



## 'PHILOSOPHY OF SELF-SURRENDER: THE TEACHING OF ŚAṅKARDEVA'S NEO-VAIṢṆAVISM'

Dr. Abani Sonowal<sup>1\*</sup>, Rajiv Thengal<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

Śrīmanā Śaṅkaradeva was primarily a social reformer, a religious leader, a great Vaiṣṇava saint. Śaṅkaradeva was influenced in his life by the Bhakti Movement or Vaiṣṇavism of South India. The principle of Neo-Vaiṣṇavism of Śaṅkaradeva or Eka Śaraṇa Nāma Dharma is 'Self - Surrender' (Ātma-Samarpaṇa). This means that a devotee seeks ultimate refuge in One God i.e. Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu. This has been adopted verses 63-66 of the 18<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Bhagavadgītā. In his philosophy, Bhakti plays an important role in Śaṅkaradeva's religion of Neo- Vaiṣṇavism or Eka Śaraṇa Nāma Dharma. Śrīmad Bhāgavata enjoins nine kinds of bhakti for a Vaiṣṇava devotee, viz. Śravaṇa, Kirtana, Smarana, Archanā, Pada-Sevana, Dāsyā, Vandanā and Deha-Samarpaṇa etc. Out of these Śaṅkaradeva preached Śravaṇa, Kirtana, Dāsyā bhakti and also Deha-samarpaṇa. For him, bhakti is the medium of bringing a close relationship between God and devotee. This relationship is like the attitude of Dāsyā Bhakti, which means the relation between master and slave. By this a devotee attains Supreme bliss i.e. mukti. This paper aims at studying Śaṅkaradeva's Neo-Vaiṣṇavism movement in Assam with a view to finding out its essence and significance in present day Assam.

**Keywords:** Vaiṣṇavism, Eka Śaraṇa, Bhakti, Śravaṇa, Kirtana, idol worship.

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<sup>1</sup>\*M.A., B. Ed., PhD Asstt Teachers, Dept. of Philosophy, Amguri Tribal H.S.S, Dhemaji, Assam, India  
Email: sonobani89@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup>M.A, M. Phil Asstt Prof, Dept of Political Science, B.H.B College, Sarupeta, Assam

**\*Corresponding Author:** Dr Abani Sonowal

\*M.A., B. Ed., PhD Asstt Teachers, Dept. of Philosophy, Amguri Tribal H.S.S, Dhemaji, Assam, India  
Email: sonobani89@gmail.com

**DOI:** 10.48047/ecb/2023.12.si10.00214

**Introduction:**

Śrīmantā Śaṅkaradeva was primarily a social reformer, a religious leader, a great *Vaiṣṇava* saint. He propagated the *Vaiṣṇava* religion which is known as *Neo-Vaiṣṇavism* or *Neo-Vaiṣṇava* religion in Assam. When Śaṅkaradeva was ruling, the principalities of *Bhuyān* communities (Neog), he saw Assam disunited with different religions, creeds. There was no peace in Assam because of geographical and political separation of Assam into many parts. The religion of *Śaivism*, *Śāktism* and *Tāntrism* were predominant at that time. When Śaṅkaradeva came back from pilgrimage to *Pūri*, he came to be influenced by *Bhakti* Movement in South India, and thought of reforming the society of Assam making way for peace and harmony among the people of all castes of the society.

**Objective of the study:**

- To study Śaṅkaradeva’ Neo- *Vaiṣṇava* in Assam
- To study the philosophy of Self-Surrender of Śaṅkaradeva
- To study the significance of his philosophy in present day of Assam

**Methodology:**

This study is based on the analytical and textual hermeneutics interpretation. Data are both primary and secondary. The authors translate and interpret the collected primary data from the original works of Śaṅkaradeva.

