DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS CULTS PREVALENT AMONG THE ASSAMESE HINDUS

The three sects - the Saiva, the Sakti and the Vaiśnava have been occupying prominent places in the religious and social life of Assam. It is however, not an easy task to determine their exact origin, not withstanding the fact it can be presumed that the worships of Śiva, Sākti and Viṣṇu have been prevalent in Assam since very ancient times.

Śaivism was invogue in ancient India. In the Sabhā-Parva of Mahābhārata there is the praise of king Bhagadatta of Kāmarūpa who has been termed as the friend of Śiva. From this we may guess the idea that Śaivism was prevalent during the reign of Bhagadatta. Another authority, the Kalika-Purāṇa even goes to prove that Śaivism was a prevalent sect even prior to the reign of king Naraka. It has also been mentioned in Kalika-Purāṇa that Viṣṇu selected the place for Kirats with the permission of Śiva. The Brīhat-Dharma-Purāṇa states that Lord Śiva taking the dead body of sati while wondering about fell the yonimandal (genital part) on the hill of Kubjikapith. At that time the yonimandal of sati was transformed into a blue stone. Henceforth the hill was known as Nilachala where in Devi Kāmākhyā was residing. It is also mentioned in Kalika-Purāṇa that the dominant Goddess of Kāmarūpa was Kāmākhyā before king Naraka subjugated Kāmrūpa. It is also known that Devī was co-existing with Śiva in

2. "sa sa desa swarājārthe purbaingupta sa sambhunā" Kālikā-Purāṇa. 38/96
Nilachal hill till the fall of the yonimandal on it.6 Hence it may be said that Śiva and Sākti were equally prominent in Pragjyotish Kāmarūpa from ancient times.

The trace of Vaiṣṇavism was also seen along with Śaivism and Śaktism in Assam. Vaiṣṇavism evolved centring Lord Viṣṇu. The history of this cult is old. A few names of Viṣṇu are however found in the Rigveda. Inspite of such mentions, He is not regarded as supreme deity. He is the saviour of human beings in Mahābhārata. Viṣṇu has been described as the best god in Satapatha Brāhmaṇa7 and Taitiriya Āranyaka8. There is the mention of Viṣṇu in Katopanishada9. It is mentioned in Taitiriya Āranyaka that Viṣṇu, Nārāyana and Krisna are the same and inseparable.10

Śaṅkaradeva propagated Neo-Vaiṣṇavism in Assam in the mediaeval period. According to him Krisna is one of the incarnations of God. This incarnation, the Bhāgavata Purāṇa reads, is the purṇa-avatāra, viz., all qualities of God have been manifested through Him. He is of course known by some other names such as Rāma, Hari, Nārāyana etc. Such being is only to be worshipped in the cult propagated by Śaṅkaradeva and his disciple Mādhavadeva. Other two preceptors-Dāmodaradeva and Harideva competent contemporaries of Śaṅkaradeva also spread Vaiṣṇavism with slight speciality of motto in their cult. The speciality is that they agree to the performance of Veda-prescribed rituals in the path of devotion to Viṣṇu.

These three cults are prominently in vogue today in Assam.

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7. Satpahbhrahman 14/12
8. Taitiriya Āranyaka 5/1
10. Op-cit 10/11
3.1 ROLE OF SÁIVISM:

Siva is the most popular God of all the Gods and Goddesses of Hindu Pantheon. He is the God, bestower of blessings and He may satisfied very easily and that is why he is called Asutosa. Both the tribals and the non tribals and even the Vaiṣṇavas and the Śāktas, the rich and the poor, the barren, the diseased, the quacks or Assam venerate Śiva with great esteem. While other Gods and Goddessess are living in heaven or some unknown places, mount Kailasa is Śiva's abode. He is believed to live on the big tree like peepal or in the creamation ground. He is a poverty-stricken family holder and lives on begging. He is contented if somebody offers a cilim of hemp. Wearing tiger skin, trident in hand, with matted hair and long beared, besmearing the body with ashes, using snake as sacred thread, this Śiva in His anthropomorphic form is very familiar among the masses.

