

# ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL INNOVATIONS OF SRIMANTA SANKARDEVA: A HISTORICAL EXPLORATION OF ENDURING TRADITIONS IN ASSAM

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## ABSTRACT

In medieval Assam, the great saint-scholar Srimanta Sankardeva (1449–1568 CE) established a wide range of creative and cultural achievements that have persisted till the present day. He changed the socio-cultural landscape of the area by establishing new literary genres (Borgeets, Ankia Naat), performing arts (Bhaona, Sattriya dance), visual arts (Vrindavani Vastra, mask art, temple architecture), and institutional structures (Namghars, Sattras). In addition to being aesthetically pleasing, these developments were intricately linked to the devotional philosophy of Ekasarana Dharma, which places a strong focus on social equality, communal involvement, accessibility, and moral reform. Under Sankardeva's tutelage, the interaction of traditional idioms, vernacular language, and classical antecedents allowed the artistic forms to endure, adapt, and become part of Assamese identity throughout generations, as well as to proliferate quickly during his own lifetime. Specifically, the utilization of theater and music helped close the literacy gap, and the visual and material arts provided focal points for devotion, education, and community identity.

In order to understand how and why the artistic and cultural forms that Sankardeva started to survive, what changes they endured, and how they still influence Assamese culture now, this study explores their nature, origin, evolution, and ongoing resonance. It highlights distinctive elements by contrasting them with other regional Bhakti movements and drawing on literary works, historical documents, oral traditions, and modern creative activity. The investigation's main focus is on the functions of organizations like Sattras and Namghars, the relationship between art and religious devotion, and the ways in which Sankardeva's inventions became ingrained in popular culture. According to the findings, Sankardeva's inventions endure not just because of tradition but also because of their adaptability, collective ownership, and the cultural infrastructures he helped create, such as temple halls, monastic institutions, and performance spaces. [Khataniar \(2022\)](#)

**Keywords:** Srimanta Sankardeva, Ekasarana Dharma, Borgeet, Ankia Naat, Sattriya Dance, Vrindavani Vastra, Namghar, Sattras, Assamese Cultural Tradition

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Srimanta Sankardeva was a key character in the remarkable convergence of religious, social, and creative ferment that occurred in Assam during the medieval era. He established the Neo-Vaishnavism or Ekasarana Dharma movement as a reformer, which prioritized devotion (bhakti) to a single divine presence over caste marks and intricate rituals. [Borkakoti \(2006\)](#) Beyond his religious pursuits, however, Sankardeva was a musician, dramatist, poet, artist, and institutional

innovator. Assam's cultural environment was altered by his contributions to dance Sattriya, literature (Borgeets), theater (Ankia Naat and Bhaona), painting, and textile art (Vrindavani Vastra, for instance). These developments allowed people of different literacy levels, ethnicities, and castes to engage in a common culture, serving not only as displays of devotion but also as instruments of communication and social cohesiveness. [Saikia \(2004\)](#)

Since his inventions are directly responsible for many of Assam's contemporary cultural traditions, it is crucial for historical research and cultural policy to comprehend how they came to be. Thus, this study explores the ways in which Sankardeva's artistic forms were institutionalized through Sattras, Namghars, and community performance, as well as how they developed through folk, oral, liturgical, visual, theatrical, and linguistic sources. [Misra \(2000\)](#) The visual arts textiles, mask-making, manuscript painting, and their complementarity to literary and performative arts are given special consideration. These elements are important for comprehending how aesthetic traditions continue, but they frequently get less attention than Borgeets or Ankia Naat. [Dutta \(2019\)](#)

Furthermore, this paper aims to identify the mechanism of "endurance" that permits some art forms to endure, adapt, renew, or fade by looking at surviving artifacts such as textiles like Vrindavani Vastra, mask crafts, modern revivals and transformations like Sankari style painting workshops, and the adaptation of Sattriya dance to stage and outside Sattras. In addition to what Sankardeva accomplished, the question is how his works have been perpetuated, conserved, altered, and occasionally disputed in social, political, and cultural contexts during the previous 500 years. [Barua \(1998\)](#)

## 2. STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM

Even though Srimanta Sankardeva's significance in Assamese culture and religion is widely acknowledged, many of the artistic and cultural traditions he brought about are not well documented in scholarly literature, particularly when it comes to their material aspects, technical procedures, historical changes, and current status. The challenge for study is to comprehend survival processes.