**Discussion:****A Brief History of Vaiṣṇavism in India:**

Let us have look into the history of *Vaiṣṇavism* or *Bhakti* Movement by which Śaṅkaradeva was influenced and advocated his *Neo-Vaiṣṇavism*. The *Bhakti* Movement or *Vaiṣṇava* Movement was first propagated by the *Ālvārs*<sup>1</sup> in the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D. The *Ālvārs* of South India constituted a school of *Vaiṣṇava* mystics and saints who used to compose devotional songs of *Viṣṇu* or *Kṛṣṇa* worship and adoration in Tamil language.<sup>2</sup> The system of *Vaiṣṇavism* founded by

the *Ālvārs* believed *Viṣṇu* as the Highest Reality. *Vaiṣṇavism*, one of the oldest monotheistic religions in India where *Viṣṇu*, also called *Hari*, *Nārāyaṇa*, *Kṛṣṇa*, etc. is worshipped as the Supreme God. Worship of *Nārāyaṇa* or *Viṣṇu* and devotion to Him constitute the means of liberation. Lord *Viṣṇu* is the lover and the protector of all human souls. They believed that He is the first and the final cause of the universe. *Viṣṇu* is *nirgūṇa* for them because he lives in the hearts of all the *bhūtas* and thereby He is called *Vāsudeva*. *Viṣṇu* is the supreme form of knowledge and God realization is possible through devotion and complete self-surrender to Him.

Nāthamuni, who was traditionally known as the founder of Rāmānuja’s school of thought, Yamūnāchārya, the grandson of Nāthamuni, who really laid the foundation for all the doctrines that are now ascribe to Rāmānuja, and Rāmānuja himself, who was steeped in the ‘*Pañcarātra* Tantra’<sup>3</sup> were great *Vaiṣṇavite* saints and successor of the *Ālvārs* in the South India. He also believed that *Viṣṇu* is the Ultimate Reality which he calls *Nārāyaṇa* also. Worshipping Him or devotion to Him is the sole means of final release or *mokṣa*. He is the cause of everything in the universe. The *Vaiṣṇava* School did not try to start a new philosophy, but based its teachings on ‘*Nārāyaṇa Pañca Rātra*’ and *Bhāgavata Pūrāṇa* and *Bhagavadgītā* and laid stress on a life of purity, high morality, worship and devotion to only One God who is above all the creator, preserver and destroyer.<sup>4</sup>

The *Bhagavadgītā* according to Rāmānuja advocated the *Bhakti* Yoga on the noble and the prominence feature which is a kind of reciprocity in relation of love between the devotee and God who seeks refuge in Him and is also liberated finally through His grace. Therefore J.S.M Hooper in his “Hymns of the *Ālvār*” (cited from Anima Sen Gupta, pg-xx) has said that these group of *Vaiṣṇava* mystics “filled the gap between the *Bhagavadgītā* and Rāmānuja” (Sharma).

<sup>1</sup>. The *Ālvārs* were the earliest *Vaiṣṇavite* saints in South India. They preached *Bhakti* or devotion to One God *Viṣṇu*. The word *Ālvār* means one who is well versed in the knowledge of God and is also mad with love for Him. There were 12 *Ālvārs* including one female known as Āṇḍal.

<sup>2</sup>. This reference is taken from the ‘Authors Note’ of “*A Critical Study Philosophy of Rāmānuja*” written by Anima Sen Gupta, pp. xix,xx,xxi.

*Eur. Chem. Bull.* 2023, 12(Special Issue 10), 1811 - 1817

<sup>3</sup>. *Pancarātras* are the *Vaiṣṇava* *Saṁskṛt* *Āgamic* texts composed of more than 200 texts. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pancharatra#cite\\_note-GOS-1.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pancharatra#cite_note-GOS-1.))

<sup>4</sup>. BezBarua, L: ‘*History of Vaishnavism in India*’, A Creative Vision: - *Essays on Sankaradeva and Neo Vaisnava Movement in Assam*; Srimanta Sankar Kristi Bikash Samiti (Dec 2004), pg-14

