The Political Legacy of Bishnu Prasad Rabha: Revolutionary Nationalism, Peasant Mobilization and the Quest for Social Justice in Assam

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Abstract

Bishnu Prasad Rabha (1909–1969), known as Kalaguru, played an important role in Assam's cultural and political history. He is well known for his work in music, literature, dance, and theatre, but his efforts as a political revolutionary, socialist thinker, and supporter of agrarian justice are just as important. Rabha's political ideas grew out of India's anti-colonial movement and the rise of Marxist and socialist thought in the early twentieth century. He wanted to go beyond conventional nationalism by connecting the fight for independence with the rights of peasants, workers, and marginalized groups. His participation in the freedom movement, associations with left-leaning political groups, engagement in peasant movements, and advocacy for land rights collectively demonstrate a commitment to substantial social and economic transformation.Rabha's idea of Assamese nationalism also stood out, as he valued cultural diversity, social equality, and the inclusion of different communities in building a democratic society. This paper looks at Rabha's political beliefs and actions, especially his focus on revolutionary nationalism, peasant movements, and social justice. It argues that Rabha deserves recognition not only as a cultural leader but also as a political thinker who brought together regional nationalism, socialist ideas, and a vision for an inclusive society.

Keywords: *Bishnu Prasad Rabha, revolutionary nationalism, peasant mobilisation, Marxism, agrarian movements, social justice, cultural nationalism, Assam.*

Introduction

The story of modern Assam is the story of a number of intellectuals and political personalities who have in their own way contributed to the transformation of the social, cultural and political fabric of the state. Bishnu Prasad Rabha is one of the most significant of these. His contribution was not confined to literature, music, dance and theatre. It reached into the field of political activism, revolutionary nationalism and social reform. He was born on 31st January 1909 and came of age during a period of tremendous political and socio-economic change in India as a whole.[1] The rise of nationalism, the growth of the middle class and the emergence of the socialist and communist movements were all factors which shaped the political environment in which his thinking evolved.[2]

Rabha's political stance was that independence from British rule in itself would not create a just society. He felt that political freedom was in itself insufficient and that it had to be coupled with economic emancipation, agrarian justice and the elimination of all forms of social inequality. His increasing involvement with left wing politics was a reflection of this.

One of the hallmarks of Rabha's political thought was his attempt to forge a link between nationalism and class consciousness.[3] He was a nationalist in the true sense of the word and at the same time he was deeply concerned about the economic exploitation of the peasantry and the working class. His political activity in the villages, particularly his work in the field of agrarian mobilisation, was all about the rights of the cultivator and the oppressed. He had a very broad conception of Assamese nationalism which recognised the cultural contributions of all the communities and their right to political participation.[4]For Rabha cultural identity, economic equality and democratic participation were all inter-related and were essential to any genuine social advance.[5] The paper therefore looks at Bishnu Prasad Rabha's contribution to Assam's

[1]Pathak, B. (2023). *Bishnu Prasad Rabha from an Indian Perspective: A Revolutionary and Cultural Icon of Assam*. Journal of Humanities 3, pp. 20-26. https://doi.org/10.55529/jhmd.31.20.26
[2]Baishya, G. (2023). Bishnu Prasad Rabha – A Revolutionary Spirit of India: A Study. SSRN. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4377242

[3] Ibid.

[4]Op.cit Pathak, B. (2023).pp. 20-26

[5]Op.cit Pathak, B. (2023).pp. 20-26

political history from three major angles: revolutionary nationalism, peasant mobilisation and the pursuit of social justice.

Objectives of the Study: The principal objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the historical background that shaped Bishnu Prasad Rabha's political awareness.
2. To analyse his move from nationalist politics to revolutionary socialism.
3. To look at his contribution to peasant agitation and the agrarian struggle in Assam.
4. To assess his understanding of nationalism, class consciousness and social justice.
5. To analyze the relationship between his cultural activities and his political ideology.
6. To assess the relevance of his political legacy in today's Assam.

