CHAPTER- VIII

CONCLUSION

After strict inspection and hard field work 90 (ninety) Satras in total have been found in South Kamrup. Amongst these there are 48 (forty eight) numbers of Mahāpuruṣīyā Satras and 24 (twenty four) numbers miscellaneous Satras. There are 5 (five) disappeared Satras. On the other hand, another name of 13 (thirteen) Satras are mentioned in the Guru Carit Kathā but the existence of these Satras have nowhere to be found.

We are ascertained that Mahāpuruṣa Śaṅkaradeva was the founder of Satra tradition in Assam and that tradition was made full-fledged by his followers. When the Neo-Vaiṣṇavite religion flourished in other parts of Assam, at that time so many minor feudal tribal Rājās reigned in Dakṣiṇ Kūl. In this tribal populated area of Dakṣiṇ Kūl the air of Neo-Vaiṣṇavite cult was carried for the first time by Gāro Gobinda Ātā, the direct and favourite disciple of Śaṅkaradeva. Gāro Gobinda Ātā played the role of pioneer in the building of the bridge of unity of Bar Asam (Greater Assam) by bringing the innumerable people of tribal
and Garo community of Dakṣiṇ Kūl to Mahāpuruṣīyā faith. Mahāpuruṣa Śaṅkaradeva was the creator of this bridge building whereas Gāro Gobinda Ātā was its genuine representative.

Mahāpuruṣa Mādhavadeva was the real founder of Satra culture in South Kamrup. Mādhavadeva inaugurated two Satras by lighting the Banti by his own hands in South Kamrup. The first one is the Mālacā Satra (Later on transferred to Chamarīyā) and the second one is the Bar Herāmda Satra. Besides, he appointed two Dharmācāryas in Dakṣiṇ Kūl. Mādhavadeva spread out the Neo-Vaiṣṇavite religion by travelling various places of Dakṣiṇ Kūl for 6 (six) months. Those places where he visited later on Satras grew up. Therefore, Mahāpuruṣa Mādhavadeva is regarded as the genuine founder of Satra culture in Dakṣiṇ Kūl.

In my research work I found there are 48 numbers of Mahāpuruṣīyā Satras. These Mahāpuruṣīyā Satras have been influencing deeply on the life of the people of South Kamrup since earliest time. Each Satras enable to survive their own existence staying in their own ideology and the jurisdiction for hundred and hundred years. Of course, not a single Satra can be divided under the banner of a particular Samhati. Because of the changing of the time; the social customs, conduct and
behaviour have also been changing. It is seen that though the Satras have been maintaining the Mahāpurūṣiyā customs yet the practices of 14 prasaṅgas have been stopped in many Satras. Only in two times that means in the morning and in the evening prasaṅgas they finish their daily prayer services instead of three times. But yet, even many centuries back the Mahāpurūṣiyā Satras of South Kamrup can be able to survive the ideology of Neo-Vaiṣṇavite cult.

The administrative side of the Mahāpurūṣiyā Satras of South Kamrup is noticeable. The supreme authority of the administrative and spiritual sides of the Satra is the Adhikāra or Satrādhikāra. In absence of the Satrādhikāra the Dekā-Adhikāra look into the matters of the Satrādhikāra. The portfolio of the Satrādhikāra is hereditary. To run the Satra smoothly there is a Satra Paricālanā Samiti in each Satras. The President and the Secretary are the heads of the Satra Paricālanā Samiti. In addition to this, there are some other executive members in this Samiti. Amongst these members the Mazumdār, Bharālī, Bar deurī, Pālideurī, Bhāgavati, Pāthak, Sutrādhār, Dāināpālī, Gāyan, Bāyan, dihādār, medhi, Rājmedhi, Pākhi medhi, Bar Sātolā, Pācanī, Barā, Khātaniār, Mudiār etc. are mentionable. In some Satras Mazumdār acts as Secretary. The members of this Paricālanā
Samiti are selected by the Satra villagers yearly. There are no Satrādhikāras in some Satras of South Kamrup. Those Satras wherein no Satrādhikāras, are run by the Satra Paricālanā Samiti.

