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## A Serious Filmmaker of Assam: Jahnu Barua

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### Abstract:

Assamese filmmaker, Jahnu Barua is an ardent follower of Indian parallel or art house or serious cinema, who has produced both Assamese and Hindi mainstream cinemas of national and international repute. Till now Barua has directed twelve Assamese and three Hindi films. *Aparooopa* (1982), *Papori* (1986), *Halodhiya Charaye Baodhan Khai* (1987), *Banani* (1990), *Firingoti* (1991), *Xagaroloi Bahu Dur* (1995), *Khushal* (1998), *Pokhi* (2000), *Konikar Ramdhenu* (2002), *Tora* (2003), *Baandhon* (2012) and *Ajeyo* (2014) are his Assamese films and *Apeksha* (1984), *Meine Gandhi Ko Nahi Mara* (2005) and *Mumbai Cutting* (2010) are his Hindi films. This paper is an attempt to study the cinematic oeuvre of Barua in detail. The textual analysis method has been applied to find out the basic characteristics of Barua's films.

### 1. Introduction

Jahnu Barua, one of the most talented contemporary parallel filmmakers of India, and Assam in particular, was born in Bakata of Sivsagar, Assam in 1952. After completion of his graduation from B. Baruah College, Guwahati, Jahnu Barua went to do his post-graduation diploma in film Direction from Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), Pune. However, from his childhood Barua was inquisitive to nature. According to him, some *puk* (one kind of insect) is always crawling in his head that inspires him to capture his imagination in the celluloid. After five years of Bhabendra Nath Saikia's *Sandhyarag* (1977) Jahnu Barua embarked into the serious filmmaking tradition of Assam with his debut film *Aparooopa* (1982). Before this venture, Barua was engaged with cinema world as an Assistant director to Arun Vikash for the film *Shaque* and also directed many short films. Till now Barua has directed twelve Assamese and three Hindi films. *Aparooopa* (1982), *Papori* (1986), *Halodhiya Charaye Baodhan Khai* (1987), *Banani* (1990), *Firingoti* (1991), *Xagaroloi Bahu Dur* (1995), *Khushal* (1998), *Pokhi* (2000), *Konikar Ramdhenu* (2002), *Tora* (2003), *Baandhon* (2012) and *Ajeyo* (2014) are his Assamese films and *Apeksha* (1984), *Meine Gandhi Ko Nahi Mara* (2005) and *Mumbai Cutting* (2010) are his Hindi films.

Barua's films are mainly based on diverse issues pertaining to Assamese society and its people. From the story of women subordination to the tragedy of terrorist attack, Barua has covered range of issues in his films. And in all his films the protagonist fights alone against the odds, but with deep conviction, a deliberate ploy to arise the collective consciousness of the audience. After the death of Bhabendra Nath Saikia, Jahnu Barua remains the only man to guide the contemporary parallel filmmakers of Assam. Therefore, Yves Thoraval has rightly acclaimed him as 'a hope for Himalayan and Indian Cinema'. Among the other filmmakers, Barua was well trained with film education and his quality reflects in his creations. However, it is unfortunate to say that even after his long effort of realist filmmaking; audience of this region never inspired him to produce good films. Therefore, after making ten full length films in the Assamese language from 1982 to 2004, Jahnu Barua tried his hand at making Hindi films and received accolades from Indian audience.

According to Thoraval, Barua is the first, who interpret on the screen the connection between politics and social and cultural events with the aim of bringing an awareness to the public and he adopts generally a direct style, which serves the levelheaded development of the narrative. Apart from these, Barua's film carries some distinctive features. Each of his films overtly or covertly documented some historical facts or historical disturbances. If *Aparooopa* brings the issues of women subordination, *Papori* directly captured the turmoil situation of Assam Agitation; likewise, *Halodhiya Charaye Baodhan Khai* focused on the exploitation of landlords and *Xagaroloi Bahu Dur* documented the impact of development on grass root level. In the same manner his other movies are also based on some socio-cultural facts. However, the presentation of such facts on cinematic platter by Barua is excellent and innovative. According to Moulee Senapati, Jahnu Barua's root lie in the pastoral, unpolluted milieu of Assam. It is therefore, natural that most of his themes deal with and delve into the crisis and complexities confronting the pastoral sensibilities of a society he understands well and deeply seeks his inspiration from.

