

Fifty Golden Years of *Dr. Bezbaruah*



Brajen Baruah

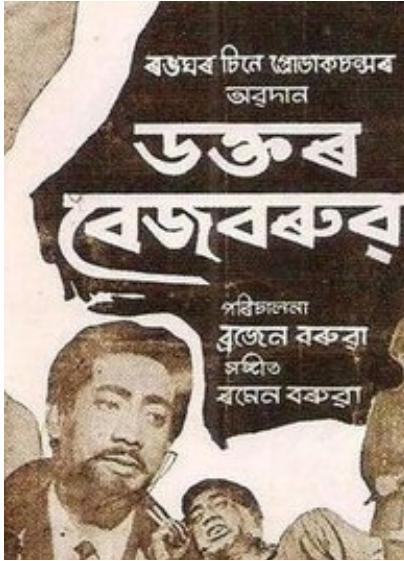
There are few films that have the magical power to revolutionize and *Dr. Bezbaruah* by Brajen Baruah was one such film that transformed the then existing film production system in Assam.

The first Assamese film *Joimoti*, released in 1935, was produced in a studio model when Producer/Director J P Agarwala, established his own studio set up for the shooting and sound recording of the film in a tea-estate godown. After that system not working up to the expected standards, J P Agarwala went on to produce his second film in studio of Kolkata and apparently that process of film making, in a Kolkata Studio, continued till 1969. So basically in those days the Film makers had to set up a base at the nearest convenient place in Kolkata, camp there and had to make their films there- right from the song recording to the final print.

Even Brajen Baruah, one of the leading Music

Directors with the credit of eight successful films, made his first film *Eto Sito Bahuto* at the Kolkata Studio. He had captured the outdoor scenes mostly at Guwahati transporting all the equipments and technicians from Kolkata. And as for the producer making a film in a shoe-string budget, this transportation indeed became a Hercules task for him. Film-making in such a way was cumbersome! So Brajen Baruah shot his second film *Dr. Bezbaruah* entirely in Assam and even shot the indoor scenes not in a studio but rather in a normal location. And this time instead of hiring technicians from Kolkata, he trained some local youths to handle the camera and sound recording work. He later took help from the studios of Kolkata only for song recording and for post production works. And on 9th Nov of 1969 this film was released in the silver screen. The film was a great commercial success and most importantly the film inspired a good numbers of aspiring producers to make films in Assam along-with Assamese technicians.

Thus, beaconing hope for film makers of Assam to make films in their home-ground.



Dr. Bezbaruah Poster

Dr. Bezbaruah was a big hit; be the screenplay, the essence of the story, the use of music or the success story of the film-making at the base—all these aspects might be some inspirational topic of discourse among film-students today.

However, like many films, *Dr. Bezbaruah* too was scrutinized, criticized and insulted as a copy of a third rate hindi masala film. Most of the Hindi films use the same kind of masala, but some films turn out to be hit and others are flop. So the question is - *Does the masala make a film HIT?*

It is obvious that a mere copy of a Hindi film cannot be transformed into a hit movie in Assamese language. But how did Brajen Baruah make the film a hit?

The general conception that the Film industry holds is that Hit films has no logic, only flop film has. So inclusion of local technician and shooting in normal space outside a studio floor is no doubt an example of his creative imagination supported with his technical outlook or might be some reflections of his passion for film, but this cannot be a reason of the phenomenal success of the film!

The success of *Dr. Bezbaruah* lies on the

dramatic and emotional fundamentals presented in a most enchanting approach. The very first sequence was constructed in a very high dramatic note blended with suspense and curiosity and maintaining the required pace till the last sequence of the film and this worked its magic! And not just that, this fast paced story gradually had transformed into a multilayered story spreading out from an urban setting to a rural backdrop. And projecting this distinctive feature wasn't easy then!

