

## ABSTRACT

Nationalism in India emerged as a self-defeating formula because it represents the ideology of the middle class which was shaped by ideas derived from European Nationalism. But this framework of Nationalism was not conducive and hence its fallout was seen after independence relating to language, religion and diversity. According to Eric Hobsbawm Nation means 'a state or political body which recognizes a supreme centre of common government'. However, in modern times a nation indicates a notion of political unity and independence. Deeply influenced by the ideas of civic nationalism, India emerged as a nation that constituted the idea of Indianness based on plurality and multi-ethnicity. The term 'Nationalism' had been coined in Europe to indicate the rise of national sentiment within the established nation-state. The nationalism that we talk about in India fall under the Eastern Nationalism but influenced by western nationalist ideology. Most of the early Indian leaders of the British Raj, their sense of Nationalism was at par with Western Nationalism. Rabindranath Tagore expressed his doubt about the feasibility of adopting Western model of Nationalism in India as western nation culture and racial diversity was not as heterogeneous as India. His apprehension has actually been proved to be true after independence as Nationalism has been viewed only as a tool to achieve political autonomy. Moreover, it led to a never-ending problem coz of the diversity of the nation with numerous ethnic groups and language. Consequent upon this problematic categorization and post-colonial development, nationalism as a civic component disoriented due to the resurgence of ethnic, linguistic and racial identities. Following this trajectory, the growth of national consciousness in Assam emerged as a very complex phenomenon which should be historically and objectively analysed by investing in to the events that took place in Assam before and after 1826. Our point of intervention would be to analyse how Srimanta Sankardev's philosophy can negotiate with the problems of modern nationalism and auger a cohesive society by removing parochial boundaries of race or ethnicity. It may be mentioned that the greatest Assamese social reformer, Srimanta Sankardev contributed a great rich literary and cultural effluence in Assam. His cultural and artistic works are unparalleled in the history of India at that time. His efforts can be cited as the first step towards planting the seed of Assamese Nationalism as he brought various tribes and communities under one umbrella by installing neo-vaishnavism and later the Satra culture in Assam. Sankardev's neo-vaishnavism has given birth to a new cultural Nationalism. This was brought forward to the indigenous people with the help of Satras and Namghar which has a major role to play in the preservation and development of culture and language, evolution of Assamese identity and also in the

creation of nation building. After Sankardev most of his disciples and people in general carried out his philosophy, culture and traditions. Of late a little lesser known devotee of Sankardev from the backward region of Dimakuchi, in Udalguri district, Harekrishna Mahanta can be attributed as progeny of Sankardev. By establishing Barangajuli Satra in Dimakuchi, he created an atmosphere of cultural nationalism as like Sankardev in the region. Presently Harekrishna Mahanta has established thirty-five Satra promoting culture, literature and social integrity. He enlightened the backward region where people from various tribes and communities are a part of those Satras. So, it can be said that a new era of socio-cultural sustenance and integration through the Satra culture of Harekrishna Mahanta has been reached. Although quite a few research works have been done relating to Bhakti Movement, Sankardev and Pre-colonial Assamese society, no integrative research work has been attempted to analyse the contribution of Harekrishna Mahanta within the rubrics of Nationalism and Satra Culture.