Research Methodology

The study is historical and analytical in nature and is primarily based on secondary sources and published writings. It looks at Rabha's political activities in the context of the broader history of colonial Assam, the Indian national movement and the growth of left politics. It is a qualitative study in the sense that it involves historical interpretation, critical analysis of political ideas and an examination of the nexus between culture and political mobilisation. The principal sources are published research articles, the various historical studies of the peasant movements of Assam and the collected writings of Bishnu Prasad Rabha. The relationship between ideology, political organisation and popular mobilisation is of particular interest.

Historical Background: Colonial Assam and the Emergence of Political Consciousness

The first half of the twentieth century witnessed important changes in Assam's political and socio-economic structure. The expansion of commercial agriculture, changes in land

relations under the British Colonial administration, and the growth of educated middle-class society contributed to the emergence of new forms of political consciousness among the masses.[6]

The agrarian economy of Assam was characterized by considerable inequalities. Peasants, sharecroppers and agricultural labourers frequently experienced economic insecurity, indebtedness and unequal access to productive resources.[7] Colonial revenue policies and the commercialization of agriculture complicated rural economic relationships. [8]

At the same time, the Indian national movement gradually expanded its influence in Assam. The Non-Cooperation Movement, Civil Disobedience Movement and subsequent nationalist campaigns encouraged the participation of students, intellectuals and ordinary people in anti-colonial politics.[9]

Alongside nationalism, socialist and Marxist ideas began to influence sections of the educated population. These ideas encouraged a critical examination of colonial exploitation, landlordism and the unequal distribution of economic resources.[10]

It was within this historical context that Rabha's political consciousness developed. He increasingly recognized that the political liberation of India had to be accompanied by the emancipation of economically and socially disadvantaged sections. Thus, his political thought emerged from the intersection of anti-colonial nationalism, agrarian discontent and the growing influence of socialist ideology.

Revolutionary Nationalism and the Evolution of Political Ideology

Early Nationalist Orientation

Rabha's political career began during his student days when the Indian national movement was becoming increasingly influential among educated youth. During his studies at Ripon College in Calcutta, he became involved in student politics and nationalist activities. In

[6]Saikia, A. (2010). The Moneylenders and Indebtedness: Understanding the Peasant Economy of Colonial Assam, 1900–1950. Indian Historical Review 37(1), pp. 63-88. https://doi.org/10.1177/037698361003700104

[7] Ibid.

[8]Wary, J. (2020). Colonial Aspect of Agriculture in Assam. ResearchGate. https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.28494.59204

[9]Wilkinson, T. (2017). Student Politics in British India and Beyond: The Rise and Fragmentation of the All India Student Federation (AISF), 1936–1950. South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal 17(1). https://doi.org/10.4000/samaj.6488

[10] Op. cit. Saikia, A. (2010).pp.63-88

1929, he served as General Secretary of the Students' Union of Ripon College.His participation in the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930 marked an important stage in his political development. Inspired initially by Gandhian nationalism and the ideals of anti-colonial resistance, he actively participated in the movement against British rule. His involvement in nationalist activities disrupted his formal education and brought him into conflict with the colonial authorities.

However, Rabha's political consciousness gradually moved beyond the conventional nationalist framework. He increasingly questioned whether the achievement of political independence alone could eliminate the economic exploitation and social inequalities experienced by ordinary people.

Transition from Gandhian Nationalism to Revolutionary Socialism

The limitations of conventional nationalist politics, particularly its inadequate engagement with the economic demands of peasants and workers, influenced Rabha's ideological transformation.During the late 1930s, he became increasingly attracted to Marxist literature and socialist political thought. His association with the Radical Institute, a left-oriented study circle connected with the Revolutionary Communist Party of India (RCPI), was an important stage in this transformation.