From ancient time to the present day Sáivism has been playing an important role in the religious outlook of the Hindus. "Both in legends and history Siva worship appears to have been the most popular form of religion in early Assam both amongst the aboriginal and Aryanised people." The popularity of Śiva cult in ancient Assam may be ascertained from the existence of greater number of institutions of Śiva worship. The Kālikā-Purāṇa clearly shows that the holy places of Kāmarūpa, where the places connected with Śiva worship are larger in number than the places associated with Devī and Viṣṇu. Rai Bahadur Gunabhi Ram Baruah has mentioned that Siva worship in the linga form was introduced by a king Jalpesvara of present Jalpaiguri district of west Bengal. Mention is made of

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12. According to B.K. Barua the "number of places associated with Siva, Visnu and devi are respectively fifteen, four and five." Cultural history of Assam, henceforth abbreviated as CHAP. VI P. 162. no. 6.
numerous sacred places in the *Kālikā-Purāṇa* and many of them are dedicated in the name of Śiva. It is also mentioned in the same scripture that Śiva was worshipped by the Kiratas, before Naraka who was supposed to have introduced the cult of mother Goddess in old Kāmarūpa. “From historical records it appears that all the principal royal dynasties of early Assam were in some way associated with Śiva.” Bisva Simha who founded the royal dynasty of Koch Bihar was a staunch devotee of Śiva and he claimed to be the descendant of God. Ahom king Rudra Simha rendered into Assamese a part of the Sanskrit *Śiva-Purāṇa*.

In the mediaeval period of Assam Śaivism had a wide popularity. Śri Śārikaradeva, the preacher of the Neo-Vaiṣṇavism in Assam, was named after Śiva and Śāṅkara. It is described in the biographical works of Śārikaradeva that his father Kusumbara worshipped Gopesvar Śiva to bless him with a son. Mādhavadeva the closed disciple of Śārikaradeva once received order from his elder brother to worship Śiva on the *Śiva Caturdasi* day. Rāmānanda, a biographer of Śri Śārikaradeva gave the description of the religious atmosphere in Assam before the advent of Neo-Vaiṣṇavism. He wrote “people did not worship Kṛiṣṇa or perform the deeds sacred to Hari. They on the otherhand, would fain worship Bhairava and consider it to be the greatest religious. They made offerings of blood of tortoises and goats to the deity and as a sacred drink (prasāda).”

Many people perform Śiva worship on the *Kṛiṣṇa Caturdasi* tithi (14th. lunar day of the dark half of a month) of Phalguna (Feb.-March) of the year. Many people observe this day as Śivaratri *Vrata*. Jatiyā Bābā, Bhāngrā or Bhāngurā, Lengtā Bābā, Laṅkeswar, Dudhnāth are some of the popular epithets of Śiva.

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It is mentioned in the *Daranga Raj - Varisāvalī*, a chronicle of the Koch-dynasty, that once king Naranārayana undertook a military expedition against the Ahom king. Before the expedition he worshipped Śiva according to the sastric rites. But Śiva appeared before him in a dream and exhorted the king to worship him in tribal mode of rites. Accordingly the king made arrangement for performance of rites by the kachari soldiers on the bank of the river Sonkos. Ducks, Pigeons, liquor, cooked rice were offered and buffalos, swine, cocks and he-goats were sacrificed. Deodhani dance was also performed. Afterwards Naranārayana issued an order that in the temples lying on the north bank of the Brahmaputra (North side of Gohai Kamal road) Śiva would be worshipped by the Koches - Meches and the Kacharis in accordance with their traditional rites and on the south bank of the river by the Brahmin priest. From the above it is clear that Śiva was worshipped according to both the sastric rites as well as tribal methods. "A curious practice of animal sacrifice is in vogue even now in the Śiva temples of Assam. On the occasion of the Śiva caturdasi festival, castrated goats are strangled to death in the precincts of the temples. Their flesh is cooked and a huge feast is held at night in the temples." There were some dancing women known as Nati or *Devadāsis* in the Śiva temples. The women led an unmarried life. Such dancing women were found in the Śaiva temples such as Dubi-Parihareswar, Negheriting, Umānanda, Mādhava temple of Hajo, Kāmākhyaūdhām, Pingaleswar, Visvanāth Śiva temple and so forth.

Śiva to the mind of the masses is more a human being than a heavenly God. He is a good householder and leads a peaceful family life. Blessings are offered by the elders to newly married couple by chanting "*haragauri basati baok*" i.e.; let your conjugal life be happy as that of Hara and Gauri.

