

## CHAPTER-IV

# CONTRIBUTION OF *THĀN* AND *SATTRA* TO THE VALUE EDUCATION OF ASSAM

In this chapter the researcher mainly discuss about the contribution of Śaṅkaradeva and *Thān and Sattras* to the value education of Assam. At first here discuss about the value education and various methods about how Śaṅkaradeva developed value education at that time. Value education introduced by Śaṅkaradeva through *Thān and Sattras* was not an independent subject. It was related with religion i.e. *Eka-Śaraṇa-Hari-Nāma-Dharma*.

Values are socially accepted norms to evaluate objects, persons, and situations that form part and parcel of society. Value system is the backbone of a civilized society. Values may change from one society to another society and also time to time. Every society abides by certain moral values, social values and religious values. Values that are accepted by all the societies are “global value”<sup>1</sup> A value is well defined as an endeavor which satisfies need system; psychological as well as physiological. Values are ideals, standard principles, a moral code, or a code of ethics. Values are cultural norms of the society in which individual is brought up.

Values are the motivating force behind man’s thought emotion and action to bring moral and spiritual progress of life. Values are the pillars of human life. The

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1. Chitkara, M.G (2003) *Education and Human values*:P 54.

human values are easily grasped by the children who immediately focus their concentration together with their faculty of institution.<sup>2</sup>

Value is a difficult concept to define. Value education is also education in the sense that it is education for “becoming”. It is concerned with the development of the total personality of the individual intellectual, social, emotional, aesthetic, moral and spiritual. It involves developing sensitivity to the good, the right and the beautiful, ability to choose the right values and releasing them in thought and action.<sup>3</sup> Many American writers have used the term “axiology” to denote that branch of philosophy which is concerned with values. The philosophers of the great tradition from Plato to Hegel have been greatly concerned with values; through they may not have used the term, but have spoken of desires and aims.<sup>4</sup> The value of an individual depends on his or her culture. For the progress of a country citizen have to cultivate the moral, ethical and spiritual values.<sup>5</sup> Considerations for the feelings of others, for the rights of others, for the faults of others are some of the highest marks of Indian culture. “Vidyadadativinayam” without these two elements a man would definitely be uncultured and for “vinayam” (modesty, humbleness) moral, ethical and spiritual values are necessary.

Values are guiding principles of life which are conducive to one’s physical, mental, health, as well as to social welfare and adjustment. Values are considered as potent determinates of human behavior. Value may be defined as any experience,

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2. Ruhela, S.P (1986) *Human Values and Education*: P 11.

3. Verma, Yogindar (Ed 2007) *Education in Human Values for Human Excellence*: P 148.

4. Dash, B.N (2004) *Principales of Education and Education in the Emerging Indian Society*: P 108.

5. Pandey, V.C (Ed 2007) *Education Culture and Human Values*: preface.

ideal, thing, or state of being which is favoured or desired, whose ends and means are justified as per social norms.

Values are not static. In our glorious past the aim of education was to understand the universe, the man's mind, soul and values. The prime concern of education is therefore, to enable, to establish a vigorous system of ethical and spiritual values in our society.

The famous psychologist skinner told in "Walden two" that values come by practice and reinforcement.<sup>6</sup>

According to American Ex-president Jimi Carter, if one want to be truly happy in life he need to ensure that the choices he makes directly support his values.<sup>7</sup>

The value oriented education can be help the individual and the society in the following ways-

1. It can develop a healthy and balanced personality.
2. It enables the person to earn his livelihood and to acquire prosperity.
3. It develops vocational efficiency.
4. Develops character and morality of the person.
5. Makes the people ideal citizen.
6. Enables the person to adjust with his environment.
7. Promotes social efficiency.
8. Inculcate ideas about national integration.

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6. Skinner, B.F (1948) *Waldentwo*.

7. Carter, Jimmy (2005) *Our Endangered Values*: P 2.

9. Value oriented education helps to develop the culture of country state or a person.
10. Enables the person to use his leisure time profitably.
11. With the help of value oriented education one can improve his quality of life.
12. Value education removes impurities of mind and enables a person to live a stress free life.<sup>8</sup>

#### **4.1 Objectives of Value Education**

Value education is important for all round development of personality. The main objectives of value education are as-

1. To develop universal qualities like truthfulness, compassion, honesty, respect for peace and justice etc.
2. To understand social values to become a responsible citizen.
3. To develop secular outlook.
4. To develop mutual feelings for one another.
5. To preserve cultural heritage of our country.
6. To develop patriotism and also international brotherhood.<sup>9</sup>

Various education commission of India gives importance on value education.

Some of these are –

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8. Dash, B.N (2003) *Principles of Education and Education in Emerging Indian Society*: P 103.

9. Das Sarma, P. and Goswami S. (2014) *Foundation of Education Theories and Principles*: P 208.

- 1) Radhakrisnan Commission (1948) was given importance on spiritual training in the institution.
- 2) The secondary Education Commission (1952-53) which is known as Mudaliar committee also was given importance on moral education. (P 126)
- 3) Sri Prakash Committee, which is known as the committee of Religious and Moral Education (1959-60) was given importance on moral and spiritual values at different stages of stages of education.
- 4) Kothari Commission of 1964-66 give importance to provide social, Moral and spiritual values in school curriculum. (P:358:359)
- 5) National policy on education (1986) and programme of Action NPE (1992) also suggested making education a tool for the cultivation of social and moral values.<sup>10</sup>

## 4.2 Different Methods of Teaching Values

Value education can be taught through lectures, text books, epic, legend and several other activities i.e audio –visual aids. In an educational institution one can teach values with these media. *Thān* and *Sattras* are also used these methods to inculcate value education. Śaṅkaradeva, Mādhavdeva and other Vaiṣṇav leaders innovated such type of methods to diffuse the value education and ideology of *Eka-Śaraṇa-Hari-Nāma-Dharma*. Śaṅkaradeva wrote *Kirttnghoṣā* and other devotional books to give value education to the common people. He innovated performing art-*cihnayātra* (pantomime) and other six *Aṅkiyā nāt* for that purpose. Again Śaṅkaradeva and his

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10. Aggarwal J.C (2010) *Modern Indian Education*: P 134-135.

followers established two powerful social institutions like *Nāmghar* and *Thān and Sattra*. *Nāmghar* is regarded as the 'lower house' and the *Sattra* is called the parliament or *Nāmghar* is a college and *Sattra* is a university.<sup>11</sup> Dr. K.N. Goswami in his key note address said that *Sattras* are the hub of *Vaiṣṇava* art, culture and literature of immense value.<sup>12</sup>

The value base education cannot develop by only reading books. It is a long term processes.

There are different methods of teaching values, these are -

1. Verbal communication ---This is a suitable method for inculcating intellectual values.
2. Demonstration for ethical and aesthetic value.
3. Imitation
4. Reward and punishment
5. Participation
6. Discussion<sup>13</sup>

### 4.3 Different Types of Values

There are different types of value according to different philosopher, educator or sociologist. According to them there are two types of value-

1. Internal
2. External

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11. Das, P.Ch; "Srimanta Sankaradeva: The great sociologist,".in Das.K.S ed, *Luit to Thames* 2014 Vol XV issue 2014: P 178.

12. Goswami, K.N.D "key note Address" in Hazarika Biman (Ed) *Neovaishnavite Movement* 2013: P 1.

13. Chitkara, M.G, (2003) *Education and Human Values*. P. 251.

Internal values are depend upon the personal ideas and experiences of an individual and external values depend on social environment synthesis between the two is essential to development of personality.<sup>14</sup>

Greek philosopher Plato classified values in terms of ultimate realities, i.e. truth, goodness and beauty. Ancient Indian thinkers have also advocated these values and declared *Satyam*, *Shivam* and *Sundaram* as the basis of good life.<sup>15</sup> Truth, goodness and beauty are the three main components of value education.<sup>16</sup> There are total eighty four values (84) according to NCERT on the basis of various documents on education as well as the study of the Gandhian Literature as given in Appendix III of “Documents on Social, Moral and Spiritual values in Education” (1979)<sup>17</sup>

In the light of these 84, values can be classified as-

1. Moral Value
2. Religious value
3. Social value
4. Aesthetic value
5. Spiritual value
6. Hygienic value
7. Environmental value

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14. Dash, B.N (9<sup>th</sup> edt 2004) *Principles of Education and Education in Emerging Indian Society*, P.110.

15. Bhatia K.K. (2011) *Foundation of Education Theories and Principles*:P148.

16. Goel & Goel (2005) *Stress Management and Education*: P 2007.

17. Chand, Jagadish: (2007) *Value Education*: P. 15.

**1. Moral Value:** Dictionary<sup>18</sup> meaning of the word ‘moral’ is concerned with principles of right and wrong behavior. Moral development is a process of the natural ‘growth’ of moral character. With the help of moral value one can find out what is good or what is bad according to their culture. Some of the very important moral values are truthfulness, right conduct, peace, lone, non-violence, honesty, trust etc. Morality is closely related to spiritualism .Moral values refine human behavior and help is self realization and these are therefore imparting into human life.<sup>19</sup> According to Bishop Butler, “Morality means the moral institute of life”,<sup>20</sup>

Morality is sometimes defined as an instrument of society as a whole.<sup>21</sup>

Moral values arise in the course of moral experience. Thus it implies a freedom to choose, between right and wrong. The rationally moral experience, therefore characterized by feeling of obligation to choose freely and judge what is right.<sup>22</sup>

Morality is internal and it comes from the heart of the individuals. There is a relation between religion and morality. According to Descartes and Locke and Indian philosophers religion is the source of morality. Again Kent and Martineer suppose that morality is the source of religion.<sup>23</sup>

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18. *Oxford Learners Advanced Dictionary* (Ed 7<sup>th</sup>), P. 991.

19. Das, P and Goswami, S (2014) *Foundation of Education*: P. 206.

20. Frankena, K, William (2<sup>nd</sup> edn2015) *Ethics*: P.6.

21. Ibid, P. 62.

22. Bhatia,K.K (2011) *Foundation of Educational Theories a Principles*: P163.

23. Swami, Ghanananda (1938) *The Religion of the World*, Vol.I, P263-264.

Dr. S Radhakrishnan's view is that, "Morality is not merely a question of laws and conventions but one of purity of mind with actions as its outward manifestations."<sup>24</sup>

Śaṅkaradeva also laid the greatest stress upon the highest duty or dharma including all moral precepts which consist in Atma Jnana or self realization-

*sakala prāṇika dekhībek ātmsama/*

*upāya madhyata itū ati mukhyatama/*<sup>25</sup>

(All creature should be regarded like own self and this is the main way of life amongst the all means)

Based on the *Gītā* Śaṅkaradeva laid stress on the practice of *Ahimsā*. Śaṅkaradeva opposed all bloody sacrifices that committed in the name of religion.<sup>26</sup> According to Śaṅkaradeva -

*ghare poshā pashu yitu kare balidāna /*

*parama agyanī situ rāksasa samāna /*<sup>27</sup>

(The person who sacrifices the domestic animals is unwise and like demons)

**2. Religious value:** Religion is the belief in the existence of a God or Gods and the activities that are connected with the worship of them.<sup>28</sup> The word 'Religion' derived from two words in which 're' means 'back' and 'lego' means 'to bind'; i.e. take man

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24. Radhakrishnan (1977) *Eastern Religion and Western Thought*, P 107.

25. *kīrttan ghoṣā, Śrīkṛṣṇar vaikunṭha prayāna*. V. 1825.

26. Choudhury, P. (2013) *The concept of purush, prakriti and lila in Śaṅkaradeva's Philosophy*, P.319.

27. *Śrīmad Bhagavat Gītā VI, Ajāmila Upākhyāna*, V. 58.

28. *Oxford Advanced learner's Dictionary* 7<sup>th</sup> edition: P1279.

backward to the source from which he came. His mind must circle; backward to the Devine source, instead of moving 'forward' in the direction of the world.<sup>29</sup>

According to Gandhiji religion was a way of life. Religious education can be imparted through the virtues like truth and non- violence, because they constitute a true religious life.<sup>30</sup>

Religion and mortality are interred connected. Śaṅkaradeva's writings put much emphasis on the ethical aspects of religion with apt illustrations from the epics and the *puranas* he extolled and elaborated the merits of such virtues as *satya* (truth) *dayā* (mercy) *dāna* (charity) *ahimsā* (non-violence) *ksamā* (forgiveness) *anasuyā* (absence of envy) *dhṛti* (patience) *sraddhā* (respect) and *damā* (control of senses)<sup>31</sup>

**3. Social value:** Individuals constitute society which has certain ideas, models and norms in general in respect of behavior, conduct, duties and responsibilities towards one another. Love, humanity, brotherhood, honesty, sincerity are some of the constituents of healthy social life.<sup>32</sup> Social values have been evolved by the society to make life more civilized. These values have been evolved during the long course of time to make human life safe, comfortable and peaceful.<sup>33</sup>

There are some characteristic of social value. These are-

#### 1. Social values are socially created

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29. Ghanananda, Swami (Ed1938) *The religion of the world*, Vol. 1, P. 171.

30. Dash, B.N (2004), *Principles of Education and Education in the Emerging Indian society*, P 269.

31. Barua, B.K(2009) *Śaṅkaradeva the Vaiṣṇava Saint of Assam* :preface.

32. Das, B.N (9<sup>th</sup> ed 2004), *Principles of Education and Education in the Indian Emerging Society*: P.122.

33. Bhatia, K.K (2011), *Foundation of Education Theories & principles*: P160.

2. Social values are socially shared and transmitted from one generation to another.
3. These are learned and acquired
4. Social values are abstract.
5. Social values are vary from society to society according to their culture.
6. Emotions, sacrifice and conflict are involves in social value.<sup>34</sup>

Śaṅkaradeva advised his follower not to hate anybody however one is either lower caste or higher caste, rich or poor.

*brāhmaṇara caṇḍālara nibicāri kula /*

*dātāta corat yena ḍṛṣṭi samatūl //*<sup>35</sup>

(There should not be gave importance on Brahmana or chandal, offerer or thief and all are equal)

Again Śaṅkaradeva said that-

*śakti anurupe                      karay sabāko*

*upakāra sādhu nare/*

*mahā kṣamāśilā                      sahansilā*

*asuyā kāko nakare//*<sup>36</sup>

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34. Chitambar, J.B (1972) *Introductory rural sociology*. P. 212.

35. *Kīrttanghoṣā: Śrīkṛiṣṇar Vaikuṇṭha Prayāṇa*, V. 1821.

36. *Bhakti Ratnākar* –V. 92.

(Honest people help other according to his capacity. They are tolerant, forgiver and do not violent to other.)

Again-

*viśeṣat manuṣyaganat jito nare /*  
*viṣṇu budhi bhāve mānya kare sarbādāye //*  
*irishā, asuyā, tiraskār, ahaṁkāra/*  
*sabe nasta huye tebe tavakhene tāra //*<sup>37</sup>

(Specially person respect other people as God, his jealousy egoiness are ruined at a moment.

**4. Aesthetic value:** According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*.<sup>38</sup>

‘Aesthetic’ means concerned with beauty and art and understanding of beautiful to look at. Aesthetic values are those which provide beauty, pleasure and happiness to an individual, i.e. satyam, sivam and sundaram. Aesthetic values can be developed through activities like literature, painting, music, etc. These values free the mind from all sorts of narrowness and motivate the people in the right direction and expression.<sup>39</sup>

Aesthetic values help the individuals to realize the sense of beauty. Here lies the difference between man and animal. Aesthetic value is important element of ideal life. Man cannot live by bread alone. Appreciation of the beautiful creations of the creator goes by the name of aesthetic value. It is a mental feeling. Aesthetic value frees mind

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37. Kīrttan-ghoṣā: Śrīkṛiṣṇar Vaikuṇṭha Prayāṇa, 1822.

38. Dictionary- *Oxford Advanced learners Dictionary*, (7<sup>th</sup> Ed, P. 24)

39. Das and Goswami: (2014), Das, Goswami, *Foundation of Education Theories and Principles*: P . 207.

from all sorts of narrowness. So it is regarded as one of the important features of character or personality.<sup>40</sup>

Aesthetic can be considered some type of *Brahmavidyā* that should enable the spectator to realize the highest Bliss (Perfect happiness).<sup>41</sup>

Aesthetic values are those which provide pleasure and happiness to an individual. German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) observes that aesthetic enjoyments valuable not for any extraneous factor, but because it is a value itself.<sup>42</sup>

Śaṅkaradeva innovated various performing art and visual art, costumes and composed many literatures which have magical aesthetic value.

