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# **Satriya culture and Srimanta Sankardeva's contributions to education**

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**Abstract**---In most parts of Assam, the Satriya culture is prevalent. Assamese culture is incomplete without this feature. To get to where it is now, the Satriya culture has undergone a major transition. In the 15th century, Srimanta Sankardeva and Sri Sri Madhabdeva founded this practice. Srimanta Sankardeva possessed a wide range of qualities. He was an Assamese poet, playwright, painter, and sculptor who contributed significantly to Assamese culture. He pushed for a pure, honest work culture, social discipline, humanized love, and universal religion acceptance. Education was a privilege reserved for a select few from society's top crust during Sankardeva's time. The mass people were still mired in a pit of illiteracy and ignorance. We shall study about the satriya culture, its evolution, importance, and Srimanta Sankardeva's contribution to society, culture, and education in this article.

**Keywords**---education, Sankardeva, Satriya culture, society, tradition.

**Introduction**

Culture is a comprehensive phrase that encompasses many aspects of our lives, including how we act, our philosophies, ethics, morality, values, and manners, our rituals and traditions, religious beliefs, political, economic, and other activities. Humans are the only animals with culture. Man is a social and cultural being. Man is the only animal that is born and raised in a cultural setting. Other creatures can be found in their natural habitat. Culture is a unique feature that distinguishes humans from other animals. Every man can be thought of as the embodiment of his own culture. Culture refers to all someone has learned in his social and personal life. Culture, as a unique way of life, did not begin with a clear

beginning. It is self-evident since man did not appear on the earth in a single day. During the European Enlightenment, the concept of culture was developed. Initially, the term "culture" referred to the act of cultivating the soil, but it came to represent "human growth" over time. The evolution of culture parallels the evolution of the concept of civilisation. There is no precise date for the emergence of human civilisation. It would be arbitrary to try to pin down a date for the birth of culture. Culture evolves at a glacial pace, and it is only recently that it has begun to shift swiftly.

Different cultures can be seen in various locations. Srimanta Sankardeva and Sri Sri Madhabdeva developed this tradition in the 15th century. In Satras, the Satriya culture is practiced. This culture is an essential aspect of Assamese culture. The Satriya culture has undergone a significant transformation to reach its current state. Culture and education are two interrelated and interdependent factors. Any educational pattern is influenced by a society's cultural trends. For example, in a society with a spiritual culture, educational emphasis would be placed on the attainment of moral and eternal life ideals. On the other hand, if a society's culture is materialistic, its educational system would be tailored to achieve materialistic values and conveniences. There is no definite educational organization in a society that does not follow any culture. As a result, a country's culture has a significant impact on its educational system. While human lives continue to be shaped by local circumstances, the lives and experiences of today's youth will increasingly be influenced by social processes, economic realities, technical and media developments, and cultural flows that traverse international borders. These global transformations will require young people to adapt to new abilities that are far beyond what most educational systems can currently provide.

### **Objectives**

The following objectives are specifically formulated:

- To study about Satriya culture and Srimanta Sankardeva's contributions to education.
- To highlight the development education in Assam under the patronage of satriya culture.

### **Methodology**

The present study is mainly based on descriptive and analytical method. Similarly, the information has been collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary source includes both the published and unpublished written documents. On the other hand, the secondary sources have been collected from various books and articles published in different journal.

### **Area of the study**

As Srimanta Sankardeva was born in Nagaon, Assam so, the area under this study is also Assam. Srimanta Sankardeva with his pupils did a lot of work here in respective to in the field of culture, education etc. Assam is situated in the

northern part of India and it is one of the most beautiful states of India. With many customs, traditions, ethnic culture etc it is also very rich in flora and fauna.

### **Significance of the Study**

The satras are the source of a large part of Assamese culture, literature, and songs. The people of Assam underwent a moral and cultural renaissance as a result of Srimanta Sankardeva and his pupil Sri Sri Madhabdeva's revolutionary dramatic movement in the 15th century. Srimanta Sankardeva was a man of many attributes. He was a poet, playwright, painter, and sculptor who made a significant contribution to Assamese culture. He advocated for a pure, honest work culture, social discipline, humanized love, and universal acceptance of religious beliefs. Through his dramas, music, and dance, he taught us about humanism. He and his supporters also campaigned to improve education in Assam. He attempted to construct educational goals based on individual needs and benefits, curriculum development based on societal demands, and so on.

### **Discussion and Results**

The Bhakti movement in India was founded with the goal of promoting the Vaishnav religion. Srimanta Sankardeva and his student Sri Sri Madhabdeva, two leaders of the Vaishnav movement, brought the Bhakti movement to Assam. The two Vaishnavist saints founded the Satras as a result of the Bhakti Movement. The institution known as a satra was founded primarily for religious purposes. Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardeva founded these institutes based on the Neo-Vaishnavism ideology. Since the fifteenth century, these Satras have played a vital part in Assam's cultural and religious life. Sankardeva built the first satra in Bardowa, his birthplace, according to Assamese chronicles (buranji). Satras have become an intrinsic part of Assamese life and culture, uniting the population from the west (KochBihar) to the east (Majuli).

