

PREFACE

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.

Śrīmanta Śaṅkaradeva (1449-1568) the *Vaiṣṇava* leader of Assam was not only a religious preacher but also a great educationist who innovated various media to educate the common people of Assam. At medieval period all sorts of evil practices, superstitions and social disintegration prevailed in Assam and the political situation was in great disturbance. Assam was a country where there were many castes and many religions. So Śaṅkaradeva took these problems as serious issues and steps were taken to improve the situation. At that time *Bhakti* movement spread all over the country. As a *Vaiṣṇava* leader Śaṅkaradeva started the *Bhakti* movement in Assam.

To construct a peaceful, disciplined society Śaṅkaradeva and his followers established *Nāmghar*, *Thān* and *Sattrā*, where they propagated the *Eka-Śaraṇa-Nāma-Dharma* and inculcated various types of values. Education is the most important invention of mankind. It is a process of all round development of life, by which one can adjust with his situation. Śaṅkaradeva had not used the term education but in action he really dealt with education. So here decided to make a study to know the contribution of *Thān* and *Sattrā* to the value education of Assam, specially Bardowā *Thān*, the birth place of Śaṅkaradeva. Much work has already been done in the area of literary contribution of Śaṅkaradeva and his followers, and other contributions to performing art and religious and social contribution of *Thān* and *Sattrā*. But no attempt has so far been made in systematic manner of the contribution of *Thān* and *Sattras* to the value education of Assam.

Thān and *Sattras* are the pillars of *vaiṣṇava* culture of Assam. These are the institutions which have been pivotal in ensuring social cohesion among the people of Assam and integrating them to a greater Assamese community, providing them religious identity of their own with Śaṅkaradeva's *Eka-Śaraṇa-Nāma-Dharma*. Those are the places that have been used for creation, practice and preservation of Assamese art and craft, painting and literature. *Thān and Sattras* are not merely the means of propagating religious faith but instrumental in organizing and preserving of culture and inculcating human and environmental values. At present there are more than seven hundred small or big *Sattras* in Assam and have been contributing to the greater Assamese society from their end.

Bardowā is the first *Thān/Devgrha* established by Śaṅkaradeva with his friends and family at his birth place. At Bardowā he enacted his first drama (*pantomime*) *Cihnayātrā*. This can be said as first *Yātrā* (step) towards his *Aṅkiyā Nāt* (drama). After that he composed six dramas, that is *Aṅkiyā nāt*, translated and transcreated many parts of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavat*, *Rāmāyan*, in his life time in various places. Bardowā is the first place where Śaṅkaradeva gave same status to all castes. *Doul utava* also first started at Bardowā. But for unsuitable political and social situations Śaṅkaradeva and his followers wandered from one place to another and established *Thān and Sattras* and *Kīrttanghar* in those places.

Barodwā remained abandoned from 1516 A.D till Āi Kanaklatā the grand daughter-in-law of Śaṅkaradeva along with her adopted son and nephew *Dāmodarātā* rediscovered the Bardowā *Thān* in 1656.

After many ups and downs Bardowā *Thān* reached at present stage. After independence utmost endeavor of many dedicated persons made Bardowā alive. Now every village or town, *Thān* or *Sattras* has its their own *Nāmghar/ Kīrttanghar*

where people celebrate various functions i.e. *Bhāonā*, *Nām prasaṅga*, *Doul Utsava* etc. which are the contribution of Bardowā *Thān* and have great value to construct a utilitarian society.

The present study has been divided into seven chapters, each making thorough study of the problem. First chapter is the Introduction, where given a brief description of the topic, statement of the problem, significance of the study, conceptual frame works, delimitation of the study, Methodology, objectives and research questions of the study.

Review of related literature is the second chapter of the study. The third chapter is Methodology. In this chapter description about sample, tools and techniques used to find out the objectives of the study are mentioned. The 4th chapter is the contribution of *Thān* and *Sattra* to the value education of Assam. In this chapter descriptions about the meaning of value and education, social scenario of Assam during 15th and 16th century, Śaṅkaradeva as a pioneer of vaiṣṇava institution, objectives behind establishment of *Thān* and *Sattras*, contribution of *Thān* and *Sattras* to the value education of Assam and methods innovated by Śaṅkaradeva to inculcate value education are given.

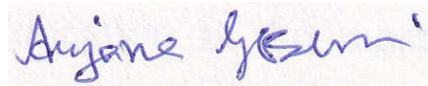
Chapter 5th is the “Bardowā *Thān*: Its contribution towards value Education.” In this chapter there gives geographical description of Bardowā *Thān* with original and present administrative and population structure. Contribution of Śaṅkaradeva during his stay at Bardowā, rediscover of Bardowā *Thān*, functions and festivals at Bardowā *Thān* and importance and impact of Bardowā *Thān* are also included in this chapter.

The 6th chapter is the analysis and findings. Here put forward the objective wise findings and problems faced by Bardowā *Thān* and their remedies.

The 7th chapter is the concluding chapter of the study where put forward the abstract of the study and suggestions for further research related with the topic. i.e *Thān*, *Sattrā*, value education, Śaṅkaradeva etc.

For development of the *Thān* and *Sattrā* importance should be given on the following points.

- i) The surroundings of the *Thān* and *Sattrā* should be encroachment free zone for all purpose.
- ii) It has not come into the lime light as much as it was to be in comparison to other historical and religious holy places due to insufficient publicity. Government and conscious citizens should try to publicise these institutions with culture through booklets, articles and cinemagraphy in different languages like Hindi, English etc.
- iii) Communication system should be improved for the convenience of tourists and other devotees and public.
- iv) Methods of value education innovated by Śaṅkaradeva should be introduced in education system to build a better and utilitarian society.



Date:

Place: Nagaon

Anjana Goswami

Research Scholar

Mahapurush Srimanta Śaṅkaradeva

Vishwavidyalaya, Nagaon