



THE SACRED CRADLE OF A LEGACY: SOCIO-CULTURAL REVERBERATIONS OF THE BIRTHPLACE OF MAHAPURUSH MADHABDEVA ON THE SURROUNDING SOCIETIES

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ABSTRACT

Blessed is the holy land of India, blessed is the holy land of Assam. Mahapurush Madhabdev was born in Leteku pukhuri area of Narayanpur in Lakhimpur district in the eastern part of Assam, known as the holy land. The Thaan's are one of the centers of the spread of the Nava Vaishnava religion in Assam. The Thaan's are an invaluable asset of Assamese society. In Assam, thanas were established in memory of Mahapurush Sankardev, Madhabdev's and other gurus who preached the Neo-vaishnavite religion. This study examines the impact of the Madhabdev Thaan established in memory of Madhabdev at Leteku pukhuri, Narayanpur, Lakhimpur district on the surrounding community. Since the subject of our study is related to social, cultural, economic, religious etc. impacts on the society around Madhabdev Thaan, qualitative study techniques have been used here. Data have also been collected from two sources, primary and secondary, for the study. Data have also been collected from the study area through interviews, observations, etc. In this study, the area of Leteku Pukhuri in Lakhimpur District has been selected as the universe of the study. The office bearers of Madhabdev Thaan were selected as the sample size. The main objectives of this study :To study in depth the social, cultural, religious, economic and educational aspects of Madhabdev Thaan on the life of the surrounding community. To study about Mahapurusha Madhabdev and Sankardeva and their relationship with "Thaan". Based on these objectives, some of the research results were obtained. The Thaan was established in 1951 in memory of Mahapurush Madhabdev, the preacher of the Neo-Vaishnavite religion, so the Thaan has given more emphasis to the religious aspects. In addition, the Thaan is trying to provide religious education to the younger generation of the area and introduce them to the wider Assamese society. The study also reveals that The Madhabdev Thaan is of immense importance in maintaining social harmony. There are many people who have been able to become successful in business around the Thaan. As a result, the local economy has improved significantly. The Thaan is now gaining more or less popularity in Assam as well as abroad. As a result, Thaan has been transformed into a religious tourist destination. The government and the committees for the management of the thana have been constantly trying for the overall improvement of the Thaan and the people of the surrounding communities.

also try to improve the Thaan. There are many festivals and religious ceremonies held in the Thaan every year. The study also reveals the controversy surrounding the Thaan since the 20th century. There are various controversies in the Thaan but the people of the Thaan are trying to eradicate them. Leteku pukhuri Thaan is famous as the birthplace of Mahapurush Sri Sri Madhabdev, the lifeblood of Vaishnavite culture.

Key Words: Mahapurush Madhabdeva, Mahapurush Shakardeva, Assam, Assamese Society, Narayanpur, Lakhimpur, Letekupukhuri, Thaan, Socio- cultural , Vaishnavite, Neo- Vaishnavite.

1.1: INTRODUCTION

Harinaam Nuhike Niyom Odhikari,
Ram Buli Tare Mili Axom Kochari...(Namghosa)

This verse bears witness to the fact that Mahapurush Madhabdev organised the devotional movement by bringing together every people, even the tribes. One of the most legendary, decent and versatile personalities of all times -Srimanta Madhabdev (1489-1596) prosperous in the socio religious and cultural history of eastern Bharatvarsha in the 16th century. When Govinda giri and his wife Manorama were studying at Leteku Pukhuri, in Narayanpur area, to the South west of Dhuwahat, under the dwelling of Harisingha Bora, Madhabdev was the born to the couple in the saka 1411(1489AD). Govindagiri built two separate houses in the residence of Harisingha Bora, where Madhabdev grew up. Madhabdev was a smart and healthy boy and took active and leading parts in all children's sports. He also helped Harisingha Bora Uzir in his work. Madhabdev grew up and started working at various agricultural activities and after saving money he asked Harisingha Bora 'Uzir' for permission to build his own house at Leteku Pukhuri. Govinda Giri built two houses on the west of Letekupukhuri and settled there. They lived there happily for six years. Harisingha Bora uzir died during this period. Without Harisingha Bora Madhabdev's family was helpless. There was famine in the kingdom at the time. Madhabdev's family left Leteku Pukhuri due to famine in the area. Many of the mediaeval saints and religious leaders were accomplished musicians, composers and writers. Kabir, Mirabai, Tukaram, Namdev, Alwars, and many others used to draw a large crowd by their melodious songs and rapturous delight in divine music. Both Shankardev and Madhabdev were great musicians. The 'Namghosa' is a monument of Madhabdev's life. The Namghosa defines a source of joy in devotion to the lord. Namghosa was composed around 1558-1595 AD. This great book is full of expressions of the spiritual life of Madhabdev. Besides being the basis of devotional religion, the Namghosa is a glorious book of wonderful poetic beauty. Madhabdev wrote plays such as Pimpura, Bhojan Bihar, Chor-dhara etc. He also wrote valuable books such as Adi kanda ramayana, Janma rahasya, Naam malika etc. He composed about 157 Borgeets. On the eve of Shankardev's death, he appointed Madhabdev as his 'Successor Guru'. He established a satra at Sundaridia and converted many people and he also established a satra at Barpeta. Mahapurush Madhabdev died in 1596 AD in Kochbehar. (Mahanta, 1984).

Letekupukhuri, the holy birthplace of Mahapurusha Madhavdev, is not only a historical or geographical place, but it is the lifeblood of socio-cultural life of the entire Assam and especially the Narayanpur area of Lakhimpur district and a living reflection of Neo-Vaishnava ideals. The far-reaching effects of the spiritual renaissance that the birth of Madhava brought to the region in the fifteenth century are still deeply felt at every level of the surrounding rural society. The satra environment around Letekupukhuri Sri Sri Madhavdev Thana has established a strong foundation of religious unity and social cohesion in the wider area, which has taught all people irrespective of caste, race and community to come together in one mandap. The celebrations of Nam-Prasang, Bhaona-Sabah and Bargit not only create a spiritual atmosphere but also develop cultural richness and artistic spirit in the local society. Furthermore, in keeping with Madhavdev's democratic values and liberal humanism, the Namghari system built around this sacred land regulates local customs, social control and collective ideas, which play an important role in enhancing mutual cooperation in the rural economy. Similarly, the influx of pilgrims and tourists to this birthplace at different times of the year has strengthened cultural exchange in the region while promoting cottage industry, bamboo and cane work and local trade, providing a unique socio-economic

dynamism (Neog, 1970). Overall, Letekupukhuri has given a distinct religious ethos to the surrounding area, where the influence of the Mahapurusha's religion, literature and liberal philosophy continues to guide people's daily lifestyle, moral character formation and aesthetic outlook to a distinct and dignified level. There was a different opinion among the locals as to the birthplace of Madhabdev. Some people say that Madhabdev was born in the Leteku Pukhuri and others say that he was born in the Rangajan area, Narayanpur. Anthony Wallace's *Cultural Renewal Theory* can be used to analyse the sociocultural effects on Letekupukhuri, the birthplace of Mahapurusha Sri Sri Madhavadevan, and the surrounding districts (Wallace, 1956). This study aims to portray Letekupukhuri as both a geographical location and a historical hub of the Neo-Vaishnavite movement's social restructuring and cultural transformation of Assamese culture. Sociologist Emile Durkheim's theories of *Collective Effervescence* and *Sociology of Sacred Spaces* can be used to examine the sociocultural influence of Letekupukhuri, the birthplace of Mahapurusha Madhavade. It can look at how, over the ages, this hallowed location has acted as a powerful catalyst for the local population's social cohesion, moral principles, and sense of cultural identity.

Thaan's are closely associated with the life of the human society. The thaan culture started from the time of Srimanta Shankardev and Madhabdev. Some 'Satras' are usually called Thaan after the name of a great saint or associated with the birth and death of a great saint. Not all Satras are called Thaan and also not all Thaan's are called as Satra. For example Malini Thaan in Assam is not called Satra. The place where Shankardev stayed for a while is known as Satra. After Shankardev the satras where he or other gurus stayed for some time such as Bordowa, Belguri, Barpeta etc. are also called Thaan's instead of Satras. However, some biographers do not distinguish between Thaan and Satras. Thaan are total institutions established in memory of various religious counsellor. For example: Mahapurush Shankardev, Madhabdev etc. The main objective of Thaan is to praise the 'Guru', to discuss and disseminate religious doctrine. The Thaan are repositories of various great saints and assamese culture such as Borgeet, Satriya dance etc. as well as various old books and other historical resources. Thaan has many unique characteristics that influence various aspects of social life, thaans are centres of spiritual practices. Thaan are also centres of cultural activities. Thaan are the ones who have contributed to the dispelling of ignorance of the Assamese nation and bringing them to the right way. Thaan's help to forward the people of the society in various social, political and cultural aspects. Some activities like daily 'naam - prasanga' are performed in the Thaan. Thaan is an invaluable asset of Assamese society.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Thaan are an invaluable asset of Assamese society and have influenced all aspects of the social, political and cultural life of Assam. The Thaan were established in memory of great gurus like Mahapurush Shankardev and Madhabdev. "The Madhabdev Thaan" established at the birthplace of Madhabdev at Leteku pukhuri in Narayanpur block, has had an impact on the life of the surrounding community. Letekupukhuri is located between Rangajan and Kachikota river in Narayanpur. Leteku pukhuri is located in Borbali about 15 km North East of the centre of Narayanpur town. Madhabdev was born in the house of Harisingha Bora 'Uzir' of Leteku pukhuri, hence the establishment of Madhabdev Thaan in his name. After the establishment of Madhabdev Thaan it has influenced the life of the surrounding communities in various ways- political, educational, Socio-cultural aspects. Therefore, it is very relevant to study the significance of Madhabdev Thaan in the present time. The Madhabdev Thaan serves as a repository of traditional knowledge and religious practices. After the establishment of the Madhabdev thana, tourists from different parts of India come to visit the Thana.