### **The Satra System**

The satras are the source of a large part of Assamese culture, literature, and songs. The people of Assam underwent a moral and cultural renaissance as a result of Srimanta Sankardeva and his pupil Sri Sri Madhabdeva's revolutionary dramatic movement in the 15th century. Srimanta Sankardeva was a man of many attributes. He was a poet, playwright, painter, and sculptor who made a significant contribution to Assamese culture. He advocated for a pure, honest work culture, social discipline, humanized love, and universal acceptance of religious beliefs. Through his dramas, music, and dance, he taught us about humanism. The satras are the outcome of the Ek Sarania Dharma, or Neo-Vaishnavite movement. Their movement's motto was all-inclusive faith integration and societal stabilization. Lord Krishna has been acknowledged as the greatest power as a result of the Assamese Neo-Vaishnavism movement spreading the philosophy of selfless devotion and humankind. The neo Vaishnavite movement transcends class, community, and race barriers. Srimanta Sankardeva portrays Lord Krishna as the highest authority and all human beings as equals in his dramas, hymns, and Satriya Dance. The people of Assam have followed the same culture and customs since the foundation of the satras.

Assam's Satriya culture enriches the Assamese culture. Tourists go to Majuli from all over the world to see the vibrant Satriya culture. The world-famous mask culture is still alive and well in the Satras. Satra devotees still adhere to Srimanta Sankardeva's Ek Sarania Dharma doctrine. The Satras' monks still don't wear pants, instead opting for the Dhoti. The ceremonies of Satriya culture are followed by Assamese community. The Satriya culture is an important aspect of Assamese culture. The Bhawnas (play or act) are still performed by the locals in June and July. They still follow Sankardevas' philosophy. Females were not allowed to participate in cultural activities such as Bhawna, Satriya dance, or Gayan-Bayan (a type of dance) when Srimanta Sankardeva and his disciples originally formed the Satriya culture; only males were allowed to participate. Females are now permitted to participate in these events, thanks to the passage of time. Women are now equally contributing to culture, adding to the art's beauty and grace. Despite the fact that various norms and practices have altered over time, the satras remain an integral component of Assamese culture. Assamese culture is famous because of the Satriya culture only.

### **Sankardeva's Contribution to Education In Terms of Sankardeva's Educational Goal Sankardeva's Method of Teaching**

During the time of Sankardeva, education was a privilege reserved for a select few from the upper crust of society. The general public remained engulfed in a dismal abyss of illiteracy and ignorance. In the huge sea of ignorant multitudes, the intellectual and socially conscious pupil was a tiny minority. Despite this, Srimanta Sankardeva and his followers went about their mission of spreading knowledge and wisdom in their own unique ways. He wrote several songs, dramas, prayers, and intellectual works. This book contained a large percentage of the course material taught in the residential school at the time. This school's teachers primarily taught religious texts such as the Vedas, Puranas, and Srimadbhagavatgita. Srimanta Sankardeva made significant contributions to education. His contribution to education can be discussed under the following headings: (a) Sankardeva's educational goal (b) Sankardeva's method of teaching (c) Sankardeva's curriculum of teaching.

Both formal and informal education was provided by Srimanta Sankardeva to the general public. In this regard, Sankardeva's Namghar and Satra played a crucial role. Education was not a concern of the state in medieval times until the British came to power. There were tols and pathsalas run by private folks here and there. These, on the other hand, were a drop in the ocean. With the growth of Sankardeva's Satra institution, the responsibility of delivering education fell under its purview. The noble responsibility of informing the people through their own tols was freely taken on by the Satra institution. All of the important Satras had, and still have, a regular band of scholars whose job it was to teach education, particularly in old lore and scriptures, as well as other disciplines of study such as Vyakarana, Nyaya, and Kavyas. Madhavadeva, Sankardeva's principal student, taught Ramacarana, his nephew, Haricarana, and Purosottama, Sankardeva's youngest son and grandson, respectively. Bhattadeva, the Satradhikara of Patbausi Satra and the pioneer of Assamese prose literature, held a regular tol in the premises of his Satra, and according to Ramaraya's

biography, he educated a thousand students. The following are some of Sankardeva's educational goals:

- Brotherhood is universal.
- Education's moral goal
- a spiritual goal
- To prepare people for work.
- Development on all levels

### **Method of Teaching**

Srimanta Sankardeva was a distinguished scholar and a very committed teacher to the entire society. He introduced some significant teaching strategies for mass education. The modern educationalists of our time have recognized and adopted these strategies. These are the methods: (I) Method of group discussion (ii) Method of play (iii) Method of learning by doing

