



MAHAPURUSH SRIMANTA SANKARDEVA: THE PARADIGM ON SYNCHRONIZATION AND REINSTATEMENT

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Abstract:

Srimanta Sankardeva was a scholar and knowledge manager and organized a knowledge management system which includes production, collection, Dissemination and preservation of knowledge. He had clear objectives of his research with great social relevance. Srimanta Sankardeva's knowledge management system is still significant in present society.

KEY WORDS:

scholar and knowledge manager , medieval Assam , motivator.

INTRODUCTION-

Srimanta Sankardeva was a great Vaishnava Saint and social organizer as well as reformer of medieval Assam. He was an imaginative artist, an innovator, a motivator and a preacher of Neo-Vaishnavite Movement. He did not confine himself only to preach Bhakti doctrines, but tried to sustain the society and in true sense by enlightening the work culture among the peoples of different ethnic groups of Assam.



Some of the Literature Review is given below:-

1.S.K. Chatterjee, N. Roy and some other have expressed their opinions in regards of acculturation. They have taken into consideration that the Aryans were more cultured people than other tribes who entered India prior to Aryans. The Aryan imposed their cultural ideals either by overthrowing or by preaching their religion.

2. There are different sources from which we may have a good idea about the growth and development of Neo-Vaishnavism in Assam in the 15th and 16th centuries. "The Neo-Vaishnavite Movement and Satra-Institution of Assam" by Dr. S. N. Sarma, "Katha-Gurucarita" by Upendra Chandra Lekharu, "Sankaradeva and his times" by Dr. Maheswar Neog and "Sankaradeva" by Dr. Banikanta Kakati are of great value in the field of societal impact on harmonization and peace restoration of Srimanta Sankardeva.

3. According to Bhagawat Gita- "There is no other sacred than knowledge..... Everything starts from knowledge and everything ends in knowledge."

4. According to S. K. Chatterjee- "... Sankardeva was the greatest builder of Assam by bringing in a purer spiritual life and although circumstances prevented his influence from being spread into other parts of India as a religious leader he is unquestionably one of the greatest India has produced and he deserved to be mentioned with Sankaracharya, Ramanujacharya Basavappa, Ramananda, Kabir, Chaitanya, Mirabai, Guru Nanak and Tulsi Das".

The movement of Neo-Vaishnavism was a great event in the North Eastern part of India in the 15th-16th centuries and its founder Srimanta Sankardeva was a man of versatile genius. He was a great reformer and nation-builder. The people of Assam look upon him as an incarnation of God Vishnu. He gave Assam a new age, a new life, a new culture and above all, a new state. His "Neo-Vaishnavism" is also known as 'Mahapurushia Dharma'.

The religion of Sankardeva was based on the "Srimat Bhagavata and the Geeta".

It was very simple. He brought the new message of a new religion of love as he proclaimed the eternal dharma based on truth and love. His teachings centred round morals and ideals. These are “Atmavat Sarva Bhuteshu”, “Ahimsa Param Dharma”, “Bahujana Hitaya” and so on. His “Eka-Sarana-Nam-Dharma” does not support the worship of any other gods and goddesses but Krishna, the supreme reality. In other words, in the religion of Sankaradeva there is only one God — ‘Lord Krishna’ who is above all.

The religion of Sankaradeva was based on democratic principles and tolerant spirits. He kept no distinction between caste and creed, between the rich and the poor and between the high and the low. In this way he wanted to make the society a classless one. His pupils included men of all classes of the society. There were several Brahmin and Sudra pupils of Sankaradeva including Garo, Bhutia, Naga, Mikir and fishermen etc. His famous pupils were Madhabdeva, a Kayastha, Damodardeva, Sarvabhanmadeva and Purusottamadeva, trio Brahmins, Narrotama Atai, a Naga, Bolai Atai, a Mikir, Chaudsai Atai and Jayahari Atai, both Muslims, Damodar Atai, a Bhutia, Ram Atai, a Kachari, Govinda Atai, a Garo, Paramananda Atai, a Miri, Madhav Atai, a potter, Sri Ram Atai, a Kaivartta (fisherman), Haridasa Atai, a baniya and so on. Moreover, it is learnt from Gurucarits that Sankaradeva had different pupils from different parts of modern India. But it should be mentioned here that he did not accept any people as his disciples who belonged to the sovereign class. This was also so in case of the women.