1.3: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Jogendranath Dutta (2015) in his book *Sankardeva and Madhabdev Jiban Jyoti* mentions that Madhabdev was the epitome of sacrifice. He was an example of sacrifice and rare talent. The two books of Mahapurush Madhabdev, the Namghosa and Bhakti Ratnavali, strengthened his genius.

About fifty years ago, a renowned writer of Assamese literature, Lakshmidhar Sharma mentions in his essay entitled "Madhabdev" that the union of Shankardev and Madhabdev is a wonderful thing in the Assamese Vaishnavi world. If this brave and ascetic young man had not come and shouldered the burden of Shankardev's holy doctrine, the work of the slow, calm Shankardev would have been incomplete. Madhabdev's concentration, intelligence, knowledge and enterprise turned Tantric Assam into Vaishnavi Assam.

According to, *The Guru Charit Katha* (paragraph 112-126) edited by Maheswar Neog (2021), Govindagiri spent nine years in the house of Harisingha Bora, six years in his own house at Leteku Pukhuri and after spending six years at the house of Maji, Madhabdev was about thirty nine years when he reached Banduka.

According to "*The Guru Charit Katha*" (paragraph 98) edited by Maheswar Neog (2021) Letekupukhuri is considered to be the birthplace of Madhabdev. Mahananda Bora of North Lakhimpur strongly argues in his book *Sri Sri Madhabdev* that 'Rangajan' is the real birthplace of Madhabdev. According to, *The Guru Charit Katha* (paragraph 98) edited by Maheswar Neog (2021) Letekupukhuri has been recognized as the birthplace of Madhabdev since ancient times.

In the book entitled *Sacred birthplace of Mahapurush Sri Sri Madhabdev* edited by Numal Chandra Bhuyan mentions that the birthplace determination committee formed in 1956 under the chairmanship of the well known literary scholar Dimbeswar Neog to determine the birthplace of Shri Shri Madhabdev concluded that the Rangajan birthplace is the true birthplace of Guru.

In the book entitled *Sacred birthplace of Mahapurush Sri Sri Madhabdev* edited by Numal Chandra Bhuyan mentions that from 1951-1952, there was a division of opinion between Letekupukhuri and Rangajan, which divided Madhabdev's birthplace into two parts. Such divisions also include religious differences. In 1954, a group of people held a meeting presided over by Nilomoni Phukan and declared Letekupukhuri as the birthplace of Madhabdev. This led to controversy and another thana was established about half an kilometre away as the tool of 'Rangajan Uzir'.

1.4: OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

- To study in depth the social, cultural, religious, economic and educational aspects of Madhabdev Thaan on the life of the surrounding community.
- To study about Mahapurusha Madhabdev and Sankardeva and their relationship with 'Thaan'.

1.5: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the significant role of Madhabdev Thaan which is located in Letekupukhuri in the promotion and preservation of indigenous Assamese folk culture, Bargit, Satriya dance and Bhaona culture.
2. What is the impact of the ideals of Mahapurush Madhabdev and this Thaan on the social unity and harmony of the different ethnic groups of Letekupukhuri and its adjoining areas?
3. How has the religious and spiritual atmosphere of the Thaan helped in the eradication of superstitions and social stereotypes among the local people and the increase of educational awareness?
4. How the influx of devotees and tourists to Letekupukhuri Madhabdev Thaan was involved in socio-economic issues such as local business and job creation?
5. To what extent has the participation of local women in different religious, spiritual and cultural activities of Madhabdev Thaan contributed to their social empowerment?
6. How successful has this historic Thaan been in the present age of globalization to provide moral education to the local youth and link them with spiritual and cultural roots?

1.6: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Thaan in Assam are places of worship established to commemorate the birth and death of famous religious leaders. In Assam, the Thaans named after gurus like Shankardev and Madhabdev have a wide cultural, historical, and spiritual influence on the society. Similarly, the Madhabdev Thaan at Leteku Pukhuri in Narayanpur is no exception. Madhabdev Thaan also influenced the devotional movement of Assam in the 16th century. The Madhabdev Thaan was established in his memory as the birthplace of Shri Shri Madhabdev, a saint, poet and social reformer. The Madhabdev Thaan has played a special role in social reforms by opposing caste discrimination in the hope of social studies equality. The Madhabdev Thaan emphasises moral behaviour, devotion to God and social harmony. Madhabdev Thaan focuses on the spread of the Neo-Vaishnavism preached by Shankardev-Madhabdev. There are also daily 'Naam-Prasanga' at the Madhabdev Thaan. There are many religious activities like Naam-Prasanga, Bhagavat explanation etc held at Madhabdev Thaan which has shaped the religious and cultural environment of the area. The Madhabdev Thaan has played a unique role in preserving the works, ideals and literature of Mahapurush Madhabdev. Madhabdev Thaan is also an important tourist destination now-a-days. There are many devotees from different parts of India and also Assam who come to see the birthplace of Madhabdev and his pastimes. The study of Madhabdev Thaan is essential to understand the history of the devotional movement in Assam and to draw inspiration from the spiritual and social teachings of Madhabdev for the preservation of Assamese culture as a whole.

1.7: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The research can be linked to the theory of Collective effervescence and social solidarity of the famous sociologist Emile Durkheim. Durkheim's sociology of religion is perfect for analyzing Emile Durkheim's functionalism, "*collective effervescence*," and how a community maintains its social fabric. He argued that religious ceremonies do not simply honor a deity; They celebrate and hold the community together. During collective upliftment, i.e. major events at the shrine (such as Janmashtami, Ras Leela, or Abirbhav Tithi of Madhavdev), the community gathers for collective nam-prasang and bhaona. Durkheim called the intense communal energy produced during these shared events "*collective fervor*." This energy unites individuals, making them feel part of the collective identity. The shrine physically demarcates Letekupukhuri as a common site of daily labor (profane) and an elevated, protected area (sacred) of the spiritual and moral code governing local social behavior and ethics. In this way, everyone comes together to celebrate festivals and there is a social cohesion in the society and a society functions smoothly.

It can also be linked to Pierre Bourdieu's theory of capital (cultural, social, and symbolic). Bourdieu extended the concept of capital beyond money, looking at how non-economic assets influence the position and development of a community. Social capital The networks of relationships, mutual trust, and collective responsibility formed among devotees (devotees and Vaishnavas) create strong social safety nets within the locality. The recognition of the symbolic capital as the literal birthplace (birth place) of Mahapurush Madhavdev gave immense prestige and regional recognition to the entire Letekupukhuri and Narayanpur areas throughout Assam.

Also, the experience of the shrine can be attached to Victor Turner's theories of "*liminality*" and "*communitas*". Anthropologist and sociologist Victor Turner viewed pilgrimages and sacred sites through the lens of transformative experience. Applied to shrines, when pilgrims travel to Letekupukhuri from different parts of Assam, they enter a limited state of normal everyday life and do not focus on time and space outside its socio-economic hierarchy (e.g., separate from their daily occupation, class status, or concerns). Communitas, or communitas, is where the pilgrims develop an intense sense of social solidarity and absolute equality, which Turner calls communitas. Rich or poor, academics or workers, all sit on the same floor of the synagogue and temporarily abolish structural differences.

1.8: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In social research, methodology has a broad meaning. Research methodology is the rule or system of scientific methods and techniques for the systematic solution of research problems. Research methods or techniques are special parts of research methodology. The scope of methodology is wide. Research methodology focuses on the solution of a research problem, the rationale for imposing that method and why another method is not used. Three of the most relevant and useful purposes of social research involve exploration, description or explanation of some topic or event of interest. There are virtually no limits to what can be studied in social science.

Different types of data collection in society sometimes use different techniques. The choice of research strategy depends on the type of research problem. In the social sciences, qualitative or quantitative research methods have traditionally been used to study human society. Qualitative and quantitative research methods are considered as two separate methods, but the only difference between the two methods is style and technique. Both methods aim to draw conclusions from social facts. Social studies methods usually include choosing appropriate methods (e.g. interviews, observation), collecting data, analysing data and drawing specific conclusions. Both quantitative and qualitative methods need to be combined to learn about social phenomena comprehensively. A researcher has to study applied books, journals as well as rely on the Internet, personal experience etc. for a research. In addition, the researcher should emphasise early observation of the research area and discussion with the research supervisor.

The Madhabdev Thaan, which was chosen as the subject of the study, is associated with the lifestyle of the people around the Leteku pukhuri area of Narayanpur. This section discusses the methodology implemented to investigate the impact of the shrine on the socio-cultural life of the people of the Leteku pukhuri area. Qualitative techniques have been used in the study for evaluating the socio-economic, cultural, and political aspects. Qualitative techniques like interviewing and narrative analysis are interesting tools used to collect information on the impact of the Madhabdev shrine on peripheral social life.