### Eka Śaraṇa Nāma Dharma:

Śaṅkaradeva was influenced by the Bhakti Movement or *Vaiṣṇavism* of South India. Indeed Śaṅkaradeva for his *Neo-Vaiṣṇavism* movement laid emphasis on *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and *Bhagavadgītā*. As the *Vaiṣṇavism* of Śaṅkaradeva is based on *Bhāgavata Pūrāṇa* it is also called as *Bhāgavata Dharma*. Some people call it as *Neo-Vaiṣṇavism*, or *Bhāgavata dharma* or *Eka Śaraṇa Nāma Dharma* etc or *Mahā-puruṣiya Dharma*. S.N. Sarma in his book mentioned that the real name of the cult is 'Eka Śaraṇa Dharma' (Sarma, 1999) i.e. the religion of supreme surrender to one God viz. *Viṣṇu* or *Kṛṣṇa*. But his apostle disciple Mādhavdeva placed his religion in his 'Gūrū-Bhatimā' as 'Eka Śaraṇa Hari Nāma Dharma'.<sup>5</sup>

The principle of *Neo-Vaiṣṇavism* of Śaṅkaradeva or *Eka Śaraṇa Nāma Dharma* is 'Self - Surrender' (*Ātma-Samarpaṇa*) seeking ultimate refuge in One God i.e. *Kṛṣṇa* or *Viṣṇu*. This *Eka Śaraṇa Nāma Dharma* or the religion of seeking ultimate refuge in One God is accepted by Śaṅkaradeva from the verses 63-66 of 18<sup>th</sup> chapter of the *Bhagavadgītā*.<sup>6</sup> We will try to translate and interpret it.

*iti te jñānam ākhyātāṃ guhyād guhyataraṃ mayā/  
vimṛṣyāitad aśeṣeṇa yathecchasi tathā kuru//63*

'Thus I have explained all the knowledge to you which is more secret than the secret; you reflect over this fully and do as you wish.'

*sarva-guhyatamaṃ bhūyaḥ śṛṇu me paramaṃ  
vacaḥ/  
iṣṭo 'si me dr̥dham iti tato vakṣyāmi te hitam//64*

'Listen again My most secret speech, the most secret of all. Because you are very dear to Me; by this I shall say you the best for your benefit.'

*man-manā bhava mad-bhakto mad-yājī mām  
namaskuru/  
mām evaiṣyasi satyaṃ te pratijāne priyo 'si  
me//65*

<sup>5</sup>. Deka, Nath, D: 'Eka Saran Hari Nam Dharma : Eti Alocana', pg-123, reproduced from *Dinanath Deka Racanavali, Complete works of Late Dinanath Deka*, ex- Padadhikar, Srimanta Sankaradeva Sangha, Kailash Das (Chief Ed.), Prasanna Saharia (Ed.) Srimanta Sankaradeva Sangha, Nagaon, 2004.

<sup>6</sup>. Chuita, S : 'Srimanta Sankaradeva and his Eka-Sarana Hari-Nāma Dharma' (www.tributetosankaradeva.org/Eka-Sarana\_Hari-Nama\_Dharma.pdf.)

'Attach your mind on Me, become My devotee and worshipper and pay homage to Me. If you do this I truly promise you, you will attain Me because you are very dear to Me.'

*sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṃ śaraṇam  
vraja/  
ahaṃ tvam sarva-pāpēbhyomokṣayiṣyāmi mā  
śucaḥ//66*

'Give up your all dharma in Me only and come to Me and seek refuge in Me, I will liberate you from all sins; do not grieve.'

The sloka of *Eka Śaraṇa Nāma Dharma* comes clearly in the 66<sup>th</sup> of the *Gītā*. Śaṅkaradeva also translated this verse as –

*sarva-dharma eri eka śaraṇa sākhyāta/  
sudṛha viśvāke sakhi layuka āmāta//  
nakaribā bhaya herā karu angikāra/  
samasta pāpate moyi karibo nistāra//<sup>7</sup>*

So the real meaning of *Eka Śaraṇa Nāma Dharma* of Śaṅkaradeva is very clear in this verse of the *Gītā*. What does mean by this is give up all dharma and seeking refuge only in One God i.e. *Viṣṇu* or *Kṛṣṇa* and surrender and worship Him without any selfish aim. This also means denial of worships of others deities. So Śaṅkaradeva also denied worships of other gods and goddesses. We will discuss it in next section.

