

CHAPTER V

PATBAUSHI SATTRA (SANKARDEVA'S *THAAN*): CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Eka Saran Nama Dharma when reached its proper goal among the people of then Assam, Patbaushi Sattra established by Saint Sankardeva became the centre of attraction. At that time devotees from different parts of Barpeta gathered at Patbaushi Sattra for whole day and night for practicing religious music, drama and *Naam Kirttan*. Patbaushi became similar to *Baikunthpuri* or Heaven as the entire place was heralded with the recitals of musical instruments. The melodious vocals attracted every individual and led them to surrender themselves to Lord Krishna.

5.1 Etymological meaning of Patbaushi

During the rule of Koch dynasty, the name of Patbaushi was known Baushi Bilayat. The founder king of Koch dynasty Biswa Singha (1533-1587) defeated the Bhuyans and spread his kingdom to this area. During the time of Koch king Naranarayan (1533-1587), Saint Sankardeva was at Patbaushi.

Saint Sankardeva established Patbaushi Sattra in the end of 1549 AD (1468 *Saka*). The *Sattra* is situated in the south eastern part of Barpeta town. It is nearly 5 km away from Barpeta town. Patbaushi was also known as Baraljar or Baralcung. Baushi covered a large area including Chenga, Bahari in the east side and Na- khanda River in the west. But it is not possible to give proper boundary of Baushi. In the book, "Guru Charit" Baushi is known as Baushi Paragana. The east side of Dhanukhanda *jaan* (cannel) of the *Sattra* is known as Byaspara.

It is mentioned that Saint Sankardeva along with his disciples came from upper Assam and stayed six months at Kaplabari. During the period of journey they took rest at Bhari Dhuwa Ghat at the village Chenga of Barpeta district but the place was not suitable for living and therefore, he came to another place named Chinpora of Barpeta town. He entered Barpeta through Galiya *jaan* and stayed there for a short period. After a great deal of moving, Sankardeva arrived at Patbaushi. In 16th century Saint Madhabdeva, Saint Harideva and Saint Damodardeva came to Patbaushi and propagated Vaishnavism through *Naam Prasanga*. From then the place was considered as *path* (a big centre of learning) and as such the place is known as Patbaushi.

‘Bhakti vander sthan Patbaushi samastare bandyasthan

Sankar madhab ram damodar tarar teje nirman

Jehen naimisyarannya shonakadi patila siro satrak

Sehimate purbakhanda sampradya kripaye bhaktasewak’

That means ‘Patbaushi is a place of devotion where bound each other by a thread, established the *Sattra* by cutting forest by Sankar, Madhab, Ram and Damodar and since that time the *Bhakats* have been blessed by the forefathers.

(Mishra, 2002:16)

According to some scholars, in the early period the inhabitant domesticated silk worm to make silk cloth. Basically the local women were associated with weaving workshop. So the place became famous for silk cloth. They made cloth from cotton. Many traders came to collect silk from different direction for selling. Patbaushi was centre place of silk.

In the copper plate (1772 AD) of Ahom King Lakshmi Singha, the boundary of the *Sattra* is described as “surrounding of *Thaan* comprises of *Dala jaan* in the east side, *Kakatigota jaan* in the west, *Rangiar jaan* in the north and in the south side is *Dhanukhanda Beel* and the total dimension of the land is 40 *pura*” (Roy Choudhury, 2007 :49)

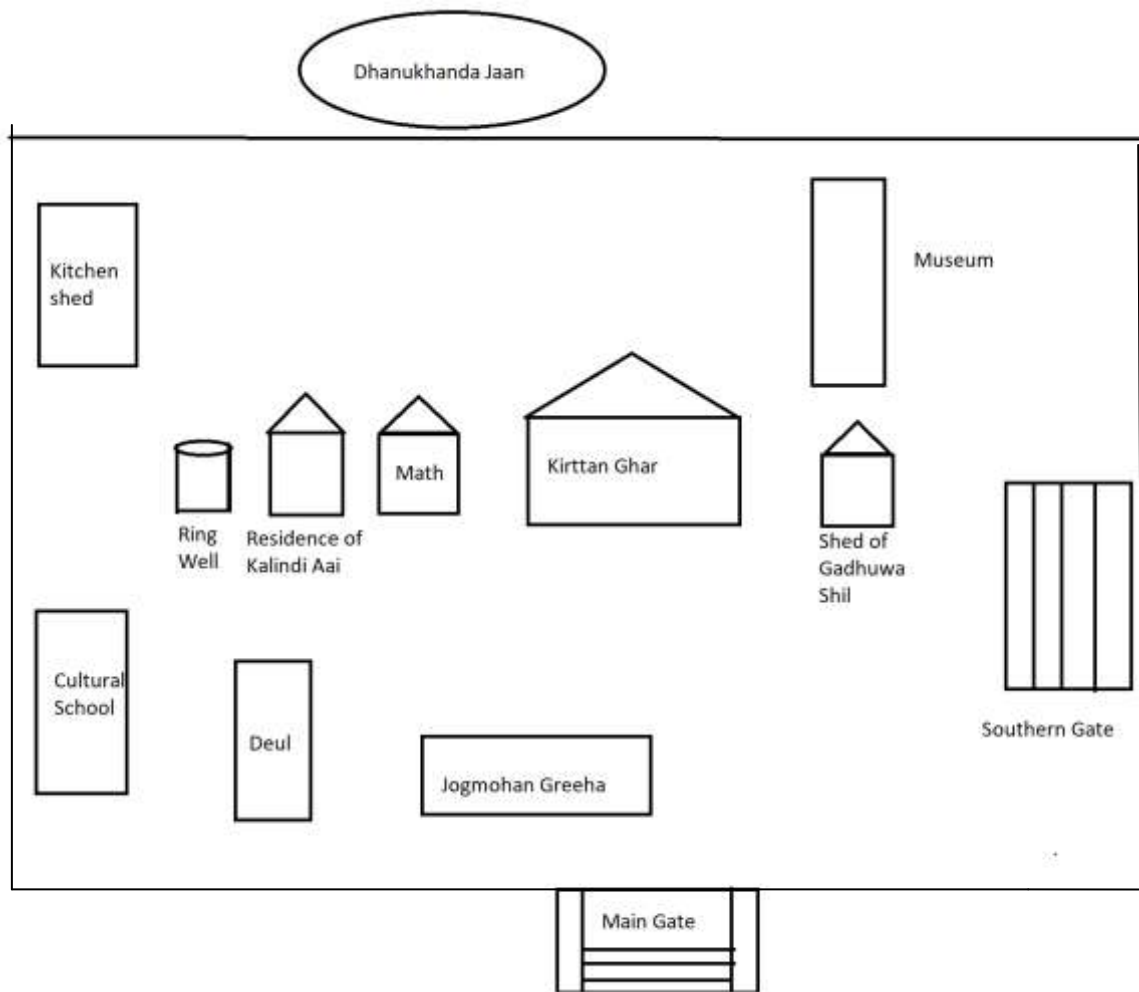


Fig. 5 Sketch of Sattra Compound

5.2 Physical Structure of the Sattra:

5.2. a. Toron (Main Gate): The main gate of the *Sattra* is known as *Baatchora* or *Toron*. The gate is situated in the west direction of the *Kirttanghar*. This *toron* was built from the donation provided by DRDA and some local person in 1990. Each and everybody have to enter into the *baatchora* with bare feet.

5.2. b. Manikut: The *Kirttanghar* has an adjunct “the sanctum-sanctorum” where the idol or the sacred scripture is kept known as *Manikut*. It is a smaller structure than *Naamghar*. All the valuable jewels of the *Sattra* including the sacred idol are kept and preserved here. During the time of Saint Sankardeva, the *Kirttanghar* and *Manikut* were made of thatch, cane and bamboo. It is considered as the heart of the entire establishment. The *Manikut* reconstructed in 1990 with the donation provided by DRDA. Its length is 40 feet and breath is 13 feet

5.2. c. Math (a Shrine): During the time of late Mahendra Mohan Choudhary and Finance Minister Matiram Bora, State Government and local people provided donation for build the *Math* in 1962. The *Math* is situated in that place where Shrimanta Sankardeva and other saints discussed on Vaishnavite religious faith, books. The foot print of Sankardeva on a stone is preserved inside the *math*. It is found 9 cm in length and 4cm in breadth of his foot.

5.2. d. Kirttanghar (Prayer house): The centre of the main activities of a *Sattra* is the *Naamghar*. It is Sankardeva’s pivotal and outstanding legacy for the Assamese people. The focal point of his religion and its influence on Assamese life is all pervading. An epitome of simplicity, *Naamghar* has been the cornerstone of Assam’s socio-religious structure for over half a millennium. Basically in design, *Naamghar* is a large prayer hall built in the traditional style and generally placed in the east-west direction. Its

open sides are symbolic of its entrance as well as acceptance of people of every caste and creed.

In the early period, the *Naamghar* was made of thatch and clay. 95 years ago, some honourable person viz. Gopi Pathak, Late Lakri Shingh, Late Monohari Babu provided GI sheet to replace the thatch of the roof of *Kirttanghar*. 1987, Government of Assam and in 1999 DRDA had provided fund for reconstruction of the *Kirttanghar*. *Guru Asana* (Seat of Spiritual Guide), *Doba* (drum), a statue of Hanuman, a statue of *Varuna*, *bargaccha* (used for lighting), *sarai* (an offering plate standing on foot) are kept inside the *Kirttanghar*. There is multiple views viz, inside the *Naamghar*, equality is preached as well as practiced. During ceremonies, everybody sits cross-legged on the floor with bare feet and partakes in the activities and dose have same *Prasad*. The devotees, irrespective of caste, creed or language, chanted the name of Lord Krishna during three broad sessions of *Naam Prasanga* in a day, marking the morning, afternoon, and evening prayers. It creates and enhances the feeling of fraternity among the people through praying together and participating in its various activities of the *Sattra*. Its length is 100 feet and breadth is 26 feet.

As per the Vaishnavite religion created by Saint Sankardeva and Saint Madhabdeva, any idol of God had not been worshipped by the followers in *Kirttanghar*. So, in all the *Sattras* of Barpeta, the followers worship only the *Guru Asana*. Like the other *Sattra* institution of Barpeta, in Patbaushi *Sattra* also, the devotees worship the *Guru Asana* placed inside the *Kirttanghar*. But in the same *Kirttanghar*, one idol of Lord Shri Krishna known as Madan Mohan Gosai is placed behind the *Guru Asana*.

As per the information of staff of Sattrra Management Committee, Lakshminath Bezbaruah mentioned in a meeting held in Bardowa that “No idol was ever worshipped in any *Sattrra*, that is, place for religious worship established by Sankara, particularly during the life time of Sankardeva and his great successor Madhabdeva”. During the time of *Deul* festival, the idol is worshiped outside the *Kirttanghar*. As per the information provided by the *Bhakats*, though this place is known as the place of worship for Vaishnavite religion, yet one of the Ahom rulers gifted the idol of Lord Krishna to the *Sattrra*. As the Ahom rulers were the all in all of the then Assam, so the Vaishnavite followers were not able to refuse his gift.

5.2. e. *Guru Asana* (Seat of Spiritual Guide): *Guru Asana* is considered as the best spiritual memorable material associate with Saint Sankardeva. It is manufactured as the resembling of Baikuntha and well decorated. The same is created with seven steps with some sculptures viz. Tortoise (kacch), elephant (hati), lion (singha) and cow (garu). All these have spiritual meaning such as *Brahma, upa –brahma, param brahma, brahma gyaan*. All these symbolise in this way- tortoise for longevity, elephant for stability, lion for courage and cow is for carriage of God. There are two large size *gaccha* (light stand) kept in front of the *Guru Asana*. During the period of festivals these are lighted. The cloth placed on the *Guru Asana* is considered as sacred. The *Bhakats* perform the daily *Naam Prasanga* in front of the *Guru Asana* maintaining parallelism in every way.

