CHAPTER-III

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

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Introduction

The present chapter embodies a brief review of the researches done in the area related to this investigation. An intensive review of existing literature on the subject is an important step in any research endeavour. Today, review of related literature has been identified as a valuable guide in defining the problem, recognising its significance, avoiding unintentional duplication of well established findings, better understanding of research methodology, suggesting promising data gathering devices, appropriate study design and sources of data. It also helps to know the recommendation of the previous researchers listed in their studies for further research.

The researcher has visited Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Development, Guwahati; SCERT Kahilipara, Guwahati; Library, Guwahati University; Srimanta Sankardeva Kalakhetra, Guwahati; District Library, Guwahati for searching the review of literature. The researcher has relied on a number of secondary sources in the form of books, journals, periodicals, articles, English and vernacular magazines, dissertations and theses. Firstly, the investigator would like to refer the names of theses, which have given the researcher to put things in a historical analytical perspective as well as a conceptual frame work for the purpose of study of the researcher.

Review of research studies on Sankardeva

Neog, M. (1965), conducted a study on –Sankardeva and His Times: Early History of the Vaisnava Faith and Movement in Assam‘‘ with a view to study the history of spread of neo-vaishnavism in Assam. Here the investigator gave a very detailed survey of Sankardeva with a full account of his background and a resume and appraisement of his work. The whole thesis was completed in twelve chapters where he has treated all aspects of the subjects. The religious life of Sankardeva‘s era has

been depicted on the background of economic and cultural life as well as the historical, literary and artistic aspects of Assamese Bhakti Movement. In the thesis the investigator gave a detailed account of the Eka- Saraniya system of religious organization which was built up under the auspices of Sankardeva. Sankardeva is the greatest name in the history of Assamese literature and early Assamese culture, and all his literary remains have been discussed very lucidly and in very great detail. Even the dramatic art and technique and the Vaishnava music and dance inspired by Sankardeva, as well as the fine arts like manuscript miniatures and calligraphy, have been treated by Dr. Neog. There is a very exhaustive bibliography which adds value to his work. In the chapter on ‗Social Implication of Sankardeva‘s Bhakti Movement‖ the investigator gives an account of the permanent human qualities of Sankardeva‘s writings. Sankardeva in many places of his writings announces the fraternity of *bhaktas* and the acceptability even of *Sudras* and women to *Bhakti*. *Bhakti* is no respecter of caste. In Bhakti one does not require to be God, a Brahmin or a sage. The *candala* whose body, word and mind are turned upon the remembrance of God is superior to a Brahmin maintaining his twelve verses. In his *Namghosha* Madhavadeva refers to the acceptance of *Nama-Dharma* by the people of *Garo, Bhota* (Bhutia), *Yavana* (Muslim), *Miri, Assamese* (Ahom) and *Kachari* origin who were till the time of Sankardeva outside the pale of Hinduism. As findings of the study the researcher mentioned that the great Sankardeva movement brought about a new and comprehensive outlook on life and a distinctly healthy tone to social behaviour. It accelerated the pace of a renaissance of literature and fine arts like music and painting. The holy books in Sanskrit, the *literate humaniores* of India could no longer be sealed to the common man‘s view by a rigid oligarchy. The use of local language in exposition of theology and philosophy was itself as challenge to the erstwhile guardians of secret doctrines who understood the significance of the challenge and protested very much. The use of Assamese language an Indo-Aryan tongue, which formed but an island in a Tibeto-Burman ocean, as the medium for the propagation of the neo-vaisnava faith led to its emergence as the language of all the people. The ancient kingdom of Kamrupa was undergoing a huge change in regeneration, political and social which timed well with the cultural resurgence initiated by Sankardeva making a unified and modern Assam.

Sarma, S.N. (1966), conducted a study on ‒The Neo-vaisnavite Movement and the Satra institution of Assam‖. The objective of the study was to make a comprehensive survey of Vaisnava Movement in detail and a systematic study of Satra institution of Assam. The study reveals that the history of the Neo-vaisnavite Movement in Assam was started by Sankardeva and the growth of the institution through which the movement manifested and developed. The single minded devotion to Krishna under the guidance of Guru and the cultivation of Bhakti purana constitute the main feature of the faith. To create such an atmosphere where companionship of devotee and guidance of Guru could be procured in the same place, the Satra institution was brought into existance and it becomes a well organised and a popular institution within a century of its inception. The movement commenced in the first decade of sixteenth century and reached its climax towards the middle of the seventeeth century. By the end of that century the most faithful peirod of vaisnavism in Assam also came to an end and the galaxy of Vaisnava stalwart disappeared from the religious firmament. The later history of the faith and the subsects is marked by the expansion of Satra institution throughout the entire Brahmaputra valley and stereotyped proselytising the process and religious activities continued unabated. Difficulties, hardships and opposition from the state that confronted the religious reformers of the first two centuries of the history of the movement practically ceased with the begining of eighteen century. The Vaisnava religion and Satra instituion by this time got it firmly rooted to the soil and the royal authority had to acknowledge it as a faith accompli. Proselytisers by the time found a more peaceful and accommodating atmosphere to preach their faith and consequently numerous branches of Satra were established by family members and disciples of the principal religious proselytisers of the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries.The author, in his thesis also highlights the institution of Satra and Namghar as a multidimensional institution covering various aspects of Assamese society.

Goswami, K. D. (1969), conducted a study on ‒Purusa Samhat Sect of Assam Vaisnavism‖ with a view to study the history and development of the Purusa Samhat sect of Assam Vaisnavism. The study reveals that the early history of the vaisnava faith and movement in Assam has been ably studied by scholars and literary men of note, and has thus been able to draw the attention of scholars in India and abroad. But very little is known out side about the later history and development of the movement.

The ‒Vaisnava history of Assam is a history of splits.‖ It may have been observed how the Sankardeva movement had its ramifications in the later centuries and how a sect of the order tried to keep up the ideals set by the propounder of the faith of Bhakti in Assam. The Samhati division came into being soon after the death of Madhavadeva in 1596 A.D. Both the Purusa Samhati and the Kala Samhati emerged out of the main body of the order in about the same period. The Brahma Samhati, however, evolved prior to that and of course, was not called a Samhati at that time. The Nika Samhati, which came into existence comparatively late, was however, included in the Purusa Samhati at the begining. It is to be admitted that the tradition of the activities of the Gosais in various fields still persists in the state, of course, it is noticed that with the impact of western civilzation and the growth of rationalistic ideals among the people, a process of gradual decadance in most of the Satras has long sect in. There is, on the other hand, an awakening tendency in India which has brought about a change in the out look of the people and which urges upon them the necessity of assessing properly the cultural wealth they had. It is significant that ‒the reformers and revolutionaries in many parts of the world had often used religion and the appeal to the post to bring about changes in the social and political spheres.‖ The Purusa Samhati has made a considerable stride in this direction since the very days of the modern period of our history.

Das, N. (1980), conducted a study on ‒The Devotional (Vaishnavite) Lyrics of Assam and Bengal.‖ The author conducted the study with a view to make a comparative study of Devotional Lyrics of Assam and Bengal. The vaishnavite lyric poet of Assam and Bengal through their devotional lyrics has menifested the physical and spiritual aspects of literature. In their lyrics almost all the element of literature such as natural feeling like the happiness and sorrow, laugh and cry, hope and despair etc. as well as the beauty of nature, the insight, creation and perception of the sentiment, beautiful expression of inner experience and also magnanimity as well as eagerness for the supreme Lord have been fully expressed accomplishing a great enthusiasm along with the bless of happines in the heart of Assamese and Bengali people. Even then the vaishnavite lyric of Assam and Bengal are best way of worshiping the God for all classes of people of the Society. Vaishnavism advocated that God can be remembered through every activity even while leading a normal life. Thus the vaishnavite lyrics of Assam and Bengal which have been recognised as the literatures of great significance

have improved the social and cultural lives of the two respective states by developing the mind as well as the soul of the people of these two states. These devotional lyrics par excellance have the highest human ideal in themselves that man can ever follow. The vaishavite lyrics of both the school are kind of literature beneficial to the people. The oozing nectar of these very lyric has brightened the path for the welfare of the society to a considerable extent. The persons aflicted and distressed with the woodly sorrow and suffering may get some solac by chanting these songs celestial and listening to them.

Ray, S. P. (1983), carried out a study on ‒The Critical Examination of the Concept of Personal God in Vaisnavism‖. The investigator explained that vaisnavism is one of the prominent dispensations of Hinduism which gave rise to many religious sects with the passage of time. Such splits are very natural to all the religions of this world. Prof. Hurston smith remarks, ‒Religions are always splitting. In our own tradition, the ancient Hebrews split into Israel and Judah, Christendom into the Eastern and Western churches, the western Church into Roman Catholicism and Protestantism and Protestantism has continued to split into its many denominations‖. Here the investigator mentioned, his contention is not to discuss the philosophy of a particular vaisnaava sect, but to discover the underlying unity of all the denominations of Vaisnavism. It is the personal concept of God or Iswara to which all the denominations owe their allegiance. Moreover all the vaisnava sects are univocal in denouncing Sankara‘s concept of Iswara who has a phenomental reality only. Sankara‘s mayabad also provokes equal denounciation among the Vaisnava Philosophers. Sankara‘s conception of Nirvisen Brahman can not be logically accepted on the grammatical role of co-ordination. The Vaisnava religion throughout its long history spokes of gracious deity helping man in various ways for his Release or Moksha. The object of Vaisnava teachers was to confute the theory of Maya and establish the doctrine of bhakti and personal God on secure basis.

Mahanta, N. (1985), conducted a study on ‒The Mystical Thoughts of Sri Sri Sankardeva and Sri Sri Madhavadeva.‖ The study reveals that the pragmatic attitude has been found to be prominent in the mystical thoughts of Sankardeva and Madhavadeva. Mystical unitive life, according to these two great thinkers, culminates in social emancipation. At the same time, they put importance on the ethical life of people. Sankardeva and Madhavdeva hold that self less devotion is the only way to

attain intuitive apprehension of God. The most fruitful way of devotion, they say, are the Sravana (listening) and the kirtana (singing) of the glorious God. Sravana and Kirtana again have to be performed by the devotees with the spirit of complete self - surrender. Mystical experience of Sankardeva and Madhavdeva is an integral experience. Mystical experience should not be understood as the mere sum total of certain ecstatic or rapturous experience. Sankardeva and Madhavdeva‘s mystical thoughts seen to have been a great significance in the modern age of science. In the present age of technological and scientific advancement, human civilisation is facing a serious spiritual crisis. Man has own inventions. He has lost the meanings of his existence. The present age is considered as general unrest and intellectual confusion. At this critical period of mankind, the need of mystical teaching of Sankardeva and Madhavdeva seems to be indispensable for the promotion of inner peace and harmony.

Agarwala, B. M. (1986), conducted a study on ‒The Vaishnava Monasteries in Assam in relation to folk religion.‖ The researcher in her thesis throws light on Vaishnava Monasteries known as Satra institution in Assam. In the 16th century Sankardeva, the initiator of the vaisnava cult, established monasteries (Satra) in order to propagate the faith to Assamese society. Satras are institutions through which religious doctrines and a religious mode of life are practised. The study has been made to clarify some of the doubts and queries that investigator had about Assamese culture and religion. Scholastic works on village India emphasise the structure, functions and politices of the caste system. They view that the caste system is a determinant of social culture and religious life of villages. From this juncture, Indian sociology and anthoropology have emerged and has remained to analyse Indian rural life as a caste oriented society. To use a stronger word they have kept this phenomanon as the mainstream of Indian sociology. By studying different analytical works on village India such as casteism, peasantry, women‘s world, marriage and kinship, the writer has tried to study the Assamese situation on the same issues and as a ultimate analysis she found that Assamese society presents a different socio-cultural picture altogether. It is not being understood as something unique or in comparable. But the phenomena of flexible casteism, popular religion and admixture of tribal/ethnic and caste population have softened the social construct of Assamese society. The writer also made a greater query wheather socio religious norm would

remain uninterupted despite the changes brought by external forces. Govt policies, urbanisation and influece of the media were strong factor of changes.