### Śaṅkaradeva against Idol Worships:

In Śaṅkaradeva's time the *Śākta* religion<sup>8</sup> i.e. *Śāktism* was prevalent and dominating all other religions. *Śāktism* performs a variety of blood and animal sacrifices, some of which were carried out at *Kāmākhyā* Temple in *Nīlāchal* Hill, *Tāmreswari* Temple in *Sadiyā*<sup>9</sup> in extreme form. Śaṅkaradeva and his followers, like Mādhavdeva, who was earlier a *Śākta* and had become *Vaiṣṇava*, saint were fully against the religion of *Śāktism* and also blood and animal sacrifices.

<sup>7</sup>. 'Eka śaranat Sarva Dharma Tyag', Sonarama Chutia Rachanavali, (http://www.tributetosankaradeva.org/eka\_sarana\_sarva\_dharma\_tyag\_pdf.)

<sup>8</sup>. *Śākta* Religion or *Śāktism* was one of the strongest religions in Assam that worships female deities as the Supreme and sacrifices blood and animals.

<sup>9</sup>. Neog, M: 'Shri Shri Sankaradeva and His Contribution to Culture and Civilization of India', article published in 'Man and Environment in Northeast India', EBH Publisher (India), Guwahati, pg-28

Śaṅkaradeva protested against idol worships and denied the worship of other gods and goddesses such as *Durgā*, *Kāmākhya Devī* etc except Lord *Kṛṣṇa* who is the only One Supreme Person or God. For him there is only One God i.e. Brahman who is the creator, preserver and destroyer who is also called *Kṛṣṇa*, *Rāma* or *Viṣṇu* etc.<sup>10</sup> This he clearly mentioned in *Bhakti Pradīpa* –

*jagatore ātma brahmādiro moi deva/  
jāni eka citte mātra muka kore seva//  
muka eri āna eku nabhaje devaka/  
sehi bhakti eruwābe hamasta karmaka//  
sehi ekśaraṇa bhajana anupāma/  
nuhunya āna eku devatāra nāma//  
avyabhichāri tāke buliya bhakati/  
nāhike prayāsa āta alpe sādhe gati//  
sahuda buliyā dunāi dunāi dew hāka/  
muta bine nabhajibā anya devatāka//  
nāma nuhunibā tumi āna devatāra/  
nuhi jen āmāra bhakati vyabhichāra//* (cited from Dinnath Deka Rachanawali, pg.130)

This means *Kṛṣṇa* or *Viṣṇu* is the only God and knowing this seek refuge in only One God i.e. *Kṛṣṇa* or *Viṣṇu* with one pointed mind and worship Him without worshipping other gods and goddesses. Worship *Kṛṣṇa* as the sole refuge only. He who worships other deities without worshipping *Kṛṣṇa* is *Vyabhichāri* and bhakti will become also *vyabhichāri*. Even one should never listen to the names of other gods and goddesses. This is what is called ‘*Eka Śaraṇa*.’

Besides, those who worship other gods and goddesses are called *Vyabhichāri* according to Śaṅkaradeva. This is mentioned in the second section of *Bhāgavata* as –

*annya devī deva nakaribā seva/  
nakhāibā prasāda tāra//  
murtiko nāsāibā grihu napaṣibā/  
bhakti haiba vyabhichāra//*  
(Cited from Dinnath Deka Rachanawali, pg.130)

That is do not worship other gods and goddesses except *Kṛṣṇa* and also do not take *prasāda* or offerings from those ceremonies where it is performed and do not worship those gods and goddesses. It is also said that even do not bow

<sup>10</sup>. Śaṅkaradeva believed in many incarnations of God i.e. *Viṣṇu* as Rama, *Kṛṣṇa* etc. A devotee who seeks ultimate refuge should worship *Kṛṣṇa* or *Rāma* or *Viṣṇu* without any image or form as the sole of salvation or Mukti. So Śaṅkaradeva believes God without any form i.e. *Nirākāra*.

down heads towards statues of those gods and goddesses in any form. If anyone does so is called the *Vyabhichāri*, or the *Vyabhichāra*. But the question can be raised how can it be *Vyabhichāri* if somebody is *Vaiṣṇavīte*? The answer can be treated as he said God is formless, *nirgūṇa*, and when a *Vaiṣṇava* devotee bows down to a specific form of idol whether it is *Kāmākhya* or *Durgā* etc he is moving away from the formless God to idol. He is going away from the beloved God to someone else who attracts him. Then, he is no more devoted to God. That is why he is called *Vyabhichāri*. Like when a husband or a wife is not devoted to each other and family or when person is not devoted to institution etc they are *Vyabhichāri*.

