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## Traditional Knowledge of Sankardev Than: A Cultural History Paradigm

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### ABSTRACT:

*The word Traditional Knowledge (TK) used to refer to the complete long standing traditions and practices of definite regional, indigenous or local communities.*

*The base of the Than or Sattra institutions can be outlined to the moment in time when the Neo-Vaishnavite movement launched by saint Srimanta Sankardeva. Thans are the very important centres of artistic and cultural action. Throughout the Mahapurusha's life time a lot of Thans were recognized all over Assam. Among them Sankardev Than of Barpeta has its cultural heritage and historic traditions. The original name of Sankardev Than was Bausi Barang Chung. After Sankardev's death the name Sankardev Than was given by the Bhakatas.*

### INTRODUCTION:

The word than finds state in Neo vaishnavism culture. A gesture of resurgence in the meadow or religion and society removed over Assam throughout 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. Saint Srimanta Sankardeva was the originator of the movement recognized as the Neo-Vaisnavite movement. Srimanta Sankardeva established different types of religious institutions namely Namghar, Sattra and than for the cause of human integration.

### HISTORICAL BACKDROP:

Srimanta Sankardeva established Sankardev Than in 1546 (1464 Saka). The Than is located in the South East location of Barpeta town. It is almost 3 km away from Barpeta town. The early name of Patbaushi village is known as "Baushi Barang Chung" or "Baraljar". Baushi covered a large part counting Chenga, Bahari in east side and Na-khanda River in west. In 16<sup>th</sup> Century, when saints Mahapurush Sankardeva, Madhabdeva, Damodardeva, Harideva, Narayandas, Thakurata established the Bedi of Vaishnavite trust then the place is measured as "Pat" (a big centre of knowledge) and as such it is acknowledged as "Patbaushi".

### CHIEF OBJECTIVES:

The chief objectives of the research paper are;

1. To identify the idea of Traditional Knowledge.
2. To know the idea of **Than**.
3. To study **Sankardeva Than** of Barpeta as a meadow of Traditional Knowledge.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

The research paper is based on Primary sources like historical, oral traditions and site explorations. The Secondary sources are reference books, edited books, magazines, periodicals, journals, research papers, research articles, paper clips etc.

**THOUGHT OF TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE:**

Traditional knowledge focuses to the thought, originality and practices of indigenous and local communities. Generally, traditional knowledge is spreaded orally from generation to generation. India has its prosperous heritage of traditional knowledge passed on between generations in the course of folklore and orally. Assam has also its distinctiveness to protect and conserve the rich cultural heritage.

Traditional knowledge is the knowledge that knows how skills and practices are developed, sustained and passed on with its varied cultural and divine characteristics.

**Parameters of Traditional Knowledge:**



**What is Than:**

1. Than means living pattern, habitation, where people exist.
2. A means of shielding the necessities of existence
3. Than is a way of thought associated with prospects and limitations.
4. Than is defined a set of activities performed to live for a given life length, concerning, protecting water, food, shelter, clothing etc.

### **Component of the Than:**

The Sankardev Than is highlighted by the reality of Manikut, Naamghar, Math, DouL, Bed and Pat Kua of Kalindi Aai (Wife of Saint Sankardeva), Padashila of Sankardeva, museum and a school of Satriya dance and music inside the campus.

In near the beginning phase, the Kirtanghar and Manikut of the Than were made of thatch, cane and bamboo, even though about 95 years ago some local people built the roof of the Kirtanghar with CI sheet. In 1962, Math was constructed from the assistance of the local people. In 1987, Government of Assam and in 1990 DRDA had afforded for the key gate, Manikut, Gosaighar of Kalindi Aai.

### **The Than Management:**

For the day to day to activities of the Sattrra there is an organization consisting of a number of functionaries with definite sphere of activities. Among the devotees, the person who has the highest authority in religious and social matters of Sattrra is popularly known as Sattradhikar. The Sattradhikar of Bardowa Sattrra is also the Sattradhikar of Patbaushi Sattrra. Besides him, Pathak, Gayan, Bayan, Pali, Deuri, Gosai, Bharali, Paladhariya associated with the religious activities of the Sattrra.

### **Literacy Endeavor:**

Sankardev Than, Patbaushi Sattrra played a vital role for the Vaishnavite faith in Assam. Sankardeva had lived 18 years and 6 months in this Sattrra. Among the literacy works, he finished the translation of the Srimat Bhagabata and wrote other independent works. He continued composing the Kirtan Ghosa. He wrote four drama viz-Parijar Haran, Rukmini Haran, Keligopal.

### **Museum:**

In the museum, there are more precious articles linked with him such as masks which were used in drama, 10 nos. Rabbon's head, two doors of copper (donated by Lakshmi Singha, 1694 Saka), 4 Nos. Sarai, a wooden Ural, a stone used for busted rice, the important text on Sanchipaata like Gunamala (32 pages), Kirtan Ghosa (72 pages), Adi Dasham (97 pages), Nimi Naba Sidha Sangbad (16 pages), Kalia Dam drama (6 pages), Rukmini Haran (14 pages), Parijat Haran (12 pages), Patni Prasad (11 pages), Ras Keligopal (19 pages) and Ram Vijoy (9 pages).

### **Cultural Fiestas:**

Sankardev Than, Patbaushi Sattrra as one of the chief religious centre of Assam has preserved its religious impact on the local people and set of traditional functions. In the Than, the devotees each day execute two times prayer i.e. in the morning and in evening. For the duration of Prayer, Srimat Bhagabata, Kirtan Ghosa, Naam Ghosa and Gunamala are read by the devotees. Moong, rice, coconut and fruits are distributed among the devotees as Prasada. Flower ring of Bakul.

Some Photographs:



The Main Entrance



The Main Image



Devotional Prayer



Well of Kalindri Ai (Wife of Sankardeva)

CONCLUDING REMARK:

It is clear that Sankardev Than, Patbaushi Sattra plays a very significant task in link with the Neo-Vaishnavite religion since an extended time. Sankardeva made the foundation of the rich culture from this Than which were widened all over Assam. Certainly, it is a place of tourist destination for both the insider as well as the outsider of Assam. Accordingly, Government of Assam should give importance to encourage and support its value. For this reason, we the people of Assam will able to pay respect and high regard saint Srimanta Sankardeva for his precious and valued works.

**Acknowledgements:** A special thank to Mr. Sanjit Pathak, Sankardev Than of Barpeta who accompanied me during the data collection and interview schedule.

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