditīye praṇāmo Hari,
tritīye praṇāmo gāonr buḍhā-methā
dhari jāo nāmare guri.

Words such as ‘Rām’, ‘Gobinda’, ‘Hari’, ‘Sarasvatī’, ‘Kṛṣṇa’ etc. are an integral part of Husari songs. Through the Husari songs, the Bhakti, Śānta, Bīra, Karuṇā, Adbhuta and Hāsya rasas are mainly reflected.

3.0 Chanda (Prosody) in Bihusong:

Chanda (Prosody) is the science or study of poetic meters and versification. It is a particular or distinctive system of metrics and versification. The term ‘Chanda (Sanskrit: Chanda/chandas) means ‘pleasing’, ‘alluring’, ‘lovely’, ‘delightful or charming’, and is based on the root ‘chad’ which means esteemed to please, to seem good, feel pleasant or something that nourishes, gratifies or is celebrated. The

term also refers to any metrical part of the Vedas or other compositions.

Some elements are essential to structure the Chanda. They are – Akṣara or Dhvani (syllables), Mātrā (measure), Yati or Ched (marks of Punctuation), Parba, Pada, Stabaka (stanza) and Antyamil (rhyme).

Mainly two types of Chanda in Assamese literature- rhyme in verse and blank verse. In rhyme verse prosody the poetry is divided into stanzas or verses in which all or some of the lines have a rhyme word at the end. And blank verse is any verse comprised of unrhymed lines all in the same meter, usually iambic pentameter.

Bihusongs are worldly creations. The songs are created by the folk poet and therefore, these are not created with planned and systemic rules of prosody. But in these songs, the rhythmic form is reflected spontaneously. Bihusongs are quatrain, which is a stanza of four lines, especially one having alternative rhymes. The extensive application of Tripadī chanda can be seen in Bihusongs. But the Dvipadī chanda is also parallelly reflected in Bihusongs. There are various types of Tripadī chandas like- Dulaḍī, Chabi, Lechāri etc. The Dulaḍī and Chabi chandas are extensively used in Bihusongs.

Dulaḍī chanda is considered the best chanda of Tripadī chanda. It is also called Laghu Tripadī. The rhythmic design of dulari is 6+6+8. Example of dulari chanda in Bihu songs-

kon svargadeve pukhurī khanāle
pārato bandhāle doul,
gaḍh bāndhi dile khāl khāndi lol
kālalai khiyāti rol.

bihu ānandīyā bihu binandīyā
bihure amiyā māt,
bihure bā lāgi bihuvā kakāi (ai)
deodhā lāgiche gāt.

Chabi chanda is also known as Dīrgha Tripadi chanda. The rhythmic design is 8+8+10. Example–

nair pānī baḍhā nāi kapou phul phulā nāi
tel teñā ghanhā nāi gāt,
gāonr dekā larāi kaḍi khel patā nāi
bihu bihu lagā nāi gāt.

In Assamese literature, there are various types of Dvipadī chandas like

Jhumurā or Gajagati, Digakṣarā or Laghu Payāra, Ekāvalī or Jhunā, Kusummālā, Jhamaka, Payāra, Mālatī etc. Jhumurā, Digakṣarā and Jhunā chandas are extensively used in Bihu songs, especially in Husari songs. The rhythmic design of Jhumurā chanda is 4+4. Example–

*raṁpur (ai) rañāpur (ai),
gaḍhgāon (ai) kata (kimān) dur (ai).
āidhan (ai) binandīyā,
haridhan (ai) laharīyā.*

The Jhunā chanda is also known as Ekāvalī. The rhythmic design of Jhunā chanda is 6+5. Example–

*eketā bāhare teratā kāmi,
bahāgar bihute āhichon āmi.
opāre baraṣuṇ taledi pānī,
huchari gāonte ki hoba hāni.*

We can say based on the above discussion that as the Bihusongs are transmitted in oral expansion and written by folk poets the Prosody or Chandas are used spontaneously in Bihusongs. Tripadī chanda is mainly used in Bihusongs but parallelly Dvipadī chanda is also extensively used in Bihusongs, especially in Husari songs.