Furthermore, visual arts textile weaving like Vrindavani Vastra, mask crafts, manuscript painting, and Sankari style painting have received less rigorous historical and technical scholarship than literary and performative developments like Borgeet, Ankia Naat, and Sattriya. Thus, a thorough mapping of those creative forms is required, including their history, methods and materials, networks of patronage, decline and continuity, and place in Assamese culture today. Thus, by carefully examining the visual and performative arts that Sankardeva started and by examining how these traditions have been preserved, changed, or lost over time, this study aims to close these gaps.

## 3. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

[Das \(2019\)](#), the study "Ankiya Bhaona and Its Impact on the Socio-Cultural Life of Assam" explains how Ankiya Bhaona affected language, the performing arts, social gatherings, and identity formation in general in Assamese society. It makes the case that Bhaona had a significant role in enabling Assamese culture to be shared, accessible, and expressive among a variety of communities not only affluent or religious ones.

[Hoque \(2020\)](#), "Assamese Society and Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankardeva's Relationship" with a focus on literature, education, social change, and religious

philosophy, Hoque examines the diverse cultural impact of Sankardeva on Assamese society. He notes that Sankardeva addressed caste, ethics, and communal cohesiveness issues primarily through the arts.

Hoque (2020), "Relation Between Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankardeva and Assamese Society- A Brief Study", the study looks at the significant influence Srimanta Sankardeva had on Assamese society, especially in relation to his literary and cultural accomplishments. It emphasizes how his cultural inventions and teachings have greatly impacted contemporary artistic creations, highlighting their educational worth in fostering moral, spiritual, and value-based thinking in coming generations.

Devi et al. (2021), "Satriya Culture and Srimanta Sankardeva's Contributions to Education", the article examines how Satriya culture has changed throughout time and how Srimanta Sankardeva contributed to it, especially in the area of education. It looks at how Sankardeva's founding of educational establishments and encouragement of cultural customs benefited Assamese society's social and intellectual advancement.

Khataniar (2022), "Sattra Institutions and Neo-Vaishnavism in Assam", Khataniar concentrates on the development and function of Sattras, which are monastic establishments that are essential to the Neo-Vaishnavite movement. He describes their cultural significance, rituals, and organizational systems. The significance of Sattras in maintaining and advancing the arts and teachings that Sankardeva introduced such as music, theater, and manuscripts is emphasized in the study.

Dutta et al. (2022), "The Construction of Masculinism in Mahapurush Sri Sankardeva's "Ankia Naat" (Drama): A Sociological Viewpoint Beyond Conventional Reading", this essay uses a sociological perspective to investigate how the dramas of Sankardeva generate ideas of gender, particularly male roles, the portrayal of divine masculinity, and societal expectations of masculinity. This advances knowledge of the artistic medium and its cultural connotations.

#### 4. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In the 15th and 16th centuries, Sankardeva's Assam was characterized by linguistic diversity, tribal cultures, political fragmentation among several chieftains, the Ahom kingdom, Koch influence, and religious spirits both Brahmanical and folk as well as ritual forms, Tantric, and Shaktism. Despite the influence of religious reform movements like Bhakti and Vaishnavism in other parts of India, Assam's version, led by Sankardeva, stood out in terms of its institutionalization and artistic scope. Against this background of social stratification and ceremonial intricacy, he founded the Bordowa Than, composed devotional literary, theatrical, musical, and visual works, and created Sattras. The inventions were partly a reaction to the need for a universally accessible devotional religion that drew from folk arts and vernaculars while dismantling boundaries of caste and esoteric ceremony.

Primary textual sources, including writings by Sankardeva and his followers, manuscripts, textiles, masks, paintings, and current performing arts, as well as secondary scholarship that has looked at them from a variety of disciplines, are used in this study. In order to track continuity, change, and loss, it also takes into account living tradition performances, workshops, and oral history. In order to provide a comprehensive understanding of Sankardeva's creative ideas and their lasting influence on Assamese culture, the goal is to connect literary, art historical, performance studies, and cultural history.