### 2. *Aparooopa* (1982)

*Aparooopa*, the first film of Jahnu Barua is based on a conventional narrative of an educated woman (Suhasini Muley), who is confined by her luxurious life received from her tea planter husband. Her university education was stopped by her parents to get married with a rich man. Her husband completely neglects her for his business and she becomes bore with the social routine of the tea garden. Suddenly, she discovers the fact behind her marriage that her father sells her to her husband for the sake of wiping off a huge debt.

She is shocked and becomes outraged, and as a result of that when she once again comes into contact with her former lover (Biju Phukan), she makes an attempt to continue their love story and ultimately eloped with him.

*Aparoopaa* is a story about the liberation of women, who is suppressed both by her family and her husband. Her suppression is not physical but totally psychological in nature. Amidst her luxurious life, she is desperately searching her self-identity and finally finds her solace with her former lover. In this film Barua has casted performers like Suhasini Mulay, Girish Karnad and others from Bollywood. But despite such attempt, this film could not make a history in Assamese film industry and criticized by scholars as 'strained lyricism'.

### 3. *Papori* (1986)

After *Aparoopaa*, Barua made his second film *Papori* with a purpose to records the effects of the Assam Agitation<sup>on</sup> common people. This film was thematically and technically developed from his earlier creations. The story uncovers some hidden stories related to Assam Agitation. *Papori* is ostensibly a woman's story but the underlying intension is to show what happened in a turmoil-torn province during the days of the movement through the life of the female protagonist convincingly played by Barua's film institute contemporary, Gopi Desai. The purpose behind the coverage of Assam Agitation in *Papori*, according to Barua is that, thousands of people have lost their life in 1983, most of whom had no connection with politics and therefore he tried to document such an incident through the story of *Papori*. Choosing an ordinary housewife, Barua shows how anybody could be a victim of the agitation and illogical power.

*Papori*, the protagonist is a housewife of a school teacher Binod. They have a daughter who is terminally ill, a fact not known by *Papori*. Unfortunately, one day Binod is arrested for a murder of which he is innocent. Though the actual murderer, a gangster who has both financial and political power, is arrested, Binod is not freed. In the mean time *Papori*'s daughter is dead in the hospital and she becomes alone. Taking the advantage of her loneliness a small-time criminal, who is interested to *Papori*, raped her. But when she approached the police for complaining, the police also failed to accept Binod's innocence and at the end of the film throwing away the idea of suicide, *Papori* decides to live and fight against the system.

Set in the situation of Assam Agitation, *Papori* demonstrates the pathetic condition of women folk in that turmoil situation. Though the Agitation benefited some people, but lots of common people were badly affected by this movement. *Papori* is one from those victimized people. More than a film, *Papori* is Barua's comment on the Assam movement. He sketched his observation about the movement with great sensibility. And for that reason, instead of its box office failure, the film deserves a special position in Assamese film history.

### 4. *Halodhiya Charaye Baodhan Khai* (The Catastrophe, 1987)

*Halodhiya Charaye Baodhan Khai* is adapted from one of the famous Assamese novel of the same name by Homen Borgohain. Though this is the third film of Jahnu Barua, yet he is introduced to the national and international platform with this film only. The film has a realist appeal to the audience. To achieve realism Barua tightly maintains some rules and regulations. Indra Bania, the protagonist of the film exposed that prior to shooting Barua gives him three months' time to prepare him for the role. During this three months' time he is asked to learn ploughing that he did at a village in Pathsala in lower Assam. In addition to that he is advised not to shave or undergo a haircut and also to refrained from brushing his teeth and cut nails. Even Bania was made to seat in the sun for hours in the traditional *suria*, a loin worn till the knees, and had to walk barefooted at a brisk pace carrying the plough in the style and manner a traditional farmer would, as a part of regular morning walks to the utter amusement of the passer bys. It proves that Barua never compromise with reality. Apart from other cinematic tools, he demands real acting from his actors.