### **Curriculum of Teaching**

Assamese, Brajavali, and Sanskrit are the three languages that Sankardeva emphasized. Brajavali, Sanskrit, ancient lores and scriptures, Philosophy, Psychology, Yoga, Moral education Saint Sankardeva's genius is credited with reviving the Brajavali language through the Bargits and Ankiya Nat, and inspiring Assamese Vaishnava devotees to continue it until the 18th century A.D. and beyond. He became the architect of bridging the gap created by the different dialects by writing in Brajavali. Sankardeva also taught the Puranas, Tantras, and Samhita to his disciples in order to provide them with moral education knowledge. Bhagavata Purana, Kurma Purana, Narasimha Purana, Matsya Purana, Naradiya Purana, Vishnu Purana, Bramanda Purana, and Brahnnaradiya Purana are just a few of the Puranas. His disciples were also taught the knowledge of various Tantras and Samhita. Satvata tantra, Kaumara tantra, Vashistha samhita, Vishnu yamala, Agasyta samhita, Patanjala samhita, Vaisvanara samhita, Katyayana samhita, Jaimini samhita, and Naradiya samhita were among the Tantras and Samhitas. 186 In addition to the teaching of various ancient scriptures, devotees were taught the Vyakarana, which they used to create a variety of vaisnavite literatures. Sankardeva also placed a high value on vocational education as a subject of study since he recognized that it was the only way to offer a means of subsistence for the villagers and to make them economically self-sufficient. Sankardeva included yoga in his teaching curriculum because he realized that a healthy body and a strong soul or mind are both essential in one's life.

### **Satra's role as a Learning Center**

Srimanta Sankardeva developed Satras to provide both official and informal education to the masses. It provided formal education by establishing numerous tols, which were run by some wealthy Satras. In the case of the masses, the informal education delivered by the Satras was extremely effective. Villagers flocked to the Namghar in the Satra to hear recitations and explanations of various scriptures such as the Bhagavata-Purana and Kirtana ghosha. They were

also participated in a variety of theological discussions and communal prayer services, and as a result, they gained a thorough understanding of the scriptures.

## **Conclusion**

Assamese culture includes a significant amount of Satriya culture. The famous saint and reformer Sankardeva made a significant impact to Assamese cultural and social life. Sankardeva demonstrates that there is only one God in the world, and that every human being possesses the single supreme soul. We should not be divided based on caste, class, or religion. In the 16th century, he established the Satras, where individuals of all classes, castes, and religions might pray to God. In Assam, everyone celebrates Bhawna by performing Satriya dances, singing Bargeets, and praying in Satras' Namghars or kirttana ghars. Only the Satriya culture has made Assamese culture popular in recent years. The Bhawnas, a satriya dance, is well-known around the world. The Satriya dance form is also well-known. Before any good thing appears, the people of Assam still go to the Satras. When people battle over class, caste, and religion, Assamese people still believe in the Sankardevas EK Sarania Nam Dharma, in which all members of society, from tribals to Muslims, celebrate the festivals. The Sankardevas ideology is revered among Assamese people. In the fifteenth century, Srimanta Sankardeva intended to convey to the Assamese people that every human being possesses the same supreme ability. His philosophy is reflected in his dramas, poems, and other works. He connects Assamese society via Satriya culture. His philosophy was that because all humans are equal, human society should not be segregated along caste, tribe, or race lines. Assamese people have followed the Satriya culture since the time of Sankardeva. With the passage of time, numerous changes occurred in society; people began to adopt European culture; nonetheless, Assamese people still revere Sankardeva and his Satriya culture.

Srimanta Sankardeva with his pupils also worked for the development of education in every field. Srimanta Sankardeva developed Satras to provide both official and informal education to the masses. It provided formal education by establishing numerous tols, which were run by some wealthy Satras. In the case of the masses, the informal education delivered by the Satras was extremely effective. Satra institution did religious gathering in which religious issues are discussed. It should be emphasized, however, that Assam's Vaisnava establishment is known as Satra. That time education was a privilege reserved for a select few from the upper crust of society. The general public remained engulfed in a dismal abyss of illiteracy and ignorance. In the huge sea of ignorant multitudes, the intellectual and socially conscious pupil was a tiny minority. Despite this, Srimanta Sankardeva and his followers went about their mission of spreading knowledge and wisdom in their own unique ways. With the growth of Sankardeva's Satra institution, the responsibility of delivering education fell under its purview. The noble responsibility of informing the people through their own tols was freely taken on by the Satra institution. All of the important Satras had, and still have, a regular band of scholars whose job it was to teach education, particularly in old lore and scriptures, as well as other disciplines of study such as Vyakarana, Nyaya, and Kavyas. Educational goals followed by Srimanta Sankardeva were like Brotherhood is universal, Education's moral goal, a spiritual goal; the purpose of education is to prepare people for work,

Development on all levels. Srimanta Sankardeva was a distinguished scholar and a very committed teacher to the entire society. He introduced some significant teaching strategies for mass education. The modern educationalists of our time have recognized and adopted these strategies. These are the methods: Method of group discussion, Method of play, Method of learning by doing. The students of that time also participated in a variety of theological discussions and communal prayer services, and as a result, they gained a thorough understanding of the scriptures. Srimanta Sankardeva played a vital role in the development of the cultural history of Northern India in respect of literary works, fine arts and painting, craft, education and learning since the beginning of the sixteenth century till the 187 advent of British and we find that his technique, procedure and equipment of teaching are scientific and useful and are most useful in contemporary days. As a result, Srimanta Sankardeva is rightfully regarded as a great educator.

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