Baruah, P. (1986), carried out a study on ‒Literary Study of Sankardeva‖ with a view to study the literary works of Sri Sankardeva and the investigator found that Sankardeva was like the glorious sun under whose warmth of mind Assam blossomed like a lotas of thousand petals. It is difficult to imagine how deep and wide spread was the influence of Sankardeva of the cultural renaissance that burst forth in the medieval Assam. There are poets and composer, there are saint and religious teacher, there are musical masters, there are preachers but Sankardeva was genius in whom all these qualities were rolled into one. The study reveals that (i) In respect of many matters Sankardeva was a pioneer in the field of Assamese literature in the modern Indian vernaculars. Sankardeva was the first writer to make use of vernacular prose in drama and he created a type of drama called *Ankiya nat* with many an exclusive feature. He used the Brajawali language for the first time while composing the *Bargit* and *Ankiya nat*; (ii) Sankardeva made deliberate effort to enrich the Assamese literature. This is evidenced by his taking upon the task of completing the Assamese Ramayana left unfinished by Madhava Kandali. It goes without saying that his efforts were successful to a remarkable degree; (iii) Sankardeva also inspired others to write, for instance Madhavdeva composed 191 Bargitas existance of Sankardeva; (iv) Sankardeva wanted to give Assam in the place of cultural map of India. This is warranted by his making reference to Assam and things of Assam in his verses; (v) Sankardeva had to write with much limitation. He could hardly write anything entirely new. Again and again he had to assure his reader that his composition is based on original sastras; (vi) Despite of being Non Brahmin and oposition Sankardeva translated Bhagavata, in Assamese idioms. The rendering of Bhagavata marks an era of renaissance in Assamese poetry.

Saikia, A. C. (1988), carried out a study on ‒Rukmini Harana Legend in Sanskrit and later Indian Literature.‖ The researcher found that Sri Sankardeva who was popularly known as Mahapurasha Sri Sri Sankardeva of Assam composed two prominent works in poetry and drama i.e the *Rukmini Harana* kavya as a poetrical work and *Rukmini Harana* Natas as a dramatic work on the basis of the original *Rukmini Harana* legend in medieval period. The researcher also described that Sankardeva was a great poet, preacher, an educationist, master playwright, social-religious reformer, musician and

painter. Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankardeva‘s literary works are still regarded as the most valuable treasure of Assamese literature. The investigator made a classification of Srimanta Sankardeva‘s literary contribution as (i) *Ankiya Nats*: These include the dramatic works like *Chihnayatra, Kaliyadamana, Patniprasada, Keligopala, Rukminiharana* and *Ramvijay*; (ii) Versified works: Include Upakhyan, *Balichalan, Rukminiharana Kavya, Amrit Manthan, Ajamil Upakhyan* and *Kurusetra*; (iii) The philosophical poetic works: These include *Niminamasidha Sambada, Bhaktipradip, Bhaktiratnakar,* and *Anadipatan*; (iv) The translation (in to Assamese): These include *Bhagavata purana* the Books-I, II, VI, (only the episode of Ajamil), VIII (only the *Amrit Manthan* and *Balichalan* Stories), X, XI, XII and *Uttarakanda Ramayana*; (v) The Gits (Songs): These include *Bargits, Bhatimas, Totays* and capay; (vi) *Namprasanga* (Songs invoking holy names of Lord): Include Kirtana (uttering of holy names) and *Gunamala* (uttering and remembering the manifold qualities of God).

Mahanta, N. (1990), carried out a study on ‒Influence of Neo-Vaisnavism on the Bodo-Kocharies of Kamrup‖ (with special reference to socio-cultural aspects). The investigator found that during the medieval period (in Vaishnava period) a large no of Bodo Kacharies people were converted to the new faith and they gradually gave up their own tribal modes of life and got merged in the greater Hindu Society. Today except a very few who still remain faithfull to their old tribal Gods, most of the Bodo Kacharies have been formally converted to the Neo-Vaishnavism in the course of time. There are thousands of Bodo Kacharies who have been converted to the new faith during different historical periods. The investigator also mentioned that the Neo –Vaishnavism influenced the life of the people in three aspects i.e. religious, cultural and social. In Assam Vaishnavism these three aspects have been made indentical in the society by the suceessive saints of the later periods. It is a well known fact that Sankardeva was not only religious preacher but also a social reformer and promoter of cultural and civilization in the society. Sankardeva realised it very well that no religious faith can hold good for any society or nation without social order and cultural upliftment. Keeping this in view Sankardeva applied the faith of God in every walk of life. The sole aim of Sankardeva was to make all the people of society spiritually and morally sound. He tried to abolish untouchability from the society and established equality and social harmony in the country.

Das, M. (1991), carried out a study on ‒Barpeta Satra-An Institution of Learning Culture and Religion.‖ The objective of the study was to bring to light various aspects of Barpeta Satra. The investigator has mentioned the findings of the study as (i) Barpeta Satra has enriched the moral, social cultural and educational life of the people of Assam during the last few centuries. The Satra has also made a contribution in the field of art, literature and culture; (ii) Barpeta Satra like other Satras in Assam has also laid the foundation stone of Assamese culture and society. Barpeta Satra is an important tool for changing socio-cultural structure of the Assamese Society; (iii) Barpeta Satra has been keeping up not only moral and spiritual tone of society but it has made a contribution to large extents towards the maintenance of discipline, peace and social harmony among the people; (iv) Barpeta Satra is famous for its Satriya dance and music. Barpeta Satra is said to possess a religious manuscript in its original form of Sankardeva and Madhavadeva. The archieves of Satra contain many ancient documents.

Nath, U. (1991), conducted a study on ‒Barpeta as a Centre of Assamese Culture‖ with the objective to study in tradition and change with sepecial reference to the Satra institution. In the thesis an attempt has been made by the investigator to present the background of Assamese culture along with the scope of its study. The study has been begun under two principle streams - upper Assam and lower Assam with a glimse of the locality of the Indian ushered in by the Bhakti movement. The Sankardeva‘s Neo - Vaishnavism is known as *Eka - Sarana -Nama -Dharma* There are two main religious services Nitya (daily) and Naimittika (Special) services observed by the devotees. The innovated unique aspects of the Neo-Vaishnavism movement is the growth of Satra institution through which movement was manifested and devoted excercising tremendous influence on the cultural, social and community life of the Assamese people at large. Moreover an attempt has been made in the light of Assamese vaishnava culture to present an account of Barpeta as a centre of Assamese culture and its unique role played in various aspects of the same since the begining of the 16th century with traditional changes occured from time to time. The importance of Barpeta as a centre of trade and commerce owed its origin to its physical feature. Sufficient agricultural products and some other products of small scale industries constituted the merchandise for different classes of merchants. The people of Barpeta

don‘t speak one and the same dialact uniformly. The dialect of this cultural zone shows unity in diversity. The diversity of the dialect solely depends upon the customs of inter marriage, intimate contact and means followed for livelihood. Such areas of Barpeta having dialectical divergences are tried to trace out in this work with certain speciment. Perhaps no one can claim dogmatism in culture and Barpeta, one cultural zone of study is not in exception. Taking this point in view the traditional changes of Barpeta as a centres of Assamese culture that have been attempted to trace out with associated agents of such changes as far as practicable were found indispensible.

Barua, D. K. (1992), conducted a study on ‒Barpeta Satra.‖ with the objectives to study the inter relation between the sacred complex and its urban enviornment. The researcher in his thesis traced short historical aspects of neo-vaisnavite movement in Assam, growth of Satra institution in general, establishment of Barpeta Satra and its inter-relation with the society. During the later part of the 15th Century the wave of vaisnava renaissance also touched the north eastern state of Assam under the leadership of Sankardeva, the guiding personality. He was not only the initiator of the new faith called *Eka-Sarania-Nama-Dharma* but also a great social reformer. Holding of general religious discourses was the mode of spreading the faith among the non-ellite village people. As a means of propagating his new faith researcher established a number of religious institutions known as Satras and Namghars. In their functioning it has been proved that besides being - primarily religious instituions the Satras acted as aids in the task of social reform and as repositories of vaishnavite tradition and culture. The study reveals that the religious control over a community declines with economic and technological development. The religious organisation itself tends to decline as a result of urbanisation, modernisation and commercialisation. Even then the symbolic value of a religious organisation persists though it may itself disintegrate in the course of time.

Dutta, G. C. (1992), carried out a study on ‒Socio- Economic Life of the People and Its Impact on Children Education with particular reference to the District of Lakimpur, Assam.‖ Here the investigator mentioned that Mahapurusa Srimanta Sankardeva has a unique position for making his contribution to the greatest Assamese culture. The greater Assamese society was formed as unique in India. The famous religious book mainly *Kirtan ghosha*, introduction of *Ankiya Nat* (one act play), *Bargit*, *Gayan-Bayan*, *Satra* and *Namghar*, use of different musical instrument

like *khol, taal, mridanga, raags* etc. are exception not only in India but also all over the world. Therefore, the name of Srimanta Sankardeva should be remembered first in the history of Assamese culture. Here, the researcher mentioned that a huge change have taken place in the cultural aspects of Satriya Nritya and its *taal* and in the style of costumes in the course of last few centuries as laid down by Dr. Moheswar Neog. The *Satra* and *Namghar* are the centres of spiritual discussion for which music is compulsory. In the Hindu philosophy the music is supposed to be the Gods gift. Therefore Satras are concentrated with so many items of Assamese culture.

Choudhury, L. (1992), carried out a study on ‒The Educative Role of Temple, Namghar and Satra in Dakshin Kamrup Area‖. The study reveals that Namghar which were set up as central religious institutions of villages contributed to a large extent towards the spread of intellectual and cultural activities in the village. Congregational chanting and dramatic performances known as Bhaona are also held in the Namghar. Satra is another important institution in the Assamese society. Satra has been enriching the Assamese life morally, socially and educationally and contributed a great deal to the realm of literature and art. Satras are those place where discussions by devotees relating to glory of the God and which are pleasant to God Himeslf are held through the practice of nine (9) bhakties i.e. *Sravana, Kirtana, Smarana, Vishnu-padasevana, Archana, Bandana, Dashya, Sakhya and Atmanibedana*.

Sarma, N. N. (1996), carried out a study on the ‒Contribution of Sankardeva and His Associates towards Education Amongst the Rural Folk of Assam.‖ The objective of the study was to ascertain the extent and depth of contributions of Srimanta Sankardeva and his associates towards education amongst the rural folk of Assam. In this context the whole socio-economic, political and religious conditions of that time had taken into consideration. Here the investigator mentioned that a society is always with some spiritual obligations under some form of religions. On the other hand society makes and regulates religion and spiritual ideals. Religious education does not mean something separable from general education; rather it is pure, honest and beautiful education for life and living. Education is religion and religion is education in the real sense. Regarding the contributions of Sankardeva the investigator stated, Srimanta Sankardeva was on the one hand the fountain head of the Bhakti Movement in Assam and on the other hand the pioneer of Assamese art and culture, language and literature and also of education. He was a great genius, prophet, reformer and

educationist with encyclopedic knowledge, majestic personality and brilliant power of exposition.

Sarma, M. (1997), conducted a study on ‒The Religious Concepts of Sankardeva and Nanak.‖ The objective of the study was to make a comperative study of the religious concepts of Srimanta Sankardeva and Nanak. Here the investigator mentioned that the Vaishnava movement in Assam was initiated by Srimanta Sankardeva in the closing decades of 15th century of the Christian era. The vaishnavite movement of Sankardeva was a unique in itself. The ideological framework of his thought was provided by the Purana (Bhagavata) and Gita. Sankardeva laid great emphasis on devotion to a single God i.e. Lord Krishna. Hence the religion propagated by Sankardeva is popularly known as ‒*Eka-Sarana-Nama Dharma.*‖ According to the Radhakrishnan the fundamental principle of Sankardeva‘s philosophies are (i) The knowledge of supreme reality conceived as Narayana; (ii) Surrender to the supreme in the form of Srikrishna; (iii) Company of God souls, Satsanga; (iv) Prayer and chanting of the name of the Supreme Being.

