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Growth Of Bhaktimovement And Mayamara Satra Samaj Of Assam

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Abstract

Sri Sri Aniruddhadeva, born in the 16th century, was an eminent saint-scholar and a social reformer in Assam. He played a significant role in the growth of the Bhakti movement in the region. The Bhakti movement in Assam is unique because it is a syncretic blend of various religious and philosophical traditions, including indigenous beliefs. By the time Aniruddhadeva came onto the scene, the Bhakti movement was already a strong social and spiritual force in Assam, primarily due to the contributions of Sankardeva, another saint-scholar, who had initiated the Neo-Vaishnavism movement in Assam. Aniruddhadeva took it upon himself to disseminate the teachings and philosophies further. He was instrumental in composing a large number of devotional songs, dramas, and theological works. His writings were largely in the Assamese language, making them accessible to the common people, and he encouraged the use of local idioms and styles in religious discourse, which added a unique Assamese flavor to the Bhakti movement. Aniruddhadeva was also a social reformer who worked tirelessly to dismantle the rigid caste system and other social inequalities. He advocated for a society based on devotion to God rather than birth or social standing. His contributions also included the establishment of Satras, or monastic centers, that became hubs of social and cultural activities. These Satras not only functioned as centers of religious discourse but also promoted social cohesion by bringing together people from different strata of society. Moreover, Aniruddhadeva's role in promoting communal harmony is noteworthy. His teachings emphasized the essential unity of all religious paths and encouraged an open-minded approach to the interpretation of religious texts. This has been pivotal in making Assam's Bhakti movement one of the most inclusive and diverse forms of Bhakti in India. Sri Sri Aniruddhadeva was a key figure in the growth of the Bhakti movement in Assam. His work in spreading the teachings of Neo-Vaishnavism, initiating social reforms, and fostering communal harmony has left an indelible mark on Assamese society and culture. Sri Sri Aniruddhadeva, played a significant role in propagating the Bhakti movement in Assam. He contributed to the Neo-Vaishnavism movement in Assam. Aniruddhadeva's teachings focused on love, devotion, and surrender to God. His contributions are not only religious but also social and cultural. He composed hymns, organized community prayers, and was involved in translating important texts. Sri Sri Aniruddhadeva was a saint and a significant figure in the Neo-Vaishnavism movement in Assam. He lived in the 16th century and Aniruddhadeva's contributions were multifaceted, including religious, social, and cultural arenas.

Key word: *Bhakti Movement, Sankardeva, Aniruddhadeva, Vaishnavism,*

Introduction

The Bhakti Movement in Assam had significant growth, particularly through the contributions of cultural and religious figures like Sri Sri Aniruddhadeva. The Bhakti Movement focused on personal devotion to a particular deity, generally bypassing the need for ritualistic practices and priests. In Assam, this movement primarily revolved around the worship of Lord Krishna and contributed to a distinct Vaishnavism tradition. The growth of the Bhakti Movement in Assam stands as a profound chapter in the tapestry of Indian religious history. Rooted in the 15th century, this movement bore the indelible influence of Sri Sri Aniruddhadeva, a spiritual luminary whose legacy continues to illuminate Assamese culture and spirituality. This essay endeavors to explore the trajectory of the Bhakti Movement's expansion in Assam and the pivotal role played by Sri Sri Aniruddhadeva in shaping its course. Emerging in the early 15th century, the Bhakti Movement was a transformative phenomenon that emphasized a personal and direct connection with the divine. It sought to transcend rigid caste hierarchies and religious formalities, encouraging individuals to experience spirituality on a personal level. Assam, nestled in the northeastern part of India, became an apt canvas for this movement's expression. The region had its own rich cultural tapestry, marked by the confluence of various traditions and spiritual practices. As the Bhakti Movement found its way into Assam, it interwove with the region's distinct ethos, giving rise to a unique amalgamation of spiritual fervor and cultural synthesis. At the heart of the Bhakti Movement's growth in Assam was the charismatic figure of Sri Sri Aniruddhadeva. Born in the 15th century, Aniruddhadeva emerged as a spiritual beacon, illuminating the spiritual landscape with his teachings and practices. His influence was profound and far-reaching, shaping the spiritual aspirations of countless individuals. Aniruddhadeva's teachings emphasized devotion, humility, and a direct connection with the divine. He encouraged a way of life that transcended societal barriers and advocated for a path of spirituality that was accessible to all, irrespective of caste or social standing. Aniruddhadeva's role extended beyond the confines of religious discourse. He was not merely a spiritual guide; he was also a social reformer. His teachings resonated with the masses, challenging prevailing norms and fostering a sense of unity and compassion. By challenging established hierarchies and advocating for a more inclusive approach to spirituality, he ignited a transformation that rippled through the social fabric of Assam. His teachings offered solace to the downtrodden and marginalized, instilling a sense of dignity and worth in a society that was often divided along caste lines. The Bhakti Movement's growth under Aniruddhadeva's tutelage was not without challenges. He encountered resistance from conservative elements within society who were reluctant to relinquish age-old traditions. Yet, his unwavering commitment to his beliefs and the authenticity of his spiritual experience served as a catalyst for change. His teachings found resonance among a diverse cross-section of society, inspiring a movement that united people under the banner of devotion and spirituality. Aniruddhadeva's legacy extends beyond his lifetime. His influence on the cultural and religious landscape of Assam endured, influencing subsequent generations of spiritual seekers, artists, and thinkers. The Bhakti Movement, as championed by Aniruddhadeva, became a defining feature of Assamese identity, shaping artistic expressions, cultural practices, and even political ideologies. The growth of the Bhakti Movement in Assam, anchored by the teachings and influence of Sri Sri Aniruddhadeva, stands as a testament to the transformative power of spirituality. This movement, which emerged in the 15th century, redefined the contours of religious practice, emphasizing direct communion with the divine and inclusivity in spiritual pursuits. Aniruddhadeva's role as a spiritual guide and social reformer was pivotal in this journey, challenging existing norms and fostering a sense of unity and compassion among diverse segments of society. His legacy continues to radiate through Assamese culture and spirituality, reminding us of the enduring impact of a movement that sought to bridge the gap between the individual and the divine.

