

**Drama and Society: Reflection of Medieval Assamese society in  
Ankia Bhaona**

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**Abstract:**

Sankaradeva first composed Assamese drama in the fifteenth century, taking elements from Indian *Natyashastra*, erstwhile Indian folk-dramas and local folk resources of Assam. Sankaradeva wrote plays to teach people and provide beauty. The play created by Sankaradeva is called *Ankiya Naat* and the performance of *Ankiya Naat* is called *Bhaona*. By producing Assamese drama, Sankaradeva showed the drama to Assamese people of the 15th-16th century, who at that time had to be satisfied only by hearing about Sanskrit drama. The influence of society is an important feature in *Ankiya Bhaona*. While propagating Vaishnava religion, Sankaradeva was greatly influenced by contemporary society. The impact of various phenomena of society is quite natural in *Bhaona* while it was an attempt to transmit in a useful way for all people. At that time, various elements of social, religious traditions, caste, culture, etc. were seen in *Ankiya Bhaona*. According to the pace of society, *Bhaona's* changes started to increase. At first, the *Ankiya Naat* was created to propagate Vaishnavism, but later it was converted into a medium of entertainment. When *Bhaona* received the royal sponsorship, the spirituality of *Bhaona* was reduced and began to appear new elements in the performance. This paper is a humble attempt to test the impact of society in *Bhaona* performance.

**Keywords:** Satra, Bhaona, Sankaradev, Ankiya Nat, Assam, Vaishnavism.

**Introduction:**

Literature has a deep connection with society. This relationship can be seen in various forms of literature. Among the various forms of literature, drama has the deepest connection with society. Drama is an art in which many people can enjoy the same time instead of one. People collectively enjoy drama. In plays, people like the consumer to do with collective consciousness. The real joy of the play is in stage form. When viewing the stage form of the play, the audience's eyes and ears become more active rather than subtle fantasies. Therefore, the audience is most satisfied when they see themselves on stage. Among all the literary forms, the influence of society in drama is the highest, in the same way, the influence of drama in society is more. (Bora, 128)

Sankaradeva composed the first play in Assam. Based on the rich folk drama, Sankaradeva produced the play through the Brajavali language. Simultaneously, Sankaradeva started a primary base of theatre in Assam through *Chinayatra*. But there was no written copy of this theatre. This play was acted out, drawing on materials such as cotton, clothes, etc. The artists performed this play by standing in front of this painting. *Chinayatra* was the first Bhaona made by Sankaradev. (Sarma, 31; Bhattacharya, 33) He composed six plays to propagate Vaishnavism, titled *Patni Prasad*, *Keligopal*, *Kalidaman*, *Rukmini Haran*, *Parijat Haran*, and *Rambijay*. These play is called *Ankiya Naats*. *Ankiya Naat* has some unique features. (1) The dominance of the *Sutradhara* (Narrator) (2) The use of poetic righteous songs, *slokas*, and *Bhatima* (A kind of prayer song) (3) *Brajavali* language, (4) Rhythmic prose (5) Music and dance. The plays of the *Ankiya Naat* model are a kind of dance-drama in which there are songs and dialogues in *Brajavali* interspersed with *slokas* and other pieces in Sanskrit. The dramatic story of Lord Krishna or Rama were taken from Hindu holy books. In the Sankaradeva's play, there is a certain mode of performance. At the beginning of the play, *Gayana-Bayana* (singers and instrumentalist) sing and dance like the *Purvaranga* of Sanskrit drama, then the narrator or *Sutradhara* starts the play with his dance and recites the *slokas* (Sanskrit verse). The *Sutradhara* then announces the story and then the actors are introduced through the directive of the *Sutradhara*. There are no scene and act divisions and different

episodes are strung together through the Sutradhara. In this way, Ankiya Bhaona was performed during Sankaradeva's time.

