

Contribution of Madhabadevato the Intellectual Arena of Assam, India

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Abstract--*Madhabadeva (1489-1596) is one of the most popular preceptors of Ekasarana Dharma. After Sankaradeva, he is the next outstanding figure in Assamese literature. Assam is known as the state of Ekasarana Dharma because of these two legends, Sankaradeva and Madhabadeva. Madhabadeva made a significant contribution to the development of his Guru Sankaradeva's legacy to enlighten the people of that era. There is also a graceful flow in Madhabadeva's style which is as expressive and captivating as that of his master. Madhabadeva's contributions to the modern dramas are also significant works for the Assamese literature of that period. He is known particularly for his book of hymns, the 'Naam Ghosha'. This gave a strong impetus towards Assamese literature. The Borgeet written by both Sankaradeva and Madhabadeva is known as the soul song of Assam. Following Sankaradeva, the great Neo-Vaishnavite reformer Madhabadeva spent his most valuable time in pursuing the doctrines of Vaishnava literature Madhabadeva, and his cultivation of Vaishnava literature through his significant works are like a rebirth and transformation from darkness into light for the last six centuries. This is a philosophical study of Madhabadeva's literary output which has a great place in literature of Assam. The vision of this study is to explore Madhabadeva's philosophical contribution towards the literary culture of Assamese society.*

Keywords--*Contribution, Madhabadeva, Intellectual, Assam, Sankaradeva, Sakta, Bardowa.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Madhabadeva is one of the most popular vaishnava saints in Assam. He was at Letekupkhuri in Lakhimpur district of Assam to GovindagiriBhuyan and Monorama. Govindagiri, Madhabadeva's father who worked as a revenue official in the kingdom of Banduka. After the death of his first wife, he left upstream for Bardowa, Nagoan district in Assam. His education continued in Banduka. He studied Purans, Tantras, Tarka-Sahastra and other Saktism literature.. Madhabadeva met Sankaradeva in 1522 Belguri, Dhunhata, when hewas about thirty two and the saint were in his seventy year of his. After a four and half hour long debate, Madhabadeva accepted Sankaradeva as guru. After this incident, Madhabadeva become an important preceptor of Ekasarana dharma known for his loyalty to his guru Sankaradevaandalso for his artistic brilliance. Initially he was a *sakta* worshipper later converted to *Ekasarana dharma* by Sankaradeva and became his most prominent disciple. Madhabadeva had grown into a staunch *sakta* in his leaning and practice, and on receiving news of his mother's illness while in banduka, he resolves to sacrifices two goats to propitiate the goddess. In the meantime his Brother-in-law Gayapani had converted to Ekasarana Dharma and refused to procure the goats for sacrifice, A debt ensued and Gayapani, now named Ramadasa, took Madhabadeva to meet Sankaradeva as his guru.

At the age of thirty-two, he joined his scholarship, literary and musical genius to the cause of *Ekasarana* dharma. Madhabadeva religiously carried forward his guru's legacy, establishing several sattras that have served as

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the foundation of moderate thoughts and beliefs for centuries. Madhabadeva too was a prolific writer. As a poet and author, Madhabadeva's contribution to his Guru's religion immense. He is known particularly for his book of hymns, the *Naam Ghosa*, which is as great work as Sankaradeva's *KritanGhosa*, as well as large selection of songs called Borgeets of 191 and besides five *Jhumuras*. That gave a strong impetus towards Assamese literature. The Borgeets written by Sankaradeva and Madhabadeva is known as the soul song of Assam. Contribution of Madhabadeva's works can be classified under these categories: philosophical, Narrative Rendering, Plays, and Devotional Lyrics etc.

Madhabadeva's first work *Janma Rahasya* is a work about 300 verses. Madhabadeva also successfully translated the first book of *Ramayana* of *Valmiki*. The beauty of his *Adi Kanda Ramayana* lies in its elegant verses and homely similes. *Jumura*, *Gurubhattima*, *Namghosha*, *Nam Mallika*, which are among the most popular books of Madhabadeva in Assam. Serially Madhabadeva's works of philosophical nature are; *Naam Ghosa*, *Bhakti Ratnavali*, *JanamaRahasya*, *Naam Malikaa*. Madhabadeva also wrote plays like; *ChorDhora*, *Pimpara Gusowa*, *Bhojana Behar*, *Bhumi Letowa*, *Arjuna Bhanjana*. Plays of Madhabadeva's authorship are like; *BhusanaHarna*, *Ras Jhumura*, *Kotora Khel*, *Brahma Mohana*, *The Dhyana-varna (part of the Kirtan)*. *Govardhan Yatra*, *Nrasimha Yatra*, *Rama Yatra*, these plays are found towards the Attribute to Madhabadeva.