1.8.1: Universe of the study

The present study has been conducted in Narayanpur. Narayanpur is a town located in Lakhimpur district of the northeastern Indian state Assam. Narayanpur is also known as Bor -Narayanpur. The social reformer Raja Rammohan Roy in his book The Background of Assamese Culture mentions that Narayanpur was the temporary capital of the Chutia king Satya Narayan. Some scholars believe that Narayanpur was the base of the Koch king Naranarayan, hence the name of the place. In the mid-18th century, the Tai and Khamti tribes began to migrate to Narayanpur. Narayanpur has also been influenced by Aryan culture since ancient times. In prehistoric times, Bor-Narayanpur belonged to the kingdom of the king of Ban. Narayanpur was the birthplace of Mahapurush Madhabdev. Leteku Pukhuri is a place under Narayanpur Revenue Circle in Lakhimpur district of Assam. Historically, this place is famous as the birthplace of Madhabdev. Leteku pukhuri is a historical place since the time of the Komta kingdom and it was extended to the Kalabari area of Sonitpur district. Leteku pukhuri is located at Barbali, about 15 km northeast of the centre of Narayanpur area. Leteku pukhuri is located about 54 km west of the district headquarters of Lakhimpur. Leteku pukhuri is located between Kachikata and Rangajan to the north of Bihpuria town.

1.8.2: Sources of data collection

As it is not possible for one to restrict within one particular method and technique during data collection, various methods and techniques were simultaneously applied depending on the nature of enquiry. Therefore, various methods and techniques were used to investigate the impact of Madhavdev Thaan located at Leteku pukhuri in Narayanpur, Lakhimpur district on the life of the surrounding society. Various data have been collected and presented here through analytical methods. The data for the current study are primarily from two sources. One is primary and the other is secondary. Primary data is collected from the study area through interviews, observations, informal discussions etc. Some key informants and sources were also contacted depending on the specific nature of the data. Information on the history of the Thaan was collected from various dignitaries of the Leteku pukhuri area. The attitude of the people was

observed to learn about the impact of Madhavdev Thaan on their daily lives. Behaviour and interactions around the Madhavdev Thaan are observed to observe patterns, manners and social dynamics. Secondary data were also collected from other sources, including published works. Some written information was also collected from the committee members of the Thaan. Historical records, texts and accounts are examined to understand the evolution of the shrine and its role in shaping community values and practices over time. The second stage, involved consultation of relevant literature, preparing for the field investigation, secondary information and data have been collected from books, journals, magazines and internet sources.

1.8.3: Tools of data collection

To collect data, researchers using interview guides have standardized formal data which means the same questions are asked to each interviewee in the same order. Both open and close ended questions have been included for the interview purpose. Also participant observation was used as a tool for data collection.

1.8.3: Sampling design

In this study, the area of Leteku Pukhuri in Lakhimpur District has been selected as the universe of the study. A sampling procedure has been adopted to select households. The village of Leteku Pukhuri in Narayanpur was selected for this study. This is because the Madhabdev Thaan established there has a great influence in the area. The respondents in this study came from the area. Purposive sampling techniques were employed for the study. The Respondents were both male and female. The elderly people of the village were interviewed.

2.1: THE PRICELESS TREASURE OF ASSAM: THE THAAN

Thaan are sacred places dedicated to a particular deity, ancestor, hero, saint or similarly respected or revered person. There is an influence of Shakti Puja in the Thaan's established or dedicated to the names of gods and goddesses. These Thaan's are important centres for the worship of various forms of goddesses like Durga, Kali, Lakshmi, Saraswati etc. depending on the tradition and region. Shakta Thaan's usually refer to sacred places dedicated to the worship of Shakti, the divine female force in Hinduism. These Thaan's were used for religious rituals such as tantra, mantras, magic tricks and sacrifices. For example, Malini Thaan is located at Chilapthar on the southern border of West Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh. Malini Thaan is mainly dedicated to Goddess Durga and Shiva. Like Chaitanyadev of Bengal, Sankardev introduced Neo-Vaishnavism in Assam. Thaan's are the official centres of the spread of Neo-Vaishnavism in Assam. They were also established for the purpose of spreading Neo-Vaishnavism. Thaan's are also holy places dedicated or established in memory of Shankardev, Madhabdev and other Vaishnava gurus who preached the Neo-Vaishnava religion or Eksharan Naam Dharma. These Thaan's are also referred to as Mahapurushia Thaan's. The Thaan's are the birthplaces of great sages. The Thaan's were established to preserve the contributions of Vaishnava gurus including Sankardev, Madhabdev and others to the life of Assamese society around the world. The pioneers of the Eksharan Naam Dharma, who made people realise the presence of God in their hearts, that is, that God exists on earth in formless form, are praised in the Thaan's of these great sages. The Thaan's were established to keep alive the memory of Vaishnava gurus like Sankardev, Madhabdev, Haridev, Damodardev etc. It is also believed that the Thaan's were established with the aim of introducing the birthplace of the Neo-Vaishnava gurus to the courts of Assam and India as well as the entire world. The Thaan's played a leading role in promoting the life cycle, works and contributions of the Naam dharma preachers. The Thaan's try to preserve the works of the great sages and their contributions to social life in various aspects. They are the mirrors of religion, society, culture and national life.

The history of Thaan culture is as long as that of Satra culture. Some satras are also called Thaan's. It is believed that the satras originated at the beginning of the preaching of the religion by Mahapurush Shankardev. The first satra was established at Bardowa, the birthplace of Shankardev. Shankardev established a 'prarthana ghar' in the newly preached place, which later became a cultural centre. It is also called "Thaan". The word Thaan comes from the Sanskrit word "Sthana". He travelled from one end of

Assam to the other to preach the religion and established shrines in places. The Thaan was the largest in Barpeta established by Madhabdev, the chief disciple of Shankardev. The twelve disciples entrusted by Madhavade with the responsibility of spreading the Eksharan Naam Dharma also established thanas in various parts of Assam. These Thaan's eventually became known as "Satras" the lifeblood of Vaishnavism. In the later period of Sankaradeva, the satras where he or other gurus stayed for some time such as Bardowa, Belguri, Barpeta etc. were called "Thaan's". Some biographers do not distinguish between "Satra" and "Thaan".

2.2: THE MAIN COMPONENTS OF THE THAAN

Satra and Thaan are used synonymously but thana is different from satra in some respects. There is no such thing as a "Vaishnava griha charihati" in the satras. There are special parts of the Thaan's. Some of the main parts are - Namghar and Manikut, Bhoral (Storehouse), Guest House, Bhog Ghar.

2.2.1: Namghar and Manikut

Namghar and Manikut are the focal points of the Thaan. It is located between Namghar and Manikut Thana, facing east-west. In the middle of the Namghar, there are fourteen prasangs and Bhagavat seats for recitation of the Bhagavad Gita. A separate house is built attached to the Namghar and the Bhagavat or idol is placed in it and the house is called Manikut. A throne is established for the worship of God and the Bhagavad Gita is placed there. This throne miner is placed in the highest position.

2.2.2: STOREHOUSE (BHORAL)

All the resources and maintenance items of the Thaan for the rituals of worship are kept in the storehouse. This barn is usually located in the middle of the Thaan around the namghar.

2.2.3 : GUEST HOUSE

A guest house is available for visitors to the Thaan. Guests from far and wide can stay in the guest house.

2.2.4: BHOG GHAR

A separate place for preparing the perfect offerings and offerings of God is known as Bhog Ghar. The bhog ghar is sometimes used to prepare food for the guests who come to visit the place and also at times of societal feast.

2.3: THE OFFICE BEARERS IN CHARGE OF THE THAAN

Just as a village needs different people to run it and be bound together by the rope of unity, so a Thaan needs people whom such a society has given responsibilities to run. Only experienced, knowledgeable and suitably qualified persons are employed to manage a Thaan. Without rules and regulations, it is difficult to conduct activities in an orderly manner. The various positions that play an important role in the management of the Thaan are:

2.3.1: Namgharia

An honest and simple person is appointed as Namgharia. All the responsibilities of the Namghar of the Thaan are in the hands of the Namgharia. They are responsible for the cleanliness of the Namghar and the maintenance of the equipment used in the Namghar. They are responsible for cleaning the Namghar in the morning and lighting candles in the evening.

2.3.2: Namati

The Namati is the one who performs Naam-Prasanga on various festivals, birth and death dates, etc. at the Thaan. They also perform daily 'naam-prasanga' at the Thaan. A person experienced in the field is assigned to conduct the 'Naam-Prasanga' 'Namati' gives the name and the rest of the devotees cooperate with him.

2.3.3: Pathak (Reader)

After the end of the naam-prasang at the shrine, the book is read. The person who reads this book is called a 'Pathak' (reader). The 'Pathak'(reader) should be able to sing the verses of Kirtan, Bhagavat, Ratnavali, Dasham, Ghosha etc. correctly and fluently. Occasionally, the verses will be translated and the 'Pathak'(reader) explains their meaning. Therefore, only skilled persons are entrusted with the responsibility of 'Pathak'(reading).

2.3.4: Bilonia

'Bilonia' is the person who gives prasad to the devotees at various functions of the Thaan. The bidder must be humble and righteous. To take on the responsibility of distribution, a person must take knowledge of the doctrine from the guru. The one who is 'Bilonia' must understand the principle and fulfil his duty by abandoning pride, arrogance, delusion, greed and anger.

