

## Denoting Cultural Significance in a piece of Music of Bhupen Hazarika

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### Abstract

*Any piece of music has its own cultural and sociological aspect leading to a civilizational touch. Through a certain piece of music, we can identify its genesis and the development that society has gone through during a larger span of time. This paper is focused on a particular song titled 'Us Din Ki Baat Hai' sung and orchestrated by Late Shri Bhupen Hazarika.*

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Music is supposed to be the most abstract art form available in the world. The place of painting and poetry comes after this in subsequent manner in terms of abstraction. If, we look at the very simple meaning of abstractness, it denotes it's farness from the actuality or reality, a thing that never follows any chronological time and space. It's like the myths which covers large time span of a society but always remain fresh in the mind of the inhabitants of that place without any sense of time and space, as we walk into our dreams leaving all the questions regarding time, object (including human) and space. Music travels in the same way. It would be amazing to know that still we could be singing the tunes invented by our forefathers of nomadic ages. But it is true that as like myths music also comes to us generation by generation varing, verifying and re-evaluating itself, moulding easily by the need of the people and circumstances.

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Rivers have played a major role in the life of human society. It has given a certain type of life pattern or a system guided by natural forces which used to be a revolutionary step in the life of human being. Man has learned to settle down somewhere through rivers, as it has capacity to full fill the needs of human beings. That is why all the earlier civilizations flourished by the bank of great rivers. If, we see the anthropological data of those societies, we see that all the indigenious societies have their own river songs whatever part of the world

they belongs. This is what they have given back to the rivers in return for their love, care and fulfilment. The relationship between the two is dialectic in nature. Both have their own specimen's to each other. They are not always fruitful (as one of the reasons of disappearing the Harppa and many other civilizations is supposed to be the flood and till today it's harmfulness towards the human society is visible) but still rivers are always there as bless for human beings.

Bhupen Hazarika, the legend of Hindustani music tradition from Assam, is very much a part of those nuanssaces. Listening him is like taking a dip into the cultural, sociological and civilizational life of a particular society, and their human species. His music takes us back to the roots, where the relationship of man and nature is unbreakable. In his music nature is present with its species, trees, mountains, and rivers. The music and voice of Bhupen Hazarika is not just a creation of an individual but it becomes the representative voice of the nature, culture and society of that particular area and thus even the last person of that very civilization got his space is his music and songs.

He is a musician and singer who have recreated the magic of folk songs of Assam. But I don't think that the music he has created and songs which he has sung remain the folk songs. He brought them into a new category called popular music, although, very much near to the old form and that's why so distinctive from the other music of popular category. His music and songs are fresh, airy and gives a new experience as a whole. His music which he has recreated by using the tunes of the folk music of Assam for singing new lyrics and poems become voices of the speechless persons. The soul of the tunes/music remains the same but the content of the song changes in a focused manner. This is the type of change human being always experimenting with the civilizational change in the society by adding new experiences of life into the traditional tunes or music. It is why it looks so natural. Several highly appreciated and popularly accepted songs of Bhupen Hazarika are the instances of such experiments including, *Dola re Dola*, *O Ganga*, and others.

But the song I have chosen to discuss here is different one from these, as even the content of this song looks like the traditional one. It is a beautiful piece of work by Bhupen Hazarika called "*Us Din ki Baat Hai*". The fisher going for fishing in the midst of the river and becoming hunt of the river is a regular experience in the life of the people living beside the rivers. Missing of the fisherman is the most common saga in most of the river songs created all over the world. This is the grey part of the river, in human experience. But life goes on and people take it as their misfortune. These songs try to aware the human beings

about this misfortune, however, this is written in their fate and bound to happen in that way. This is the only way to accept it as they have no choices.

Folk songs always depict folk tales with the common experience shared by people. People want to communicate something (their experience) to the next generation, so they brought that experience in musical formats or in myths. So, almost all folk songs have their own agenda or propaganda conveyed with the help of stories or incidents. It means that communication is the main object in a folk song. So, its musical format is not so complicated as in other types of music. Simple rhythm patterns are used in these songs so that everyone can follow it, as it is a thing of and for society not just individual. The musical instruments used in these are basically based on percussion and mouth instruments easily available in the society.

Bhupen Hazarika, in his arrangement of music, maintained the same things, adding only few, which creates the whole atmosphere i.e. simple beats of Drum (Dhol or Mridang), and use of flute (one of the most ancient musical instrument). He has used *Shehnai* with a minor synthesis of orchestra arrangement, not loud but very profound, with the sound of waves of sea in the background. The whole arrangement is so good that it recreates the mystic-daisy atmosphere of the sad raga very powerfully. The deep and steady voice of Bhupen Hazarika adds a lot in the whole ambience. The anger of 'Ramani' was shown by the somewhat fast and pitched voice. It creates a type of tonal colour in respect of his voice, which is full of pathos. This is one of the greatest achievements of the popular music. The deep voice of Bhupen Hazarika resembles the sound of a river, which is flowing slowly and the pitched voice resembles the high waves. The whole cultural-civilizational and sociological attributes mingles here in a much codified manner in this very song. The tempo of the music changes in between but again comes on the same pattern. In this song, words (voice) also behave like a sound pattern, which boosts the temperament of the song.

Any civilization, how much advanced it may be, has to deal with the natural calamities. So it is better for the human beings to respect the grievances of the nature and rebuild the same organic but dialectical relationships with it which earlier human species have developed with their own experiences. Music, one of the most ancient art form, can help us in this direction, especially, the indigenous music based in its cultural roots. And to explore those possibilities legends like Bhupen Hazarika has already shown the path.

**Webliography:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZ\\_eh1tjDHw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZ_eh1tjDHw)