**5 Spiritual value:** According to *Oxford Advance Learners Dictionary*, Spiritual means- connected with the human spirit, rather than the body or physical things that – connected with religion or a spiritual leader and spiritually means the quality to being concerned with religion or the human spirit.<sup>43</sup>

Spiritualism is a truth spiritual experience cannot explain before others. It is a mystic experience like communication with God.<sup>44</sup> Spiritual values emanate from the concept that the ultimate reality of this universe is spiritual and not material. This

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40. Dash, B.N, (2004), *Principles of education and edu in emerging Indian society*, P: 128.

41. Speziale Aurturo: 1987, *The ethical and religious values in ancient India: Introduction*. XXXIII.

42. Sarma, Nilima, "Creative humanism in Sankaradeva's thought" Sarma N.(ed 2008) *The Philosophy of Sankaradeva An Appaisal*, Vol. I, P 332.

43. *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary*, P. 1475.

44. Dash, B. N (2004) *Principles of education and edu in emerging Indian society*, P: 128.

entire universe is simply the manifestation of that spiritual nature of this universe. The ultimate objective of man's life therefore, is to be one with God.<sup>45</sup>

The *Thān and sattrā* propagated the spiritual and moral education by organizing religious and cultural activities which are now extended to the lying far and wide villages and towns all over Assam.<sup>46</sup>

The greatest feature of Śaṅkaradevas religion was first recognition of spiritual equality amongst all men and secondly universal brotherhood of mankind, under the banner of one God, the creed of *Bhāgavata* profounded in it.<sup>47</sup>

According to Vaiṣṇavism, the supreme person's body is spiritual. There is no distinction of body and mind.

This truth has been elaborated in the *BhāgavataPurāṇa*. According to Śaṅkaradeva –

*dehāte āchaha mātṛe tumi dehahīna /*  
*yena agni thākante kāṣṭhato kari bhinna / (205)<sup>49</sup>*

(Though you dwell in the body yet, you have no existence, as like as fire and wood)

**6. Hygienic Value:** 'Hygiene' means to keep own self and surroundings clean to prevent from disease. 'Hygienic' means the practice of keeping yourself and your

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45. Bhatia, K.K (2011) *Foundation of educational theories and principles*: P 165.

46. Saikia Utpal, *National seminar New Vaisnavite sattras of Assam in 21<sup>st</sup> century*, Hazarika Biman (ed.2013) *Sattrā Institution of Mayeng present Treats and its remedy*: P 190.

47. Chaliha, D. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed :2000) *Origin and Growth of the Assamese Language and its Literature*, P 96

48. Bhattachayye Haridas (ed 2006) *cultural heritage of India* Vol. I.

49. Sankaradeva, *Srimad Bhagawat XII*, V.205.

living and working areas clean in order to prevent illness and disease.<sup>50</sup> Hygienic value related with health. Health is a precious wealth for every person. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) health is not merely absence of disease , but a stable of complete well being with respect of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual planes of being.<sup>51</sup>

There is a close relationship between mental peace and happiness of an individual and his physical health and efficiency. A mentally tense, anxious and sick person has tendency to develop various symptoms of organic disorders. Mind is the powerful part of the human system.<sup>52</sup> According to Greek philosopher Aristotal, there is a healthy mind in a healthy body.

According to Locke (1632-1704) good health is an essential prerequisite to the attainment of the four different aims of education – i.e. virtue, wisdom, breeding and learning. Plenty open air, exercise and sleep, plain diet, no wine or strong drink is helpful for healthy life. These were also same as the *Brāhmanic* system of education in ancient Indian *Brahmacāri* life.<sup>53</sup> We have found this system in Śaṅkaradeva's philosophy.

Sri Aurobinda stated that a healthy body is necessary condition for intellectual or spiritual attainment. Our ancient education system also gave importance on physical development of a person. A strong physique is a Sinequa-non of success not only in mundane but also in religious matter. According to them,

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50. *Oxford Advanced learner's Dictionary*, P.765.

51. Mathew (Ed. 2013), *Manorama Year Book*: P. 259.

52. Goel and Goel (2004), *Stress Management and Education* : P 1-4.

53. Mookerjee, K.K (1972) *Some Great Educators of The World*: P 29.

*śariramādyam khalu dharma sādhanam*<sup>54</sup>

Every morning sishya must perform prāṇāyama and go through the exercise of *surjyanaṁskār* in order to strengthen his body and mind.<sup>55</sup>

*Thān and sattra* also followed the hygienic rule to developed the personality. They keep clean inner body with spiritual knowledge and outer with cleanliness.

*nartanu iṭo bhārata variṣa*  
*kaliyuga harināma /*  
*śarīra saṁyago āur kait pāibu*  
*kṛpā karā prabhu rāma //*<sup>56</sup>

(This human body in the Bhārata Varṣa and Kaliyuga and the name of God would not found again. So help the Lord Rāma)

**7. Environmental value:** Environment is the sum total of water, air and land, interrelationship among themselves and also with the human beings, other living organisms and property.<sup>57</sup> According to our ancient philosophy environment is the sum total of five elements. These are –

1. *Kṣiti* (Soil) 2. *Apa* (Water) 3. *Tejaḥ* (Energy) 4. *Marut* (air) 5. *Vyoma* (Open Sky) without these five elements no one can live in this earth.

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54. *Kumārasaṁbhava*, V 30.

55. Altekar, A.S (1975) *Education in Ancient India*: P 7.

56. *Śrīmad Bhāgavata XII*, V.

57. Kaushik and Kaushik (2004) *Perspectives in Environmental Studies*: P 1.

Environment belongs to all and is thus important for all. Whatever be the occupation or age of a person, he or she will be affected by environment and also affect the environment by his or her deeds.

Śaṅkaradeva gave importance to keep clean the environment and also human body, when environment gets degraded it affects our health. With help of *śaraṇa* and *bhajana* Śaṅkaradeva gave environmental education. Our all human values socio-cultural, spiritual, religious or moral values were incorporated into environmental education. Value based environmental education can help to develop the attitude and life style of mass people.

According to Śaṅkaradeva-

*viṣṇumaya dekhai yito samasta jagata/*

*jivante mukuta hoyve achir kālata/*<sup>58</sup>

(The person who perceives all creatures as God then he gets salvation of life .)

#### 4.4 Relation Between Value and Education

Education is the most important invention of mankind. Education of man does not begin at school; it begins at womb and ends at his death. It is a lifelong process.

The word education is derived from the Latin word, “Educare” which means ‘to nourish’ or ‘to bring up’, ‘to rise’ as they say in America or ‘elever’ as they say in France.<sup>59</sup>

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58. *Kīrttanghoṣā, vaikunṭha prayāṇa.*

59. Ross, J.S (1942) *Ground Work Educational Theory*, P 17.

The most common Indian word *śikṣā* is derived from the Sanskrit Verbal root *Śās* which means ‘to discipline’, ‘to control’, ‘to construct’ or ‘to teach’.<sup>60</sup> The word *Veda* means ‘knowledge’. The *Veda* also originates from the Sanskrit root *vid* and *vidyā* means ‘education’. In Sanskrit verb *vid* means ‘to know’.<sup>61</sup>

In ancient India the term education was used in wider as well as narrower sense. In wider sense education is self-culture and self-improvement and the process will go on to the end of one’s life. In narrower sense the instruction and training receives during his studenthood before he settles down to his carrier or profession.<sup>62</sup>

In narrow sense education is a planned, organized and formalized process and imparted in an institution where definite curriculum is there.<sup>63</sup> In that sense education is a process of the development of potentialities.

In wider sense education is a lifelong process. It starts at womb and ends at grave. Purpose of education in wider sense is to enable people to live and act like a ‘normal’ and ‘real men’ begins in the society. Śaṅkaradeva and his followers followed this principle in their education system in *Thān and Sattras*.

Education removes the difficulties and enables one to realize the true value of life. It is like a good and faithful friend.

*nāsti vidyā sama bandhu*

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60. Apte, V.S (2008) *The Student English Sanskrit Dictionary*, P.128.

61. Ibid: P 248.

62. Altekar, A.S (1975) *Education in Ancient India*, P 3.

63. Raymont, T. (1864), *Principales of Education*, P.8.

Again education considered as secret or hidden money. An educated person respected by all.

*swadeśe puṇyate rājā vidyāsarvatrapuṇyate*<sup>64</sup>

Education is defined as acquisition of knowledge in relation to a definition of philosophy a love of knowledge. In *Bhāgavata Gītā*, Śrī kṛṣṇa has set knowledge as one of the qualification of a *sthitaprajña*-a person of equanimity poise, and mental balance. Again education may be compared to a *kalpavṛkṣa* as it fulfills human desires.

In ancient India education was regarded as a source of illumination and power, which transforms and ennobles our nature by the progressive and harmonious development of our physical, mental, intellectual, moral, spiritual and social powers and faculties.<sup>65</sup> This conception is closely resembles with modern educationist like Pestalozzi, Gandhiji etc.

Education in India passes through four *Āśramas* into which first stage is *Brahmacārya*. (i. e. life of education with full discipline), then *Gāhasthya* (family life with social responsibilities), *Vāṇaprastha* (life of retirement and meditation) *Sannyāsa*, (renunciation to attain his Salvation)

Though the educational system provides the background of piety and religiousness, its aim was not to induce the student to renounce the world and become a wanderer in the quest of God. Śaṅkaradeva's philosophy was also similar with ancient Vedic philosophy in this sense. A man can open his heart before the almighty without

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64. Sarma, Jaganath (2003) *Nitiśloka*: P. 3.

65. Altekar, A.S (1975) *Education in Ancient India*, P. 5, 8.

the help of any third person or go between. One can receive the blessing of God if one has a pure heart and dedication.<sup>66</sup>

The formation of character by the proper development of the moral feeling was another aim of education. True education refined and strengthens moral character of individual. Self-respect, self-confidence and self-control help to develop the moral character.

For a good health a strong mind is necessary. Aristotle and other Greek philosophers also support this view. The proper development of the physique is a sine-qua non of success not only in mundane but also in religious matters. According to our ancient Indian philosophy-

*nāsti vidyā sama bandhuḥ*

... ..

*nāsti rogaḥ samam dukham* <sup>67</sup>

(There is no friend like education and there is no sorrow like illness.)

Education is not merely book learning. It solves the problems of bread, enables to live as respectable and self-supporting citizen with insight and culture.

The UGC's view on the matter is well reflected in the recommendations of the conference on Vice-chancellors of Indian universities organized by UGC in Delhi in May 1984-- "value oriented education does not merely imply an intellectual discussion on the theme of value as an integral part of the syllabus in various disciplines, but also

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66. Pathak, Dayananda (2012) *Beautiful mind of Srimanta Sankaradeva*: P. 71.

67. Sarma, Jaganath (2003) *Nitiśloka*. Sloke 109.

the practice of those values in the day to day life by the teachers and the students, which should be considered the final goal.”<sup>68</sup>

According to Gandhiji, education means all round development of life; i.e., physical, mental, spiritual, social and moral development.

Swāmi Vivekānanda said that education means the manifestation of the divine perfection, already existing in man.

Education is a powerful and pervasive agent for all round development, individual and social transformation. According to Radhakrisnan, moral and spiritual training is an essential part of value education; value education helps to realize the mission of life. It help's to realize the value of humanism. Education without value is of no use. Without value education man never can measure the values of his own life.<sup>69</sup>

#### **4.5 Śaṅkaradeva: The Great Value Educator of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Century Assam**

The great Assamese leader of Bhakti movement, vaishnavite saint Śaṅkaradeva was the decendent of the Śiromoni Bhūñā Caṇḍībara whom Durlabha Nārāyaṇa the King of Kamata settled in Kamrūpa about Middle of the fourteen century.

His father Kusumbara Bhūñā migrated to Bardowā within the Āhom Kingdom.<sup>70</sup>

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68. Verma, Yogindar (ed 2007) *Education in Human values for human excellence*: P. 135.

69. Akhter, R Parveen, Sarma, M , Ed. (2007) *An Introduction to education* : P 145.

70. Barua, K.L (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.1966) *Early history of Kamrup* : P 204.

Śaṅkaradeva was born in this Bhūṇā family at Ālipukhurī in Bardowā a place of 15.42K.M from the present Nowgong Town near the mighty river Brahmaputra at that time in 1449. Śaṅkaradeva's mother Satyasandhyā and father Kusumbara Bhūṇā died at his early age. So he had brought up by his grandmother Khersutī. This orphan boy one day became world famous scholar, philosopher, educationist, musician, artist, Social reformer and preacher and creator of new vaishnavism in Assam. Under the lavish patronage of noble Koch-King Narānarayan, Śaṅkaradeva rendered monument services for the growth of development of Assamese culture.<sup>71</sup>

At the age of twelve his grandmother Khersutī sent him to the renowned scholar at that time, Mahendra Kandali's *tol*. (Sankrite educational institution) Śaṅkaradeva composed a poem only with consonant and first Assamese vowel 'AO', "*kartala kamala, kamala dala nayana*" (A pleasant description of Lord Kṛṣṇa) just after learning the alphabet.<sup>72</sup>

From this day Śaṅkaradeva's pen was never stop for a moment till his death. From this skill it can be said that 'morning shows the day'. He was the founder of Assamese culture. It was Śaṅkaradeva who guided the Assamese people and society for which Assamese people established him as their identity. During his school life he composed a little kāvya *Hariścandra Upākhyāna*.<sup>73</sup>

After completed his education he married Surjyavatī.<sup>74</sup>

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71. Rajguru, Sarbeswar (1988) *Medieval Assamese society*: P. 57.

72. Lekharu, U. (1952), *Kathā Guru Carit*, P. 27.

73. Neog. M. (2003) *Guru Carit Katha*, P. 56.

74. Ibid: P. 62.

But Sūrjyavati died after four years left a girl child “Monu”. After married his daughter with Gayāpani alias Hari, Śaṅkaradeva went out a pilgrimage and travelled for total twelve years. His teacher Mahendra Kandali and other friends and relatives total Seventeen (17) people accompanied with him in this journey.<sup>75</sup>

During this period Śaṅkaradeva went to Gayā, Kashī, Vṛndāvan, Mathurā, Dwaraka, Kurukhetra, Badrikashram, Rameswaram, etc.<sup>76</sup>

He noticed that Vaiṣṇavism was the ruling religion that had achieved with a new outlook and movement. The unification of the people on a common basis through the medium of congregational prayer accompanied with music.<sup>77</sup>

After twelve years of such wandered through many sacred places of Vaiṣṇavite learning Śaṅkaradeva returned home with acquired the various divine knowledge from various places on various sides which he later introduced in Assamese society.

After returned from pilgrimage, Śaṅkaradeva married again a girl named Kalindi and removed his residence from Ālipukhurī to Bardowā.<sup>78</sup>

On his request, his brother Rāmrāya constructed a *deva-gr̥ha* wherein regular prayers and religious discussions begun to be held.<sup>79</sup>

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75. Bezbaroa, Lakhinath (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.2010) *Śrī Śaṅkaradeva and Śrī Mādhavadeva*: P. 37.

76. Lekharu, U. (1952), *Katha Guru Charit*: P. 30-31.

77. Nath, R.M, “Śaṅkaradeva and the vaisnava movement in Assam, in Bhattacharya”, Haridas ed the *Cultural Hariage in India* (1969) Vol IV P: 202.

78. Barua; B.K (2009) *Śaṅkaradeva Vaiṣṇava Saint of Assam* :P 5.

79. Sarma. S.N (2016) *The Sattra Institution of Assam*: P 11.

The official name of Śaṅkaradeva's vaiṣṇavism is *Eka-Saraṇa-Nama-Dharma*, the religion of supreme surrender to one.<sup>80</sup> *Eka-Saraṇa-Nama-Dharma* is related with various types of value education.

The main component of *Kīrttanghar* was set up their way back on 1468 itself.<sup>81</sup>

Śaṅkaradeva preached vaiṣṇavism and inculcate value education and the doctrine of salvation by faith and prayer rather than sacrifices. He at first propagated his views in Ahom territory and after that he went to Barpeta, where under the mild and just rule of Nar-Nārāyaṇa and he proclaimed the new faith far and wide. Nar-Nārāyaṇa was a great patronage of learning and some of the best known Assamese writings date from his reign. Many vaiṣṇava hymns and homilies were written by Śaṅkaradeva and Mādhavadeva under his patronage.<sup>82</sup>

It was Śaṅkaradeva of Bardowā who gave a unique identity of Assamese people. He enriched the people of Assam culturally by propagating the neo vaiṣṇavite faith. Assamese society could not have reached its present status without Śaṅkaradeva. He light the spark of religious tolerance among the common people by his liberal view which were devoid arrogance.<sup>83</sup>

Śaṅkaradeva said-

*bhakatita nāhi jāti ajāti vicāra*

(There is no discrimination of caste and creed in the field of devotion)

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80. Barua, B.K (2009) *Śaṅkaradeva Vaiṣṇava saint of Assam* :P 5.