2.3.5: Bharali

As an officer, a 'Bharali' performs important duties. The 'Bharali' is responsible for the various equipment and other materials of a Thaan. The treasurer is responsible for the maintenance of various books and important documents of the Thaan.

2.4: DAILY WORK AND CEREMONIES OF THE THAAN

Various programs are held in Thaan. Organising various religious ceremonies at the Thaan is very much significant. Some of these events are discussed below:

2.4.1: Nam-Prasang

In the Mahapurushia Thanas of Assam, the Mahapurusha in memory of whom the Thana is established including Lord Krishna Vishnu is also praised in various ways. The main part of this praise is the name-prasang. Naam prasanga has been held since the time of Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev and Madhabdev. Naam prasangas are performed according to a certain time in the Thaan's. There is a Namti employed in the shrines to conduct the NamPrasang.

2.4.2: Bhagavat Path and Explanation

After the daily Naam-Prasanga is performed in the shrines, the reader explains the Bhagavat Path. In addition, Akhand Bhagavat Path and Explanation programs are held at certain times of the year.

2.4.3: Celebrating the birth and death anniversaries of Mahapurushas

The birth and death anniversaries of the Nava-Vaishnava Gurus are celebrated in the Thaan. The shrines celebrate the birth anniversaries of the great saints with great pomp. They are memorised by chanting the names on the dates of appearance and death.

2.4.4: Celebrating the birth and death anniversaries of Mahapurusha's

The birth and death anniversaries of the Nava Vaishnava Gurus are celebrated in the Thaan. The shrines celebrate the birth anniversaries of the great saints with great pomp. They are memorised by chanting the names on the dates of appearance and death. The Thaan's are places established in memory of Mahapurush Shankardev and Madhabdev as well as Vaishnava gurus. The main purpose of the Thaan is to

worship the deity, practice and spread religious doctrines. Thaan's have a wide influence on society. The Thaan play a role in promoting the literature of the great sages to the world. The shrines also serve as cultural resources by enriching the region and preserving its heritage. The Thaan played a prominent role in the spread of the Nava Vaishnavism created by Sankaradeva and Madhavadevas. The Thaan's simplify religious rituals and play a role in the spread of monotheism. In addition, they try to bridge the gap between different classes in the society. Thaan helps in building unity and religious harmony. Thaan advocates social equality and condemns caste discrimination. People of all races, religions and castes have the right to enter the Thaan's. In addition, the Thaan play a leading role in building an egalitarian society. Thaan have a wide range of influences both culturally and spiritually. Thaan serves as centres of religious or spiritual practice. In addition, the Thaan's can attract tourists and contribute to the local economy. Overall, the impact of Thaan's on society varies depending on location, religious significance, and cultural context.

3.1: IMPACT OF MADHABDEV THAAN IN LETEKU PUKHURI, NARAYANPUR, LAKHIMPUR DISTRICT

Narayanpur is situated in the South-West of Lakhimpur district, covering an area of 425 sq km. Narayanpur is also known as Barnarayanpur. Different historians have given different explanations about the origin of the name Narayanpur. Some scholars believe that the name "Narayanpur" is derived from the Koch garrison that set up the Nara Narayan during the Ahom- Koch conflict in the 16th century, but this seems to be incorrect as there is mention of Narayanpur several times before this period. These include the Ahom Buranji and the biography of Madhabdev. The name might actually be derived from a previous dynasty of Narayan I. e. of Chutia Kings. In prehistoric times, Narayanpur belonged to the kingdom of Banaraja. Ancient idols, temples and various sculptures of ancient Hindu gods and goddesses have been discovered at various places in Narayanpur at different times. It bears evidence of the presence of a civilised culture at this place in the past. Some believe that Habung, east of the Subansiri River, was inhabited by a powerful Vaishnava Bhuyan dynasty. Their prestige extended to the present Narayanpur area. They added the word 'Narayan' as a title to the names of the people of this royal dynasty. People named Prem Narayan, Jai Narayan, Satya Narayan etc. enjoyed power like kings. The powerful Satya Narayan had temporarily settled in Narayanpur for some time. It was during this time that the worship of Vishnu Narayan flourished through the Vaishnavas, Brahmins, Pandits and Bhuyan in Narayanpur. It is said that the area was named "Narayanpur" at that time. The Narayanpur sub division is bounded by Bihpuria in the East, Gohpur in the West direction, Banderdewa in the North and River Brahmaputra (luit) in the South direction.

According to the 2011 census, the total population of Narayanpur sub- division stands at 129640. Narayanpur is the birthplace of many Vaishnava gurus including Madhabdev, Haridev, Aniruddha Dev, Badla Padma Ata. Bar Narayanpur is one of the pioneers of the Satra movement in Assam led by Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardeva. Notable places in Narayanpur include Bilguri Satra, Badla Satra, Phulni Than, Buddha Bapuchang, Maginhawa Dol, Gohai Kamal Ali, Radha Pukhuri, Rangati Pokhuri etc. One of the most famous places in Narayanpur in Lakhimpur district is Leteku pukhuri, the birthplace of Madhavdev, located between the Rangajan and Kachikata rivers. Leteku pukhuri is located about 15 km northeast of the centre of Narayanpur town near a place called Barbali. The geographical coordinates of Narayanpur, including Leteku pukhuri, are 26° 59 '47 N and 93° 53' 49 E. It is located about 54 km west of the district headquarters of Lakhimpur. Leteku pukhuri is bordered by Bihpuria in the east, Bhogpur in the west, Porabil village in the north and Bilotia village in the south. Leteku pukhuri is located in Kherajkhat division of Narayanpur under Lakhimpur district. Leteku Pukhuri is the famous birthplace of Madhabdev Narayanpur who is originally known as Bor Narayanpur or great Narayanpur. The Leteku Pukhuri is a historical place since the kingdom of Kamata, and it was extended up to the Kolabari region of Sonitpur district.

3.2: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF MADHABDEV THAAN

Apart from a few charit books and a few legends, no other primary sources can be found to obtain information about the birthplace of Sri Sri Madhabdev. The biographies of the great sages as well as the character books provide insights into most aspects of contemporary society. There are also clear and vague connections between history and reality in certain legends. There are only a few character books and legends about the birthplace of Madhabdev. Mahapurush Sri Sri Madhabdev was born in the Assamese month of Jeth in 1489 AD at the famous Leteku pukhuri in Kherajkhat Mouza of Narayanpur in present-day Lakhimpur district. Madhabdev was born in the womb of Govindagiri and Manorama in the presence of Harisinga Ujir Bora, the former Ahom king's officer near Leteku pukhuri. Govindagiri, the father of Mahapurush Madhabdev, was a descendant of the Bhuyan dynasty of Banduka. Govindagiri, known by three names, was a royal officer of the king. The three names are Dighalipuria, Mohodar Bhuyan and Barkanagiri. He came to Assam and married Manorama, the daughter of Srimanta Sankardev's uncle. He spent his days in great distress. Finally, he took refuge with Harisinga Ujir Bora, the royal officer of Leteku pukhuri village. Madhab was born there. Madhab spent about twelve years on the banks of Letekupukhuri and left the place. There are all the similarities with legends, folklore and the stories told by the old men. It is also true that there is only one 'Leteku pukhuri' in Lakhimpur district where a great man was born. He is the son of Govindagiri, the founder of the Assamese nation, religion, literature and culture. There is also a brief history associated with the name 'Leteku pukhuri'. Leteku pukhuri is a qualitative name. Some say that the locals named a large royal pond Leteku pukhuri because of a large leteku tree on the bank. It is said that in time, the tree fell into the pond and washed away. Mahapurush Madhabdev was born in one place. Based on this historical fact, research has been conducted among different ethnic groups since about four decades ago. There was also a great deal of curiosity among the devotees of Madhabdev to know about his true birthplace.

3.2.1: THE BIRTHPLACE OF MAHAPURUSH MADHABDEV

The birthplace of the Neo-Vaishnavite guru Mahapurush Madhabdev has a long history. Based on historical facts, people of various ethnic groups and inquisitive people started searching for the birthplace of Madhabdev about four decades ago. The Khamati's were the first to report the famous Leteku pukhuri. Some of these Khamati people include the Khamti Mouzadar of Kherajkhat, Alang Gohain, Cher Bahadur Subba Nepali and others. They were the first to report Leteku pukhuri. They showed the newcomers the birthplace of Madhabdev. These tribesmen came to hunt elephants and animals in the thick forests far around the pond. Therefore, it is important to understand the seriousness and depth of the pond in the middle of the dense forest. It was identified as the historical Leteku pukhuri as it had a huge area covered with some large trees. The large pond was covered with trees and thick forest. The tribals saw various species of trees and shrubs in the jungle. In some parts of the area, which was in pitch darkness without sunlight, lettuce flowers and seeds lay under the trees. They may have been eaten by wolves or other animals and birds. The people were delighted to see the fruit trees around the pond. They were convinced that this was the historic Letekupukhuri. A tree among the large trees around the pond testifies to the history of about 500-600 years ago.