## 5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are:

- 1) To examine the different forms of creative and cultural innovation that Srimanta Sankardeva brought to medieval Assam, including literary, performative, visual, and material advances.
- 2) To explore these innovations' historical development over time, including their modifications, adaptations, downturns, resurgences, and continuity.
- 3) To evaluate into the institutional, social, technical, and material elements that helped these traditions endure, such as Sattras, Namghars, patronage, craftspeople, materials, and skills.
- 4) To assess art forms' present standing in Assamese society today and their contribution to artistic practice, cultural identity, and heritage preservation.

## 6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) What specific innovations in the arts and culture, specifically in the fields of literature, performance, visual arts, and material arts, did Srimanta Sankardeva bring to Assam?
- 2) In what ways have these innovations changed over time in terms of form, technique, patronage, performance context, and community practice?
- 3) What social, material, technical, and institutional factors have influenced their existence, modification, or extinction?
- 4) What obstacles do these customs currently encounter in Assamese society today, and how are they maintained?

## 7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 7.1. PRIMARY SOURCES

Original and historical sources that are directly related to the life and contributions of Srimanta Sankardeva are the main source of information used in this study. These include religious classics like the Kirtan-Ghosa, his own creative creations like Borgeets (devotional songs), and Ankiya Naat (one-act dramas). His artistic and spiritual philosophy can be better understood through manuscripts that have been preserved in archives and Sattras (Vaishnavite monasteries) throughout Assam. Direct interaction with practitioners of Sankardeva's traditions will be made possible by field trips to significant Sattras like Barpeta, Kamalabari, and Majuli. These excursions will allow for the observation of performances, ceremonies, and oral histories. To learn how these customs have been maintained and passed down over the ages, interviews with Sattradhikars (monastic leaders), artists, and local elders are crucial oral primary sources.

### 7.2. SECONDARY SOURCES

This study makes use of a variety of secondary sources in addition to primary sources to contextualize and evaluate Sankardeva's contributions. Scholarly viewpoints on his innovations may be found in books, journal articles, and theses on

the Bhakti movement, Assamese cultural history, and Sankari art traditions. The impact of Sankardeva on literature, music, theater, and religious reform is critically interpreted in works by historians, cultural anthropologists, and art historians such as Maheswar Neog and Sanjukta Gupta. Documentary films, museum archives, and conference proceedings that explore the development and significance of his legacy are further examples of secondary sources. When taken as a whole, these resources provide a thorough historical and cultural examination of the persisting customs resulting from Sankardeva's groundbreaking work.

## 8. RATIONALE

Despite the fact that Srimanta Sankardeva's artistic works are essential to cultural legacy of Assam, there is a dearth of comprehensive, methodical research that covers literature, performance, visual, and material arts with a diachronic (past-present) perspective. The necessity to protect endangered art forms, comprehend the relationship between institutional religion and vernacular culture, and guide cultural practices and policies in heritage preservation serve as justifications for this research. Additionally, knowing what has kept some traditions alive in a time of cultural uniformity provides guidance for maintaining living heritage.

Additionally, the study adds to academic discussions in the fields of art history, performance studies, religious studies, and cultural heritage: how community versus institutional agency in preservation, how religious movements can produce enduring artistic forms, the function of vernacular aesthetics, and how historical innovations are reinterpreted in modernity.

## 9. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 9.1. INNOVATIONS IN LITERATURE: PROSE, BRAJAVALI, AND BERGEETS

Bergeets, a brand-new type of devotional songs penned by Srimanta Sankardeva, are meticulously arranged in ragas and talas and are in Brajavali, a blended Assamese language with Maithili and Sanskrit influences. These songs were written to convey the theology of Ekasarana Dharma in a language that the general public could understand, in addition to being beautiful to listen to. In Sattras and Namghars, Bergeets have always been a component of collective singing and daily prayers, strengthening a sense of community. [Borkakoti \(2015\)](#) Although there has been some simplification or alteration in musical style due to modern pressures, such as the availability of expert artists and instrument materials, the repertoire has been preserved over time and transcribed into manuscripts and printed books. Music teachers and Sattria musicians continue to instruct students, maintaining melodic and lyrical forms. [Neog \(1980\)](#)