He formally became associated with the RCPI in 1945. His ideological development reflected a growing conviction that political independence without economic emancipation would reproduce existing structures of inequality under a different political leadership.Rabha therefore advocated a more comprehensive understanding of freedom, encompassing:

- Political independence from colonial domination.
- Economic emancipation of peasants and workers.
- Abolition of exploitative agrarian relationships.
- Social equality and the removal of class-based discrimination.
- Democratic participation of ordinary people in political institutions.

His political ideology represented an attempt to integrate anti-imperialist nationalism with socialist transformation.

An important distinction must be made here: Rabha did not simply abandon nationalism after embracing Marxism. Rather, he sought to redefine nationalism by connecting the aspirations of the Assamese people with the wider struggle for economic and social emancipation.[11]

Revolutionary Nationalism and the Concept of People's Freedom

For Rabha, the concept of freedom was considerably broader than the transfer of political authority from British rulers to Indian leaders. He believed that genuine freedom required the dismantling of exploitative economic and social structures.His political writings and creative compositions reflected his conviction that peasants, workers and other disadvantaged groups constituted the foundation of a democratic society.

His revolutionary nationalism consequently contained two interrelated dimensions:

Firstly, Anti-imperialist nationalism: Resistance against colonial domination and the establishment of national independence. Secondly, Socialist transformation: The creation of a society in which economic resources and political opportunities would not remain concentrated in the hands of privileged classes.His lyrical play Mukti Deul is particularly important for understanding this political vision. The work reflects his concern with the relationship between popular power, democracy and social emancipation. It expresses the belief that political authority must ultimately serve the people.Thus, Rabha's revolutionary nationalism was not merely an expression of patriotic sentiment; it represented a broader programme of political and socio-economic transformation.

Peasant Mobilisation and Agrarian Struggles in Assam:

Agrarian Conditions and Peasant Exploitation

The agrarian question occupied a central position in Rabha's political activities. Colonial Assam experienced significant changes in land relations, revenue administration and agricultural production during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Peasants and sharecroppers faced numerous difficulties arising from unequal land relations, indebtedness and the demands of landlords and revenue intermediaries. The expansion

[11]Hazarika, P., & Nath, D. P. (2017). Bishnuprasad Rabha as cultural icon of Assam: The process of meaning making. Cosmopolitan Civil Societies: An Interdisciplinary Journal, 9(1). [https://doi.org/10.5130/ccs.v9i1.5241](https://doi.org/10.5130/ccs.v9i1.5241?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

of commercial agriculture and colonial revenue policies further intensified the economic vulnerability of rural communities.

The peasantry constituted a substantial section of Assam's population, yet its economic position remained insecure. Rabha recognised that political freedom could not become meaningful unless these structural inequalities were addressed.His engagement with agrarian questions was therefore not incidental to his political career. It represented one of the central foundations of his socialist ideology.

Association with the Krishak Banua Panchayat

In 1945, Rabha became involved with the Krishak Banua Panchayat (KBP), the peasant organisation associated with the Revolutionary Communist Party of India.This association provided him with an organisational platform for connecting revolutionary political ideas with the everyday concerns of rural society.Through the KBP, Rabha became involved in mobilising peasants, sharecroppers and agricultural labourers against exploitative agrarian relationships.His political activities increasingly focused on the rights of cultivators, the redistribution of agricultural produce and opposition to the economic domination exercised by powerful landlords and mouzadars.His involvement demonstrated an important transition in his political life: from an anti-colonial nationalist activist to an organiser who sought to transform rural social and economic relationships.

The Nangal Jar Mati Tar Movement

Central theme of Rabha's agrarian politics

One of the most significant expressions of Rabha's political ideology was the slogan:Nangal Jar Mati Tar — Land belongs to the tiller.The slogan expressed a fundamental principle of agrarian justice: those who cultivated the land should enjoy secure rights and receive a fair share of agricultural production.During 1948–1952, Rabha played an important role in mobilising peasants, particularly sharecroppers, against exploitative mouzadars and large landholders.The movement raised demands for a fairer distribution of agricultural produce and challenged existing relationships of economic dependence.The demand for Tin Bhag (one-third share) was associated with the struggle for a more equitable distribution of produce between cultivators and those claiming rights over land.The movement bore similarities to the Tebhaga

movement in Bengal, which had emerged in 1946 around the demand for a larger share of agricultural produce for sharecroppers.