It is not found, what is the correct written date of Sankaradeva's plays except *Ramvijay*. Satyendranath Sarma described his approach, saying that *Patni Prasad* is the first drama of Sankardev (Sarma, 44). At the same time, Harichandra Bhattacharya would like to say that *Kaliyadaman* is the first play of Shankaradeva (Bhattacharya, 33). In *Ramvijay*, Sankaradeva added the date of his last play. This was the Saka era of 1490 or the Indian calendar year of 1568. Prior to this play, Sankaradeva completed all his other plays.

### **Social life of the medieval period in Assam:**

The state was not named Assam until the 12th century. This area was not in the political sense, but the geographical sense, this land was inhabited. The name and extent of the region were changed from time to time (Das, 9). This land was known as Pragjyotishpur, Kamrupa, Assam since Prehistorical period (Bardoloi, 23). The name Assam was earlier used to explain the eastern part of the region. After the arrival of the British, the name Assam was used to explain the entire state. The name Asom was first used to describe the Ahom people of this state (Bardoloi, 26). After Kamrupa, this state got the name Assam from Ahoms. In the Assam, The state of the Ahoms, Sankaradeva planted the seeds of Assamese nation. The courtyard in which Ahoms united Bodo, Badahi, Moran, Chutia, Koch, Kachari, Gosai, Bamun, Kalita, etc. and formed a comprehensive Assamese society, consisting of a mixture of assimilation and blood, the courtyard was cleaned by various tribe of Bodo origin and was named by Mongoloid Bodos. At the time of Sankaradeva, the society of Assam was a mixed society, associated with various religions. The Ahom brought all the small states together and brought them under one central rule. The Ahoms started the process of social integration by dissolving all social and religious groups but failed to subdue all the defeated local groups under one political discipline and central role. Till the last days of the Ahoms, the struggle with the defeated population continued. Kachari, Koch, Bhuyan, Chutia, Naga, Dafla and other communities tried to raise their heads as soon as they got the chance (Gogoi, 34). The Ahom rulers befriended some groups and brought them with them (Mahanta, 103). In this way, under Ahom rule, various communities formed a feudal society and adopted Ahom rule. The people of medieval Assam can be divided into two large groups. One was the Arian and

the other was a tribal group (Sarma, 196) The Ahom rulers, under the influence of the sword and the economic chain, forced all groups to live and follow equal social lives (Gogoi, 20). Many gods were worshiped in this big Ahom society. Brahminical people were arriving in this region from time to time. Various practices, such as Shakti Puja, Mother cult, Tree-Stone worship, and ethnic society culture were worshipped here. In the heart of that society, Arya Brahmanical religion was raised. But Aryan groups were not able to convert the ancient Serb-dominant tradition of aristocratic Brahminical religion. According to Mahanta the tribal kings of the region were converted to Brahminical Hinduism and under the patronage of these kings, the Hindu Brahminical religion was limited in the process of building a small society for combining and mixing Aryans and Mongols (29). The conduct of *Tantric* Brahmins was protective and biased towards people spread in all directions. Naturally, the ordinary people of Assam were finding it difficult to follow the Hindu Brahminical culture and maintained their own primitive beliefs and tradition. In some particular areas, the form of social order or social practice was different from the masses. Where upper-caste Hindus predominated, the new beginner of Vaishnavism practiced religious with strict discipline in social and personal spheres. In a society that was not dominated by upper-caste Hindus, there was no compulsion to completely bury the previous area of faith and behavior (Roychoudhury, 148)

