

## PREFACE

I generally found a profound enthusiasm for the relative investigation of the extraordinary personalities of the world and eventually, I got the opportunity to pursue my Doctoral Degree in Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyalaya (MSSV), Nagaon. During the course work (1<sup>st</sup> Semester) of the Ph.D. program, I gathered in-depth information and knowledge about the great saint and social reformer of Assam, Mahāpuruṣa Śrīmanta Śaṅkaradeva and after the completion of the course work and review of relevant extensive literature and as a student of Political Science, I felt the need to compare Śaṅkaradeva with Karl Marx on the grounds that both are extraordinary personalities in their respective periods and had done phenomenal work for uplifting the downtrodden and marginalized sections of the society, and still have been inspiring generations to follow their foot-steps and ideals. After consultation and discussion with my mentor, I have selected the research theme and hence put-forth the study named - **Social Reconstruction of Śaṅkaradeva: A Study in the light of Karl Marx.**

In social sciences, the concept of social reconstruction embraces social recovery of conflict, sharing a vision of mutual respect, the reduction of prejudice, and increased understanding of human fragilities. In Assam, the most significant social reconstruction of the society was affected by Śaṅkaradeva (1449—1568), the pioneer of Neo-Vaiṣṇavism in Assam. The Neo-Vaiṣṇavism preached by the saint is also known as *Eka-Śaraṇa –Hari Nāma-Dharma*. According to Śaṅkaradeva, *Viṣṇu* or *Kṛṣṇa* is the supreme God. So, complete surrender to Lord *Kṛṣṇa* is the basic

principle of this religious order. As a social reformer of Assam, Śaṅkaradeva initiated the process of social reconstruction through *Kṛṣṇa bhakti*, where his ideology was based on egalitarianism and humanitarian spirit.

Karl Marx (1818-1883) was one of the most influential social thinkers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century from Germany. He is known in the world as the architect of socialism and the champion of communism. He was a good organizer, a committed revolutionary, a voracious reader, and an effective writer. He committed himself to the cause of the exploited working class and declared a kind of an intellectual battle against the exploiting rich of the capitalist class.

Śaṅkaradeva's purpose was to establish an egalitarian society through devotion and he believed that *bhakti* or devotion was the ultimate route to Godhead and salvation. He also believed that in the matter of devotion of God there is no difference. On the other hand, Karl Marx advocated a classless and stateless society through a proletarian or worker's revolution. Marx believed that in a society, class struggle or class conflict was an integral part. Therefore, Marx argued for economic security, social or national development, and freedom for self-expression. It is true that the method and places of social change of these two social thinkers were different, but both of them wanted to establish an egalitarian society for the greater interest of the common masses. Hence, the thinkers, Śaṅkaradeva and Karl Marx tried to investigate the real nature of society and value of human beings and extended, established their philosophy of social reconstruction from individual to the community level. As a whole, Śaṅkaradeva was a multidimensional personality, with various unique qualities. Karl Marx was one of the prominent social thinkers distinctively known for modern

scientific socialism. In this study, the emphasis has been laid on the prime area of study- the philosophy of social reconstruction of both these stalwarts.

The present work is an attempt to correlate and compare the thoughts of Śaṅkaradeva and Karl Marx in the area of social reconstruction. At first glance it appears that the thoughts of social reconstruction in respect of these two personalities have nothing in common. Because, Śaṅkaradeva's philosophy of social reconstruction is based on religion i.e. *Kṛṣṇa bhakti* in the east, but Karl Marx's thoughts are based on dialectical materialism and economic determinism of history in the west.

However, to make an intricate and comprehensive study of the theme, the proposed scheme of the research work has been divided into seven chapters preceded by an introduction and succeeded by a conclusion. In the first chapter I put forward the statement of the problem, conceptual framework, research questions, research methodology, objectives of the study, need of the study, and scope of the study. In the second chapter, the review of related literature is presented. The third chapter contains a general concept of social reconstruction, views of western and eastern thinkers on society and cosmology, some important components of social reconstruction, social reconstruction and its significance and relevance of some events of Europe, India and Assam and, thoughts on social reconstruction of Śaṅkaradeva and Karl Marx. The fourth chapter deals with the philosophy on social reconstruction of Śaṅkaradeva, his background of the thoughts for formation of social reconstruction in the society and the basic areas of Śaṅkaradeva's social reconstruction philosophy. The fifth chapter deals with the social reconstruction philosophy of Karl Marx and his background for the formation of social reconstruction thoughts and some important ingredients of

social reconstruction by Karl Marx for the development of individual level to community level. The sixth chapter deals with the comparative analysis of the social reconstruction philosophy of Śaṅkaradeva and Karl Marx, the philosophical basis, attitude towards class, religion, human rights, gender equality, major determining factors of social development and way to achieve classless society or path of emancipation and liberation and in the last chapter, I have presented the observation, finding, and conclusion of the study.

I have collected data from primary and secondary sources from various books, *Gurucarits*, biographies, research journals, research papers, and research periodicals to make the present study a fruitful one. In this thesis, I have used the APA (American Psychological Association) style in the bibliography portion. Further, I hope the information provided in the thesis will pave the way for future research activities in this domain.



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