Choudhury, A. (1999), carried out a study on ‒Rukmini Harana and Parijata Harana Natas of Sankardeva‖ with a view to make a critical analysis of *Rukmini harana* and *Parijata harana* Natas of Sankardeva. The researcher found that Saint Sankardeva edited *Rukmini harana* and *Parijata harana* Natas chiefly as vehicle for propagation of vaishnavism and he therefore, faithfully adhered to the original Sanskrit *Bhagavata* in the construction of the plots. Yet in many places he introduced some local elements which beautifully reflect the customs and usage of the Assamese society of his time. The study while making an attempt to restore *Rukmini - harana* and *Parijata harana* Natas on the basis of text critical analysis of the text has also been concerned with revealing the various aspects of the contemporary Assamese life and society as depicted in these two plays. This study can helps us to form a comprehensive idea of the Assamese people and society of the 16th century. In these plays we have a glimpse into their customs and usage, their social mores, their hospitality, their ways of entertainment and their faiths and beliefs, undoubtedly these two plays are two great documents of considerable historical value and importance.

Saikia, K. K. (2001), carried out a study on the ‒Kathaguru Carita‖ and the ‒Bhaktamal‖ with a view to make a comparative study of the *Kathaguru carita* and

the *Bhaktamal*. The researcher found that the *Kathaguru carita* and the *Bhaktamal* are two of the most precious books of Assamese and Hindi respectively. Both of them enriched Indian language in their respective fields. In case of the *Kathaguru carita*, it is the unique one among the carita written in prose because of all carita it is the most authentic one. In the same manner, the *Bhaktamal* can be regarded as the mile stone of Hindi biographical literature; prior to it no such attempt was found to be made in Hindi to write a biography. The *Kathaguru carita* narrates the life and activities of the vaishnavite preceptor Sri Sankardeva along with his disciples including his best bhakta, Sri Madhavadeva. Not only the life and activities of the Bhaktas but also the social and economic condition of the people were reflected in it. Likewise *Bhaktamal* narrates the lives of about two hundred Bhaktas of different sects (Sampradayas). Most of these ‒Bhaktas‖ were not known or were little known to the people. The *Kathaguru carita* depicts the lives of the Gurus in detail and makes them more popular, like wise the *Bhaktamal* depicts certain particular incidents of the lives of the Bhaktas and immortalises them. Both the *Kathaguru carita* and the *Bhaktamal* analysise the lives and activities of the great Gurus and give publicity to the great ideals of these Bhaktas which if followed, could change, the society into a healthy and prosperous one, both the books regarded Guru as the Lord. Both the book incorporates the local customs and convension, faith and belief in them and thereby proved their equal respect to folk culture of different regions. The originals didnot acquire human qualities completely, but acquired some brutal virtues in them. They even did not care to kill others on small matters. Even today a great section of the people wants to use forces against each other. The whole world is under the threat of war and use of lethal weapous. It is forseen that a time is not far away in which there would be more and more crimes against humanity. Under such circumstances, book like the *Kathaguru carita* and the *Bhaktamal* may be very useful to teach values to the poeple. The Bhaktas and the Gurus as depicted inspire the people to love each others and to lead a good life. Today, the materialistic ideas lead the people astray. Therefore, books the *Kathaguru carita* and the *Bhaktamal* can teach people principles of good life. The great ideals of humanity and unity as advocated by these two great books inspire people of all ages. Those who love humanity and universal unity cannot forget but love and appreciate these two great books.

Bharali, C. K. (2003), conducted a study on ‒Satra Institution of Assam and Legends‖ with the objective to study of legends related to Satras in Barpeta district. The investigator found that Barpeta is well known in Assam for its Satra institution. There are more than 25 well-known, known and little known Satras in Barpeta district. Sankardeva spent later part of his life at Patbausi Satra of Barpeta district. From Patbausi he went to Koch Behar. Just after the demise of Sankardeva, Satra institution was devided into four sects known as samhatis headed by various Vaishnava saints. The Brahma Samhati was for the first time began by Damodardev at Patbausi in Barpeta district. Kala Samhati was named after kaljhar of Barpeta. The Purusa Samhati headed by Purusottama Thakur of Jonea is also there in Barpeta district. Madhabdeva was at Barpeta Satra when the Nika Samhati was established. Considering the above statements we may affirm that all the Samhatis were developed in various Satras of Barpeta district only. In Barpeta district there are 1 (one) Satra of the Brahma Samhati, 5 of the Purusa Samhati and 6 of the Nika Samhati which were found in existence. This study of Satra legends shows that there was a relationship between religion and kingship. Various Satras received Royal Patronage according to the popular memory. Popular memory also says that the orgin of Satra is an important and a glorious event. Legends also thrived in Satra atmosphere where lives of the saints, properties of Satras and the place of location all become subject matter of legends. The study doesnot find any difference between Samhatis with respective legends.

Goswami, R. (2006), carried out a study on ‒Role of Religious Institutions with special reference to the Harimondira in Imparting Informal Education among the People of the District of Nalbari.‖ The objective of the study was to make a systematic survey of the educative role of the different religious institution in Assamese society with reference to Nalbari areas. The researcher found that the religious institution plays a very important role for imparting informal education. The illiterate common people use to come to the Namghars and Satras and get informal education through participating in various religious activities. The democratic thought is expressed through religious institutions like Namghar and Satra. The role of religious institutions in controlling the society is significant. Sometimes it is seen in our society that some persons or individuls are having tendency to indulge in some anti social activities like theft, dacoity etc. which lead to a chaotic environment in the

society. The religious institutions like Satras and Namghars can play a vital role in controlling these incidents and thereby create a social harmony.

Bhuiya, A. (2007), carried out a study on –The Socio-Cultural and Political Role of Namghar in Assam: A comparative study of the Namghars of Borbhogia village and Bordowa Than/ Satra.‖ The objective of the study was to find out the role of Namghar as an agent of community development and also to probe into the role of Srimanta Sankardeva as harbinger of community development activities. In his research study the researcher has enquired about the role of Namghar institution in socio - cultural economic and political life of the people of Assam. The researcher has really made an original contribution in analysing the role of Srimanta Sankardeva in creating the composite Assamese culture with the ingredients from all ethnic groups from within the geographical boundary of Brahmaputra valley. The investigator has shown to the people how the new creed of Neo-vaishanism initiated by Srimanta Sankardeva had all the tenets of social movement. One that was so powerful and innovative that it left no section of society in Assam untouched. Taking note of the fact of ongoing socio-political turbulance in Assam the researcher argues that the institution of Namghar can emerge as vital centres to spread the message of peace, harmony and integration so centred to the Neo-vaishnavite Philosophy.

Talukder, P. (2009), conducted a study on –Sankardevar Adi - Dasamar Eti Samikhyatmak Adhayana‖. He found that the Bhagavata - X which is popularly known as Adi Dasama has been created as a result of positive effort of Sankardeva to make a concrete foundation of Neo-Vaisnavism in Assam. The investigator also described that Sankardeva‘s Adi Dasama or Bhavawata - X is his chief contribution to Assamese Bhakti literature. It renders the pleasent tale of Krishna‘s early life in lovely and glowing verses. The language is sober and fully mature. Here Sankardeva weaves new matter of imagination and beauty into the texture of the work. Sankardeva‘s power of description and narration is perhaps at its best in this work.

Goswami, P. (2009), carried out a study on –Sankardeva as a Composer with special reference to Bargit and Kirtana‖. The study reveals that Bargit and Kirtana ghosa were composed by Sankardeva. Sankardeva was not only a preacher, but also a writer, master playwright, poet, lyricist, a singer and composer merged into one. This identity found expression in whatever he composed. Not to speak of his poetic expression as

focused in his wide range of versification including his plays. His Borgit was a noble or devotional song which is passed on from generation to generation either in the form of pure devotional numbers or in the form of heritage songs. As recorded in his biographies Master composed about 240 nos. of Borgits out of which 34 nos. of Borgits are found available at present. According to biographical work Bordowa carita –*Mana meri rama caranahi lagu*‖ was the first Bargit composed by Sankardeva at Badarikashram. Sankardeva also composed Kirtana ghosa which is considered to be a monumental poetic collection of Sankardeva often described as Kirtana in common parlance. It is a magnificent collection of versified prayers and anecdotes culled from the Bhagavatapurana, the most sacrosanct instrument of the Bhakti Movement sweeping the country. Here Kirtana ghosa means prayer either in the form of a Bhagawata stories having two parts - (I) Ghosa (refrain) and (II) pad (songs). Sankardeva was inspired to compose the verses of Kirtana ghosa after having read the Bhagawat purana. Today we have 33 books or chapters of the Kirtana ghosa. That Sankardeva was our greatest literary genius is amply projected in every verse of the Kirtana ghosa. The language is not only poetic, but also rich in imagery.

Choudhury, S. (2010), examined –The theism of Sankardeva and the new testament of the Bible‖ with the objective of making a comparative study. The investigator found that vaishanava Bhakti Movement of Sankardeva has some salient indigenous feature which will probably help the church for better working and better integration of the life in India. It is also noticed how this Bhakti movement parallele the Christian missionary ideals in our country. The people of plain of Assam would have become Christians but not for the vaisnava resaisance brought by Sankardeva. The poeple of Khasi, Jaintia, the Garo hill and Lusai Hills was Christian only after arrival of British and it is to be noted that the integrating force of Sankardeva movement did not touch this region. The Naga tribes and Dafala of Subansiri district received their vaishnavism quite early. Sankardeva certainly belong to the first rank of the saint and sages of Mediaval India. Sankardeva adopted the spirit of religion in a similar way as st. Paul did. Paul and Sankardeva were sympathetic towards their existing environment. Christian faith emphasises congregational worship. The Bhakti Movement closely parallele the Christian missionaries ideals. However major difference is that Sankardeva exalts Vishnu while Christianity worships Jisu Christ.

Chetia, B. (2012), conducted a study on –The educative value of Srimanta Sankardeva‘s contributions and its influence on the youths of Assam with special reference to Nagaon and Lakshimpur Districts. The research study has been undertaken by the investigator with a view to study the educative value of Srimanta Sankardeva‘s contribution towards the social upliftment of literate vaishnavite youths of Assam; to study the educative value of Srimanta Sankardeva‘s contribution towards the cultural upliftment of the literate vaishnavite youths of Assam; to study Srimanta Sankardeva‘s contribution towards Assamese literature and its influence on the literate vaishnavite youths of Assam; to have a comparative study of the influence of Srimanta Sankardeva‘s contribution on the rural and urban literate youths of Assam; to have a comparative study on the influence of Srimanta Sankardeva‘s contribution on the male and female literate vaishnavite youths of Assam; to have a comparative study of the influence of Srimanta Sankardeva‘s contribution on the literate vaishnavite youth of Nagaon and Lakhimpur District of Assam. The researcher mentioned that Srimanta Sankardeva was the founder of modern Assamese society, culture, literature. His contribution towards Assamese society is multidimensional. His religion is based on the Modbhagavata and the Gita-popularly known as *Eka –Sarana- Nama- Dharma* where Lord Krishna is the only and the single worshiping God. After completion of analysis and interpretation of collected data of the study the investigator has shorted out the findings as (i) Male literate vaishnavite youth belong to age group of 17-21 years have more social upliftment than female literate vaisnavite youth of both Nagaon and Lakhimpur district of Assam. They actively associated with the various vaishnavite activities and function held in their societies. They maintained the sense of brotherhood, friendship, unity and harmony among them and with other non vaishnavite members of the society due to the influence of Srimanta Sankardeva‘s contribution; (ii) The highest social upliftment was found in urban male literate vaisnavite youth of Nagaon district i.e 72%, secondly both urban and rural male literate vaisnavite youth of Lakhimpur district i.e 71% in each, thirdly rural male literate vaishnavite youths of Nagaon district i.e 70%, fourthly urban female literate vaishnavite youths of Nagaon district i.e 67%, fifthly, urban female literate vaishnavite youths of Lakhimpur district i.e 66%, sixthly rural female literate vaishnavite youth of Nagaon district i.e 65% and lastly rural female literate vaishnavite youth of Lakhimpur district i.e 64% due to the influence of Srimanta Sankardeva‘s contribution; (iii) In case of cultural upliftment, it

has been found from the study that male (urban and rural) literate vaisnavite youth have more upliftment than female (urban and rural) literate vaisnavite youths of both Nagaon and Lakhimpur district of Assam. Again rural male literate vaisnavite youth have more cultural upliftment than the urban male literate vaishnavite youth of both Nagaon and Lakhimpur district of Assam.