4.0 Alamkāra in Bihusong:

The term ‘Alamkāra’ in Sanskrit stands for the principle of poetic beauty itself. Alamkāra in a restricted sense also means any trope or figure of speech that adorns a literary composition. The language of poetry is different from ordinary language. It is embellished with appropriate use of figures of speech. Figures of speech make language elegant. They become poetry only when the use of Alamkāra embellishes them. An important aspect of poetry is that it is charming and beautiful. Alamkāra allows poetry to express ideas differently from the ordinary use of language.

There are two large classes of Alamkāra accordingly based on sound and sense- Sabdalamkāra and Arthalamkāra. Arthalamkāra (artha, meaning), which ornaments the meaning of the word, and Śabdalamkāra (śabda/ word), which ornaments its sound. The poetic analysis shows that Alamkāra makes the Bihusongs more romantic and in addition its poetic beauty and literary value more attractive.

Śabdalaṁkāra in Bihusong

In Śabdalaṁkāra the sounds of words of important. If the sound of a word is changed, Śabdalaṁkāra loses its significance. Repetition of the same sound creates sound rhetoric. Sound rhetoric has different classifications including Anuprāsa, Yamaka, Śleṣa, Punaruktabadābhāṣa and Vakrokti. In Bihusong, the extensive uses of Śabdalaṁkāra can be seen. Example–

cirip cirip kari kāpor dhui āchilo
ciri luitalai cāi,
ciri luitāte kirīli mārile
cenāi nāve meli jāi.

bihutalīr biriṅā pāte ai nācanī
bihutalīr biriṅā pāt,
biḥu thāke māne biḥuke binābi
biḥu gole binābi kāk.

cote gai gai bohāge pālehi
phulile bhebeli latā,
kaino kai thākile orake napare
bahāgar biḥure kathā.

Arthalaṁkāra in Bihusong

In Arthalaṁkāra, the sense of words is of primary importance, while the sound is secondary. In this case, words may be changed as long as there is no alteration in meaning. Commonly arthalaṁkāra can be divided into five types- Sādṛśyamūlaka, Birodhmūlaka, Śrīnkhalāmūlaka, Nyāyamūlaka and Guḍhārthapratītimūlaka. Sādṛśyamūlaka alaṁkāra refers to some kind of similarity between two different subjects or alaṁkāra objects. Birodhmulaka alaṁkāra is a rhetorical category which involves an apparent contradiction between two things. Śrīnkhalāmūlaka alaṁkāra refers to a rhetorical category which works through or develops through a sense. Nyāyamūlaka alaṁkāra refers to the rhetoric of argument. Guḍhārthapratītimūlaka alaṁkāra refers to a rhetorical device in which there is another hidden meaning behind a simple statement. In five types of arthalaṁkāra there are various Alaṁkāra- Upamā, Rupaka, Dipaka, Atiśayukti, Virodhābhāṣa, Pratīp, Utprekṣā, Bhrāntimān, Dṛṣtānta, Samāsukti, Atiśayukti, Tulyayugitā, Viṣama, Vibhāvanā,

Arthārntarnyāsa, Aprastutpraśamsā. The various types of arthalamkāra are reflected through the Bihusongs—

*tāmolar dābi jen maram kumalīyā
kalijār potaṇi pāṇ,
bīṇāre māte jen cenāir māt śunī
hṛdayat bāniche dhān.*

*tomār culitāri megh baranīyā
jāmuke bulovā dāt,
ocar cāpi cāpi nāhibā lāharī
agaṇi jwaliche gāt.*

*sājone kācone ekhani dāpone
kakālṭi bīṇare goṭ,
ene bagītarā sone gilip mārā
dāpoṇ sāi mārili photo.*

*maramar dīghe di chenehar bānī lai
hepāhar āchore bovā,
saponar phulere hiyār bihuvān
manedi ebeli lowa.*

*tomār cakujuri hariṇī caku jen
bukute padumar cakā,
tomār bāhu duṭi padumar thāri jen
rihār ānchalere dhakā.*

