CHAPTER - VI

SATRAS IN DECAYING CONDITION
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6.00 SATHAS IN DECAYING CONDITION

6.1 GOALPARA: The undivided Goalpara has retained twenty two Satras with all various activities of the Satra while many other Satras are now in a decaying condition, some of them are completely defunct. A brief account of these Satras are given below:

6.1.1 RAGHUNATH PRABHU SATRA: The Satra of Raghunath Prabhu was founded in the village Srijangram popularly known as Sastar near the confluence of the rivers Manab and Aie. It is 10 kms. towards North-East from Abhayapuri town. It is one of the oldest Satra. It was functioning since the time of King Naranarayana. In course of time it came under the jurisdiction of Bijni Zamindar. Later on, the Zamindar of Gauriput got that area of land along with the Satra as a gift from the Zamindar of Bijni and thus it came into the jurisdiction of Bijni. The Satra had a plot of revenue free land measuring 348 bighas gifted by the Bijni Zamindar to the Satradhikar of this Satra. The
Satra preserved the Vigrahas of Rāmachandra, Sita, Lakshmana, Krishna, Radha, Gopal and a few Sālgrāms. In 1982 A.D. this Satra shifted from original site to the present site and re-established in the North bank of the Aie river in Saster of Srijangram village. The Do‘l Purnima, Janmāsthami, Rām-nabami, Sitānabami, Māgh Bihu and Lakkhipujā are observed in the Satra. At present the Satra Committee is getting an annual grant of Rs. 6000.00 (Six thousand) from the Govt. of Assam since the year 1987. There are 18 bighās of land in the name of Rāmchandra Vigraha of the Satra. At present, Śrīkamesvar Ādhikary performs the day-to-day routine works of the Satra with the help and co-operation of the Satra Committee.

6.1.2 BĀSUDEV SATRA; Bāsudev Satra is located in the village Tilapara within Goalpara town. It was founded in 1935. This Satra is still functioning in the name of Vaisnava Mahāpurush but it fails to maintain the old traditions of a Mahāpurushya Satra. They observe the tithi of Gurus. The Vigras of Bāsudev, Balaram and Gopal
are preserved in the Manikut of the Satra. Moreover, a few old manuscripts viz., Kirtan, Mahabharat and Namghosa are also preserved in the Satra.

6.1.3 GHILAJARI SATRA: The Ghilajari Satra is also known as Gharisi Satra. It is situated at the village Sakomura near Bishnupur Satra in Goalpara district. At present a devotee Sri Bahadur Roy by name is carrying on the daily works including prayer etc. to the deities in a dilapidated house. It is said that this Satra was founded by Chaturbhuj Thakur in Ghila which was a part of the town place known as Gharisa. Sankardeva stayed there for some time. King Parikshit Narayan gave of revenue free land to the Satra. ¹ A piece of Padasila i.e., footprint stone and Japmala i.e., prayer beads are preserved here, these were used by Chaturbhuj Thakur.

6.1.4 BALIJANA SATRA: The Satra was found by the descendant of Ramcharan Thakur in Rajapara village within

¹ Neog, M.; 1969: 'Pamitra Asam', p. 324
the area of Laxmipur Zamindars. Later on, it was shifted to Balijana within the village Bapupara by Baneswar Adhikary for better management. This Bapupara is only 3 kms. away from Agia. The Zamindars of Mechpara estate gave the Satra three thousand bighās of revenue free land as gift in the name of the Satra for its proper maintenance and upkeep. The Satra is now in a dilapidated condition. In the name of Kirtanghar there is a small house of C.I. sheets in the original site of Satra. The Vigraha of Madan Mohan, Padasilā, and three scriptures, viz., Dasam, Kirtan and Bargeet written in Sānchipāt are also lying on an ordinary small wooden table. One Debendra Nath Adhikary got the possession of all properties but he sold out the entire land and permanently settled down in Gauripur. At present there is a small plot of land measuring approximately one bighā in the surroundings of that small Kirtanghar. It is found that the people of Bapupara recently requested the Sankar Sangha in 1977 to manage the Kirtanghar and its

2 Ibid., p. 331
properties. But the Sangha did not take any care of the Satra. As a result the Satra is somehow survive in the aforesaid status.