5.2. f. *Mancha* (Stage): There is a stage in the compound of the *Sattrra*. All the cultural programmes like drama, *bhaona, bargeet* competition, delivery of lecture held in the *Sattrra* are conducted here.

5.2. g. Sabhaghar (Assembly House): The house situated in front of the *Deul ghar* is known as *sabha ghar* or *Jogmohon ghar*. During the time of *Deul* festival the idol is kept in the *sabha ghar* to worship. Any general assembly organizes in this assembly house.

5.2. h. Deulghar (House where devotees pray to God on Holi festival): It is situated in north –west site of *Kirttanghar*. During the *Deul* festival the performance of *bhar deul* is held in it. There are four doors and seven rounds step of *Deul*. The devotees offer *faku* (coloured powder) to Lord Krishna on that day inside the *Deul ghar*.

5.2. i. Cultural School: The school is situated in north direction of *Kirttanghar*. *Satriya* dance *bargeet*, cultural training is given in this school. A few number of student practices the same on every Friday in a week.

5.2. j. Aai Goshanir Patkuwa (Ring Well): After the death of Saint Sankardeva, Shri Shri Ram Ata came frequently at Patbaushi for getting information to Aai Goshani (Kalindi Aai- the spouse of Shrimanta Sankardeva). She informed him about the problem of water and said him to inform Madhabdeva about the problem for taking necessary action. Dhanukhanda *jaan* (cannel) dried and in other side some women had wasted water with bathing and by fishing. Ram Ata as directed by Kalindi Aai explained the problem to Madhabdeva. As soon as, Saint Madhabdeva went Bhabanipur to meet Amritakar Doloi and bought pat (ring used in well) from him. As per the instruction of Madhabdeva, Gopal Ata and Mathura Das Burah Ata dug a pit and constructed the *Patkuwa* for Kalindi Aai. In 1988's earthquake, the *Patkuwa* had filled up with soil but at present 2-2.5 feet have come out of the soil and steps have been taken to preserve it. (Mishra, 2002:25)

Besides, in the left side of *Naamghar*, near the *Math* the residence of kalindi Aai had built. There is a bed made of *kardai* (star fruit wood) used by *Aai* has been preserved. Its length is 6 feet 4 inch, breath is 5 feet 10 inch and height is 5 feet 3.5 inch.

5.2. k. Dhanukhanda jaan:

Dhanukhanda *jaan* located in the east side of Patbaushi Sattrā. Its shape is like a bow. It is a channel of Nakhanda River. There is a rumour about Dhanukhanda *jaan*- in ancient time Lord Shri Krishna went to Koundil (Sadia) to elope Rukmini by chariot. During that time one saint was passing through that road. Due to the high speed of the chariot, the saint became senseless. Then Lord Krishna drew some lines by his arrow on the ground to collect water. After sprinkling the water to the face of the saint by Lord Krishna, he regained his sense. Since then this pond is known as Dhanukhanda *Jaan*.

5.2. l. Guest house: There are two guest houses constructed at Patbaushi Sattrā. One of those is situated inside the *Sattrā* which is constructed with the contribution of public. Another is situated far away from the *Sattrā* which is constructed by Assam Tourism Department in 2013. The guest house has the proper accommodation of lighting, bed, water supply and sanitary facilities. Management Committee collects rupees two hundred as a minimum charge from the tourists on per day basis.

5.2. m. Ga Dhuwa sil (Stone used for bath): It is a unique memorable sign of Saint Sankardeva. The stone has been preserved inside a concrete shed near the south side of *Kirttanghar*. It is an important emblem as Saint Sankardeva used the said for bathing. Its length is 79 cm, breadth is 48.5 cm and height is 20cm. The trace of two feet of *Gurujana* is available on the middle part of the upper surface on the stone.

5.2. n. Keli Kadam (Bur flower tree): This tree was grown up by Saint Sankardeva in the *Sattra* premises. At present the former tree extinct, but the newly grown tree from the same root is one of the major attractions of the *Sattra*.

5.2. o. Ahat Gach (Banyan Tree): The tree is a unique and memorable sign of the presence of Saint Sankardeva. It is standing on the way to Patbaushi *Sattra* near the first gate. People believe that the tree was planted by Saint Sankardeva. Now it is seen that devotees pray in front of the tree and offers incense stick, earthen lamp, coins and traditional Assamese *Gamocha* to fulfil their wishes by hanging *Gamocha* on the branches of the tree. The local people believe that if a part of branch of the tree keep in residence, it is good for them.

5.2. p. Museum: At Patbaushi *Sattra*, a few number of valuable items like manuscripts (*sanchipaats*) and memorable materials of Saint Sankardeva are collected and preserved in the museum. The museum was built in 1991. Before this museum was constructed, most of the valuable items were lost due to lack of preservation. A few years ago, there was no scientific methods applied for conservation but at present Sankardeva Kala Khetra Samity has provided some chemical to preserve the items.

In this *Sattra*, Sankardeva's own manuscripts written on tissues of *sanchipaata* and on *tulapat* i.e. paper made from cotton as well are available. The ink used by Saint Sankardeva for writing on *sanchi* leaf was made of *kechu-rokh* (extracts of earthworm), *amlokhi* (*phyllanthus emblica*), *Silikha* (*Terminalia chebula*), and *keraj* (*Eclipta prostrata*) which were purely natural. *Hengal* and *Hytol* are two types of dyes that were used in the writing of the religious scripts. The manuscripts are kept in a glass almirah and are not allowed to touch by any visitors or tourists.

Table 7. Manuscripts Preserved in Museum

Sl No.	Name of the Item	Written by	Script	Material	Language	Remarks
1	Gunamala	Sankardeva	32	Sanchipaata	Brajabali	Incomplete
2	Bhagawata (Part I)	Sankardeva	26 (23 Lost)	Sanchipaata	Brajabali	Incomplete
3	Adi Dasam	Sankardeva	97	Sanchipaata	Brajabali	Incomplete
4	Kirttan Ghosha	Sankardeva	72	Sanchipaata	Brajabali	Complete
5	Nimi Nava Sidha Sanbad	Sankardeva	16	Sanchipaata	Brajabali	Incomplete
6	Kaliya Daman	Sankardeva	6	Sanchipaata	Brajabali	Incomplete
7	Rukmini Haran	Sankardeva	14	Sanchipaata	Brajabali	Incomplete
8	Parijat Haran	Sankardeva	12	Sanchipaata	Brajabali	Incomplete
9	Patni Prasad	Sankardeva	11	Sanchipaata	Brajabali	Incomplete
10	Rash or Keli Gopal	Sankardeva	19	Sanchipaata	Brajabali	Incomplete
11	Bhakti Ratnawali	Madhabdeva	Full	Sanchipaata	Brajabali	Complete
12	Kongsha Badh	Ram Charan	10	Sanchipaata	Brajabali	Incomplete
13	Syamanta Haran Drama	Daitari Thakur	5	Sanchipaata	Brajabali	Incomplete

The Antiquities preserved in the museum

A. Name of the Object : *Chariya* (large bowl made of wood)

Number of Item: 1

Material Used: Wood

Approximate Date: 16th Century

Utility: Used for offering *Prasad*

Measurement: Length 89 cm, breadth 2.74 cm

Location: Patbaushi Sattrra

B. Name of the object : *Sarai* (Offering plate with foot)

Number of Item: 2

Material used: Bell metal

Measurement: 1. Length 63.5 cm, breadth 56 cm

2. Length 66 cm, breadth 14.61 cm

Approximate Date: 1721-1722 AD

Utility: Used these *Sarai* for keeping *Prasad* on the death anniversary of Saint Sankardeva.

Location: Patbuasui Sattrra

C. Name of the object: Barpira (Short Table)

Number of Item: 1

Material used: Wood

Utility: Used by Saint Sankardeva to keep papers on it during writing

Measurement: Length 130 cm, breadth 74 cm

Location: Patbaushi Sattra

D. Name of the Object: *Ural* (Rice grinder)

Number of Item: 1

Material used: Wood

Approximate Date: 16th Century

Utility: Used for grinding rice by Kalindi Aai

Location: Patbaushi Sattra

E. Name of the object :Door (Donated by Laksmi Shingha)

Number of Item: 2

Material Used: Copper

Approximate Date: 1694

Utility: Used in main *Kirttanghar*

Measurement: Length 180.5 cm, breadth 73 cm

Location: Patbaushi Sattra

F. Name of the Object :*Chariya* (Large bowl made of bell metal)

Number of Item: 1

Material used: Bell metal

Approximate Date: 16th Century

Utility: Madhabdeva used for carrying different item

Location: Patbaushi Sattra

G. Name of the Material : *Pakhali* (A Stone with a pit nit)

Number of Item: 1

Material used: stone

Approximate Date: 16th Century

Measurement: Length 58.5 cm, breadth 51 cm. height 28 cm

Utility: Used for grinding rice by Kalinidi *Aai*

Location: Patbaushi Sattra

H. Name of the Object : Statue (Horse standing on elephant)

Number of Item: 6

Material used: Wood

Approximate Date: 16th Century

Utility: Used in drama at his time.

Location: Patbaushi Sattra

I. Name of the Object : Tortoise (model)

Number of Item: 2

Material Used: Wood

Approximate Date: 16th Century

Utility: Used during drama

Location: Patbaushi Sattrā

J. Name of the Material : Mask

Number of Item: 17

Material used: Wood

Approximate Date: 16th Century

Utility: Used during drama

Location: Patbaushi Sattrā

K. Name of the Material : Mask (model-Raban's head)

Number of Item: 6

Material used – Wood

Approximate Date: 16th Century

Utility: Used during drama

Location: Patbaushi Sattrā

L. Name of the Object : Horse face (model)

Number of Item: 6

Material used: Wood

Approximate Date: 16th Century

Utility: used in *Bhaona*

Location: Patbaushi Sattrra

M. Name of the Material: Bath Stone

Number of Item: 1

Material used: Stone

Approximate Date: 16th Century

Measurement: Length 79 cm, breadth 48.5 cm. height 20 cm

Utility: Used for bath

Location: Patbaushi Sattrra



Plate 19: First Gate of the *Sattrā*



Plate 20: Banyan Tree planted by Sankardeva



Plate 21: Main Entrance of the *Sattrā*



Plate 22: Southern Gate of the *Sattra*



Plate 23: Main *Kirttanghar*



Plate 24: Devotees offering prayer inside the *Kirttanghar*



Plate 25: Bhakat distributing *Nirmali* to the Devotees



Plate 26: Front View of *Guru Asana*



Plate 27: Backside View of *Guru Asana*



Plate 28: Statue of Garuda inside the *Kirttanghar*



Plate 29: Statue of Hanuman inside the *Kirttanghar*



Plate 30: Plate: Scripture use for *Naam Prasanga*



Plate 31: *Doba* placed inside the *Kirttanghar*



Plate 32: Residence of Kalindi Aai



Plate 33: Bed used by Kalindi Aai



Plate 34: Ring well of Kalindi Aai



Plate 35: Deul of the Sattra



Plate 36: Math of the Sattra



Plate 37: Foot Print of Shrimanta Sankardeva inside the *Math*



Plate 38: Dhanukhanda *Jaan*



Plate 39: Sankari Cultural School



Plate 40: Student during Class of Khola



Plate 41: Jogmohan Greeha



Plate 42: Guest House of the Sattra



Plate 43: Stone used by Sankardeva for Bathing



Plate 44: Museum of the *Sattra*



Plate 45: Cooper Door preserve in the Museum



Plate 46: Manuscripts preserve in the *Sattra*



Plate 47: Wooden Mask of Sankardev's Time



Plate 48: Wooden Bowl



Plate 49: Wooden *Kath*



Plate 50: Grinder used by Kalindi Aai



Plate 51: *Sarai* (Offering plate with foot)

5.3 Sattra Management Committee:

5.3. a. Formation:

Patbaushi Sattra has a fully fledged Management Committee. Till 1970, the *Sattra* was managed by *Sattradhikar* and *Bhakats*. But in 1971, as per “The *Sattras* and the Temples Endowment Act”, 1863 the Government undertook the property of *Sattra* on the basis of it provide them seven hundred rupees per annum. In 1973, a committee formed by Deputy Commissioner, *Sattradhikar* and a selected *Bhakat*. Though it is the main committee, yet at present another committee has been formed by local public. The duration of this committee is for 5 years. The Committee consists of 13 members and each member is selected for 2-3years duration. The committee is formed for smooth functioning of the *Sattra*.