Sankaradeva brought about a great change in the religious outlook of the people of Assam through his valuable teachings. He also united his pupils with the tie of community feeling. He organized the Vaishnavite society with the help of its three components as Nama-Kirtana, Satra and Namghar. Many Satras were set up in different parts of Assam with the progress of Neo-Vaishnavite. His two disciples, Madhavadeva and Damodaradeva gave a definite shape to the structural and organized aspects of the Satra institutions.

Sankaradeva made the last use of Satra and Namghar for the propagation of his religion. As a result, they became the religious centres of the people, where their intellectual and cultural activities were given a new inspiration for development. Of course, the growth and development of Satra and Namghar developed fully during the days of Madhavadeva and Damodaradeva after the death of Sankaradeva.

For the increase of his religion Sankaradeva had to compose songs, write drama and other works of literature. He wrote Rukmini Haran Kabya, Rumini-Harana, Kalidamana, Keligopal, Parijata-harana, Rama-Vijaya, Patniprasat Nat (drama) and so on. The ‘Kirtan-ghosa’ and the ‘Nama-ghosa’ of Sankaradeva and Madhavadeva were respectively the main Vaishnava books of the said period.

The Neo-Vaishnavism contributed much to the Assamese society and culture. It tried to remove the problem of untouchability from the society. It also brought certain changes in the food-habits of the people of Assam for which the Hindus stopped to take the meat of certain birds and animals. The Namghars served the village people as village courts, schools and above all, as prayer houses. Sankaradeva transformed the whole of North-Eastern India “socially, culturally, democratically and religiously” ushering in cohesion of a section of society of the area “spreading the message of Bhakti-cult”.

In Hinduism and Buddhism, “Bhakti” is a technical term meaning “portion, share”, from the root bhaj- “to belong to, to partake in, to worship”. Bhakti movement in Medieval India is responsible for the many rites and rituals associated with the worship of God by Hindu, Muslim and Sikhs of Indian Sub-continent.

The Bhakti movement was a Hindu religious movement of the medieval period that promoted the belief that salvation was attainable by everyone. In early 15th century,

many parts of our country witnessed a degradation of socio-economic and religious life. Superstitions and malpractices in different sides in the name of religion polluted the entire society.

Sankardeva twice went to pilgrimage and toured many sacred places of northern India. There only he met many learned scholars and saints and came to the connection with Bhakti Movement. He considered 'Bhakti' as main force or power of life's action. He regarded it as mother, father, brother, kith and kin as analysed in the 'Bhagavata'.

The new Vaishnavite Bhakti Movement started by Sankardeva in early 15th century was not limited only to preaching and practicing of 'Ekasaran-Nam-Dharma', hence, to expand the ideology and philosophy of Vaishnava Cult. He did a well disciplined trait through the medium of art, culture and literature and it occupied a 'golden age' in 'Assamese society' and its history.

