

SANKARADEVA AS A MASS COMMUNICATOR

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Abstract: Srimanta Sankaradeva established the noble thoughts of moral values and spiritual inspiration for the humanity and social harmony. To disseminate and popularize these dignified views Srimanta Sankaradeva contributed immense effort by creating a wide range of cultural creations as well as philosophical foundation. Looking into the distinctiveness of socio-cultural involvement it is notable to recognize Srimanta Sankaradeva as a greatest mass communicator. The universality of his vision is a strong communicating mechanism which playing a vital role in community development of Assam. Sankaradeva devoted his entire life to strengthen this socio-cultural and spiritual bond between the mass. It spreads thoughts of universality and liberalization across the nation. Thus, this research paper is to study the role of Sankaradeva as a mass communicator and to understand his communicating outlook for greater Assamese society is incredibly noteworthy to highlight the different issues in modern context.

Index Terms: Communicating Mechanism, Liberalization Mass Communicator, Universality.

I. INTRODUCTION

Srimanta Sankaradeva is the legend widely recognized to institute a realistic model of socio-cultural development across all sets of society accomplish with ideological and spiritual vision. This representation was the first ever-systematic configuration of principles, deeds and communicating agenda for the greater interest of Assamese community. Before this period, the socio-cultural efforts confined in between the geographical, social order and ideological limitations of people. Many scholars of Pre-Sankaradeva era were contributed towards socio-cultural upliftment of society and they used the socialistic and literary tools to disseminate the knowledge. However, Srimanta Sankaradeva initiated this new progressive form includes all socio-cultural-spiritual-ethical elements which methodically generate a communicating outline where all people can participate, perform and informed. This is the key factor, which is denoting Sankaradeva as a mass communicator. This research paper is a study to understand Sankaradeva and his creations focusing different mass media aspects.

II. OBJECTIVE

The foremost emphasis of this research paper is to focus on the mass communication perspective of Sankaradeva's vision and contribution that established him as a mass communicator. Mainly to study the contribution of Srimanta Sankaradeva in the field of art and culture and aspire of their contents, style of presentation and preservation which signify the mass media facts. Also to understand the historic evolution, socio-cultural transformation of Sankaradeva's thought and its future prospect with recent circumstance.

III. METHODOLOGY

This is a critical and analytical type of research. The findings of the research are on two types of data i.e., the Primary data and Secondary data. Different works of Sankaradeva in his lifetime is considering a chronological limit is the primary data for the research purpose. After the data collection process, data analysis has been done. In addition, it includes various components of communication process that may establish Sankaradeva as a remarkable mass communicator.

IV. REVIEW LITERATURE

A wide range of literature is available based on Sankaradeva's philosophy and socio-cultural contributions. These are based on literary expression while a limited outlines are found on mass media aspects of Sankaradeva's vision and creations. Hence, to focus on communicating process selective books are taken into account. Namely, *Jugonayak Sankaradeva* written by Anil Roy Chaudhury, *Asomiya Samaj Aru Navabaisnavabad* by Dimbeswar Neog, *Srimanta Sankaradevar Darshanot Abhumuki* by Ananda Ram Das are reviewed to understand the Sankaradeva as a communicator. Also the Sankaradeva's literary contributions namely Kirtan Ghosa, Dasam, Gunamala are the treasure to study his role.

V. CONTRIBUTION OF SANKARADEVA

Sankaradeva was born on 1449 AD and died in 1568 AD. In this life spent of about 120 years Sankaradeva dedicated himself for the cultural extension, social reform and importantly rational enhancement. As a result of socio-political-cultural amalgamation the Bhakti movement swept throughout India and in connection with this renaissance; Srimanta Sankaradeva contributed the Neo-Vaishnavite philosophy where a high range of scholarly creations of Drama, poetry and several performing arts were started. Srimanta Sankaradeva is distinguished as the first to establish and perform the drama culture in any other Indian regional languages. Before this, there were no other evidence found regarding the regional-lingual drama performance excluding the folk acts and plays. These are the masterpiece inclusion of all art forms i.e., music, dance, acting, painting which began a new era of Assamese cultural fest. Also it comprises the sculpture, handloom and handicrafts of Assam where he laid emphasis on the socio-economic viewpoint of people through the cultural involvement.