Review of books on Sankardeva

Neog, D. (1963), in his book titled *Jagatguru Sankardew, the founder of the Mahapurusism* published by Srimanta Sankardeva Sangha deals with Sankardeva‘s Philosophy and religion in the proper perspective. In chapter six (Further proofs of admission of Sankardeva‘s Scholarship) the writer states that besides the gists as in the *Kirtan* Sankardeva rendered about eight books of the Bhagavata. He also rendered *Ramayana uttara kanda*. But none of these renderings were entire translation. Sankardeva picked up only such things from them which were found suitable for his aims and objects. This proves his vast erudition and orginal judgement. Sankardeva leaves behind the legacy of vast and great literature himself. Over and above his contribution to Indian Philosophy and literature in general, his making of first prose and first drama in a modern Indian language, his songs in general and Bargits in particular are really a contribution to Indian music of Modern times. In chapter ten (Mahapurusiya Practice and way of life) the writer mentions that untouchability in the gross sense of the term has really been unknown in Assamese society at least since the time of Sankardeva. Percentage of literacy may not still be high enough in Assam but education and culture in real sense of the term must be among the highest in India within the Assamese Society.

Neog, M. (1967), in his book titled *Sankardeva* published by the Director, National Book Trust, India has traced the social and political background at the out set of the book. Subsequently the writer goes on discussing Srimanta Sankardeva‘s Neo-vaisnavite order, the tenets and practices of the faith and attempts to discuss on social reorganization. In the chapter titled ‗Tenets and practices of the faith‖ the writer mentioned that Sankardeva‘s creed is popularly known as *Mahapurushiya dharma*. The word *Mahapurushia* is derived from Sanskrit word *mahapaurusika* (Bhag.-p, 1.14.37). The official name of the Bhakti creed of Sankardeva is *Eka-Sarana- Nama-*

Dharma and this explains his cardinal principles which enjoin the worship of one God. i.e Vishnu specially in the incarnation of Krishna. The investigator also mentioned that Sankardeva was a non Brahman but accepted Brahman as his disciples who made such obeisance to him as a spiritual guru. This was one of his actions that could not be approved by the orthodox, supporters of casteism and Sankardeva had to render an explaination for this in Koch Court. In another chapter titled ‒Social Reorganization‖ the writer again explained that in the Vaishnava congregation all members of the fraternity were equal. The prayer services and the reading of sacred texts could be conducted by any person who is able to do it, irrespective of their social standing in the old scale. The offerings to the deity could be distributed in assembly by men of any caste within the cirle of ‗Bhaktas'.

Malakar, R. (ed.) (1977), in his book titled *Teaching of Sri Sankardeva* published by Sankar Jyoti Association, Chandigar included several essays devoted to the philosophy of *Eka-Sarana-Nama-Dharma*, Vaishnavism of Sankardeva and the restoration of its dignity by Sankardeva to mankind and the religion that came out from the caves and entered into the day to day life of the people. These writings are thus excercising healthy influence on moral, educational, philosophical and socio-political out look of the people. The essay titled *popular Method of Sri Sankardeva* by Binoy Bhushan Choudhury deals with various drama, dance and music used by Sri Sankardeva in propagating his religious belief. The article titled *Art and philosophy of Sankardeva* by J. P. Agarwal throws a light on Vaishnavite Movement of Sankardeva. The faith initiated by Sankardeva was known as *Eka-Sarana-Nama- Dhardma* i.e devotion to one God. That is true ethical spirit of the Vaishnava faith. The identification was established with almighty through *Sravana Kirtana* and total submission to the feet of that all pervasive power. The essay titled *Miracle and Sri Sankardeva* by S. K. Dutta highlights the miraculous powers of Sri Sankardeva right from his early age. The miraculous episodes seen in the early age proves that Sri Sankardeva had supernatural powers.

Chaliha, B. P. (ed.) (1978), in his book titled *Sankardeva: A Studies in Culture* included a number of valuable articles contributed by eminent writers on various aspects of the life and teaching of the greatest reformer, Sri Sankardeva. Here the author enlightens the personalities of Sankardeva which India had produced after Gautama Buddha. By reading this the reader can understand and generate in them a

spirit of realization that would lead them to strive for working out the sublime ideals for which the Mahapurusha lived.

Goswami, K. D. (1982), in his book titled *Life and Teaching of Mahapurusa Sankardeva* published by Forum for Sankardeva Studies, Guwahati deals with the background of Bhakti Movement of Sankardeva, his literary works including poetry, song, *Gunamala*, *Bhatimas*, dramatic works and his *Satra* institution as a socio-cultural centres of education. In his book the author also throws a light on the propagation of Bhakti Movement known as *Eka-Sarana-Nama-Dharma* with a distinct and a new interpretation in its doctrinal and ritual matters.

Barkakati, S. K. (1995), in his book titled *Sri Sri Sankardeva: A Total personality* published by Bani Mandir, Guwahati deals with the life sketch of Sankardeva, his total personality, his contribution to Assamese literature, art and culture. The author also throws light on village Namghar established by Sankardeva as the focal centre of rural society of Assam. The Namghar institution continues to be social, cultural and spiritual centre of Hindu village. In the book the writer also states that Sankardeva‘s philosophy was based on complete self surrender to the Lord as taught by the Lord Himself in *Srimad Bhagavad Gita*. He stressed that the devotee should develop an attitude of a servant towards God. The writer also mentions that the *Namghar*, the cornerstone of Sankardeva‘s social system was a multipurpose institution. It was not only an assembly house for spiritual prayers and discourses. It was also a cultural centre of the village. The devotees of *Naam-Dharma* staged spiritual drama, *Bhaona* authored by Sankardeva in these *Namghars*.

Choudhury, P. (1996), in his book titled *Jagatguru Srimanta Sankardeva* published by Lawyer‘s Book Stall, Panbazer, Guwahati mentioned that Sankardeva‘s main region of activities was Assam, the old kingdom of Kamrupa which comprised also Cooch Behar including portion of North Bengal, but the stump of his greatness was felt at Puri- Vrindavana and in the heart of co-religionists of India. He gave a new meaning of Indian way of life, interpreting a new, the best in the teaching of *Vedas*, the upanishadas, the Vedanta, the Epics and lastly the *Bhagavata Purana*. Sankardeva through his own culture of the head and heart could become a versatile genius. He excelled his contemporaries in both intellectual attainments and knowledge of the *Sastras* (scriptures) whether Vaishnava or Sakta. He gave evidence of his ability as a

successful administrator, an ideal householder and shown that *grahastha- dharma* is not a hindrance against the attainment of a *paramartha gnana* though Madhabdeva‘s life was considered as ideal for a *Guru*. As a successful social reformer, his Satra institutions constitute the best in Hinduism. There is no high and low, no *Varna* or community who may be debared from having initiation and visiting the temple of God. This constitutes as well the best in pure Budhism and Christianity. In fact Sankardeva by his teaching has proved himself as one of the best religious reformer of India.

Sarma, B. N. (1996), in his book titled *Patabhumisahita Sankardevar Darsan* deals with the historical back ground of philosopy of Sankardeva at the out set of the book and then goes on discussing the Bhagavata, Vedanta and Gita. In the chapter titled philosophy of Sankardeva the writer compares the philosophy of Sankardeva with the philosophy of Sankaracharya. Sankardeva‘s philosophy is based on the philosophy of Bhagavata Purana. Sankaracharya said in his Brahmasutra Bhashya that Sudra could not study the Veda and that they were not competent in scriptural matters. This has come from a person who preached monism. Such contradiction and discrimination are never found in Srimanta Sankardeva.

Goswami, R. K. D. (ed.) (1996), in his book titled *Essays on Sankardeva* published by Forum for Sankardeva Studies in collaboration with Lawer‘s Book Stall, Guwahati includes several articles written by eminent scholars dealing with literary work of Sankardeva, his religious and social teachings, Ankiya naat, its origin and nature. The essay titled *The poetry of Sankardeva* by Upendra Nath Sarma enlightens Sankardeva‘s unique dance drama known as *Ankiya Naats* which represents a composite syncretic art form with slokas or Bhatimas, dance, song and dialogue. All these combine to create an atmosphere or super human loveliness through the skill of performers. By reading this book the reader can get insight how deep and wide spread was the influence of Sankardeva on the cultural renaissance that burst forth of medieval Assam.

Bharali, A. (1997), in his book titled *Assamese culture as reflected in the medieval Assamese literature* dealing with the cultural aspects of the Neo- vaishnavite creed highlights the various media of preaching the Vaishnava religion in the form of religious plays (Ankiya Naats) and songs-Bargits and Bhatimas.

Neog, M. (1998), in his book titled *The contribution of the Sankardeva Movement to the Culture and Civilisation of India* published by National Book Trust, India familiarizes the readers with overall contribution of Srimanta Sankardeva to the social, cultural and religious life of the Assamese people even as he initiated the Neo-Vaisnavite Movement.

Das, S. K. (1998), in his book titled as *The Polyphony of the Bhakti Movement* published by the Forum of Sankardeva Studies, Guwahati mentioned that Sankardeva was engaged in a compaign against the Saktas which was prevailing as a dominant religious group of that time. He had opposed the Saktas by his vigorous rejection of Tantric mode of worship, sexual perversion and human sacrifice associated with it. He also faced with the wrath of the Brahmins by criticising many Hindu rituals and more particularly for assertion of spiritual equality of man. Professor Maheswar Neog mentioned that Bhuyas were always suspected by the Ahom Kings and Sankardeva had difficult times. The king indeed had once ordered the arrest of the Saint. Hari, son in low of Sankardeva was beheaded and his disciple Madhabadeva was kept under detension for several months. Sankardeva had left the Ahoms Kingdom and settled in Barpeta. The most important text for the Vaishnava of all denominators is the Srimad Bhagavata which has been translated and trancreated into different language, although its impact is different from area to area or from language to language. The kind of impact that Bammer Potana, the fifteenth century Telugu Poet, made all over Andhra Pradesh through his transcreation of the Bhagavata (Along with lyrics of Annamacharya) is partly comparable with the impact of Sankardeva‘s Bhagavata in Assam.

Sarma, S. N. (1998), in his book titled *A Glimpse of the Art of Sankardeva’s Poetry* published by Forum of Sankardeva Studies, Guwahati depicted that Sankardeva was primarily a religious and cultural reformer. He had not any intention like Kalidas or Bhavabhuti to produce a series of literature for the elite section with poetic pleasure. The poetric genius that is established in his personality found adequate expression in some of the finest passage of description of natural scenes and of characterization. His lyrics incorporated in the category of Bargits and devotional plays bespeak of his devotional urge, poetic sensibility and reformative zeal. Sankardeva admitted and preached equality of all in the sphere of devotion, but he did not clearly state his views regarding removal of caste barriers existing in the society, rather in certain

passages he seems to have accepted the status que of the *varnasrama* system. By propagating revolutionary ideas he did not want to antagonize the social leaders by breaking the then social fabric, but he freely admitted to his devotional faith of all caste including Muslims and tribals. But he did not invite trouble deliberately by going against the traditional social fabric with a view to safeguarding the new religious order from the frown of the social leaders.