Therefore, it is seen that Śaṅkaradeva believed in one God, for him devotee should seek refuge in Him for the attainment of salvation and denied the worships of other gods and goddesses. For him the ultimate teaching as the *Bhāgavata Pūrāṇa* urges is “it is enough to water the roots of the tree by which the branches and foliage (green leaves) get their sap (a vital liquid containing sugars and other nutrients that circulates in plants) or give food to the *prāṇas* by which limbs get their nourishment.”<sup>11</sup>

### **Bhakti in Ek Śaraṇa Nāma Dharma:**

Bhakti<sup>12</sup> plays an important role in Śaṅkaradeva’s religion of *Neo-Vaiṣṇavism* or *Eka Śaraṇa Nāma Dharma*. For him bhakti is the medium of bringing a close relationship between God and devotee. This bhakti he has been mentioned in his various works such as *Bhakti-Ratnāvali*, *Bhakti-Ratnākara*, *Bhakti-Pradīpa*, etc. (Mukherhjee, 1996) *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* enjoins nine kinds of bhakti for a *Vaiṣṇava* devotee, viz. *Śravaṇa*, *Kīrtana*, *Smarana*, *Archanā*, *Pada-Sevana*, *Dāsyā*, *Vandanā* and *Deha-Samarpana* etc. Out of these Śaṅkaradeva preached *Śravaṇa*, *Kīrtana*, *Dāsyā* bhakti and also *Deha-samarpana*. *Śravaṇa* means listening to the glories of *Kṛṣṇa* and *Kīrtana* means chanting the glories of *Kṛṣṇa*.

<sup>11</sup>. Neog, M: “*Shri Shri Sankaradeva and His Contribution to Culture and Civilization of India*”, article published in ‘*Man and Environment in Northeast India*’, EBH Publisher (India), Guwahati, pg-29

<sup>12</sup>. Bhakti generally means love, love for God, humanity, or animal etc. The Sanskrit word *Bhakti* is derived from the root *bhaj*, which means "divide, share, partake, and participate." It also means a spiritual, religious principle or means of salvation.

*Dāsya* means a relation between *Kṛṣṇa* and his devotee and *deha* – *samarpaṇa* means self-surrender to Him. According to Śaṅkaradeva for the Kali Yuga *Śravaṇa* i.e. listening to the glories of *Kṛṣṇa* and *Kīrtana* i.e. chanting the glories of *Kṛṣṇa* are prescribed as only dharma and in Śaṅkaradeva's system of *Vaiṣṇavism* he enjoined these two kinds of bhakti mainly.<sup>13</sup>

Śaṅkaradeva in his *Kīrtana – Ghoṣā* mentions the fruitions of *Śravaṇa* and *Kīrtana* which he calls as *Nāma Dharma* is –

'*parama mangala hari nāma dharma/  
jāhāra thākoī mukhata//  
tāra teti kṣhane bhaṣma huiyā jāyo/  
mahāpāpa kuti śata/*<sup>14</sup>

He, who is a devotee listens and chants the name of Hari i.e. Lord in his mind, heart and soul it is sufficient to destroy the hundred crores of great sins and attains Supreme Bliss by him. But chanting and listening merely like a parrot is not fruitful. It should be from the deepest of heart, voice and soul all together.

Another condition Śaṅkaradeva mentioned in verses from 48-56 of *Nāma - Aparādha* of *Kīrtana - Ghoṣā* is that the Name of Hari should be taken with a controlled steering and not by committing offences i.e. *aparādha*.<sup>15</sup> These are – i) He who neglects and speaks ill of Hari – bhakta; ii) He who differentiates the name of Hari i.e. *Viṣṇu* or *Śiva* etc as different gods; iii) He who neglects his *Gūru* under whom a devotee follows

<sup>13</sup>. BezBarua, L: 'History of Vaisnavism', pg-15, A Creative Vision: - Essays on Sankaradeva and Neo Vaisnava Movement in Assam; Srimanta Sankar Kristi Bikash Samiti (Dec 2004).