The present Management committee has been consisted of the following persons-

1. President – Mr. Dharendra Naath Bayan
2. Vice president – Mr. Bhaben Pathak
3. Secretary- Mr. Tiken Nath
4. Joint secretary – Mr. Kushal ch. Das
5. Members - 9 (nine)

5.3.b. Functions:

1. Management committee is a secular unit of the *Sattra* which regulate and arrange the norms of the *Sattra*.
2. This committee is responsible for providing funds to celebrate the religious programmes.
3. This committee regulates and protects the properties of the *Sattra*.

4. Management Committee is bound to make arrangement for overall development of the *Sattra*.
5. Another duty of the Management Committee is to make necessary steps to receive fund from Government body.

5. 4.Sattra Organization

5.4. a. *Sattradhikar*: The person who has the highest authority and power over the *Sattra* is known as *Sattradhikar*. He is considered as the religious as well as spiritual guide of the people having affiliation to the *Sattra*. At present Debananda Dev Gowsami, who is the *Sattradhikar* of Bardowa *Sattra* is also the *Adhikar* of Patbaushi *Sattra*. The formal initiation of the neophytes to Vaishnavism called *dikhya* is conducted by him in Patbaushi *Sattra*. In Patbaushi *Sattra*, the *Sattradhikar* inherits the right and charge to be the *Sattradhikar* from the family of the first *Sattradhikar*. The names of the *Sattradhikars* are chronologically given bellow-

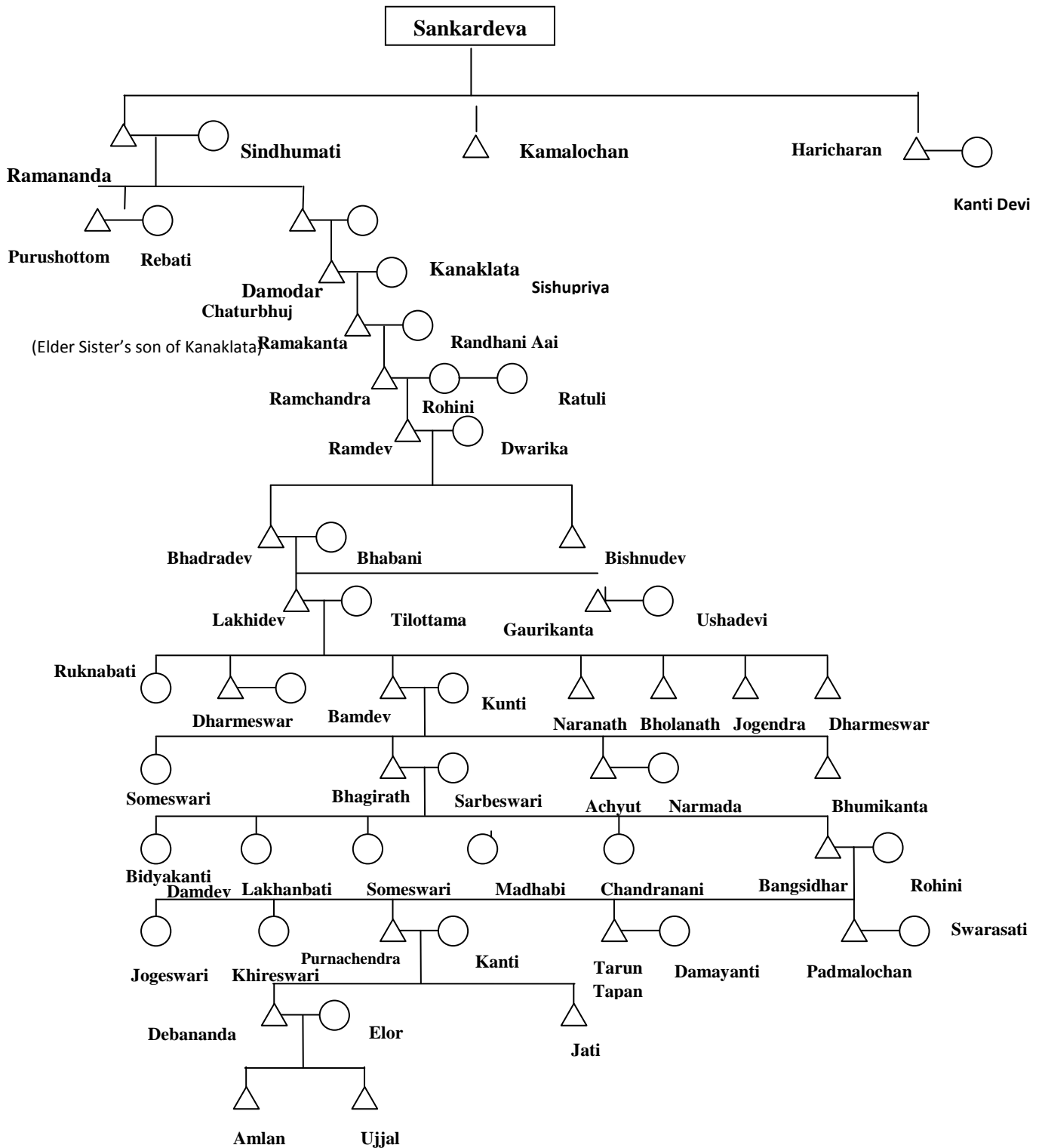
1. Purushottam Thakur Ata
2. Chaturbhuj Thakur Ata
3. Shri Shri Damodar Ata (1656 - first *Sattradhikar*)
4. Shri Shri Ramakanta Ata
5. Shri Shri Ram Chandra Ata
6. Shri Shri Ram Deva
7. Shri Shri Bhadra Deva
8. Shri Shri Laksmi Deva
9. Shri Shri Bam Deva
10. Shri Shri Bhogirath Ata
11. Shri Shri Bongshidhar Ata

12. Shri Shri Purna Chandra Dev Goswami

13. Shri Shri Devananda Deva Goswami

In 1761(1683 *Saka*), elder son of Ramchandra *Ata* became the *Sattradhikar* of Narowa Sattrra. He collected Copper slate of Patbaushi Sattrra from Ahom King Lakhsmi Singha in the year 1772 (1694 *Saka*). Then he established Rampur Sattrra in between Bardowa and Bali Sattrra and merged the copper slate of Rampur and Bardowa into a single slate. He disagreed with Ramcharan *Ata*, the then *Sattradhikar* of Bardowa and also took charge of Patbaushi Sattrra by the written order of King Lakhsmi Singha. Since then, the *Sattradhikars* has been taking charge from his family. (Mishra 2010:32)

Fig. 6. Genealogical chart of Present Sattradhikar



(Present Sattradhikar)

i . Process of taking charge of *Sattradhikar*:

The process of taking “*Dhop- Nirmali*” is similar to the coronation ceremony of a king of any kingdom. For the appointment of a new *Sattradhikar*, it is the main ritual which is observed in all the *Sattras* of Assam. Generally in the majority of *Sattras* of Assam, *Sattradhikar*’s appointment is family oriented. On the day before the ceremony, the person who is going to be appointed as a *Sattradhikar* should obey *Adhibas* (fasting). Next day morning, after completion of *Naam Prasanga* the main process of appointment starts. In the mean time, the *Bhakats* who gather to attend the ceremony are served light meal.

The *Dhop* is a ring made of *Damana phool* (one kind of flower), its leaf and leaf of Tulshi. Hence, *Nirmali* is a ring made of *Bakul* flower (Spanish Cherry). At this ceremony *Sattradhikars* from other *Sattras* are also invited to the *Sattra*. After their arrival, they are provided room for taking rest in the guest house of the *Sattra*. After that, the *Bhakats* of the *Sattra* welcome all the *Sattradhikars* to the main stage by performing *Naam Prasanga*. After that, the *Bar Medhi* of the *Sattra* describes the family details of him who would be *Sattradhikar* as well as introduces the *Sattradhikar*. In the next step, the invited *Sattradhikars* accordingly to their seniority one by one offers *Dhop* and *Nirmali* to the new *Sattradhikar* and give blessing also. After that, the new *Sattradhikar* delivers speech in front of the invitees. If necessary, the *Sattradhikar* has the right to make any change in the designation of the existing members of the management by offering *Nirmali*. In the next step, the new *Sattradhikar* distributes betel nuts among the invitees. The entire process comes into end with chanting the name of Lord Krishna.

There is no *Deka Sattradhikar* and *Kewaliya Bhakat* in this *Sattra*.

ii. Roles and Responsibility of *Sattradhikar*

1. The main objective is to propagate Vaishnavite religion among the public.
2. To observe all the religious activities related to *Sattra* following the tradition.
3. To provide *Nirmali*, *Saran-Bhajan* among the *Bhakats* and to make them capable through proper training.
4. To improve the economic condition and to cooperate in solving the problems of the *Sattra*.

5.4.b. *Naamghar Rakhiya* (Care taker of the *Sattra*): He plays important duties to manage smoothly the day to day activities of the *Sattra*. He has basically three activities-

1. He receives visitors and shows the all part of the *Sattra* and describes in details. The visitors gain knowledge from him about the *Sattra*.
2. He lightens the lamp every day in different parts of the *Sattra*.
3. He offers blessing to the devotees and distributes *Nirmali* among them.

5.4.c. *Bayan* (Musician): *Bayans* play an important role in *Naam prasanga*. They play musical instruments like *khol* (drum), *taal* (cymbal) and accompany the *Gayan* to perform the programme held in the *Sattra*.

5.4.d. *Gayan* (Singer): *Gayan* is basically a singer among the *Bhakats* who takes part in the musical programmes of Patbaushi *Sattra*.

5.4.e. *Deuri* (Distributor): They are the local people and undergone through initiation. Their main duty is to distribute *prasada* and *nirmali* among the devotees. During that moment, they covered their mouth with *gamocha* and wear white *dhuti*.

5.4.f. Pali- Deuri (Assistant): They assist the main *Deuri* in the *Sattra*'s day to day activities. In absence of the main *Deuri*, they perform all the duties as his substitute. After the completion of *Naam Prasanga*, they distribute betel nut and leaf among the devotees.

5.4. g. Majumdar (Treasurer): *Majumdars* are the auditor of the *Sattra*. He is accountable to manage the fund flow of the *Sattra*. He is responsible to give the expenditure statement to the Committee during the time of annual audit. He collects the donation during the time of annual festivals from devotees.