Amongst the Mahāpuruṣiyā Satras of South Kamrup Chamarīyā Satra is the prime one. We consider that the historical sources which are found in the Chamarīyā Satra will be the remarkable help in the writings of the history of South Kamrup. We can learn about the political and cultural history of that time from the Copper Plate Inscription preserved in the Chamarīyā Satra. The Math that was built during the reign of Ahom Swargadew Lakshmi Singha clearly indicates the architectural design of Ahom era. In the same way it can be learnt about the name of the king, date and year, language etc. from the coins preserved in the Satra. Again from the Metal Seal etc. we can learn the relations of the Chamarīyā Satra with king’s court along with the other official activities under which process it maintained. On the other hand from the manuscripts found out at Satra proved that the practises of literature occurred at Chamarīyā Satra from the earliest time. From this it is also proved that the Chamarīyā Satra has been contributing a remarkable contributions to Assamese literature. Besides these the flowers of gold and silver, other articles, sculptures inscribes
on wood, stone etc., wooden musks, various utensils of bell and brush metal, tanks, stairs of stone and other numerous historical sources preserved in the Satra will be considered as the special addition in the cultural, religious, social and political history of South Kamrup. Over and above the Guru Āsana made of wood by Mādhavadeva with his own hands, the Akṣaya Banti, Sewār Vastu, image of Caturbhuj made of wood etc. all the articles that the Chamarīyā Satra can able to preserve for many centuries without any loss is a justifiable matter. On the other hand, the traditions that maintained for many centuries increase more importance of the Chamarīyā Satra.

The impact of Satras are very deep on religious, social and cultural life of South Kamrup. The Satras which were born in the 16th century A.D. able to create the renaissance in the religious aspects in South Kamrup. The Satras have been influencing socially in such a way that all the people of various caste, creed and colour are continuing their life-style through the ideology of the Satra without their knowledge. Even the impact of the Satras are very distinct on the tribal society also. It is known from our study that the tribal people have been playing an important role in holding up the Satra culture in South Kamrup. It is known that an old lady of Rabha community has been
looking after the Mālacā Satra for many years. Again it is also 
known from the documents of the Śrī Śrī Gajamuktā Viṣṇu 
Satra that the idol of Viṣṇu, the prime article of the Satra and the 
Kīrtanghar were received from people of Garo community.

The impact of the Satras on cultural aspects also very distinct. 
Besides giving the teaching of the Anākharī Śikṣā to illiterate 
rural people, the Satras have served as a cultural zone. Teaching 
the practice of literature, drama, dance, architecture, sculpture 
and fine arts etc. the Satras have created the inseparable relations 
with the cultural life of South Kamrup like the two sides of one 
coin. We are ascertained from our study that in the Satra tradition 
of South Kamrup the women are placed on a high position and 
they are well-respected. It can be pointed out as a proof that the 
women are regarded as Ai, means they are respectfully addressed 
as mother and they are allowed to enter in the Kīrtanghar in 
most of the Satras of South Kamrup.

Though the Satras observe the various anniversaries and 
festivals yet the death anniversary of the founder of the respective 
Satras are observed magnificently and grandourly. This particular 
festival which is celebrated for two or three days is called Sabhā

   1st Annual Rāipārā Conference, p. 8.
2. ibid, p. 12
or Rāij Sabha. People of various communities gather irrespectively of caste, creed, colour and language in the festivals resulted unity and brotherhood among the people. Regarding the festivals the Boat-Race (Nāo-Khel) competition is specially mentionable. This Boat-Race competition is one of the remarkable festivals of Assam.

Judging from the historical point of view it is impossible to evaluate the heritage of the national life of South Kamrup without Satra-culture. But under the perspective of the present social system it is also important to analyse the role of the today’s Satras. We think that to strengthen the Satra-sided society, those persons who decorate the place of the Dharmaguru instantly hurt the sentiment of their own disciples through untouchable - impure conduct, should be perceived the pleasant relationship between the Bhakat and Bhagavān through the observation of self-dedication to God. We observed a matter, as has been stated by Dr. K. D. Goswami that the jurisdiction of the best amongst the Satras has been occurred through the strength of property and wealth rather than spiritual improvement. The number of Satras are increasing even today. In addition to the Satras there are so many such kind of religious units like Saṅgha, Samāj,

Saṅga etc. are also in South Kamrup. But it is a matter of grief that it seems to be a separate - one individual unit rather than holding social unity.

Again taking the advantage of generosity of Satra and society uncultured music, yatrā, Saṅkīrtan and non-vaiśṇava dance, song etc. that enters into some Satras turn disaster to Assamese socio-cultural life at present days. The Satras should be conscious in this regard. It is universally accepted that the society is changeable. Hence, keeping ahead the ideology of Śaṅkaradeva the Satras of 21st century A.D. should endeavour to take step for building up a healthy society.

Though the spreading of education is increasing at this time the morality is almost going to take farewell. Today having fallen in the economic problems the young generation is reckoning the dark-future. We assume that the Satras have much responsibilities in this regard. At this time the Satras should come forward to solve these problems. The Satras should adopt a mission to turn to the real path of humanity for the young generation through the moral and religious teaching.

We suppose that young generation can be attracted towards the religion along with the building up a healthy society by showing the path of work-culture which is suffering in the
economic problems. A vast area of land is lying barren in so many Satras. If we are able to make the young generation self-dependent through agriculture on the basis of co-operative society in those waste land then the work culture must grow up with the removal of economic problems. By this the young generation will be attracted towards the Satra-culture and religion also.