6.1.5 KATHĀLMURI SATRA: The Kathālmuri Satra was founded by one Basudev Goswami descendant of Daśmodardeva. It is situated at Dhanbhanga village in Goalpara district. At present the Satra is in a ruinng condition. It is said that the Zamindar Mukunda Narayandeouv of Bijní estate provided them a revenue free land of the village, 'Pāńcha' in 19th Pāguna of 1192 Sāl.3

6.1.6 SHYAMSUNDAR SATRA: There is another Satra at Tilapara village is known as Shyamsundar Satra. It was set up prior to 1920. The Satra Vigrāmas are preserved in a dilapidated house by Praneswar Mēdhī, who is acting as a caretaker adhikār of the Satra.

6.1.7 NĀOKĀTA SATRA: The Nāokata Satra is situated in a village called Khekāpārā near Dhupdhara in Goalpara

3 Ibid., p. 328
district. Sri Purnakanta Adhikary became the Satradhikār by inheritance to his late father Banikanta Devadhikary. The present condition of the Satra is very pathetic. It has nothing of its own at present except the sweet memories of the by gone days. Purnakanta Adhikary, somehow is keeping the Vigrahas and banti of the Satra in his own residence. Once this Satra was founded by Daityari Thakur, the eldest son of Ramcharan Thakur on a plot of land donated by late Balit Narayan Bhup Bahadur of Bijni estate.

6.1.8 FAILĀMĀRĪ SATRA: Failāmārī Satra is situated in the village Marnai of Goalpara district. The Satra is in decaying condition. The Satra Vigrahas, old manuscripts viz., Vangśāwali, Nām-mālikā, Kirtan-ghosā, and Padasilā are preserved in a dilapidated house. Sri Priyanath Pathak performs the Satra prasangas daily.

6.1.9 RĀNGĀPĀNĪ SATRA: This was a very old Satra founded by some descendant of Narayandas Thakur Ātā. The

4 Ibid., p. 324
Satra was a very rich and nicely organised by the Satradhikār. The Satra had sufficient landed properties also. But in the earthquake\(^5\) of 1897 the Satra was completely ruined and the devotees left the place. All these are narrated by the people of that locality. Now the Satra is completely defunct.

6.1.10 **Baguān**: The Baguān Satra was founded by the Satradhikār of Madhupur Niranjan Ātoī a disciple of Barīrapo-Gobinda Ātoī. Niranjan Ātoī obtained a plot of land for this purpose from the Zamindar of Lakhhipur in Goalpara district. The Kirtanghar, the houses of Satriyā Bhakatas and the Bharāl were constructed at the expenses of Zamindar.\(^6\) Niranjan Ātoī breathed his last in the Baguān Satra. After his death his prominent disciple Hari Ātoī shifted the Satra from Baguān to Rāmrāykuti in present Dhubri district.

6.1.11 **Ghāṭārī Sātra**: This Satra was situated in Ghautara village under the present Kokrajhar district and it was founded by Harihar Ātā, who is also popularly known

\(^{5}\) Ibid., p. 324
\(^{6}\) Goswami, G.; 1964: 'Hari Atoī Purusar Charitra', p. 40
as 'Jivanmukut Harihar Ātā'. He was one of the dearest disciples of Madhavadeva. This Satra was previously known as Chatāri. Now the Satra is completely defunct, only the place is keeping its memory with the name Chautara originated from Chatāri Satra which has been referred in Gurucharit as a dwelling place of Harihar Ātā for some time.

6.1.12 JĀMLĀI SATRA: Jāmlāi Satra was founded by Daityari Thakur. It was situated in the eastern border of Goalpara district, but its actual site was in the then Kamrup district. But due to an outbreak of 'Kalāzar' in epidemic form many of the population died and the rest left the place and settled down in Goalpara. But the Satra did not survive. The articles of worship of this Satra were taken away to Nāokata Satra in Goalpara district by the Satrādhikār for preservation. The Satra became non-existent and its landed properties were acquired by the Government as khās land.

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7 Neog, M. (ed); 1988: 'Gurucharit Kathā', p. 586
8 Neog, M.; 1969: 'Pabitra Asam', p. 278
6.1.13 PHULAGURI SATRA: The Phulaguri Satra was established by Manohar Kayastha, a devotee of Damodardeva in the village Phulaguri. It was situated on the bank of Manah river at a distance of ten miles towards the south of Hakama, but it is now totally defunct excepting a few old residents of Hakama to give us the old story of the Satra.

6.1.14 BIJAPUR SATRA: During the Burmese invasion (1822 to 1826) many Vaishnava people left Barpeta and settled down in Margaon and thus Bijapur Satra was established there. When normalcy was restored after invasion one group of people shifted again to their original place in Barpeta and another group took up settlement at Dharmapur along with their old Satra Vigrahas. After their departure from Margaon this Bijapur Satra was also completely departed.