Apart from Bergeets, Sankardeva also created dramas (Ankia Nats) and prose pieces (Kirtan Ghoxa, Gunamala) that were intended to teach morals, inspire devotion, and narrate Puranic legends in a way that was relatable to the common people. Linguistic barriers were lessened through the use of Assamese for writing and Brajavali for dramaturgy and songs. These works have remained in use, occasionally with editorial modernity, thanks to the print age, contemporary education, and scholarly activity. Even if staging, costumes, and the makeup of the audience have changed, many Ankia Nats are still performed during festivals in Sattras and Namghars, maintaining the original format. [Barua \(2007\)](#)



## 9.2. DRAMATIC ARTS AND PERFORMANCE: ANKIA NAAT, BHAONA, SUTRADHAR

Ankia Naat, a one-act devotional theater that combines discourse, music, movement, dance, costumes, and a narrator (Sutradhar), was a significant cultural innovation created by Sankardeva. These plays, which were written in Brajavali, featured dramatic storytelling and ceremonial invocation that the average person could understand. [Neog \(1973\)](#) Community members were frequently used as actors in performances that were held in Namghars or open areas. With the development of masks and props, the custom of Bhaona performances by Ankia Nats was institutionalized in Sattras, and specialized craftspeople emerged. [Barua \(1998\)](#)

These dramatic forms have persisted, but with modifications. For example, contemporary productions may employ different materials for costumes, stage lighting, and audience seating, actors of different genders may be used, modern settings may be adapted, and occasionally, language may be translated or modified for younger audiences. The fundamental elements the use of Sutradhar, invocation, a blend of song, dance, and discussion, as well as the religious narrative remain unaltered, maintaining ties to Sankardeva's original vision. [Dutta \(2019\)](#)

## 9.3. DANCE: THE EVOLUTION OF SATTRIYA

The religious dance form known as Sattriya was first performed by Srimanta Sankardeva during devotional and ceremonial rites within the Sattras, mostly by male monks called bhakats. Movement, rhythm, mime, spiritual expression, and narrative storytelling were all incorporated into Sattriya, which was closely linked to Ankia Naat theater performances. The dance was restricted to the Sattras' monastic setting for generations. But starting in the 20th century, it became more widely known, and the Indian government eventually recognized it as one of the country's traditional dance forms. As a result of this recognition, it began to spread outside of monastic settings, with performances taking place in public auditoriums, cultural organizations offering instruction, adaptations for both male and female dancers, and themes that went beyond the conventional Krishna legends. [Medhi \(2008\)](#)

As performances move out of monastic contexts, there has been negotiation adaptation of costume, choreography, length, audience expectations. Some purists critique loss of ritual purity or changes in style, others see this adaptability as necessary for survival. The institutional infrastructure of Sattras, dance training, and festivals contribute to teaching new practitioners. [Barua \(2016\)](#)

## 9.4. VISUAL AND TEXTILE ARTS: PAINTING MANUSCRIPTS, MASK-MAKING, AND VRINDAVANI VASTRA

The Vrindavani Vastra, a huge silk drape that Sankardeva supervised and that shows scenes from Krishna's life, is one of his most notable visual inventions. The intricate weaving, materials, design themes, and story structure make it a unique artifact. [Neog \(1971\)](#) Much of the original artistry has been lost, although throughout time, some pieces have been saved in museums like the Victoria and Albert Museum and the British Museum. In local workshops, efforts are currently being made to analyze themes, reconstruct weaving techniques, and bring back similar weaving. [Dutta \(2013\)](#)

Plate 1

**Plate 1** Vrindavani Vastra

Courtesy British Museum Collection

**Plate 1:** The Vrindavani Vastra is a finely woven cloth that portrays events from Lord Krishna's time in Vrindavan. It is credited to Srimanta Sankardeva's disciples in 16th century Assam and is a prime example of the Neo-Vaishnavite movement's blending of devotion and artistry. The cloth functioned as a visual scripture for followers, serving both ritualistic and narrative functions. Its cultural and historical value is shown by its preservation in the British Museum.