5.4. h. Bhakat (Devotee): The *Bhakat* plays a vital role to perform all the religious activities observed in the *Sattra*. They are related to keep and propagate the Vaishnavite religion among the devotees. As the *Bhakats* are related to the day to day activities of the *Sattra* Institutions, they have to maintain the cleanliness of the entire campus, perform the daily rituals which include *Naam Prasanga*, preparation and distribution of *prasada*, distribution of *Nirmali* among the devotees. Like the other large *Sattras* of Barpeta which have the residential facility for *Bhakats* but in Patbaushi *Sattra*, there is no such provision in the campus. They come to the *Sattra* during the time of performing daily activities and after completion of all the activities they return back to their own residence.

i. Food Habit of Bhakat:

It is mentioned that in Patbaushi *Sattra* there is no *Kevaliya Bhakats* (who never married and stay away from family). All the *Bhakats* are married, living with family members under the same roof and neatly perform and engaged in the activities of *Sattra*. Almost all *Bhakats* are non vegetarian. They usually eat fish but not meat. The *Bhakats*

of Patbaushi Sattras do not take food from those persons who are not taken initiation. They have restriction to have any intoxicating food, alcohol, etc.

ii. Manners of *Bhakats*:

Bhakats are revering, they respect and have obedience to each other celibate. They are very much polite and modest in manners and dealings. Junior *Bhakats* do not cross upon a shadow of a senior *Bhakat*. They do not speak any abusive word or express displeasure. They have fraternal relationship to each other. The *Bhakats* obey some rules in their daily life. They get up early in the morning and take bath, before eating any food they chant *Hari Naam* at first.

iii. Dress of *Bhakats*:

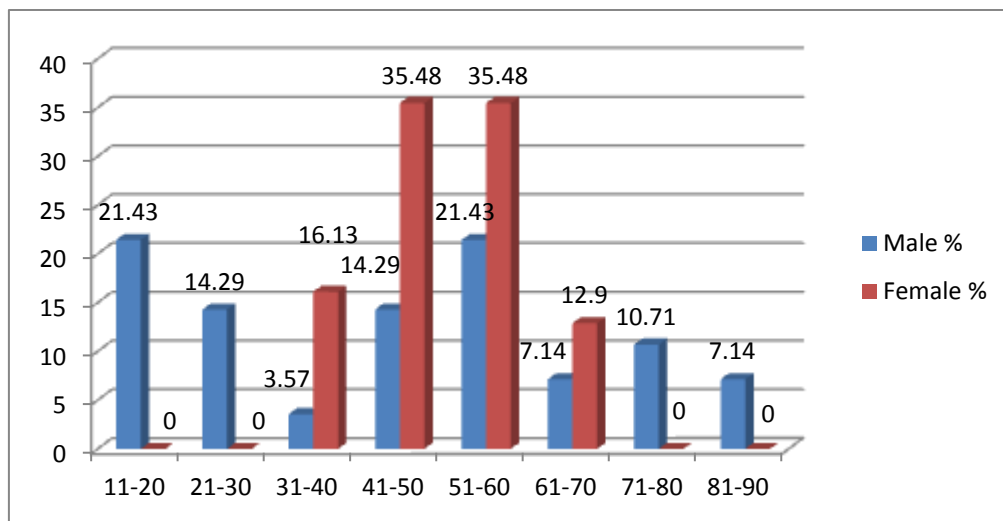
The *Bhakats* those attached with this *Sattras*, have a particular sense of dressing. Generally they wear three pieces of cloths like *dhuti* (piece of cloth for lower part of body), *sadar* (wrapper) and a *gamocha* (towel). *Gamocha* is considered as most precious cloth by the Vaishnava. It is noticed that the *Deuri Bhakats* during the time of distribution of *Prasad* cover their facial part with a *Gamocha* and wear banyan. The *Adhikar* of the *Sattras* wear a turban (*pag*) on the head.

5.5 Demographic Analysis of the functionaries of *Sattras*:

Table 8. Number of *Bhakats* on the base of Age and Sex

Age group in Years	Male	%	Female	%
11-20	6	21.43	0	0
21-30	4	14.29	0	0
31-40	1	3.57	5	16.13
41-50	4	14.29	11	35.48

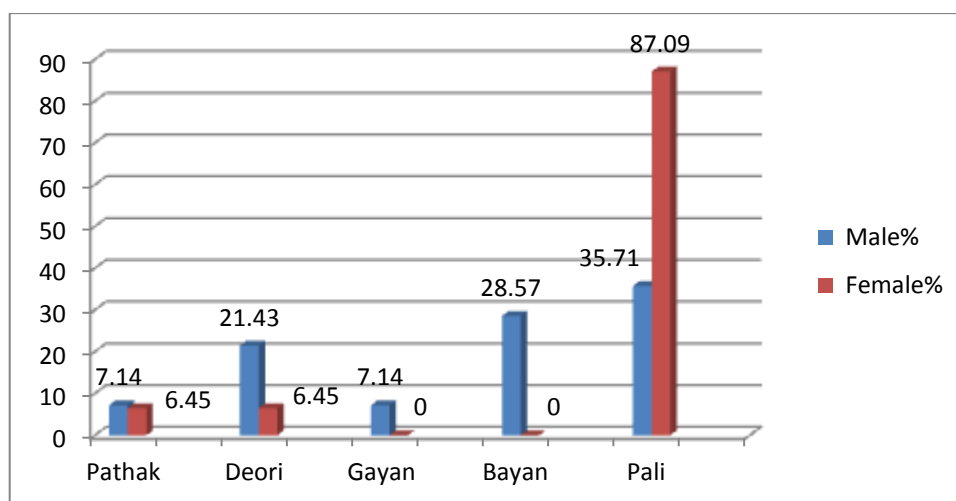
51-60	6	21.43	11	35.48
61-70	2	7.14	4	12.90
71-80	3	10.71	0	0
81-90	2	7.14	0	0
Total	28	100	31	100



From the above table it is found that there are altogether 59 devotees nearly engage in daily activities of the *Sattra*. Out of the same there are 28 male devotees and 31 female devotees. The oldest *Bhakat* is Kandarpa Kumar Bharali who is 87 years old. 21.42% (6) of male devotees are seen in the age groups between 11-20 and 51-60 while 35.48% (11) females are between the age group of 41- 50 and 51-60. There is no female devotees found between the age groups 11-30 and 71 -90.

Table 9. Designation of *Bhakats*

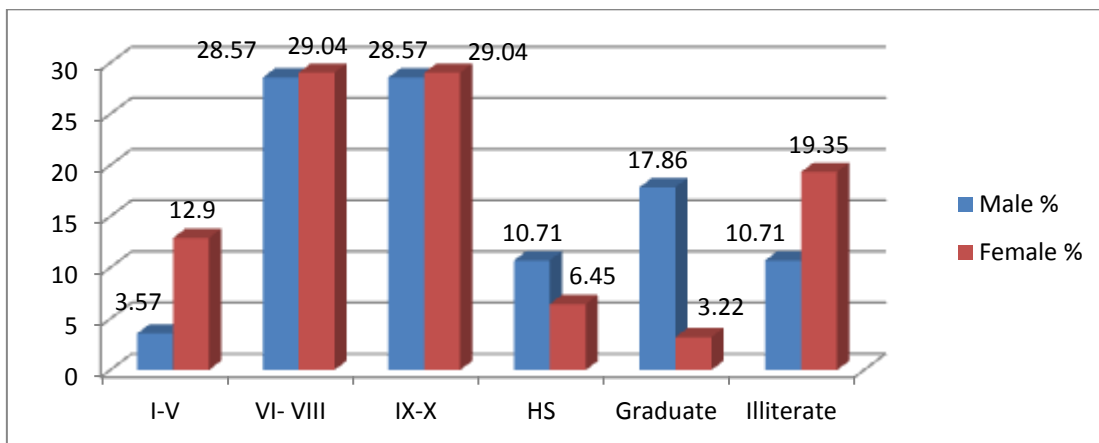
Sl. No.	Designation	Male	%	Female	%
1	Pathak	2	7.14	2	6.45
2	Deori	6	21.43	2	6.45
3	Gayan	2	7.14	0	0
4	Bayan	8	28.57	0	0
5	Pali	10	35.71	27	87.09
Total		28	100	31	100



The above table is cited that different kinds of designations are associated with their activity. Out of the total *Bhakats*, 7.14% (2) males and 6.45% (2) females are *Pathak*, 21.43% (6) male and 6.45% (2) females are *Deori*, 7.14% (2) males are *Gayan*, 28.57% (8) males are *Bayan* while 35.71% (10) males and 87.09% (27) females are *Pali*. No female have been found under *Gayan* and *Bayan* category.

Table 10. Qualification of *Bhakats*

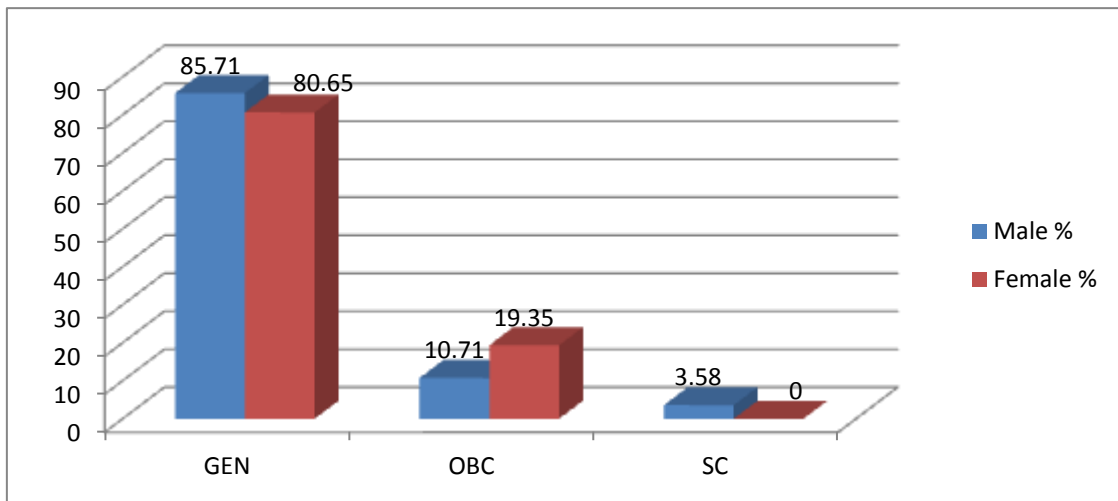
Educational Level	Male	%	Female	%
I-V	1	3.57	4	12.90
VI-VIII	8	28.57	9	29.04
IX-X	8	28.57	9	29.04
HS	3	10.71	2	6.45
Graduate	5	17.86	1	3.22
Illiterate	3	10.71	6	19.35
Total	28	100	31	100



From the above table it is found that out of 59 devotees 3.57% (1) male and 12.90 % (4) females continued their education up to class V, 28.57% (8) males and 29.04% (9) females studied up to VI-VIII, 28.57% (8) males and 29.04% (9) females studied up to IX-X, 10.71% (3) males and 6.45% (2) females studied up to Higher Secondary level and 17.86% (5) males and 3.22% (1) females found graduate. 10.71% (3) males and 19.35% (6) females found illiterate.

