

THE RIVER BRAHMAPUTRA: ITS IMPACTS ON ASSAMESE CULTURE

Abstract

The great River Brahmaputra, coming out of Manas lake is flowing through the heart of Assam from the very ancient era. Not only does it turn Assam a healthy one by its sacred water but also helps greatly in endowing Assam with cultural beauty. Brahmaputra has a deep relation with Assam and Assamese people from several eras. The excess water of rainy season, the wide char areas of dry season, the green areas of both sides of the river and the various big, small rivers and ponds etc. keeps the Assamese race alive with its own features out of whole India.

Binanda Chandra Baruah, the Assamese poet observes Brahmaputra as “old” but “universally young”. Not only so, the Brahmaputra is a good sign and always pouring us blessings just like our parents blessings is always with us.

“Mangalmay dayar Sagar, Pita-Matas Tumi Desher Pran, Pitri Rupere Anno Jogoya matri Rupere Stondaan”.

The Brahmaputra river by spreading its unlimited impact and gift of mercy, helps Assam to be alive as Assam. There is no such subject left like political, geographical, literary, religious and cultural, where more or less impact of god Brahmaputra is not found or felt by the Assamese people. Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee too called Assam the country of Brahmaputra. She says that Assam is the land of the Brahmaputra. In total, a broad side of Assamese culture is covered or occupied by river Brahmaputra. Brahmaputra river works as the basis of Assamese culture.

Keyword: Manas lake, Brahmaputra as “old” but “universally young”,

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The great River Brahmaputra, coming out of Manas lake is flowing through the heart of Assam from the very ancient era. Not only does it turn Assam a healthy one by its sacred water but also helps greatly in endowing Assam with cultural beauty. Brahmaputra has a deep relation with Assam and Assamese people from several eras. The excess water of rainy season, the wide char areas of dry season, the green areas of both sides of the river and the various big, small rivers and ponds etc. keeps the Assamese race alive with its own features out of whole India.

The holy places that work as the base of Assamese peoples, worship and pride are shining with full of pride only taking the holy Brahmaputra river as its shelter. The examples of such holy places are – Majuli's 'Satra', 'Kamakhya', 'Umananda', 'Ashwaktanta', 'Navagraha', 'Dhakeshwara', 'Haigriv Madhava' etc. including 'Parashurama Kunda'. Besides these, it is also described in many 'Shastras' (Religious books) like 'Tirtha Koumudi' that many holy places starting from 'Ashwaktanta' to 'Manikut' hill (Hajo) are lying hidden in the womb of River Brahmaputra. A detail description of this is also found about what are the holy places, hidden there in the womb of the river and to what depth they are lying and also about the consequences of taking bath in river Brahmaputra.

The River, Brahmaputra and the past history of Assam both are interdependent with each other. Most of the stories of the ups and downs of Assamese race or Assamese people are floating or reflecting in the eyes of this ageold river only. It is a past story of Assam that the son of Vishnu, the utmost powerful, Narakashura began to reign over Pragjyotishpura situated by the side of River Brahmaputra. It can also be heard that even he blessed by goddess that checks the evil desire of that extreme powerful Narakashura couldn't be saved from its horrible attack and is cut down or murdered in the bank of this River Brahmaputra. That place becomes well known as "a murdering place of hens" even today onwards. The huge pond dug by most famous hero Bhagadutta of "Mahabharata" on the occasion of marriage ceremony of his daughter Bhanumati is shining even today onwards in the bank of river Brahmaputra.

Even Mahaparakrami (the powerful and mighty) Banashura worshipped Mahadeva and thus possessed mercy in the bank of this river Brahmaputra only. It is also well known to all that Lord Sri Krishna while taking away the very beautiful goddess Rukmini take rest in the bank (Ashwaktanta) of this river Brahmaputra only. Not only so, beginning from Narakashura, a number of king for many centuries, taking Brahmaputra as the centre of its rule not only makes a healthy political liberty of it but also astonishes the foreigners by its civility and culture. "Pragjyotishpur", "Hatpashwar", or "Harupashwar", and "Durjaya" – all these three capitals of ancient Kamrupa acquires the mercy and attachment of river Brahmaputra only.

