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**POETICS OF NATIONALISM: A STUDY OF BHUPEN HAZARIKA'S SONGS IN
THE CONTEXT OF THE ASSAM MOVEMENT (1979-85)**

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Abstract

Music, Poetry, Art and any other form of cultural expression is generally taken to be aesthetic artefacts of a particular society. However, sociologically these presumed 'artefacts' are not mere objects; they reflect many different aspects of a culture- its history, its belief system and mainly the sentiments of its people. This paper is an attempt to reflect upon the possibility that poetry and music can be seen beyond the realm of aesthetics; that poetry/music can equally be evoked as a 'national' form, a reflection of the sentiment of 'nationalism'. Drawing examples from the study of how poetry and songs of the East Pakistani resistance to state oppression eventually led to secession and the creation of Bangladesh, my paper would argue that poetry/music is a powerful national form and that that aspect of songs/music/poetry needs to be taken into significant academic cognizance. In particular, my paper would focus upon the discontentments that arose during the time of the 'Assam Movement' (1979-85) and how the underlying sentiments forming the basis of those discontentments are reflected (and can be traced) through the songs of an eminent musician/singer/artiste of Assam, Dr. Bhupen Hazarika. In doing so, I would select a few amongst his numerous compositions and emphasize upon how those songs, the inherent poetry in them and the imageries used in them make a very poignant appeal of the 'Asamiya' nationalism that the Assam Movement debated over.

Keywords: Poetics, Nationalism, Assam, Assam Movement, Bhupen Hazarika, Asamiya identity.

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