*Halodhiya Charaye Baodhan Khai* received the National Film Award for the Best Feature Film in 1988 and won multiple awards at Locarno International Film Festival in the same year. Apart from this, Indra Bania, the lead actor of this film won the Best Actor Award, which is first time in Assamese film history. With the story of a poor farmer, Barua uncovers the ongoing social and economic exploitation of rural Assamese society.

Rakheswar is a poor but independent farmer with his ancestral patch of land. He has a happy family consisting of his wife and two children. But one day Sonathan, a *zamindar* kind of man of his village, attempts to take his land on the ground that the land was once mortgaged by his father and Rakheswar does not have a legal document as agreement are made orally based on confidence. Failing to furnish legal document, Rakheswar approaches administration but without any result. Having no option at hand, he sells his two oxen to file a legal case against Sonathan. This is the beginning of Rakheswar's excavation of labyrinth of corrupt administration and in this journey he lost everything. As a common rule of the system he has to bribe everyone, it may be money or homemade curd. Consequently, his son has to leave his school and work as a servant in the house of the village headman. In the mean time, Sonathan stands for legislative election and opposition party wants to take benefit from Rakheswar's land case. Then the tax collector realizes that even though Rakheswar doesn't have legal document, he must help Sonathan to dispose of his case for the sake of winning the election. As a result, Rakheswar gets his land back, but now he doesn't have his oxen to plough the land. Apart from this, his happiness is smashed away by the election posters showing the exultant smiling of Sonathan. At the end of the movie Rakheswar expressed his anger by cutting the posters with his hoe.

The Catastrophe was acclaimed by critics for its cinematographic mastery, for the authenticity of its description of rural problems in India and for its affirmation of human dignity. Jahnu Barua was criticized for not adapting the story fully and moving away from its original line. But Barua's intension is not to give a simple picture of the exploitation only, but by moving one step ahead he tries to give a message to the audience that the movement or revolution has been started – a subaltern voice against such exploitation is emerging. The transformation of the tree from black to red signifies the emerging voice. These kinds of suggestive shots heighten the

cinematic beauty of the film. Another thought provoking shot is the shot of the two children and their *desired* curd pot. The curd is made for a ritual going to be solemnized at their home and his children are eagerly waiting for the day to have the curd; but unfortunately, their father is planning to give it to the tax collector as bribe. In that particular shot, Rakheshwar is taking the curd pot and two children are despondently looking at the pot. The situation is composed in such a manner that audience can hardly stop their tears. In my observation, in the whole story, that moment expresses the deepest effect of such exploitation.

### 5. *Banani* (The Forest, 1989)

After the grand success of *Halodhiya Charaye Baodhan Khai*, Barua concentrates on another side of exploitation going on in forest. *Banani* is an ecological film that projects the human exploitation and damage of forest areas of Assam by some traffickers. Now a day, this is one of the burning problems of the earth. Due to such deforestation, the nature is losing its balance day by day. From the Chipko Movement (1970s)<sup>12</sup>, an awareness about environment protection emerged among the people of India and they resist the destruction of forest. The movement touched each and every corner of the society. Under the wave of this movement filmmakers made movies on environment by focusing such issues. In Assam also, number of films on environment issues are made and *Banani* is also such an attempt by Barua to criticize the rampant deforestation, one of the wealth of Assam and its neighboring regions. Barua describe the narrative through a 'story' and 'everyday life' which is accessible and is intended to create awareness.