The river Brahmaputra influences the Assamese literature in the very ancient era itself. Some 'Lokogeet' (folk songs), 'Prabadas' (Phrases) and "Holy stories" are created based on the river Brahmaputra and the banks of river Brahmaputra full of various natural beauty. In ancient times, the origin and development of love affairs of young boys and girl and their union were held taking Brahmaputra as its witness. Many 'Bihu' songs are composed taking into account the sands, water, char areas etc. all fascinating and attractive resources of River Brahmaputra. The river Brahmaputra is occupying satisfactory space in modern Assamese literature too. The deep waterfalls, aggressive garland of waves, wide

background of the river Brahmaputra and the green grass and plants, birds etc., surrounding its sides etc., make alive various sorts of feelings in hearts of artful people. Again these resources create strong feelings of love, separation, fear, hatred, hopelessness, patriotism etc. of the heroes and heroines of many dramas and novels based on various persons, their aptitudes and various situations.

Many poets and prose writers gave various glorious descriptions not only about Brahmaputra river but also about the hills and mountains and plants, flowers etc. situated either by the sides of the river or in the midst of it. Their incomplete fascinating pictures as explained in various places are expressed through their subjective and objective descriptions. This type of descriptions are also found more in numbers in modern process. In some descriptions, the poet's love and respect towards the Brahmaputra river is specially found to be seen. Lakshminath Fukan says with deep accuracy that – “Brahmaputra is the witness of past Assam etc. – *“Koto Shoto Bosoror Koto Shoto Bedonar Kotha Tomarei Antarat Gatha.”* (More Than Hundreds grievous and Painful stories of more than several centuries are hidden in the heart of Brahmaputra for several eras).

Binanda Chandra Baruah, the Assamese poet observes Brahmaputra as “old” but “universally young”. Not only so, the Brahmaputra is a good sign and always pouring us blessings just like our parents' blessings is always with us.

*“Mangalmay dayar Sagar, Pita-Matas Tumi Desher Pran,
Pitri Rupere Anno Jogoya matri Rupere Stondaan”.*

(Meaning, Merciful being, full of blessing. You are our parents, you are the soul of our country ; you give us food in the disguise of a father and breast food in the disguise of a mother.)

On the basis of Brahmaputra, we also get some phrases and idioms in Assamese language. As far example, - “Luitehe (Brahmaputra) jane, batha Kimanloi bahe”, “Luitot furile gato sikim hoi” etc.

The Hindu scriptures remark the Brahmaputra river to be a sacred river and also obeys it as one of the gods. That is why, thousand of people and more than thousands of people come for bathe in the river with holy and pure feelings in their mind with the purpose of minimizing their sin or making them pure out of their sins. And it is also mentioned in some religious scriptures that many people have been worshipping the Brahmaputra River from time to time.

The holy and pure water of river Brahmaputra becomes more pure especially on the day of shuklastami (Ashokastami) of March / April month. The all pilgrims, river and seas of the world are re united in the river. Those people who do bathe in this river acquire highest position in life. River Brahmaputra is also considered as a god according to Bihu songs. –

“Utuwai niniba Brahmaputra devta Tamol di mata nai”

Even, history tells clearly about the customs of worship of Brahmaputra river in ancient Assam. Rising out of Brahma Kundu, the sacred river ‘Brahmaputra’ enters into the

“Lohita” Lake found in the Valley of Kailash Mountain. Then Parshurama flows away Brahmaputra in the east direction by cutting down the boundaries of this ‘Lohita’ lake. Brahma himself named his son as Louhitto. As it (the river) origins from the ‘Lohita’ lake so, the river Brahmaputra is also known as Louhitto.

The Brahmaputra river by spreading its unlimited impact and gift of mercy, helps Assam to be alive as Assam. There is no such subject left like political, geographical, literary, religious and cultural, where more or less impact of god Brahmaputra is not found or felt by the Assamese people. Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee too called Assam the country of Brahmaputra. She says that Assam is the land of the Brahmaputra. In total, a broad side of Assamese culture is covered or occupied by river Brahmaputra. Brahmaputra river works as the basis of Assamese culture.

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