

**Symbols in Bihu Song: An Aesthetic Analytical Study**

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**Abstract:** This research paper aims to an aesthetical study of the symbols use in the text of Bihu song. Symbol is used as an object, person, situation or word which represents something else. In literature symbol stands for ideas or emotion and one of the particular attraction of poetry. By the gradual evolution of human society the concept of symbol has developed in human mind. Parallely the symbols has also reflected on folk songs. Bihu songs are the most distinctive type folk songs of Assam in north east India, both for their literary content and musical mode. Symbols has played a large role in Bihu Songs. This paper presents an analytical study on the uses the different types of symbols in the text of Bihu songs.

The main research method used in this paper is analytical method.  
The data are collected from library and field survey.

**Keywords:** Aesthetic, Bihu song, erotic related symbol, nature related symbol, physical beauty related symbol.

**Introduction**

The word ‘Symbol’ derives from the Greek ‘Symbolon’. The meaning of symbol is sign or mark. In literature symbol is something that represents something else. Symbol is a word, an image or anything that represents an idea. Therefore symbol is literally translates to a reflected likeness of a subject or a thing. With the uses of symbol we can describe a representative of a subject as an another subject.

Language is the union of sign and symbol. 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,1990,p.3) People used to communicate themselves with symbolic gesture before language established as a written form. Every language have 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

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often used to convey a specific meaning to the readers or audience in various elements of literature like poetry, novel, short story, song etc. Writers usually used 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. (Brereton, 1959,p.132)

Symbols can be categorized as conventional, universal and personal. (Mazumdar,2011,p.50) Conventional symbols are something that generally used from ancient fable and folk belief. Universal symbols are something that carry the same meaning for all over the world and the personal symbols are reflect the internal state of mind of the speaker.

## **Symbolism**

Initially symbolism was developed in late nineteenth century as a literary movement in France. Use of symbol and symbolism are not same. Symbolism was a special literary movement. It was evolved as the reaction against naturalism and realism. Symbol was used in literature before the symbolism movement started. In literature symbolism originates as a style with the 1857 from Charles Baudelaire's publications. After Baudelaire Stephane Mallarme, Paul Verlaine, Paul Valery, Arthurs Rimbaud, Jules Laforgue are the pioneer who developed and used the techniques of symbolism. With a short period the symbolism became very popular in European literature. From the World War I, the movement of symbolism became more pervading form. Although symbolism was mainly a poetic movement but gradually novel, drama and song were also influenced by it. In this manner all world was influenced by symbolism movement but its life time was not lasting for a long term period. Nevertheless it was able to create a new era in the world literature.

The symbolism was arise by the nineteen century although the symbols are used in literature from the ancient times. It is not different with Bihu song which are streaming by oral expansion. Symbols are used spontaneously in Bihu song by the poet to express the feelings for their loved one. As the Bohag Bihu is the most characteristically typical Assamese festival, so Bihu songs are the most distinctive type of folk song of Assam. The Bihu of Assam was originally a kind of festival complex connected with the agricultural cycle. The Bohag Bihu coming at seed time as also the Assamese New Year happened to be the most important complex. (Datta,1999,p.17) Bihu songs are the most distinctive type of folk song both for their literary content and musical mode. These are normally quatrains with alternate rhymes. Sung antiphonally, Bihu songs are excellent poetry. It describe the beauty both of nature and human being, express adoration of sweetheart, speak of frustration and sorrow, but above all it glorify youth, love and express the yearning for union.

## **Symbols in Bihu Song**

To express the feelings from the bottom of heart the poet uses many symbols in Bihu song. All Bihu songs are not symbolic although a type of Bihu song called Banghusha symbol has played a large role. It is natural that in the touch of basanta (spring) the mind of human is become fickle as like as the nature. In this time the feelings of lovers for their loved one is expressed through the Bihu song. Bihu songs are the medium to express the feelings of love with symbols although these are very easily comprehensible. Banghusha are the wonderful example for express the feeling of heart through the symbols. The symbols are used in Bihu song from surrounding environment. Various colour, birds, trees, flowers, clouds, rain, moon, sun etc. are played role as symbols in Bihu songs.



. 'Loss of elephant and horse' has used as a simile to narrate the sentence 'found and lost the pearl of heaven in the courtyard grass'. In the first line poet says that he has lost elephant in the slender grass. Slender grass is a very thin and short grass. So it is impossible to lost elephant in slender grass. Actually by using slender grass as a symbol to explain the loss of valuable wealth like elephant. Here 'the pearl of heaven' and 'slender grass' is easily obtainable in the village courtyard. In this Bihu song 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 his lover who is like the pearl of heaven. To express the feelings of lost strongly, the poet has used 'the pearl of heaven' and 'slender grass' as symbols.

### ***Physical Beauty related Symbols in Bihu Song***

The beauty of natural and physical are mainly described in Bihu song. The lover boy compares the physical beauty of his girlfriend with nature. Lover also describes the changes of nature during the period of spring with changes the physical beauty of his loved one. In Bihu song the physical beauty of young girl are expressed through the simile and symbols. This types of Bihu song are performed in special place or environment and the performers are very sensible about the application of words.