Darbari, J. (1998), in her book titled *Srimanta Sankardeva –The Living Legend* published by Vikash Publishing House Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi explains that her book is just like a research work into karma, thoughts, actions of Srimanta Sankardeva as the author wrote the book with her own experience during her visit to various Namghar and Satra institutions of Majuli and Hajo. In the book the author states that Sankardeva‘s exposition of *Eka-Sarana Nama-Dharma* has capped his devotional excellances mounted on the Bhaktivedantism. Sankardeva left a finished product of chiselled artistry churning out the classics of the orient. The multifaceted genius of Srimanta Sankardeva and his multilinear contribution on the Vaishnavite renaissance is not adequately known and appreciated outside the North- East India. Not much has been done to make the greater academic world of India known about the greatness of Sankardeva or the Sankardeva movement. This book will be a great step in this direction. In the book the author deals with the cultural heritage of Assam and enlightens the literary works of Sankardeva which is good news for the cultural and spiritual world. She has aptly said that when the conflicting human mind and barbaric instinct are nurtured with Prem (love) and Bhakti (devotion) to the supreme, it balances the emotions and heals the traumas of life. In the chapter titled ‒The town of Hajo‖ the author describes Hajo as the famous meeting place of Hindu, Buddhist and Muslims where Muslims offered prayer and embraced vaisnavism. Ek Deo Ek Seo Ek Bine Nahi Keo (only one God, only one to be revered, none else but one!) is what Sri Sankardeva had propagated. By reading this the reader can get insight how people with different religion, creed and culture were brought united by Sri Sankardeva through his *Eka- Sarana- Nama- Dharma.*

Barman, S. (1999), in his book titled as *An Unsung colossus* mentioned that Sankardeva has not only taught us the moral and manliness that every man should possess of but also taught us the technique to spread the thought and ideas among the common people in a winning manner. Sankardeva through spread of Neo-

Vaishnavism broke the barrier of class difference that of Assam had suffered and united them by contributing to the formation of a general Assamese society. In the face of growing threats of dissolution in present day Assam Sankardeva‘s ideal of oneness and unity is undoubtedly of immense value and should find a sharp focus in the intellectual milieu of today. In his book he mentioned about the literature and cultural activities of Srimanta Sankardeva as mentioned below

A. Kavya:

i. Hariscandra-upakhyana
ii. Ajamilopakhyana
iii. Bali-chalana
iv. Gopi-uddhava-samvada
v. Rukmini –harana kavya
vi. Amrita-manthana
vii. Kamajaya or Rasakrida
viii. Kuruksetra-yatra
ix. Krishna-prayana-pandava-niryana
x. Kirtana-ghosha.

B. Theological works (works on Bhakti Theory)

i. Bhakti-pradipa
i. Nimi-navasiddha-samvada
iii Anadi-patana
iv. Gunamala

C.Translation:

1. Bhagavata-

In the Bara-Bhuyan territory-

i. Book VI (Ajamilopakhayana part)
ii. Book VIII (Amrit-manthana part)

During the Koch-Kingdom-

iii. Book I

iv. Book II.

v. Book VII (Bali Chalana part)

vi. Book X (Adi Dasama)

vii. Book XI (with materials Book I &III)

viii. Book XII

(Sankardeva is said to have translated Book IX of the Bhagavata also, but it is not available)

2. Ramayana (Uttarakanda)

D. Dramas:

1. Patni-prasada.
2. Kaliya-damana
3 Keli-gopala
4. Rukmini-harana
5. Parijat-harana
6. Rama-vijaya.

E. Lyrics:

1. Borgitas: According to *Guru-carita-katha* (para-380). Sankardeva composed as many as twelve scores of Bargitas, but most of them were consumed by fire. As a result, only thirty seven of his ‗Bargitas‘ are available now.
2. Bhatima: Sankardeva wrote a number of ‗Bhatima‘ which can be classified into following groups;
   i. Nata-Bhatimas
   ii. Deva-Bhatimas
   ii. Raja-Bhatimas.

Chaliha, B. P. (ed.) (1999), in his book titled *Sankari Sanskritira Adhayan* in Assamese published by Srimanta Sankardeva Sangha, Nagaon includes several essays devoted to the cultural and social dimensions of the Neo-vaisnavite faith. The essay titled *Assamiya Samajik Jibonor Duti Bishista Anusthan: Namghar and Satra* by Dr. Sarbeswar Rajguru deal with Namghar, its origin and structural component as well as various socio-cultural activities entering around the institution.

Deka, B. (2003), in his book titled *Srimanta Sankardeva* states that Sankardeva was not only a religious reformer and preacher, but also a great scholar in literature, art and culture. He was a poet, dramatist, lyricist and artist. His contributions towards Assamese literature are unique. He had brought a new renaissance not only in the field of religion, art and culture but also in the Assamese literature. Sankardeva‘s religion is based on the Bhabavata puruna and the Gita. So, his philosophy of religion was the philosophy of Bhagavata and Gita. Of all sastras, Bhagavata and Gita are the best and Nama –Dharma is the best of all the religions. Sankardeva accepted Bhagavata as the assence of the Vedanta and preached the religion of Bhagavata. So, his religion is also known as Bhagavati Vaisnava Dharma. But as he gave more emphasis on *Sravana* and *Kirtana*, it has also come to be known as Nama-Dharma. The religion of Sankardeva is also known as Bhakti –Dharma, religion of love and devotion. Sankardeva‘s religion of Bhakti is very simple that can be followed and practised by all classes of people –high and low. His religion of Bhakti is the *Sravana –Kirtana- naam- dharma* with the company of the devotees. The main principle of Bhakti- Movement in Assam is the following of Nama-Dharma. In Bhakti Nama-Dharma there are nine kinds of Bhakti. These are *Sravana, Kirtana, Smarana, Padasevana, Archana,* Dasya, *Vandana, Sakhya* and *Atmanivedana.* Of these nine modes of Bhakti, Sankardeva considered *Sravana* and *Kirtana* as the best for the inculcation of a spirit of devotional mind. A devotee can get that grace of God only by practising *Sravana* and *Kirtana*. Religion propagated by Sankardeva played very important role in the socio –cultural and religious sphere of Assam. Satra institution is the cultural center for enacting drama, dance and music school for learning Bargit, and orchestral music. Namghar is the sacred institution where equality of man is preached and practised. Untouchability, classes on caste distinction were totally discarded and all were given equal status. The down trodden human were given protection from the clutches of exploitation and repression. The Assamese people and Assamese culture is indebted to this great scholar, religious leader and the promoter of an art and culture. The very base on which we can now proudly stand as an Assamese is the contribution made by Sankardeva. Like Gautam Budha, Srimanta Sankardeva lifted the lives of the common people from the darkness of ignorance and rescued religion from clutches of absurdity.

Datta, A. (2004), in his book titled *Poetry Religion and Culture: The Indian Perspective and Sankardeva* states that religion might have as some belive, originated from the fear of the hostile and impersonal forces of nature and unpredictable calamities that often visited the unprotected lives of the early men. This fear could have led to the belief in a super power which could be propitiated for the evasion or mitigation of risks to life. The purity of religious experience got adulterated when religion became thoroughly institutionalized and turned public from a private affair. All religious reform movement is in a sense protest movements. The Bhakti Movement that swept the country from the South to the North and from West to East in the Middle Ages was aimed at reawakening the people to the consciousness of the religious tradition but by implication it was also a protest movement against the deprivation and oppression that the common men suffered from. Sankardeva laid the foundation and actually built up an integrated society and race of people and it was great historic experiment. Waves of migration for centuries had formed the demographic pattern of this region. Those who migrated from the main land kept alive in their isolation, the tradition of Sanskrit studies and religious practices but the majority of the population lived as separate entities of ethnic and tribal groups. Sankardeva was the first man to realize the exigency of bringing all to a common meeting ground. And he eventually succeeded in creating a race of people giving it a status both political and cultural in the federal structure of India‘s socio- political formation. The two institutions that Sankardeva set up, the Satra and Namghar show a visionary‘s concern with the future of the people. The Satra have been the repositories of Sankardeva lore and they are a valuable legacy. The Namghar in every village was obviously meant to be a prayer hall. Sankardeva might have additionally thought of it as a place where people could regularly meet and get to know one another for social cohesion. For, today‘s need it could have been turned into a meeting place for discussing village problems or initiation of development programmes for the village. All this would have naturally encouraged social involvement and participation.

Borkakati, S. K. (2005), in his book titled as *Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankardeva* states that Srimanta Sankardeva was not only spiritual preacher but also a great litterateur as well as a performing artist. It was he who laid the foundation of the Assamese literature and culture. He was a social reformer and the founder of present Assamese social structure. The etire society of modern Assam continues to run

according to his models and ideals till now. The village Namghar which was established by him as the focal point of the new society continues to be the social, spiritual and cultural nerve centre of Hindu village in modern Assam. He was truly a unique person who lived his own concept of universal brotherhood. In Chapter three (Building the Institutional Set up) the writer also mentions that Srimanta Sankardeva founded a whole new school of art. He initiated a new form of painting with his epoch-making drama-festival _Chihna-Yatra‘ held in 1468 A.D, where he drew the imaginary pictures of heaven to be used as beckdrops. He encouraged illustration of his manuscripts and decoration of the _Kirtanghar‘ walls with pictorial depiction of stories from Bhagavata. Srimanta Sankardeva preached a unique philosophy. Though a proponent of devotional path he was neither a dualist nor a qualified monist. Sankardeva said that the world was identical with Brahma in intrinsic reality. It was very much a creation and at the same time a characteristic of Brahma. Srimanta Sankardeva‘s teachings were in the line of upanishadic philosophy of enlightment of knowledge of the self, together with pure devotion to the single God as preached in Bhagavata. He made a fine blending of the two. Simanta Sankardev‘s philosophy was a complete religion in itself. Such a great philosophy can not be termed as a branch of any religion. His religious idea has been named Eka- Sarana- Nama- Dharma after the concept of self surrender and the chanting of God‘s name as the main mode of *sadhana*. It is clear from the extensive writing of Sankardeva that he evolved a unique philosophy which succeeded in bringing about a resolution of conflicts between different schools of thoughts in Indian Philosophy. In chapter eight (The Patbausi Life) the writer again mentions that Sankardeva began his literary works seriously at Patbausi. He continued with his incomplete works of *Kirtana –ghosha* which he completed here. Each chapter of *Kirtana –ghosha* was a complete writing in itself which deals with different stories glorifying the devotion to *Lord Krishna*. Here the writer also states that Srimanta Sankardeva was somewhat on a literary mission. He was not only a religious leader like many people think, but also educationist in his own immitable way. He helped the people acquire knowledge of the scriptures as well as of behavioural science. His teachings were always full of advices about an ideal life style. He asked people to shun evil. Ethics constituted the main component of his teaching. People were also cautioned against pride. Thus he stood as a teacher of the entire society.

Bhatacharjya, S. K. (2005), in his article titled *Understanding Sankardeva—The Great Socio-Economic Reformer of Assam* published in the book *Srimanta Sankardeva Bharata Barise* published by Bharatiya Etihas Sankalan Samiti, Assam mentions that Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardeva was a genius with all round accomplishments. Though primarily a religious preacher and reformer it was with him that a new era of cultural evolution started in Assam with far reaching consequences. Though his ideas were of universal relevance it is unfortunate that his message remained confined to Assam alone mostly due to Assam‘s peculiar geographical location which practically isolated Assam from the rest of India. Sankardeva did not limit his activity only to the religious front. Under his guidance great cultural development took place. He took special care to acquire the know-how and to develop and adopt these for making musical instruments and producing these under his supervision. He himself wrote books as well as scripts for plays and encouraged his disciple to do the same. It is very interesting to note that all the economic burden of these activities wheather of developing and producing or organizing plays and open stage performance called *Bhaona* or of making *Namghar* or of maintenance expences of congregation etc were met within the devotees. The devotees contributed their share of this burden as Guru Kar which came both in the form of cash and kinds.