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9 Ibid., p. 331
10 Ibid., p. 327
6.1.15 DOBĀPĀRA SATRA: During the Burmese invasion the Satrādhikār of Dīhing Satra Brindabanchandra Dev established his Satra at Dobapara in Goalpara district. But subsequently he went to Ketekibari, Guwahati and his disciples carried on the daily rituals at the Satra. They could not maintain it for long because of multifarious difficulties and the Satra came to its natural end.

6.1.16 TRIBENIGHĀT SATRA: According to local beliefs Tribenighāt Satra was established by Madhavadeva at Mauzabari village in the present Kokrajhar district. It is situated at a distance of 6 kms. away from Kokrajhar town towards the northern side. Here the Shamukha and Saralbhanga riverlets met Gaurang river, so it is called Tribenighāt. During the earthquake of 1897 the Satra sunk under the earth and its Satrādhikār could not be traced there after.

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11 Ibid., p. 332
12 Ibid.
6.1.17 MADHAV GOSSAIN SATRA: Madhav Gossain Satra was situated at Bhotgaon, 5 kms. away towards south from Kokrajhar town. It was connected with the name of Madhavadeva. A Medhi was made the head of this Satra. The Zamindar of Bijni estate donated a plot of 19 bighas land for this Satra. This Satra is also now totally defunct.

6.1.18 JOGIGHOPA SATRA: No Satra or Satra activities is traceable in Jogighopa, but Gurucharit gives the information of this Satra, and it was established by Mahapurush Madhavadeva.

6.1.19 SHYAMRAI SATRA: According to popular legendary beliefs that there was a Satra named Shyamrai in a village Charaikhola situated at a distance of 12 kms. north side from Golakganj. The Satra was established during the reign of King Raghudeva and Parikkhit Narayan. No sign of the

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13 Ibid., p. 333
15 Mandal, N.(ed.); Vol.1; 1985 : 'C.R.College Magazine' article 'Behār Hājīyar Vaisnav Satrar Sutibor' by D.N.Bhakat, p.49
Satra is traceable now. The village is mainly inhabited by people belong to the Rajbanshi community.

6.1.20 BEDUA SATRA:  The famous biography, Guruleelā, written by Ramray gives the information of this Bedua Satra. Mahapurush Damodardeva lived there for one year at the request of King Parikkhit Narayan. According to Pandit Vidyalankar, the Satra was situated in the village Varundanga in the present Dhubri district. But a local prominent citizen Rajani Kanta Sastri is of opinion that the actual location of this Satra was at the village Materjhar near Golakganj. There is, however, nothing is traceable of the Satra at present excepting an old temple and one tank. Now, Lord Siva is worshipped there.

16 Chaudhury, M.M.(ed.); 1886 Saka : 'Guruleelā by Ramray', p. 83
17 Samma, S.(ed.); 1972 ; 'Smriti grantha', Assam Sahitya Sabha, Dhubri', article 'Pabitra Goalpara' by editor, p. 165
18 Mandal,N.(ed.);1985;'C.R.College Magazine',article 'Behār Rājyar Vaisnav Satrar Sutibor', by D.N.Bhakat,p.50
6.1.21 BIJOYPUR SATRA: According to the legendary stories the Vijoypur Satra was established by Harikrisna Atoi, a disciple of Madhavadeva at Rupshi village near Gauripur. Harihar Ata also lived there for some times. In course of time the Satra was ruined but the name Bijoypur is still remained.

6.1.22 KACHUBARI SATRA: During the reign of Koch King Laxminarayan Deva Damodar Guru established a Satra in Kachubari village. From this Kachubari Damodardev entered the Koch Kingdom on the other bank of Sonkosh river. At present, there is a place called Kachugaon near Sonkosh river in the Kokrajhar district. It is said that Kachubari satra was setup there by Deva Damodar. At present nothing is available there regarding this Satra.

6.2 NORTH BENGAL: During the rule of Koch as particularly after Naranarayan the Assamese Vaisnava Gurus had

19 Chaudhury, M.M.(ed.); 1886 Saka: 'Guruleela', by Ramray, p.118
done tremendous reformations in the society in this region. In fact North Bengal became famous for many Satras. Almost all the Vaisnava Gurus had constructed Satras in this region. In course of time all are decayed. An account is given below about such decaying and defunct Satras:

6.2.1 HARIPUR SATRA: Haridev was one of the helmsman of Assamese Vaisnavite religious culture. He was the founder of the Haridevi sect, another important Vaisnava sect of Assam. He got three prominent Satras founded, one at Maneri in Kamrup district, one at Narayanpur in Lakhimpur district of Assam and one at Haripur in Cooch Behar district of North Bengal.20 There is still an old temple at a place called Haripur, one kilometre away toward the western side of Madhupur Satra. The Lord Siva is worshipped there. A popular legends runs that the Haripur Satra was setup there.