*carāi hai parim gai tomāre bilat ai
māche hai parim gai jālat,
ghām hai somām gai tomāre śarīrat
mākhi hai parim gai gālat.*

*lokare bārīte kalpāt kāṭilo
āgali āgali cāi,
bihure talīte tomāke bāchilo
kakāl khāmucīyā pāi.*

5.0 Symbols in Bihusong:

The word 'symbol' derives from the Greek 'symbolon'. The meaning of the symbol is a sign or mark. In literature symbol is something that represents something else. 'Symbol' is a word, image, or anything representing an idea. Therefore, the symbol is literary translating to a reflected likeness of a subject or a thing. With the use of symbols, we can describe a representative of a subject as another subject.

Language is the union of signs and symbols. So, we can say it is the most often used form of symbol. "Man is the only creature that uses words intentionally and habitually." (Boulton 3) People used to communicate themselves with symbolic gestures before language was established as a written form. Every language has a different symbol for each letter or word. Symbols are adaptive. Human society can learn to use a new symbol with a new concept every day. Symbol is often used to convey a specific meaning to the readers or audience in various elements of literature like poetry, novels, short stories, songs etc. Writers usually use symbols as a means of aesthetic expression or indicative meaning. "To name an object is to destroy three-quarters of a poem which is made up of the pleasure of guessing little by little, to suggest it that it is the ideal." (Brenan 132)

Symbols can be categorized as conventional, universal and personal. (Mazumdar 50) Conventional symbols are something that is generally used from ancient fable and folk belief. Universal symbols are something that carry the same meaning all over the world and the personal symbols reflect the internal state of mind of the speaker.

Symbols are used spontaneously in Bihusongs by the poet to express feelings for their loved ones. To express the feelings of love from the bottom of the heart the poet uses many symbols in Bihusongs. All Bihusongs are not symbolic although in a type of Bihusong called Banghusha symbol has played a large role. It is natural that in the touch of Basanta (spring), the mind of a human becomes fickle like nature. In this time the feelings of lovers for their loved ones are expressed through the Bihusong. Bihu songs are the medium to express the feelings of love with symbols although these are very easily comprehensible. Banghusha is a wonderful example of expressing the feeling of heart through the symbols. The symbols are used in Bihusongs from the surrounding environment. Various colours, birds, trees, flowers, clouds, rain, moon, sun etc. played roles as symbols in Bihusongs. There are three types of symbols used in Bihusongs – nature-

related, physical beauty- related and erotic-related.

Nature-related Symbols in Bihusong

The elements of nature like birds, plants, insects, rivers etc. are reflected as symbols in the Bihusong. These songs are the best medium to express the feelings of lovers. In which Bihusong symbols are used normally the first line is described as a simile and the second line is used to describe the main narrated subject. Example-

āliye nejābi bāliye kāṭiba
pathāre nejābi bokā,
carāi hāladhīyā durekai nejābi
rāvane hariba sītā.

In this Bihusong, the first line is used as a simile. Here ‘carāi hāladhīyā’ (yellow bird) and ‘Rāvane hariba Sītā’ (Ravana will kidnap Sita) — the two parts of the second sentence are symbolically described. In this song ‘carāi halodhiya’ means lovely girl. The yellow birds are very beautiful so the lover boy compares his loved one with the yellow bird. According to the poet if the beautiful girl goes alone anywhere then the wicked man will kidnap her like Ravana kidnapped Sita. Here ‘Ravana’ and ‘Sita’ are used as symbols. From the ancient time ‘Ravana’ has been described as the symbol of a demonor the power of evil and ‘Sita’ is described as the symbol of simplicity. The lover is afraid to lose his girlfriend, so he expresses his feelings of fearful mind through this song.

hātī heruvālo lihirī banate
ghorā heruvālo raṇat,
pai heruvālo saragar mukutā
chotālar dubari banat.