The Ahom kings adopted Hinduism, but it was not the religion of the common tribal people. Each ethnic group had its customs, beliefs, and rituals, it was different from each other. Many of these groups were matriarchal. There was no caste discrimination or high caste among the people. This difference came after the influence of Hindu society and the prevalence of the category discriminatory production system (Roychoudhury, 148). The Ahoms were able to bring the people closer to the royal household by promoting an advanced agricultural system. Although the Ahom system of governance was feudal, between the ruler and the ruled, the lord-subjects relationship was rather than the master-slave. The kings established the Brahmins through the land, the pike (Mahanta, 59). The Brahmins, by converting the aboriginal people, who occupied that area into the lowest class of Sudras in society, formed small Aryan Brahmin societies and settled like small islands in the vast tribal ocean (Mahanta, 34). Caste-less tribal people had to join the caste-based system after conversion. Sankardeva was able to dispel the caste-based sentiments in religious conduct through his religion to a great extent, but he was not able to remove these distinctions in social spheres. It

cannot be said that the neo-Vaishnavism has destroyed the caste-based system in social areas. It cannot be said that Neo-Vaishnavism has destroyed the caste-based system in social areas. It depended on the population of Hindu people in the society, it did not depend on religion (Roychoudhury, 148). In the feudal society founded by the Ahoms, Sankaradeva began to propagate the Neo-Vaishnavism based on liberal humanism in the society of this time and even before that, Tantric power, religion mixed with the religion of non-Aryan tribes and took a distorted form. The Brahmins also got attracted to greed and incest, were away from the Veda prescribed karma. Brahmanical religion was misguided by following various Tantric powers and morals. For this reason, King Narayana rebuilt the Kamakhya temple, established the goddess and brought good Brahmins from Bengal to worship the goddess (Bezbaruah, 197). The Hindu common people had lost all possessions due to the effects of Hindu sacrifices and misconduct. This religion divided the society into various castes. At this time Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras - Aryan groups of these four castes were on one side and non-Aryan group of Bodo, Karbi, Kachhari, Milan, etc. were on the other side called Berber, Melech, Demon, Asura, etc. (Mahanta, 121). However, the caste system was much more flexible in Assam than in other regions of India. The reasons for this flexibility where the impact of castles and matriarchal tribal society of Brahmin society. The common people wanted freedom from the rigid rules and laws of the Brahminical religion. Unhappy tribes looked forward to a better life system. At this time, based on the benevolent humanity of Neo-Vaishnavism, Sankaradev was able to touch the subjects of the Ahom kingdom with ease. In this way, Sankaradev, including all the people, established a comprehensive society through the Neo-Vaishnavism.

### **Reflection of Society in Naat-Bhaona**

Sankaradeva was not only satisfied in propagating religion, but he also wanted to educate the people and also carried out literature and cultural activities as a medium of propaganda to attract people. He wrote poems, songs, lectures, etc. based on Vaishnavism and based on Bhagavat, composed plays and also acted to attract people. As the wise man, towards the end of the fifteenth century, Sankaradeva was trying to find a solution to the problem of racial discrimination, ascetic origins, etc. These problems shook the social life of Assam.

Sankaradeva found that the solution to these problems was in developing arts and culture and involving people in that development.

Sankaradeva donated free life to Assamese language, literature through the company of the common people of that time. The cultural program that Sankaradeva took, rather than direct publicity, had more value. Kirtan or melodies and music of Bhaona used to attract the common people more. With the smooth application of devotion, Sankaradeva assimilated and created coordination for various castes and tribes for the promotion of Vaishnavism. In this way, Sankaradeva and Madhavdeva broke the narrow barrier of the previous tribal society and formed a large Assamese society. Hiren Gogoi says that in the days of Sankaradeva, a large number of tribal people adopted Vaishnavism. Later, people like, Ahom, Deori, Maran, Chutia, Sonowal, etc. took extensive initiation into the religion of Sankaradeva (27). So Sankaradeva can be called the father of Assamese nation.