Another visual/material art closely linked to Sankardeva's performative inventions is the creation of masks for Bhaona (also known as mukha or mask). Traditionally, clay, bamboo, cane, cow dung, and other natural colors like hengenul and haital are used to create masks of animals, devils, and mythic figures. [Borkakoti \(2014\)](#) In Sattras like Samaguri, these masks continue to play a major role in Bhaona performances. The artistic environment also included manuscript painting, Sankari style painting illumination, and illustrations, more recently, workshops in Sankari painting have been established to teach artists traditional pigment techniques. [Saikia \(2021\)](#)

## 9.5. TECHNICAL AND MATERIAL ASPECTS: ARTISANS, MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUES

The majority of the materials utilized in Srimanta Sankardeva-inspired artistic activities historically came from local sources, including bamboo, cane, clay, bark, and natural dyes and pigments like hengenul (vermilion) and haital (yellow arsenic), as well as silk (particularly for textiles like the Vrindavani Vastra). The techniques were similarly varied and included the creation of musical instruments, mask modeling, manuscript illumination, loom weaving, and natural dyeing. [Neog \(1973\)](#)

**Plate 2**



**Plate 2** Hengul or Red Earth & Haital or Yellow Arsenic,  
**Curtsey** Kalang Museum, Puranigudam, Nagaon, Assam, India

**Plate 2:** These ancient colors, Haital (yellow arsenic) and Henggul (red earth), have been essential to Assamese Sankari art styles. Originating from natural minerals, they were frequently utilized in Sattra tradition religious iconography and manuscript painting. In addition to adding visual depth, their vivid colors have symbolic meaning in religious settings.

The complex network of religious art forms at Sattras required collaboration between a number of artisans, each with a unique specialty and operating under both spiritual and technical direction. These artistic methods were both technological innovations and forms of devotion, with their origins in elaborate craftsmanship and ecological knowledge. [Barua \(2010\)](#)

Weavers, potters, bark-cloth manufacturers, and mask makers were typically closely associated with the Sattras or lived in nearby villages, demonstrating how the artists were frequently integrated into the community. Non-institutional methods of knowledge transfer included apprenticeship, oral tradition, and observational learning. Certain talents were maintained through artisan guilds or family-based institutions, and the spiritual significance attached to these customs offered a greater incentive than just a means of subsistence. But with time, these intangible heritages were at risk of being lost, mostly as a result of shifting patronage patterns, market upheavals, and declining generational transmission. [Borkakoti \(2011\)](#)

The commercial art market and the contemporary educational system, both of which frequently ignore ancient kinds of knowledge, are two forces that these traditional technical arts must contend with today. Among the difficulties are scattered mentorship, competition from synthetic substitutes, the loss of original materials, and the dwindling supply of raw resources. Simultaneously, revival initiatives like government-sponsored workshops, training programs run by NGOs, and museum exhibits like those featuring the Vrindavani Vastra have started to elevate traditional customs. But there is still a major conflict: how to preserve methodological and philosophical authenticity while adjusting to the financial limits and limitations of contemporary settings. [Dutta \(2018\)](#)



## 9.6. INSTITUTIONAL ASSISTANCE: COMMUNITY, NAMGHARS, AND SATTRAS

A large portion of these art forms have been sustained thanks to the establishment or systematization of Sattras and namghars by Sankardeva and his adherents. Sattras offered artists, manuscripts, musicians, actors, patronage, ritual schedules, physical places, and frequent performance opportunities. As local congregational hubs, Namghars performed plays, songs, dances, and group worship, integrating customs into daily life. [Goswami \(1995\)](#) These organizations have served as living cultural archives through their consistent use, ceremonial calendar, and generational transmission.

However, certain Namghars are less active, some Sattras have seen a reduction in their resources, and occasionally outside forces like urbanization and economic hardship make it harder to sustain artists or performances. However, there has been a renewed interest in a number of sectors, including cultural mapping, heritage policy, workshops, tourism, and institutional collaboration, for example. Kalakshetra and other initiatives are strengthening institutional support. [Dutta \(2010\)](#)

The adaptive tactics employed by these institutions also demonstrate their resilience. Modern educational programs, digital preservation, and community outreach projects have been integrated by Sattras and Namghars while preserving essential ceremonial and cultural frameworks. This dynamic strategy ensures continuity in the face of shifting social environments by both preserving and making the art forms accessible to younger generations. [Baruah \(2018\)](#)