Madhabadeva is the next outstanding figure in Assam after his Guru Sankaradeva. Madhabadeva, the great scholar of Assamese culture is also known as the closest and most Devoted disciple of Sankaradeva. His most disciple devotee Madhabadeva's contributions to the Culture and literary fields of Assam are in no way lesser than his Guru Sankaradeva, this extraordinary performance of Madhabadeva shows in his works with a dignity that itself was Overwhelming. The saddest reality of his childhood days and sufferings of his teenage taught him to be hard working to encounter his life. Many hurdles and obstacles of his adulthood gave him bitter taste of life. Madhabadeva met Sankaradeva in 1522 at in age of 32, when he was Indomitable courageous person with a extraordinary capability. Both are scholar in their respective religious doctrines which led them to a four and half hour long debate on the issue of the superiority of the cult of *Bhakti* and *Sakti*. However, Madhabadeva understand the deep rooted meaning and acknowledge the power of Lord Krishna and after that accepted Sankaradeva as a guru when Sankaradeva uttered a *Sloka* from the *Bhagawata-Puran*.

After that Madhabadeva become the dearest and the most reliable disciple of Sankaradeva and engaged himself completely in the service of his Guru and consolidated the groundwork laid by Sankaradeva, which reflects in his religious, philosophical, cultural and literary works. Madhabadeva was the successful creator of Vaishnava literature, which was brought by Sankaradeva. Therefore ,Daityari Thakur writer of *Guru Charitastated* that:“Sankarebhakatiprakashilamatra, Madhabespprasarila.”

It may be mention here that, the great Neo-Vaishnaviate reformer Madhabadeva, pursuing his guru's religion and guiding force for the followers and spent his most valuable time by spreading their neo-vaishnava culture. Madhabadeva continued the groundwork that has been created by Sankaradeva by setting down some indispensable rules and regulations for the newly formed religious institutions. Which make these institutions more powerful and lively. Madhabadeva grown into a staunch saint for his followers, who had some intellectual ability. They have faith in Madhabadeva because he was deeply involved in the propagation of Vaishnava tenets and doctrines.

The most significant instance of the Neo-vaishnava culture is *Naamghar* or *Kritan Ghar*. Under the guide of Madhabadeva, *Naamghar* was beautifully presented by colored, which is also known as *Rongiya Ghor*. This *Naamghar* become immensely popular and people came in large to take incitation in the Vaishnava culture. At Barpeta, Kamalabari, JarabariSattras was significant of the un extinguished light that is called 'Akhay Banti'. Madhabadeva lighted the 'AkhayBanti' before the Guru Asana, at Barpeta at the time of inauguration of the KritanGhar and divided some rules and regulations against the system. This 'AkhayBanti' never allowed to go burn off by devotes of Vaishnava.

To establish Sankaradeva's vision, Madhabadeva makes a division between the rules and regulations for religious institution to create a awareness in the sattras. Madhabadeva was divided the *Chaidha Prasang* (Part of Naam) that has given by *Baikuntha Dwiji* and determined the order in which the *Bhakta* shut be stated. *Baikuntha Dwija* stated those *Pransangs* as in words : (i) Bhattima (ii) Capaya (iii) Gunmala (iv) Leelamala (v) Tatparjya (vi) Ghosa (vii) Pad (viii) Geet (ix) Naam (x) Path (xi) Bhagawat (xii) Joi (xiii) Haridhawni (xiv) Achhribata Katha.