Sankaradeva propagated the devotional Vaishnava religion, which aimed at the common people rather than the royal family. The patronage of states also gave considerable energy to Hindu culture from time to time. Satyendranath Sarma has observed that Vaishnava Gurus gave more priority to the common people than the aristocracy (196). In the meantime, Sankaradeva faced indignation from the Ahom king and the Brahmin sect, but succeeded in propagating the religion over a large area. The Sankaradeva's play had more power to expand the new Vaishnava religion in the society. Through the medium of Bhaona attracts more people's minds than all others. This was a new thing for the people of that time. On seeing the Leela (Works of god) of God, the audience was fascinated by the devotion and got attracted towards religion. M Neog stats –“*Bhaona* is considered a great act of piety; it is not mere entertainment for the Vaishnava. It is a *Sadhana* or the exercise of the *Bhakti* religion. Even the *Bhagavata-Purana* enumerates *abhinaya* or the acting of the deeds of the Lord among the ways of devotion” (Neog, 2).

In Sankaradeva's time, the audiences were very simple. They hadn't seen the drama till then. At that time there was only folk theatre in Assam. Sankaradeva created perfect theatre as *Bhaona* for the first time in Assam. Sankaradeva used the *Bhaona* performance to achieve his goals of propagating and spreading Neo-Vaishnava religion. With this aim in mind, he took the stories of *Naat-Bhaona* from the holy book *Bhagavata-Purana*. There was also a shelter

of simplicity in the presentation of the façade. Sankaradeva's foresight from the composition of the play to the acting was admirable. Therefore, the social life of Assam Influenced Sankaradeva in a serious way and he also gave valuable contribution to the society .

Sankaradeva fulfilled the aspirations of making the best of *Krishna* or *Vishnu* through drama. To do this, he took into account the ordinary village society of that time, where men came close to the *Sutradhara* and the actors and listened to them. Sankaradeva understood very well that there was no benefit in removing these simple audiences from the stage or in the surroundings of *Maya*. So he composed *Bhaona* in such a way that every person can enjoy their own way. The knowledgeable people get to listen to Sanskrit verses, those who are interested in music get to listen to music, people who are fond of dance can see dance, devotees get Krishna devotion and common people get pleasure from masks and other elements of *Bhaona*. The *Ankiya* performance is the highest of all the religious obligation initiated by Sankaradeva. It is also believed that, among the *Satras*, *Bhaona* is considered more sacred than *Palnaam* (a kind of prayer-songs, rituals). According to Atulchandra Hazarika, In all other rituals of Vaishnavism, only *Shravan Kirtan* is the only means of devotion. But the effect of *Bhaona* is higher among people, this is proved today (72). The Assamese people still considere *Bhaona* as a secred things and performe and enjoy with holy mind.

In Neo-Vaishnavism, out of the nine types of devotion, all these are present in *Bhaona*. The nine forms of *Bhakti* are listed: (1) *Sravaṇa* (listening to Story of God or Name of God), (2) *Kirtana* (praying to God), (3) *Smarana* (remembering the teachings in ancient texts), (4) *Pada-savannah* (service to the feet of God), (5) *Archana* (worshiping of God), (6) *Namaskar* or *Vandana* (bowing to the divine), (7) *Dasya* (service to the divine), (8) *Sakhyatva* (friendship with the divine), and (9) *Atma-nivedana* (self-surrender to the divine). Hence the dramaturgy of the play or *Bhaona* illuminated the goal of Neo-Vaishnavism in the most serious way. *Bhaona*, the creation of Sankaradeva, was the main medium for the practice of *sravaṇa*, *kirtan*, *smarana*, *pada-sevana* *Archana*, *Vandana*, *Dasya*, *sakhyatva* and *Atma-nivedana* this nine types of *Bhakti*. *Bhaona* is a powerful medium for persistence of practice and behavior. The visual religiosity of *Bhaona* makes the *Bhakti* like hearing, praying more active.