Significantly, Sankaradeva formulated *Vrajawali* language with the inspiration of *Maithili* lingual dramas. *Vrajawali* used the performing language in *Ankiya Naat*. Sankaradeva wrote a range of spiritual scripts namely *Kirtan ghosa*, *Dasam*, *Gunamala* where he describes spiritual narratives give moral lesson through divinity. To explain these scripts Sankaradeva instituted a platform to perform and practice these values. Sankaradeva established *Satra* and *Namghar* across the regions were residential spirituality learning institutions and community prayer houses, respectively. *Gosain* is a spiritual leader who teaches moral education, social values to the disciples, students and followers. Usually *Gosain* are the principal leader and mentor of *Satra* and on the other hand, the native prayer houses *Namghar* are functionate by the native people where locality gathered for worship practice and perform the spiritual learning in various art forms like, *Bhaona*, *Satriya* dance, *Borgeet* presentation. These institutions are widely open for all irrespective of caste, creed, and gender that they can participate in the services and can enjoy the cultural performances.

Sankaradeva introduced *Ek Saran Naam Dharma* a Neo-Vaishnavite stream of Hindu religious vision and practice but it is more flexible and progressive. *Ek Saran Naam Dharma* is the highest ideological and spiritual contribution of Srimanta Sankaradeva which binds all people of society irrespective of caste, creed, social status and region. *EK SARAN* referred to be under the guidance and direction of the single God who is not other than Lord Krishna who described as *Palankarta* i.e., the protector of humanity and social values.

Sankaradeva contributed these all highly valued visions to generate mass awareness among the population. His continuous effort seems to build a social consciousness where people become well informed about individual ethics and collective responsibility through various literary written forms and the performing art forms. This entire progression of mass interest unswervingly signify Sankaradeva's role as an effective mass Communicator.

VI. MASS MEDIA ASPECTS OF SANKARADEVA'S VISION AND CREATION

Sankaradeva extensively travelled the country for twice and he closely experienced the common opinions, believes, desires of individual and social means. He had collected various useful elements for socio-cultural development based on public interest. Therefore, with a universal outlook Sankaradeva introduced a innovative and dignified form of spiritual movement which assemble mass significance. Theoretically, this mass significance includes various mass media aspects. Studying the structural composition of Sankaradeva's vision and creations, we found mass media fundamentals, which discussed here.

The efforts made by Sankaradeva notably personified him the characteristics of a communicator. To be a conversationalist of public one has to be very precise about the aims and objectives, message, target audience and the mass media tool. Sankaradeva was incredibly knowledgeable to use these elements to disseminate the information among the people. Systematically he used the written scripts, performing art forms, symbolic art forms as mass media tool. He commenced all verbal, non-verbal communicating methods to spread the knowledge and information. These have the entertainment too to attract the public. Dramas composed by Sankaradeva are known as *Ankiya Naat* and the theatrical representation of *Ankiya Naat* is called *Bhaona*. *Bhaona* is a masterpiece includes all performing art forms i.e., drama, dance, music, handicrafts. Considering the context of *Bhaona* and its presentation the whole creation found to be a unique and thoughtful event. For the scripts, the stories of *Bhaona* are taken from the epic of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* were full of moral lessons. Although the most of the population is illiterate hence, the dramatic representation of such ethical subjects can occupy people's mindset towards positive way.

Sankaradeva wrote his first *Ankiya Naat* '*Cihna-Yatra* bhouna' is the '*Chihna*' means spotted, or to draw and '*Yatra*' means drama. *Birinchi Kumar Barua* stated *Cihna-Yatra* as 'a pantomimic show with a scenic background to emphasis the effect'. It was a colourful portrait of tales of Lord Krishna and other deities on a long cloth demonstrated the gradual development of the stories which significantly denoted the modern cinema concepts. In *Katha Gurucharita*, it is stated that *Cihna-Yatra* *Bhaona* was associated with live music, acting and performances which able to attract the people. Later on, Sankaradeva wrote other nine *Ankiya Naat* namely, *Patni prasada*, *Kaliya damana*, *Keli Gopala*, *Rukmini harana*, *Parijata harana*, *Janma yatra*, *Gopi Uddhava sambada*, *Kangsa badha* and *Sri Rama Vijaya*. The script of the play *Janma yatra* is however not available now.