The Satra is not only the institution of a particular class. The Satras of South Kamrup constitutes with the co-operation of the various groups of people from Garo, Rabha, Kachari, schedule tribe to Brahmin and Kayastha, Hence, it is the sacred duty for the Satras to save the religion of the Mahāpuruṣa avoiding the caste, colour, high and low etc. It is the high time to bring the non-Vaiṣṇava to Vaiṣṇava through the main truth of Sarana, Bhajana and Bhakti given by the Guru.

Culture is a flowing river, rectification of culture is needed if and when required. It is desirable to correct the past errors and remaining defect. Let the leading Dharmācārya to analyse the past orthodoxy limitations without any affection. Let them to self-analyse. We should know that religion can be able to set up in the soul of mankind, not to make feel through external custom-practice, orthodoxy etc.
It should be the prime duty for the Satras to think and prescribe about the social system and culture given by the Neo-Vaiśṇavite movement so that it would be grow up with more strength and development adjusting with the present modern age. We should be conscious about that matter at any moment that would not be harmful to this social system and culture through our any words and activities. Analysing through intense scrutiny with organising aspects, when it is done for the welfare of the mankind, the Satra-culture of South Kamrup would be established in the heart of the people and then the social responsibilities are also would be well-executed.

At the very present time though the criticism arises regarding the role of the Satras, it must be admitted by all that the impact of the Neo-Vaiśṇavite movement on the cultural life of South Kamrup is more and great. By the dint of wealthy cultural and firm social bindings that given by the medieval period to Daksin Kūl, the Assamese culture and society of South Kamrup through various historical disasters and intrigue also able to maintain own existence.

The condition of the Mahāpuruṣīyā Satras of South Kamrup which bear the Vaiśṇava culture and historical heritage is pathetic. The condition of so many Satras are deplorable. The condition
including the main *Kirtanghars* along with the other establishments are also inadequate. The main reason of all these are the economic crisis. To conduct the Satra affairs of each Satra so many lacs of rupees are required per year. But without having proportionate income the condition of the Satras have been deteriorating day by day. Again the lands granted to the Satras during the reign of the Ahom Swargadews are taken over by the government under jurisdiction through legitimate process. Consequently the main income sources of the Satras came to an end. On the other hand the floods that happened in every year besides weakening it stands as a bar to the development of the Satras. If there are no any steps to prevent the erosions of rivers and floods, immediately so many Satras will be collapsed. Moreover, without having any economic aids from government it will be the problem of the Satras to survive. Besides, it is an inevitable duty of the government to protect and to keep well-conditioned of these rare Satras. But the prevailing government does not take any action in this regard. Though it is known about one or two schemes that are taken by the government yet it is not come into force in practical field. These Satras are survived only by the donations, *pranāmies* and well-wishes of the Satra villagers.
The earlier cheerful heritage and gravity are also being decreased of the Satras. According to our conceptions the main reason of this neglected condition of the Satras are changing social system and influence of prejudice. Moreover, the then Satra villagers through which they were fastened with the social responsibilities, due to the loosening of that social system also, it has influenced the social and internal system of the Satras. On the other hand, in this present scientific, machinary and materialistic age most of the people have no mentality to absorb himself with the religion and spiritualism. Yet we think it should be our duty as well as the government to protect the cultural heritage and historical sources that are in the Satras.

It is come to our knowledge that in lack of preservation lots of manuscripts written in Sāñci barks and cotton leaves are destroyed in the Satras. What has been remained at present in the Satras are also not preserved in and adequate method. Those things that are in the Satras like inscriptions, stairs of stone, old stands of native lamps, wooden musks, other utensils, furniture architectures and sculptures are lying in a neglected condition. These historical sources should be well-systemised for the adequate preservation by examining through the specialist. There should be organised a museum in a suitable place of South
Kamrup to preserve these historical and cultural records and monuments. In this regard the government and archaeology department should take initiative. Besides, the Satras can be built as a centre of tourism for the tourist. The tourism department of government may take initiative in this regard.

The research on Satra culture is a very important work. It is assumed that the society would get a lot of new information about the Mahāpurusīyā Satras of South Kamrup from this research work. It is also expected that the today’s young generation would have the inspiration to establish it in national level through the modern thinking after being known about the historical background, organisation, management, structure and culture of the Satras. On the other hand assumption goes that the historical sources found in the Chamarīya Satra would build up the history of South Kamrup in a new way. It is thought that this research work will increase the unity among the people along with the spreading of national consciousness. The problems of the Satras and their way of solutions have been shown in this research work. It is expected that the national heritage would be preserved when step forward through this way as has been shown in this research work and the society would be also benefitted.