Statement of the problems:

The Bhakti movement led to devotional transformation of medieval Hindu society, wherein Vedic rituals or alternatively ascetic monk-like lifestyle for moksha gave way to individualistic loving relationship with a personally defined god Salvation which was previously considered attainable only by men of Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishya castes, became available to everyone. Most scholars state that Bhakti movement provided women and members of the Shudra and untouchable communities an inclusive path to spiritual salvation. Some scholars disagree that the Bhakti movement was premised on such social inequalities.

The present study is intended to explain about the Mayamara Satra Samaj and its Bhaktisim dhara of Assamese Mayamara society. In the present situation lots of publish and unpublished reference are available in the bhaktri dhara of mahapurush Sri Srimanta Sankardev. But limited publish documents is available in the Mayamara Satra Samaj. The philosophical views of Sri Sri Aniruddha deva is concentrated within the few Assamese community of Assam. Aniruddha deva main aim was to spread his Bani to all lower caste including sweeper, Musi, Jalowa etc. through the establishment of Satras. Aniruddha deva has lots of unpublished document in different part of Satras in Assam and society and in my research paper I have collected and compiled his views and try to spread the society as well as Mayamara Samaj.

Objectives of the study:

Objectives is a major outcome of the research where describe about intends to accomplish; the objectives are delineated on the basis of problem which the researcher has selected for study. In this way to study about the study of research design, the following objectives has been taken for the study of my research work,

- * to study the origin of the Mayamara Satra Samaj
- * to identify the Satras of Assam which is distributed different part of Assam.

Research methodology is a way of explaining how research intends to carry out. It is a logical, systematic plan to resolve the problems; sources of data are the main part of the research works. In the present study the special emphasis has been given to the Mayamara Satra Samaj of Assam. In this way I have been collected the primary and secondary data from the different part of Assam for his field ideology.

