

## Importance of Satriya Culture in Contemporary Time (Spicial Emphasis On Songs,Dances And Instruments)

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**ABSTRACT:** ShrimantShankardeva established Satriya culture for the first time in Assam . Madhavdeva, contemporary religious saint after Sankardeva and also as a disciple of Shankardeva set up many Satras in different places of Assam. Satras have its own rules and regulations, formal festival and religious belief. Satras have been beautifully celebrated all the tradition by the creation of Shankardeva. Shankardeva established Satra for religious practices as well as cultural practices. He popularized religion through Geet(songs), Dances, Acting only by his creative talent. These Songs, Dances, Instruments, Acting, which grew in that time, are highly popular in today's time also. The Satriya culture is deeply contributing to the cultural field of Assam. In present time also it is practiced with great honour.

**Key Word :** Satriya, cultural practice, songs, dance etc.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

ShriShriShankardeva established Satra-Sabha, 'Namghar' to popularize religious beliefs, ideas, rules and regulations among common people. The main aim of the Satras is to popularize 'Nabadha Bhakti' (nine types of Bhakti) and worship of God by Nabadha Bhakti and discussion of religious theory.

Satra also includes religious Poems, Dramas, Songs and it practises all these, through which people can be transmitted towards the focal point of religion. As a result, a traditional as well as systematic life style is created in the Satras.

Though, the aims and objectives of the Satras are the same but specifically rules and regulations of Satra, the types of festivals and norms are different. That is why different rules and regulations are seen in different Satras.

Madhavdeva, contemporary religious saint after Shankardeva and also as a disciple of Shankardeva, set up many Satras in different places of Assam. Satras have its own rules and regulations, formal festival and religious beliefs. Satras have been beautifully celebrating all the traditions by the creation of Shankardeva.

How is Satriya tradition in contemporary times, by the influence of Modernity? How far is Satriya Sanskrit going to exist? etc. and its importances and perspectives- A study by special reference of Songs, Dances, Instruments are reflected below.

### II. INTRODUCTION OF SATRIYA CULTURE

ShrimantShankardeva established Satriya culture for the first time in Assam . He established Satra for religious practices as well as cultural practices. He popularized religion through Geet(songs), Dances and Acting only by his creative talent. These Songs, Dances, Instruments, acting, which grew in that time, are highly popular in today's time also. The Satriya culture is deeply contributing to the cultural field of Assam. With Shankardeva, his main disciple Madhavdeva, Damodardeva, Padma Aata, and their creations like Songs, Dances, Dramas etc. are also included in Satriya culture later on. These creations are like jewels in the granary of Assamese culture. The cultural practices in Satras are-

(A) Daily duties

- Individual duties
- Duties done by all. (common duties)

(B) Tradition and belief of Satriya culture among the masses

(C) Festivals celebrated in Satras

- Janmastami (Birthday of lord Krishna)
- Raasleela
- Holi (festival of colours)
- Three types of Bihu
  - Bohag Bihu
  - Kati Bihu

- MaghBihu
- (D) Formal festival
  - Tithi (Birthday- Funeral) of saints.
  - Paalnaam
  - Festival of oath taking by Satradhikari (Head person of Satra)
- (E) Satriya cultural work in Satra
  - Bhauna (character playing)
  - SatriyaNritya
  - SatriyaGeet
  - SatriyaInstruments (Khol, Doba)

### III. VARIOUS PERSPECTIVES OF SATRIYA CULTURE

The main aim and objective of the Satra was to popularize 'Vaishnav Dharma'. To fulfil this motto, the disciples of Shankardeva established many Satras in Assam. The objective of 'Naba Vaishnav Dharma' is expressed with Satriya culture.

"Sajpochak, angivangia adirmajedisatrik vabarprakash, aisamuharanyatambixexatwa. Tadupori Akokvabes atriya sanskriti hisapeullekhorahoy jodiusanghatibhedesanskritikaryasamuharmajatkisuparthaykyaparilakshitya hoy.

Satriya sanskriti **Sangeet, Nritya**, are **Natya** itini utapakaraneresamridhya hoikeibataushatikajuriprabahito hoi aahise."

In above research paper three kinds of Satriya culture is discussed.

#### 3.1 GEET

'Geet' (songs) expresses our inner emotions through melody. Geets were one of the finest creation of Shankardeva. He popularized Vaishnav religion through **Bhakti** songs. The '**Raag**' of Sashtriyasangeet is seen in his songs. The songs written by Shankardeva, Madhavdeva, and their disciples were practiced in Satriya environment. Bargeet, Bhatima, Drama, Song, Tutai, Sapai etc. These songs are practiced in different Satras in Assam. Different **raag** practiced in Satriya songs are- Ahir, Ashuwari, Beluwar, Bhatiyali, Bhupali, Dhanashri, Gauri, Gandhar, Devagandhar, Kou, Kalyan, Kanada, Kamud, Kedar, Halite, Mallar, Mahoor, Purabi, Rangini, Shaymgada, Shri, Shrigauri, Shrigandhar, Sindhura, Suhai, Tud, TudBhatiyali, TudBasanta, Barari and Basanta.