In the mantra literature, Śiva is conceived to be the remover of all the diseases. The quacks compel the evil spirit to abandon the ailed person by chanting the following mantras:

Śri māhādevaḥ humkār
cāidyā bhūbanar dekhi nīrantar
hum hum humkār carīya lankā pār
nāhibī amukār ghar bāri simāi sncār
āse pāse yadi tai raś
isvar māhādevaḥ mātba khāś
Śāṅkarar bacan sirat dhāri
māro byāḍi panikrītya kari.

"The utterance (humkār) of Mahādeva is heared in the fourteen worlds. You disease, go to Lanka leaving the boundary of the household. If you remain somewhere near the house you will eat the head of Mahādeva. Keeping on head the words of Śāṅkara, I kill you disease. 19 Many episodes of Śiva have been narrated in the folk songs, tales, legends etc. In tokārigū, it is mentioned that Śiva has made the tokārī (a musical instrument). In Budha Gobātī nam we find the poverty striken life of Śiva. In Bhāṅguri sevār gīṭ we find the local or folk form of Śiva that he carries a bag of hemp on shoulder, his body is besmeared with ashes, he rides on the bullock and is contended when somebody offer him a leaf of bel tree. 20

If we come to the tribes of the regions we find that Śiva is the most popular God among them. "The Boro culture is a part and parcel of the Mongloid (Kirata) culture. “ 21 "The Boros of the Northern bank of the Brahmaputra valley narrate their origin of creation in

20. Ibid. P. 189.
relation to the worship of Bathou the supreme God among the Boros."  

The Kacharis claim that Śiva was their progenitor. They worshipped him in the name of Śiva, Gitā, dāmbrā, khariyā, Śrībarāy (Śibrāi), Bathau etc. The Rabhas identify Him with Lāngā, the principal deity of the tribe. The Karbis of the plains worship Him in the name of Mahādat. "The Tiwas call Him Phā - Mahādeu." Siva and Parvati are worshipped in the name of Girā - Girāci or Pīsvādemā by the Deuri-Chutiyas.

Śiva is a compromising deity of the different sects of Hindu religion. Besides the Sāktas and the Śaivas, the Vaiṣṇavas also honour Śiva without hampering their own ideology. Śāṅkaradeva, the Neo-Vaiṣṇava saint and poet composed several lines in his Kīrtana and Rukmini-harana Kāvya in honour of Śiva. Ram Sarasvati another poet of Neo-Vaiṣṇava period composed a couplet Bhima carita, by name depicting Śiva as a cultivator.

In the Śiva temples besides daily worship, festivals and ceremonies are held on some auspicious days during the year. In spite of the wide popularity of Śaivism there are no definite Śaiva gurus and apostles in Assam. Śaivism has been mixed up with the Saktism and Śiva and Sakti are revered equally.

3.2 ROLE OF SĀKTISM:

In the whole of India and especially in the Eastern India the tradition of Sakti worship has been enjoying important place. Even in Indian philosophy also the impact of Saktism is far reaching. The role of Saktism cannot be overlooked not only in religion and

22. Ibid.
27. Ibid. P. 96.
philosophy but also in the various fields of the national life of India. Such as nationalism and the freedom movement of India. “Guru Govinda Singh composed the *Chandī-Kāvyā* in order to encourage the feeling of nationalism among the Sikhs in Punjab. Bankim Chandra conceived the motherland India as the Goddess Sākti and this conception was a source of inspiration for the freedom fighters of our nation.”28

Subramanyam Bharati a renowned poet of Southern India composed *Pānicālir Sapat* in which the enunciated the cult of Sākti. “Many of freedom fighters of India who sacrificed their lives for the sake of the freedom of India, were inspired by the Sākticult. They used to take vows before the Goddess Kāli to sacrifice their lives for the sake of their nation.”29 The impact of Sākticult cannot be overlooked in the field of religion and philosophy of India. No religious set up has been able to overlook the influence of Sākticult.