Table 11. Social Status of *Bhakats*

Caste	Male	%	Female	%
GEN	24	85.71	25	80.65
OBC	3	10.71	6	19.35
SC	1	3.58	0	0
TOTAL	28	100	31	100

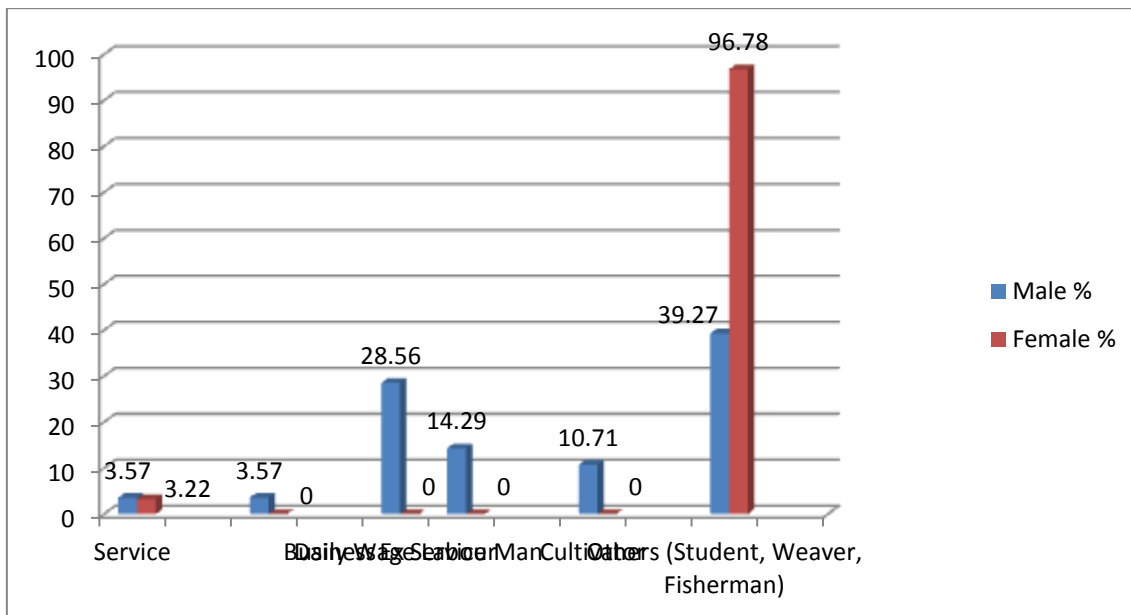


From the above table it is evident that there is no any caste discrimination observed in this *Sattra*. The *Bhakats* belong to different caste groups like General, OBC and SC. 85.71% (24) males and 80.65% (25) females belong to General caste, 10.71% (3) males and 19.35% (6) females are of OBC category while 3.57% (1) male is under SC category. No female devotee is found to SC category.

Table 12. Occupational Status of *Bhakats*

Occupation	Male	%	Female	%
Service	1	3.57	1	3.22

Business	1	3.57	0	0
Daily Wage Labour	8	28.56	0	0
Ex Service Man	4	14.29	0	0
Cultivator	3	10.71	0	0
Others (Student, Weaver, Fisherman)	11	39.27	30	96.78
TOTAL	28	100	31	100



From the above table it is found that there is only 3.57 % (1) male and female 3.22% (1) devotees engaged in service. 3.57% (1) male is engaged in business, 28.56% (8) males are daily wage labour, 14.29% (4) males are ex service man, 10.71% (3) males are cultivator while 39.27% (11) males and 96.78% (30) females are others category (student, fishing, etc.). No female devotee is engaged in business, daily wage labour, ex service man and cultivation.

5.6 Process of *Saran* (initiation) and *Bhojan* (confirmation)

Initiation is a process through which a devotee gets himself/herself engaged in some spiritual aspects of Vaishnavite religion to practice in his daily life. In this *Sattra* during the time of Saint Sankardeva, he initiated various disciples in *Eka Saran Naam Dharma*. “A person in order to qualify himself to be considered as a genuine member of the Vaishnava community and to take part in all religious functions must be initiated by the head of the *Sattra* with which his family is traditionally connected. The rite of initiation is called *Saran*” (Sarma, 1999: 165)

This ceremony is arranged in the main *Kirttanghar* of the *Sattra* at the presence of *Sattradhikar* and those who are willing to practice the rite. There is age limitation of taking initiation. After crossing 12 years, a person can take initiation. The disciple should observe fasting at the previous night. On the day of initiation, after taking bath, wearing clean and fresh clothes like *dhuti*, *cheleng chadar*, *gamocha* for male and women wear traditional Assamese dress – *chadar mekhela*, *riha*, *gamocha* and take a handkerchief known as “*dharmeswari*”. The novice offers a *sarai* in front of *Guru Asana* as an offer in the memory of *Gurujana*. At the beginning of the ceremony, the *Sattradhikar* cites from the scripture of *Kirttan Gosha* composed by the great Saint Sankardeva. The devotee willing to take initiation is asked to bow down. *Sattradhikar* explain the main principles and importance of initiation and advises to be a man who should have positive thinking for others to tell the truth, do good work, to have devotion to parents and respect to elders. Later the novice is asked to take an oath surrendering himself to the four fundamental principles i.e. *Guru*, *Deva*, *Naama* and *Bhakat*. The novice offers a pairs of areca nuts and betel leaves to the *Sattradhikar*.

Without initiation, the rite of *bhojan* is not performed. After the initiation process is completed, the next is the *bhojan*. In *bhojan*, the *Sattradhikar* serves cooked food to the novice. If he is not able to cook food, he offers rice and vegetables to the novice for cooking. None of the *Bhakat* takes cooked food from the person who is not undergone through initiation.

5.7 Daily Activities of the Sattr:

Saint Sankardeva was the originator of Vaishnavite religion. At Patbaushi, Shrimanta Sankardeva had lived for 18 years 6 months and propagated *Eka Saran Nama Dharma* through his literary works and discussion with devotees. In *Naam Dharma*, there are two main religious services observed by the devotees and these are known as *Nitya* (daily) and *Naimittika* (occasional) service. The services which are observed by the devotees either in the *Sattr*, *Kirttanghar* or in the village *Naamghar* from morning to dusk are known as *Nitya* services or rites. On the other hand, the services which are observed on special occasions are called *Naimittika* services.

Different types of congregational services are performed in the daily religious routine of the *Sattr*. These services continue from morning to till early hours of the night. The singing of hymns and songs, the chanting of prayers with the accompaniment of musical instruments and reading and explaining of scriptures including *Kirttan Ghosa*, *Naam Ghosa*, *Bhagawata*, *Puran*, *Geeta*, *Gunamala*, *Bargeet* constitute the chief features of the daily services which is also known as *Nitya Naam Prasanga*. Daily prayer services are held in three times i.e. Morning Prayer (*puwar prasanga*), the afternoon prayer (*abelir prasanga*) and the evening services (*ratir prasanga*)

Maheswar Neog (1965:342) quoted that Madhabdeva fixed these following fourteen *Prasargas* -

1. *Bhatima* (devotional song)
2. *Capaya* (coupai verses)
3. Gunamala
4. Lilmala
5. Talpraya (the concluding admonitory verses of different works of teaching scriptures)
6. Ghosa verses.
7. Pada verses
8. Geeta (songs in ragas)
9. *Nama*
10. Pad (reading from verse works)
11. Bhagawata
12. Jay (calling glory to be god etc)
13. *Hari-Dhani* (calling names of God in chorus), and
14. *Katha* (the relating of Krishna or Rama)

A detailed programme of the daily prayers observe at Patbaushi *Sattra* is given below-

Derpar Prasanga: The first prayer performs by *Bhakat* is known as ‘*Derpar Prasanga*’. There is a faith that when Shrimanta Sankardeva was staying at Patbaushi, different saints came from different directions viz. Narayan Das Thakur Ata from Rangapani, Madhabdeva from Baradi, Harideva from Bahari, Damodardeva from Byashpara, since they stayed far away, they were unable to attend the *path* timely. So, they started *Naam Prasanga* too late. Today the present devotees follow this time. In *Derpar Prasanga*, the first item they sing a *Bargeet* (*jagaran* or *chalan*),

2nd item is Naamghosa’s *namchandar kuluk chari charan*,

3rd item- one Ghosa from Kirttan Ghosa,

4th item- advice from Bhagawata,

BiyalirPrasanga:

5th item- *Bargeet*

6th item - Charan Chanda

7th item- one Ghosa from Kirttan Ghosa

8th item- advice from Bhagawata

Gadhulir Prasanga:

9th item- Guru Bhatima, Gunamala, Totayi, Lilamala

10th item- Bhagawata (Reading and analysis)

11th item- one *Bargeet*

12th item- Naam Ghosa’s Charan Chanda

13th item- one Ghosa from Kirttan Ghosa

14th item- advice from Bhagawata

In this *Sattra*, a little difference has been seen from the other *Sattra* Institutions of Barpeta Women perform *Naam Prasanga* early in the morning in the South side of the *Kirttanghar*.



Plate 52: Present *Satradhikar* of Patbaushi Sattra



Plate 53: Naamghar Rakhiya briefing about Virtue of Sankardeva



Plate 54: Women Devotees inside the *Kirttanghar*



Plate 55: Women Performing *Naam Prasanga* in the Southern part of *Kirttanghar*



Plate 56: Devotees from other parts of Assam resting on the *Varanda*



Plate 57: Distribution of *Prasada*

5.8 Annual Festivals of the *Sattra*

Festivals are considered an important aspect of all cultures of each society in the world. A festival is an event ordinarily celebrated by a community and centre on some characteristic aspect of that community and its religion or tradition, often marked as a local holiday. Next to religion and folklore, a significant origin is agriculture. Food is such a vital resource that many festivals are associated with harvest time. Festivals often serve to fulfil specific communal purposes, especially in regard to commemoration or thanks giving. The celebrations offer a sense of belonging for religious, social or geographical groups, contributing to group cohesiveness. They may also provide entertainment, which was particularly important to local communities before the advent of mass-produced entertainment. Festivals that focus on cultural or ethnic topics also seek to inform community members of their traditions; the involvement of elder sharing storage and experience provides a means for unity among various categories of people.

All Hindu festivals are also characterized by the programmes of devotion. The festivals held in Patbaushi *Sattra* (Sankardeva's *Thaan*) offer scope for the people to come together across caste lines. This community participation helps in creating a feeling of unity among various categories of people. Thus the festivals provide the ground for studying the cohesive influence of the *Sattra* on the community. There are various festivals celebrated here, which are given in the list below.

Table 13. Festive Calendar of Patbaushi Sattra (Sankardeva's *Thaan*)

S. N.	Name of the festival	Month	Duration
1.	Bohag Bihu	Bohag (April)	7 days
2.	Birth anniversary of Madhabdeva	Jeth (May-June) 1 st day of dark fort night	1 day
3.	Mortuary of Sankardeva	Bhadra (September) 2 nd day bright fortnight	10 days
4.	Mortuary of Madhabdeva	Bhadra (September) 5 th day of dark fortnight	7 days
5.	Shri Krishna Janmastami	Bhadra (September) 8 th day of dark fort night	1 day
6.	Birth anniversary of Sankardeva	Ahin (October) 10 th day of bright fortnight	1 day
7.	Magh Bihu	Magh (January)	1 day
8.	Deul Yatra	Phagun (March)	3-4 days

5.8. a. *Bihu* Festivals:

Bihu is considered as national festival of Assam. Transition of one month to another is called *Sankranti* or *Domahi* or Bihu. But all the transitional phase of twelve months in a year is not celebrated. Three such Bihus are celebrated in Assamese society-

1 *Bohag Bihu* (April)

2. *Kati Bihu* (October)

3. *Magh Bihu* (January)

In the *Sattr*a circle at Barpeta, the Bihu is known as *Domahi* meaning coincidence of two months. It is interesting to note the coming of the elements of folk culture like *Bihu* into the sphere of a Vaishnavite religious centre like the *Sattr*a.

Bohag or *Rangali Bihu* has the pride of place as the most important and colourful of the Assamese festivals. During this time, first three days of the month is celebrated with *Naam Prasanga* specially recitation from the script of the childhood of Lord Krishna. On the seventh day, *Bar naam* is performed by the *Bhakats* of the *Sattr*a.

Magh Bihu occupies not a less important place. It is primarily a harvest festival and the farmers celebrate it with gusto to mark their good crop. *Magh Bihu* may primarily be classified as an agricultural festival; still it occupies an important place in the Vaishnavite *Sattr*a like Patbaushi *Sattr*a. The *Bhakats* of Patbaushi *Sattr*a plays important role in this Bihu celebration. During the time of Magh Bihu, the previous day of *domahi* is known as *uruka*. Next day the *Bhakats* make *meji* (fire place) using thatch, bamboo and banana plant outside of *Sattr*a compound. One important point is that both male and female folk make the *meji* separately. At morning after burning the *meji*, *Naam Prasanga* is performed and after completion of this they entered into the *Sattr*a. After that the males perform *Thio Naam* in which entry of women is restricted. During that time the women perform *Naam Prasanga* at the main gate of the *Sattr*a. After the completion of the ritual performed by the males, the female enter in to the *Sattr*a and begin to move around the *Math* for seven times. In the southern part of the *Sattr*a, the females then perform *Naam Prasanga* and there after the distribution of *Prasada* is being started.