However, the significance of Rabha's involvement went beyond the immediate economic demands of cultivators. He attempted to develop class consciousness among rural communities and transform peasants into organised political participants.Dewri's (2018) study of Rabha's engagement with rural Assam demonstrates how his political activities and musical interventions became interconnected during this period.[12] The slogan Nangal Jar Mati Tar represented not merely an agrarian demand but also a challenge to the existing structure of rural power.

Peasant Mobilisation as a Political Movement:

Rabha's involvement in the peasant movement reflected his understanding that social transformation required collective political action.He regarded peasants and agricultural labourers as important agents of historical change. His political songs and writings encouraged them to recognise their economic position and organise themselves against exploitation.His compositions addressed the concerns of workers, peasants and other disadvantaged sections. Through these creative expressions, he sought to establish a relationship between political ideology and popular consciousness.

His approach to peasant mobilisation can be understood through three major objectives:

- Economic justice: Ensuring a fairer distribution of agricultural produce and protection of cultivators' rights.
- Political awareness: Encouraging peasants to understand the economic and political structures responsible for their exploitation.
- Collective organisation: Promoting unity among peasants and workers to challenge unequal social relationships.

The importance of this movement lies in its attempt to bring agrarian issues into the centre of Assam's political discourse.

[12]Dewri, P. (2019). Bishnuprasad Rava and the rural in Assam: Inspiration and intervention through music. Review of Agrarian Studies, 9(1), 76–98.

Repression and the Decline of the Peasant Movement:

The post-independence political environment created considerable difficulties for radical left-oriented movements in India. Communist organisations faced government restrictions and repression in different parts of the country.Rabha's activities during the peasant struggles brought him into conflict with the authorities. He spent a period underground and was arrested in 1953, reflecting the difficult circumstances under which the movement operated.The suppression of the peasant struggle exposed the limitations of revolutionary mobilisation within the existing political structure.Nevertheless, the movement contributed to the development of agrarian consciousness in Assam and highlighted the unresolved questions of land rights, rural inequality and economic justice.

Social Justice, Class Consciousness and the Marginalised:

Marxist Interpretation of Social Inequality

Rabha's political thought was deeply influenced by Marxist interpretations of class relations and economic exploitation.He believed that social inequality was closely connected with the unequal distribution of productive resources. The concentration of land and economic power in the hands of a small section of society perpetuated poverty and social dependence.His writings and political activities attempted to establish a relationship between economic exploitation and political domination.For Rabha, the emancipation of society required a transformation of the existing economic structure rather than merely the introduction of political reforms.His commitment to socialist ideals therefore extended beyond the agrarian question to the wider problems of labour exploitation, social discrimination and unequal opportunities.

Tribal Communities and Inclusive Social Transformation

Rabha's political vision was also significant for its concern with the position of indigenous and marginalised communities.Assam's society consisted of diverse ethnic and cultural groups, many of whom experienced economic and political marginalisation. Rabha believed that the development of Assam required the participation of these communities in its social and political institutions.

His engagement with rural and indigenous communities demonstrated his commitment to a form of nationalism that did not depend upon cultural uniformity.He sought to establish solidarity among different social groups through shared concerns about economic exploitation, dignity and political participation.This aspect of his ideology is particularly relevant to the

contemporary history of Assam, where questions of indigenous identity, land rights and multicultural coexistence remain important political concerns.

