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## A Literary and Interpretive analysis of Bihu Songs' Identity

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**Received:** 12 January 2024

**Accepted:** 01 April 2024

**Published:** 14 May 2024

**Abstract:** *The research paper titled “A literary and interpretive analysis of Bihu Songs' identity” attempts to conduct an artistic analysis of the symbols used in the text of the Bihu song. Symbols are objects, people, situations, or words that signify something else. In literature, symbols represent thoughts or emotions, which is one of the attractions of poetry. The idea of symbol has evolved in human culture over time. Parallely, the symbols have been reflected in folk tunes. Bihu songs are the most characteristic genre of folk song in Assam, northeast India, both in terms of literary substance and musical mode. Symbols have played a significant role in Bihu Songs. This research gives an analysis of how different sorts of symbols are used in the text of Bihu songs. This paper's major research method is analytical. Data are gathered from library and field surveys.*

**Keywords:** *Literary, Interpretive, Assamese, Bihu, Songs, Identity.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The word 'Symbol' comes from the Greek 'Symbolon'. Symbol means sign or mark. In literature, a symbol indicates something else. A symbol is defined as a word, image, or other representation of a concept. As a result, a symbol literally means a mirrored image of a subject or object. Using symbols, we can describe a representative of one subject as another. Language is a combination of sign and symbol. As a result, we can conclude that it is the most commonly used symbol. Man is the only creature that utilizes language on a regular basis and with intent. Prior to the advent of written language, people communicated through symbolic gestures. Every language has a unique symbol for each letter or word. Symbols are adaptable. Every day, humanity can learn to employ a new symbol to convey a new thought. Symbols can be characterized as conventional, universal, or personal. Conventional symbols are commonly employed in old fables and folklore. Personal symbols reflect the speaker's

interior state of thought, whereas universal symbols have the same meaning all throughout the world.

### **Statement of the Problem:**

The Bohag Bihu celebration, also known as Rangali Bihu, is the national festival of Assam that honors the Assamese New Year. This is where the name of the Bihu dances and songs from. The Bihu dance is performed at the festival, which takes place in the middle of April, to honor and mimic the spirit of the season, which is one of passion and fertility. The bihu songs have a significant impact on Assamese national life.

## **2. RELATED WORKS**

**Dr. Momi Sarma, (2020)**, in her paper titled "Source and Evolution of Bihu Song: An analytical Study" highlight that Bihu songs celebrate togetherness, love, and the natural world. The bihu song, an oral tradition dating back thousands of years, reflects the many facets of Assamese society, including its political, social, religious, and economic aspects.

**Saswati Bordoloi, (2024)**, in her paper "The Traditional Songs of the Assamese: Voice and Connection" focuses that Bihu Geet are songs associated with Bihu, the primary harvest festival of Assam, which takes place in the middle of April. These Bihu Geet depict sentiments of joy, love, and sadness.

**Dev Nath Pathak & Moureen Kalita (2019)**, in their paper "Folklore's Contemporariness: Dynamics of Value Orientation in Bihu" highlights that Following the contemporaneity of folklore, Bihu in flux reveals the dynamics of value orientation and intersections of identity politics.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

The main objectives of the study are-

1. To study the significance of the Bihu songs of Assam.
2. To investigate the Bihu Songs' interpretive identity.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this research article is to analyze the origins and development of bihu song. An essential component of folk literature is the folk song. Like other components of folk literature, folk songs are developed and expanded orally by the folk people from one generation to the next. The most characteristic kind of folk song from Assam, a state in northeastern India, is called bihu songs. These have to do with bihu, the Assamese agriculturist society's fertility-focused traditional celebration. Bihu songs celebrate togetherness, love, and the natural world. The bihu song, an oral tradition dating back thousands of years, reflects the many facets of Assamese society, including its political, social, religious, and economic aspects. This song stands out for its uniqueness and

diversity in terms of topic, expression style, structure, performance style, and literary beauty. The primary association of bihu songs is with the bihu dance of Bohag bihu, the Assamese springtime celebration. It acknowledges the different shifts that Assamese society has undergone over time. As a result, bihu songs are evolving through several stages in tandem with Assamese society's developments. The main aim of this paper is to analyze the source and stages of evolution of bihu song. The analytical method is the primary research methodology employed in this work. The information was gathered through field surveys and libraries.