5.8.b. *Tirobhav Tithi* (Death Anniversary)

The meaning of the word *Kirttan* is recitation and discussion of one's qualities and skilful activities by way of remembering on the particular day of death anniversary. *Kirttan* is the occasion on which thousands of people assemble to recollect with gratitude the contributions of the forerunners of the Vaishnavite movement of Assam. At Patbaushi Sattrā, the festival associates with the death anniversary of both the Saint Shrimanta Sankardeva and Shrimanta Madhabdeva, are observed in *Bhadra* month (August- September).

The death anniversary of Saint Sankardeva is the main festival among the other festivals of *Sattrā*. The *Kirttan* is very broadly celebrated for 10 days with three times of *Nitya Prasanga* i.e. in the morning, evening and night. The devotees establish the *Thapana* before ten days of main *Kirttan*. In these days the chief *Pathak* reads the script of *Kirttan Ghosa* serially day by day and completes it up to main *Kirttan*. The programme is started with offering *Karbhar* (annual pay of essential commodities to the *Sattrā* as tax) to the *Sattrā*. *Karbhar* is a process to pay homage to the great *Gurujana*. After the death of Shrimanta Sankardeva, Madhavdeva issued an order to all the devotees to offer rice, firewood, mustered oil, vegetables, salt, curd, betel nut and betel leaf to the *Sattrā*. Since that day it has been continuing in the *Sattrā*.

At present the programme is started after the *Sattradhikar* of Barpeta Sattrā hands over one pot of mustard oil to the *Sarania Bhakat*. Then they lighten up one earthen lamp which is known as *Guru Banti*. After lightening the lamp mass procession is organized from Barpeta Sattrā to Patbaushi Sattrā. After reaching, they hand over all the items to the *Bhakats* of Patbaushi Sattrā. On the previous day of *Kirttan*, the

Bhakats celebrates the ritual with *banti prajjalan* (lightening of earthen lamp) in the evening. A large number of devotees come from different directions of the state. The people who come to light the earthen lamp continues their fasting up to evening. In the main *Kirttan* the devotees celebrates *Naam Prasanga* continuously. On that day, the Assistant *Pathak* prepares a *Sarai*, known as *Bhog Thogi*. *Bhog Thogi* is one kind of offering first organized by Saint Madhabdeva. It is kept for the devotees who cooperated with Madhabdeva and Thakur Ata to organize Sankardeva's death anniversary and for somebody who had donated to perform it. This *Sarai* prepared with nine different elements like rice 60 kg, 480 bananas, coconut, apple, mung, sugar cane, sugar, betel nut and these are known as '*Nabaidya*'. The rice of *Bhog Thogi* is divided into two parts; one part is mixed for preparing *ladu* while another part is mixed with mung. The *ladu* is made of rice powder, prepared by young boys of the village using *dheki* (traditional rice grinder) where women are not allowed to touch the same. At that time, they wear Assamese traditional dress like *dhuti*, vest and a *gamocha* (traditional towel) covering the facial part and observe fasting during that time. The total amount of rice for preparing *ladu* is 100 kg, jiggery 35 kg, ghee 2 kg and a little amount of camphor. The devotees offer *Sarai* individually too.

Next day is observed as *Bhog Thogir Prasad bitaran* (distribution of *prasada*). At present the *Sattra* Management Committee arrange coupon to the holders who need share of *Prasad*. The villagers should be given 41/ 51 rupees for getting *Bhog Thogi's Prasad*. If someone of village does not pay the amount for 3 years his name is cut off from *Bhog Thagi's* share and he should renew his name with 10 rupees as fine. Committee takes 100 rupees from outsiders. There are two kinds of *Prasad* taking pot. If someone receives *Prasad* with *maale* (disc of pottery) he should be given 51 rupees

and if wants to take on banana or lotus leaf then 41 rupees provides. More than 500 people receive *Bhog Thogi*'s share from different direction of Barpeta. In case of the fixed share holders of Barpeta town, few days prior, people from the *Sattra* collected the share amount from their house. Each *Bhog* is composed with mung, 4 numbers *ladu*, 3/4 number banana, two piece sugar cane, apple, betel nut, one flower ring made with *bakul* flower (Spanish Cherry), one piece of coconut in equal.

After preparation of *Bhog Naibadya*, one devotee beat the *daba* (drum) and bell and at same time each *Bhakats* come into the *Kirttanghar* to perform the prayer and sing the following words-

Aapradha Binasana Taju Nama Narayana

Janiname Pakhilo Sarane

Anagati Nahike Marane

Apradhaa Khyama Kari Tumi Dayashil

Mok Rakhya Kari Sarane

After completion of the prayer, *Deuris* distribute the *Bhog* to each one against the name mentioned in the record copy. Next day, *Deuris* distribute *Prasad* to 100 families of Barpeta town due to their contribution for the development of Patbaushi *Sattra*. A few years back, they used basket made of bamboo for carrying the pot containing *Prasad*, but at present they arrange light vehicle for this task. The rest part is distributed home to home among the local people is known as *Gharmuriya Bhog*. People give importance on this *Prasad* as a valuable item for better future. On that day,

in the evening time, group of *Gayan- Bayan* from different *Hatis* (locality) of Barpeta town come to the *Sattra* to perform *Naam Prasanga*.

Information provided by the *Bhakats*, earlier during this festival, boat racing popularly known as *Naokhel* was conducted by the villagers from nearby villages in Maranadi River. This type of game was first introduced by Ahom ruler Sargadeo Rudrasingha. During his time the citizen of Sibasagar annually organized this game. In PatbaushiSattra during that time the players sang various songs related to the life of Lord Sri Krishna. The person who pioneered the song was known as *Kanakata*.

5.8.c. Birth Anniversary of Saint Sankardeva:

The villagers celebrate this festival most inspiringly. The devotees both male and female get up at early (before 4 am) morning on that day. The females clean and wipe their houses and courtyard. Females lighten earthen lamp at the right time of the birth of Sankardeva. In the early morning the *Bhakats* recite *puwar geet* “tejare kamala pati pravate ninda” and one *Bhakat* beats *doba* (drum) in the *Kirttanghar* and at the same time the villagers start prayer. Thereafter, the *Bhakats* organize *prabhatferi* (morning procession) and along through the village roads and conduct *Naam Prasanga*. The *Bhakats* also perform *Nitya Prasanga* and *Thiya Naam* at afternoon from 3 pm onwards. At the same time the women sect of *Bhakats* perform *Naam Prasanga* in south side of main *Kirttanghar*. In the end, *Prasad* is distributed among the devotees. At the evening, each family lightens a *banti* (earthen lamp) in their main gate of the house.

5.8 d. Janmastami (Birth Anniversary of Lord Krishna):

This festival is performed on 8th day of dark fort night of the month of September. On that day, the *Bhakatas* well as the little girls and old women keep day

long fast from morning to evening and at the evening time they come to the *Sattra* to perform prayer. The women devotees come again to *Sattra* at night after completion of the *Nitya Prasanga* performed by *Bhakats* and recite the songs related to the birth of Lord Krishna, offer *Prasad*, fruits and sweets. On the next day, they perform *Nandouthsab*, it is also known as *Pek Yatra* as on that particular day young children play with mud.

5.8. e. *Palnaam*

Palnaam is an important religious festival of this *Sattra*. This festival is held in every alternate three years ends. It is performed for three days bearing 30 hours continuously. There is no fixed date; it is performed as convenience of all *Bhakats* engaged in the *Sattra*. Many *Bhakats* are invited to perform *Naam Prasanga* from different *Sattras*. At that time a huge gathering is seen which is composed of the people from different direction of the *Sattra*. The main *Pathak* prepares two *Sarai* with mung, rice and other fruits. One of the *Sarai's Prasad* is mixed in *barcharia* and distributed among the devotees at noon. The other *Sarai* is kept to distribute upto the finishing of *Palnaam*. All the expenditure for this festival is gained from public donation.

5.8. f. *Thiya Naam*:

Thiya Naam is performed as an art of spiritual nature. In Pabaushi *Sattra*, *Thiya Naam* is performed during the month of *Magh*. It is prayer presented in standing and rhythmic posture in group amidst clapping of *bartaal* (big cymbal), it is a dance based on devotional *Sattriya* art. There is one principle artist is called *Ojha* or *Pathak* and several other *Palis* or accomplices in a group of *Thiya Naam*. The *Ojha* and *Pathak*

recite *Harinaam* in verses in tunes. The texts are selected mainly from Kirttan Ghosha. The groups of *Thiya Naam* party are invited from different places.

5.8. g. *Deul* Festival

Saint Sankardeva first started to perform *Deul* festival in Bardowa *Thaan*. In lower Assam *Deul* (Holi) festival is considered as the main festival which is celebrated in different communities in India. At Patbaushi Sattras, this festival is celebrated for three to five days according to Hindu calendar. If this festival is observed for three days it is called as *Deka Deul* and if for four to five days, known as *Burah Deul*. The first day of this festival is known as *Gondh* or *Gondh Yatra*. On that particular day, the youth of the locality make one thatched house named *meji*. It is made of thatch, bamboo, cane and dry leaf of banana tree. There is an idol of Lord Madan Mohon which is generally kept behind the *Guru Asana*. One notable point is that in *Mahapurusiya* religion, worship of any idol of God is not allowed. It is already mentioned that the Ahom rulers of Assam donated an idol of Lord Krishna to the *Sattras*. As the Ahom kings are the all in all in Assam, so the *Bhakats* were unable to refuse and accepted the gift. So, after accepting the gift they placed it behind the *Guru Asana*. In the afternoon, the idol of the Lord is placed inside the *Meji* or *Bhelaghar* on *Sarai*. Then inside the *Bhelaghar* God is worshipped. One picture of sheep is drawn with rice powder inside the *Bhelaghar*. After finishing the worship, the *Bhelaghar* is set fire and all the people moved around the *Bhelaghar* with the idol for seven times. This worship is known as *Meshdah Puja*.

After that, the idol of Lord Krishna is bathed which is known as *Mahasnan* by applying Ghee, honey, turmeric, clove, cardamom, mustard oil. The bath is performed using the water kept in eight pots including the water of sea, the water of the river

Ganga, Brahmaputra, Yamuna, coconut, sugarcane juice, fog water and rain water. After that, the idol of Lord Krishna is again moved around for seven times outside the *Deul Ghar* and then it place inside this. Then the priest offers coloured powder known as *Faku* to the God. On the next day, the devotees offer *Faku* to the God. On the last day, again *Mahasnan* and prayer are performed by the devotees. After that, God is kept inside the *Jogmohan Ghreeha* after moving around for seven times. In the afternoon, one procession is arranged where the idol of God is taken from the *Sattra* to Kumarkuchi *Sattra* which occasion is known as *Hekta Khowa*. After returning from there the devotees sing *Holi Geet* on the road and the road side people offers prayer to God. When the procession comes to the main entrance of the *Sattra* one party of devotees known as the followers of Goddess Lakshmi stop them from entering into the *Sattra* crossing the barrier made of bamboo, but they forcefully break through the barrier following the tradition. Then the followers of Lord Krishna have to pay fine to them and entre inside the *Sattra*. Then competitions of playing different musical instruments are conducted among the devotees. It is the last ritual of *Deul* festival. After that, the idol is kept inside the main *Kirttanghar*. This way the entire *Deul* festival comes to an end.