Women's Emancipation and Social Equality

Rabha's understanding of social justice also included the question of women's emancipation.He recognised that the establishment of an egalitarian society required challenging patriarchal restrictions and ensuring women's opportunities for intellectual, economic and social development.His essay Sovietor Nari reflected his interest in the position of women within socialist society. He admired the opportunities available to women in Soviet society and considered women's emancipation an essential component of broader social transformation.Pathok (2020), in examining Rabha's non-fictional writings, highlights his concern with gender inequality and women's freedom.Although his ideas on gender should be evaluated within their historical context, they demonstrate that his understanding of social justice extended beyond class relations alone.[13]

Culture as an Instrument of Political Mobilisation:

The Relationship Between Art and Politics

One of the most distinctive aspects of Rabha's political contribution was his understanding of the relationship between artistic expression and social transformation. He did not regard art as an activity separated from the realities of ordinary life. Instead, he considered it an expression of the experiences, struggles and aspirations of society.His artistic activities were deeply influenced by his political experiences, particularly his engagement with rural Assam during the 1940s and 1950s.In his essay AsamiyaKristirSamuh Abhash (1946), Rabha presented an understanding of culture that extended beyond literature, music, dance and fine arts. He associated culture with the everyday activities, labour and creative practices of ordinary people.This conception was politically significant because it challenged the elitist understanding of culture. For Rabha, the peasants, workers and indigenous communities were not merely consumers of culture; they were its creators and custodians.Dewri (n.d.) demonstrates that Rabha's understanding of Kristi connected artistic creativity with agricultural labour and the

[13]Pathok, J. (2020). Feministic concern of Bishnu Rabha in his non-fictional works. International Journal of Advanced Science and Technology, 29(1), 1731–1735.

everyday experiences of the people.[14]His approach therefore established a relationship between cultural democracy and economic emancipation.

Indian People's Theatre Association and Progressive Cultural Activities

Rabha's association with the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) represented another important dimension of his political engagement.He became one of the founding members of the Assam branch of IPTA in 1947. The organisation sought to connect artistic expression with the social and political concerns of ordinary people.Through music, theatre and public performances, IPTA attempted to communicate progressive ideas and create awareness about poverty, exploitation, imperialism and social inequality.Rabha's participation in this movement reflected his conviction that artists had a responsibility towards society. His artistic activities were not simply intended to entertain audiences but also to encourage critical thinking and social awareness.His songs and performances drew inspiration from folk traditions and the everyday lives of rural communities. This enabled him to communicate political ideas through familiar cultural forms.His musical interventions thus became an important means of popular political education .[15]

Music and the Peasant Movement:

Rabha's music played a particularly significant role in the mobilisation of peasants and workers.His songs of the 1940s reflected the aspirations of agricultural labourers, sharecroppers and economically disadvantaged communities. Rather than limiting his compositions to personal emotions or romantic themes, he increasingly used music to communicate ideas of collective struggle and social emancipation.His bilingual Assamese-Bodo compositions are especially significant because they attempted to establish solidarity among different linguistic and ethnic communities.Through these songs, Rabha sought to communicate that economic exploitation was a common problem affecting different sections of society.His cultural activities therefore complemented his political mobilisation. Music became a means of connecting ideological ideas with popular experiences and of strengthening solidarity among rural communities.

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[14]Op.cit.Dewri, P. (2019).pp.76-98

[15]Op.cit.Dewri, P. (2019).pp.76-98

Inclusive Nationalism and the Question of Assamese Identity:

Beyond Narrow Regional Nationalism:

Rabha's understanding of nationalism was not confined to linguistic or ethnic identity. Although he was deeply committed to the development of Assamese language and culture, he recognised the multicultural character of Assam.His political outlook attempted to reconcile regional cultural identity with the rights and aspirations of different communities.He believed that Assamese society should develop through mutual cooperation rather than cultural domination or exclusion.This conception was particularly important in the context of Assam, where questions of language, ethnicity, migration and regional identity had become significant political issues.His nationalism was therefore closely connected with the principles of cultural pluralism, social equality and democratic participation.