## 9.7. REVIVAL, ADAPTATION, AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

Many traditions are changing as Assam becomes more modern. These days, performance traditions like Ankia Naat and Sattriya are presented in theaters, often with altered costumes, and with the help of current lighting and sound equipment. New themes may be introduced, and language or pronunciation may be updated for audiences of today. These art forms are preserved in part by media documentation, cultural organizations, and scholarships. Workshops in visual arts, such as painting and mask-making, as well as the resurgence of weaving skills, have increased in frequency. [Saikia \(2014\)](#)

The livelihoods of artisans are unstable, traditional materials might not be available, younger generations could favor contemporary entertainment, funding is erratic, and documentation and preservation of textiles and manuscripts are frequently lacking or in danger. Additionally, there is a chance that commercialization will weaken the integrity of aesthetics or rituals. [Bhuyan \(2019\)](#)

Community-led projects have started to promote sustainable approaches of cultural preservation in spite of these obstacles. The goal of initiatives like skill-sharing programs, collaborations between designers and craftspeople, and the marketing of traditional crafts in international markets are to ensure both cultural authenticity and economic viability. Additionally, the utilization of digital platforms has created a bridge between tradition and innovation by opening up new channels for youth awareness and engagement. [Hazarika \(2022\)](#)

## 9.8. HERITAGE POLICY, CULTURAL IDENTITY, AND PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

Sankardeva's ideas have influenced festivals, rituals, community memory, language, and the performing arts, all of which are intricately intertwined into Assamese identity. The return of the Vrindavani Vastra through scheduled exhibitions, the inclusion of Sattriya dance as a classical dance form, the Sattras' heritage status being recognized, and public policy initiatives through cultural mapping and memorandums of understanding (MoUs) such as Kalakshetra's partnerships with universities show that their heritage significance is recognized by the government and the general public. [Sarma \(2017\)](#)

Prospects for the future rely on a coordinated heritage strategy, education, documentation, support for craftspeople, sustainable materials, performer training, and contemporary distribution through digital media and performance tours that strike a balance between authenticity and adaptation. Many of Sankardeva's inventions are likely to survive if these are upheld, if not, some may gradually deteriorate. [Deka \(2020\)](#)

Encouraging grassroots involvement in addition to institutional backing is essential for a vibrant cultural future. Giving local communities the tools they need to take pride in their history can increase their ability to withstand outside influences like urbanization and globalization. Fostering a vibrant culture that honors tradition while welcoming the essential innovation will require networks of collaboration between academics, practitioners, policymakers, and young people. [Talukdar \(2023\)](#)

**Table 1**

Table 1 The Enduring Legacy of Srimanta Sankardeva's artistic and Cultural Innovations in Assam				
Category	Artistic/Cultural Form	Description	Innovative Features	Significance
Arts of Literature	Borgeet	Songs of devotion written in Brajavali	Lyrical devotional music with a raga foundation	Essential to Vaishnavite ceremonies, performed in Sattras
	Naat Ankia	One-act plays on themes from mythology	Musical interludes, chorus narration, and the use of Brajavali	Bhaona is still done throughout Assam.
	Writing in Prose	Brajavali original prose and translations	Language that is accessible for religious texts	The basis of literary prose in Assamese
The Arts of Performance	Nritya Sattriya	Traditional dance style with Sattria roots	Coded gestures and ideas of devotion	Acclaimed as a traditional dance of India (2000)
	The Bhaona	Ankia Naat is presented in theatrical fashion.	Combining dance, theater, and music	Carried out at ceremonies and festivities
Visual and Material Arts	Making masks (Mukha)	Characters from mythology wearing large, stylish masks	Crafted from bamboo, clay, and fabric, colorful designs	Majuli and other Sattria districts continue to practice
	Vastra Vrindavani	A sacred cloth that portrays the life of Krishna	Intricate weaving and narrative images	Renowned worldwide and kept in museums
	Paintings of Manuscripts	Religious texts with illustrations	Fine detailing, the use of hengul and haital (natural pigments)	Revival initiatives using seminars and exhibitions