<sup>14</sup>. Pada. 205, 4<sup>th</sup> *Kīrtana*, *Ajāmil Upākhyāna*, *Kīrtana - Ghoṣā*, Pp-55

<sup>15</sup>. The offences i.e. *aparādha* mentioned in *Kīrtana – Ghoṣā* are i) *Bhakataka Nindā Kāroi adhama – Jānibā Nāmara Druhi Param*, ii) *Guṇa Nāma jata Viṣṇu Śivara – Tāko Bhinno Buddhi Kāroi Jitu Naro*, iii) *Jitu Pāpi Kāroi Gurūka Helā – Vedaku Nindoi Jādī Kunu Belā*, iv) *Harira Nāme Karoi Arthavāda – Nāmara Mahimā Karoi Uschāda*, v) *Nāmata Bole Karoi Pāpa Buddhi – Astāngayuge Tāra Nāhi Suddhi*, vi) *dharma Homa Vrata Tirtha Snāna – Joteka Āsoi Mahā- Yajña Dāna – Āko Ere Kare Nāmaka Hari*, vii) *Nāmaka Kirtana Karante Āne – Āna Mana Kari Nuśune Kāne*, viii) *Nāhike Śraddhā Napātaya Kāna – Tāka Jitu Deya Nāmaka Dāna*, ix) *Śuniya Nāmara Mahimā Nīti – Tathāpi Nāmata Nākaroi Prīti*.

the instructions, also condemns the Vedas at anytime; iv) He who takes of Hari *Nāma* for gaining or who wants to gain personal benefits slights or reduces and degrades the glories of Hari *Nāma*; v) He who utters the name of Hari with a evil mind even gets no redemption by *Astāngayoga*, vi) He who goes for *Tīrtha*, offers *Mahā-Yajña*, Homa, Vrata, and take holy bath in holy place when there is Hari *Nāma* or gives equal place of all these with Hari *Nāma*, vii) He who does not listen to Hari *Nāma* and pay no attention even chanting by others also, viii) When others give Hari *Nāma* and if a bhakta does not have regard to it and pay no attention to it, ix) He who even by dinned and knowing the glories of *Nāma Dharma* does not fall in love with Hari *Nāma* is *Aparādhi* according to Śaṅkaradeva. A devotee like this can never be a devotee of Hari and attain mukti.

### Dāsya Bhakti:

*Ek Śaraṇa Nāma Dharma* follows the attitude of *Dāsya Bhakti* which means the relation of master and servant. Just as the servant follows order or command of his master and completely devoted to him and his services, so the devotee is a servant of God or *Kṛṣṇa*. Just as the servant completely surrenders himself to his master for everything so the devotee after attaining bhakti state and making a divine relation like *Dāsya bhakti* surrenders himself completely to his God *Kṛṣṇa* or *Rāma*. By this a devotee attain Supreme bliss i.e. mukti.

Therefore, it is found that ultimate teaching of Śaṅkaradeva's *Neo- Vaiṣṇavism* is self- surrender completely to and to seek refuge in *Kṛṣṇa*, the Supreme Person who is also called the Brahman for the attainment of salvation. Though this is said by Śaṅkaradeva but there is nothing to be achieved salvation or mukti. When a devotee or bhakta attains the state of bhakti or devotion to One Supreme Person i.e. *Kṛṣṇa* then the salvation itself is there in such a devotion or bhakti.

