

# Contribution of Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardeva :An Analytical study

Boby kalita  
Darrang college  
Assistant Professor

## **ABSTRACT:**

Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva (1449-1568) was a multi-dimensional genius, who transformed and modernized Assamese society with his egalitarian ideology. He worked in diverse fields like religion, literature, music, dance, drama, architecture, social reconstruction, etc. His literary and artistic contributions are living traditions in Assam today. The religion he preached is practiced by a large population, Sattras (monasteries) that he and his followers established continue to flourish and sustain his legacy.

**Key words:** Assamese Literature, Mahapurush Srimanta Sankar Dev, Culture.

## **INTRODUCTION :**

Srimanta Sankardeva was a human God within the world and amongst the people of Assam and he's the foremost celebrated name in Assam. He was really the foremost worthy son of God, which is also considered an incarnation by a section of Assamese people. Srimanta Sankardeva was a versatile genius, an honest administrator, a spiritual teacher and a variety one social reformer. He was all, and each one was in him – a painter, a musician, a scholar and specifically an ideal Assamese of an extended past. Srimanta Sankardeva is kind of a savior to Assamese society. He spread Neo Vaishnavism in Assam and regenerated the whole society refurbishing its faith, cultural, social organization. Srimanta Sankardeva had not only reformed the entire Assamese Society but also laid the foundation of Assamese culture with his contributions in the field of literature, dance, drama, music, painting etc. His literary and artistic contributions are alive.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

To review the tutorial significance of the Contribution of Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankardeva within the world of Assamese literature and culture.

## **METHODOLOGY:**

This study has been prepared mainly using analytical methods.

## **RESULT AND ANALYSIS:**

Contribution of Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankardeva within the sphere of Assamese literature and culture. Srimanta Sankardeva's contributions to the shaping of Assamese culture are immense. Under the umbrella of Ek-Sarana-Naam-Dharma several dance, song and other art forms were propagated by him which are practiced widely even today. Ankiya Naat, Bhaona, Sattriya Nritya, Borgeet apart from his great poetic works form a major part of the Assamese culture.

### Ankiya Naat and Bhaona:—

Ankiya Naat are a class of one-act plays created by Srimanta Sankardeva. These plays are usually centered on Krishna and are written in the Brajawali language which gives them a certain poetic rendering. Some notable Ankiya Naat of Srimanta Sankardeva are:

- 1.Patni-prasada
2. Parijat-harana
- 3.Kali-damana 4.Rukmini-harana
- 5.Keli-gopal
- 6.Srirama-vijaya

The text of a few of these plays have been lost with time. The performances associated with these Ankiya Naat are called Bhaona. Live instruments, singers, dance and elaborate costumes are the essential elements of a traditional bhaona. These performances were created to spread moral and religious awareness through the medium of entertainment.

### Sattriya Nritya:

Sattriya Nritya is a classical dance form with its roots in the ancient drama and music texts of India, particularly the Natya Shastra. Srimanta Sankardeva modernized this existing form and introduced drama and expressive dancing, nritya and nritya, as a form of community religious art for emotional devotion to Krishna. During his time this dance form was practiced by the monks inside satras and namghars in the form of dance-drama centered around Krishna. In the second half of the 20th century this dance form went out to the metropolitan stage and both men and women started

performing this dance form. The Sangeet Natak Academy recognized Satriya Nritya as an official classical dance of India in the year 2000.

### Borgeet :-

Borgeet is a collection of lyrical songs composed by Srimanta Sankardeva and his disciple Sri Madhabdev. These are devotional songs written in the Brajawali language, set to specific ragas but no taal. A prayer service in the namghar or satra starts with the devotional Borgeet.

Srimanta Sankardeva wrote his first borgeet " Mon meri Ram sanehi laagu" in Brajavali language while on his pilgrimage to Badarikashrama. He composed around 240 borgeet in total and compiled them in a book which got burned in a wildfire. His favorite disciple Sri Madhavdeva followed his footsteps and composed around 157 borgeet and carried forward the legacy.

### Literary Contributions:

Srimanta Sankardeva was a great poetic genius whose contributions in the literary scene of Assam is noteworthy. Some of the major religious texts that every Assamese adhere to were compositions of this great saint and reformer. Some of his major literary works are:-

- a)Kirtan-Ghosa
- b)Harishchandra-upakhyan
- c)Ajamilopakhyaana
- d)Bali-chalana
- e)Kuruksheetra-yatra
- f) Gopi-uddhav-samvad
- g)Amrita-manthana

He also translated eight books from Bhagavata Purana which was named Bhagavat, and is the main text of Ek-Sarana-Naam-Dharma or Neo-Vaishnavism. Some other texts of Bhakti theory composed by him are:

- 1.Bhakti-pradip
- 2.Anadi-patana
- 3.Nimi-navasiddha-samvada
- 4.Bhakti Ratnakar
- 5.Gunamala