81. Ramcaran Thakur (Ed. 2016) *Gurucharit stanza* 1607-1616: P: 320-321.

82. Gait, E (2006) *A History of Assam*: P 56-61.

83. Assam Tribune; June 4, 2017.

Again

*jāti ajātika nabachanta bhagavante*<sup>84</sup>

(There was no difference in the eye of God)

## 4.6 Social Scenerio of Assam During the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Century

### 4.6.1 Political System

In the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century the social and political background of Assam was not systematically organized. There were many dynasties, e.g., Āhom, Kachārī, Koch etc. ruled and they had no unity among them. The Cutias ruled over the easternmost region of the country, while the south-east was under the Kachārīes. West of the Cutīas and of the Kachārīes on the south were under the Bhūñās. The Koch kingdom was extreme west. The rest of the Brahmaputra valley was ruled by the Āhoms. They were hostile to one another. So there was no social integration at that time.<sup>85</sup>

Śaṅkaradeva and his family had to move from one place to another to protect his family and friends e.g.-Bardowā to Routā, Gaṅgou, Belgurī, Dhuwahāt, Pātbaushī etc.

The Bhūñā had to attack very frequently by the neighboring Kachārīes. In order to get rid of kacharies they fled away from Bardowā to other place. Śaṅkaradeva along with his family, friends and disciples reached on the north bank of the river Brahmaputra. After resided for six months at Śingārī and Routā they went to Gāṅgmou.<sup>86</sup> They stayed at Gāṅgmou for 6 years. According to Lakhinath Bezboruah

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84. Bhagawat X: 1239.

85. Rajguru, Sarbeswar (1998) *Medieval Assamese Society*: P 60-63.

86. Lekharu, U (1952) *Katha Guru Carit*: P 44.

they stayed there for 7 years and 6 months ( $7\frac{1}{2}$ ).<sup>87</sup> Again for fear of Daphalā (Āpātāni) they went to Komarokatā, than Belguri Dhuwāhātā (Āhom kingdom). But for failure of elephant catching Āhom beheaded Śaṅkaradeva's son-in-law "Hari". Śaṅkaradeva decided to leave Belguri Dhuwāhāt, for good and never return to Ahom kingdom and move towards Kāmṛūpa which was under the rule of Koch king Nar-Nārāyaṇa in the year 1546.<sup>88</sup>

#### 4.6.2 Slavery System

Slavery system also prevailed at that time. The slaves were not always kindly treated and they often changed hands. The condemned criminals were sold and sometimes bartered for horses to the Bhutias, e.g.-Bolorām Ātai was a bonded labor. Again Hemā and Pemā two Bhutiās tried to bartered Gakul Chānd and Nārāyan Dās with a horse.<sup>89</sup> There was so much economic disparity that some people were without food and others were rolling in wealth. Rich people engaged servant.<sup>90</sup>

#### 4.6.3 Religious Faith

Saktism had been the most dominating religion of ancient Kāmṛūpa. Various goddess of Śakti like-kāmākhyā, Manaṣā, etc. was worshiped by the people and sacrificed different animals, birds and also human beings before the idol of goddess to satisfy her. Such mal practices occupied the place of religious faith and continued until the Neo-Vaiṣṇava movement of the late fifteenth century. A. D.<sup>91</sup>

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87. Bezboruah, L (2010) *Śrīmanta Śaṅkaradeva and Śrīmanta Mādhavadeva*: P 45.

88. Neog, M (reprint 1998) *Śaṅkaradeva and His Times*: P 113.

89. Lekharu, U (1952) *Katha Guru Carit*: P 101-178....180.

90. Neog, M (1998) *Śaṅkaradeva and His Times* :P 77.

91. Dev Goswami, K.N (2007) *Mahāpuruṣa Śaṅkaradeva*: P 22.

There prevailed various religious faiths by various tribes in Assam. For political supremacy in Kāmrūpa and adjoining parts an unrest prevailed in all spheres of life. Religion was also a cause of such condition. The religion of Assamese people has an all India importance. Here the strange *Tāntrīc* development of Hinduism and Buddhism appeared in strength very early and much influenced the religion of the Indian sub-continent. The country is well known in Hindu traditions as a land of sorcery, magic and witchcraft.<sup>92</sup>

According to Śaṅkaradeva—

*buddha avatāre veda pantha kari channa/  
vāmānaya śāstre muhi āchā ajña jana//  
nicinte śaraṇa nāma nalave tohmāra/  
sadāye pramatta loka pāṣaṇḍa ācāra//*<sup>93</sup>

(“As Buddha incarnation, the *Vedic* ways concealed and the ignorant were mislead and not prayer the God and deal with evil ways.”)

Sometimes famine also held for different reason.<sup>94</sup>

The greatest innovation of this period was the foundation of a new religion based on enlightened doctrine of *Bhakti* as revealed in the *Śāstras*. It was a cultural and progressive movement which laid emphasis on the unity of the Godhead, stood against excessive ritualism, preached a faith based constant devotion, fought against caste, prejudices and stressed the equality of man.

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92. N.N Archarjy: (2003) *The History of Medieval Assam*. P. 2.

93. *Kīrttanghoṣa : Catūr viṃsati –avatār*. V. 13.

94. Neog, M (1998) *Śaṅkaradeva and His Times*: P. 80

The preacher of this faith in Assam was the reformer, Śaṅkaradeva, who propagated his liberal doctrine throughout the province and influenced the Assamese people to inaugurate a literary renaissance.<sup>95</sup>

#### 4.6.4 Casetism

Casetism is the greatest barrier for unification of the then society. At that time various caste and creeds were prevailed there. According to Śaṅkaradeva-

*kirāta kachārī                      khācī gāro miri*  
  
*yavana kaṅka govālā/*  
  
*asama muluka                      dhobā ye turuka*  
  
*kuvāca mlecha caṇḍālā/*<sup>96</sup>

Koch, Kalitā, Kaivartta, Brāhmīṇ, Tantī, Mālākar etc. Various caste related with their profession was found at that time.<sup>97</sup>

#### 4.6.5 Diversity of Language

The diversity of language is the most powerful obstacles in the path of integration. Various caste and tribes had their own language and dialects. So they had no co-operation with each other because there was no *lingua franca* at that time.

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95. N.N.Acharjee (2003), *The History of Medieval Assam*: P 6.

96. *Bhāgavat* book II, V. 53

97. Rajguru, S (1988) *Medieval Assamese society* .P 109-143.

#### 4.6.6 Dearth of Social Leader

In the medieval period there was a dearth of efficient social leader. To unite a society there is always necessity of a strong and efficient leader. So there was no united mind among mass people.<sup>98</sup>

#### 4.6.7 Different Manners and Customs

Assam was a multicultural land. Those who lived at hilly region had followed their own tribal faith and tribal customs. Due to confused admixture of different Hindu and Buddhist *tāntric* cults a mysterious atmosphere was created in the country.

#### 4.7 Neo-Vaiṣṇava Movement and its Impact on Assam

The Neo-Vaiṣṇavite movement with its revolutionary impact on the religious, social and cultural life of the people which was started in Assam during the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries had wide and far reaching effects on all aspects of the Assamese life. It had such a profound effect on the development of the Assamese language and literature that scholars have sometimes found a parallel to this movement in the European Renaissance. This age has therefore been rightly called the glorious age of Assamese culture.<sup>99</sup>

In Assam, the neo-vaiṣṇava movement led by Saint poet Śaṅkaradeva was a part of the great religious awaking that had its impact on the whole of India during middle ages. Saintly preachers like Rāmānuja, Kavīra, Ballavācāryya, Śaṅkaradeva and

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98. Pathak, D (2009) *Beautiful mind of Srimanta Sankaradeva* : P. 42.

99. Devi, Chandraprabha 'The Ankiya Nat, Its probable source' Chaliha, B.P(ed) *Journal of Srimanta Sankaradeva Research Institute* Vol I 1990 : P :119.

Caitanyadeva etc. appeared preach the cult of Bhakti to the people of different religions and to give a new direction to the Hindu faith. They were against the caste system and propagate a simple but not rigid religion depends on Bhakti.<sup>100</sup>

Nārada defines *Bhakti* as of the nature of intense love of God. *Bhakti* is free from desire, and is of the nature of inhibition of all desires. It is almost impossible to suppress all desires and passions. We can only divert their course towards Gods, and dedicate all our action to Him.<sup>101</sup>

God is attaining only through whole hearted devotion. The relation of God to man is the highest boon granted by Him to man.<sup>102</sup> In the *Bhāgavata Gītā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa said to Arjuna “Fix the mind on me alone concentrates the intellect on Me; here after thou shall undoubtedly dwell in Me alone”.<sup>103</sup>

According to the *Bhāgavata* the mind of the devotee of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is engaged in meditating upon His lotus feet-

According to Śaṅkaradeva-

*bhāi mukhe bolā rāma hṛdaye dharā rūpa,  
eteke mukuti pāibā kahilo svarūpa//*<sup>104</sup>

(The complete surrender the soul to God. Then you will achieve emancipation)

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100. Sarma, S.N (2016) *The New vaishnavite movement and the sattrā institution of Assam*: P 1.

101. Singha, Jadunath “Bhagavata Religions : The cult of Bhakti” Bhattacharjya, H.D (ed) *The cultural Heritage of India* vol IV 1969: P 148-149.

102. Ibid : 340.

103. *Bhāgavat Gītā*, XII: 8.

104. *Kīrttan ghoṣā* –Syamanta haran, 113: ghoṣā.

According to Śaṅkaradeva, *Bhakti* means sincere devotion of *Jīva* (individual) to *Paramātmān*, the Supreme Universal Soul; Soul Absolute or God. Through the practice of *Bhakti*, the *Jīva* can free itself from the afflictions and attain eternal bliss. If it can attain true knowledge about the Soul Absolute, the *Jīva* through practices of *Bhakti* can free itself from the bondage of ‘*Māyā*’ and ultimately can enjoy the perfect bliss and union with God. KṛṣṇaVāsudeva is represented as the Supreme Soul. He creates the universe and all the material objects.<sup>105</sup>

The great genius Śaṅkaradeva was the main preceptor and central figure of this glorious age of Assam. He noticed that Vaiṣṇavism was the ruling religion that had achieved, with a new outlook and movement, the unification of the people on a common basis through the medium of congregational prayer, accompanied with music.<sup>106</sup> Śaṅkaradeva, Mādhavadeva and Dāmodaradeva who may be styled as Trimurti of Assam Vaiṣṇava movement.<sup>107</sup> Śaṅkaradeva innovated various media to propagate his new ideas. *Thāns and Sattras* are the result of his new ideas. He gave importance on the oneness of God and on the master servant relationship between God and devotee.

According to Śaṅkaradeva Vaiṣṇavism enjoins that devotee should establish a loving relationship with the object of his worship. The relationship can be of five types, viz-*śānta* (of a serene devotee), and *dāsyā* (of a servant) *śākhyā* (of a friend), *vātsalyā* (of a parent) and *madhura* (of a comfort). Of all these Sankaradeva laid great

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105. Nath, R.M “Sankaradeva and the vaiṣṇava movement in Assam” Bāttachārjya Haridās (ed) *The Cultural Heritage of India* 1969 Vol IV :P 206.

106. Ibid: P. 202.

107. Sarma, S.N ( Re 2016)*The satra Institution of Assam* : Introduction :XI.

stress on *dāsyabhāva*, as like a faithful servant with hoping or asking for any reward return.<sup>108</sup>

#### 4.8 Objectives behind establishment of *Thāns and Sattras*

There were some Objectives behind establishment of *Thāns* and *Sattras*. These are-

##### 4.8.1 To Reconstruct the Society

Śaṅkaradeva was a socio-religious reformer. In order to reconstruct the society, he and his followers established two powerful social institutions like *Thāns and Sattras* with *Nāmghar*. To overcome the socio-religious and political problems, these two institutions are the main weapons at that time. The institution established by him and later on by his followers contributed immensely to the socio-religious development of Assam. *Nāmghar* is regarded as the lower house and *Sattra* is called the parliament or the *Nāmghar* is a college and *Sattra* is a university.<sup>109</sup>

##### 4.8.2 To Propagate the *Eka-Śaraṇa-Nāma-Dharma*

It is important to note that *Thān and Sattras* are the result of Vaiṣṇava movement in Assam. So to propagate the *Eka-Śaraṇa-Nāma-Dharma* was the main objective to establish the *Thāns and Sattras* with the help of various media.

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108. Nath, R.M “Sankaradeva and the vaiṣṇava movement in Assam” Bāttachārjya Haridās (ed) *The cultural heritage of India* 1969 Vol IV :P 207.

109. Das, Prabhat Ch., “Srimanta Sankaradeva the great sociologist” Das,K.S (ed) *Luit to Thames*. (2014), Vol. XV. P. 178.

### 4.8.3 To Develop the Nationalism

Another important objective to established the *Thāns and Sattras* are to develop the nationalism and spirit of harmony among the people of different caste and creed. According to Śaṅkaradeva-

*koṭi koṭi janme                      antare jāhāra*  
*āse mahā punya rāśi*  
*si si kadāsit                      manuṣya hoyaya*  
*bhārata bhūmita āsi //*<sup>110</sup>

“Man who have many good deeds or virtue in his life than he will be able to rebirth in *Bhāratbhumi*.”

### 4.8.4 To Refine the Behavior

To refine the behavior of *Guru* and *Bhakats*, both internally and externally was another objective of *Thāns and Sattras*. It is found that they were far more cultured in socio-ethical rules than their counterparts in other parts of India.<sup>111</sup>

### 4.8.5 To Maintain Equality

To maintain equality was another objective to establish *Thān and Sattras* of Assam. In his *Kīrtan-ghoṣā*, Śaṅkaradeva said that-

*strī śūdra karai yadi āmāta bhakati;*  
*tāhāta kahiba ito jñāna mahāmati* (1826)<sup>112</sup>

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110. *Kīrtan ghōṣā* :Ajamil upakhyan, V. 214.

111. Rajguru, S (1998) *Medieval Assamese Society* :P 273.

112. *Kīrtonghosa* , Srikrishnavaikunthaprayan, V. 1826.

“Even if the women and people of low caste keep faith in me, O great uddhava, tell about this wisdom to them.”

#### 4.8.6 To Appoint an Efficient Leader

For a sound society an efficient leader is very necessary. It was found that the Vaiṣṇava leader fulfilled this needs to appoint some good leaders; e.g.- when Mādhavadeva left for Coach-Behār he appointed Mathurā Dās Ātā as a leader to the Borpeta *Sattrā* community of devotees; Dāmodardeva appointed Bhattadeva, Badulā Ātā nominated Śrīrām Ātā as the head of the community. After the death of Mādhavadeva Achyut Guru was appointed as a *Sattriya*.<sup>113</sup>

#### 4.8.7 To Record the Chronicles

To record the chronicles with the growth of *Thān and Sattrā* institution, there developed new centres of learning and education, aiming at moulding the spiritual outlook of the people for a new society. From the *Thān and Sattras* the spiritual enlightenment spread to the villages through the *Nāmghars* and it was obligatory for a new *Sattradhikārs* and Vaiṣṇava disciples took to writing the chronicles of their respective *Sattras* called *Sattriyāvansavalias* as well as biographies of the Vaiṣṇava saints called *caritputhis*, which not only form a new branch of Assamese literature but also a valuable source of information for compiling the socio-economic history of medieval Assam.<sup>114</sup>

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113. Lekharu, U (1952) *Katha Guru Carit*: P. 519-589.

114. Baruah, S.L (2002) *A comprehensive History of Assam* : P 425.

#### 4.8.8 To Develop Economic Awareness

Economic cannot be separated from Dharma. It is related to the whole man in his social and cosmic dimension.<sup>115</sup> The *Thāns and Sattras* of Vaiṣṇavas were directly or indirectly related with the economic interest of the people. An economically exploited person has no dignified social life. A healthy religious life is firmly founded on a man's healthy social life. Assam has been mainly a rural based agricultural country with land as the principal source of sustenance and production of the people. The people were broadly divided into two classes,--viz – landlord, and peasant.<sup>116</sup> So there was a economic gap between the two groups. In medieval Assam some sort of feudal economy was prevalent.