*Banani* is a story about Tapan Barua, idealistic forest officer who dedicatedly perform his duty and for that reason frequently transferred from one forest to another by his superiors who are involved in smuggling. He confronted with illegal traffickers of construction wood that are legally authorized to some tribal people, who are unable to resist their activity. With the act of his frequent transfer, his wife Rubi is highly dissatisfied as she is more concerned about the education of their little child. Gradually, she also understands the seriousness of the issue and stands with her husband and other tribal people and finally realizes the fact that they will have to take weapon against these exploiters. Like the earlier film, in this film also Barua is hinting about an awakening, however this time the fight is against the exploiter of the forest who is large in number and the issue is also universal. Thus Barua is moving from locale to universal problems.

### 6. *Firingoti* (The Spark, 1991)

*Firingoti* is another award winning movie of Jahnur Barua. The film won the Second Best Film and the main actress Malaya Goswami received the National Award for Best Female Artist. Like his other films in this film also he crafted a strong woman character fighting with her situation. This time she is a widowed teacher (Ritu), who is transferred to a remote village of Assam (Karanga) whose school has been destroyed by fire few years back. The story is set in the year 1962, the time of Indo-China war. Now, the first and foremost task of Ritu is to establish a school so that she can start her actual job. She tried her best to acquire the confidence of the community people. Initially the people treat her as a foreigner, but gradually she receives their confidence and with their support able to construct a school building. In the mean time a teacher of that area who had left his job and went to city, come back and begins to create problem for her. One day with the help of some friends he burns the school. At the end of the movie, Ritu has to leave the village with a promise of the villagers of reconstructing the school, so that 'no fire can suppress the spark of knowledge'.

The term *firingoti* is used by Barua to signify the spark that can enlighten a society. In Assamese there is a proverb *firingotir pora Khandav dah*, meaning collapse of Khandav jungle from a simple fire spark. The connotative meaning of the sentence is that a small thing can also bring revolution. In Barua's *Firingoti* Ritu is simply a widowed teacher, she belongs to the marginalized section of the society. But after her arrival at the village, which is still far away from school education, gets a hope or light of future. Her restless efforts make the people conscious about their school and as a result of that they promised her to set up a school again.

### 7. *Xagaroloi Bahu Dur* (1995)

Deviating from his earlier movies, in his sixth film *Xagaroloi Bahu Dur*, Barua attempted to capture the reaction of the common people for the communicational development. The film looks into the development of the society from the perspective of a boatman and his grandson. The story revolves around their reactions to different facets of social development. The film provoked to reassess the negative effects of development in a rural society by taking a bridge as metaphor. In a developing society how a bridge becomes a curse for a boatman is the main question raised by the director in this movie. *Xagaroloi Bahu Dur* is a candid recognition of the reality hidden behind each and every developed society. The film won the Best Director Award (Golden Lotus), Best Regional Film Award, World Peace Prize (Chicago) and Best Actor (Singapore Film Festival) and gained popularity among the audience and critic.

Moulee Senapati has rightly said that in dealing with the individual as a focal point of his films, Jahnur Barua never loses sight of the broad social perspective. His 'individual', the protagonist, does not drop from the skies. They are the integral part of the social organization and their crisis emerges from a dichotomy between the person and the society to which they belong. The protagonist of *Xagaroloi Bahu Dur* is fighting with the communicational and behavioral changes occurred in the society.

Powal (Bishnu Khargharia), a village boatman is living with his grandson Suman (Sushanta Barua), after the death of their elder son and daughter-in-law. He lives on the bank of the river Dihing and ferried people from one side of the river to another. His only dream is to educate Suman, so that he can leave their ancestral job and becomes a prestigious man. On his younger son's invitation, one day Powal and Suman visit the city and experienced the naked picture of a materialistic urban society by discovering that his son insists him to come only for a signature to sell his land. Coming back to his village, Powal encountered with another change. A wooden bridge is going to be built on the river Dihing. No doubt, this is good for the society, now people can easily cross the river and connect with the city. It will gradually develop the society. But, for Powal and Suman, the bridge is not a sign of development, but a curse. As

it will make an end to their only livelihood. Being frustrated with the ongoing construction of the bridge, one night Powal attempted to cut the bridge, but Suman stopped him to do that and ultimately they decided to wait for a new morning.