Barkakati, S. K. (2006), in his book *Unique Contribution of Srimanta Sankardeva in Religion and Culture* published by Srimanta Sankardeva Sangha Nagaon Asssam which is a compilation of several articles deals with the contribution of Srimanta Sankardeva in religion and culture. Here the writer made an attempt to bring out the pioneering role played by the Saint in both religious sphere as well as cultural arena. The *Eka-Sarana-Nama- Dharma* preached by Srimanta Sankardeva is a unique in much respect. There is total absence of worship of any female entity in this order, where as such worship is found in some degrees in all other cults of India. Similarly the school of art evolved by the saint in painting dance and music has of late been recognized as unique by all scholars. The writer also mentioned that Srimanta Sankardeva is accepted as the father of Assamese race by the people in the state. It was Sankardeva who gave the Assamese people a commom language and culture in addition to a predominant bond of religious belief. The great mass of literary works left by him has become the bedrocks of Assamese literature. He was the founder of composite culture which comprises naam –kirtan (community prayer unto God),

dance, music and Ankiya plays. The composite culture created by Srimanta Sankardeva went on to become the mainstream Assamese culture. The article titled *Ankiya play and Bhaona of Srimanta Sankardeva* deals wth the distinctive drama style of Srimanta Sankardeva and the world record set by this style of play. The article *Srimanta Sankardeva's Bargeets and traditional instruments used in Sankari music* deals with the great classical songs created by Srimanta Sankardeva and the ethnic instruments used by him. The article *charateristics of Srimanta Sankardeva's wriing* is an attempt to bring out the salient feature as well as the originality of the saint‘s writing. The article *ethnic integration by Srimanta Sankardeva* explains the process of ethnic integration achieved by the saint through cultural ingradients.

Mahanta, G. (2007), in his book titled *A treatise on Sankari Music* edited by Dr. Sanjib Kumar Barkakati and published by Srimanta Sankardeva Sangha has depicted a detailed illuminating picture abut the heritage of Sankari Music, nomenclature, genesis, Indian background, ingradients, occupation, introductory part of Raga etc. The author has also discussed the non –Raga elements of Sankari Music in addition to the detailed discusstion of Sankari Ragas. The writer also mentions that Sankari Music is distinctive school of Indian Music. Jagat Guru Srimanta Sankardeva was the founder of this school. There had been a massive decadence in the sphere of religion and culture in the North-East India including Assam when the Saint was born. He launched a Vaisnavite Bhakti Movement in order to redeem the society. He used the tool of culture in the revolutionary task as culture is an unfailing instrument for any revolution.

Barua, G. and Others (Ed.) (2008), in the book titled *Srimanta Sankardeva and His Philosophy* published by Srimanta Sankardeva Sangha Assam, India includes a number of valuable articles by various scholars delineating the life and philosophy of Srimanta Sankardeva. The writer Bhaba Prasad Chaliha in the article titled ―Sankardeva‘s Literary Contribution: A short Survey‖ mentions that Sankardeva‘s literary out put is quite large and consists of a wide variety--- translation and adaptation, longer narratives, songs, drama and doctrinal treatise. Maheswar Neog makes an attempt to prepare a list of Sankardeva‘s works in a tentatively chronological order on the basis of certain external and internal evidence. Sankardeva‘s *Rukmini Harana Kavya* is one of the most popular works in all Assamese literature. Sankardeva‘s *Kirtan ghosha* is one of the most important books

on Assam Vaishnavism. Based on mainly on Bhagavata Purana each section of Kirtana ghosha contains several Kirtana songs each relating to a story. Sankara‘s adi dasama or Bhagavata-X is another great contribution of the saint to Assamese culture. In another article titled *Sankardeva’s and the vaishnava renaissance in Assam* published in the book, the writer Dr. Moheswar Neog states that Sankardeva, who refers to his father Kusumvara as the gandharva incarnate has also left a rich legacy of style of classical Indian dancing. This school has some features in common with Manipuri style, reorganized as one of the four all Indian classical school. In another article titled conscept *of Brahman, isvara, jagat and Jiva in Sankardeva’s Philosophy* published in the book the writer Kailash Chandra Das discusses different views given by Sankara, Ramanuja and Sankardeva. Here the writer states that like Sankara and Ramanuja Sankardeva believe that all is Brahman because the world of multiplicity is born out of Brahman. Sankardeva holds that the absolute reality (Brahman) is non dual consciousnesss (having no distinction- internal or external) pervading the world of multiplicity created by maya.

Pathak, D. (2009), in his book titled *Srimanta Sankardeva--- the Great Master* published by Chandra Prakash; Guwahati discussed the life sketch of Sankardeva including political and religious background of Sankardeva, his geneology and his literary contribution. In Chapter eight (Literary Masterstrokes) the writer states that *Kirtan ghosha* is considered to be a monumental collection of Sankardeva often discussed as Kirtan in common parlance. It is a magnificent collection of versified prayers and anecdotes culled from the Bhagavatpurana, the most sacroscant instrument of Bhakti Movement sweeping the country. *Dasama* being described as *Adi Dasama* is considered to be one of the excellent works of Sankardeva. It is an Assamese rendering of the first part of the 10th book of *Bhagawatpurana* considered to be one of the sacrascant writing of the Saint. In Chapter six (Preacher- playwright) the writer also mentions that Sankardeva was the pioneer of Assamese drama. He laid the foundation stone of drama and stage play in the North-Eastern part of India.

Barua, B. K. (2009), in his book titled *Sankardeva Vaisnava Saint of Assam* made an attempt to put the world an academic assessment of the inspiration and achievement of God Saint Sankardeva whose contribution not only sustain us, the Assamese people but may as well prove of immense value to India at large particularly at this moment of reconstruction and regeneration of the country. At the

very outset of the book the author deals with brief life sketch of Sankardeva, then author goes on discussing literary works, Ankiya nat and Bhaona, his philosophy and the institution of Namghar and Satra as the centre of social activities. In chapter two (Literature) the author mentions that Sankardeva drew inspiration chiefly from *Bhagavata* which was described as the Sun amidst the Puranas. An early attempt was therefore made to translate the book into Assamese. It was realy a very bold and extraordinary undertaking to render into a provincial language a vulnerable text written in the grand style of classical tongue. The translation of the entire text was not a light job for one man; So Sankardeva allotted different sections for translation to his different disciples. He himself undertook the rendering of the major portions, namely books I, II, III, VI, VIII, IX, X and the book XII. Of all the books of the *Bhagavata*, the *Adi Dasama* the first part of Book X is very popular. This book describes the incidents of Krishna‘s early life. The next outstanding literary production of Sankardeva is the *Kirtana* which even day influence upon the mind and thought of the Assamese people. In Chapter five (Institutions) the writer also mentions that Sankardeva‘s religion has many institutional aspects and these exercise even today a tremendous on the cultural, social and community life of Assamese people. As an institution it may be considered mainly in two aspects: the Satras and Namghars.

Phukan, B. (2010), in his book *Srimanta Sankardeva: Vaisnavite Saint of Assam* published by Kaziranga Book, Guwahati made an attempt to discuss the life sketch of Srimata Sankardeva, his legacy including his literary and cultural contributions. Here the writer states that Sankardeva‘s literary output is prodigious, remarkable for a religious writer he adopted several forms of literature, prose, verse and poetical prose, translation of adaptation, compilation from different texts, songs, lyrics, longer narratives and a doctrinal treatise. He wrote in three language—Assamese, Brajabuli and Sanskrit. The *Kirtan Ghosha* or simply *Kirtana* is the first of Saankardeva‘s work written specifically for the purpose of propagating his faith. It describes –the devine attributes and activities of Lord Krishna in a language within reach of masses that they may understand and sing them in devotion to Lord. The writer also mentioned that Sankardeva composed 240 hymns. Of these only 35 survive, the rest destroyed in the fire. Bargit is a convergence of philosophical reflections, secular and ethical broodings, agonies of the sptrit, and saintly humility.

Hussain, A. (Ed.) (2012), in the Souvenir titled *Shankarjyoti* published on the occasion of the 564th Birth Anniversary Celebration of Srimanta Sankardeva organized by Srimanta Sankardeva Sangha in collaboration with Assam Satra Mahashabha, Ek Sharana Bhagawati Shamaj and published by the reception committee of Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardevar abirbhav Mahotsava silchar, cachar included a number of valuable articles written by various scholars which deals with the life and works of Srimanta Sankardeva, his social and religious teaching, Ankiya nats and his literary and cultural contribution to Assamese and Indian Society. The article titled *Sankardeva and his contribution to the Assamese and Indian Society* by Priti Deka deals with the cultural and literary contribution of Srimanta Sankardeva. In the article the writer mentions that in the field of literature his contribution is indeed great. A new gospel required a new Bible. He therefore composed kavyas, plays and devotional lyrics (Bargita). Out of twelve books of *Bhagavata Purana* he rendered eight skandhas in Assamese including Dasama skandha popularly known as *Adi – Dasama*. His *Kirtana ghosha* based on the stories of Bhagavata is beautiful expression and passionate in depth of feeling and it is found in almost every household of Assamese people. The article titled *Art and Srimanta Sankardeva* by Dr. Meghali Goswami deals with his social institution-Namghar and also the famous Brindavani Vastra of Srimanta Sankardeva. Here the writer mentions that Sankardeva was a poet, writer, lyricist, composer, playwright, singer and author of a new religion. If all these attainments are overlooked, Sankardeva will still be remembered for his unforgettable creation of _Namghar‘. His contribution in the field of visual Arts is to be commendable. It is due to his initiation that Assam is now the storehouse of the treasured illuminated manuscripts. Along with the illuminated manuscripts the famous Vrindavani Vastra- the cloth of Vrindavan: a 120x60 cubits tapestry depicted the lilas of Lord Krishna at Vrindavan through richly woven and embroidered designs on silk. Sankardeva engaged the weavers of Tatikushi near Barpeta. Sankardeva provided the design to be woven chose the various colours to be used and personally supervised the weaving.

Barkakati, S. K. (2012), in his book titled *Srimanta Sankardeva: An Epoch Maker* published by EBH Publishers, India deals with the contribution of the fifteenth century saint, litterateur Srimanta Sankardeva in different areas that brought about unprecedented reforms in medieval India. The book is an attempt to bring out the

constructive role played by the saint at a time when the North-East was divided among numerous warring tribes. The writer also states that the *Eka-Sarana- Nama-Dharma* preached by Sankardeva worked as an amalgamating agent to bring together these tribes.

Review of journal on Sankardeva

Chutia, D. (Ed.) (1997), in the journal titled *Mahapurusha Jyoti* published by Srimanta Sankardeva Sangha, Nagaon made a modest attempt to organise systematic study both an institutional and individual level-and dissemination of knowledge on Sankardeva, his works and his ethico- moral teachings as well as literarary artistic contribution to the world culture. It is generally complained that the impact of life and works so much so of his teaching is not fully realised both within and outside neither the country nor any systematic endeavours have been made in this direction from any quarters. The Journal is a humble attempt in this direction. The writer in the journal included several articles by variouis eminent scholars which deal with the life sketch of Sankardeva and his vedantic teachings, Bargits, his literary works and the Sanskrit drama and Ankiya Naats of Sankardeva. The article titled *Sankardeva the creator of Assamese culture* written by Jogeswar Bardoloi deals with cultural contribution of Sankardeva. Here the writer states that Sankardeva began his journey in to the realm of drama, an audio-visual literature with *China –Yatra* as the stepping stone. Realising that a drama leaves far reaching influence on the masses comprising of educated and uneducated, elite and laymen, he wrote bilingual dramas, Brajavali for the commoners and Sanskrit for the educated. Moreover he wrote gits befitting different scenes and episodes of drama and placed them accordingly. The article titled *Sankardeva's literary contribution: A short survey* by Bhaba Prasad Chaliha deals with the literary contribution of Sankardeva. In the article the author mentions that Sankardeva‘s Kirtana ghosha (the book of songs and refrain) is one of the most important books of Assam vaishnavism. There are twenty nine sections in the Book including one section by Ratnakara Kandali. Sankardeva‘s Adi- Dasama or Bhagavata X is another great contribution to Assamese Bhakti literature. In another article titled *Sanskrit drama and Ankiya –Naats of Sankardeva—A comparative study* by Dr. Indira Saikia Bora deals with the comparative study of Sankrit drama and Ankiya Naats where the writer

states that though the Sanskrit Natas were produced to provide enjoyment to the people it was difficult for the common people to enjoy, Sanskrit being not a common language for the general masses. But the Ankiya Naats were written in Brajabuli which was commonly understood by the general people. Further Sanskrit dramas had given stress on entertainment whereas the Ankiya Naats had given stress on the religious faith of the order in addition to entertainment of the common people.