In the ideal of Sankaradeva, Madhavdeva and the other religious *gurus* of later times also composed plays and these plays were also performed in Assam. The *satradhikars* tried to preserve this tradition. *Bhaona* performance was recognized as part of religious worship in Assamese Neo-Vaishnavism. When a new *satradhikar* or the authority of a Satra takes the garland as newly nominated position, there are traditions of composing a play and performing the same (Devgoswami, 150). As Kapila Vatsyayan says that Sankaradeva and his disciples Madhavdeva made the rules for writing the play and its performance mandatory to establish as the new head of Satra. In this way, the tradition of writing Ankiya play and *Bhona* became an integral part in Satra and *Namghars*. Although kirtan and Borgeet were popular, *Bhaona* was equally valuable (Vatsyayan, 101). Involving all people in the form of drama and acting tradition as worship of religion was certainly an extraordinary achievement of Sankaradeva. Therefore, through *Naat-Bhaona*, the people of Assam had got a sophisticated life and the people of Assam were lucky in the region. In other countries of the world, there are no examples of dramas being written and acted as a part of religious practice. But in Assam, it has been running as a living stream for five hundred years.

**Influence of society in the Post Sankaradeva's drama:**

Sankaradeva was able to bring all the people closer with the help of *Naat-Bhaona*, *Naam*-songs and rise above the caste-differences. But after the death of Sankaradeva, the deal broke down. Prafulla Mahanta has mentioned that the caste discrimination which was relaxed in the days of Sankaradeva started to become rigid again. Damodardeva first divided the Bhakti movement of Sankaradeva (101). Madhavdeva was given the responsibility of religion by Sankaradev. But Damodardeva refused to consider Madhavdeva as a leader or followers of Damodardeva did not accept either. Along with the high Hindu people of that time, Damodardeva was also not persuaded to limit the conduct of religion in *Nam-kirtan*, except in the practices of Brahmin ethics such as *Gayatri*, *Murti*, *Shaligram*, etc. Hence Damodardev and his followers followed a different Vaisnava cult. This creed came to be known as Brahma sanghati (Roychoudhuury, 98). In this way, the *Purus sanghati* led by Purusottam Thakur, grandson of Sankaradeva, *Nika Sangathi* led by Badalapadma Aata and Mathuradas Buda Atta, under the command of Madhavdeva and Kalsanghati Satra was created under Bhabanipuria Gopal Ata. Having the same faith in both the Vedic *Acharan* and the *Naam*-

religion was *Brahma Sanghati*, According to M Neog, The four principal Satras of Upper Assam. After doing a little work in *karma*, keep the faith in the *Naam* was *Purus Sanghati*-Purusottam Thakur, Thakur Aata, etc. Gopal Aata sect, who renounces all *karma*, keeps his faith in *Guru Charan* was *Kala Sanghati*, With the practice of extraction and keeping a clean faith, *Nika* or *Nistha Sanghati*- Padma Padma, Mathuradas Burha Ata. In the midst of this, the *Kaal Sanghati* always extreme creed, this community suffered the tyranny of the Kings (153). In this way, the Assam Vaishnava society was divided into four sub-sects. The effect of this partition was also seen in Assamese society and *Bhaona* also. The unity of Assamese society becomes weaker than earlier times. People started performing *Bhaona* as per their own way

The arrangement of the Satras in the hands of Sankaradeva did not achieve perfection. But in the days of Sankaradeva, all the devotees started the tradition of sitting in the *Namghar* (prayer house) under his leadership to perform *Naam Kirtan* and settle under a small society (Gohain, 100). Madhavdeva laid the foundation stone of the Satra Institute at Barpeta Satra and Damodardeva established the institutional Satra in full form like present in Assam (Sarma, 105). The propagated religions of Sankaradeva were very simple. This ideal was emphasized in easy recitation of the Lord's name and avoidance of ostentatious practice in full. But Damodardeva established Satra in a new form through rules and practices. The *Satradhikar* was the principal authority and the *Deka Adhikar* (deputy of *Satradhikar*) was the sub-authority in a Satra. Devotees performed religious duties while staying in the Satra permanently. The disciples of the Satra stayed in the village or city and rearing obedience to the Satra. The *Satradhikar* was the all in all in a Satra