According to the Haft Iqlim, there was in Kāmarūp a class of persons called Bhogīs who were voluntary victims.30 From the time when they announced that the goddess had called them, they were treated as privileged persons; they were allowed to do whatever they liked, and every woman was at their command; but when the annual festival came round, they were killed.” The following note on the religious life of the Chutiyas of Assam is significant: “The religion of the Chutiyas was a curious one. They worshipped various forms of Kali with the aid not of the Brahmanas but of their tribal priests or Deoris. The favourite form in which they worshipped this deity was that of Kesai Khati, ‘the eater of raw flesh’, to whom human sacrifices were offered. After their subjugation by the Ahoms, the

29. Ibid.
Deoris were permitted to continue their ghastly rites; but they were usually given for the purpose, criminals who had been sentenced to capital punishment. If none were available, victims were taken from a particular clan, which in return was accorded certain privileges. The person selected was fed sumptuously, until he was plump to suit the supposed taste of the goddess, and he was then decapitated at the copper temple at Sadia, or at some other shrine of the tribe. Human sacrifices were also formerly offered by the Tipperas, Kacharis, Koches, Jaintias and other Assam tribes, and it is thus easy to see how they came to be regarded favourably by the Tantric sect of Hinduism which is believed to have had its origin in this corner of India.31 “In different parts of South India, the goddess Durga was worshipped with blood sacrifice.”32 “In Bengal, the goddess Kali is worshipped with animal sacrifices.”33

Saktism was a predominant religion in Assam since the days of Narakasura. It is mentioned in the Kālikā-Purāṇa that at the instruction of Viṣṇu, Naraka introduced Devī worship at Nilachal hillock. Kāmākhya is the yoni pitba of the Tantric as the genital organ of Sati had fallen on the hillock. It is mentioned in the same scripture that Kāmākhya came Herself secretly to satisfy her amour (Kama) with Śiva. Mother Goddess and Goddess of love seem to mingle together in Kāmākhya. B. Kakati has thoroughly discussed the probable etymology of the word Kāmākhya and inferred that the word is of Austric origin. Further he states: “On the basis then of similarities in mere sound and sense in the formations of Skt-Kama, Austric Kamoi, Shinto Kami and also on the basis of correspondence of certain rites and customs, it may be tentatively assumed that the yoni-goddess sprang up amongst peoples with leaning towards ancestor-worship and believing in the protective powers of an Ancestral Mother and

31. Ibid, P. 42.
33. Ibid. P. 55.
that she migrated into Assam with the migrations of the Austric peo-

dles. From the above it is evident that Kāmākhyā was originally a
deity of some tribes and later on she was Aryanised. Ther were Garo
or Mech Pujaries in the temple. King Bisva Simha got first information
about the deity from an old woman belonging to the Mech community.
Even now she is the most popular Goddess amongst the various tribes
of the region. Even today the non christian Khasis (i.e. traditional
Khasis) worship guardain Goddess Kāmākhyā in their homestead
regularly with devotion. From this point of view also it can easily be
assumed that once the worship of the Goddess was popular amongst
the Khasis. Similarly most of the traditional and Hinduized tribals of
Assam, worship Mother Goddess Kāmākhyā. The religious history
of Assam centres round Kāmākhyā and she is assumed to be the
manifestations of many sastric and local Goddesses.

The cult of Mother Goddess is worshipped by the Jayantias.
The Jayantias worshipped like Hindus before the publicity of christian
religion of Englands. It is known from legendery sources that the king
of Jayantia worshipped Durgā like Hindus by building a Durgā temple
in Nartiyang. Even today some temples are there in Nartiyang and
Christians are worship there. She is still known as Jayanti-Devi.

Among the Dimacha Devī Mahamaya is known as Heremadi. Before going to the battle they worshipped Devī Heremadi
with human sacrifices. Even today Devī Heremadi worship is performed
if the people of Dimacha fall in some diseases and evils.

According to the folk-belief of Rabhas Bāikho is the
supreme Devī among them. The place of their worship is the Bāikho
thān. This thān is situated in the Phulbari thān of Meghalaya.

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35. Informant: Saumen Sen (male, 60), Shillong, Data collected on 15/6/98.
37. Ibid. P. 269.
38. Informant: Gaurikanta Goswami, (male, 70), Duddhnoi, Data collected on 9/6/98.
The people of Sonowal Kachari also worship Devi. According to the folk belief of Sonowal Kachari the supreme Devi is Bhuruli Habuki. There are various name of Devi and traditional worship according to the Boro culture. From the legendary sources of Boro-Kachari King Khārungphā had introduced Śakti worship among them. The mārāi (marei) pūjā or the snake Goddess Manasa was worshipped by the Boro-Kacharis. Formerly this worship was performed with human sacrifice. But now buffalo sacrifice is offered. “The female shamanistic dance associated with the worship of the snakedeity Manasa is heavily influenced by the shamanistic dance current among the Boro-Kachari.” Besides “they worship Gārjā, Devi Kumāri and Devi Bhāndāri.”