The intimate relationship between the Bihu celebrations and the Assamese regional ecosystem is clearly evident. But it's important to consider whether and to what extent changes in the ecological context which affects the tradition's background and performance space have an impact on the festivals. Amidst the swift transformation of Assamese society, primarily due to globalization, there are voices advocating for the preservation of tradition. These voices stem from a desire to maintain or assert identity and obtain political influence, as well as a sense of nostalgia.

Environmental concerns, however, are rarely addressed in this setting despite their equal significance to social and economic drivers of change. It is important to remember that any attempt to lock cultural activities in an anthropological "freeze-frame" is unlikely to work when those practices are tied to ecological variables, as the Bihu festivities are. This is because ecological change appears to be an unavoidable and ongoing process.

The idea of seasonality is deeply embedded in Bihu, as we have seen above, in terms of rituals and other cultural forms, thereby bridging the gap between the local environment and cultural heritage. It is probable that Bihu was observed in different regions of India in the past, and the way it is observed in modern society proves that it is a secular holiday with no religious significance. The two most obvious parts of Bihu are really behaviors related to agriculture and cattle worship, as well as the changing of the seasons and their purpose in the environment.

Folk music and culture is the cornerstone of any society. Folk music stands out in literature and culture due to its unique musical style and literary substance. It provides information about a certain society's language, geography, customs, culture, and region. Folk music is an ethnic expression of folk people's socio-cultural, psychological, and occupational perspectives, among other things. Folk music is passed down from person to person and spreads throughout communities as song after song is sung. Both unintentionally and intentionally, melodic change happens during performance. When it comes to bihu songs that are expanded orally, it is the same. Bihu songs are the most distinctive kind of Assamese folk music, since Bohag bihu, the springtime celebration, is the most distinctly traditional Assamese event.

Additionally, research papers, research articles, periodicals, newspapers, bihu magazines, paper clippings, journals, and edited volumes provided secondary materials for the production of the research paper.

#### **4. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS**

Symbols can be characterized as conventional, universal, or personal. Conventional

symbols are commonly employed in old fables and folklore. Personal symbols reflect the speaker's interior state of thought, whereas universal symbols have the same meaning all throughout the world. Following World War I, symbolism started to become more prevalent. Though symbolism began as a mostly poetry movement, it eventually affected fiction, play, and song as well. In this way, the symbolic movement had an impact on the entire world, but it did not last for very long. Nevertheless, it succeeded in ushering in a new era in international literature.

Despite the fact that symbols have been utilized in writing since antiquity, symbolism emerged in the nineteenth century. When it comes to Bihu songs that are expanded orally, it is the same. In Bihu song, the poet impromptu uses symbols to convey their sentiments for their loved one. As the Bohag Bihu is the quintessential Assamese event, Bihu songs are the quintessential Assamese folk song genre. Originally, the Assamese Bihu was a type of celebration complex related to the agricultural cycle. The most significant complication coincided with the arrival of Bohag Bihu during seed time and the Assamese New Year. Bihu songs are the most unique kind of folk song in terms of both their musical style and literary content (Datta, 1999, p. 17). Usually, these are rhyme-alternating quatrains. Bihu songs, when sung antiphonally, are wonderful poems. Above all, it exalts youth, love, and the desire for unity. It also describes the beauty of both the natural world and humankind, expresses devotion for a beloved, and speaks of frustration and grief.

In the song Bihu, the poet makes extensive use of symbols to convey his true feelings. Even while the Banghusha sign, a particular kind of Bihu song, has been quite influential, not all Bihu songs are symbolic. It is only fitting that as basanta (spring) approaches, human minds become as erratic as the natural world. The Bihu song is a way for lovers to express their affection for their loved one at this time. Bihu songs are a means of expressing love through symbols, even though these are relatively simple to understand. Banghosha are a great example of how to use symbols to convey heartfelt emotions. The symbols from the surrounding surroundings are employed in the song Bihu. Bihu songs use a variety of colors, birds, trees, flowers, clouds, rain, the moon, the sun, etc. as symbols.