### Sankaradeva's contribution to Vaishnavite Renaissance:

Sankaradeva, after his return from pilgrimage, waged a relentless crusade against Sakta worship and Tantric practices. His stature grew to its full height against the spiritual barrenness of Saktism. With utter contempt for cant and supreme faith in the spirit, he vigorously launched the Vaishnavite Renaissance. Sankaradeva dispensed with the Vedic rituals and worship of diverse gods and goddesses. He enjoined adoration of one God and named his new faith Ekasarana Nama-dharma, the religion of supreme surrender to the One, and trait One is Visnu

who in the form of Narayana manifests himself in various incarnations from age to age. The most beloved incarnation of Visnu is Krsna. Sankaradeva says: "There is one God and one form of devotion, and there is none else." The surrender to the One is very rigorously enjoined in his religion. For an Ekasraniya, the worship of other gods and goddesses is strictly prohibited. It has been said by the saint himself that a "Vaisnava should not worship any other god's temple, nor should he partake of offerings made to any other god. Bhakti (devotion) would be vitiated by such fickleness.

Sankaradeva, it should be noted, advocated neither a religion of extreme asceticism nor complete renunciation of family life. He upheld the golden mean between the two. He believed that renunciation should be internal, not external. He realized that men and women have to live in the world and to pursue their professions. The saint himself led a full family life and took a Second wife After the death of the first.

#### Sankaradeva's Contribution towards Religion:

His religion upheld the ideal of a chaste and devoted domestic life and offered a simple way to salvation based on ethical-devotional codes; accordingly, like the gospel of the Buddha, it won over the entire population of the country in no time.

The main argument stressed by Sankaradeva for grihastha stage (house-hold) of life was that the man in this stage of life could do many welfare works of

the society by supporting one's own family and relatives, giving gifts to the needy and the poor, and performing religious duty. In upholding this view, Sankaradeva was more influenced by the Mahabharata and the pravritti marga or Karma-yoga (path of action) of the Gita. He occasionally referred to the utterances of the Sage Syumarasmi in the Mahabharata Where the sage favoring the house-hold life says: "To achieve a proper equilibrium of mind in misery as well as happiness is a necessary step towards achieving salvation, it should also be noted that without taking resort to the house-hold life, one does not achieve this state of mind. Just as all the creatures are dependent on their mother for their life, so all the other as Ramas (stages of life) are dependent upon the house-hold stage of life." Sankaradeva's religion, further, brought a new meaning and depth to social and cultural life. For the first time in Assam's history, he asserted the dignity of man in society independent of the accidents of birth and social rank, and established the spiritual equality of all men. In his fraternity, Brahmanas, Sudras and men of lower birth enjoyed equal liberty of worship, devotion and prayer.

Sankaradeva admitted into his fold people from all social orders, and among his chief disciples

there were Brahmanas, tribals, and even Muhammedans. The Sankarite movement produced far-reaching religious and social effects. It gave a great

impetus to the advancement of learning and literature in Assam. Sankaradeva, though a

distinguished Sanskrit scholar, wrote mainly in Assamese, with the aim of bringing Sanskrit lore within the reach of the uneducated masses. He wrote and did a number of textual commentaries and translations to expound his creed, and he transformed whatever he touched into gold.

These writings had also a practical utility; they were constantly required for guidance in the performance of one's duties. A versatile genius, he also wrote poetry, songs and plays which gave a new impulse to Assamese literature. The translation of the entire text was not a light job for one man; so Sankaradeva allotted different sections for translation to his disciples. He

himself undertook the rendering of the major portion, namely Books I, II, III, VII, VIII, IX, X and XII. Besides Sankaradeva, other writers who undertook the translation of different sections were Ananta Kandali (Books IV, VI and a section of Book X), Kesavacarana (Books VII and IX), Gopalacarana Dvija (Book III), KaviKalapcandra (sections of Book IV), Sri Visnu Bharati (sections

of Book IV), Ratnakara Misra (sections of Book V), Sri Candradeva (sections of Book IV), Aniruddha Kayastha. The next outstanding literary production of Sankaradeva is the Kirtana-ghosh (the lyric in praise of God's Glory).

Sankaradeva's contribution in Assamese literature not only pinpoints his literary and human genius but even the rich body of Assamese literature as a whole.

### **Conclusion:**

Hari naamo race, Baikuntha prokaxe

Prem amritara nodi

Srimanta Sankare, paar bhangi dile

Bohe brahmandoko vedi

(Naam Ghosa, Sri Madhavdeva)

Srimanta Sankardeva broke all shackles and created an ideal place for everyone to live in. A place where devotion to Krishna and naam ras ran through the veins of the people thereby bringing them closer to the Supreme Being. Srimanta Sankardeva breathed his last on 23rd August 1568 in Bhale Donga, Cooch Behar leaving behind a rich cultural legacy for the Assamese to inherit. This inheritance is far meaningful and expensive, an inheritance that defines the roots of the Assamese culture.

### **REFERENCE:**

Sarma, SatyendraNath. Asomiya Sahityar  
Samiksha Mak Itibritta. 9th edition. Rihabari, Guwahati: Saumar Prakash, 2006. Edited.