

## S.K.C. - portrait of a time capturer



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Nazrul Haque 18 January 2010 8790 views

The nameless and faceless assamese writer Saurav Kumar Chaliha once said about himself- “some chaps are somewhat like photographic films, willing to record what they see only so long as they are left in their light-tight obscurity of the camera box, and are absolutely no good any more if pulled out into the open.....”, and to be honest, as a fan of this great legend, I too never want to disturb the tranquil and intellectually obscure life of his! Since my childhood I have only read him and in the process I formed an imaginary persona of his in my mind, always believing that, this one is the real SKC! I grew with such strong “imaginary picture” about this person that when a few news papers declared, at the time when Saurav Kumar Chaliha was chosen for the Assam Valley Literary award, his actual name to be “Suren Medhi” I felt somewhat disheartened! How can a lovely name, “Saurav”, be something else? So what if Suren Medhi is the son of another great Assamese’ Kali Ram Medhi? No one needs to know that to enjoy his 60 odd writings, again and again, and learn something new, every time.

That is why I was a bit apprehensive when I reached “Laksmiram Barua Sadan” on that chilly Sunday afternoon of 17th January, 2010. We were all there for the screening of Noni Bora’s first attempt in film making – “S.K.C. Profile of a time capturer”! And the very first shot made me realize that all my worries were totally misplaced! The film opened with a stray discussion about Saurav Kumar Chaliha, in a dimly lit room occupied by an unknown woman and two men – an atmosphere as aimless and mysterious as SKC himself! The few lines coming from those characters in the screen assured us about the story telling abilities of the young chap- Noni Bora! It was a cold Guwahati afternoon and the hall was damp and there were better venues for us, ninety odd people voluntarily sitting as audience, to attend as 17th January is also “Silpi Diwas”! But this boy from Golaghat, Noni Bora, who is based in Pune now, showed us some marvelous cinematic displays, a wonderful ability of story telling and above all, a heart full of love and devotion to SKC. In many of his writings SKC talks about his profound love for his very old Guwahati- a small town as calm, peaceful and warm as its residents was. Noni Bora, with extreme care and hard work, portrayed that love with a few early morning, foggy shots of Panbazar and Mahamaya Cabin- the heart and lifeline of a rapidly degrading city. His camera moved around many places, buildings, characters and plots of SKC’s stories to look for things the writer may have witnessed- many years ago! We were all mesmerized by this show of moving imageries, portrait by portrait, and I still think we would have no difficulty in understanding the messages, even if “S.K.C. Portrait of a time capturer” were made as a silent movie! As Orson Welles, the American actor and director, rightly said- “A film is never really good unless the camera is an eye in the head of a poet”! And eyes speak more eloquently than words.

Making a film about Saurav Kumar Chaliha is not easy! Firstly, you can't bring the writer in front of camera and make him talk, in first person, about his life and work. And secondly, you need to be highly sensitive towards his need of remaining behind the screen and so you neither can use one of his close family members to reveal everything about him! And that was reiterated by another renowned and unconventional Film maker from Assam, Mr. Altaf Mazid when he narrated, in the movie, his experiences in making films about the great legend and what he could learn from his interaction with the writer. He was one of the four narrators Noni Bora used to actually tell the storyline and discuss the life and work of Chaliha. The other three were Mr. Prabhat Bora, Mr. Apurba Sharma and Mr. Arindam Barkotoky. All four did extremely well in discussing the various shades of Chaliha's work and they, one by one, revealed to us the many layers of thought processes that one encounters while reading his stories. Noni Bora wisely separated the discussions in various sub-themes so that the audience can feel a sense of continuity while watching the movie. So, Prof. Bora quite eruditely discussed in detail about the influences of western music and cinema in Chaliha's work and he was extremely eloquent and innovative when he said that one can feel the divine magic of listening to Bach or Beethoven while reading some of the stories of the great writer! Similarly Prof. Apurba Sharma talked about the influences of Science in SKC's creations and he wondered whether we could have the great fortune to witness some of his superb writings provided Chaliha would not have been related to Physics! The creator of "Lakhtokiat Golam", another marvelous work on SKC and his thinking, Altaf Mazid revealed that Chaliha's stories are themselves quite cinematic and any student of film making can effortlessly visualize the plot and turn the stories into some beautiful cinemas. However, while replying to the discussion on the future of SKC, lecturer of ADP College of Nagaon, Mr. Arindam echoed the thoughts of countless fans of the writer when he declared, in a voice laden with true love and emotion, that Saurav Kumar Chaliha has no past and no future!

SKC is a present, a reality, and so shall he remain till Assamese people and Assamese language will be alive in our earth! Would anyone disagree with that?

Noni Bora is a fresh youth and his cinematic approaches are also very new and full of creative freshness. “S.K.C. Profile of a Time Capturer” has some wonderful music and Noni himself collected those bits, one by one, by searching into the net! The film was innovative and brilliant from all angles and everyone in the audience wished Noni a great future ahead in film making. It shall not be out of context to mention that Altaf Mazid has already formed a fan club for the great writer- “Saurav Kumar Chaliha Anuragi Sangstha” and the film was shown under the banner of this group. We feel it is a timely and laudable effort. Saurav Kumar Chaliha never seeks any rewards, publicity or appreciation and remained throughout his life like a wise sage in his trademark style of intellectual carelessness! But Assam needs this person for its own solace and Chaliha shall always remain a guide to us in our quest and lust for a better and meaningful life. Perhaps, that is what Noni conveyed through his last shot where SKC himself was standing in the bank of mighty Brahmaputra like a colossus, a “Mohiruha”! I left the cold and damp hall in a very positive note that afternoon as if I have just heard “Eta Bhal Khobor” (A good news).

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Nazrul Haque

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BY NAZRUL HAQUE

Talk on AFSPA by Sanjoy Hazarika at B'lore on Oct 4

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A walk with Saurav Kumar Chaliha

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Crisis Of Leadership

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#### ON THIS DAY

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Buffy to distribute sanitary napkins in Nagaland.

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Heart awareness rally in the city

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