Plate 58: Women performing *Naam Prasanga* during *Magh Bihu*



Plate 59: *Gayan –Bayan* with *Kar Bhar* from Barpeta Sattrā



Plate 60: Local Youth carrying rice for grinding



Plate 61: Local Youth grinding rice during *Tirobhab Tithi*



Plate 62: Rice after grinding



Plate 63: Diluting Jiggery for making *Ladu*



Plate 64: Preparation of *Ladu*



Plate 65: Preparation for *Mah Prasada*



Plate 66: Preparation of *Prasada*



Plate 67: Local Women are busy in cutting betel nut



Plate 68: *Prasada* offered to the Lord



Plate 69: Collecting payment for *Bhog Thogi*



Plate 70: Arranging *Bhog Thogi*



Plate 71: Arranged *Prasada* for *Bhog Thogi*



Plate 72: Female devotees performing *Prasanga* outside the *Kirttanghar*



Plate 73: Distribution of *Prasada* for permanent share holders



Plate 74: *Prasada* of *Bhog Thagi* towards Barpeta



Plate 75: *Bhakats* performing *Naam Prasanga* during *Palnaam*



Plate 76: Women sitting outside the *Kirttanganhar* during *Palnaam*



Plate 77: Feast to the *Bhakats* during *Palnaam*



Plate 78: Feast to the devotees during *Palnaam*



Plate 79: Idol of Lord placed in *Jogmohan Greeha* during *Deul* Festival



Plate 80: *Bhakat* distributing *Nirmali* among the Devotees



Plate 81: Devotees buying offering items



Plate 82: Idol towards Kumarkuchi Sattra



Plate 83: Idol returns back to the *Sattra*



Plate 84: Broke down the barricade of Bamboo



Plate 85: Idol of Lord is moving around the *Kirttanghar*



Plate 86: Devotees are waiting for Door open moment



Plate 87: Devotees coming from outside Barpeta

5.9 Income of *Sattra*

Economy is an important factor for each institution. The following sources help to manage the income of the *Sattra*.

5.9. a. Religious Sources

Guru Kar (Tax): *Guru Kar* provides by the disciples in the *Tirobhab Tithi* (death anniversary) of Sankardeva in Patbaushi. Many years ago, only one rupee and 5 kg rice were taken as *Guru Kar* by the committee but rice is not compulsory for one till today. Now people pay the *Guru Kar* according to their capacity depending upon the income.

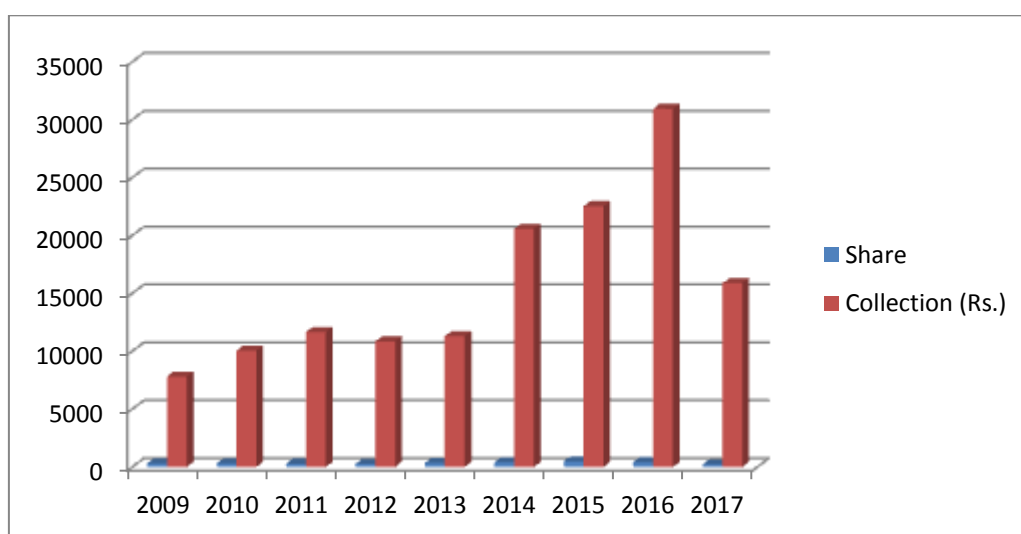
Bhog Thogir Bhag. It is mentioned in previous page that on the last day of *Tirobhab Tithi*, the villager should give 41/50 rupees for getting *Bhog Thogi's Prasad*. If someone does not provide the amount for 3 years, his name is cut off from the list of *Bhog Thagi's* share and he should renew his name by paying 10 rupees as fine. If someone receives *Prasad* in earthen dish he should give fifty one rupees and if wants to take in banana leaf then forty rupees should be paid. More than 500 people provide fee to receive *Bhog Thagi's* portion from different directions of Barpeta. The following table indicates the income of the *Sattra* from *Bhog Thogi's* share year wise-

Table 14. Year wise Collection from *Bhog Thogi*

Year	Share	Collection (Rs.)
2009	314	7,811
2010	289	10,057
2011	284	11,650
2012	266	10,844

2013	362	11,302
2014	395	20,583
2015	488	22,540
2016	412	30,941
2017	222	15,875

Source: Record of Sattrra Management Committee



The above mentioned table and graph indicates the share of *Bhog Thogi* as a whole irrespective of area across Barpeta. These shares are changed year by year. But there are 135 shares of the people of Barpeta town which are fixed (As per 2017 record) is described as follows-

Table 15. Area wise permanent share holders of *Bhog Thogi*

Sl. No	Place	Share	Collection
1	Ganakkuchi	14	1962
2	Icchapur Hati	6	500
3	Dakshin Hati	23	2123

4	Dala Hati	3	200
5	Kujirdah Hati	1	100
6	Major Hati	5	500
7	Palangdi Hati	5	524
8	Nahati	11	755
9	Dahati	3	100
10	Kakati Hati	3	301
11	1 No. Galia Hati	1	100
12	Metuakuchi	10	745
13	Bara Bazar	11	800
14	Bilartari Hati	6	601
15	Kalaya Hati	3	200
16	Gandhi Nagar	2	0
17	Jail Road	3	300
18	Brindaban Hati	7	500
19	Ambari Hati	17	1602
20	Baradi	1	100
Total		135	12,013

Source: Record of Sattrra Management Committee

Pranami: *Pranami* is an important source of income of the *Sattrra*. In the time of festivals, thousands of devotees and tourist visit to the *Sattrra* and they offer money to the God. It is seen that a large number of tourists visit to *Sattrra* in the month of January. According to the Secretary of *Sattrra* Management Committee, the total income from

Pranami is approx one lakh per annum. From the head of *Pranami*, permanent staffs are paid per month as follows-

Table 16. Salary Structure

Designation	Amount/month (Record)
Assistant Pathak	Rs. 2000
Paladharia	Rs .1500
Naamgharia	Rs. 3000
Music Teacher	Rs. 3000
Pujari	Rs. 1200

Source: Record of Sattra Management Committee

Barangani (Donation): Sometimes, some necessary things like *gocha, sarai, salita* (cotton wick), oil, salt, sugar, incense stick, fruits provided by local people, as well as by the tourist also. Besides this another custom is followed by the villagers that when a girl gets married, her parents should offer fifty one rupees as *barangani* to the *Sattra* Management Committee. For lighting the lamps made of brass metal which are placed in front of the *Guru Asana*, oil is used from the donation provided by the devotees. As per the information provided by the *Bhakat*, one liter oil is used for the same every day.

Sidha (Victuals) and bhojani (Edible): In the mortuary of Shrimanta Sankardeva, Barpeta *Sattra* provides *sidha* from different *hatis* with different items such as rice, dal , mustard oil, bengal gram, mung, betel nut, betel leaf, salt, coconut, other fruits and some vegetables as *Prasad*. Devotees' believe that at first Madhabdeva provided *siddha*

to this *Sattra* after the death of Sankardeva, so, since then this custom has been continuing.

5.9.b. Agricultural Sources:

There are 100 Bighas of land provided by Assam Government at Gandhi Bill of Kahibari in 1985. The said land had been given on lease to local people for cultivation of paddy from which annually the *Sattra* Committee earns approx one lakh rupees. Besides the above mentioned land, another 7 bighas of land of Dhanukhanda is also given on lease for cultivation and from there the committee earns approx nine thousand rupees per year as well. A little amount comes from the pond “Dhanukhanda *jaan*” of the *Sattra*. It is given on lease to the local people for one or three years and amount they have to pay is approx 1500- 2000 rupees.

5.9.c. Government Grant:

The *Sattra* receives Rs. 50,000 as annual grant from the fund of the Deputy Commissioner of Barpeta as expenditure for *Fakua* (Holi) festival. The committee should have to submit the vouchers of expenditure time to time. But this grant is not regular according to the information of the Management Staff. At present Govt. of Assam provided five lakhs rupees to renovate the museum of the *Sattra* with all the facilities required.

5.10. Status of Women

Saint Sankardeva and Madhabdeva tried to build an integrated society, to create unity and brotherhood among the people of Assam through the ‘*Eka Saran Nama Dharma*’ in their esteemed *Sattras* and *Naamghars*. Saint Sankardeva married twice

(after the death of first wife he married for the second time) and obeyed *griha dharma*. He asked Madhabdeva for marriage and advised him by saying “ghar bandhi jujile saj pranar sangsai nai”. His elder son married at Patbaushi Sattrra when he was alive. In his book Bhakti Ratnakar, he described the equal right for all people in *Eka Saran Nama Dharma* like ‘*nai jati ajatir bisar*’. He respected women and it was proved in the characters viz, Sati Radhika, Chandari Aai, Rukmini, Sashiprava, Sumalini dhai and Chandalani.

In Patbaushi Sattrra, women are allowed to enter into main *Kirttanghar* in free time. In all occasions *Prasanga* is performed by female in south direction of the *Kirttanghar*. But they are not allowed to enter into the *Kirttanghar* during the *Prasanga* period performing by male devotees. Though the door of *Sattrra* is open to women yet the local women don’t enter into *Kirttanghar* because they don’t want to break the traditional custom of the *Sattrra*.

In a historic moment, in the morning of one Sunday on April 4, 2009, under an initiative taken by Late Janaki Ballav Patnaik, the then Governor of Assam, opened the door of *Kirttanghar* for women in Patbaushi Sattrra and brought an end to the age long system of gender discrimination. For this reason, a controversial situation arose among the villagers in spite of it the Management Committee had taken resolution to allow women to enter into the *Kirttanghar*. Prior to him, in 1999, an American lady named Denish Darbar, entered into *Kirttanghar* of the *Sattrra* for the first time.

To know about the opinion regarding the entrance of women into *Kirttanghar*, some case studies are described below-

5.11 Case Study

Case Study: 1

Informant: Ms. Mitali Das

Age: 23 Years

Date: 12/07/2017

Ms. Mitali Das is a resident of Patbaushi village just near the *Sattra*. She is studying MA in distance education as well as working as a computer operator in the *Sattra's* Museum. As she is engaged with the *Sattra* so she involves in all the festivals observed in the *Sattra*. In her opinion, as a local girl, she respects and obeys the traditional rule regarding the entrance of women folk into the *Kirttanghar* of the *Sattra*. Though at present, the *Sattra* Management Committee allows the women to enter into *Kirttanghar* and to offer prayer, yet she does not like to enter inside. She uses to stand near the main door of the *Kirttanghar* and offers prayer from that particular place. But she never prevents any women from entering in into the *Kirttanghar*.

Case Study: 2

Informant: Mrs. Gunabati Das

Age: 47 years

Date: 12/ 07/ 2017

The informant is a local resident of Patbaushi village. She had undergone through initiation after her marriage by the *Adhikar* of the *Sattra*. She informed that during that time only she entered into the *Kirttanghar* from that very day till today she has never entered there. She always comes to the *Sattra* twice in a day but offers prayer

from the varanda of the *Kirttanghar*. Though she knows that now a day door of *Kirttanghar* is open for all women, yet she maintains the traditional rule continuing from the time of *Gurujana*. She also advises the other female members of her family to do so.