The ancestors of Śaṅkaradeva and Mādhavadeva were staunch Śāktas. The appellation Devi ṃasa was conferred upon CandiVara, the great grandfather of Śaṅkaradeva. A stone image of Candi was the object of worship of Śaṅkaradeva’s father.

Mādhavadeva argued with Śaṅkaradeva in support of Devi worship. Bisva Simha, when he was a cowherd boy worshipped an image of Durga by sacrificing a grass-hopper. Though Śaṅkaradeva preached Neo-Vaiṣṇavite religion, devotion to the Goddess was not totally abandoned by some of his disciples. Once Vyaskalai, a disciple of Śaṅkaradeva let loose a pair of pigeon in the name of Śītalā when his son suffered from small pox. In the Thākura-carita Vidyānanda describes the religious beliefs of the Barnagar locality in Kamrup in these words: “These people were not conscious of the great way (Vaiṣṇavism); and Śakti (Śāktism) then reigned supreme. Thay sang songs of Hari; but then when the autumn came they installed a ghata.”

(Pitcher representing the Goddess) each in every one's house." The belief is still in vogue amongst the woman folk of the regions.

From the historical point of view, it is seen that the Sākṣi-pūjā was prevalent during the period of Banamāla Varman (9th century A.D.) and Indrapāla (11th century). Besides, since the sixteenth century with the support of the Koch kings and the Ahom kings, the Śāktā religion flourished. Since ancient time, Kāmākhya temple is being regarded as the centre of the Śāktī worship and such Śākti worship is also found today.

There are a good number of temples and shrines dedicated in the name of the Devī. The Ahom and the Koch kings were chief patrons. The Goddess is worshipped in her various manifestations such as Mahāmāyā, Kāli (Bhairavi), Bhagavati, Āi, Kečāi-Khāiti, Bāghesvari, Tāmreswari etc. Generally Śāktism means the worship of the Śāktī (feminine energy) in her different manifestations. Śākti signifies Devī Mahāmāyā (parama Śākti) Durgā who holds the Bīśva Brahmānda. Hence those who worship Durgā are called Śākta. The Śāktas established some temples in which various festivals and ceremonies are celebrated.

3.3 VAISHNAVISM:

"The worship of the Lord Vishnu may be traced back to the era of the Mahābhārata; the epic in its Santiprava contains reference to Visnu described as Pragjyotis Jyestha." In the Brahmā Purāṇa there is a reference to the Kausiki and Trisrota rivers, which points to the site within the boundary of Kāmarūpa. Viṣṇupitha is among the nine sacred regions, also called yonī, of Kāmarūpa. A good number of copper plates and terracottas have been discovered

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and all these testify to the existence of Tantric Vaisnavism. The *Kalika-Purāṇa* mentions as many as five incarnations of Visnu who were worshipped in different places. These are "(a) Visnu as *Haya-Griva* killed Javrasura in a place called Manikuta. (b) Visnu as Fish incarnation worshipped in the Matsyadhvaja mountain east of Manikuta. (c) Madhava in the form of a Bhairava named Pandunatha in Raksakuta. (d) Visnu as a Boar incarnation in the Citravaha mountain east of Pandu. (e) Vasudeva - Visnu in the Dikkarvasini region." The epithet Nārāyaṇa is also mentioned hither and thither. Moreover, the legend of Parasurama is associated with mighty river Brahmaputra. B. K. Barua observes that Vaisnavism faired well from the seventh century onwards. Vaisnavism had gained ground in Assam even in remote past. The legends of Narakasura, Vana and Bhismaka had proved that Kriṣṇa was well known here. The relice, epigraphs, coins, inscriptions, grants etc., prove its antiquity. During ancient period Viṣṇu was worshipped in a Panca-rattra system (i.e. worship with offering milk, fish, meat etc.). There was a synthesis of Vaisñavism and Tantrism. The Vaiṣṇava *dharma* which adopted the Tantric process is termed as Tantric Vaiṣṇava *dharma*.