In this context, Anil Royhaudhary said that the balancing character is seen in the handling method of the Barpeta Satra. In other Satras of Assam, devotees receive only slightly more respect than the slaves of *Satradhikar*. However, the status of authority may have been inherited or acquired in other genres (Roychoudhury, 113). This vision of the Satra and society has also reflected in *Bhaona*. In the history of Assamese drama, the number of plays composed by the *Satradhikars* is the highest. Plays written by other playwrights were very limited. The new *Satradhikar* needed to compose a play and act to sit in new positions. Therefore, there was an increase in the number of plays. In particular, these plays were

composed by *Satradhikas* till the post Sankaradeva period. Of course, other devotees of the Satras and the people of the village also composed Plays in the mother tongue. There was no prohibition of composing play by devotees of the Satras, but in the view of society, only the plays of the *Satradhikars* had gained recognition widely. Therefore, other people did not come forward to compose plays in the post Sankaradeva period. Sankaradeva was a unique playwright. No one could be able to show talent in composing drama like Sankaradeva in later times. But in the modern era, as democratic sentiment grew and ideas changed in society, many common people who were interested in drama came forward to compose play.

In Sankaradeva's time, there was a class of priests ruling the society. With the emergence of Sankaradeva, its authority and capacity were challenged. M Neog says that Sankaradeva's religion also gave birth to a priestly class. This class also came forward to rule the society (264-265). It was not unknown to Sankaradeva and Madhavdeva of that new category's feeling. Madhavadeva did not want to inherit one as the lord of religion. But which they did not want, it remained in society. The Satra institutions developed in different directions, but failed to separate the old Brahminical culture. Therefore, the Satras could not contribute to the society in all directions. Satra became a part of the feudal system. Sankaradeva, united with everyone with a generous attitude, preached the Neo-Vaishnavism intending to establish a wider society, Satra, the creation of this religion, started falling from its goal. This character of Satra undermined the unity of Assamese society. Hiren Gohain has said that the Satra culture of Assam has failed to improve the Brahmin culture and its caste discrimination. The feudal situation did not change. Rather formed as a pillar of civilized feudalism (Gohain, 105-106). In the first phase of the establishment, caste discrimination increased among the satras. The practice of caste discrimination continued in later times as well; People familiar as a lower class in the society started the movement demanding the right of entry into the satraps and temples. In Sankaradeva's time, the gurus of religion, chosen on ideal, spiritual strength, later adopted the heritage. All this was the cause of deterioration. Due to this caste discrimination, the character of Krishna or Gosai in *Bhaona* was not given to anyone except the Brahmin people (Devgoswami, 65). Atulchandra Hazarika mentions in *Manchalekha* that the character of Krishna was given to a boy of a Brahmin-gentleman. All the people showed respect for this character (Hazarika, 14). So Caste-discrimination affected *Bhaona*. Keswananda Devgoswami says that, It is said that *Kansa Badha Natak*, *Akrur*, *Sudama*, etc.

used to pay obeisance to Rama-Krishna, hence the character of Rama-Krishna was given only to the boys of Gosai Mahanta (Devgoswami, 65). The Unpleasant truth is that caste-discrimination was rooted in the society in such a way that it was unthinkable at that time to serve lower caste people by upper-class people. Of course in Assam, the caste system has become very relaxed at present. Nowadays, people of all castes perform all the characters of Bhaona. Instead of satra, the credit would be given to the society for relaxing this caste system. In this context, Anil Roychudhuri has written that one of the main reasons for the changing of racialism is the constant change of the social order (Roychoudhury, 149). The religion, the caste, the society in which all the citizens of the independent India have equal democratic rights and equal recognition. This was not the arrangement in the feudal society of olden days. The new system has introduced the purification of old rites.