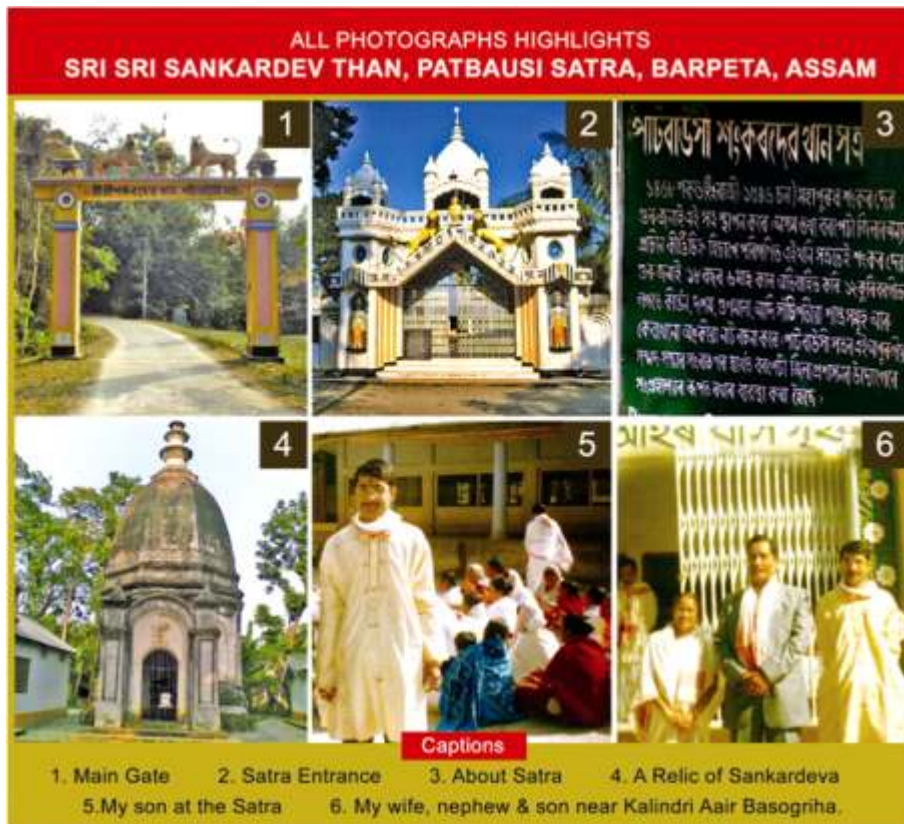
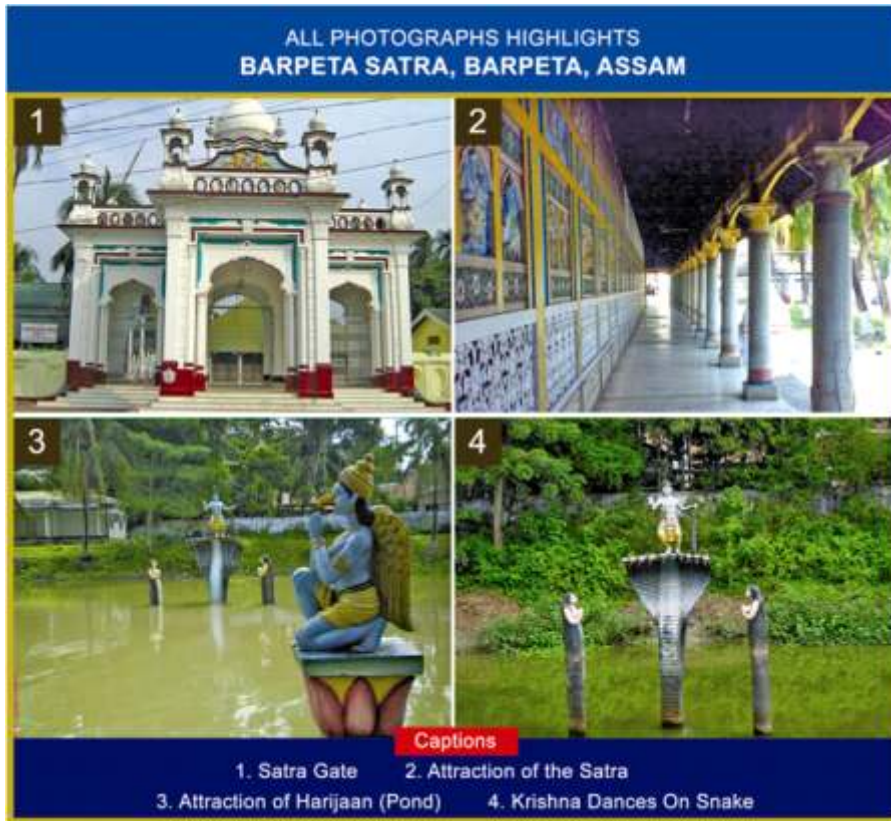
Srimanta Sankaradeva, the founder of Neo-Vaishnavism in Assam, was a man of versatile genius. He was a great reformer and nation-builder. The people of Assam look upon him as an incarnation of God Vishnu. He gave Assam a new age, a new life, a new culture. There are different sources from which we may have a good idea about the different aspects of the life of this great man.