Śaṅkaradeva introduced the system of *Prasād* which is closely related with agricultural products- such as –rice, gram, mug, fruits etc. As a result cultivation of rice, mustard seed, fruits, gram, and mug increased in the villages. In order to construct *Nāmghar* (house of prayer) there was necessity of bamboo, thatch etc. For distribution of *Prāsada* basket and other utensils are necessary which is made from bamboo or can. Again for *nāmkīrttan*, *tāl*, *khol*, and *gasā* (lampstand) are necessary. So to fulfill these necessities there established various cottage industries and agricultural work, horticulture, animal husbandry etc. Again for various cloths such as, *Āsanar Kāpor*, *Candratāp* (canopy) etc there established various handloom industries. *Vṛndāvanī vastra* is the best example for it.

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115. Speziale, Arturo (1987) *The Ethical and Religious Values in Ancient India*: P.262.

116. Sarma, S.N (2001) *A socio-economic and cultural history of Medieval Assam* : P 115.

To bring economic equality they encouraged the disciples to pull their resources together and then gave every one as per one's requirements.<sup>117</sup> Śaṅkaradeva and his followers advocated work culture among his disciples and discouraged the practice of bagging. He encouraged the common man to make effort for their stable economy. In the Bargīt --*tejore kamalā pati porabhāte ninde/* (Rise the night is over and day is coming) expose about the advocating about work culture.

#### 4.8.9 To Educate the Mass People

To educate the people with the help of non-formal education was another objective of *Thān* and *Sattrā*. The main concern for the great thinkers, philosophers and religious leaders of the world is to foster human welfare. Assam, too, did not lag behind in this respect. Śaṅkaradeva the Assamese leader of fifteen century was a socio-religious reformer. *Thān*, *Sattrā* and *Nāmghar* established by Śaṅkaradeva and his followers played the role as a multidimensional community centre. In *Sattrā* there was preserved the rich Assamese culture and propagate the religion. *Nāmghars* are used as an auditorium, prayer hall, archive centre, village court, educational institution and also a democratic and hygienic centre.<sup>118</sup>

On the basis of acquiring knowledge, skills or values, education can be divided into three forms --- formal, informal and non-formal.

Formal education is taken from formal institutions ---such as *Tols*, Schools and Colleges etc. Informal education obtained from truly and spontaneously in day to day life from his environment. But non-formal education envisages need based education

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117. Lekharu, U (1952) *Katha Guru Carit*: P. 302.

118. Goswami, P.D, "The social Role of the Namghar" Tamuli, D .N (ed) *The Blessed Iland*: P 310-15.

process of enabling the individual, to understand his own needs, the environmental situation and ensures mutual relationship. 'It has flexible curriculum, life oriented and need and interest based learning'<sup>119</sup> It gives importance on the analysis and judging the outcome of learning by the learners. As regards the system of formal education, it more or less followed the ancient Indian pattern laid down in the *Manusamhitā*, *Artha-Sāstra* and other dharma *Sāstra*. The *vedas*, *vedangas*, *smṛties* the different schools of philosophy, grammar with its auxiliary branches and literature alone with poetries were studied. The subjects learned by Śaṅkaradeva are found in *the Kathāgurucarit*.<sup>120</sup> In Assam the number of Vedic literature was very much limited. The formal education in *tols*, *pāthsālās* or *chātrasālās* was not widespread as to cover all sections of the populations. It was mainly confined to the upper strata of the society, especially to the *Brāhmin* and *Kāyasthas* and the *Kalitās* and number of students coming from other castes was probably very much limited. Women education was not given in that institutions.<sup>121</sup> The *Gurukul* system with residence was followed in Assam. Śaṅkaradeva spent twelve years in the *pāthsālā* of his teacher Mahendra kandalee and Mādhavadeva with his teacher Rājendra Adhyāpaka.<sup>122</sup>

Non-formal education is a notable feature of *Thān and Sattras* education. As a Vaiṣṇava leader Śaṅkaradeva established first *Thān* i.e. *Kīrttanghar* or *Devagrha* at Bordowā which was his birth place. *Thān*, *Sattra*, *Nāmgharar* are the religious place where parallely education also going on. Although majority of the people, at that time

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119. Bhatia, K.K (2011) *Foundation of Educational Theories and Principles*: P 78.

120. Lekharu, U (1952) *Katha Guru Carit*: P. 28.

121. Sarma, S.N (2001) *Socio-Economic and Cultural History of Medieval Assam*: P. 159.

122. Borpujari, H.K (1990) *The Comprehensive History of Assam Vol I*: P 288.

were quite ignorant in reading and writing, yet most of them were conversant with the teachings of the epics, and other religious book. Because in the *Nāmghars* and *Sattras*, people read these books and explained it. Śaṅkaradeva thought that skillful education help a person to become self dependent and socially efficient. He gave importance on horticulture, animal husbandry, handicraft, fine arts, visual form of art etc., which are at present known as vocational education. The characteristics of non-formal education are found in these Vaiṣṇava's education system in Assam. So, there grew in Assam, what we call this conveniently term 'illiterate literacy'.<sup>123</sup>

There are many instances to show that the Vaiṣṇavite teachers were greatly responsible for educating the masses of the country. Śaṅkaradeva and his followers wrote not only for literate people but for all illiterate and common people also. According to Śaṅkaradeva –

*kākā buli harikathā harikirtana*  
*jitosābekoe nājāne,*  
*śtrī śudra antya jati tāku sikshā dibā māti*  
*dharibe sisabe aho prāṇa*<sup>124</sup>

(All are without the knowledge of Hari or God, so teach all woman and low caste, because they will learn with heart and soul.)

Bhavānipuriā Gopāl Ātā also another example who educate the people without the aid of slate and pencil. He made Laksman Ojha remember the entire book XI of the

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123. Bhuyan, S.K (1956) *Studies in the Literature of Assam* : P. 12.

124. *Śrīmad Bhāgavat XI, Nimi Naba Sidha Sambad*. V.332.

Bhāgavat.<sup>125</sup> Another instance also found that one old lady refused to food to her husband till he would go back to *Sattra* to learn the verses of *Kīrttan*. One Bolobhadra Ātāi teaches him *kīrttan*.<sup>126</sup>

The head of the *Sattra* institution is known as *Adhikār*, *Sattrādhikār* or Mahanta. According to present Narowā *Sattrādhikār* the selection of *Adhikār* in early days were determined on the basis of intellectual attainment and general behaviour. He must enacted a play written by himself at the night of his *Sattrādhikār* appointment. Because he educated the *Bhakat* and *shishya* with moral, spiritual and day to day life education at that time. Though this restriction was not so strict, yet he initiated his *Bhakat* and *shishyas* with various rules and regulations.

To educate the new *Bhakat* there was a head *Bhakat* known as *Burhā Bhakat* and the system was known as *phalidiyā*. Purusattam Thākur taught various educational knowledge from Madhavadeva. New learner should learn about ink making system coping the puthi (manuscripts), art of various identification marks, figure, illustration and descriptions graphics and paintings etc.<sup>127</sup> There are various dignitaries to maintain the *Thān and Sattras* , and teach them according to their duties and performance with the help of non-formal education and people recognize them as their duties.

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125. Lekharu, U (1952) *Katha Guru Carit*: P. 270.

126. Ibid: P 332.

127. Goswami, K.N.Deva (2014) *Satra Samskritir Ruprekha* : P 175.

#### 4.8.10 To Develop Value Education

To develop the moral, spiritual, aesthetic, hygienic and social value of the people was another objective of *Thān* and *Sattra*. Spiritualism has an emotional appeal which motivate the people to work. Therefore, under the unbearable social and political stress of medieval period spiritualism was a big instrument to integrate the society. So Śaṅkaradeva and his followers introduced community prayer in the *Nāmghar/ Kīrttanghar* for this purpose. Inside the *Nāmghar* spirituality was preached as well as practiced.

For a healthy social life there are some norms. Love, humanity, universal brotherhood, non-violence were some constituents of healthy social life. So, he wrote many lyrics and dramas which were daily practiced in the *Thān* and *Sattras*. According to him-

*viṣṇumaya dekhe jīto samaste jagata/  
jīvante mukuta huvai achir kālata//  
sakal prāṇika dekhibeka ātma sama/  
upāya madhyat ito āti mukhyatama//*<sup>128</sup>

(If a person sees the world as Lord Viṣṇu then he can attained the salvation of life. There fore all creatures should be treated as ownself and this is the main way of life)

Again it is found that when Śaṅkaradeva went second time for pilgrimage on their way they found a deer and a pea cock trapped in traps in a forest. Śaṅkaradeva

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128. *Kīrttan ghōṣā, Śrī Kṛṣṇar Vaikunthaprayān*, V. 1824-1825

advised his fellow men to rescue them and keep a coin in that place of trap.<sup>129</sup> It is the example of love and non-violence which are the moto of *Thān* and *Sattrā*. Mādhavadeva wrote in his *Nām-ghoṣā-*

*jnāna śūnya āti*

*paśu pakhī jāti*

*tāko anugraha kari āsā kṛpāmaya* (804)<sup>130</sup>

(Animals are innocent, yet you are merciful for them also)

Morality is closely related to spiritualism. Moral value refines human behaviour. Man can learn moral code from their parents, *Guru* and *Bhakats*. (Teacher and devotee) The aim of moral education is to find out what is good and what is evil.

#### 4.8.11 To Develop the Physical and Mental Health

To develop the physical and mental health of the people was another objective of *Thān* and *Sattrā*. Therefore some physical training with the help of amusement, i.e. nṛty (dance) physical exercise- such as *māṭi ākharā*, *Cāpari* (clapping) was given to people. For mental health, music, i.e *nām prasanga*, *Bargīt*, *Ṭoṭay* etc and *jap* (meditation) were given to developed the both physical and mental health.

So, Śaṅkaradeva and his followers established *Thān* and *Sattras* to fulfilled these objectives which help to integrate the society with pure, cultured and healthy person.

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129. Neog, M (ed 2003) *Guru Carit Katha* 275: P 87.

130. *Nāmghoṣā :Mādhavadeva*, V. 804.

## 4.9 Contribution of *Thān and Sattra* to the Value Education of Assam

*Thān and sattras* had not been merely the means of propagating religious faith but the instrument in organization and reformation of Assamese society, transmission and preservation of culture and inculcation of human and environmental values.

*Thān* and *Sattra* as socio-religious centre had contributed to the society in many ways. These are –

### 4.9.1 As a Library

It is found that almost, every *Thān and Sattras* have a precious library with various books of *Sāchipāta puthi* (Aequilaria Agallocha) written by Śaṅkaradeva or his followers, *Carit puthis* (hegiographis) of Śaṅkaradeva and his followers and *Vamaśāwalī* (family history) of *sattrādhikārs* (Head of the *Sattra*) or *Buḍhā Bhakat* (Head devotee) and other dignitaries of sattras etc. Moreover there are other books, magazines and religious books also preserved in the *Thān* and *Sattras*. There found the *Pañjikās* (Almanac) of various years in every *Sattra*. Because many *Sattādhikārs* depended on *Pañjikās* for various prediction and *tithi* (astrology and lunar day)

In the Bardowā *Thān* there is a library of various books, hagiographics on *Sāncipātar puthi*, books written by Śaṅkaradeva and his followers in *Sāncipāt*, religious books, souvenirs and other important books related with socio-cultural life of the people.

Nikamul *Sattra* library of Tezpur is also a very rich library. Present *Sattādhikār* Punyabrata Goswami keeps it very systematically and cleanly. Many valuable books, souvenirs found in this library was at the time of late Sattadhikar,

writer and social worker Gohan Ch. Goswami. There are more than one thousand books and twenty (20) *Sāncipātar puthi* in this library.

The Ghārmora *Sattra* library of Lakhimpur has preserved many valuable books of Śaṅkaradeva and his followers. Besides religious and other books, there are many other books written by Arunachali writers. Carit puthi (Hagiography) of Late *Sattādhikārs* are also found in this library. It is a very precious library. Many Astrological books (*Jyotiṣ*), *Pañjikā* (Almanac) of many years, Ayurvedic books, *Mantra* Puthi (Prayer to god and mystical poem) etc. are also preserved in this library.

In Assam there are many renowned *Thāns* and *Sattras* which have their own library with various valuable books, hagiographis, and magazines that contribute to our society. Some of these are Kamalabari, Gormur, Dakhinpat, Auniati of Majuli, Patbausi, Kaliabar Na-Satra, Bholaguri, etc.

It is found that in 1570 A.D Mādhavadeva established the 1<sup>st</sup> library in the *Sundarīdiyā sattra*. There are preserved many *Sāncipātar puthis* with the handwriting of Mādhavadeva. There are total 61 puthis now at *Sundaridiya*. (Source: field study. Photo)

Not only big but small *Sattras* have their own book shelves in which they have preserved religious books, *Panjikās*, *Jyotiṣas*, Ayurvedic books etc. The books preserved in the libraries of different *Sattras* have historical and socio-cultural value besides other value.

Again many *Thāns* and *Sattras* are the creator of renowned writers, social workers etc. Some of them are Dr. Keshavananda deva Goswam, Dr. Sarananda Deva Goswami, of Narowā Balisatra, Gohan Ch. Goswami of Nikamul *Sattra*, Hareswar

Goswami of Bholaguri *Sattrā*, Pitambar Deva Goswami and Dr. Pitambar Deva Goswami of Gormur *Sattrā*, Narayan Ch. Goswami of Kamalabari *Sattrā* etc.

#### 4.9.2 As a Museum

In *Thān* and *Sattrā* institution have kept and preserved various valuable materials like museum. In Bardowā *Thān* there is a Mini Museum where preserved various materials used by Śaṅkaradeva and his successors. These are –

- 1) *Sānchi Patar* (Aquilaria Agalloca) *Puthi* written by Śaṅkaradeva and his followers.
- 2) Musical Instrument- a) *Khol*, b) *Tāl* (cymbals) etc.
- 3) Various size of the decorated wooden door
- 4) *Maharāji* (Gate in front of Singhason)
- 5) *Agnigarh* (Fire palisade)
- 6) Idole of Viṣṇu, Garuḍa Pakhī, lion etc.
- 7) Decorated wooden cariā (tub)
- 8) Decorated wooden *Sarai* (offering plate with stand)
- 9) *Dolās* (Palanquins) and *Pālki*
- 10) Designable *Sinṃhasan* (Alter of God)
- 11) Various types of *Āsanar Kāpur* (Alter covered Cloth)
- 12) Varieties *Goṣā* (Light Stand)
- 13) *Koth* and *Bishani* (Designable mate and hand fan)
- 14) *Stambha* Murti (Pillar idle)
- 15) Various wooden, Brasso, Silver and ivory utensils.
- 16) Foot print of Śaṅkaradeva (Stone foot print). (Source –field study)

In the Samaguri *Sattrā* of Pubtharia Kaliabor also preserved many items used by Śaṅkaradeva at his early days with other objects. These are-

- 1) Wooden Dawar (Bath Tub of Śaṅkaradeva), 2) *Bhuni* (Cloth) Sewed by tailor Cāndsāi, 3) Japā (Basket for Cloth, made by cane), 4) Mittikā used on forehead (soil), 5) Ghuṅguri (Waist belt) Kakalor Botia, 6) Wooden foot wear with golden art and cap was given by Chilārai, only one, 7) *Meharāji* (Artistic) Wooden gate in front of Alter), 8) *Garunda Pakhī* (Garunda bird) of Wood, 9) *Agnigarh* (nine light stand used in *Bhāownā*), 10) *Sinṃasans* with viṣṇu idole, 11) *Varities Mukhā*. (Source –field study) (photo)

The Nikāmul *Sattrā* of Tezpur has a very large museum. They have preserved-

- 1) Wooden decorate *Pālki* and *Dolā*, (Palanquine), 2) *Houdā* (Seat used on back of elephant for *Satrādhikār*), 3) Brass and wooden, big and large utensils used for *Prasad*, 4) *Goṣā* (light Stand) *Thogā* (Book stand), 5) *Garundā Pakhī* (Wooden), 7) *Mukhā* Wooden mask of demon, 8) Wooden big tub. 9) Weavers loom, Jatar (Wheel for spinning) (Source –field study).