*Aahate salale                 paate samania*  
*Aahate salale paat,*  
*Aamar aaitie                 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.

*Dolonir upare                 ki charai urile*  
*Dekho ranga ranga thut,*  
*Chenai bogitora             sonar gilip mora*  
*Kopalat sendurar phut.*  
 Which bird has flown over the land of dal grass  
 See the red beak,  
 My dear bogitara<sup>2</sup> cover up with gold  
Vermilion bindi at forehead.

<sup>2</sup>A woman of whitish color.(Barua, 2015,p.907)



Bloom Seuti (a type of jasmine) bloom maloti (a type of jasmine)  
 Bloom khorikajai (a type of jasmine),  
 In the garden of my love bloom the flower of youth

Scented highly fragment.

*Tumar chakujuri harinir chaku jen*  
*Bukute padumar chaka,*  
*Tumar bahuduti padumar thari jen*  
*Rihar achalere dhaka.*  
 Your eyes are just like the eyes of dear  
Lotus seed vessel in the bosom,  
 Your arms are just like the stem of lotus  
 Covered with the end of scarf.

*Dekhiboloi suwani tumar bukukhoni*  
*Kumalia tamolar thuk,*  
*Misikia hahiti lahari uthate*  
*Kon sote eri jao tuk?*  
 Looking beautiful your bosom  
The immature branch of betel nut,  
 Smile on your lips  
 How can I leave you?

These above mentioned Bihu songs are described about the female breast through the symbols without any artificiality. Sometimes the narration about the female breast going beyond the limit of modesty. To describe about the beauty of female breast the poet uses the symbols like- ‘flower of youth’, ‘seed vessel of lotus’, ‘immature bunch of betel nut’ etc.

### ***Erotic related Symbols in Bihu Song***

Bihu is a fertility faith centered festival of Assam. The elements of nature become very attractive at the touch of spring. The mind of human being is also become very fickle and romantic like the changes of nature. In this time the lover cannot undermine the feelings of desire and these are described spontaneously in Bihu songs. Bihu performers are performed these types Bihu songs (banghosh) in a special environment with a special way. The subject of these songs are very personal of lovers. Even then the expressing way of these types of Bihu songs with indicative meaning through the symbols are very noteworthy.

*Hatee pani khale doiyange dipange*  
*Ghorai pani khale roi,*  
*Dhane pani khale* *piriti nijorat*

*Thiya garat khopani loi.*

Elephant has drunk water here and there

Horse has drunk water at a place,  
My dear has drunk water at the fountain of love

With the foothold at steep bank.

*Nale nai bichani*                      *keloi banaichila*  
*Nopore batahor baa,*  
*Dokoi pukhuri keloi khanaichila*

*Chenaie nudhue gaa.*

Why did you make the hand fan without handle  
 Which does not give wind blow,  
Why did you dig the deep pond

My dear does not take bath there.

*Tiyahu naholi*                      *chiralo naholi*  
*Kechai khaloheten tuk,*  
*Sariyah janam loi*                      *beteri chepaloi*

*Keloi nu karicha bhoi.*

You are not a cucumber not a melon  
 I may eat you raw,  
Born as a mustard seed

Why are you afraid to squeeze in expeller?

*Aahu dhan daboloi*                      *mati pathialo*  
*Lokar bao dhanani dale,*  
*Kachi doli mari*                      *sumal habioni*  
*Sarilot barale khale.*  
 I have called to crop the aahu<sup>3</sup> paddy

(She) has gone to crop others bao<sup>4</sup> paddy field,  
 Throwing the sickle and entered in the forest  
The wasp cut her body.

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<sup>3</sup> A spices of paddy which is reaped and gathered in June –July. (Barua, 2015 176).

<sup>4</sup> A kind of paddy grown on flooded land. ( Barua 932)

The erotic related symbols are used in the above mentioned Bihu songs. As a fertility centered festival song the main subjects of Bihu songs are agriculture, women and the feelings of sexual desire. The agriculturist believe that by increase the fertility power of women can increase the fertility power of crop. It is magical folk believe of agriculturist. It is noticeable the abundant description of the feelings of love, the desire sexual intercourse etc. subject in Bihu song. The desire of sexual intercourse or incomplete copulation are described in above mentioned Bihu songs. As the symbols of sexual intercourse 'my dear has drunk water at the fountain of love with the foothold at steep bank', 'throwing the sickle and entered in 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 Bihu songs. It is easy to understand the symbolic subject of Bihu songs with the spontaneous uses of the language of folk life.

### Conclusion

In late nineteen century the symbolism movement was developed although the symbols are used in literature from the ancient time. The ancient Indian rhetorician had accepted the symbols as sound picture. In this research paper it has observed that the folk poet has applied novel symbols through their own point of view in Bihu song. In this study the symbols of Bihu song are divided in three types--- nature related, physical beauty related and erotic related instead of various types of symbols which are agreed by the different critic. All Bihu songs are not symbolic although in some Bihu song specially Banghusha it is very noticeable the extensive application of symbols. These symbols have artistically reflected the Assam environment and lives associates with it. The symbolic language of these types of Bihu song have clearly lighten up the emotion and perception of simple and easy folk artist fellow and it has also immensely impact in sensory sense of listener and readers throughout the ages.

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