Review of papers presented in the national seminar on Sankardeva (2006)

Choudhary, J. submitted a seminar paper on ‒Lord Sankardeva, His Super Human Qualities.‖ In the seminar paper he mentioned that Sankardeva was a versatile genius. The genius of Sankardeva was so versatile and his achievement in the field of religion, social reform, art, culture, literature, music and nation of harmony were so vast and far reaching that the common people could not but worshiped him as incarnation of Lord Krishna. Sankardeva was physically strong, handsome, a prophet, poet, composer, translator, master play wright, linguist, dancer, musician, lyricist, artist, singer, great social organisar, great unifier of Nation, humanist, founder of *Ankiya nat*, *Eka-Sarana-Nama –Dharma*. Satra and Namghar, symbol of liberty, equality, fraternity and peaceful co-cxistence, motivatior, discurder of untouchability, master weaver, architect, painter, composer of devotional songs, creator of vaishnavite culture, musk culture, educationist, psychologist, economic uplifter, nonviolent with great soul force only uplifter of Lord Krishna. Srimanta Sankardeva after studying the philosophical works realized that Krishna culture is the fine dicision of the Indian philosophy. He wanted to enrich the human life with all round development i.e physically, mentally, morally, intectually and spiritually.

Deka, K. K. submitted a seminar paper on ‒Sankardeva: A Great Social Reformer.‖ In the seminar paper he explained that Sankardeva was not only a religious prophet but also strongest revolutionary social reformer ever born on the soil of Assam. The whole Assamese culture and tradition may be said to be epitomised in Sankardeva. The whole life and activity of Sankardeva are closely associated with the social life and culture of Assamese people. In true sense Srimanta Sankardeva was called the creator of Bar Assam or an epoch maker of Assamese culture. At the time of Sankardeva the society of ancient Assam was full of evil practices resulting from

Saktism and Tantricism. There was a class distinction among all section of the society. The upper class people used to neglect the lower class people. The lower class people were deprived of all prestigious positions in the society and the shares of the royal rule. Sometimes their very presence in religious festivals was an act of impurity leading to a sin. The greatest social reforms performed by Srimanta Sankardeva are the social recognition provided to the people belonging to the lower caste. Sramanta Sankardeva preached *Eka-Sarana-Nama –Dharma* which means devotion to a single God.i.e Lord Krishna. His religion is the most liberal, simplest and easiest way of attaining God. His spiritual teaching to his disciples is unquestionably remarkable as it bears no room for any hostility between the rich and poor in the name of religion. Srimanta Sankardeva brought about Cultural Revolution in Assam. He opened not only the door of religion for the laity, but also the doors of languages, literarure, art and culture for all.

Devi, B., Guwahati College, Guwahati submitted a seminar paper on ‒Reflection of Humanism in the Works of Sankardeva‖ where he explained that Sankardeva was a great propagator of humanism. The life and works of Sankardeva is saturated with human values, the dignity of the downtrodden of the society. In fact it is spiritual humanism which is based on classical literature (Scriptures) of the Eka-Sarana-Naama-Dharma. Srimanta Sankardeva attains artistic excellence and serves the interest of humanity and for the betterment of mankind. Beautiful and humanism are the two defining characteristics of his work. The whole works of Sankardeva wheather it may be the works of literature, culture, religion etc. reflect the essence of Humanism. The principles of equality and equity are seen in most of his works. Srimanta Sankardeva tried to demolish the barriers of caste and creed and bridged the division between the high and low of the society. Among his disciples were people from all castes and creed including people of Mahmadan community. His faith in Eka-Sarana-Nama-Dharma that is the religion of worshipping the one by uttering his name reflects equality which is the aspect of humanism. Sankardeva‘s Namghar, Namkirtana, his celestial songs included in his Kirtana ghosha and Bargits highlight humanistic aspects. In the Humanistic views of Sankardeva everyone is equal to any other man in capacities or may be superior or inferior by his /her good or evil deeds.

Mahanta, D., Nagaon Girl’s College, Nagaon presented a seminar paper titled as ‒Concept of Progressive Society as Envisaged in the Philosophy of Srimanta

Sankardeva‖. Here the writer explained that as a social reformer, religious philosopher, the greatest achievement of Sankardeva is his success in uniting the people of a disintegrated society into a culturally advance and religiously monotheist ideology. Sankardeva though belonging to a ruler class realised that the success can never be achieved by using arms or using muscle power. For making unity among different ethnic groups of that era Sankardeva applied his progressive ideology towards forming a common bond of love and affection. The writer also mentioned that Sankardeva was one of the greatest progressive thinkers of the world who taught and followed the ideas of socialism four centuries back before Kari Mark preached, that too only theortically the ideals of sociology. Sankardeva established Namghar and Satra for uniting together the diverse section of the Assamese society. He was in favour of upward mobility i.e virtue of moral practices. The people belonging to lower strata of the society could attain equality with the people from the higher strata. The superiority of Sankardeva‘s progressive thinking was that he did not allow the feeling of hatred towards any caste; rather he was much in favour of a peaceful and egalitarian society which is free from all forms of class conflict.

Neog, S. B. presented a seminar paper titled as ‒The Satra: A Social and Religious Institution of Assam‖ where he depicted that institution like Satra and Namghar were devised by Sankardeva to propagate the Vaishnava faith. Srimanta Sankardeva established Satra as permanent place where devoties used to stay and carry out the programe of religious activity regularly. Satra is an institution resembling, to a certain extent the Buddhist monastery system or the vaishnavite Mathas of the medieval period. Satras are generally situated on quadrangles surrounded by palisades or walls. Each principal Satra is marked by the existence of a *Namghar,* a *Manikut*, a *Batcara* and two or four rows of *Haties*. During the time of Sankardeva the Satra institution had not taken the shape of a regular institution. It was developed during the succeeding generations. At present day situation the Satra has been serving as the centre of all the religious and spiritual activities of vaishnavism. This institution has become so popular in Assam not only as a religious institution but also social and educational institution. Now a days Satra and Namghar act as the socio-cultural centre of Assamese society.

Review of papers presented in the international conference on Sankardeva (2007)

Baruah, K. presented a paper titled as ‒Aesthetics of Prayer in Srimanta Sankardeva‖ with the aim to explore the role of aesthetic experience in Shri Sankardeva‘s perception and examined in relation to three principal dimensions the aesthetic realm: feeling and imagination, beauty (or taste) and the arts. In the seminar paper the writer explained that according to Sankardeva the best way of reforming a society and religion was not to attach the evil but to present what is good and to appeal their aesthetic sense. He made a remark to one of his chief disciple Gobinda Ata that religion is not for king. Religion is for common masses. A very pragmatic approach was taken by Srimanta Sankardeva establishing within the confines to the society. Sankardeva established Satra which is unique type monastic /semi monastic place of prayer, a safe heaven which serve as a centre for preaching peace and equality. This Satra was having a stricking character‘s resemble to Bhudhist Sanghas. These Satras had some moral laws framed for controlling the activities of the Society. The village Namghar, a miniature replica of Satra with combined functions of a village Church, a village Court, a village Stage was initiated by Sankardeva himself. The Namghar has been growing its popularity in the daily life of the Assamese people and it becomes more vibrant by allowing entry to all persons irrespective of their caste.

Deka, U. B. presented a paper titled as ‒Importance of the Teaching of Srimanta Sankardeva for the Upliftment of the Society‖ where the writer depicted that Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankardeva was one of the greatest versatile genious, a saint, a poet of medieval India who made immense contributions to the spiritual, cultural and literary life of the people of the North-East India specially of Assam. At the time of Sankardeva the social and political condition of Assam was in turmoil. There prevailed evil practices resulting from Saktism and Tantrism creating a chaotic condition in the religious as well as social orders. So there was necessity of proper upliftment of the society and by the grace of God Srimanta Sankardeva was sent as an Angel to save the earth. He concentrated his mind to the study of the Vedas, Vedanta and Srimadhbhagavadgita, the Bhagavata Purana and other scriptures to expand a proper form of religion. His twelve years of pilgrimage is said to be a comprehensive training in the vaishnavite theology text made of worship and management of institutions. According to Sankardeva the single God Srikrishna is to be worshiped

with single minded Bhakti and devotion. He established Satra and Namghar for public prayer and wrote many books, a great numbers of Bargit to preach new Vaishnava dharma to attract the common people.

Hembram, L., Utkal University, Bhubaneswar (Orissa), submitted the abstract paper titled ‒Neo- Vaishanavism: A Comparative Study between Atibad-Jagannath Das and Srimanta Sankardeva of Assam‖ where the writer mentioned that it is perhaps in the early middle of 15th century A.D due to excessiveness of the Brahmanical Vedic ‒Karmakanda Shakti Cult‖ and superstition and a large scale exploitation of the upper caste people on the general masses at its peak, some Mahapurusha or the great souls are born at the same time in the different parts of India to show a new path which is different from the old one. The prominent among them are Tulsi Das , Santa Kabir, Guru Nanak, Sri Chaitanyadev, Atibadi Jagannath Das of Orissa (Utkal) and Srimanta Sankardeva of Assam born as desired by Lord Krishna in the holy text of Bhagavat gita. Both Atibadi Jagannath and Srimanta Sankardeva are socio- religious reformers, greatest writer, poet and Guru who translated the great holy book that is Bhagavata into their own language in Oriya and as well as in Assamese that was a great at period of time. Both Srimanta Sankardeva and Atibadi Jagannth Das were very close with Sri Chaitanya Dev at Puri Dham as the fact is revealed from the history that the trio has fought against the evils of Hinduism of their times. They defied the Vedic Hinduism with the supremacy of the upper caste Hindu. Atibadi Jagannath Das as a translator of Oriya Bhagavat and Srimanta Sankardeva of Assam remains in the heart of the people till today.

Kandali, M. presented a paper titled ‒Srimanta Sankardeva and Sattriya Dance‖ where the writer depicted a clear picture about Satriya Dance introduced by Srimanta Sankardeva. Here, the writer mentioned that the Satriya Dance was evolved from the *Nator Nac* or the dances of the Vaishanava Theater called *Ankiya Bhaona*. Srimanta Sankardeva composed and choreoghaphed *Ankiya Bhaona* with an aim of propagating Bhakti as a medium of reaching out to the people. The writer mentioned some important characteristics of *Ankiya Bhaona* or naat which are stated as (i) *Ankiya Bhaona* is a combination of nritya, natya and sangita or dance drama and music; (ii) Nac or dance is having a dominant and active role in *Ankiya Nat*. All the dramatist or Bhawariyas perform their roles through dances; (iii) The four types of Abhinaya- *angika, vachika, aharya* and *sattvika* are actively exhibited in *Ankiya- Nats*; (iv)

Ankiya Bhaona is Juxtaposition of all the *rasas* but the Bhakti has the dominant role in it; (v) The music is based on various ragas and *tals;* (vi) Like the purvaranga in Sanskrit drama, there are elaborate arrangements of preliminaries of an *Ankiya-Bhaona* performance called *gayan- bayan* or *jara-gowa*. The *gayan-bayan* on its own comprises a large number of *dhemalies* (meaning sports) in the form of arc performance accompanied by the gestures of dances; (vii) There are many sastric and local elements in *Ankiya Bhaona*. Sankaradeva‘s *Ankiya Bhaona* is like a dance drama having a dominant role played by dance. In the other words starting from preliminaries (*gayana-bayana*) to the end (*kharmanar nac*), the entire performance of *Ankiya Bhaona* can be described as a colourful panorama of various dance numbers. Therefore *Ankiya Bhaona* is the foundation of Satriya dance tradition.