The Ghārmora *Sattrā* of Lakhimpur has a famous museum. There are many valuable documents, important letters and other valuable things *Joy ghanta* donated by chutia king Satya Nārāyan, *Bhubon Mohan Idole* of lord Viṣṇu donated by Ahom King Rudra Singha, *sāncipāt*, cloths, decorated hand fan, various (Mask) *Mukha*, utensils etc. are preserved in this museum.

In the Pātbushi *Sattrā* and Patboushi *Thān* and Sundaridiya *Sattrā* there preserved the palanquin, decorated door, utensils and many other valuable things used

by Madhavdeva, Kālindi Āi (wife of Śaṅkaradeva) Besides these there are some Sānchipat Puthi (books) also there.

All big and small *Sattras* of Assam keep ancestral things and traditional properties with due respect. Garmur, Kamalabari, Auniati, Belsidhia and other *Sattras* of Majulee have their own museum, which are enjoyed by many research scholars, educationist and tourist of India and abroad. These museums have many cultural religious, spiritual, moral and social values.

In the Auniati Sattras there are many ivory items, silver utensils, *hangdang* (Swords) given by Ahom king Gadadhar Singha. *Hastividyārnava*, *Śrīharasha Mukṭāwali* and hundreds of ancient books, written on Sānchi leaf. There are also preserved the newspapers of different times.

In the new Kamalābārī Sattras, there are preserved the hair of Śaṅkaradeva, comb used by Śaṅkaradeva, *Candan* Grinding *potā* and 300 (three) hundred books of *Sānchipāt*.

In the Narowā Balisatra there preserve the world famous *Citra Bhāgavata*, big alloyed bell (*Borkāh*) which was given by Āhom King, flower pot, monuscripts, *Sānchipāt* etc.

There have been a loss of valuable ancient writings, books, priceless artifacts due to improper storage and lack of scientific preservation. The economic condition of some *Sattras* is very poor. So the government should give importance to preserve the ancestral property as heritage of Assam.

### 4.9.3 As Music School

The science of music associated not only with singing and playing of instruments but also with dramatic performances and dancing was well cultivated.

The Vaiṣṇava leader Śaṅkaradeva cultivated *Gandharva Vidyā* and qualified himself as a master musician (*Bor Gāyān*) and dancer. He gave lessons to the disciples on the art of music, dancing and play (*Bhāonā*)<sup>131</sup>

In the Neo-Vaiṣṇava movement took the music as a tool for spreading Vaiṣṇavism among the mass people. As an Assamese leader of Neo-Vaiṣṇava movement Śaṅkaradeva also took music, (*Nām*, *Bargīt*) as media of spreading his movement and which impact is going on in our present Assamese society. *Thān*, *Sattrā* and *Nāmghar* have their own orchestra party, (*Gāyan bāyan*). Every Assamese family chants the *nām* or *kīrttan* on every occasion from birth to death.

*Thāns* and *Sattras* have many cultural contributions to the society. The *satriyā* dance has got recognition as a major classical dance form of India on 15<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2000. During the last five hundred years. *Thān* and *Sattras* have gave importance on satriya dance and music. The *Bargīts* (Great song) were composed by Śaṅkaradeva and his follower in different places and under various circumstances. They can be called lyrical strains; they show how the religious sentiment of the poets reacted to different surroundings.<sup>132</sup> Now the *Sattrā* have preserved these culture keeping in mind the

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131. Barua, B.K (2011) *A Cultural History of Assam* : P 158.

132. Neog, M (1998) *Śaṅkaradeva and His Time*: P 178.

interest shown by the non Assamese students in Maharashtra also. In Bharati Vidyapith University has introduced Sattriya dance in their syllabus.<sup>133</sup>

*Sattras* are the centre for cultivation of various performing arts, such as music, dance, drama (*Bhāonā*). Now these *Bargīt* and Dramas have been translated into various languages such as English, French etc. and performed in various countries of the world. In 12 April 2018 Dr. Bhabananda Barbāyan performed this spiritual dance (*Satriyā* dance) in USA with his team and accompanying a film, name by *Dancing the devine* on *Sattriya* dance made by Madhusmita Bora of USA.<sup>134</sup>

*Bhaonā* is a gift of the *Thān* and *Sattras* to the Assamese village life; villagers learnt the culture of *Bhaonā* from the *Thān* and *Sattrā*. It is a unique contribution of the *Sattrā* Institution to the Assamese village life. For villagers it is a heavenly thing which Śaṅkaradeva brought from the heaven for welfare of the common people about five hundred years ago<sup>135</sup> Through *Bhaonā Thān and Sattrā* contributed aesthetic, moral, spiritual and social value to the mass people of Assam.

#### 4.9.4 As a Prayer Hall and Centre of Religion

*Thān Sattras* can be said as the centre of religion with a prayer a hall, (*Nāmghar / Kīrttanghar*) *Nām* or *Kīrttanghar* means prayer *Ghar*, or prayer home. The *Sattrādhikār* or *Guru* is the head of this religious institution. They give moral and spiritual lesson to the disciples that important in their day to day life. It is therefore said that *sattras* controlled to a large extend the behavior and activities of the people.<sup>136</sup>

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133. Assam Tribune 15 May 2018.

134. Ibid.

135. Nath, D (2012), *Sattrā, Society and Culture*: P 194.

136. Nath, D (2012), *Sattrā, Society and Culture* : P 126.

*Thāns and sattras* have daily followed some routine. These are the singing of hymns or songs, chanting of prayers to the accompaniment of musical instruments and the reading and explaining of the *Bhāgavata* etc. The whole programme is called *Nām-Prasaṅga* or *Chaidhya Prasaṅga* (Fourteen Prasaṅga) i.e. prayer and functions connected with prayers.<sup>137</sup> But at present all *Thāns and Sattras* have not observed all *chaidhya prasaṅgas*. On some occasions e.g. *Guru tithi*, *Janmāṣṭamī* etc, they follow these all *prasaṅgas*. The major portions of prayers, song as, hymns and recitations are adopted from the writing of Śaṅkaradeva and Mādhavadeva. Every Assamese village there is a *Nāmghar* which is used as a prayer hall. In the village *Nāmghar cidhya prasaṅgas* are not held, but there performed *Nām* in every morning and evening by *Nāmgharīā* (Caretaker of *Nāmghar*). On the festival occasion, or on the month of *Bhādra* and *Jaiṣṭha* all villages took part in the prayer held in *Nāmghar/ Kīrgttanghar*.

*Nāmghar* is the common property of the villagers where they meet each evening to listen or to recite the sacred scriptures. Some times they have to enjoyed the *Bhaonā* or other festivals, discussed various matters related with village, and also spiritual, moral and social discussion and to enjoyed leisure time fruitfully.

#### 4.9.5 As a Theatrical Stage

*Thān* or *Sattra* can be compared with a public theatre. On festival occasion it converts itself into a public theatre.<sup>138</sup> *Thān* and *Sattra* play a significant role in the social and religious life of the Assamese people. It helped the growth and development

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137. Samah, S.N (2016 ) *The Neo Visnava movement and Sattra Institution of Assam*, P 126.

138. Saikia, Nagen (ed 2015) *Birinchi Kr Barua Rachanawali*: P 2009 Part III.

of *Ankīyā Nāṭ*, Assamese *Bhāonā* and other performing art. In the *Bardowā Gurucharit* it is found that Śaṅkaradeva, also trained various people for *Cihnayātrā* (panto mime)<sup>139</sup> Śaṅkaradeva Organized a dramatic performance styled as *Cihnayātrā*, which literally stands for a *Bhaonā* of present time.

#### 4.9.6 As a Court

*Thān* and *Sattra* can be said as a village ‘court’. The court is a place where legal trials take place and where crimes, etc. are judge,<sup>140</sup> Sometimes village people settle their quarrels either it serious or not, in the *Nāmghar* / *Kīrttanghar* of *Sattras* or villages among themselves by a sort of arbitration in a panchayat or mel consisting of the, leading *Sattrādhikāra* or elderly villagers. The pontiff appeals to these village judges for justice by placing before them one *baṭā* or *śarāi* (offering tray) with *tāmbul-pāṇ* (battle nut and leaves). The judges then go into case and impose a fine on the offender. The fine may be from Rs. 1 to Rs. 100 as so on. The poor but submissive escapes the fine, the respect shown with the offering of *tāmula* being considered sufficient for his atonement.<sup>141</sup> So this system helps the people to save their time and money which are mandatory in a legal court. According to Dr. K.N. Dev Goswami, to control the indiscipline among *Bhakata* and *Śiṣyas* there are some punishment known as *Danda* and *Prāyascitta* in *Thān* and *Sattra*.<sup>142</sup> This village trial reminds us the Panchayatirāj ideology of our ancient Hindu Society and late propounded by Gandhi. The present Loka Adālat which has been recently practiced was introduced long

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139. Ibid. P.2012.

140. *Oxford advanced learners dictionary* (P-352).

141. Neog, M (2004) *Cultural Heritage of Assam* : P 78.

142. Goswami, K.N.D.(2014) *Sattra Samskritir Ruprekha*: P. 118

before five hundred years ago in our *Thān / Sattra* and *Nāmghar*. So the sattras can also be called the early courts of Assamese people. Sattras help the people when they are in mishap.<sup>143</sup>

#### 4.9.7 As a Yoga Centre

*Yoga* is a Hindu Philosophy by which one can control his body and mind and united the spirit of universe. A system of exercise for one's body and controlled the breathing system of the people. Patanjali defines *yoga* as a complete supersession of all mental models or processes (*Chittavritinirodha*) It is a Universal attribute of the mind. All persons can attain yoga by repeated practice (*Abhyāsa*) and detachment (*Vairāgya*). So in ancient education system yoga is very important subject.

The word *Yoga* is derived from the Sanskrit root *Yuj* meaning “to unite” ‘to combine’ and “to integrate”. *Yoga* is a way of life, propounded by Patanjali in a systematic form. It aims at harmonious development of the body, the mind and the soul.<sup>144</sup>

*Yoga* helps in the overall development of the personality of the people. In *Thān* and *Sattras* the *Bhakats* have done many yoga activities, though it is not formally called as *yoga*. Śaṅkaradeva was also a *yoga* expert. He can be kept under water many times. Again in performing arts like *Bhaonā*, dance and other activities such as *Māṭi Ākharā* can be called as *hath yoga*. There teach the *prāṇāyāma*, other exercise which are helpful them to keep their physical and mental health properly. At the time

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143. Rajguru, Sarbeswar (1990) *Itihasar Patmeli* : P 113.

144. Goel A. and Goel, S.L (2005) *Stress Management and Education*, P 81-82.

of *Kīrttan* or *Nām Prasāṅga* people sit on the ground in a mat and clap their hands.

One must sit as *padmāsana* at that time. (From *Narowā Sattrādhikār*).

#### 4.9.8 As a Centre of Health and Hygiene

*Thān and Sattrā* can be called as a centre of health and hygiene. *Saran* (Initiate) is compulsory in *Thān/Sattrā*. From the day of *Śaraṇa* and *Bhajan* the *bhakat* always maintain some rules and regulation, which are very important for them to maintain their health.

Education gives us proper notions of cleanliness and manners and thus makes us more acceptable to our fellow citizens. Ancient Indian education first taught to the young students the rules of cleanliness and etiquette before anything is else.<sup>145</sup> A strong physique is essential of success not only in mundane but also in religious matter. Kālidās said - *Śarīramādyam Khalu Dharma Sāadhanam*.<sup>146</sup> In the morning they take bath and then they do physical exercise. They are expert in various *Sattriya* Dances. And many *Sattras* become the centre of Dances. Hand washing after toilet, Oil massaging before bath, *Guru Sewā* after bath (Prayer and meditation) hygienically cooking and eating, food take after bath, use tooth pick after eat, abstaining from alcohol and drugs, wear neat and clean cloth etc are their daily routine.<sup>147</sup> Distributor of *Prasāda* always used a mouth cover for hygienic reason. This Type of hygienic education is followed by *Thān/Sattrā* and *Nāmghar* at present time also.

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145. *Manu Samhitā* II 69.

146. *Kumarsambhavam*, V. 30.

147. Goswami, K.N.D (2014) *Sattrā Samskritir Ruprekha*: P 118-125.

#### 4.9.9 As an Educational institution

*Thān and Sattrā* can be compared with educational Institutions. Primarily they are to propagate Vaiṣṇava faith to initiate disciple, to provide ethical and devotional codes and rules. The secondary function of the *Thān* and *Sattrā* is to educate the mass people with the help of various methods such as *Bhāonā (Drāma)*, *Nām (Prayer)*, *Saran* and *Bhajan* etc.

The *Sattras* may be compared with a cultural university. In every *Thān/Sattrā* are cultivated the various types of songs, music, dance, art various type of agricultural activities etc. *Thān and Sattrā* are the centre of various handicrafts such as *Pāsi* and *Kharāhi* (bamboo basket), *Bichani* (Hand fan) *Jāpi* (wicker hat), *Kāth* (Mat), *Āsan* (Wooden furniture such as Altar), *Thogā* (book stand) *Gosā* (Light stand), *Gamoshā* (Towel), wearing cloths etc, again the materials related with *Bhoanā* such as *Mukhā* (mask) costumes, cracker, etc.<sup>148</sup> Various types of vocational education were given to the *Bhakat* because they will become self dependent. Such type of learning through creative and productive work is also the basic principle of Gandhiji's education system.<sup>149</sup>

*Tols* are found in many *Thāns* and *Sattras* to educate their *Śhiṣys*. Some *Sattras* cultivate the *Jyotiṣa* (Astrology) and *Ayurveda Śāstras* e.g. *Karatipār Na-Sattrā* (kaliabor, Nagaon) *Jārniāl Sattrā*, Gohpur, *Ghārmārā sattrā* (Lakhimpur)- (from field study) etc. In 1963 Dr. Bhupen Hazarika said in the Assam Sahitya Sabha as a President, that a *Sattrā* can be converted into a university and introduces the

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148. Ibid: P 177-178.

149. Mookerjee, K.K (1972) *Some Great Educators of the World*: P 253.

curriculum which was innovated by Śaṅkaradeva. So the Vaiṣṇava Vishwavidyālya of the Bardowā will be established like Shantiniketan.

With the growth of the *Sattrā* institution, there developed new centre of learning and education, aiming at moulding the spiritual outlook of the people for a new society. The spiritual enlightenment spread to the villages through the *Nāmghars* and it was obligatory for a new *Sattādhikār* to visit the villages and disseminate the teaching of the new creed to the village folk. Subsequently, some *Sattrādhikārs* and vaiṣṇava disciples took to writing the chronicles of their respective *Sattras* called *Sattriya Vamsāvalī* as well as biographies of *Vaiṣṇava* saints called *Carit puthis*, which not only form a new branch of Assamese literature but also a valuable source of information for compiling the socio-economic history of medieval Assam.<sup>150</sup> Now *Thān* and *Sattras* are the centre of Assamese culture particularly for propagation and practice of religion and ethics, music, dance, art and crafts. There hardly exist such villages where *Bhāonā* or religious song is not performed on selected occasions. Now many colleges of Assam, Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyalaya, Nagoan, Dibrugarh University and Gauhati University have implemented *Sattriya Nr̥tya* as performing art and a subject for Bachelor and master degree courses e.g. Dr. B.K. College, Puranigudam, and Nowgong College. The *Thāns* and *Sattras* are like a residential school of present time. In a *Sattrā* institution residential *Bhakats* (devotee) live under the *sattrādhikār* who teach them and monitor them like their father or guardian. Every naval (new) *Bhakat* is placed under a senior *Bhakat* (*Burḍā Bhakat*). Senior *Bhakat* teach him discipline and other ethical and positive education. At first

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150. Barua, S.L (2002) *A Comprehensive History of Assam*: P 425.

novice is known as *Āldharā* (helper). Novice also received education from the functionaries of *sattras* e.g. *Bhāgavatī* or *Pāṭhaka* or *Nāmlagowā*. They also translate the Sanskrit text into Assamese and compose it. It was a customary practice with the monks to copy and illustrate the *carit puthis* to vaiṣṇavite ideal of individual life.<sup>151</sup>

#### 4.9.10 As an University

Presentation of various position or official post or to recognized person's position there are some rules and regulations, which can be compared with the convocation of present university e.g. to recognize a person as a *sattrādhikār*, *Medhi*, *Burha Bhakat*, *Pathak*, *Nāmloguwā*, *Gāyan-Bāyan*, *Sutradhār* etc, have some qualities.