The Leteku pukhuri is mentioned on the map of the Government Land Department in 1911-1912. Therefore, it became easy to determine the holy place of the Guru. The news spread to Kheraj Khat, Narayanpur and Bihpuria and people believed that the place was the holy birthplace of the Guru. After the spread of the disease in Lakhimpur district and the entire area, countless devotees gathered in the area and the eternal anxiety ended. There were about 30-40 people from different parts of the state of Assam who lived in the area. There are also reports of people from Majuli, Jorhat, Dergaon, Golaghat, etc. holding meetings with the local people to discuss the appearance of the birthplace. The residents rode several elephants through the jungle to the pond to get detailed information. It took several days to reach the

destination after cutting down trees and shrubs with knives and axes. In the distance they could see a huge tall foundation about 250 feet long and 75 feet wide. It was about 9/10 feet high. He expressed surprise at seeing such a big and tall foundation. Because where did such a big foundation come from on the flat land? The old heads firmly believed that this was the birthplace of Madhabdev. It was fully discovered in 1948.

3.2.2: ESTABLISHMENT OF TEMPORARY 'NAMGHAR' AT THE BIRTHPLACE OF MAHAPURUSH MADHABDEV

After the discovery of the birthplace of Mahapurush Madhabdev, the birthplace of the Mahapurush was filled with people from different districts. The people together built a temporary Namghar and established the Guru's seat. The festival of construction of the birthplace was held for three days. There was a great ceremony of Naam Kirtan, Guru charit recitation and explanation. There were chess, brass and conch shells in his birthplace. The birthplace of Madhabdev was filled with Harinam. The Harinam was conducted by 'Oja Harimisra Goswami Prabhu'. There was also a nameplate reading "Birthplace of Mahapurusha Sri Sri Madhabdev, Leteku pukhuri Later, a huge Harimandir, Manikut Ghar, about 150 feet long and 70 feet wide was built. There was a colorful courtyard and a huge archway, and two small and tall foundations were discovered about 200 yards away. where 'the Gurugriha' was built. Remembering all the things mentioned in the Charit Puthi, the people confirmed that the big and high foundation was the foundation of Uzir. There was a lot of talk about the identification of the birthplace of Mahapurush Sri Sri Madhabdev. In 1950, a devastating earthquake caused severe damage to Assam. Lakhimpur district was also devastated. However, the temporary house of Madhabdev's birthplace at Leteku pukhuri was not damaged. The Gurubanti continued to burn day and night as it does today.

3.2.3: PLANS TO BUILD THE BIRTHPLACE OF MAHAPURUSH MADHABDEV

In 1954, a construction committee was formed under the chairmanship of the President of the Assam Sahitya Sabha, Jorhat and MLA "*Kaka Bagmibar Nilmani Fukan*". The committee formed in 1954 also included representatives of the claimants of two or three thana committees that were circulating nearby. The members of this committee are as follows:

1. *Nilmani Fukan, MLA, President*
2. *Shashi Chandra Barua, Member*
3. *Hemchandra Hazarika, Member*
4. *Mahananda Bora, Member*
5. *Hargobind Sharma, MAB L, Secretary*
6. *Yogen Shaikia, BL, Member*
7. *Hahanchandra Goswami, ALB, Member*
8. *Yogeshwar Barua, Member*
9. *Dinaram Barua, Member*
10. *Kinaram Hazarika, Member*
11. *Dutiram Bhuyan, Member*
12. *Premdhar Bhuyan, Member*
13. *Boparam Dutta, Member*
14. *Keswananda Vaishnav, Member*
15. *Dimbeswar Neog, Member*
16. *Khagendra Nath Dutta, Member.*

The Governor Jairam Das donated Rs. 6,000 for the construction of Daulat's birthplace. In 1955-1957, the public meeting was held on the banks of Leteku pukhuri under the chairmanship of Garmur Satradhikar Pitambar Dev Goswami. The public meeting was inaugurated by Kuldhar Chaliha. There are many people who have been involved in these meeting, including Majuli MLA Kirk Doley, Tezpur MLA Gahan Chandra Goswami, Sibsagar MLA Anandaram Bezbarua, Lakhimpur MLA Gobin Bora, Sarveshwar Bora, Hem Hazarika Mahananda Bora and others. They recognized the birthplace of the Guru discovered on the banks of Letekupukhuri in a resolution. They plan for the development of their birthplace. The Government of Assam appointed the late Hargobind Sharma of Barpeta, then Superintendent of Taxes of Tezpur, to investigate the place of birth. He visited all the areas and declared that the birthplace of the Guru was on the banks of Letekupukhuri, showing all the arguments of legend, history, ancient chart books, geographical location etc. The birthplace of Mahapurush Sri Sri Madhabdev was discovered but many schemes were undertaken to improve the birthplace but they were not fully effective. The people collected some donations and laboured to build the beads. From 1967 to 1980, no government grants were received. In 1979-1980, the late Revenue Minister Vijay Sharma donated Rs. 5,000 but only Rs. 2,000 was received. In 1982, Lakhimpur District Commissioner Kamal Majumder donated Rs. 33,000. The funds were used to complete the work of the Kirtan Ghar. In 1985-86, the then Chief Minister Prafulla Kumar Mahanta visited his birthplace and donated Rs. 10,000 and the money was used to complete the work of the kirtan ghar. In addition, in 1995-96, the then Chief Minister Hitesh Shaikia sanctioned about Rs 2 lakh 75 thousand for construction of Manikut house, guest house, cleaning of Leteku pukhuri etc. The funds and theatre were collected from the people and the birthplace was decorated beautifully. In 1999-2000, toilets and latrines were constructed with government assistance of Rs. 1 lakh to facilitate the devotees from far and wide. Accommodation is also provided. In addition, drinking water tanks were constructed and the floors of the kirtan houses were paved with donations from the people. For the construction of Madhabdev Kalakshetra at Leteku pukhuri, the birthplace of Mahapurush Sri Sri Madhabdev, Since 2000-2001, the local people and the management committee have been trying. The local people and the management committee have been trying. The year 2000-2001 was the year of birthplace development and various meetings were held. In addition, the inaugural festival of the Development Year was celebrated with a two-day program from 04/01/2000. It was registered in 1975 as the birthplace of Mahapurush Sri Sri Madhabdev. Accordingly, an executive committee called the Birthplace Committee was formed. Its President was Sri Sri Kamalakanta Goswami, Secretary was Mohan Chandra Bhuyan and Assistant President was the late Muhidhar Bora.

3.2.4: DESCRIPTION OF THE HERITAGE AND BEAUTY OF LETEKU PUKHURI, THE BIRTHPLACE OF MAHAPURUSH SRI SRI MADHABDEV

The researcher visited the birthplace of Mahapurush Madhabdev, Leteku pukhuri or Madhabdev Thaan and got some insight into its heritage and beauty. There are rows of 'Areca Gracilis' (Mamoi tamul) entering the Thaan through the main gate of the heritage Madhavdev Thaan. The historic Leteku Pukhuri is surrounded by a large pond about 300 feet long, 100 feet wide and four to five feet high. There are several small and large Burmese grape trees around the bank of the pond. On the west side is a tree about 200-250 feet high. The base of the tree is about 60-70 feet in circumference. The huge roots lie far away like a huge log, sucking up the soil and keeping the tree alive. The tree is home to various animals and birds from the root to the front. There are many species of snakes in the root zone. A few years ago, a dragon snake about 25-30 feet long was found there. At night, these species are known to roam in ponds and take refuge in caves. There are many species of birds living in the trees from the front to the roots. They have created a new generation of raw, hoodu, tiwa, peacock etc. Until a few years ago, birds such as dragonflies and sparrows lived there. The birthplace of Madhabdev is now home to cuckoos, vultures, etc. The melodious voices of various birds are known. This is like heaven. Despite the presence of so many species of birds, there is no noise. They may also listen to the Naam Kirtan, recite the Ghosha, smell the incense. There are two mango trees, a Ipomoea aquatica and an Arjun tree along the kirtan house on the east side of the

Madhabdev Thaan. They have a heritage of about four hundred years. They have also created a bright atmosphere. There is also a beautiful flower garden with various species of flowers. The historic Leteku pukhuri is located in front of the Kirtan Ghar and Manikut Ghar. The pond is surrounded by a perimeter of about 200 feet. Pilgrims from far and wide drink the water of Leteku pukhuri to bless their lives. The management committee of the Thaan provides water to the Leteku pukhuri as the water dries up during the dry season. There are many species of fish in the pond. The management committee of the Madhabdev Thaan occasionally releases various species of fish into the Leteku pukhuri. The frogs can be seen by waiting on the banks of the pond for a while. There are often lotus flowers in bloom in the middle of the pond. There are many tourists and pilgrims in the area. The Madhabdev Thaan is a meeting place of various birds and various aquatic and terrestrial animals.

3.2.5: THE PRESENT PHYSICAL STRUCTURE OF MADHABDEV THAAN

The Madhabdev Thaan of Leteku pukhuri is located about 15 km northeast of the centre of Narayanpur town. The Madhabdev Thaan covers an area of about 32 bigha. The entire compound is currently surrounded by a brick wall. There are several entrances to the Madhabdev Thaan. There are two main entrances to it. One entrance is the entrance connecting Rangajan and Madhabdev Thaan or the entrance connecting Bhogpur and Madhabdev Thaan. There are statues of Shankardev and Madhabdev on both sides of the entrance and two lions. There is also an idol of the bird Garuda, the vehicle of Lord Krishna, at the entrance. The donors of this entrance are Sri Sri Janardan Deba Goswami, Satradhikar of Sri Sri Uttara Kamalabari Satra, Late Dimba Shaikia Atai, Late Yogen Bora Atai, their Aldharas and disciples. This archway was inaugurated on Monday, 5th June 2023 (21st Jeth, 1945) by Hon'ble Shri Jayant Malla Baruah, Minister of Tourism and Public Health Engineering, Assam in the presence of Shri Shri Janardan Devgoswami. This entrance is the memorial arch of Sri Kamalakanta Deba Goswami Gosai Ishwar, the nineteenth Satradhikar of Sri Sri Uttara Kamalabari Satra. When you enter the premises of the Madhabdev Thaan, you will find another entrance. There is a gateway. There are three large tables. This entrance is currently under construction. The 24th February 2024, the foundation stone of the 'Welcome Building' of Madhabdev Thaan was laid by the Hon'ble MLA of Bihpuria Assembly Constituency.