Case Study: 3

Informant: Mr. Kushal Das

Age: 45 years

Date: 05/07/2017

The informant of this case is one of the *Bhakats* of the *Sattra*. He is a graduate and serving as a *Bhakat* for several years. According to him, the door of the religious institution should be opened for both male and female. At present no such restriction is imposed upon the women sect regarding the entrance into the *Kirttanghar*. He also mentioned that there is also no such record in black and white, yet the devotees especially the female sect of the locality follows the rule which has been continuing till today verbally. He mentioned about the incident happened when the Governor of Assam amended the rule which has been continuing verbally.

Case Study: 4

Informant: Mr. Gunadhar Pathak

Age: 76 Years

Date: 20/08/2017

The informant is a local resident of Patbaushi village and has been engaged as *Naamghar Rakhiya* since last 40 years. He receives the devotees come from different directions of the country as well as from foreign countries and describes about the

activities carried out by Saint Sankardeva at Patbaushi. According to him there is no restriction regarding the entry of women inside the *Kirttanghar* except the time of performing *Naam Prasanga* by the *Bhakats*. As his opinion women are also a part of society so no gender discrimination should be there. He told that Sattra Management Committee had taken good step to abolish the year old custom of the *Sattra*.

Case Study: 5

Informant: Mrs. Tarali Pathak

Age: 46 Years

Date: 25/10/2017

The informant is a local resident of Patbaushi village and staying there since last 21 years after her marriage. According to her in a society both male and female have the equal right to survive and participation. But due to the year long restriction practice in the *Sattra* institutions of Barpeta especially in Patbaushi *Sattra*, she never entered into the main *Kirttanghar* after taking initiation few months later of her marriage. But she informed that when the relatives particularly the female from outside the village come to visit the *Sattra*, she never restrict them to enter into the *Kirttanghar*. She also allow her daughter to enter into the *Kirttanghar* but herself is not willing to break down the year long restriction though at present the Management Committee allows women to enter into the main *Kirttanghar*.

5.12 Changes occurred in the *Sattra*:

Continuity and change are the two words which are related to the every aspects of society. It may be related to living being or to objects. In Patbaushi *Sattra* some changes are observed related to the physical as well as religious aspects. These are like the following-

5.12.a. Physical Aspects:

As the *Sattrra* was established by Saint Sankardeva in 1549 AD, it is clear to all about the infrastructure of the *Sattrra* of that time. During the inception it was simply constructed by bamboo and thatches. No written record is found regarding this. But as per the *Bhakats* of the *Sattrra*, during that time main gate and math were not constructed. Only *Kirttanghar* and *Manikut* were made of bamboo mat. But during the passage of time, Assam Government and other respected person from Barpeta area constructed the different buildings time to time.

5.12. b. Religious Aspects:

Religious aspects of the *Sattrra* are changing day by day. Now a day, the followers of this religion are not willing to involve all the functions observed in the *Sattrra* due to their changing mentality. Some changing aspects are as follows-

Saint Sankardeva was a great social reformer with an open mind who initiated to his faith, men of different ethnic groups (Garo, Miri, Naga, and Bhutiya) even the Muslims. Sankardeva tried to tie all the caste and tribe population of Assam through his “*Eka Saran Nama Dharma*” and to bring in same level in society. Saint Sankardeva said “*Na bacche bhakati jati ajati*” (In *Bhakti* there is no caste discrimination). Sankardeva gave initiation to all the people irrespective of all community. *Gurujana* pointed as “*kukura srigala gardavaro atmarama, janiya sabako hari kariba pranama*”. Sankardeva believed that even dog, fox and donkey have the same soul like a man. So, we salute them as manifestation of the same God. At present there is a change noticed that the people of Muslim community are not allowed to enter into the *Sattrra* premises while Sankardeva had given initiation to Chandasai. At present daily *Prasanga* for two

times with nine items instead of fourteen items are performing. Involvement of local people in the festivals celebrated in the *Sattra* is gradually decreasing.

Another notable change observed is the restriction related to the entry of women inside the *Kirttanghar*. At present, women are permitted to enter inside the *Kirttanghar* except during the time of performing *Naam Prasanga* by male *Bhakat*.

Another change occurs in case of initiation Saint Sankardeva gave initiation to all classes and communities. Sankardeva gave initiation to Chandasai who belonged to Islam religion. Though according to Sankardeva, every human being is equal yet at present people of Islam religion are not permitted to enter into the *Sattra* premises.

For this, no written order was issued by *Sattra* institutions, but verbally it is issued which is continued from several years.

It is also known that after the death of Chandasai, for several years his family members offer *siddha* to the devotees from outside Barpeta who came to the *Sattra*. But this system was going on up to the tenure of *Burah Satriya* Late Chaturbhuj Dev Mishra. After his death, this was totally stopped. They had share at Sundaridiya *Sattra* and during the festivals, participated as well. (Das, 2006: 375)

A few years ago, there is a unique change noticed in this *Sattra*. It is mentioned earlier, on the morning of Sunday, April 4, 2009, under an initiative by Sri Janaki Ballav Patnaik, the then Governor of Assam opened the doors of *Kirttanghar* to women in Patbaushi *Sattra* and tried to made an end to the centuries old gender discrimination. For this reason a controversial situation raised among the villagers though the Management Committee had taken resolution to allow women to enter into the *Kirttanghar*. But it is only in initial stage because the women are only allow to enter

into the *Kirttanghar*, not to take active participation to do the daily activities with the male sect of the society.

It is well known that in most of the *Sattras* of Barpeta restriction is there on women to enter into the *Kirttanghar* of *Sattra* after attending puberty. As this system has been going on from the time of Madhabdeva, as a rumour, Saint Madhabdeva lived in Patbaushi after the death of Saint Sankardeva for taking care of Kalindi Aai. There were two people named Ratikanta and Sadananda who had disturbed him and they expressed some unpleasant words against him with Kalindi Aai and her daughter-in-law. As a result Madhabdeva left Patbaushi and settled at Sundaridia

Now, in Patbaushi *Sattra* women are permitted to enter inside the *Kirttanghar* except during the time of performing *Naam Prasanga*. But at that time they should be pure from all sides. Female get chance to do prayer in front of *Guru Asana*, but they are not allowed to across the *Guru Asana* and enter into *Manikut*. Sankardeva was a married man and he had a revering mind on women.

The female devotees are called as *Gosani*, *Aai*, *Bhakatani*, *Namati*, *Aayati*, *Namghariyani* and *Bayanani*. The female devotees take active part in different religious festivals of the *Sattra* but separately from the males. They perform their regular prayer services on the stipulated place on the southern *varanda* of the *Kirttanghar* in the morning and evening, through which they can enjoy their lives. They get opportunity to increase their knowledge through different types of discussions which makes them happy. Even they may receive *Prasad* of *Naam Prasanga* and become share holder of *Bhog Thogir Bhag* of *Gurujana's Tithi*.

In earlier time after receiving initiation from the *Sattradhikar*, the devotees have to follow some restrictions related with food habit, sanitation and also day to day activities. But now some changes have occurred in those. Earlier, after toilet the devotees who are undergone initiation process had to wash hand and foot five times with sand or mud. But due to modernization and lack of time this system is changed specially among the young generation.

Though according to the Vaishnavite religion, there is a restriction on consuming non vegetarian items, yet now a day majority of devotees include fish in their regular diet. Only on the special festivals observed in the *Sattra*, they do not consume non vegetarian items.

5.12. c. Changes due to Modernization:

Impact of modernization on the society is one of the factors leading to decrease in *Bakat* population. People who seek to become Bhakats are declining day by day. At present, it is seen that a few of *Bhakats* perform the daily *Prasanga* for two times with nine items instead of fourteen items. This is a fear that if such a trend continues, the *Naam Prasanga* of *Sattra* institution may become extinct one day.

A few years ago, during the anniversaries of Sankardeva or *Deul* festival the *Ankiya Bhaonas* written by Saint Sankardeva were performed but at present the people are attracted to the modern drama.

It is seen that the attitude towards the *Sattra* specially, of the younger generation is gradually changing due to the impact of modernization. At least a section of them bear least regard to the *Sattra* as a religious institute, instead they feel pleasure in joining the gatherings there during the festivals. Such section of new generation does

not feel obliged to follow the traditional practice such as observing fasts on certain occasions and do not hesitate to violate those practices. Majority of the changes are driven by the electronic media. According to the *Sattrra* Management Committee, the youths are not much interested to become *Bhakat* in the *Sattrra* due to higher qualification and employment in other places.

Changes have been seen in case of dress. Nearly a few years back the devotees and visitors wore *dhuti* as their lower garment with bare foot. The female devotees used no other dress than *mekhela chadar* and never used any foot wear. But with the influence of modernity, changes in the pattern of cultural dress habits have seen people now days go to the *Kirttanghar* with full pants and shirt. Now a day, female enters inside the *Sattrra* compound with different types of modern dresses.

Due to employment in various job majorities of the people of the village have to settle themselves in different parts of Assam and entire India. So, during the festivals they are not able to involve in the tasks of the *Sattrra* regularly. So, gradually the involvement of the local people is decreasing day by day.

Earlier during the death anniversary of Shrimanta Sankardeva, boat race was organised on Maranadi River. But at present due to lack of expert players and decreasing water level in the river this game has been totally stopped.

5.13 Problems of *Sattrra*:

The *Sattrra* is situated far away from the Barpeta town but there is no such sufficient transportation facility.

1. The infrastructure of the *Sattrra* library is very poor.

2. Flood is another problem in that area as the river Nakhanda is flowing just near the *Sattras* and almost every year the locality is flooded by the overflow of the river.
3. Though Government of India launched a scheme named “PRASAD” (Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive) under which the religious places are covered, yet the *Sattras* has not got any grant from their side under that scheme.

5.14 Enforcement of Illegal Migrants in *Sattras*' Land

In the later part of 15th century, the rulers of ancient Assam donated land for the temples and *Sattras* among whom Siba Singha, Chandrakanta Singha, Lakshmi Singha were the prominent ones. The system of land donation was very interesting. During the time of land measurement, a drum was beaten and upto where the sound was audible that was the last point of the property. They engraved the volume of donated land on a copper slat mentioning the name of the donor, date of donation and volume of land. The donated land was divided into three types like *Debottar*, *Dharmattar* and *Brahmattar*. The term *Debottar* is related to the temples and *Dharmattar* is related to the *Sattras* and *Maths* while *Brahmottar* denotes to the land offered to the Brahmin families.

Now days, the illegal trespass over such land is a burning question in all over Assam. A large numbers of temples and *Sattras* of Assam have such problems. As per the report of the Committee for Protection of Land Rights of Indigenous people of Assam, 18 numbers of *Sattras* are facing threats to their existence which are mentioned below-

1. Patbaushi Sattrra: Barpeta, total land is 196 bighas but land occupied is 81 bighas.
2. Satrasaal Sattrra/Ramrai Kuthi: Dhubri, total land is 162 bighas and occupied volume is 161 bighas.
3. Jania Sattrra: Barpeta, total land is 167 bighas but land occupied is 160 bighas.
4. Bali Sattrra: Total land is 511 bighas but land occupied is 400 bighas.

Besides these above mentioned Sattrras, there are 14 another Sattrras where land is illegally occupied by the migrant population viz. Barpeta Sattrra (1000 bighas), Bahari Sattrra (190 bighas), Pirala Sattrra, Kobaikata Sattrra (180 bighas), Patekibori Sattrra (65 bighas), Bardowa Sattrra (221 bighas), Bali Sattrra, Rampur Sattrra, Garmur Sattrra, Natun Kamalabari Sattrra, Adi Elengi Sattrra, Bor Elengi Sattrra, Basudev *Thaan* and Madhupur Sattrra.

(<https://landrevenue.assam.gov.in>)

As per the *Sattradhikar* of Patbaushi Sattrra, recently 130 bighas of land is successfully restored from the migrant population in Bardowa Sattrra of Nagaon.