Here ‘hātī heruvālo lihirī banate’ is used as a simile to narrate the sentence ‘pai heruvālo saragar mukuta chotālar dubari banat’. In the first line, the poet says that he has lost an elephant in the slender grass like he lost a pearl of heaven in the grass of the courtyard. Slender grass is a very thin and short grass. So, it is impossible to lose an elephant in slender grass. In this Bihusong, the poet says that he has lost the pearl of heaven in such easily available slender grass. That is to say, the poet has lost hislover who is like the pearl of heaven. To express the feelings of loss strongly, the poet has used ‘the pearl of heaven’ and ‘slender grass ‘as

symbols.

Physical beauty-related Symbols in Bihusong

The beauty of nature and physical are mainly described in Bihusong. The lover boy compares the physical beauty of his girlfriend with nature. Lover also describes the changes in nature during spring with changes in the physical beauty of his loved one. In Bihusong the physical beauty of a young girl is expressed through the similes and symbols. These types of Bihusongs are performed in special places or environments and the performers are very sensible about the application of words.

*āhate salāle pāte samanā
āhate salāle pāt,
āmār āiṭiye barañṭi salāle
lole rañā rihā gāt.*

*dalañir opare ki charāi urile
dekho ranga rañā thoṭ,
chenāi bagītara sonar gilip marā
kapalat sendurar phoṭ.*

*nair suvaṇi nair bāli-chāpari
tātare suvaṇi rihā,
dekāre suvaṇi bharir kolaphul
gābharur suvaṇi rihā.*

The beauty of the young girl attracts the young lover boy and this amorous attraction is narrated in symbolic language through the Bihusongs. Therefore, to narrate the physical beauty of a young girl the poet uses ‘rañā rihā’ (rihā-one type of cloth), ‘sendurar phoṭ’ (vermilion bindi) etc. symbols in the Bihu song. The red colour is the symbol of youth and love. According to the tradition of Assamese society when a girl attains puberty she has to wear ‘rañā rihā’ (a kind of red scarf worn by women). To describe the loveliness of the girl who attained puberty the creator uses symbolic language like ‘wearing of red scarf’, ‘wearing of vermilion bindi’ etc.

With the narration of women's whole corporal beauty parallelly it is noticed that with the medium of symbol, the poet describes the beauty of each limb of the body of women in Bihusongs. These types of Bihusongs are performed very carefully with symbolic language in a special environment.

seutī phulile malatī phulile
phulile kharikājāi,
dhanare bārīte jauban phul phulile
gondhate āmolmolāi.

tumār chakujuri harinīr chaku jen
bukute padumar chakā,
tumār bāhuduṭi padumar ṭhāri jen
rihār achalere dhakā.

dekhibalai suvaṇi tumār bukukhāṇi
kumaliā tāmolar thok,
michikiā hānhiṭi lāhari othate
kon sote eri jāo tok?

These Bihusongs mentioned above describe the female breast through symbols without any artificiality. Sometimes the narration about the female breast goes beyond the limit of modesty. To describe the beauty of the female breast the poet uses symbols like- ‘flower of youth’, ‘seedvessel of lotus’, ‘immature bunch of betel nuts’ etc.

Erotic-related Symbols in Bihusong

Bihu is a fertility faith-centred festival of Assam. The elements of nature become very attractive at the touch of spring. The minds of human beings have also become very fickle and romantic like the changes in nature. In this time the lover cannot undermine the feelings of desire and these are described spontaneously in Bihusongs. Bihu performers perform these types of Bihusongs (banghosha) in a special environment in a special way. The subject of these songs is very personal for lovers. Even then the expression way of these types of Bihu songs with indicative meaning through the symbols are very noteworthy.

hātī pāni khāle daiyāṇe dipāṇe
ghorāi pānī khāle rai,
dhane pānī khāle pirīti nijarāt
thiya garāt khopaṇi lai.

nale nāi bichanī kelai banāichilā
napare batāhar bā,

dakai pukhurī kelai khanaichilā
chenāie nudhue gā.

tiyanho nahali chirālo nahali
kecāi khāloheten tok,
sariyah janam lai beṭerī cepālai
kelaino karicha bhai.