Bargeet, Bhatima, Tutai are practised in Satra as daily activities. Drama songs are only played and practised in special occasions like Bhauna. Like this Satriya songs are practised in day to day life.

The songs written by Shankardeva and Madhavdeva, later conserved by Satra are called SatriyaSangeet and also this flow was maintained by the Satras. Shankardeva, Madhavdeva included '**DhrupadiRaag**' in songs and also included some elements of Drama Dance since the era of Bharat Muni.

#### 3.2 Dance/ Nritya

Dances are performed as an important part of Satra and so it is called as **SatriyaNritya**. Also including **Gayan-Bayan, Ojapali, Notuwa, Jhoomur, Sali, Apsara, Naduvangi, Mansuk, BhoortallNitya** etc. **Sutradharnitya, Behar Naas, GuxaiPrabesh Naas, GopiPrabeshNaas** also included and performed which is extract from the **AnkiyaBhauna**.

❖ **OJAPALI** : The literal meaning of Oja is- '**Nayak**' of the whole team and Pali is the assistant. Ojapali is an audio-visual ceremony. Main singer explains the old stories during songs, and Pali continuously repeats or assists him.

These are five organ of OjaPali- **Sabtaal, Jikoritaal, Soutaal, Hecharitaal, and Thookataal**. Attires and ornaments specially are- **Ojai Dhooti** made of **Pat or Muga silk**. Top (singkhap, pat) **Jalikota cloth, Pat chadar** (Gunafuliya), white turban on head (Jungapaak), in between '**Khopa**' unti on ear, **Monion** neck, and **Gamkharu** on hands.

#### ❖ JHUMURA DANCE

Madhavdeva was the creator of Jhumura Dance. This Dance form was taken from his Drama called Jhumura. There is a male dancer called '**Nartak**'. Special attire and style for Jhumura dance are- turban on head with tied hair, 'Jalikata Flowery '**bukusula**', Lohonga on waist, above it there will be **Tongali, Motamoni** on neck, Bracelet on hand and arm. Anklet (nupur) on feet. Especially Bargeet is sung in Jhumura Dance. The aim of this Dance is to worship God through Dance. Only in special occasion this dance form is performed.

❖ **BEHAR NAAS**

It was named from the drama written by Madhavdeva. This dance form expresses the joy of little Krishna and his gopis. 24-25 dancers dance as little Krishna along with Bargeet. Two parts of the dancers are 'Ram dani' and 'Geet Naas'.

❖ **MANCHIK NAAS**

This dance form is performed by Gayon-Bayon. Specially performed in the day of **NaamPrasanga**, and death anniversary of Shankardeva and Madhavdeva. To bestow respect to these '**Gurus**' this dance is performed. However **Sutradhari** Dance **Prabesh** Dance is also performed.

❖ **CHALI DANCE**

The main aim of this dance form is to communicate joyous enthusiasm through charming lookup. This dance form included in '**Shringar Rasa**' is mainly Lasya oriented. The word Chali has come from the 'Chali' (Spreading of plumes into a full-flown circular form) performed by peafowl.

The hair is tied over the head and covered with veil so that only face is visible. On the top of the body, front slit shirt is worn, made of '**shinkhaap**' and velvet. On the waist there is red embroidered white '**Tongali**'. At the bottom white '**Lohonga**'. Above **Lohonga** there is embroidered '**Aanchal**' and **Riha**, on the neck there is flower garland and bead rosary. In the hand '**Kharu**' (Bangles) and over the arms '**Baaju**'.

The chali dance of Kamalabari Satra is of 12 types and out of that only four are royal. There are three types of Chali dance – '**Ramdani**' (with out any song), '**Ghat Dance**' and '**Mela Dance**'.

❖ **NADUBHANGI**

Nadubhangi portrays lord Krishna's childhood. This dance form was performed by lord Krishna on the bank of Yamuna river with the gopis. The dance is started at the '**Raktataal**' or '**Paritaal**'. Generally in this dance four dancers take the get up of dancer Shri Krishna. In the Satras, after the tenth day of the death of every '**Bhakat**', this dance is performed after '**NaamPrasanga**' and '**Gayon- Bayon**'.

### 3.3 INSTRUMENTS

Another important thing given Shankardeva was instruments. Instruments make Bhauna, Song, Dance more beautiful and melodious. It is performed in Satras and plays with appropriate Songs with appropriate environment.

Instruments were first used in the dance where lord Shiva killed the monster called Tripurasura; as requested by Deity. Instruments were created from the body of Tripurasura. And man rhythm was created when Parvati Danced with the 'Taal of Mridanga' also with her dance- Mridanga, Verri, Patah, Jhanjata, Dindim, Homukh, Parab instruments were also played.

There are four types of Instruments- Tata, Aakanandha, for instance – Mridanga, Khol, Flute kind of Instruments, Taalets. These are performed in Assam since historic time.

Tata Instruments Specially- Beena, Vipanchy, Datar, Vilash, Kakilash, Tokari etc. Beena in three parts- Beena, Rudrabeena, Rambeena.

Tokari are also in three types- Tokari, Lau Tokari, and one is called AanandaLahari.