According to Narowā *Sattrādhikār* Debananda Goswami, to appoint as a *sattrādhikār* either in hereditary or elderly or democratically, he must follow some rules. These are-

- 1) He must write an *Ankiyā nāt*, which is enacted in the night of *Sattrādhikār Abhisek*, (appointment)
- 2) As like as present convocation system, there invited various intellectual persons related with *sattras* and arranged *sobhā* (meeting) and then gave a rosary (*Mālā*) on the head of the, newly appointed *sattrādhikār*.
- 3) There held a cultural function at that night.
- 4) The invitees questioned him about the rules and regulations of the *sattras* and also about *Nām*, *Deu*, *Bhakat* and *Guru*.

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151. Saikia, Nagen (ed 2015) *Brinchi Kr Baruar Rachanawali* : Part III : P 2447.

- 5) After maintain some rules and regulations he was decorated with garland of *Bakulful* (Rosery of *Bakul flower*) (Source: *Narowā Sattadhikar*)

#### 4.9.11 As a Recreational Centre

‘Recreation refers to both intrinsic and instrumental values. It includes multifarious programmes organized in an institution which give an opportunity to the individuals for self-expression and self fulfillment.<sup>152</sup> The *Nāmghar/Kīrttanghar*, *Thān* and *Sattras* have high recreational values. These place help the people to utilize their leisure time through various aesthetic, moral, spiritual and cultural activities. There was no any recreational centre at that time to enjoy the leisure time of mass people properly. So many people spent their valuable time by useless gossiping. So *Thān/Sattra*, *Nāmghar*, *Kīrttanghar* were become the recreational centre for that people. There always held *Nāmkīrttan* in the *Sattra* institution. *Bhoanā* also held in various occasions. *Nāmghar/Kīrttanghar* is also the centre of intellectual discussion. The people gathered in the evening and discuss about religious matter or chant the name of God. At present in the month of *Bhadṛā* or *Jeṣṭha* people always assemble in the *Nāmghar*, *Thān* or *Sattra’s Kīrttanghar* are the death and birth month of Śaṅkaradeva and Mādhavdeva. They enjoyed many stories through *Kīrttan* and spend their leisure time systemically and aesthetically. *Nāmghar/Kīrttanghar*, *Thān/Sattras*’ are the socio religious cum cultural centre of the villages. In these places where the villagers put their heads together, to discuss matters regarding social, economic and

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152. Dash, B.N (2004) *Principles of Education and Education in the Emerging Indian Society*: P.127.

other problems of the village.<sup>153</sup> They observed functions and festivals in these institutions. The new generations learnt performing art, such as *Bhaonā*, *Sattriya* dance, playing musical instrument (*Bāyan*), singing various music such as *Borgīt*, *payar*, *Bhaṭimā* etc, from elder persons of the village, in *Sattrā*, in *Nāmghar/Kīrttanghar*. Sometimes they enjoyed the ceremonial feast (*Bhoj*) with all villagers of that villages either they *Mahāpuruṣiā* or *Bāmuniā*. People observed *Bihu*, *Samkrānti* (the last day of the month) birth and death day of the *Vaiṣṇava guru*, birthday of Lord Kṛṣṇa, *Daul Utsav*, etc. So from above discussion it can be said that *Thān/Sattrā* are the reactional centre or valuable places for common people, where they have spent their leisure time very pleasantly and happily and also the centre of socio religious, moral, spiritual ,aesthetic and environmental education.

#### **4.10 Methods Innovated By Śaṅkaradeva to Inculcate Value Education in *Thān* and *Sattrā***

The values can be taught through lectures, text books, epic and several other, activities. In an educational institution one can teach values with these methods to inculcate value education. Śaṅkaradeva and his followers innovated such type of method to diffuse their principles of *Eka-Śaraṇa-Nāma-Dharma*. These are –

##### **4.10.1 *Nām Prasāṅga* (Prayer) Chanting the Name of God**

Śaṅkaradeva innovated a new cult known as, *Eka-Śaraṇa-Nāma-Dharma* which is at present known as *Māhapuruṣīa dharma*. Śaṅkaradeva accepted *Purusuttam*, *Parmeswar* and *Narāyān* as identical with *vāsudeva* Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The

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153. Rajguru, S, (1988) *Medieval Assamese Society*: P 260.

*purosuttam* of *Gītā* is the *Mahāpuruṣa* of the *Bhāgavata*. Śaṅkaradeva's religion is known as *Mahāpuruṣā dharma*. The main method of worship is *Kīrttan* or singing the praise of the name of the Lord, it is also called the, *Nām-dharma*. As the *Gītā* strictly enjoins giving up all other practices and ceremonies and lays stress on one God and Śaṅkaradeva also support this and so his religion is known as *Eka-Śaraṇa-Nāma-Dharma*.<sup>154</sup> The most notable characteristics of the Vaiṣṇavism of Assam are the *Sattrā* institution and *Nāmghar* through which the faith was propagated and stabilized.

*Eka-Śaraṇa-Dharma* surrenders ownself to only Lord Kṛṣṇa. In the *Bhagavada Gītā* Kṛṣṇa said to Arjuna in the battle field –

“You surrender all other *dharma*s and take initiation on me alone.”

*annya dharma mantra tantra sidra bahu hoi/*

*bhāgavat dharma nahi sisab sangsai//*<sup>155</sup>

(There are many defect in other *dharma* but in the *Bhāgavata dharma* there is no such fault and effect.)

There are nine forms of *Bhakti* found in the *Prahlād Caritra*. These are–

*śravaṇa, krītana*                      *smarana viṣṇura*

*archana, pada sevana/*

*dāśya, sakhīṭva*                      *vandana vishuta*

*karitba deha arpaṇa//*<sup>156</sup>

154. Nath, R.M., *Sankaradeva and Vaiṣṇeva Movement in Assam*. Bhattachajya, H.D. (Ed 1969): *The Cultural Heritage of India* Vol: IV, P. 206-207.

155. *Nimi Nava-siddha Sambada*: V. 48.

156. *The Kīrttan ghōṣā, Prahlād Charitra*. V. 340.

The school of Assamese vaiṣṇavism has preferred and adopted *Śravaṇa* and *Kīrtana* as practical modes of their devotional practices.<sup>157</sup>

According to Śaṅkaradeva –

*yadyapi bhakati nabavidha mādhavara/  
sravana-kīrtana tāte mahā shresthatara//*<sup>158</sup>

(Though there are nine types of *Bhakti*, yet *Sravana* and *Kīrtan* are the best of all)

Prayer is another form of *Kīrtan*. The sacrificed in fact continued in prayer. Prayer is equivalent to naming the God and reconciling them by the magic of the formulas sacrifice prolongs life, and prayer save us from sin; prayer is always necessary complement of sacrifice.<sup>159</sup>

Śaṅkaradeva also followed this rule. He said that –

*jnānato, karmato kari samprati/  
hari kīrttanese parama gati//*<sup>160</sup>

(Chanting Harinam is the best way in comparison to knowledge or action)

Again –

*sakal dharmate kari visisṭa,  
hari kīrttanese dharma garisṭha//*<sup>161</sup>

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157. Sarma, S.N.(2016), *The Neo-vaiṣṇava Movement and The Satra Institution of Assam*: P. 55.

158. *Bhāgavat* Book I, verse. 38.

159. Ramkrishna Mission (Ed. 1938), *Religion of the world*, Vol I. P. 185-186.

160. *Kirtan ghoṣā : Pāsanda Mardan*, V. 102.

161. Idib, V. 106.

(of all religion that prevail in the world, the kirtan i.e. the chanting the name of God is the best of all)

According to Śaṅkaradeva Kṛṣṇa is the main motivating force of moral, spiritual, religious, cultural and social value of life

He said that –

*samasta bhutate byāpi achu mai hari,*  
*savāko mānibā tumi viṣṇu budhi kari//*<sup>162</sup>

(I am present in all creatures, therefore, you do recognize all as Viṣṇu)

In the *Nāmghar* people offering mass prayer for general people. There is no upper or lower class; all are equal and sit in the *koth* (mat) on ground. With the help of *Kīrttan ghosā* he gave the moral value.

*brahmavadhā pītri*      *badha surāpān*  
*agamyagaman karai,*  
*garutirī mārāi*      *suvarṇaka harai*  
*miṭṭar droha acharai//*<sup>163</sup>

(Killing of *Brāhmaṇa*, father and cow, drinking alcohol, stealing Gold, illegal sex act as great sin in society)

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162. Ibid: *Śrīkṛṣṇar vaikuntha prayān*. V. 1820.

163. *Ajamil upākhyāna, kīrttan ghosā*, V. 182.

*Kīrttan* was the mature product of Śaṅkaradeva's mind. It affords pleasure to all classes of readers. To children it gives stories and songs for amusement, it delights the young with true poetic beauty and the elderly people find her religious instructions and wisdom.<sup>164</sup>

Dignity of labour and simple living and high thinking is the main moto of Śaṅkaradeva's philosophy. With the help of *Nām-Kīrttana* one can purify his mind and soul.

*kṛṣṇa kathā śhravanate sudha haibe manna,*

*śarvadaye karibeka kṛṣṇara krīttana//*<sup>165</sup>

(For purification of mind one can chanting and listening the name of Lord Kṛṣṇa)

#### 4.10.2 Visual Art

Art and Architecture are great agency for evoking the spirit of international brotherhood. According to Tolstoy art is the means of ending hostility and warfare.<sup>166</sup> Art has a profound relationship with Religion, relating as it does to the fundamental experiences of the human soul in its communion with God. In past ages architecture was employed as one of the principal means of worshipping God and nature, and it stood as an embodiment of devotion and sacrifice. The *Vaiṣṇavite* movement led by Śaṅkaradeva burst into a new efflorescence of art and painting. Śaṅkaradeva himself painted celestial figures on scenes for popular dramatic performances known as

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164. Barua, B.K (2011) *The Cultural History of Assam* : P. 33.

165. *Kīrttan ghōṣā : Prahlād charitra*, V. 376.

166. Ramkrishna Mission, (ed 1938) *Religion of the world*. Vol. I .P: 242.

*Cihnayatrā*.<sup>167</sup> This grand painting had the pictures of *sapta vaikuntha* (seven heavens) as imagined by him. It is a pantomime. According to *Hemkosh* Dictionary mean of *Cihna* is a mark or sign or symbol.<sup>168</sup> *Yatra* means journey or a type of rural drama or play performance.<sup>169</sup> In *Cihnayatrā* Śaṅkaradeva art the symbol of heaven.

The *Nāmghar/Kīrttanghar*'s wall and posts were carved with sculptures given emphasis on mythology, *dasavatāra* figures of Viṣṇu, scenes from *Rāmāyan*, *Mahābhārat*, *Bhāgavat*, Lotus, tortoise, lion, cow etc. Again the image of *Garuṇḍa* bird, *Joy-Bijay* (Gate Keeper) *Garuṇḍa Pakhī* (*Garuṇḍa* bird) in front of *Nāmghar/Kīrttanghar* is kept to attract the common people.

A beautiful *Thāpanā* (Altar) or *simhāsana* (Altar with lion), decorated with seven steps of lion, tortoise and elephant which are motivated the people at present time also.

*Gasā* (light stand) *Śarāi* (offering tray) also decorated with beautiful curves. With the help of these art, Śaṅkaradeva and his followers tried to develope the people's aesthetic and spiritual value.

*Mukhā* (Mask) is also a visual art which used in *Bhaonā*, *Citra Bhāgavat* was i.e. Bhagawat X. was, the result of Śaṅkaradeva's creative and artistic mind, the manuscript copy of which is found in the Balisatra of Nagaon.<sup>170</sup>

The work of art is not merely subjective; it has great mental value that evokes various pleasures. Another artistic contribution of Śaṅkaradeva is the *Vṛndāvanī*

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167. Barua, B.K (2011) *The cultural History of Assam* : P 159.

168. Barua, Hemchandra (1989) *Hemkosh* : P 360.

169. Deka, Pranav jyoti (2011) *Students Bilingual Dictionary*: P. 488.

170. Rajguru, S. (1988) *Medieval Assamese Society*: P. 416

*Vastra* (cloth decorated with *Vṛndavan*) a sixty metre woven cloth where the activities of Lord Kṛṣṇa at Gakul and *Vṛndavan* were delineating there.<sup>171</sup> This cloth has great spiritual and aesthetic value.

*vṛndābanī vastra uliāy dilā /*  
*dekhiā rājār mon harsita hailā //*  
*kāpur dekhiā rājā hol bimuhita /*  
*sabha sada dekhi hail achorita //*<sup>172</sup>

(when king saw the vṛndabani cloth then he and his courtier became astonished)

According to the wish king Nar-Nārāyana Śaṅkaradeva prepared this cloth with the help of Tantikuchi weaves under the leadership of Gopal.<sup>173</sup>

Some of the parts of this *vastra* (cloth) are preserved in the Victoria and Albert museum of London and Paris based Musee Guimet (the Guimet Meseum).<sup>174</sup>

The forms of God, the one having the highest aesthetic appeal for man must be human form. It is because of this that Kṛṣṇa is the supreme human form of the deity.

*Karalā Bārhai* made the Jagannath deity according to Śaṅkaradeva advice.

*karala barhaik mati bnlila śaṅkara/*  
*saj jagannath pratima rucikar//*<sup>175</sup>

(Sankaradeva ordered karala barhai (carpenter) to made a beautiful idole of jagannath i.e. the an other name of Lord Kṛṣṇ)

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171. Lekharu, U.(1952) *Katha Guru Carit*, P. 213.

172. Ramcharan Thākur : *Guru Charit*. V. 3736.

173. Barkakoty, S.K (2005) *Mahapurush Srimanta Sankaradeva* : P 223.

174. [http:// www. Telegraphindia.com](http://www.Telegraphindia.com) , 19 July 2018.

175. Thakur Daitari, *Sri Sankaradeva Sri Madhabdeva Carit* V. 329.

### 4.10.3 Performing Arts

Performing arts, according to, *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary* arts such as music, dance, drama, which are performed for audiences for entertain. The ancient lore of the performing arts of India was associated with figure of Lord Śiva as we find it in the all time authority on the subject, Bharat's *Natyaśātra*. The neo-Vaiṣṇava upheaval then demanded a Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa linkage.<sup>176</sup> The science of music associated not only with singing and playing of instrument, but also with the dramatic performances and dancing was well cultivated. The Vaiṣṇava leader cultivated *Gandharva Vidyā* and qualified himself as a master of musician (*Barbāyan*) and dance. He gave lessons to the disciples on art and music, dancing and playing *Bhoanā*.<sup>177</sup> Śaṅkaradeva innovated various performing arts such as Borgīt (songs which have spiritual essence composed by Śaṅkaradeva and Mādhavadeva) *Aṅkiyā nāt*, *Cihnayātrā* (a pantomime), musical instrument such as *Khol* (drum) *Tāl* (cymbal) etc. to diffuse his *Eka-Śaran-Nāma-Dharma* which has aesthetic value.

Śaṅkaradeva believed that audio visual media with aesthetic value is the best media to attract the mass people to his ideology and philosophy i. e. *Eka-Śaran-Nāma-Dharma*. To create beauty, to give pleasure, to communicate to the people is the purpose of all art. To really appreciate art, it is important to understand the purpose and technique. The genius of the artist lies in being able to arise in the mind of the audience a suitable emotional response. *Aṅkiyā nāt* grew out of the comprehensive dramatic technique of the ancient Indians and an innovative mind of Śaṅkaradeva, a

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176. Neog, M (ed 2003) *Guru Carit Katha* .P. Introduction 12.2.

177. Barua, B.K (2011) *A cultural History of Assam*: P 158

technique which includes music, song, literature, poetry and dance. The main purpose of *Sankary* plays or *Ankīā nāṭs* were to evoke a devotional attitude in the audience. So he creates *Bhakti Rasa*, a *rasa* is said to be the result of a combination of *bhāvas* or states of mind. The word *Bhāvanā* derived from *Bhāvas* which means sentiments or emotions. From *Cihnayatrā* to *Rāmbijay* there found both aesthetic sense and value of Śaṅkaradeva through which he arose the emotion of common people. Prof. K.D. Tripaty, a Sanskrit scholar, describes Śaṅkaradeva's *Ankīā nāt* as remarkable in terms of its philosophy; aesthetic and innovative technique besides being the oldest and the most important of the North Indian temple theatre forms.<sup>178</sup>

The venue of staging an *Ankīā nāt* is an open hall of the *Nāmghar/Krīttanghar* or temporary structure. The *sutradharā* himself in course of the performances indicates the audience about the change of dramatic situations implying change of acts and scenes. Ferly Richmond, a professor in Asian theatre of the Michigan state University said that, Śaṅkaradeva was not only pioneer in vernacular dramatic performance but he is acclaimed to be the first innovator of "open-air-theatre" in the world.<sup>179</sup>

Music has been an intrinsic part of Indian spirituality. Starting from *Sāmveda* the Indian music has been a well established medium of devotion, concentration and contemplation.<sup>180</sup> There are total one hundred and nineteen (119) songs in his six

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178. Phukan, Bimal (2011) *Srimanta Sankaradeva* : P 104.