āhudhān dābalai māti paṭhiālo
lokar bāo dhānaṇi dāle,
kānci dali māri somāl hābiyani
śarīlat barale khāle.

The erotic-related symbols are used in the Bihusongs mentioned above. As a fertility-centered festival song, the main subjects of Bihusongs are agriculture, women and feelings of sexual desire. The agriculturist believes that by increasing the fertility power of women can increase the fertility power of crops. It is a magical folk belief of agriculturists. It is the abundant description of the feelings of love, the desire for sexual intercourse etc. subject in Bihusong. The desire for sexual intercourse or incomplete copulation is described in above mentioned Bihusongs. As the symbols of sexual intercourse, 'my dear has drunk water at the fountain of love with the foothold at the steep bank', 'throwing the sickle and entered in the forest, the wasp has cut the body' and as the symbols of incomplete copulation 'why did you dig the deep pond, my dear, does not take bath there', 'born as a mustard seed why are you afraid to squeeze in expeller' are narrated in above Bihusongs. It is easy to understand the symbolic subject of Bihusongs with the spontaneous uses of the language of folk life.

6.0 Conclusion:

In Bihusong aesthetic dimension is one of the most important ones, because Bihusong represent a source of aesthetic urges and feelings. This work researched the aesthetic value and aesthetic theories which are reflected in Bihusongs. The concept of aesthetics is one of the most important elements to study the musical tradition of folk songs. The concept of aesthetics, a significant part of Bharatmuni's *Natyashastra*, has been outlined and illustrated through the Bihusongs. For Indian aesthetic one simply has to go to Rasa, Chanda, Dhvani and Alamkāra theories. Bihusongs are called orature, as we know, which is a product of common folk people and it lives on in people's hearts and gets carried

from generation to generation through word of mouth. The aesthetic quality is the charm of Bihusongs. But Indian aesthetic theory is not applied to Bihusongs with a plan, it is located spontaneously by the folk poet.

Based on the theory of rasa in Indian aesthetics we can evaluate the aesthetical value of Bihu songs. The nine rasas of Indian aesthetical theory is reflected very clearly through the Bihusongs. The Śṛṅgāra rasa is the main rasa of the Bihusong, but the other rasas are also seen through the Śṛṅgāra rasa. But in Husari songs which are a part of Bihusongs, Śṛṅgāra rasa is not reflected. Because there is no place for love in Husari songs, completely bhakti-related songs are performed in Husari traditions. Through the Husari songs, the Bhakti, Śānta, Bīra, Karunā, Adbhuta and Hāsya rasas are mainly reflected.

Bihusongs are worldly creations. The songs are created by the folk poet and therefore, these are not created with planned and systemic rules of prosody. But in these songs, the rhythmic form is reflected spontaneously. Bihu songs are quatrain, which is a stanza of four lines, especially one having alternative rhymes. The extensive application of Tripadī chanda can be seen in Bihusongs. But the Dvipadī chanda is also parallelly reflected in Bihusongs.

The poetic analysis shows that Alaṅkāra makes the Bihusongs more romantic and in addition its poetic beauty and literary value more attractive. The various types of Śabdalaṅkāra and Arthalaṅkāra are reflected through the Bihusongs.

Symbols are used spontaneously in Bihusongs by the poet to express feelings for their loved ones. To express the feelings of love from the bottom of the heart the poet uses many symbols in Bihusongs. All Bihusongs are not symbolic although in a type of Bihu song called Banghusha symbol has played a large role. Bihu songs are the medium to express the feelings of love with symbols although these are very easily comprehensible. The symbols are used in Bihu songs from the surrounding environment. Various colours, birds, trees, flowers, clouds, rain, moon, sun etc. played roles as symbols in Bihu songs. There are three types of symbols used in Bihu songs – nature-related, physical beauty-related and erotic-related.

The aesthetic dimension of Bihusongs is one of the most important ones because Bihu represent a source of aesthetic urges and feelings. The Aesthetic quality is the charm of the Bihusongs. However, the aesthetic theory is not applied to Bihusongs with a plan, but it is located spontaneously by the folk poets.

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