



DIPALI BARTHAKUR

An Enduring Legacy

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Senai Moi Jau Dei, Xunar Kharu Nalage Muk, Dale Dale Gai Kuli Bulbuli etc are some of the fabulous songs which will immortalize Dipali Barthakur in the cultural arena of Assam for all times to come.

An artiste who needs no introduction to every true blue Assamese, a singer par excellence at one time, Dipali Barthakur now lives in relative seclusion in her homely yet simple surroundings at her Beltola residence. She was born on 30th of January, 1941 at Nilmoni Bagan (Sonari). Her father, Bishwanath Barthakur was a manager in the tea estate while her mother Aimoni Barthakur was a home maker. She had three elder sisters and two brothers, prominent among whom is Bhaben Barthakur, noted lyricist of Assam.

Dipali Barthakur started her tryst with singing at a very early age, mostly with her brother Bhaben Barthakur. There was a very good cultural environment especially for singing at that time in Sivasagar. She still recalls the influence of personalities like Lakhiram Barua, Padmadhar Chaliha, Parag Chaliha and many others on her musical career.

In 1958, when she was still in school, she first sang on radio. After her schooling got over, she was enrolled in Cotton College in the Arts stream for the IA course. In Guwahati also, the atmosphere was congenial for her with people like Rudra Barua, Deben Sarma among others, who encouraged the promising singer. While studying her IA (now HS course), she recorded her first song on HMV in 1961. Though music was her first love, she was passionate about cooking and had other hobbies like embroidery and sewing too.

Her first brush with fame had come very early in 1957 when she was adjudged 'Best Singer' in the All Assam Music Competition of Sangeet Natak Akadei. She soon became a household name in Assam and everyone started humming her songs. But destiny had other plans in store for her when she fell sick due to a nerve disease and had to cut short her glittering career. From late 60s to the 70s, she was mostly undergoing treatment in Calcutta and Guwahati. She first met her husband, noted artist Neelpawan Baruah, who later became a Padma Shri recipient, in 1973. She got married in 1976, on 7th March.

She got her due recognition with the conferment of Padma Shri Award on her in 1998 and again, more recently, she received the *Silpi Bota* for 2009 from the Chief Minister, Shri Tarun Gogoi. Her grit and tenacity, her ever smiling face, her simplicity will surely inspire many young people to be like her. □□