Solidarity Between Indigenous Communities and Other Social Groups

Rabha's engagement with indigenous communities was an important aspect of his political activities.His ability to communicate across linguistic and cultural boundaries helped him establish relationships with different sections of rural society. His Assamese-Bodo compositions provide an important example of this cultural and political interaction.He attempted to establish solidarity among peasants and workers by emphasising their common economic interests.In this respect, his political vision sought to overcome divisions based on caste, ethnicity and language through collective action against exploitation.Dewri's analysis of Rabha's political and musical activities demonstrates that he regarded cultural diversity as an important part of the people's collective experience rather than an obstacle to social unity .[16]

Cultural Nationalism and the Politics of Historical Memory

Rabha's legacy has also become an important part of the construction of Assamese cultural identity.However, the public celebration of Rabha has sometimes concentrated predominantly on his artistic achievements while giving less attention to his revolutionary political activities.Hazarika and Nath (2017) examine how Rabha's image has been appropriated and interpreted through different socio-political discourses in Assam.[17]Their study raises an

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[16]Op.cit.Dewri, P. (2019).pp.76-98

[17]Op.cit.Hazarika, P., & Nath, D. P. (2017).

important historical question: how does society remember a personality whose cultural achievements and political ideology represent multiple, sometimes competing, dimensions?

The transformation of Rabha into a cultural icon demonstrates that historical memory is not static. Different political and social groups may emphasise particular aspects of a historical personality according to their contemporary interests.A balanced understanding of Rabha must therefore recognise both his cultural contributions and his commitment to socialist and egalitarian transformation.

Participation in Parliamentary Politics:

Rabha's political career was not confined to revolutionary movements and cultural activism. He also participated in parliamentary politics.Following his release from prison in the mid-1950s, he became associated with the Communist Party of India (CPI). His subsequent engagement with electoral politics represented an important development in his political career.He contested the 1957 Assam Legislative Assembly election from Barpeta as a CPI candidate but was unsuccessful. In 1967, he contested from the Tezpur constituency as an independent candidate and was elected to the Assam Legislative Assembly.His election demonstrated that his political influence extended beyond the ideological circles of the left movement. His popularity among different sections of society reflected the public recognition of his commitment to social causes.His participation in the legislature also demonstrated his willingness to engage with democratic institutions as a means of representing popular interests.The transition from revolutionary mobilisation to parliamentary politics should not be interpreted simply as an abandonment of his earlier ideological commitments. Rather, it reflected an additional avenue through which he sought to advance the interests of ordinary people .[18]

Critical Assessment of Rabha's Political Contribution

A historical assessment of Bishnu Prasad Rabha requires an examination of both the achievements and limitations of his political activities.

[18]Op.cit. Dewri, P. (2019).pp.76-98

Integration of Nationalism and Socialism

Rabha's most significant political contribution was his attempt to integrate anti-colonial nationalism with socialist principles.He recognised that the achievement of national independence would remain incomplete without economic emancipation. His political philosophy therefore challenged the assumption that the transfer of political authority alone could establish social justice.This integration of nationalism and class consciousness gave his political thought a distinctive character in the history of modern Assam.

Peasant Mobilisation and Agrarian Consciousness

His participation in the sharecroppers' movement of 1948–1952 was an important contribution to the development of agrarian consciousness in Assam.Through the Krishak Banua Panchayat, he helped bring the concerns of cultivators into organised political activity.The slogan Nangal Jar Mati Tar symbolised a wider demand for agrarian justice and challenged the unequal distribution of economic resources.Although the movement did not achieve all its objectives, it contributed to the development of political awareness among rural communities.

Cultural Activism as Political Practice

Rabha's political activities demonstrated that cultural expression could become an effective means of social mobilisation.His songs, plays and literary works communicated ideas that were often inaccessible through conventional political discourse.His contribution was particularly significant because he connected the cultural traditions of ordinary people with progressive political ideas.

Inclusive Vision of Assamese Society

Rabha's inclusive nationalism remains an important contribution to Assam's political thought.He recognised that the future of Assam depended on the participation of different ethnic and linguistic communities. His emphasis on cultural cooperation and social equality provides an alternative to narrow conceptions of regional nationalism.