There is a "*Sri Sri Madhabdev Kristi Sangha*" on the right side of the entrance to the premises of Madhabdev Thaan. There is another entrance to the cultural association. This entrance was built in memory of the late Laxiram Neog. The donors of this entrance are Trailokya Bora and Praneeta Neog Bora. When you enter the Thaan, you can see rows of lily trees. There is a small children's park in the premises of the Madhabdev Thaan. There is an "*Udakhin Boha Ghar*" in the left of the entrance to the premises of the Madhabdev Thaan. There are many flowers around the "*Boha Ghar*" and vegetables grown behind the "*Boha Ghar*". There is also historic Leteku pukhuri located behind the Kristi Sangha of Madhabdev Thaan. There are many species of fish and frogs in the area. The management committee office is located next to the Leteku pukhuri. The Namghar part of the Thaan is located in front of the office. There are peacock paintings on the walls in front of the Namghar. There are also two elephant statues. Late Dimbo Saikia Atoi was the first to build the Namghar. The construction of the Namghar is also underway. In addition, the construction of a new theatre is underway at the Madhabdev Thaan. There are also guest houses for tourists from far and wide.

3.3: SOCIO- RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL IMPACT OF MADHABDEV THAAN IN LETEKU PUKHURI VILLAGE

The birthplace of Madhabdev was established in 1411 AD in memory of Madhabdev who was born at Leteku pukhuri in Narayanpur. It is also known as Madhabdev Thaan. The Thaan has been contributing to social, cultural and religious aspects since its establishment. This Thaan has become a centre of education, culture and art not only in the spread of NeoVaishnavism but also in the Leteku pukhuri area as

well as in the entire state of Assam. The impact of the Madhabdev Thaan on the surrounding community is discussed below-

The Madhabdev Thaan is an integral part of the social life of the Leteku pukhuri area. Sri Sri Madhabdev Thaan was established in an attempt to form a new society and to lead the masses to Bhagavad Bhakti. Sri Sri Madhabdev Thaan preached the Eksharan NeoVaishnavite religion to forget the separatist thoughts of the nation. Madhabdev Thaan tried to remove the dirty minds of the people and organise a pure society. The Madhabdev Thaan bears the mark of stable progressive social life of the neighbouring community. The Thaan has advanced the people of its neighbourhood in all aspects of social, cultural and religious life. The Madhabdev Thaan is an attempt to bring together the entire ethnic groups of the Leteku Pukhuri area. There are many people from Boro, Miching, Karbi etc. and even Muslims gather at the Thaan. There are many ethnic groups in the area who have taken the lead in improving the Thaan with cooperation and brotherhood. This Thaan maintains peace and harmony among the people around it. Daily villagers come to the shrine to perform namsangha. People of all communities have the right to enter the Madhabdev Thaan. Only women and people of other castes are restricted from entering the Manikut. There, in the place where the lantern is lit, all nations can light the lantern. There are no restrictions in that regard. Therefore, the Thaan has become a field of social harmony. The Madhabdev Thaan also helps in maintaining national unity. There are many religious discussions held at the Thaan that influence the people of the Leteku pukhuri area. The main purpose of the Madhabdev Thaan is to spread the Neo-Vaishnavism religion preached by Shankardev and Madhabdev. The Madhabdev Thaan initiates the people of the Leteku pukhuri area and tries to explain the basic principles of the religion. The main duty of the Madhabdev Thaan is to enhance the standards and moral character of the disciples through the explanation of the ethics of devotional worship. The Madhabdev Thaan has taught the surrounding area to worship only monotheism instead of the pompous rituals in the name of religion. In addition, there is no influence of idol worship in the Madhabdev Thaan. The Madhabdev Thaan brought about a revolutionary change in Neo- Vaishnavism. It is believed that the influence of Ekasarana Naam dharma spread and expanded in the Leteku pukhuri area from the Madhabdev Thaan. There are many different types of ceremonies and rituals held at the Madhabdev Thaan every day. In the Thaan, all people come to unite in the worship of God, forgetting the rich, the poor, the high and the low. The Madhabdev Thaan is trying to introduce the younger generation of the Neo-Vaishnavism religion and the culture of the Mahapurushia to the younger generation in the Leteku pukhuri area. Leteku pukhuri, the birthplace of Madhabdev, is full of various arts and cultures that are still prevalent in the society. After the establishment of Madhavdev Thana in Assam, the people of Leteku pukhuri area have become proficient in Borgeet, Khol, Tal etc. There are also facilities for teaching Satriya dance, song and dance at the Madhabdev Thaan. This has enriched the cultural heritage of Leteku pukhuri. The people of Madhabdev Thaan have a special place in various bhaona festivals. Every year in the month of 'Bhado', people from 120 villages participate in the Naam Samaroh of the shrine. They also held a Borgeet programme there. In 1960, the "*Sri Sri Madhabdev Krishi Sangha*" was established at Madhavdev Thana under the supervision of the 'Atoi's'.

There are many different types of bhaona's and Ras festivals held in this cultural association. This cultural association emphasises various Shankari arts and crafts. As a result of the establishment of this cultural association, the children of the area are also interested in learning about Shankari arts and crafts. During the same period, in the 1960s, a music school was established. The music school was originally located in "Udasin Boha" but was later transferred to the Kristi Sangha. As a result, the cultural association takes on a complete form. The "*Madhavdev Kristii Sangha*" is currently managed by Betharam Baroua. Shobhan Barua and his colleagues are teaching khol, satriya dance etc. in the music school. The music school has also won various awards on the basis of Assam. This has brought pride to the entire region. Therefore, it can be said that the Madhabdev Thaan has contributed to the cultural aspect of the surrounding community.

According to the theory of the French sociologist Émile Durkheim, Madhavdev Thaan or Namghara create a "Collective consciousness" through collective prayer and Nam-Kirtan and bind the surrounding society together. In addition, an attempt has been made to build "Cultural Capital", as Pieere Bourdieu put

it, by establishing Sri Sri Madhabdev Krishi Sangha and bringing everyone together to teach arts and culture. Madhabdev Thaan challenges traditional caste systems and classifications and places all people in the same seat, reflecting Karl Marx's concept of a "Classless society or social equality".

3.3.1: THE IMPACT OF MADHABDEV THAAN ON THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Economically, the people of Madhabdev Thaan are self-sufficient. For the past five years, the Madhabdev Thaan has had an impact on the local economy. The Madhabdev Thaan has now become a tourist destination in Assam. As a result, the people around it are slowly becoming economically stronger. As the number of tourists increases, businesses are also increasing. The main reason for the development in the region in the last 5-10 years is the increase in tourist arrivals. This is because tourists buy various incense candles and other items from its shops. According to some sources, more than 100-150 people from locality and also from different ethnic groups visit Madhabdev Thaan every day. As a result, its locals can sell a lot of goods. The number of businesses there is slowly increasing. In addition, locals can cut the grass inside the shrine and give it to their cows. The committee members give the responsibility of cleaning the surroundings of the Thaan to the locals, which also earns them some money. The development of the Madhabdev Thaan has also had a significant impact on the local economy.

The economic opportunities created by the Thaan also provide employment to the backward classes and contribute to 'social mobility' as Pitirim Sorokin (Sorokin,1927) given it by improving their status in society Labor and livelihood are considered religious duties. Similar to Max Weber's theory, the devotional and work culture of Madhavdev Thaan fosters a positive economic mentality in the region, where honest labor and livelihood are considered religious duties. The influx of pilgrims and tourists to the Thaan creates a spontaneous market for local transport, hotels and trade, which increases the income of the locals. The collective management of the Thaan and festivals build 'social capital' in the society it helps in the exchange.

3.3.2: MADHABDEV THAAN AS A PRESERVING THE MEMORY OF NEOVAISHNAVITE GURU'S

The Madhabdev Thaan is located at Leteku pukhuri in Narayanpur and has been a centre for the preservation of various literature, culture and arts of Srimanta Shankardev and Sri Sri Madhabdev as well as the Neo -Vaishnavite Guru's. They are also trying to introduce these preserves to the people around them and establish them in the world arena. There are many different types of books written by Shankardev Madhabdev. In addition, efforts are being made to preserve the literature of the Neo-vaishnavite Guru's. They are trying to preserve the "*Jhumuras*" of Mahapurush Madhabdev at the Madhabdev Thaan. It also preserves the plays of Shankardev. There is a "*Guru griha*" built on the original birthplace of Madhavdev, not far from the 'Nat Ghar' being built at the Madhabdev Thaan. They will preserve the birthplace of Madhabdev. This Gurugriha was built with donations from the District Rural Development and local people. The donor of the marble floor of the Guru Griha is Sri Lanki Fangchun of Guwahati. Also, a 'patnad' of Madhabdev was also discovered here which is in a preserved state. The donor of the well is Mrs. Senduri Hazarika of Shantipur, Dhemaji. The house of Harisinga Uzir is located near Patna. which is now paved and preserved. There is also a stone with the footprint of Madhabdev in the Thaan.

