
Bishnu Prasad Rabha from an Indian Perspective: A Revolutionary and Cultural Icon of Assam

Banajit Pathak*

**Poet, Author and Independent Researcher Bezera, P.O. Bezera Kamrup, Assam, India.*

*Corresponding Email: [*pathakguptajit19@gmail.com](mailto:pathakguptajit19@gmail.com)*

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Abstract: *On January 31, 1909, Bishnu Prasad Rabha was born in Dhaka, which is now in Bangladesh, but was a part of pre-independence India. Gopal Chandra Rabha was Bishnu Prasad Rabha's father, and Gethi Das was his mother. During his time in college, Rabha actively participated in the Indian independence struggle. His active involvement in the fight against the British meant that, although attending several colleges, including Karmail Academic in Rongpur, Victoria College in Cooch Behar, and St. Paul's Cathedral Mission College in Kolkata, his academic education was never fully completed. In 1930, he took part in Gandhiji's Non-Cooperation Movement. Following India's independence in 1947, Rabha began to rebel against the wealthy landowners, known as Jamindars, who were abusing the common people. As a result, he became animosity with the government and had to hide from the watchful eyes. He joined the Communist Party in support of the freedom of the underprivileged and oppressed ordinary people. He carried a pen in one hand and a stein-gun in the other, both dedicated to the people's liberty. An equitable society was Bishnu Rabha's utopian vision. This research paper aims to examine Bishnu Prasad Rabha's involvement in the fight for India's independence, as well as his activism as a Communist Party member for the emancipation of the impoverished and oppressed common people. A legendary figure's life story and historiography can accurately reflect the social progress of a given era. Bishnu Prasad Rabha was a true bohemian and artist in arms who, against the backdrop of the eastern Indian subcontinent's liberation movement, emphasised a crucial role in the development of revolutionary ideas of a society. Rabha was recognised as the Assamese people's symbol, "Kalaguru.". In this paper, Bishnu Prasad Rabha a revolutionary and cultural icon from Assam is seen from an Indian perspective.*

Keywords: *Bishnu Prasad Rabha, Indian, Assam, Cultural Icon, Revolutionary, Kalaguru.*

1. INTRODUCTION

By turning to Marxism and Leninism, Bishnu Prasad Rabha broke with the ideologies of the ruling class and the aristocratic middle class and adopted socialist beliefs. 1945 saw him join

the Revolutionary Communist Party of India, where he was first exposed to Marxist economics. He made an effort to become a sincere communist in order to learn about and comprehend Leninism. From 1945 until his passing in 1969, he was involved in a variety of social, political, and cultural endeavours. During this extended era, Bishnu Rama advocated for a society without social classes. He had a creative conscience and accepted revolution.

He never saw a revolution as nothing more than murder. According to Rabha, revolution entails social transformation. Every person is endowed with a revolutionary spirit. Actually, there is a rebellion in every living thing. Living things have undergone evolution as a result of their resistance to shifting environmental conditions.

In this evolutionary chain, those who fail in this never-ending battle against nature are lost forever. A revolution like this develops gradually. Then, there comes a sharp change in direction. A fresh shift is called a revolution.

Hegel and Marx-Angels were influential social analysis revolutionaries. Later, these ideas became known as Marxism, which served as the basis for egalitarian philosophy. Throughout human history, there have been multiple revolutions that have been founded on well-established theories, concepts, and ideals. Another one of these social revolutionaries was Bishnu Rabha. He belonged to the elite group of supporters of the egalitarian social revolution. He demonstrated an incredible capacity to portray his revolutionary spirit and ideas via art that much exceeded that of his fellow philosophers and artists. As a result, he became a towering figure not just among his contemporaries but also in Assam and India during the twentieth century.

One of the great innovators who came before him, Bishnu Prasad Rabha, identified and developed the cultural ethos of a multiethnic community by using politics as a tool. Though he embellished it with an open-minded nationalism that served the wider Assamese national life and its national culture, he was influenced by the Assamese nationalist ethos.