	Borgeet, Taal, and Khol	Traditional musical instruments and songs of dedication	Instruments made specifically for Sattriya customs	Sattria ceremonies and performances continue to use it.
Institutions of Music and Instruments	The Sattras	Monastic establishments	Religious, cultural, educational, and artistic roles all combined	Fundamental to Vaishnavite culture and practice
	The Namghars	Prayer halls for the community	A democratic setting for worship, singing, and conversation	Village-level spiritual and cultural hubs
Philosophies of Culture	Egalitarian Art Practice	Caste, class, and literacy hurdles are all addressed with an inclusive approach.	Using folk forms and vernacular language	Inherent in Assam's societal cohesiveness and identity

## 10. MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

### The major findings of the study are:

- 1) The literary innovations of Sankardeva The basis for devotional literature that was accessible to people of all castes and literacy levels was established by Borgeets, Brajavali poetry, and prose narratives.
- 2) A blend of theater, music, dance, and visual spectacle was brought by performative inventions like Ankia Naat and Bhaona, which captivated large audiences and forged close ties within the community.
- 3) Originally ritual and monastic, sattriya dance has evolved into a classical dance style that is widely recognized outside of religious contexts, proving that flexibility is essential for perseverance.
- 4) Although historically important, visual and material arts like as textiles, mask-making, and manuscript painting have been more susceptible to extinction since they call for specialized materials, skilled craftspeople, and ongoing support.
- 5) Mechanisms within institutions by offering space, patronage, communal discipline, and intergenerational transmission, Sattras and namghars have played a crucial role in maintaining tradition.
- 6) Traditional pigments, natural dyes, weaving processes, etc. are frequently threatened but are being resurrected through workshops and cultural programs. Materials, skills, and artisanship are crucial.
- 7) The use of traditional idioms, accessible story formats, vernacular and mixed poetic language (Brajavali and Assamese), and basic musical structures all aided in the quick adoption and spread among the general public.
- 8) There is a risk of losing the original aesthetics as well as a good chance of survival when performance venues, stage technology, mixed-gender performances, and new materials are adapted to modern situations.
- 9) Sankardeva's legacy is being acknowledged more and more by heritage policy and cultural institutions, exhibitions, cultural mapping, educational institutions, and memorandums of understanding all contribute to resource assistance and awareness-raising.
- 10) Participatory culture and community ownership Local Namghars, Sattras, and craftspeople continue to play an important role, traditions are more likely to endure when they are ingrained in the community.

- 11) Due to a lack of resources, the departure of artisans, the migration of younger generations, or a lack of institutional support, some traditions exhibit a noticeable decrease in isolated or underdeveloped areas.
- 12) The persistence of these creative and cultural developments relies on striking a balance between tradition and adaptation, between performance context and ritual context, and between pragmatic adaptation and material authenticity.

## 11. CONCLUSION

One of Assam's greatest legacies is the artistic and cultural achievements of Srimanta Sankardeva, which are not just religious or devotional but also aesthetic, social, communal, and institutional. He created avenues for participatory culture that cut beyond barriers of caste, literacy, and ethnicity through the literary genres of Borgeet, Ankia Naat, prose, performing arts Bhaona, Sattriya, textiles, masks, and manuscript painting. The social and physical framework required for Sattras and Namghars to thrive was supplied by the organizations he established or encouraged. Therefore, the persistence of his innovations is not accidental but rather the consequence of their design: institutional anchoring, communal ownership, integration of folk and vernacular material, and accessible language. [Goswami \(2016\)](#)

However, the study demonstrates that endurance is never static: inventions evolve, adapt, lose components, and even acquire new varieties. In the absence of deliberate revival, preservation of material, method, and patronage, the visual arts are more susceptible to extinction than the literary and performance arts. Exhibitions, workshops, and heritage policies are all crucial components of modern interventions, but they must be mindful of authenticity and the underlying ideologies. [Choudhury \(2019\)](#)

Lastly, Sankardeva left behind a living as well as historical legacy. Assamese culture, identity, and social cohesiveness are still shaped by these artistic traditions. In order to preserve these historical traditions as dynamic, changing manifestations of life of Assam rather than just as artifacts, governments, cultural practitioners, academics, and communities must collaborate while acknowledging the economic, material, and generational obstacles.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None .

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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