Using the bridge as a metaphor, Barua excavates the mental situation of a tradition bearer in accepting a small token of development. Development is not always good for the society, sometime it becomes the reason behind the uprooting of age old culture and civilization. However, in this movie Barua is focusing more on the economic problem of the protagonist, rather than the uprooting of the tradition, as the character himself doesn't want his grandson to be a boatman. Padum Barua in his *Ganga Chilonir Pankhi* hinted about this problem and Barua illustrates the same problem with more detail. Though Suman is also effected by the bridge, yet unlike his grandfather he is happy with the making of a bridge or in other terms with the development. It suggests that though the development is a destroyer of traditionality, yet it is desired or important for the new generation. Therefore, at the end of the movie, Powal with Suman accept the truth and wait for a new beginning

Apart from the issue of communicational development, Barua sketched a dark picture of urban society, where a son can exploit the emotions of his father. This world is totally unknown to Powal and Suman. Their short term stay at the city gives them a chance to encounter with some urban traits. Though these people are migrated from village, under the wave of development they become selfish and corrupt.

### 8. *Khushal (The Price of Freedom, 1998)*

In his seventh film *Khushal*, Barua screened a piece of history. The story is based on the life history of Ahom freedom fighter Khushal. He was the only martyr who had been hanged during last phase of the Quit India Movement in 1942. He was born in Sarupathar of Golaghat, Assam. He was the follower of Gandhian ideology. He used to take active part in Gandhi's freedom movements. But unfortunately he was charged by the British for train sabotage and sentenced to death. He was hanged in Jorhat jail on June 15, 1943.

After the excavation of different socio-political issues pertaining to Assamese society, in this film Barua made an attempt to uncover the past history. Like the other movies this film also received the Best Regional Film Award in 1998.

### 9. *Pokhi (And the River Flows, 2000)*

*Pokhi* is famous for its 'power of simplicity' and according to Barua the main principle behind such creation is that

- Simplicity is something that we generally tend to ignore. To me, the actual purpose of being intelligent, or acquiring knowledge, is not to complicate things in life. We would do justice to our intelligence only when we could simplify the complexity of our life and our environment, and also at the same time, help others to do the same. *Pokhi* is about such wisdom.

Unlike his other movies, in this movie the protagonist is a little orphan child. This time director is willing to give a picture of cruel human character and joy of simplicity over this cruelty. The simple narration of the film and strong humanist appeal makes the movie a remarkable one. *Pokhi* is a story about little girl Pokhi who is living with her uncle and aunt after the death of her mother and father. One day her uncle –aunty leave for city and settled there by entrusting Pokhi to a childless wealthy couple of their village. Pokhi easily attached with the old lady who is kind in nature, but the old man was irritating and greedy. He is unhappy with the entrance of a new member in their family. Suddenly, the kind old lady died in an accident and the old man spread a rumor that there is a curse upon Pokhi and therefore when she entered in their house things are going wrong. But gradually, Pokhi's simplicity and determination changes the mentality of the old man and ultimately she receives her approval and gets a family life.

Through the eyes of a little girl, Barua shows the condition of a parentless child and the poor mental condition of the people of the society. The story of the little girl proves that with simplicity one can easily win the world. The film received the Best Regional Film Award and known for its structured narrative and cinematic content.

- In one word *Pokhi* is a moving tale through the eyes of a young girl child – a tale replete with immense simplicity in dire contrast to the complexities of an existentially conditioned reality marred by sarcasm, greed and pretensions growing out of obvious cracks and crevices such deficiencies can naturally form.