179. Das, Prabhat Ch, *Śrīmanta Śaṅkaradeva The great sociologist*, Das, K S (Ed.2014) *Lit to Thames* Vol XV, 2014: P 184.

180. Tiwari, S.P (2009) *An Insight into Hindu Philosophy Life and Beyond* :P. 143.

plays which have great aesthetic value.<sup>181</sup> These songs have devotional values also. It starts with *Nāndī* and ends with *Muktimangal Bhatimā*.

*nāndi – rāg-suhāi*

*joy jagajivan murāru*

*pāwe paranām hāmāru.*<sup>182</sup>

(Life of all creature, we pray on your feet)

*Mukti Maṅgal Bhatimā :*

*jay jay jagat janak jadu deva*

*pada pankaja rāj āaj karu seva//*

*kaliman mochan param hari nāma,*

*jani sawahi nara bul rām, rāma//*<sup>183</sup>

(Triumph of world progenitor, Jadu deva (Kṛṣṇa), bow down to your lotus feet to destruction of sin all person chant the name of Ram)

The *Nāndi* and *Muktimangal Bhatimā* help to develop the moral and spiritual value of the people and advice the people to discard the sinful work and follow the God.

For Indian dance is a personal form of prayer. The dancer is virtually inseparable from the dance.<sup>184</sup>

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181. Goswami, K.N.D (1999) *Anka Mala: Introduction*. P.

182. Ibid: P. 2

183. Ibid: *Rukmiṇīharaṇa nāt*, P 46.

184. Sahai, Krishna (2003) *The Story of a Dance : Bhārat Natyam*, P .44

In *Aṅkiā* plays *sutradhāra* (Main director) plays the role of the main dancer. The other form of dances are Kṛṣṇa dance, *Gopīdance*, *Cālidance* etc. Before *Nāndi* verse there displays a prolonged series of dances by *Gāyan* (Singer) *Bāyan* (drummer) party, where *sutradhara* as leader.<sup>185</sup> Performance of *Gāyan-Bāyan* has an enchanting aesthetic value, which attract the common people. Śaṅkaradeva used *Khol* (drum), *Doba* (beating drum) *Tāl* (cymbals), *Bahi* (flutes) and *Kalia* (Matalic musical horn) etc. to attract the heart of the audience.

Orchestrā and dance create a devotional atmosphere and help the audience to develop their aesthetic value. Sitting spaces of the *Nāmghar/Krīttanghar* are systematically and aesthetically arranged.

The *Ahāryas* (costumes), make-up, and jewelry are the most important features of Śaṅkaradeva's creativity. The actors have special costumes.

At present according to Narowā *Sattrādhikār* Devananda Goswami, *Khanikar* (engraver) designed and made the costumes and ornaments. Different actors have different costumes. Kṛṣṇa and Rāma are the main hero of Śaṅkaradeva's drama. Krisna wears on yellow *dhuti*, and peacock feathers on his head and flute on his hand. According to the language of Śaṅkaradeva –

*pīt vastrā subhe āti shyām kalevar,*  
*kamal lochan chāru arun adhar//*<sup>186</sup>

(Colour of kṛṣṇa is dark green or black and lotus like eye with yellow colour dress and red colour lip).

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185. Medhi, Yashodhara (2017) *The Plays of Śaṅkaradeva*: P 52-54.

186. *Krīttan ghōṣā* : Śiśulīā.V.642.

The actors used paints for their make up, prepared by heṅgual (chinahbar) and *hāitel* (yellow orpiment) mica, indigo etc. The effigies and *mukhās* (musk) are used for hideous persons, animals or buffoons and jesters. It was the result of Śaṅkaradeva's creativity, imagination and aesthetic sense by which he inculcated value education.

He entertained the common people with the help of *Aṅkiyā nāt* and other performing Arts which can be said a basic need of the people at that time. *Bhāonā* played a major role at the time of Śaṅkaradeva.

#### 4.10.4 Yoga (Meditation and Exercise)

John Locke (1632-1704) a man of versatile genius, a distinguished psychologist and a physician said that, good health is an essential requisite to the attainment of the four different aims of education virtue, wisdom, breeding, and learning, plenty open air, exercise and sleep, plain diet, no wine or strong drink are necessary for healthy life.<sup>187</sup>

The Locks' disciplinary theory is same as ancient *Bhrāhmonic* system of education. Śaṅkaradeva's philosophy was same as this theory. Sir Aurobindo insisted that healthy body is a necessary condition for intellectual and spiritual attainment. According to him, beauty is the ideal which physical life has to realize. Śaṅkaradeva gave importance on physical beauty. So to develop physical beauty he gave importance on exercise, yoga, etc.<sup>188</sup>

In one of the letter sections of the *Bhakti Ratnākara* Śaṅkaradeva quotes verses from the eleventh book of the *Bhāgavat* to explain the yoga accessories of

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187. Mookerjee, K.K (1972) *The Great Educators of the World*, P. 21-29.

188. Agarwala, J.P "silpir prithivi", Sarma, S.N (ed) J. Prasad Rasanawalee.

*Yama* (restraints) like non-injury to life, truthfulness, etc. and *niyam* (observances) like purity of body and mind, contentment etc. Śaṅkaradeva is said to have studied *yogā* after he had finished his studies at school and to have taken *yogā*, exercises of *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma*.<sup>189</sup>

*Yogā* helps in the overall development of the personality of people. An overall development of the individual is intended to be achieved through education using an affective domain in addition to cognitive skills. *Yogā* aims at recreating the world, to mould it in the pattern of the divine reality; Evil has no permanent place in the scheme of things.<sup>190</sup>

#### 4.10.5 Language and Literature

Śaṅkaradeva contributed to the Assamese society in various forms of literature such as – *Aṅkiyā nāt*, *Kīrttan ghoṣā*, various canto's of *Bhāgavat*, *Rāmāyaṇ* etc. He composed *Bhakti Ratnākara* and *Totoya Madhudānavadā* in Sanskrit. His other creations are in Assamese and *Brajavālī*. Out of the twelve *SKandhas* of the *Bhāgavat* he translated major portion, namely, Books I, II, III, VI, VIII, IX and the Book XII.<sup>191</sup>

Śaṅkaradeva used *Brajavālī* language to diffuse his philosophy and ideology entire India because it is a language that understood by the most North Indian people. Śaṅkaradeva's literature was, however, meant chiefly to serve practical purpose in the vaiṣṇavite movement, religions and certain limitations. It has a universal appeal and touches every human heart. In many of such passages philosophy, morals, rules of

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189. Neog, M (1998) *Śaṅkaradeva and His Times*: P. 233.

190. Goel, Aruna and Goel, S.L (2005) *Stress Management and Education*: P: 77.

191. Barua, B.K (2009) *Śaṅkaradeva Vaiṣṇava Saint of Assam*: P 11.

conduct are given not only to his age but for all ages.<sup>192</sup> He wrote his works mainly in common language of the people that is Assamese. As most of his writings were made for daily prayer services, these were used even by the illiterate folk and thus literacy and learning were greatly encouraged by his writings.<sup>193</sup>

Like Gandhiji, Vivekananda and other modern educationist Śaṅkaradeva felt that women education and education for lower caste is necessary for their day to day life and upliftment of society. Right type of education fulfilled their needs of life. So he used simple and common language other than Sanskrit to all of them. Because Śaṅkaradeva knew that Sanskrit language was only for learned and upper class people. He said that

*kāḥ buli hari kathā                      harir kīrttan kibā*  
*jitu sabe ekuā nājāne*  
*śtrī, śudra antya jāti                      tāku śikṣā dibā māti*  
*dharibe sisabe aho prāṇa//*<sup>194</sup>

(To learn about God, education should be given to women and other low caste people to live a healthy life)

From above discussion it can be said that Śaṅkaradeva's *Bhakti* movement greatly contributed to the growth and development of art and literature in Assam, which have great social, moral and spiritual value.<sup>195</sup>

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192. Ibid: P. 49.

193. Goswami.K.N.D (2007) *Mahāpurush Śaṅkaradeva* : P 51.

194. *Śrīmad Bhāgavat*, XI, *Nīmi Nabsidha Sambād*: V. 330.

195. Barua, B.K (2009) *Śaṅkaradeva vaiṣṇava Saint of Assam*: P 85.

Literature is a word language, music is a sound language and play uses stage language.<sup>196</sup> With the help of three ways of language Śaṅkaradeva tried to discard the social inequality and bring equality among the people at that time and which have great impact on our present society. Dr.S.K. Chatterji, in the journal of Assam Research Society, 1967, said that, Śaṅkaradeva is the greatest name in the history of Assamese literature and early Assamese culture.<sup>197</sup>

#### 4.10.6 Lecture, Seminar, Discussion, Debates and Symposium

Lecture, Seminar, learned discussion were the normal and important features of the common people. So, sometimes debate, discussion and seminars were held and explain the difficult words, carefully with meaning. For discussion of religious and spiritual topic and *Nāmkīrtton* Śaṅkaradeva established *Kīrttanghar* at Alipukhuri.<sup>198</sup> There were established *Kīrttanghar/Nāmghar/Thān* where Śaṅkaradeva and Mādhavadeva and their followers stayed, e.g. – Gangmou, Roumari, Madhupur etc. Sometimes debate also held, where different learned persons were invited. As Sir Richard Livingstone remarks there is much to be said for these methods of debate and discussion in the old system of education.<sup>199</sup> Śaṅkaradeva sometime invited his *Bhakatas* to discuss about the religious matter, where moral, spiritual and hygienic value also related. One prevailing custom among the learned was intellectual

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196. Assam Tribute: March 2018.

197. Goswami, K.N.D, *The Sattra Institution of Assam*, Tamuli, D.N (ed 2013) *The Blessed Island*: P.236

198. Lekharu (Ed. 1952) *Katha Guru Carit*, P.34.

199. Barua, B.K (2009) *Śaṅkaradeva Vaiṣṇava Saint of Assam*, P.105.

filibustering. Proud *pundits* travelled from centre to centre challenging people to scholarly disputation.<sup>200</sup>

*Kīrtanghar/Nāmghar* as a religious institution is the place for the discussion, debates and seminars. There are also discussed on various day to day problems of the villagers and also solve these problems. There are held some scholarly discussions with the reputed scholars.<sup>201</sup> For that, scholars were invited from various places. When Mādhavadeva met Śaṅkaradeva at the first time there also held debate on *Eka-Śaraṇa-Nāma-Dharma* and *Śakti Pūjā*.<sup>202</sup> From the *Sattrādhikār* of Narowā *Sattra* Debananda Goswami and Nikamul *sattra*'s *sattrādhikār*, Punyabrat Goswami it was found that they arranged some lecture programme on various topics such as *Śaraṇa*, Śaṅkaradeva's philosophy, amendment of some rules and regulations for present society etc. in village and town *Nāmghars*.

#### 4.10.7 *Śaraṇa and Bhajana*

*Śaraṇa* and *Bhajan* are two forms of initiation ceremonies of Vaiṣṇavas introduced by Śaṅkaradeva.<sup>203</sup> A person in order to qualify himself to be considered as a genuine member of the vaiṣṇava community and to take active part in all religious functions, must of necessity, be initiated by the head of the *Sattra* with which his family is traditionally connected. The rite of initiation is called *śaraṇa* and it is usually performed by the *adhikāra* within the *sattra* campus. But, whenever the *sattrādhikār*

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200. Neog, M (2003) *Guru Carit Katha*: P. Introduction 12.1.

201. Lekharu (Ed. 1952), *Kathā Guru Carit*, P. 194.

202. Ibid, P. 66

203. Mahanta, Nirupama (2001) *Sattra Sangskritir Ruprekha* : P 60.

goes on ecclesiastical (*Sahar furā*) to know the conditions of disciples at villages, the rite of initiation is also performed during such tours.<sup>204</sup> At the time of Śaṅkaradeva *Śaran* was performed inside the *Nāmghar/Kīrttanghar*. Śaṅkaradeva initiated the Brahman inside the kirttanghar to keep the *Uddhava Sambād* in front of them.<sup>205</sup>

*henśuni śriśankara iṣat hāsila*  
*nāmghara thāpanar agat basila//*  
*pustakak lāgi dandawata karāila /*  
*juktikari vipragon saranak dila //*<sup>206</sup>

(Śaṅkaradeva smiled to hear that and sat in front of the *Thāpanā* (Altar) and advised *Brāhman* to prostration to religious book for *śaraṇa*)

The procedure of *śaran* consists of four fundamental principles consisting of *Guru*, *Deva*, *Nāma* and *Bhakat*. They are called, *Cari-Vāstu*. Here *Nām* means reciting the names of God, *Deva* means Lord Kṛṇṣa, *Guru* means acceptance of a preceptor and *Bhakat* means delight in the company of religious brotherhood.<sup>207</sup> At the end of the each point the neophytes is to prostrate before the Holy Scripture, representing the deity and the guru.<sup>208</sup> There is no mantra in Sanskrit, instead of that, *Guru* imparts the *Kathā*. So it is called *Guru Vākya*. i.e. guru's sentence.

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204. Sarma, S.N (2016) *Sattrā Institution of Assam*: P 119.

205. Lekharu, U. (1952) *Katha Guru Carit*, P. 37

206. Dwija Darika, Santawali, (ed 2008) P 76.

207. Barua, B.K (2009) *Śaṅkaradeva Vaiṣṇava Saint of Assam*: P 109.

208. Goswami, K.N.D (2007) *Mahāpurush Śaṅkaradeva*: P 77.

*Bhajan* is followed by senior devotees.<sup>209</sup> *Śaraṇa* and *Bhajan* are not only a gate way to Vaiṣṇavism but also hygienic factors and healthy practices, Every residential and non-residential *bhaktas* followed the rules and regulations of *Śaraṇa* and *Bhajan* where sermon them about good conduct, ethics, morals (*sadāsāra*) and cleanliness and personal hygiene (*Saucācāra*). They rise in the early morning, hand washing after toilet, oil massaging before bath, *Guru Sewā* after bath, (prayer and meditation), hygienically cooking and eating food, eating food after bath, use toothpick after eat, follow ethics and morality, abstaining from alcohol and drugs, wear neat and clean cloths etc.<sup>210</sup> Distributor of *Prasād* always used a mouth cover for hygienic reason. With the help of *Śaraṇa* and *Bhajan* Śaṅkaradeva inculcated the hygienic, moral, spiritual and social value, which are followed by Assamese people at present time also.

#### 4.10.8 Text Book with Stories and Legends

The story telling is one of the important and comprehensive approaches to inculcate the values in the minds of the mass people. It is one of the potent ways of importing values and communicating positive message in an integrated and implicit manner.

The explosion of and its application has changed the life style and value of the society. Value covers all aspects of personality development, i.e., intellectual, social, moral, aesthetic and spiritual etc. Śaṅkaradeva tried to inculcate values among the people through stories and legends. The presentation style of the stories are mainly

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209. Mahanta, Nirupama (2001) *Satra Sanskritir Ruprekha*: P 62.

210. Dev-Goswami, K.N.D (2014) *Satra Sanskritir Ruprekha*: P 118-125.

*Nām* (song from *Kīrttanghoṣā* such as *Ajāmila upākhyāna*, *Hara mohana*, *Prahlāda caritra* etc.), *Aṅkīyā nāṭs* (Drama i.e. Six plays of Śaṅkaradeva), *Borgīt* etc. Presentation style and theme of the story help the common people to inculcate various values such as moral, spiritual, environmental, social etc. As for example, with the help of the story of *Prahlāda Caritra* Śaṅkaradeva described how the name of God, or chanting the name of God sinner also destroys his sin. Following verse of *Ajāmila upākhyāna* said that –

*maribor belā                      ito ajāmile*  
*nārāyan nām lailā/*  
*kauṭi janamara                      jata mahāpāp*  
*tāro praya citta bhaila/*<sup>211</sup>

(At the moment of death Ajamil uttered the name of Nārāyan his younger son, which is the one name of God and for that his all sins were atoned)

Śaṅkaradeva and his main follower Mādhavadeva contributed various values through their *Aṅkīyā nāṭs* and *Jumurā*. The plots of the plays were drawn from the stories and legends of the *Bhāgavat Purāṇa*. People enjoyed those plays enacted on the life and activities (*Līlās*) of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and positive response from the people made the missionary endeavors of the saints and their followers quite easy.<sup>212</sup>

Śaṅkaradeva used *Brajāvalī* language in his plays because it is easy to understand by mass people not only in Assam, but all over north and north east India.