Śāṅkaradeva preached the Neo-Vaiṣṇavite religion in the fifteenth century A.D. His religious outlook was based on the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. "The official name of Sankaradeva's Vaisnavism is *Eka-sarana-dharma*, - The religion of supreme surrender to one; and that one is Vishnu who in the form of Narayana assumes incarnations from age to age. The most favourite incarnation in which Vishnu is to be worshipped is that of Krishna." In Assam, the *Eka-saraniya nama dharma* of Mahapurusia *dharma* of Sankaradeva which emerged

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during the fifteenth sixteenth century is known widely as Vaisnava dharma.\textsuperscript{51}

Śaṅkaradeva totally discouraged worship of deities other than Krīṣṇa. "Srimanta Sankardeva's religion is the most liberal, tolerant, simplest and easiest way of attaining God, and it is economically most viable. It may be called the religion of the common man. There is no room for any hostility between the rich and the poor in the name of religion. Even the Saktiism and Tantrism learnt the lessons of humanitarianism from Sankardeva's faith and these decadent Hindu faiths have been considerably modified."\textsuperscript{52} There is no room for untouchability in his religion. His new ideas and philosophy, songs, drama and other literary works educated and attracted the masses and become his disciples. His proselytes founded satras and nāmagharas or kīrtangharas in every nook and corner of the state. The satras stood as an institution of social reform. Rightly does observe B. Kakati "These regional institutions framed moral laws and controlled the activities of society. As miniature replicas of the satras, village Namghars were built and the Namghars combined the functions of a village parliament, a village court, a village school and a village church. These institutions served as sheet anchors to Assamese society in the midst of continually shifting political circumstances. They often shook to their very foundations under the blast of the rulers fury, but stood erect again when the fury was spent. But whether in the sunshine or under the clouds, they were regarded as the vital centres of life and worthy of the gift of all that was prized and loved best."\textsuperscript{53}

In different parts of Assam, Neo-Vaiṣṇava religion began and nāmagharas and satras were established for meeting collectively to offer prayer and hold discussion about the religion and other matters.

\textsuperscript{51} Barua, B. K. : Sankardeva Vaisnava Saint of Assam, P. 92.
\textsuperscript{52} Chaliha, B. P. (ed) : Op-cit, P. 86.
\textsuperscript{53} Kakati, B. : Op-cit, P.P. 86-87.
This dharma changed the social life of people of Assam and Kāmarūpa. Sarikaradeva made no distinction between caste and creed in the matter of preaching his religion. "To him, all creatures of God were equal; and he accepted the socalled depressed, the tribals and even a Mohammedan in his fold. The followers of his religion, however, fallen away from the broad ideas of the original preacher, continued the system of proselytisation, if not for the sake of the religion, at least for the interest of annual gifts." "The spiritual and social bond fostered by the Satra reduce the rigour of caste-distinctions; Non-Aryan tribes such as Koch, Moran, Chutiya, Ahom, Kachari, Rabha and a number of others were brought to the fold of the faith the satra stood for."

Influence of Vaiṣṇavism in the life and lore of the people of Assam as a whole is still immense. Either in Sṛādha, or marriage or new birth or any other ceremonies, nāma-kīrtana is the concluding function of a Hindu family. The first flow of milk of a cow is offered in the name of Rakhal Gosain, i.e., Kṛiṣṇa. The first handful rice after harvest is offered as prasad in the namagharas. The birth anniversary of Śri Kṛiṣṇa and Doulotsova are observed in a befitting manner in every congregational prayer house. The cult of Jagannātha of Puri, Orrissa, has some influence on the people. Every year the women of Kāmarūpa region performed nāma-kīrtana in the month of jetā or Ahāra in the name of Jagannātha.

Among the tribes, Vaiṣṇavism has an indirect influence. They have accepted some of the Vaiṣṇava deities and propitiate them in their own method. The Pati Rabhas chant the word Hori-bol even in the worship of their indigenous deities.

The impact of Gaudiya Vaiśnāvism of Caitanyadeva is also noteworthy. The sect entered into Assam during the sixteen century A.D. Mathurādāś Budhā Ātā, a foremost devotee of Mādhavadeva was a Gaudiya Vaiśnava before he met Mādhavadeva. Another disciple of Mādhavadeva, Gopala Ātā was a Gaudiya Vaiśnava. At present there are many devotees of the said sect in Assam. Gaudiya mathas have been constructed in villages and towns in Assam.

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