LakshminathBezbauh writes that, Madhabadeva started lives in Sundaridiya at Barpeta for eight years and established the Guru Asana at the *Naam Ghara* after the death of Sankaradeva. After the division of these prasang Madhabadeva various sattras in the different places including Upper Assam, Kamrup and Koch Bihar. After the death of Sankaradeva, Madhabadeva was living for twenty eight years and devoted himself completely to spreading preaching the legacy and the lesson that has been taught by his Guru. Madhabadeva was shadow of Sankaradeva who was the successor of increasing the value of Neo-vaishnavism among the people of different places. Madhabadeva devoted himself as a religious as well as artistic successor of Sankaradeva and broke his betrothal and resolved never to marry and occupied a very respectable position among the people and become the devoted friend of Sankaradeva. Because of Madhabadeva's propagation of neo-vaishnaviate religion gets a wide arena into Assamese society. Like Sankaradeva, Madhabadeva also created a public awareness between the people by propagating religious faith. Madhabadeva was a prolific writer. He wrote all his verses in the stream devotion in a way which is aesthetically gratifying. Madhabadeva's lyrical poems are highly emphasized in the Vaishnava culture and various form of musical verses such as the *Borgeets* are beautifully composed. His creative expressions were lucid which creates the beautiful picture of his *Bargeets*. Madhabadeva *Jhumura* has lots of controversy because of some unknown authors who used Madhabadeva's name to gain popularity. Plays of Madhabadeva's authorship are like 'Ras Jhumura' and 'Kutkura Khel'. Madhabadeva has more lucid picture towards his works where he used instrumental lucidity to describe the beautiful picture of child Krishna. In his description we have found child Krishna with a flute to his lips, a switch in his hand and playful speeches become very dear to Vaishnavism and gained much more popularity to Assamese society. With the description of Lord Shiv and Narad we can also placed child Krishna's Lila in the Assamese society. Madhabadeva's description of child-Krishna like in this works gained much popularity than Sankaradeva's description of Lord Krishna.

It is already describes about Madhabadeva's contribution towards the cultural and literary fields of Assam. Madhabadeva in his literary works of Assam. Madhabadeva in his literary works shows his creative genius. Madhabadeva's biggest literary works *Naamghosha* has the greatest contribution towards Vaishnava culture. Madhabadeva has outstanding contribution to the cultural world. Madhabadeva's cultural contributions flourish like his guru Sankaradeva. From *CharitPuthi* we can found his literary and cultural genius. From the *Jhumura* like,

Narasingha Yatra, he remains as a successful actor. His *Jhumura*'s are composed in a lyrical manner to establish easily by the modern generation too. He was highly qualified to give the balanced of tune and rhythm in his songs and dance.

Madhabadeva dedicated his whole life to *Bhakti* and was able to bring a great social change. By following his Guru Sankaradeva's footsteps, he raised his voice against social and class discrimination. He said that, *Paramanirmaldharma Harinamakaritanata Samsatapaniraadhikara Etekesheharinama Samastadharamaraja Ehisarashastrarabichara*

Madhabadeva portraying the vivid picture of Lord Krishna's lila in front of the different kind of people of the society. He stated the purest way of salvation by chanting the name of Lord Hari:
Nalagedwevarrishuibe Nalagesamastashastarabistarajanibe.

The ideology of Mahapurusha Dharma – "*nahi bhakti jatiyajalibichara*". The successor of this ideology is Madhabadeva, who try to remove the class division from the society, therefore from his philosophy studies provider of his *Bhakta* of that time, when people from all gender, race, society, from hills to plain co-existed in peace and harmony in Natural world. He will always remains not only as a great poet, literary scholar, choreographer, an actor and a successful play writers but also as a immense contributor of modern era.

II. CONCLUSION

The most glorious form of devotion and mysticism in Assamese culture can be found in Neo-Vaishnaviteera. Though, devotional poems are there before this era but they are simple and does not have any rich imagery and aesthetic qualities as Neo-Vaishnavite literature have. There is close connection between devotion and mysticism, which can be found in Madhabadeva's works. They are exceptionally very rich in imagery and visibly bright in the field of Assamese literature including many other highly talented devotees and mystic poets of that era. Madhabadeva's lyrical poems are highly emphasized in the *Vaishnav* culture. Madhabadeva flourish like his Guru Sankaradeva by following his legacy. Madhabadeva also became a literary and cultural genius like his Guru Sankaradeva. Madhabadeva's two great works, *Namghosha* and *BhaktiRatnawali* we find his great devotional thought towards God, are nicely expressed. *Namghosha* is Madhabadeva highly spiritual *Vedantic* philosophy which has rich energetic material. *Namghosha* provides the importance of the meaning of chanting the name of God and hearing God's glories, greatness of devotion and the virtue of good company. Like Sankaradeva, Madhabadeva too took the propagation of the *Bhakti* tenets and doctrines not only through his *kavyas* and songs but also through his dramatic presentation. And this study on Madhabadeva's literary contribution towards the intellectual arena of Assam shows the greatness and authorship of the great authors and literary scholar Madhabadeva. He is the only writer in Assamese Vaishnava literature who conceives Krishna as a child through the grace of childhood simplicity. Madhabadeva creating an eternal fascination of the child, joy, warmth, fond of maternal cares are all constitute a distinctive feature of Assamese Vaishnavism.

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