Kumari, S. (Delhi) presented the paper titled ‒Bhakti Movement : The Contribution of Tulshi Das to Unity, Peace, Harmony and Happiness among Human Being‖ where the writer mentioned that Bhakti Movement not only stressed on devotion towards God but also gave much importance to human beings. In Bhakti Movement it preached that all are equal in the eyes of God opposing various caste systems prevalent in our society. It emphasized that one‘s deed leads to ‗higher attainments‘, rather than ‗Karma kanda‘s of religion‘. Thus this movement emphasized on unity and equality of man irrespective of religion, caste, and creed. In South India the Bhakti Movement was started by Ramanujacharya while Ramanand gave impetus to the movement in the North. Other great exponents of Bhakti Movemant including Lal Ded in Kashmir, Andal in Tamil Nadu, Narsi Mehta in Gujrat, Chandi Das in West Bengal, Srimanta Sankardeva in Assam, Gyan Dev and Nam Dev in Maharastra, to name a few. In central part of North India the Bhakti Movement was guided by Saint Kabir, Tulshi Das, Sur Das and Jaisi, to name a few.

Laisram, R. presented a paper on ‒Sankardeva‘s Vaishanavism: A Study of Its Origin in Historical Context‖. The writer explained in the paper that Sankardeva‘s Vaishanavism went counter to the spirit of traditional Brahmanical faith, based on notion of castes and worship through various manifestations of Devi (Sakti). The socio-ritualistic order dominated by the brahmanas though not completely overthrown, the brahmanas lost much of the spiritual authority, the message of which passed on to the saints and Gurus of Vaishnava bhakti culture. The songs and Biographies of these Saints and Gurus become scriptures for their followers. In

Sankardeva‘s Vaishnavism worship of idol is prohibited while prayers services are held in the Namghars. For Sankardeva‘s it is Bhakti alone that can brings *moksa* or release. The chief mode of worship is prayer which may be expressed through music, dance and drama etc. Sankardeva‘s Vaishnavism was different from the rest of the country in respect to the *Madhura Bhakti* or the female aspect of devotion. Here Radha-Krishna culture is not acknowledged nor is any *Sakti* of Visnu to be recognized in this worship. Sankardeva‘s Neo-Vaishanavism has often be reffered to as the single most important event in the history of Assam. In real sense, the studies relating to Sankardeva‘s Vaishnavism will be meaningfull only if the subject is understood in the context of history of early and medieval Assam.

Pradhan, M., professor, Deptt. of Oriya, Visva –Bharati, Santi Niketana presented a paper on the topic ‒Vaishnava Religion of Orissa and its Modern Development‖ In the paper the writer explained that as the most powerful stream Vaishnavism has absorbed all the other religions prevailing in Orissa. In the past there was Vedic religion and then Jainism and Budhism came up. During the rule of Sarnavansa, orissa became the cradle of Saivism and Vaishnavism. The Temple of Lord Jagannath was first constructed by Jajati Kesari but from the rule of Ganga Vansa from the beginning of the 12th century till the end of 14th century Vaishanavism became the religion of Orissa with Lord Jagannath as its centre. During Suryavansa dynasty (1435 to 1540) Jagannath not only became the central point of Orissa religion, he also became the Spirit of Orissa nationalism and the inspiration of literature too. From 12th century to 16th century prophets and saints like Ramanuj, Nimbark, Madhavacharya, Ballavacharya, Ramananda, Vishnu- Swami and Sri Saitanya came to Orissa in different periods and preached vaishnavism and as a result Vaishnavism became powerful in Orissa. All the saints amalgamated their individual faith in Lord Jagannath who became the Lord of synthesis, the God of mankind, the God of friendship. During the 20th century Orissa has experienced a fresh flowering. There are new Vaishnava culture such as ISCON, Goudiya Mission and others. After 1960 there are some modern mathas that have been constructed from the Lord Jagannath. Still in Orisa Vaishanavism is flowering on embracing Lord Jagannath.

Sarma , V., M.O.P. Vaishnav College for women ,Chennai presented a paper titled as the ‒Bhakti Movement and Srimanta Sankardeva‘‘ where the writer mentioned that Srimanta Sankardeva is a great soul whose emergence made contribution not only in

saving the society from moral degradation and deteriorating ethical standards but also gave a new and progressive look to it. Sankardeva emerged at a very critical moment in the history of Assam. Mahapurusa Srimanta Sankardeva (1449-1568) is a great figure in the cultural and religious history of Assam, India. He is credited with providing a thread of unity among the people of Assam, bulding on literary activities to provide bedrock of Assamese culture and creating a religion that gave shape to a set of new values and social synthesis. Srimanta Sankardeva preached the *Eka-Sarana-Nama-Dharma* which was a part of Bhakti Movement that raising the India and he inspired Bhakti in Assam just as Ramananda, Kabir ,Chaitanya Mahapurusa inspired it else where. Sankardeva‘s poetry included great works like, *Kritana-ghosa* and *Harichandra Upakhyana, Rukmini harana* and others. His Bhakti theory included *Bhakti pradipa, Anadi-patana* etc. His translation of the Bhakti is actually a transcreation beause he translated not just the words but the idioms and the physiognomy too. Drama was brought into life with plays like *Patni- prasada, Keli gopala,* and *Kaliya damana* etc. Sankardeva composed about 240 nos. of *Bargits* out of which 34 nos are avaiable now. The Satriya dance that Srimanta Sankardeva first conceived and which was developed by the Satras is now among the classical dance forms of India.

Studies published in website

Bhuyan, A. published an article titled as ‒Sankardeva and Neo- Vaishnavism in Assam‖ in the website ‗attributetosankardeva.org/movement‘ where he explained that Assam in the 15th century presented a mostly picture of diverse shades and grades of culture. The majority of the people belonged to non –Aryan tribes having distinct manners, customes and religious beliefs. Those who professed Hinduism loosely adhered to Vaishnavism or Saivism, Saktism bordering on extreme Tantricism was also widely prevalent. The followers of these cults were all round indulging in evil practices like animal and sometimes even human sacrifices, magical rites, spells and the like. It was based on the philosophy of palate and sensual pleasures. At this critical juncture Srimanta Sankardeva appeared on the scene. Srimanta Sankardeva undertook the difficult and arduous task of a reformer at a juncture of acute crisis in Assamese society and polity. The Neo-Vaisnavite movement initiated by Srimanta

Sankardeva in Assam in the latter period of the 15th century ushered in an era of socio- cultural renaissance in Assam, humanist in content and popular in form, in literature as well as in the vocal and visual arts.The uniqueness of the movement lay in the fact that unlike other contemporary cults in the rest of India, Srimanta Sankardeva Neo-Vaishnavism rested not on a discursive reasoning and abstract thinking but its emphasis was more on ethnic integration, social reforms and spiritual uplift through an innovative mode of religious conduct based on indigenous elements of the region. It was revolutionary in the sense that Neo- Vaishanavism in Assam meant not only a religious faith but a way of life. It encompassed their social, cultural and religious spheres even as it brought about a change in very outlook on life and the world. Neo Vaishnavism stands out among the different ―Bhakti‖ cults of India in terms of its unique and innovative character, which found expression in the move to create an egalitarian civil society based on the shared values of fraternity, equity, humanism and democracy. Srimanta Sankardeva‘s concerns were not limited to human rights alone but they extended even to include animal and plant right, as it is evident from some of his literary contributions. It is based on the simple principle that every living being is God‘s creation. The fundamental principle of the Neo-Vaishnavite philosophy was enlightment of the human conscience through universal love.

Das, H. C. published an article titled as ― Knowledge management system of Srimanta Sankardeva and his Research Method‖ in the website ‗www.grmgrlaranya.com‘ Here the writer explained that Vaishnava Saint of Assam Srimanta Sankardeva (1449-1569) was not only the spiritual leader of medieval Assam but also a research scholar. He searched knowledge by following methodologies like literature, observation method, survey method, case study method. He applied his research finding in his creative works of literature, culture and social reform with spiritual as well as scientific attitude. As a research and knowledge management system of Sankardeva the writer mentioned that in the subject of library and information science knowledge management system of Sankardeva is chapterised as production, collection dissemination and use of knowledge. Knowledge is reposed in the form of books or any such reading material and collected and preserved in the libraries or Archieves. Knowledge is disseminated to the user through the process of teaching, performing art, delivering reading and writing material etc. He established

Namghar and Satra which became the centre of spirituality as well as art, culture, literature and education of the public. The Satra and Namghar were the production, collection dissemination centre for all the people. Srimanta sankardeva produced knowledge by research activities. He did his research by the following research methods.These methods are (i) Literature search method**:** Sankardeva searched all the Vedic literature in Sanskrit language of that time. He searched four Veda, eighteen purana and fourteen different sastras of different subjects like grammer etc. He also searched the Vernacular language and literature. He read writtings of the scholar like Mahendra Kandali which were highly influencial literature of that time. By searching this literature he achieved knowledge of philosophy, language, poetry as well as society‘s. He searched both Sanskrit and vernacular language of that time. He searched the Sanskrit literature, analysed and converted to Assamese language in his own style. (ii) Observation method: Srimanta Sankardeva travelled twice on food for twelve years to see the tritha like Mathura, Brindaban, and Puri Jagannath. He travelled this temple not for mukti but to achieve knowledge. This is nothing but the observation method. He observed the places to search the culture, literature and philosophy etc. and earned necessary skills to create the art. (iii) Experimental method: Sankardeva did some experiments also. A scientist or scholar does experiments to clear his doubts and make his findings acceptable to the society. Sankardeva experimentally played Chinha-Yatra at Bardowa after returning from his first visit of North Indian Temple. The experiments were very successful. The super natural talent of Sankardeva was established by this play and intellectual society of the than Bordoa bestowed responsibility of propagation of Vaishnavism. (iv) Survey Method: Srimanta Sankardeva applied survey method of research to achieve knowledge about need of society. He surveyed the society non formaly by using the interview method. He talked to the people of different strata of society from king scholar to the general people. He found one extra ordinary talent from the general people by using survey method and the responsibilities of singer, music and literature were bestowed on them according to their talent. (v) Case study method: Srimanta Sankardeva‘s research method also includes case study method. He stayed for long six months at Puri of Orisa .According to Sankardeva worshiping of idol is prohibited. But in Puri Temple people worship idol. Then why he was so interested to puri. It was because though there was a tradition of worshiping idol in puri Temple, the society is based on the philosophy of unity. The society of puri is not divided according to upper

–lower class. All the devotees had Prasad on the same floor. Even there was a tradition of taking food from the same plate. In making conclusion the writer mentioned that the purity and sacredness of his knowledge and his high ambition to uplift the society by using quality of knowledge not only enrich the society spiritually but also developed culturally and socio- economically.

Conclusion

From the above review of research studies it has been found that the Neo-vaisnavite Movement initiated by Sankardeva in the last decade of the fifteenth century is an epoch making phenomena in the religious and social life in the medieval Assam. Its impacts on religion, literature, fine arts and social life of Assam is indeed great and abiding. The Satra institution which is functioning as a living organization for propagating Vaishnavite ideals was brought into existence by the Vaishnavite saints headed by Sankardeva. Namghar and Satra also act as multidimensional institutions covering various aspects of the society. Satra has been enriching the Assamese life morally, socially and educationally and contributed a great deal to the realm of literature and art. The Vaishnavite movement of Sankardeva is an unique in itself. The ideological framework of the thought of Sankardeva was provided by the Bhagavat Purana and Gita. Sankardeva laid great emphasis on devotion to a single God i.e Lord Krishna. Hence the religion propagated by Sankardeva is popularly known as Eka- Saran-Nama- Dharma which has been revealed in a number of research studies conducted by a number of researchers, experts and social workers.

From the review of the research studies it has been found that although a number of research studies have been conducted on different aspects of Sankardeva but hardly any study has been conducted with special reference to the study of Sankardeva as an educationist. Hence the present study is very important to highlight the educational contributions of Sankardeva.

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