2. RELATED WORKS

1. Baishya, G. (2023) in the paper titled "Bishnu Prasad Rabha – A Revolutionary Spirit of India: A Study," emphasizes that Bishnu Prasad Rabha turned away from the ideologies of the ruling class and the aristocratic middle class, turned to Marxism and Leninism, and adopted a socialist stance.
2. Hazarika, P., and Nath, D.B. (2018), in their paper titled "Reflection of Nationalist and Social Consciousness in Literature: A Study on Select Plays of Bishnuprasad Rabha," note that readers, critics, and activists have given Bishnuprasad Rabha, one of the great writers and cultural icons of Assam, a unique place. These critics, readers, and activists have attempted to base their interpretations of Rabha on his writings.

Statement of the Problem:

As an Assamese cultural symbol and revolutionary personality, Bishnu Prasad Rabha plays a significant role.

Objectives of the Study:

The major objective of the study are-

1. To study Bishnu Prasad Rabha from an Indian Perspective.
2. To explore Bishnu Prasad Rabha as a Revolutionary and Cultural Icon of Assam.

Hypothesis:

From the perspective of Assam and India, Bishnu Prasad Rabha plays a significant role as a revolutionary and cultural icon.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research paper employed a descriptive methodology. The essential secondary data was found on a number of websites, including periodicals such magazines and journals. Discussion and results and conclusions were then reached through the analysis and examination of the study.

Rationale:

In today's world, Bishnu Prasad Rabha's legacy holds great significance.



Bishnu Prasad Rabha: The Icon from Assam

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the 1940s, Bishnu Prasad Rabha became interested in the egalitarian ideas of Marxism. After some disagreements with the Communist Party, Rabindranath Tagore's young and energetic nephew Soumendronath Tagore, who had represented Indian communists at the

1928 International Communists' Meeting, returned to India from Hitler's concentration camp and founded the Communist League of India in 1943.

Later on, the Revolutionary Communist Party of India was created from that League. For the first time, RCPI was able to effectively communicate the idea of global equality and solidarity to young people in India and Assam. In this socialist uprising against capitalism, feudalism, and colonialism, Bishnu Rabha played a crucial role. Through his artistic and political writings, Rabha attempted to demonstrate his compassion for the impoverished and oppressed by joining the RCPI, an organization based on Marxist and Stalinist ideas. In his writings, he maintained that socialist egalitarian philosophy's tenets could guarantee the true liberty of labourers and farmers.

Socialism is the cornerstone of this egalitarian ideology. Bishnu Rabha made the following observation about socialism, communism, Marxism, materialism, and ideology: "Through socialism, the government, the industries, and science will be in the hands of the common public." Then, the common people will overthrow the wealthy individuals who became rich by abusing and tormenting the poor from their panchayat with the assistance of their government. The general public will take over these industries and use them to their advantage to develop larger areas of land faster. They will be able to live in harmony, eat and dress joyfully as a result.

Bishnu Prasad Rabha felt that no artist could achieve greatness without embracing a philosophy of life on people's revolution. Hence, his groundbreaking journey symbolised a journey from the domain of pure impracticality to the realm of political beliefs.

Bhishnu Prasad Rabha launched a resurgent and populist attempt because he deeply knew that the undertones of the major stream of India's feudal and capitalist societies would eventually find their way into the ethnic area of the periphery.

The significance of Bishnu Prasad Rabha's actions increased during a period when some Indian populations refused to recognise British rule because they saw it as just a transfer of authority. Bishnu Prasad Rabha aspired to create an equitable society where each Assamese group would have an equal share of money and rights, drawing inspiration from the ideals of Marx and Engels.

In order to create a great Assamese society, Rama sought to reduce the distinctions between tribal and non-tribal people. Bishnu Prasad Rabha was a symbol of kindness, peace, unity, and integrity.

Bishnu Prasad Rabha towards Rich Assamese Culture and Heritage:

1. Bishnu Prasad Rabha equated the rich Assamese culture and ethos to the Brahmaputra River, citing the latter's absorption of a wide range of diversity and Assamese culture's embrace of it as a source of the society's integrated ethnic strength.