The period from the 15th to the 16th century was really the period of worldwide reformation. However, religious reformers like Hari Vyas in Nepal, Ramananda in Orissa, Chaitanya Deva in Bengal, Sankaradeva in Assam was also given birth to.

The religion of Sankaradeva was based on democratic principles and tolerant spirits. He kept no distinction between caste and creed, between the rich and the poor, and between the high and low. In this way he wanted to make the society a classless one. He founded satras and Namgharas for bringing about a through change in the setup of society by removing untouchability on the one hand and other restrictions on the other. His teachings centred round morals and ideals. These are "Atmavat Sarva bhuteshu", "Ahimsa parama Dharma", "Bahujana Hitaya" and so on. His pupils included men of all classes of the society. There were several Brahmin and Sudra pulis of Sankardeva including Garo, Bhutia, Naga Mikir and fishermen. He also encouraged inter caste marriages in society. In this way, Srimanta Sankaradeva tried to do away with the problem of untouchability from the society. Even Gandhiji confessed Sankaradeva as the leader of the movement for removing untouchability. Now we find some of the ideals of Sankaradeva in the teachings of Acharyya Binova Bhave. They are also found in Gandhiji's ideal of 'Ram-Rajya'.

Sankaradeva was a man of multi-fold qualities and a social reformer out and out. The beginning of the religious reformation movement launched by Srimanta Sankaradeva in medieval period Assam highlighted the disintegration of ancient Kamrupa Kingdom. He structured the foundation of culturally vivacious and rich Assamese society. The medieval Assamese society wrapped all the ethnic groups living in the Eastern and North-Eastern part of Assam. He had to illustrate new route and to find new ways and means towards his destination. The mixture of the independent and supreme lands constituted the working area of Srimanta Sankardeva.

While talking about the national and international integration and unity, there are voices which state that it is incorrect to assume that India is one nation. The basis given is many residents of certain states may feel themselves to be different from the nationalist vision of India. Some Researchers, Sociologists and Anthropologists are of the view that acculturation, integration and assimilation are the three processes responsible for ethnic gamut which was associated with Srimanta Sankardeva.



Sankaradeva was a saint preacher whose prime mission was to highlight in the north eastern region the message of the Neo-Vaishnavite movement, with its accent on liberalism, humanism and spiritualism which had been sweeping over Northern India in those days. He greatly bonded the divergent faith of different ethnic groups of people land leading them to realize the real truth.

The socio-religious dimensions highlighted by Srimanta Sankaradeva were based on friendship, equanimity and toleration. He squeezed all kinds of people equally making no differentiation among them and felling no prejudice against anyone. He paid sufficient attention to the traditional heritage of Assam which is of great value in the international integration.

In my observation Srimanta Sankardev has left different valuable teachings and examples for the modern society which are of great value. His philosophy is more concerned with the cultural and spiritual arena. They are worthy of emulation today with just a little adjustment in keeping with the present scenario. He considered religion as an art which purifies men's life and enlightened. He pioneered a form of Vaisnavism known as Eka-Sarana-Hari-Nama-Dharma, popularity referred to as 'Mahapurushism', which considers Lord Krishna to be the one, Eternal and Absolute and stresses upon unqualified devotion to Him.

Sankardeva expanded the liberal and humanistic dimensions of bhakti for the very first time in Assam. The religious system of Sankaradeva is strictly monotheistic and the worship of deities other than Krishna is strictly prohibited. He successfully brought about amalgamation forgoing the divergent faith of different ethnic groups of people land leading them to realize the real truth.

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