These Bhaona was comprises with an orchestra called *Gayana* means the singers, *Bayan* means the instrumentalist plays mainly *Khol* and *Tala* i.e., a particular drum & cumbal, respectively. On the other hand, the *Bhaoriya* means the actors. *Sutradhara* is the narrator of the play who begins the play with dancing and singing. In addition, he explains the story in between the play to make it more understandable by the audience. The performance follows a classical form of staging so that it can be tie up with the grammars of dramatic representation and helps next generation to follow it without hampering the origin. For mental recreation Sankaradeva composed, several devotional songs called *Borgeet* accomplish with several instruments to spread out the message of spirituality, morality and humanity.

Sankaradeva's great creation *Satriya* dance form is one of the beautiful classical dances of India. Prominent intellectual Anandamohan Bhagawati stated that *Satriya* dance is assimilated different tribal dance forms of the region. He described it as the inclusion of different dance forms mainly of *Mizo, Naga, Jayantia, Garo, Khasi, Koch, Kachari, Missing, Deuri, Moran, Motok, Bodo* community. This represents the vast acceptability in socio-cultural scenario. Assimilation of all cultural components Sankaradeva introduced *Satriya* dance where a range of symbolic representation of divine stories are described.

Sankaradeva widely introduced *Vrajawali* language for a nationwide population so that people of other regions of India can enjoy these arts and his invaluable messages could spread in entire mass. According to Dr. Upendra Nath Goswami *Vrajawali* language blends the old Assamese language based on *Kamrupa* inscriptions on which *Charyapada* were written. On the other hand, Dr. Sukumar Sen stated *Vrajawali* as the youngest Aryan language of India. Hence, these observations indicate that *Vrajawali* as a prominent language is very close to the heart of people.

In early period of Sankaradeva, there were so many different deities and mainly living animal and human were sacrificed in the name of *Sakti Pujan*. Along this, so many and merciless rituals took place and the social system suffered a lot. To abolish the malpractices, blind beliefs and to worship the single God Sankaradeva's EK SARAN NAM DHARMA formulated on the three fundamental practices are *Kirttan, Smaran, Bandan*. *Kirttana* is to express and execute the glory of Lord Krishna in the form of poetic illustrations which are articulated by Sankaradeva. *Smaran* is to bring the instructions learned from *Kritan* and Guru (the mentor) to the mind. *Bandan* is the devotional expression of thoughts towards Lord Krishna and the *Guru* for all those we learn about this world and humanity. This is the verbal communication process in between person to person where people share ideas, knowledge and information. Sankaradeva open up the doors of this platform for all communities. Because of this, Sankaradeva received a distinguished group of disciples from different communities namely Narottom from Naga, Chandkhai from Muslim, Damodardeva from Brahmin community etc. Madhavadeva was the most prominent disciple of Sankaradeva. At beginning he believed the practice of life sacrifices for worship. Later, Madhavadeva was enlightened with Sankaradeva's thought of humanity and spirituality. This variant strengthen the team spirit of Sankaradeva and able to reach out the people's mind and soul.

On the other hand, Sankaradeva customized the edifying practices of devotion in *Satra* and *Naamghar* which are basically the good habits of lifestyle. Sankaradeva's philosophy of *Sanskar* i.e., reform for personal, mental and social health and hygiene. Realizing the fact, *Sayan Sadachar, Bhojan Sadachar, Goyon Sadachar* are introduced which says about the daily routine of sleeping, eating, moving to somewhere etc.

VII. FUTURE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study has an immense scope of future study that may unfold several new dimensions of Sankaradeva's vision and creations related to mass communicating process. This a over view study of fundamental context which may lead a new beginning for prospect researcher to understand the mass media aspects of Sankaradeva's philosophy in modern context of mass media.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Considerably, before Sankaradeva's period the musical and performing arts are related with worship only. This was the first break though in the firm cultural arena to closely associate with common people as mass media. This association of ideology and mass media aspects glorifies Srimanta Sankaradeva as a responsible mass communicator who enlightens the society with global visionary of universality.

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