The expansion of the Bhakti Movement in Assam was intricately woven into the socio-religious fabric of the region, drawing strength from both its historical context and the yearnings of its people. Assam, with its unique blend of indigenous traditions, Vedic practices, and Tantric influences, provided fertile ground for the seeds of the Bhakti Movement to take root. The movement's core tenets, which emphasized a direct and unmediated connection with the divine, resonated with Assam's cultural predisposition towards spiritual introspection. Sri Sri Aniruddhadeva emerged as a guiding light within this landscape. His role in the growth of the Bhakti Movement cannot be overstated. Aniruddhadeva's teachings encapsulated the essence of the movement—his emphasis on devotion as the vehicle for realizing the divine spoke to the hearts of the people. His teachings diverged from the scriptural rigidity and ritualistic practices that often dominated religious practices of the time. Instead, he advocated for a path that traversed the heart, transcending external distinctions and embracing the intrinsic divinity in all. Aniruddhadeva's role extended beyond spiritual discourse. He played a transformative role in reshaping societal norms. In a society that was often defined by caste hierarchies and rigid divisions, his teachings on equality and humility stood as a clarion call for change. Through his teachings and actions, he dismantled barriers, fostering a sense of shared humanity and a collective pursuit of spiritual growth. His teachings spurred social cohesion and catalyzed a movement that was not confined to temples or rituals, but rather permeated every facet of daily life. The establishment of the Mayamara Satra under Aniruddhadeva's guidance further exemplified his role as a harbinger of change. This institution became a focal point for spiritual learning, cultural expression, and social interaction. The Satra's activities spanned religious rituals, cultural festivals, and the dissemination of knowledge—creating an environment where spiritual seekers and individuals from different backgrounds could come together in pursuit of a common purpose. Aniruddhadeva's influence was not limited to his immediate time. His legacy, both spiritual and socio-cultural, continued to reverberate across generations. The Bhakti Movement, with its emphasis on personal devotion and spiritual introspection, left an indelible

mark on Assam's cultural landscape. It inspired literary works, artistic expressions, and musical compositions that reflected the essence of devotion and the universal truths he propagated.

Stage for the Bhakti Movement's growth in Assam.

The historical currents that shaped Assam's socio-religious milieu laid the foundation for the emergence of a favorable environment that nurtured spiritual movements, including the Bhakti Movement, within its embrace. This chapter delves into the intricate interplay of historical, cultural, and social factors that converged to create a fertile ground for spiritual transformation and the flourishing of Sri Sri Aniruddhadeva's teachings. Assam's historical trajectory, marked by dynastic shifts and cultural exchanges, set the stage for a diverse cultural landscape that was inherently open to new ideas. The region's location, nestled between the Himalayas and the Bay of Bengal, facilitated interactions with diverse cultures and religious practices. This geographical advantage facilitated the exchange of knowledge, ideas, and philosophies, paving the way for the assimilation of various spiritual currents. In the wake of these exchanges, Assam's society underwent a series of socio-political transformations. The decline of rigid caste hierarchies, once deeply entrenched, was catalyzed by the influx of new ideas and philosophies. As traditional hierarchies waned, there emerged a space for alternate ideologies to take root and flourish. This shift in societal norms created an environment where new forms of spirituality could take center stage, emphasizing direct connections with the divine and inclusivity. The Bhakti Movement, which encouraged personal devotion and a direct relationship with the divine, found resonance in Assam's changing societal landscape. The movement's emphasis on egalitarianism, transcending traditional hierarchies, was in alignment with the evolving ethos of the region. The Bhakti Movement's growth was not merely a happenstance; it was the result of a spiritual soil enriched by the gradual transformation of societal values. The influence of Vedic traditions and Tantric practices also played a pivotal role in creating an environment conducive to spiritual movements. The coexistence of these diverse spiritual paths demonstrated Assam's openness to a range of philosophical perspectives. The fusion of these influences created a spiritual ecosystem that was both dynamic and multifaceted, nurturing an environment where individuals were receptive to exploring new avenues of spiritual growth. The emergence of a favorable environment for spiritual movements, exemplified by the Bhakti Movement and the teachings of Sri Sri Aniruddhadeva, was an outcome of intricate historical, cultural, and societal dynamics. Assam's geographical location, cultural exchanges, changing societal norms, and the amalgamation of various spiritual influences converged to create a fertile ground for the blossoming of new spiritual paradigms. The interplay of these factors sets the stage for understanding the profound impact that Aniruddhadeva's teachings had within the context of Assam's evolving spiritual ecosystem. Light on the intricate historical and cultural landscape of Assam, which served as the crucible for the Bhakti Movement's growth. The region's socio-religious diversity, the interplay of Vedic and Tantric influences, and the emergence of a favorable environment collectively contributed to the spiritual transformation that unfolded, with Sri Sri Aniruddhadeva playing a pivotal role within this vibrant tapestry.

Establishment and expansion of Mayamara Satra in Assam

From Guru Gopaldev to Acharya Bakya, his father's home Panchpur (Lakhimpur, Bihpur, Narayan Pur, Dhalpur, Kalangpur or Gahpur) especially Dhalpur, built four steps around it, built a Namghar, Manikut in the middle, dug a pond for worship. There are many different types of characters in the satras, but the most important one is the character of the Guru of the Satras. The Gurus of the satras is a character who is very charming and has a lot of characteristics.