. Instruments used in the Satra are- Dogol, Dhol, Mridanga, Singa, Bongshi, Borkah, Madal, Sankha, Ghanta, Beena, Dalbenu etc. '**Khol**' is essential and oftenly played in Satras when ever it is Bhauna, Bargeet or Dance form.

## IV. IMPORTANCE OF SATRIYA SANSKRITI IN CONTEMPORARY TIME

Satriya culture was born with Vaishnav religion but later it got included in Assamese tradition and became a part of Assam. Though it has changed but the importance is still the same in the perspective of societal, cultural, economic, educational, literature.

- ❖ **Societal** :- Satra plays an important role in structuring of the society. Shankardeva was against superstition and caste/class discrimination, later society was shaped with his idea of non-discrimination. In every corner of Assamese village Satriya culture is seen and became an inseparable part. In present time also it is practiced with great honour.
- ❖ **Cultural** :- Songs, Instruments, Dances, Bhauna, etc. are included in Satriya culture. Satriya Culture has achieved different honour in Assamese society. Specially in the birth anniversary of Shankardeva and Madhavdeva, Satriya culture is practised. In short Satriya culture has achieved the best position among all the cultural forms.
- ❖ **Economic** :- In present time Satriya culture is related to economic earnings. As it is growing, the motivation to learn Satriya culture among the people have increased day by day. Many training centres are growing and economic activity is taking place.

The character played in a Bhauna are invited to different places. They are offered money. And also 'MukhaBhauna' became very popular in foreign countries also. Because of the market creation, the artists choose this path as their economic career opportunity.

So, Satriya culture has also achieved the importance in economic side.

❖ **Educational Importance :-** Satriya culture has achieved educational importance in recent times. Curriculamis available on – Satriya dance, Bargeet, Satriya Instruments etc. Educational degree is also being given. Though this education is not compulsory, but based on interests.

Various subject matter of Satriya culture has become a part of research. Many people including foreigners are also doing research on Satriya culture.

❖ **Creative importance or literature :-** 'Charitputhi' has beautiful mentions about Satriya culture on later period of Shankardeva. Satriya culture has achieved dignity in the writings of LakshminathBezboruah, BishnuRabha, Jyoti Prasad Agarwala etc. The touch of Satriya culture is seen in various writings by various authors such as- LakshminandanBorah- 'JakeriNahikeUpama', 'SehiGunanidhi', MedineeChoudhari's- 'Bonduka Behar', NirupamaMahanta's- 'Sarbagunakar', Soyed Abdul Malik's- 'Dhainya Nara TanuBhal', etc.

Satriya culture is also seen in the poems written by- Jyoti PrasadAgarwala, BishnuRabha, LakshminathBezborua. Specially, Rabha tried to collect indigenous songs, melodies, dramas, dances from the Satras and also tried to write a grammar describing various rhythm or 'seu' of 'Khol'.

Like other subjects, Satriya culture has also achieved a good position in literature. Many scripts, books have been published regarding satriya culture.

## V. SCOPE OF SATRIYA CULTURE AND ITS FUTURE

The traditional activities of Satras are practiced in a spiritual environment. Science and technology have influenced many tradition but not in the case of Satriya culture, because of the limitation of the rules among the Satras. On the other hand, various problems are growing, as the male 'Bhakat's (purushsanghati) are getting engaged in domestic affairs like marriages. However the amount of 'Bhakat' is also decreasing. Because with the control of population many people refuse to send their male to the Satras. That is why Satras are facing problem in continuation of various traditional activity.

After Satra, the practice of Satriya tradition is seen in **Namghar** centric villages. But if minutely observed the practices in villages are different from Satras. As a result arguments take place often.

For continuation of the satriya culture, satras have to give importance on the following subject matters-

- Satras are different from one another. Each has its own tradition. In order to introduce this culture, a common style has to be taken up. Because of this variation among the satras, this culture is still unable to stand among Indian 'DhrupadSangeet' in spite of its beauty.
- Satras are the granary of Satriya culture. But some Satriya culture dance forms are still restricted to the Satras only, and are not open to villages. For instance-
  - **Naduvangi** : The dance form is performed in the Satra ten days after the death of 'Bhakats'. Performed by **Gayon-Bayon**.
  - **Behar Naas**- Performed in a day to day function.
  - **Manchak**: This dance is performed in the death anniversary of Shankardeva and Madhavdeva, in the morning time during 'Saul Bhujoni' and at the end of **NaamPrasanga**.

These above dance form should be allowed to be performed in public.

- Satras should be open and non-discriminatory, so that all the caste-creed, Verna, could be trained under Satras. All should be associated with the functions of Satras.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The summary of this above research paper are-

- Satriya Sanskriti, in contemporary period received its due importance in various fields including social, cultural and economic aspects.
- A lot is to be done by the Satras in order to preserve continuity of Satriya culture practices. The Satras, in many instances should provide its training of Satriya culture irrespective of one's Jati or Verna, caste or community.
- The various Satras all around Assam should play the similar form of melody, rhythm and dance in order to maintain the stability of Satriya culture.

There is a vast source of study regarding this subject matter in future.

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