### 10. *Konikar Ramdhenu (Ride on the Rainbow, 2002)*

After *Pokhi*, Barua once again endeavored to capture a story of a little child victimized by the detrimental social circumstances. This is the last film of his trilogy on grandfather and grandson. Though *Pokhi* and *Konikar Ramdhenu* are based of child's story, but the seriousness of the subject matter never categorized them as children's film. Barua has used child protagonist to deal with some serious problems of the society. This time he is concentrating on the juvenile problems. The film uncovers some naked truths of the society. According to Barua,

- he wanted to make a human statement in cinematic text on an imaginative and intelligent boy who has his life going horribly wrong, and is too young and powerless to do anything about it. Like hundreds of children from rural India who run away from home and end up in cities, he finds abuse and exploitation. The question that I wanted to explore in the film is whether his desire to live in a beautiful world, a concept that he has evolved in his imagination, can be fulfilled in the society in which he lives.

Barua's selection of story is based on his sensitivity towards the deprived and suffered section of the society. He never picked up a popular issue, rather go for some sensitive, but unnoticed problems. In *Konikar Ramdhenu* Kukoi is an eleven years old boy, who is intelligent and imaginative. One day he left home to escape from his sufferings and like other children takes a train and reached at Guwahati city. He is unknown to the city and the city is also unknown to him. However, with the help of an older boy he engaged in

the motor garage of an ugly looking man called Thanu. He provides him food and shelter, but not a single paisa. Kukoi tries to adjust with this limited facility, but suddenly one day she experiences a cruel incident. One night Thanu attempted to molest him and in self defense Kukoi hits him with an iron rod and killed him. Subsequently, he is brought before the Judicial Magistrate and as per law sends him to State Juvenile Home, where he comes to know about different problems of the boys of his age. Here he is observed by Biswa Boro, an employee of that institute and gradually establishes a good relationship with him. In between the story, some other facts related to juvenile home are also come into light. For instance, the absorption of juveniles in the household works by some higher officials, child molestation, and corruption etc. After killing Thanu, Kukoi becomes silent and applying different techniques Boro able to know about his village and parents. Of course, he has given an imaginary picture of his village and parents. But Boro's experience helps him to discover Kukoi's background. One day Kukoi is freed from the juvenile home on the condition that he is taken by his parents or any guardian authorized by his parents. Then Boro makes a trip to his village and discover that Kukoi was a multi-talented boy, but had to stop his study for financial problem. He has a drunkard step father and a step mother, who doesn't want him back. When Boro approached Kukoi's father for his sign, he demands some money. After all, Boro gets the authority of Kukoi and one day takes him to his village with a hope that Kukoi will become a good man.

*Konikar Ramdhenu* speaks about the dreams of a juvenile that are broken into pieces by the brutal reality. Like Kukoi each and every deprived child's have a dream of a good life with loving parents, sound economic condition and a good school. But most of them can't have it due to various reasons. This film is focusing on some such reasons. One of them is unhealthy family environment, due to which child like Kukoi transformed into a murderer. No doubt, he is rescued by noble man like Boro, but there are still thousands of children who are living such a life and most of them are transformed into hard core criminal.

### 11. *Tora (Butterfly Chase, 2003)*

*Tora* is a children's film produced by Children's Film Society of India. The film received the Best Children's Film Award in the 51<sup>st</sup> National Film Award. Barua dedicated the film to the children killed on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2004.<sup>19</sup> The story is about the innocence of a little girl Tora, who often feels lonely among the adults. Her mother and father shifted to a place near the connecting road in search of better facilities. Naba, Deva and their bed-ridden mother is their neighbor. One-day fairy Godmother tells Tora that she will get a companion immediately. After that Tora gets the calf of their neighbor and there is no limit of her happiness. She calls him Mon. She passed her free time with Mon. In the mean time a land dispute arises between her father and their neighbor, and her father forced her to stay away from Mon, but she continued her relationship and also takes care of grandmother of their neighbor. Tora's determination to keep the relationship inspires her father to resolve the dispute and at last peace is re-established with the innocent effort of Tora.