This film had so much of intriguing aspects that kept the audiences hooked like....a hard core criminal putting up a façade of gentle, young successful doctor and the original Doctor being imprisoned in a dark cell, another rich man losing his child in an accident and he filling the void of his wife's lap with a child stolen from a hospital..... the child's name Dip being tattooed in his arm and a word PRA prefixed to the word Dip to change the identity of the child, and as time elapsed PraDip becoming a graduate, thereafter travelling to a far off village to meet one of his old friends, strange co-incidences of he meeting a random lady on the way who apparently was his original mother... etc. etc.

The striking attribute of this film was that characters did not know, but audience of the film already realized that the lady was the biological mother and the youth was her child that got lost in a hospital. Such situation created a strong sense of curiosity among the audience, gripping their emotions.

And the amalgamation of all these gripping aspects and their construction into a screenplay that plays with the emotional intelligence of the audience is not an easy task. Besides, the story of the criminal-turned-doctor also had created mystery and suspense to another level. The principle structural format of this screenplay was - the audience knew the secrets but the characters did not. All these features

kept the audience on tenterhooks waiting in anticipation for the mysteries unfold and the criminals to be caught. Another vital question that perhaps keeps the audience alert is that will both the parallel stories actually meet at one point.

The film is rare as it juxtaposes two different genres, on one hand it is a fast-paced thriller and on the other, it is a simple, soft emotional story. The screenplay writer who is also the director, shows his excellent command over the structure of screenplay combining two reverse plots in a same platform maintaining the required pace of the entire movement of the all absorbing plot. The dialogues were short, crisp, razor-sharp and suggestive, remarkably different from the existing trend of poetic or literary dialogues of Assamese films, highly prejudiced by Bangla film and literature. Those dialogues were popular as songs which can be compared with the dialogues of Ramesh Sippy's *Sholay* which was released after six years of *Dr. Bezbaruah*. Short-n-sharp dialogues in hindi film had its commencement with Vijay Anand's *Johny Mera Naam*, released after one year of *Dr. Bezbaruah*.

It is worth a mention that, besides dialogue and screenplay, Brajen Baruah had paid due attention to the lyric and music of the film. As a recognized Music director and innovative composer he was always prone to acing the quality of the lyrics and most of the leading poets of Assam had penned songs for him. He himself was a lyricist par-excellence. For this film he had himself penned two songs and had collaborated with two upcoming lyricists namely; Dr. Nirmal Prava Bardaloi (who had retired from Guwahati University as a professor) and Eli Ahmed (a recent Padmashree awardee). He is also credited to

have introduced to the Assamese film industry, the music director Ramen Baruah and the singer Dwipen Baruah, both of whom have completed fifty glorious years in the Assamese film industry as renowned Music Director and Singer respectively, creating records in term of numbers in their respective fields.

As a Music director, Brajen Baruah had this power to always combine melody with the situational Dramatic mood of the scene. This blend made the playback look like an extension of dialogue projecting the songs closer to the film-visuals. In the masterpiece *Dr. Bezbaruah* too, Ramen Baruah (*Music Director of the film*) had followed the same pattern and also added his personal touch that gave a distinctive personality to the minor sounds resulting in songs that breathed freshness and felt unheard before.

Dr. Bhupen Hazarika was the first music director of Assam who turned to film director with Brajen Baruah being the second in the list. Till the making of '*Dr. Bezbaruah*', Brajen Baruah was involved in music composing for film, stage and All India Radio. During this time he gave a massive number of everlasting melodies to Assamese listeners and it was with *Dr. Bezbarua* that he took retirement from the music world. Albeit the success of *Dr. Bezbaruah* glorified him as a Director and gave an elevation to the Assamese Film industry, however, this achievement paved a departure for Brajen Baruah from the Music world. So, be it the introduction of music genius like Ramen Baruah and stalwart Dwipen Baruah or the first of its kind masterpiece *Dr. Bezbaruah* or the countless melodies.... Brajen Baruah's contributions have always brought in revolution that had taken the Assamese Film Industry notch higher.

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