211. *Kīrttanghoṣā: Ajāmila upākhyāna*, V.182.

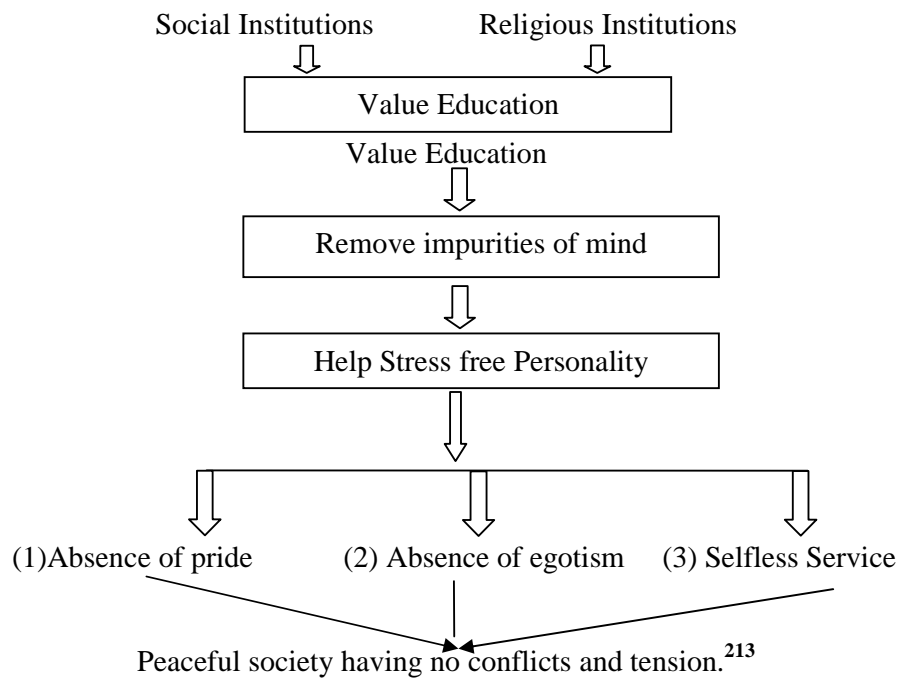
212. Pathak, Dayananda (2015) *Play Wright Peacher Sankaradeva*: P 236.

Śaṅkaradeva translated various Sanskrit books and illustrated and elaborate in Assamese so that even a common man can understand very easily.

#### 4.10.9 Establishment of Institution

Śaṅkaradeva, in order to propagate his religion i.e. *Eka-Śaraṇa-Nāma-Dharma* and inculcate various value education, established many institutions at every places where he stayed.

Though these institutions are established mainly religious purpose yet it has many socio-cultural values. It is found that social and religious institutions help people to inculcate value education.



213. Goel & Goel:2005, *Stress management and Education*: P. 204.

In 1468, at the age of 20 Śaṅkaradeva established a *Kīrttanghar* at Tembuani.  
According to Rāmcharan Thākur.

*viṃśasati Bāṭchār yebe tān huyā āse.*  
*śaṅkarat gosar karilā loke pāse/*  
*tambuāni lāgi jāu kariā yatana.*  
*sunī śaṅkarar bhailā ānandita mona//*<sup>214</sup>

(At the age of twenty, friends and relatives of Śaṅkaradeva advised him to go  
to Ṭambuani)

*āhibuli kīrttan gharak sāgilanta*  
*bhedi bāndhi āsanat mūrti thāpilanta//*<sup>215</sup>

(Śaṅkaradeva established *kīrttanghar* (Prayer Hall) and placing the idole of Viṣṇu)

*pāse rāmguru saha kari ālosona/*  
*nāmghar moṇikuṭ karilā srajan //*  
*nāmghar moṇikuṭ nahi āsamata /*  
*śaṅkare srajlā nāmghar prathamāta//*<sup>216</sup>

(After that he discussed with Ramram guru and constructed the *Nāmghar* for  
the first time in Assam)

At first he established a *kīrttanghar* constructed by Rāmraī

*śaṅkare bulanta bhāi*      *śuniuk ramrāi*  
*deva-gr̥ha sājiu jatane/*

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214. Rāmcharan Thākur, *Gurucharit*: P. 319 -320.

215. Ibid : P 155

216. Darika Dwija, *Santawali*, V. 1619, P. 73.

*hen kathā sunilanta                      sattrā gṛha sajāilata*

*rāmrāi maha rangamone//*<sup>217</sup>

(According to the advice of Śaṅkaradeva Rāmrāi very gladly built a sattra-griha, i.e. a house for meeting of Bhakat)

According to Viṣṇuram Medhi, “He gave us universal religion, culture, music, dance and drama and a well-unit democratic social institution of *Sattra*, through which he preached his religious tenets. In this *Sattras* people of all classes and castes whether devotees, disciples, followers or sympathizers meet together and perform social and religious functions”.<sup>218</sup>

The *Nāmghars* and *Sattras* are the gifts of *Vaiṣṇava* movement. Along with the spread of vaiṣṇavism, inaugurated by Śaṅkaradeva, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century a large number of *Nāmghars* (prayer halls) sprang up through out the length and breath of the country. The existence of a village, inhabited by Hindu people, without a *Nāmghar* in Assam, in fact can hardly be conceived of<sup>219</sup> It should be noted that the *Sattras* work both as seats of religious learning and residential schools. The *Nāmghars* which were set-up as central religious institution of the village worked to a large extent towards spread of intellectual and cultural activities in the village, and in course of time being nerve-centres of the village came to co-ordinate all the aspect of social, economical and political life of the Assamese people. The *Nāmghars* further serve as a panchayat hall,

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217. Bhusan Dvija, *Śaṅkara Carit*

218. Neog, M (1998) *Śaṅkaradeva and His Times* :P IX.

219. Rajguru, S (1988) *Medieval Assamese Society* : P.260.

where villagers gather to discuss and solve many of their day to day problems. *Nāmghar* became the main centre of cultural activities.<sup>220</sup>

A social life of any country could not be altogether detached from religion. The ethical basis of the society has always been derived from religion. The sattras acted more or less as the guardians of morality by keeping close vigilance over their disciples. *Nāmghar* is the institute around which all cultural activities of an Assamese village move.

This institution is nothing but an extended wing or a miniature replica of the sattras institution. Besides a prayer hall, villagers assemble here on various occasions to discuss matters concerning their village.<sup>221</sup>

*Nāmghar* helps the Assamese society to unite together. Again it helps to become tolerant, polite, noble and maintain good behavior.<sup>222</sup>

#### 4.10.10 Religion (*Eka-Śāraṇa-Nāma-Dharma*)

**Religion:** - Religions are complex system of beliefs. Religion etymologically means something that helps to bind man to man or man to God.<sup>223</sup>

According to Bartrand Russel, “Religion is based on faith a firm belief in something for which there is no evidence.”<sup>224</sup>

A true religious spirit makes us God fearing. It inculcates in us the virtues of unselfishness and love for all. Religion does not consist only rites and rituals. There

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220. Barua, B.K (2009) *Śāṅkaradeva Vaiṣṇava Saint of Assam* : P 108.

221. Sarma, S.N (2016) *The Neo Vaiṣṇava Movement and Satra Institution of Assam* :P 155.

222. Deka, Bhabendra Nath (2017) *Śāṅkari Sahitya Sangskritir Sourav*: P. 60.

223. Agarwal, J.C (2010) *Modern Indian Education* : P 133.

224. Russel, Bertrand (1963) *Human Society in Ethics and Politics*: P. 215.

are some other aspects of religion which helps a man to become moral, spiritual and social. With the help of *Eka-Śaraṇa-Nāma-Dharma* Śaṅkaradeva united the people where there was no discrimination among man and woman, rich and poor or *brahaman* or *sudra*.

*situ chandalak garistha māni*

*jār jivāgre thāke hāri bāñī*//<sup>225</sup>

(Law caste peoples are the great, if he chant the name of God)

*parama maṅgal* *harināma dharmma*

*yahara thakai mukhata /*

*tāretetikṣaṇe* *bhaṣma huya yaya*

*mahāpapa kauti sata* //<sup>226</sup>

(If the person chant the auspicious nam then his sin will be go away like ashes)

*kariyā kalit kirtan ati*

*pāwe vaikunthak chautṛsh jāti*//<sup>227</sup>

(In the kalikal thirty four castes can ascend the heaven with the help of *Nām* or ‘prayer’) Śaṅkaradeva used these method to reformed the society and inculcated value education)

#### 4.10.11 Work Culture

Śaṅkaradeva gave importance on work culture and discouraged the practice of bagging.<sup>228</sup>

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225. *Pāsanda-Marddan, Kirttan*, V. 117.

226. *Kirttan, Ajamil upakhyana*, 205.

227. *Kīrttanghoṣā, Pāṣaṇḍa Mardan*, V. 73.

228. Barkakati, S.K (2015) *Srīmanta Śaṅkaradeva Multifaceted Genius*: P 95.

It is found that Śrīram Āta gave up his bagging profession after his Guru's advice<sup>229</sup> and also brought economic equality to keep their objects at a place and distributed together. He advised two types of education one for *Hāṭī Bhakat* and other for common people. A *Hāṭī Bhakat* done all type of works in the *kīrttanghar*, and also other household works, agriculture and other performing and visual arts. From the *Borgīt* of his follower Mādhavadeva on –*tezare kamālāpati paravāte ninda* reveals this culture. Śaṅkaradeva introduced Prasad also related work culture. His eldest son Ramananda to the care of a Mazumder learned *Kaithelī Vidyā* was also an example of work culture.<sup>230</sup>

*Vṛndāvaṇī vastra* is also a good example of work culture. Śaṅkaradeva attached great importance of dignity of labour and respect from individuals.<sup>231</sup> His favourite disciple Mādhavadeva and other followers also supported him. In the *Borgeet* of Mādhavadeva's reflected this ideology.

*parbhāte shyām kānu dhenu laiyā saṅge*

.....

*jagatare guru hari kāsī gope kāse*/(133)<sup>232</sup>

(In the morning lord Kṛṣṇa went to village gazing land for cow herd though he was a son of King Nanda and Lord of all universe).

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229. Lekharu, U. (1952), *Kathā Guru Carit*: P. 302.

230. Neog, M (2004) *Cultural Heritage of Assam*: P. 90.

231. Murthy, H.V. Sreenivasa, "The lasting value of Sankaradeva's teachings" in (Chaliha, B.P (Ed. 1998), P. 35 *Śaṅkaradeva's Studies In Culture*.

232 . Dutta Baruah Hari Narayan (Ed.1991) *Borgīt*: P.149.

#### 4.10.12 *Prasāda* (Sacred Offering)

Food by its nature can attract the people irrespective of caste, creed and age. There for Prasad introduced by Śaṅkaradeva and his followers containing lentils, pulse, fruit and sweet etc. This system was help to inspire the people to come the religious institutions.

*sarva dese sidha kāri nāivedya diwāya*

*keṣa māh-sāul dibe śaṅkare bulaya//*<sup>233</sup>

(There was prevailed boiled prasād (*Bhoga*) in other parts of India but Śaṅkaradeva introduced raw prasad in Assam)

Assamese *Prasāda* is prevail in the *Thān*, *Sattra*, *Nāmghar* or *Kīrttanghar* was ingredient of raw fruits and pluses with ginger and salt and ladoos of raw rice powder and coconuts. It had contained all food values yet people were completely ignored about it. These were rinsed and cleaned hygienically and distributed in banana leaf by the person with mouth covered and cleaned hand and disease less. Children were also came to take these tempting (attractive) food and automatically involved in learning the *nām prasṅga* (prayer) and other rules and regulations of vaiṣṇavas *Eka-Śaraṇa-Nāma-Dharma* and also value education.

#### 4.10.13 Travelling

To complete all education according to Locke (1632-1704) travel is necessary. The last part of education is travel to complete the gentle man.<sup>234</sup>

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233. Darika Dwija, *Santawali*, V. 383, P-70.

234. Mookarjee, K.K (1972) *Great Educators of The World* : P 31.

Man always tried to see the unseen and knew the unknown. Travelling is a medium by which one can fulfill this curiosity. Travelling brings to mind a world of excitement, fascination, adventure and pleasure. After the death of his wife surjyavati and married his daughter Manu in 1481 at the age of thirty two he went out for pilgrimage.<sup>235</sup> He travelled twelve years and visited almost all the sacred places of India. He was accompanied by seventeen others including Mahendra Kandali, his teacher.<sup>236</sup> This journey helps him to become a broadminded man without superstitions. As a poet, writer and religious leader he expressed his ideology about *Eka-Śāran-Nāma-Dharma* which is a part of Neo-Vaiṣṇava movement, and popularized in all over Indian by some *Vaiṣṇava guru*. In 1550 Śaṅkaradeva set out on a pilgrimage accompanied by one hundred and twenty *bhakat*.<sup>237</sup> Travelling is a part of education. So with the help of this media one can fulfill his various knowledge. After visited these various places Śaṅkaradeva and his disciples understand the main aim of Vaiṣṇavism and diffused it among the Assamese people. The places of pilgrimage presented him the universal vision. Though he was a person of a local habitation he was regarded as a representative of all humanity.<sup>238</sup> Most significant result of his first pilgrimage is that it helped to a great extent in evolving a perspective in the artist thinker his mission which he followed and translated into reality in his later life.<sup>239</sup>

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235. Neog, M (1998) *Śaṅkaradeva and His Time*: P. 103.

236. Lekharu, U, (Ed.1952), *Kathā Guru Carit*, P. 29.

237. Goswami, K.N.D (2007) *Mahāpurush Śaṅkaradeva* : P. 47.

238. Barua, G : (2014), *Sankaradeva, A critical Appraisal of His Philosophy and Religion* : P. 26.

239. Mahanta, P.J (2007) *Śaṅkaradeva Movement : Its Cultural Horizon* : P 6.

Education is an ever widening and dynamic concept. Meaning and forms of education depends on according to the existing social condition. The social, political and religious condition of Assam at that time of Śaṅkaradeva, i.e. fifteen and sixteen century was full of superstitions, social evils and disintegration. So as a social reformer Śaṅkaradeva's value education system had a great impact on the cultural and social life of Assam was help to discard these errors from the society.

The Vaiṣṇava renaissance thus reached out to all fields of cultured and developed life in Assam, enriched them and brought about all together a unifying and glorifying vitality to this part of the great *Bhāratavarṣa* (India).<sup>240</sup>

*Thāns and Sattras* have always been the life line of Assamese culture and heritage. The *Sattras* of Assam are spiritual institutions and they are the name of promoting the art, culture and history of Śrīmanta Śaṅkaradeva, who was a great saint, philosopher, writer of Assam. It is Śrīmanta Śaṅkaradeva's incredible effort to form this cultural base for Assamese people by creating some everlasting spiritual writings through *Borgīts* (Religious songs) *Bhāonās* (Religious plays) musical instruments (the *tāl, khole*) etc. But it is very unfortunate that his first ever creation the religious drama *Cihnayātrā* is still in oblivion and seeks light from eminent writers.<sup>241</sup>

The *Sattras* of Assam have always been known as oases of serenity, the hub of traditional Assamese Knowledge that sustains our rich heritage, culture and religion. The *sattras* have made persistent efforts to unite this greater Assamese society through

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240. Neog, M (1967) *Śaṅkaradeva*, P. 60.

241. Assam Tribune 2016 april 23. A rich legacy

*Eka-Śaraṇa-Nāma-Dharma* These spiritual institutions provide the cultural base to promote the vaiṣṇava religion with the essence of *Nāma-Dharma* and *Bhakti Dhārā* (the serving point) through *satriya* music and Borgīts.<sup>242</sup>

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242. Goswami, R.D. “Loosing a legacy” Assam Tribune June 4, 2016.