There are many different types of Satras in the Mayamara religion:-

Sri Sri Vishnu Bali Kunchi Satra :- The first satra of the Mayamara Vaishnava devotees founded by the first Guru. The satra is bordered by Pichla to the east, present-day Sovansiri river and roads to the west, NH-37 and Dhalpur to the north and Luhit Suti to the south. At that time, a large area up to the Pichla River north of Narayanpur-Dhalpur was predominantly Shakta. There are only a handful of Vishnu worshippers or Vaishnavas.

Nahar Ati Satra :- In 1606, the Guru established 48 bighas of land near Marnai, built a ditch around it, built a Namghar, Manikut in the middle, set up four Hatis, dug a pond and built a beautiful road. The satra was named Nahar Ati Satra. There is a spacious pond to the north of the satra and the Marnai to the east.

Khutia Pota Satra:- Three years after the death of the 73-year-old Guru in 1626, his eldest son Krishna spent his time there as a religious authority. The satra established at the place where the pillars were buried is called Khutia Pota Satra. This satra is situated on the southern bank of the Dihing or Barluit.

Ba-Bhaga Satra: According to the sect, the dharmacharyas of this satra were Guru Krishnadeva, Hariramdeva, Nityanandadeva, Jayavamdeva, Yadunandadeva, Baikuntha Nath Deva, Chaturbhujadeva and Ashtabhujadeva. The satra was destroyed by the Brahmaputra for fourteen years.. There are many different types of satras in Majuli, but the most important one is the Ba-Bhaga Satra..

Ata Palm Satra:- Hridayananda, the fourth son of the first Guru, built a temple near Sarjan in Majuli Chapari, north of Haldhibari, and preached the Dharma. The satra is called Atapam because the descendants of this Guru continued to farm near the Sai Kata.

Puranimati Satra:- The Satra is located about 11 km west of Jorhat city, 3 km north of NH-37, 3 km north of Tiliki Am area, on the banks of Dhali river in Parbatia Mouza. They are the sweet idols of all, Sanatan, Ajitananda, Shivananda, Purnananda, Paramananda, Baghavananda, Madhavananda, Jaya Yadavananda, Vaishnavananda, Sachitananda, Chidananda, Ajananda, Keshavananda, Utsavananda, Radhikanandadeva, Haricharananda, Trigunananda, Purushottam and Vasudevanandadeva.

Na-Pam Satra:- During the reign of the ninth Adhikar Ashtabhuj Gohai, the Bar Luit changed its course and started digging the Khutia Pota Satra. The satra built on the new site is known as "Na-Satra" or Na-Pam Satra. Built in 1688 (1766), the Guru preached in this satra for only four years. After many years, Vishnudev became the satradhikar there.

Mayamara Tiphuk Satra - The Tiphuk Satra was built in there are many places in the country where the floods have subsided. Therefore, it is important to understand the importance of these two aspects of the universe. He was also known as a man of devotion." The Mayamara Tiphuk Satra of the Marans established by Bhavanandadev has expanded to include branch satras like Shimluguri, Dirak, Dirak Molani, Dewangur, Na-Holong, Lajum, Oban, Barali, Hati Jan and Kherjan.

Garhpara Satra:- In 1806-7, Harimayadev of the Bardha clan of Sarbanandadev, the fifth son of Aniruddhadev Guru, established Garhpara Satra with 500 disciples at Garhpara in present-day Rahmaria Mouza.

Garhmur Satra:- During the reign of Guru Bhaktanandadev, several invasions of the Mughals took advantage of the reign of the weak Ahom king Chandrakant Singh in Assam. The Assamese people were terrified of the attack. There was no exception to the killing and looting of kings, subjects and gosai mahants. Therefore, Guru Bhaktanandadev, with his family and devotees, established a temporary satra at Garhmur near Futuki Pokhuri in Majuli, somewhat east of the Kamalababi state of Assam, North Lakhimpur,

Dinjay Satra:- The satra is located on the banks of the Dinjan River and is called "Dinjay Satra". The satra is famous for its Gurus Bhaktanandadev, Swarupanandadev, Bhabanandadev, Jayanandadev, Chidanandadev, Jagatanandadev, Hridayanandadev, Avyaktanandadev, Mahadanandadev, Jivanandadev, Yogadanandadev and Arupanandadev.

Madar Khat Satra:- As the lineage of Dinjay Satradhikars increased, a branch Satra named "Madar Khat" was established about 12 km from Chabua and Chandrakant, son of Guru Bhavanandadev, was appointed as the first Dharmadhikar of the Satra.

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