3.3.3: DAILY RITUALS AND FESTIVALS OF THE MADHABDEV THAAN

Thaan's are the main centres of religious festivals and rituals. The villagers organise various rituals and festivals at the Thaan's. Similarly, the Madhabdev Thaan at Leteku pukhuri is no exception. There are daily prayers and nam sangha at the Madhabdev Thaan. There is also a daily Gurukirtan at the "Gurugriha" near Namghar. Every morning, the Atai there sings Naam Prasang and Bargeet Bhatima at the Guru Griha. There are many ways to get away from these things. There are many ways to get away from these things. Prasang is not usually held in the afternoon but if the locals offer 'sharai', it is held in the afternoon. There is a daily evening prasang at the Thaan. After the evening prasang, the Atai always recites 'Bargeet' and 'Gunomala'. The Thaan offers Bhagavad Gita recitations every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Local women sing Harinam every Thursday of the week at the Thaan. Apart from daily rituals, various festivals are held at the Madhabdev Thaan. There are many different types of Krishna Janmashtami celebrations at the Madhabdev Thaan. Every year in the month of 'Bhado', a month-long evening khol prasang is held at the Thaan. Every year, the Thaan holds a Falgutsav. The 2024 Falgutsav will be held on 23, 24 and 25 March. There are also month-long palnam's in the holy month of 'Bhado'. The villages along the Leteku pukhuri take turns participating in the palnam. In the month of 'Bhado', Bhagavat recitation starts at 10 am and Palnam starts at 1 pm. The Palnam ends on 1st Ahin every year. There is also a Bhaona Samaroh held at the Thaan every year. There are also many people from the Leteku pukhuri area who participated in the Bhaona Samaroh. This Bhaona is held at the Kristi Sangha. There are also regional Bhagavad Gita lessons every full moon. There are also celebrations of the birth and death anniversaries of Sankardeva and Madhabdev. The birth anniversary of Mahapurush Madhabdev is celebrated with a week-long programme. Nam Kirtan is also celebrated here during three Bihu. There is also a Ras festival held at the Krishi Sangha at the Thaan.

Like Max Weber's religious sociology, Madhava's 'Namghosa' and moral teachings maintain a spontaneous social control and moral discipline in the local society without any external coercion. Through the daily rituals held in the Thaan, it can be said that they help in "*Collective Effervescence*" as given by Emile Durkheim. This is because it helps a society to function smoothly by maintaining unity among people.

3.3.4: VARIOUS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES OF MADHABDEV THAAN

A society needs various skilled people to run it. Similarly, a Thaan requires a skilled person to manage it. The President in charge of the Madhabdev Thaan is the Satradhikar of North Kamalabari Satra, Sri Sri Janardan Deba Goswami. Before him Thaan was managed by late Yogen Bora Mukhtiar, late Kamalakanta Devgoswami, late Dimba Saikia, late Kinaram Burhabhakat, late Madhav Ram Burhabhakat and Fanidhar Barbayan. At present, all the responsibilities of the Madhadev Thaan are in the hands of Janardan Deba Goswami. He lives most of the time at the North Kamalabari Satra but his role in the development of the Thaan is negligible. He is the donor of the main entrance into the Thaan. While he was the president, he received government benefits for the construction of an entrance to the premises of the Madhadev Thaan. There is 'Tini prasanga' in the Madhabdev Thaan. Two Atoi's of the birthplace are appointed to conduct this Naam prasanga. The late Kinaram Hazarika and the late Mitaram Barua Atoi ran it for several years. Then the late Dimba Saikia and the late Jogen Bora conducted Naam Prasanga for many years. Currently, Sri Boloram Shaikia has been in charge of Naam Prasang for 6 years. He lived at Kamalabari Satra for many years and received the title of 'Barbayan' after receiving various educations there. He came to the 'Udaxin' tradition at the age of seven. He also currently recites the names of the Gurugriha and Namghar. He distributed Nirmali and Prasad. He also cooks the 'bhog' of the Naam Prasanga. He also attended various weddings and functions in the Leteku pukhuri area. There are many ways to get a job in the field of architecture, but the most important thing is to get a job in the field of architecture. He is also a master of Sattriya dance as well as playing the khol. Boloram Atai is helped by Lakhyajit Saikia, a 12-year-

old child who is currently studying in seventh grade. The little boy has been living with Boloram Atoi in 'Udaxin Boha' since after the coronavirus, around 2021.

The cleaning of the kirtan ghar and washing of 'prasad' is done by Krishna Barua. The responsibility of looking after the surroundings of the Thaan is done by Mani Barua. But their positions are not permanent. They may not be in charge if the management committee of the Thaan changes. They get some money from the management committee for these works.

The term of office of the Management Committee of Madhabdev Thaan is 3 years. The present management committee of the Thaan is as follows:

1. *Sri Sri Janardan Devgoswami, President*
2. *Mr. Hem Baruah, Executive President*
3. *Mr. Lohit Chandra Neog, Secretary.*

The present 'Udaxin Boha', where Boloram Atoi is staying, was built by the management committee. Its management committee also makes arrangements for guest entertainment. They also tried to improve the Thaan. The management committee cleans the surroundings of the Thaan with the money collected from the donation box. The committee has taken steps to recruit life members at the Madhabdev Thaan from 2021. Therefore, people from different parts of Assam can get involved with the Thaan. Members only have to pay Rs. 1,000 for registration. The committee will deposit the money in the account of the Thaan and make efforts for the improvement of the Thaan in the future. There is also a committee for celebrating various festivals at the Madhabdev Thaan. That is -

1. *Mr. Golap Shaikia, President,*
2. *Mr. Jatin Shaikia, Secretary.*

The festival celebration committee celebrates 'Krishna Janmashtami', 'Mahapurush Avirbhav Tirobhav Tithi', 'Falgutsav' etc. every year.

There is also a committee of women's organisations at the Madhabdev Thaan. The members of that committee are:

1. *Mrs. Kalpana Hazarika, President*
2. *Mrs. Champa Neog, Co-President,*
3. *Mrs. Manju Baroua, Secretary,*
4. *Mrs. Niru Baroua, Associate Secretary.*

This committee holds Naam Samaroh, Naam Festival etc. every year.

3.3.5: MADHABDEV THAAN AS A TOURIST ATTRACTION

The number of tourists at Madhabdev Thaan has been increasing for the last five years. The Madhabdev Thaan is becoming famous in Assam as well as abroad. Every year, pilgrims from far and wide come to visit the Thaan. There are many tourists coming to Thaan. Between 100 and 150 visitors visit the shrine every day. Tourists feed the fish and frogs in the Leteku pukhuri with various foods. The visitors also visited the rare treasures of Madhabdev preserved in the Thaan. Guests or tourists are treated to 'Udaxin Boha' in Atoi. There is also a banquet hall for distant guests to eat. In addition, guests can cook their own meals in 'Udaxin Boha' There are restrooms, toilets and bathroom facilities for guests. There is also a guest house to accommodate guests. The number of visitors to the shrine increases every year on various occasions. There are parking facilities for tourists at the Madhabdev Thaan. There are various development schemes being implemented to make the Thaan a religious tourist destination. It is said that tourist guides will be required in the future depending on the number of tourists.

3.3.6: VARIOUS GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE RECEIVED BY MADHABDEV THAAN

The government has also taken various efforts to develop Leteku pukhuri, the birthplace of Madhabdev. The scheme named 'Sankar-Madhab prokolpo' was launched in 2009 during the Tarun Gogoi government but the work of the scheme was not completed. Recently, the Government of Assam has provided Rs. 10 lakh for parking under the 'Assam Darshan' Scheme. In addition, the BJP government of 2016-2021 constructed a dining hall that can seat 200 people together. The 109th Bihpuria Constituency MLA Devananda Hazarika inaugurated the tiling scheme on the floor of the Namghar with 14th Finance Commission funds on 21st March 2020 in the presence of Borbali gaon Panchayat President Shri Bhaskar Bhuyan. Its allocated fund was Rs. 5 lakh. The present Zila Parishad Namghar was renovated and the entrance was constructed. That construction is currently underway.

3.4: CONFLICT ASPECTS OF MADHABDEV THAAN

According to Guru Charit, people considered Uzir Tol as the birthplace of Mahapurush Madhabdev from 1926, built 'Namghar' and started 'Naam kirton'. Later, there were different opinions among the locals as to the birthplace of Madhabdev. The birthplace of Madhabdev was formed in 1956 under the chairmanship of Dimbeswar Neog, a writer and then office bearer of the Sri Manta Shankardev sangha, it is believed to be the birthplace of Madhabdev. Therefore both Rangajan and Leteku pukhuri have been claimed as the birthplace of Madhabdev. The place was officially registered in 1975 as the birthplace of Mahapurush Madhabdev. Now a day there are two sects of Shankariya Vaishnavs and they are Bamunia and the other one is Kritaniya, both the sects claim two different places of the same village as the birthplace of Mahapurush Madhabdev and the birthplace claimed by the Bamunias is Leteku Pukhuri. The Leteku Pukhuri is one of the very peaceful and breathtaking places and many tourists visit this beautiful place of North Lakhimpur in Assam. If there are such disputes, the locals are now making some efforts to resolve them. They held the 535th birth Festival of Mahapurush Sri Sri Madhabdev in 2023 in conjunction with the two Thaan's. Now, the 536th birth Festival is planned to be held in 2024. They are now informed by the Assam government that both the Thaan will be given government sanctuary forever. However, the Thaan at Rangajan will be treated as a toll of Uzir and education will be provided and the Thaan at Leteku pukhuri will be declared as a birthplace in its entirety. There are various discussions among the locals to respond to the government's decision.