The patronage of the *Ahom* kings expanded the *Satras*. Under the patronage of the royal family, *Brahma Sanghi Satras* such as Auaniti, Garamur, Dakhinpat, Kuruwabahi were honored as royal status. The *Ahom* kings and ministers enriched the satras by donating land and property. The disciples of the Satra grew. Like the *Ahom* kings, positions were also created in the Satras. The feudal contract of the Satras became with the king. S N Sarma says-

It cannot be denied that the satras which largely contributed towards the cultural development of Assam and have still preserved the somber appearance of a religious institution are those satras which received royal help at one time or another. Freedom from economic worries gave opportunities to those living under the protection of the satra to cultivate the art of dancing, music, wood-carving, and painting, etc. besides usual religious duties (Sarma, 189).

The *Ahom* kings also tortured peoples of *Satras*. At first, Sankaradeva and Madhavdeva were moved by the suffering of the *Ahom* kings. In the days of *Ahom* king Gadadhar Singh, the tyranny of the royal family reached its climax. Gadadhar Singh captured Satras property. The authority of the Dakhinapat Satra was eye-wrenching and the Adhikars of other Satras were diluted. Fearing the king the Adhikar of Auaniati Satra that time was fled from Satra to Sadiya (Sarma, 189). The main reason for this hatred of Gadadhar Singh was that some Satras had become restrictive in the governance system of *Ahom* State. As mentioned earlier,

the patronage of the kings increased the wealth of the Satras. The number of Satras was also increased. In many cases, the establishment of a Satra became a livelihood-employment method (Sharma, 148). The number of devotees in Satras was also increasing. To escape the labor or *pika* system of the Ahom kingdom, devotees in the Satra Institute spent their lives becoming devotees instead of labor. Hence this atrocity was done to secure Ahom feudalism.

The growth of Satra also influenced the *Naat-Bhaona*. When the Satras were becoming wealthier, the number of Satras increased. The relatives of a Satradhikar established new Satras. On the other hand, to become a new Satradhikar, he must compose a new play and must perform the same. So everyone started composing plays or the number of playwrights increased. But most of these playwrights did not have merit. That is why the quality of these plays started to decline.

*Bhaona* was also introduced at Ahom Royal Court under the patronage of the kings. This performance also showed influence in Bhaona. To satisfy the Ahom kings and ministers, the strongmen acted *Bhaona* with great grandeur. Upon the arrival of the royal court, some changes were made to Bhaona. The rights of various Satras demonstrated Bhaona in the court of Ahom kings Rudrasingha, Shavasingha, Rajeswarsingha, Kamleswarsingha, etc. Seeing this *Bhaona*, the king and the minister used to donate money for Satras. Sometimes kings also got enchanted of *Bhaona* and take up religion. *Bahowa* (clown) was also introduced in *Naat(drama)* to be held in the royal court. Various masks and effigies of various animals were also made and shown at *Bhaona* of the Royal Court.

In the *Bhaona* to be held at the Royal Court, entertainment was more recognized than righteous instructions. From this time, the *Bhaona* began to retract the spiritual direction. Satyendranath Sarma wrote that the structure and acting of the play changed when the *Anakia* drama came out of the four walls of religious institution and entered the common people and the royal family (75). In the royal household and village, *Bhaona*'s popularity was increasing. Therefore, it cannot be said that all the speculation of the *Anakia drama* was defended in the drama between the Royal Court and the common people.

**Conclusion:**

The Author cannot neglect the influence of society. In indirect or direct form, the influence of society reflected in literature. Sankaradeva is also not an exception to this. Reflection of contemporary society is seen in the *Ankiya Naat*. With the practical purpose for society, Sankaradeva arranged for the promotion of Vaishnava religion and as the medium for this purpose, he used drama. In that case, the development of the story or the development of the event in the Ankiya drama was interrupted. The objectives of the play's composition also often disrupted the presence of society. Although Sankaradeva's social life played a pivotal role in the development of the plays. The change of society played an important role in the transformation of drama. As Assam entered the modern era, entertainment elements became widely used in *Bhaona*. In the present day, the phenomenon of society has changed the eyebrows in a very strong way. *Bhaona* is coming away from the old times and moving closer to the modern drama. This is an important question as to whether *Ankiya drama* is capable of making an official introduction to future Assam.

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