After *Pokhi*, Barua depicts the innocence of a child in *Tora*. However, this time the story doesn't bring any serious issue, rather an innocent relationship between human being with nature. Tora's love for Mon signifies the virtuousness of a child who never understands the difference between man and animal. Even she feels that Mon is privileged than her as he need not learn alphabets.

### 12. *Baandhon (Waves of Silence, 2012)*

Set in the backdrop of Mumbai terrorist attack, Barua's *Baandhon* explores the human relationships closely. Unlike his earlier movies, where city is depicted as a place of corruption or selfishness, in this movie he depicts some unusual human relationship in an urban set up. Barua's minute observation on the husband-wife relationship is reflects in the interactions of the protagonist and his wife.

*Baandhon* is a story about 72 years' old couple Dandeswar (Bishnu Kharghoria) and Hkawni (Bina Patangia), who lives in Guwahati with their housemaid. As a result of their fighting they often approach Jatin (Jatin Borah), an advocate to file a divorce petition. Jatin is well acquainted with their habits and most of the time resolved their problems. Dandeswar lost their son and daughter-in-law in an accident some years back and their only son Pona, who is studying in IIT Bombay, is the only hope of their life. Their life is mainly concentrated with his phone calls. But suddenly the phone calls stop, they become worried and fled to Mumbai. In Mumbai they discover that Pona died in the Mumbai terrorist attack. Devastated couple lost the last hope of their life and sitting on a bench looking at the sea.

The relationship between the protagonist and Jatin and his wife is unusual in the sense that they are not family members. They have only one relationship that is human relationship. Jatin used to stay in their home as a tenant. After few years he shifted to another house, but their relationship still persists. Even Jatin and his wife are fulfilling the absence of Dandeswar's son and daughter-in-law. Inclusion of such altruistic relationship within an urban context by Barua is a new inclusion. Apart from that the insignificant quarrels between the old couple is an interesting part of the films as well as human life. It makes the film livelier and real for the audience. Thus by taking the terrorist attack as the main issue of the film, Barua explores different human relationships.

### 13. *Ajeyo (Invincible, 2014)*

After *Khushal*, Barua once again go back to the Indian freedom movement, but this time not with a real story, but a story of Sahitya Academy Award Winning novel of Arun Sharma 'Ashirbadar Rang', set in the independent period. The film uncovers the existing social taboos like caste discrimination, child marriage and Hindu-Muslim living category by religion. In the movie, Barua sets a story about the relationship of Hindu boy and Muslim girl amidst the ongoing communal struggle to prove that nothing can stop the spirit of human mind.

The story is about Gojen Keot (Rupam Chetia), a high school dropout student, who discards the communal boundaries and taught alphabets to Muslim girl, Hasina (Jupitora). Keot is living with his grandmother and he is fighting against the bourgeois. One day in a communal conflict Hasina's father is killed and Keot brings her to his home. Then ignoring the social restrictions, he married Hasina and begins to live together. Being inspired by freedom movement he involved in the freedom struggle as a messenger. Unfortunately,

one day due to his laziness two freedom fighters are killed by the Britishers. This incident effects Gojen deeply and he leads a guilt-ridden life. At the end of the movie his grand-daughter continues his legacy and fights against discrimination towards women. Works of Jahnu Barua is encompassed a vibrant sense of humanity. While he eloquent a delicate social issue, a moral pragmatism and a good story with cinematic flair and often brilliance, his concerned for common people and their vast array of their crisis is dominant in his cinematic oeuvre. When he dramatized the conflicts of exploiter and exploited, he always expresses the psychological disturbances of the exploited with their extreme form of human expression. Though his women characters are in a miserable condition, they are not weak, but strong enough to assert their self identity.

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