Conflict over a temple or religious ceremony can be directly related to Karl Marx's Conflict Theory, the most important theory of sociology. From a sociological perspective, Thaan is not just a spiritual place, but a powerful social institution, involving complex equations of power, property and social status. According to Marxist conflict theory, society is basically divided into two classes, the powerful ruling class (those who have wealth and control) and the exploited or disadvantaged class. Whenever conflict arises in a Thaan, behind it is often active competition for Thaan land, economic control of charity, or dominance of the temple management committee. Madhabdev Thaan has long been a conflict over land and the birthplace of Madhabdev Guru, the aspects of this conflict can be linked to Karl Marx's Conflict theory.

Leteku pukhuri Thaan is famous as the birthplace of Mahapurush Sri Sri Madhabdev, the lifeblood of Vaishnavite culture. From the above discussion, it can be seen that the Madhabdev Thaan has contributed to the social, cultural, economic and other aspects of the surrounding society. There are many tourist attractions in Assam and the world. There are many tourist attractions in Assam and the world. The management committee and the government are making continuous efforts for the development of the historically famous Madhabdev Thaan in Leteku pukhuri.

4.1: FINDINGS

According to the survey, the Madhabdev Thaan in 1951 had a great religious impact on the people of the Leteku pukhuri area. This is because the shrine was established in memory of Mahapurush Sri Sri Madhabdev, one of the Nava Vaishnava gurus. Mahapurush Madhabdev is a preacher of religion. Therefore, the religious aspect of the Thaan is given more emphasis. It is also found in the present study that The Madhabdev Thaan has played a leading role in attracting the community of Leteku pukhuri in religious aspects and creating religious frenzy. In addition, the Thaan is trying to provide religious education to the younger generation of the area and introduce them to the wider Assamese society. Religion is the lifeblood of Assamese society, dignity and the glory of that knowledge in the minds of the people of Leteku pukhuri.

The study also reveals that The Madhabdev Thaan is of immense importance in maintaining social harmony. The Thaan helps to establish harmony among different people who come from different places and create a healthy social environment. Religion provides social stability and has increased the number of its well-wishers by establishing harmony in the minds of the people of Leteku pukhuri through healthy social processes. Along with an awakening of spiritual consciousness, Madhabdev Thaan has also had a positive impact on the local economy. Religious consciousness protects people from evil deeds and bad cultures as well as allows them to live in a disciplined manner. There are many people who have been able to become successful in business around the Thaan. From the entire present study, the researcher has found that the Madhabdev Thaan has also influenced cultural development. The Thaan has introduced the younger generation to various dances, songs, acting etc. of Shankari culture. In addition, these unique performances have helped to spread the Shankari culture to different parts of the world. Musicians, textile artists, etc. have benefited. There are many opportunities for students to study and research Satriya culture or Shankari culture. Nowadays, the Madhabdev Thaan is also being transformed into a religious tourism destination. There is a continuous influx of devotees to the Thaan. The Thaan is now gaining more or less popularity in Assam as well as abroad.

The researcher has visited the birthplace of Mahapurush Madhabdev, Leteku pukhuri or Madhabdev Thaan and got some insight into its heritage and beauty. There are many sculptures of Shankardev, Madhabdev and Neo-Vaishnavite gurus. The people in charge of the Thaan as well as the locals have beautifully preserved the literature of Shankardev and various Neo-Vaishnavite gurus as well as the Gurugriha, the Patnad, the Uzir house at the birthplace of Madhabdev. In addition, the surroundings of the Thaan are beautifully kept clean by the locals. The historical Leteku pukhuri in Thaan also attracts tourists. There are many development works done in the Thaan with various assistance provided by the government and the local people have also donated various donations for the development of the Thaan. The 'Guru griha' was built on the original birthplace of the Guru with the donations of the local people. In addition, the committees there also work hard for the development of the Thaan. The committee members built the 'Udaxin Boha' in the premises of the Thaan for the Atoi's. There are many different types of rituals like Nam Prasang, Gummala Path, Ghosha Path etc. are held daily in the Madhabdev Thaan. Various festivals are held at certain times of the year. For example, Bhagavad Path, Palnam, Khol Prasang, Bhagavat Path every Monday, Wednesday and Friday in a week, Falgutsav every year, Mahapurusha's Abirbhab (birth) and Tirobhav (death) dates, Ras festival etc. These events are attended by the local people in harmony. Sri Sri Madhabdev Kristi Sangha established in 1960 to organise various programmes. There are also new 'Natghar' being built with government assistance to hold the Bhaona's.

The present study concludes that there has been much debate about the birthplace of Madhabdev from the twentieth century to the present. According to the controversy, some people have claimed that Madhabdev was born in the village of Rangajan in Narayanpur. Therefore, some people defected from Leteku pukhuri and established the 'birthplace of Mahapurush Madhabdev, Uzir Tol- Rangajan' in Rangajan village. The debate, which has been going on since the 20th century, has caused tensions between the two communities and divisions among the local communities. And this debate had a negative impact on the student community, creating uncertainty instead of certainty. Over time, both societies caused problems

but now they are working together. From 2023, the people of both the thanas are trying to hold various functions together.

4.1.1: Suggestions

Letekupukhuri (Lakhimpur, Narayanpur), the holy birthplace of Mahapurush Madhabdeva, is one of the lifebloods of Assamese society and culture. The socio-cultural impact that surrounds this place has some aspects that are not among its true or main impact. Some steps can be taken to establish the Letekupukhuri area as well as the Madhavdev Thaan in the world arena.

1. *Modernisation of infrastructure*: Comprehensive improvement of access roads and provision of quality rest and accommodation for domestic and foreign tourists and pilgrims should be provided.
2. *Preservation of Manuscripts and Inscriptions*: There should be a separate archive or museum for preservation of old inscriptions, Namghosas and other historical resources about Madhavadeo through digitisation.
3. *Establishment of Research Centre*: A national level research centre or university centre should be established at the birthplace for higher level studies on literature, philosophy and Satriya culture of Madhavadeva.
4. *Satriya Arts and Culture Training Centre*: A permanent college/training centre should be established to provide formal training in Bargit, Ankia Nat, Bhaona and Satriya dance to the local youth.
5. *Eco-Tourism Development*: Letekupukhuri, the historic pond, should be beautified and developed as a tourist place with a natural and spiritual environment.
6. *Digital and Global Promotion*: Prepare a multilingual (Assamese, Hindi, English) website and a documentary on the history and significance of the birthplace and promote it globally.
7. *Annual Cultural Festival*: Apart from the birth and death anniversaries of Madhavdev, a national level cultural festival should be organised every year to invite artists from all parts of the country.
8. *Promotion of regional handicrafts*: Creating an indigenous cottage industry of kharams, inscription copies, singing materials, etc. related to the Mahapurusha can create jobs for locals.
9. *Inclusion of educational trips*: Students from Assamese schools and colleges should be encouraged or required to do educational tours to Letekupukhuri and Sri Sri Madhavdev Kalakshetra.
10. *Appropriate use of government and non-government funds*: By assigning agenda-based monies, programs should be carried out promptly under the joint supervision of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Local Committees of the Government of Assam.

4.1.2: CONCLUSION

When injustice, immorality, immorality, etc. threatened civilization in society, great men appeared at the same time. Narayanpur in Lakhimpur district of Assam, in the eastern part of Assam, became a memorable holy place in history for giving birth to such a contemporary Vaishnava devotee. One of the most legendary, decent and versatile personalities of all times- Srimanta Madhabdev (1489-1596) prosperous in the socio religious and cultural history of eastern Bharatvarsha in the 16th century. When Govinda Giri and his wife Manorama were studying at Leteku pukhuri, in Narayanpur area, to the South west of Dhuwahat, under the dwelling of Harisingha Bora, Madhabdev was the born to the couple in the saka 1411(1489AD). Two great apostles, Srimanta Shankardeva and Madhabdev had undertaken. Assam is known as the state of Ekasana Dharma pivotal roles in Assamese literature. The Kirtan Ghosa, Dasham, Ankia Nat, Gunamala, Namghosa are the most popular and widely held books in Assam. Srimanta Sankardeva and Madhabdev have changed the literature of Assam by writing these books. The Borgeet written by both Sankardev and Madhabdev is known as the soul song of Assam. The Ankia Nat and Jumura are the first Indian cultural dramas and these are acts that came before Shakespeare wrote Hamlet. Another poet named Rudra Kandali translated Drona Parva into Assamese. But the most well-known poet of the Pre-Vaishnavite sub period is Madhav Kandali, who rendered Valmiki's Ramayana into Assamese verse (Kotha Ramayana, 14th century) under the patronage of Maha Manikya, a Kachari king of Jayanta pura. Madhabdev became the religious as well as artistic successor of Sankardeva after his later death in 1568.

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