Limitations and Historical Context

Despite his considerable political influence, Rabha's revolutionary vision did not develop into a durable political organisation capable of implementing his comprehensive programme of social transformation.The suppression of radical left movements, internal ideological differences and the difficulties of organising a socially diverse agrarian population limited the possibilities of

sustained mobilisation.Furthermore, the later public representation of Rabha as primarily a cultural personality has sometimes obscured his socialist and revolutionary commitments.Hazarika and Nath (2017) help explain this process through their analysis of the changing political meanings attached to Rabha's cultural image.[19]A critical historical interpretation must therefore distinguish between the popular celebration of Rabha and a serious examination of his political ideas and activities.

Contemporary Relevance of Bishnu Prasad Rabha's Political Philosophy

The political ideas of Bishnu Prasad Rabha continue to possess considerable relevance in contemporary Assam. His emphasis on agrarian justice, indigenous rights, economic equality and cultural pluralism addresses several important questions confronting Assamese society.Firstly,his agrarian philosophy remains relevant in the context of landlessness, rural poverty and the economic insecurity of agricultural communities. His slogan Nangal Jar Mati Tar continues to symbolise the demand for dignity and justice for cultivators.Second, his inclusive understanding of nationalism offers an important perspective on the relationship between Assamese identity and the multicultural character of the state. His political vision suggests that regional identity should be based on mutual respect and democratic participation rather than ethnic exclusiveness.Thirdly, his socialist understanding of democracy draws attention to the relationship between political representation and economic equality. He believed that democracy must improve the material conditions of ordinary people.Fourthly, his cultural philosophy remains relevant to contemporary debates concerning the democratisation of culture. His belief that culture originates in the everyday lives and creative activities of people provides an alternative to elitist interpretations of cultural heritage.Finally, his commitment to the emancipation of marginalised communities and women provides an important foundation for understanding social justice as a comprehensive process involving economic, political and cultural equality.

[19]Op.cit.Hazarika, P., & Nath, D. P. (2017).

Conclusion

Bishnu Prasad Rabha occupies a distinctive position in the political history of modern Assam. His contribution cannot be adequately understood by examining his achievements in music, literature, dance and theatre alone. He was equally a revolutionary nationalist, socialist intellectual, peasant organiser and advocate of social justice.His political journey, beginning with participation in the Indian national movement and gradually developing towards revolutionary socialism, reflected his growing understanding of the limitations of political independence without economic emancipation. His association with the Revolutionary Communist Party of India and the Krishak Banua Panchayat provided an organisational framework for translating his political convictions into popular mobilisation.His involvement in the sharecroppers' struggles of 1948–1952 represented one of the most significant aspects of his contribution to Assam's agrarian history. Through the slogan Nangal Jar Mati Tar and the demand for Tin Bhag, he challenged exploitative land relations and attempted to establish the economic rights of cultivators.Equally important was his conception of nationalism. Rabha sought to develop a political identity that combined Assamese cultural consciousness with the aspirations of different ethnic and marginalized communities. His nationalism was therefore closely connected with the principles of equality, solidarity and democratic participation.His cultural activities further strengthened this political vision. Through music, theatre, literature and progressive cultural organizations such as IPTA, he attempted to transform art into an instrument of popular consciousness and social emancipation.The most significant aspect of Rabha's political legacy was his insistence that freedom must have a social and economic meaning. For him, the achievement of independence was only the beginning of a larger struggle to establish a society free from exploitation, inequality and discrimination.

Thus, Bishnu Prasad Rabha should be recognized as an important figure in the development of progressive political thought in Assam. His life and ideas represent an attempt to reconcile revolutionary nationalism, socialist ideology and cultural pluralism. His contribution remains relevant to contemporary debates on agrarian justice, indigenous rights, democratic participation and inclusive nationalism.