The Bihu song uses symbols to represent various aspects of nature, such as birds, plants, insects, and rivers. These songs are the greatest way for lovers to communicate their emotions.

The Bihu song mostly describes the beauty of the physical and natural worlds. The boyfriend's physical attractiveness is compared to that of nature by the romantic guy. The lover also talks about how his loved one's physical beauty changes as a result of the natural changes that occur during the springtime. The physical beauty of a young girl is conveyed through similes and symbols in the song Bihu. These particular Bihu song genres are performed in unique settings, and the singers use language quite skillfully.

Aahate salale paate samaniaAahate salale paat,  
Aamar aatie baranti salale Lole ranga riha gaat.

**(Peepal Tree Changed the Leaves My Friend, Peepal Tree Changed the Leaves, Our Girl Has Changed the Colour Wearing the Red Scarf on Her Body).**

The Bihu song tells the story of this passionate attraction in symbolic language. The little girl's attractiveness draws in the young lover boy. Thus, in the Bihu song, the poet uses symbols like "red scarf," "vermilion bindi," and so on to describe the physical beauty of the little lady. The color red is associated with love and youth. As per the custom of Assamese culture, a girl must wear a red scarf called a "ranga riha" when she reaches puberty. In order to convey the beauty of the girl reaching adolescence, the designer employed symbolic language such as "wearing of red scarf, wearing of vermilion bindi," among other things. Assamese fertility is the focus of the festival known as Bihu.

The first signs of spring make the natural elements incredibly alluring. Human minds have become just as erratic and romantic as the natural world. The lover is unable to suppress sensations of desire at this point, which are naturally expressed in Bihu songs. These kinds of bihu songs (banghosha) are sung by bihu artists in a unique setting and style. These songs deal with very intimate love-related topics. Even so, it's remarkable how these kinds of Bihu songs convey themselves through symbolic significance.

The Bihu song contains an abundance of descriptions of love feelings, sexual intercourse desires, and so on. The above-mentioned Bihu songs depict the desire for sexual intercourse or incomplete copulation. The above Bihu songs use 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 the forest, the wasp has cut the body', and 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'. The symbolic content of Bihu songs is easily understood due to the spontaneous usage of folk language.

**Major Findings of the Study:**

The major findings of the study are-

1. The bihu song and dance evolved from a seasonal agricultural celebration to a national celebration and a symbol of national unity through the adoption of many evolutionary forms.
2. Bihu song and dances are acknowledged as a highly popular global art form. But its spontaneity and fertility-focused goals were somewhat interrupted when it began to act as a performance art form on the proscenium stage.
3. It needs to carry out the on-stage performances for a certain reason and at a specific time. Additionally, in an effort to modernize for stage-oriented performances, the bihu performance has undergone some change.
4. The bihu song and dance has been recognized as a source of income in the modern day. Because the performer's financial situation has improved as a result of the numerous bihu stage competitions and events.
5. The bihu has continued to perform in various Assamese regions according to their unique structure and performance style, which was previously displayed in fields and backyards. The popularity and appeal of the traditional tunes and style of bihu songs have not diminished, despite the fact that they are evolving into new structures or forms. It has been successful in making an impression on the people of India and the world as a

whole over time.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Despite the fact that symbols have been employed in literature since antiquity, the symbolism movement emerged in the latter half of the 1800s. The symbols were recognized as sound pictures by the ancient Indian rhetoricians. This study has noted that the folk poet used original symbols in the Bihu song by expressing their own viewpoint. Instead of using a variety of symbols that are accepted by different critics, the symbols of the Bihu song are categorized into three categories in this study: those connected to nature, those related to physical beauty, and those related to erotica. These symbols have creatively depicted the Assam environment and the lives that surround it. The symbolic language of these types of Bihu songs has clearly lightened the feeling and perception of simple and easy folk artists, as well as having a huge impact on the sensory senses of listeners and readers throughout history.

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