2. Bishnu Prasad Rabha compared the mixture of 'ethnics' to all the large and small tributaries and other rivers linked to the larger Brahmaputra River.
3. A homogenised culture known as "Assamese Culture" is created by the Assamese ethnic communities Bodo, Kachari, Deori, Karbi, Mising, Ahom, Chutia, Shyam, Cingfou, Khanti and the other deviant tribes Nagas, Garo, Khasi, etc.
4. Bishnu Prasad Rabha had an aim and systematic understanding based on the historiography of the anthropological origins of the various ethnicities. He tried to bring them into the mainstream without decimating the distinct cultural identities of the smaller nationalities.
5. Bishnu Prasad Rabha emphasised popular culture and used political ideology to bring about socio-cultural revival in the rural, previously underdeveloped regions of the multiethnic state of Assam.
6. The work and existence of Bishnu Prasad Rabha bear witness to the varied yet distinctive socio-cultural lives of Assamese ethnic groups during the pre- and post-colonial eras.
7. Bishnu Prasad Rabha had many facets to his personality during his lifetime. He was a singer, actor, painter, lover, football activist, and romantic revolutionary, among other things. All of these attributes came together to make him a tremendously influential, legendary character of his era.
8. The Assamese icon's identity and creations, such as writings, artwork, dance tunes, and other media, accurately reflected the local indigenous folk culture and the characteristics that make it a part of the larger Assamese and native ethnic life of Assam.
9. With the aid of an empowered young in whom he had a firm belief and conviction, Bishnu Prasad Rabha intended to gather and compile the cultural means of Assamese national life. He always attempted to captivate young people with his artistic exaggerations.

Towards the Advancement of Assamese Culture and Society:

Bishnu Prasad Rabha's constructive constraints on the amalgamation of Assamese national life still have applicability in today's Assamese society. Even though he envisioned an improved Assamese society, he did not believe that chauvinists should come at the expense of ethnic groups.

A progressive group known as the "Tribal League" was established in Assam in 1993, and it promoted a sense of fraternity and solidarity among various ethnic groups in Assam in the twenty-first century. We witness a gradual deterioration of the once-present fraternity between the many ethnic groups. This is mostly the result of the growing middle class's fragility and the absence of well-integrated, powerful, and opinionated institutions.

A penultimate understanding of "us" versus "them" has been greatly aided by the works of the odd segments of the middle class that represent the various ethnic compositions, such as Bodo, Mishing, and Rabha, as well as the scheduled nationalities, such as Chowtal, Tea tribe, and Rajbongshi. These segments also call for self-rule and autonomy.

Major Findings of the Study:

The major findings of the study are-



1. A continuous guardian for the emergence of a classless society was Bishnu Rabha. He fought for the release of the oppressed and underprivileged people who were taken advantage of by wealthy capitalists.
2. Socialism under Bishnu Rabha was essentially humanitarian. He ordered the people to stay united behind the socialist doctrine in order to rebel against class-based exploitation, but they were no longer united.
3. One of the greatest masters of literature, art, and politics was Bishnu Prasad Rabha. In addition, he fought for freedom. He took a stand against the capitalist exploiter class and the British. Rabha initially adhered to the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi before turning into a Leninist, Marxist, and revolutionary.
4. The magnificent, pompous annual festival of "Rabha Divas" began in 1979, namely during the Assam Movement, and has since grown to be a prominent aspect of Assamese culture. Among Assamese, he is referred to as "Kalaguru," or the master of the arts.
5. Rabha was a well-liked, well-known figure in Assamese culture and society. He had long dreamed of a society without classes. He has always wished for a harmonious community free from exploitation, caste, creed, high and poor, etc.
6. The sentiments of social or human independence, patriotism, romance, etc., were all portrayed in Bishnu Rabha's song. "Rabha Sangeet" is the colloquial term for Bishnu Prasad Rabha's songs.

5. CONCLUSION

Bishnu Rabha fought for the people of all of India, not just those in Assam. With his revolutionary fervour, he tirelessly battled to build Marxism in India and made a significant contribution to the fields of Assamese language, literature, culture, history, and ethnography. Despite his inability to truly establish Marxism in Assam, he has consistently served as an inspiration for the next generation of Marxist activists and students.

Bishnu Prasad Rabha spoke on how culture develops, which is intrinsically linked to people's battle for survival, and drew heavily from a variety of traditional and folk cultural traditions as an advocate for the Assamese people. It has the potential to be a powerful tool for fostering integrity and solidarity among the populace.

In today's world, there is a great deal of importance for cultural change, where culture can be elevated from its current status as a purely recreational tool to one that reflects the real assets of an integrated community.

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