### Neo- Vaiṣṇavism in Present day Assam:

No doubt Śaṅkaradeva's *Neo- Vaiṣṇavism* ruled for a long time in Assam and many people of all castes influenced by his *Neo- Vaiṣṇavism* and followed in their lives. But if we see the present day society of Assam the religion of *Neo- Vaiṣṇavism* propagated by Śaṅkaradeva has not remained pure as it was earlier. He founded devotional institutions like *Sattras*, *Nāma ghara* which are still persistent in our society and people are listening and chanting the glories of *Kṛṣṇa* or *Rāma*. This is nowadays confined to that only and the purity of his *Eka Śaraṇa Nāma Dharma* and the essence of it are spoiled not only by bhaktas

but also other common ignorant people who followed it. If we see his teaching against idol worships or worship of other gods and goddesses like, *Durgā*, *Kāmākhya*, *Kālī* except *Kṛṣṇa* and in the present society if we see people are still performing animal sacrifices, blood sacrifices and worship in the name of those gods and goddesses even by those who follow *Vaiṣṇavism* or *Eka Śaraṇa Nāma Dharma*. They still worship and sacrifice animal and whenever and wherever see any statue of those gods and goddesses bow down their heads and take offering or *prasāda* from the *yajña* where Śaṅkaradeva was completely against. This is just because of mixing up of all religion of and people of all castes and of fear in God for their worldly prosperities or gaining desired objects and lack of knowledge.

### Findings and Conclusion:

The history of *Neo-Vaiṣṇavism* cannot be treated without the institution of *Sattra* and *Nāma-Ghara* in Assam. These two are the fundamental part and parcel of *Neo-Vaiṣṇavism* of Śaṅkaradeva. *Nāma-Ghara* and *Sattra* where bhakta gather and listen and chant the glories of God *Viṣṇu* are the result of the *Neo-Vaiṣṇavism* movement in Assam and also helped to sustain and stabilise *Vaiṣṇavism* by making it a culture of people of Assam (Sarma, 1999).

The *Vaiṣṇavism* of Assam and South India are not differ from each other. They have common characteristics of adoration of Lord *Viṣṇu* as personal God and devotion and faith; rejection of caste systems, equality of all people. There is slight variation in *Vaiṣṇavism* of South India led by Rāmānuja and Śaṅkaradeva in Assam. For all the *Vaiṣṇavite* saints have different understanding of *Vaiṣṇavism*. Rāmānuja did not deny worship of other deities because he believes that if devotee worships any deity the entire prayers do not become fruitless but go to *Nārāyaṇa* i.e. *Viṣṇu* only. And in Śaṅkaradeva’s *Vaiṣṇavism* it is opposite to Rāmānuja. It can be said that Śaṅkaradeva’s *Neo-Vaiṣṇavism* movement could not succeeded in removing or erasing or demolishing Idol worships, animal or other beings sacrifices from our society which are still persistent in our prevailing society. No sustainable development and continuity of pure *Neo-Vaiṣṇavism* is seen except *Nāma-Ghara* and *Sattras*. If we say religion is to be service to humanity then neither *Śāktism* nor *Vaiṣṇavism* will persist status in our society.

Śaṅkaradeva believed in one God or God as person like *Rāma*, *Kṛṣṇa*, *Viṣṇu* etc which is

Supreme Person or Supreme Brahman that is without form or *Rūpa* i.e. *Nirākār* not *sākār*. God is the saviour or redeemer of sin or liberate all from all the bondage or rebirth of individual selves. But there is nothing called *mukti* or salvation from the *Samsāra*. There is no such an object to be achieved by one pointed bhakti or devotion to only One God which is Supreme or Brahman or *Śravaṇa* or *Kirtana* as Śaṅkaradeva said or there is nothing to be achieved by disinterested action or *Jñāna*. *Mukti* or salvation is itself in bhakti, karma or *jñāna*. How? One has to have the knowledge of bhakti and how to share it, because bhakti means partake or share. If one is a bhakta he is a sharer so if the bhakta or devotee has the knowledge sharing it in the institution then there is *mukti* or salvation. Similarly, action and *jñāna* are also. A person should have the knowledge of performing action how to perform it.

In concluding, it is seen that Śaṅkaradeva’s teachings are based on eternal truths, such as love, *ahimsā*, humility etc. His *Neo-Vaiṣṇavism* movement has lot impact in our society. We should be aware of his rejection of idol worships where animal or blood sacrifices are carried out. In the present era with the advancement of science and technologies these animal, blood sacrifices of any other being is nothing but a foolish job.

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