6.2.2 KĀKATKUTĀ SATRA: The Kākatkutā Satra was founded by Maharaj Naranarayan to accommodate Mahapurush Srimanta

20 Sarua, B.L.; 1960; 'Sankardeva', p.121
Sankaradeva. The Satra existed there from 1533 to 1587.\footnote{21}

Sankaradeva came from Phulbāri to stay at Kākatkutā.

Sankaradeva was patronised by the King Naranarayana and honoured him giving the Status of Royal Court poet. During that time Sankaradeva used to stay in Satra. Sankaradeva passed away his life in this Satra. It is said that Maharaj Naranarayan himself set on holy fire in a funeral pyre of Sankaradeva at this Kākatkutā. When the Satra was badly threatened by the erosions of river Torsha, the King Laxminarayan, son of Naranarayan, made some arrangement to shift the holy memorial relics of Sankaradeva to a safer place, Madhupur. In course of time Kākatkutā Satra was eaten up by the heavy erosion of Torsha river.

6.2.3 JHINGĀPURNI SATRA: Mahapurush Madhavadeva established JHINGĀPURNI SATRA at the request of a Brahmin named Vrigu in the village, JHINGĀPURNI at GOOCH

\footnote{21} Nath, R.; 1964: 'Madhupur Dhāmer Iti viṛtta, p.11
\footnote{22} Samsā, H.; 516 Sankarabda: 'Dujanā Guru Sankar-Mādhava', p. 46
Behar district. Madhavadeva stayed there for six months. Later on, Jhingapurni Satra was shifted and reestablished at Jinkātā Satra.

6.2.4 BIRINĀBĀRI SATRA: King Laminarayan made the arrangement of building up by Damodardeva in Birinābāri. It was also known as Damodarpur. Damodardev stayed there from 1587 to 1627 A.D. Later on, this Satra was eroded by the river Torsha.

6.2.5 BAR MARICHĀRI SATRA: Harihar Ātā, a chief disciple of Madhavadeva founded this Satra at Marichbari village. The present Marichbari village is situated at a distance of 3 kms. towards the south-east direction from Alipurduar town in Jalpaiguri district of North Bengal. At present no Satra is traceable there. The local people got a Hari Mandir constructed there and worship the dual images of Radha-Krisna.

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23 See 3.2
6.2.6 SARU MARICHĪBĀRI: Mahapurush Madhavadeva founded a Satra at Saru Marichbari. There is a small earthly tomb called Marichbāri tomb at village Bhanukumari in Cooch Behar district. This is the only memory of this Satra. There is no other traces of the Satra.

6.2.8 ŠĀLBĀRI SATRA: There is a village called Šālbāri lying 10 kms. away in the north of the Tufanganj town in Cooch Behar district. From leading aged person of this village, Sri Puspanarayan Bhakat, it is learnt that there was a Satra in that village in recent past and it was ruined in course of time. From the mode of the names given to the surrounding villages in line with the traditions of the Mahāpurushīya sect, e.g., Bhakatpārā, Gāyanpārā, Bāyanpārā etc., it can easily be identified that once the locality was under the heavy influence of Assamese Vaisnavas and there might have a Satra. But now the Satra is not existed.

6.2.8 PHULBĀRI SATRA: When Naranarayana was annoyed with Sānkara deva then Mahabir Chilaray brother of Narannarayana made some arrangement for Mahāpurush to keep him in a safer place and thus this Phulbāri Satra was established with the help and cooperation of Chilaray. Phulbāri is now the modern town of Tufanganj in Cooch Behar district. No traces of the old Satra is available there, only the rackayes of the place of Mahabir Chilaray are still survived. Some prominent citizens of the locality point out to the present Madhupur Satra itself as Phulbāri Satra of bygone days.

6.2.9 KUTHIBĀRI SATRA: Kuthibāri Satra was situated near the town of Tufanganj in Cooch Behar district. It is said that Harihar Ātā closed his eyes forever in Kuthibāri Satra. In 1911 A.D. Kuthibāri Satra is shifted to Madhupur Satra of Cooch Behar district to save it from the erosion of the river, Raydak. Afterwards Kuthibāri Satra was washed away by the river Raydak.


28 See 3.10
6.2.10 BHITARUĀDHĀP SATRA: The Bhitaruādhāp was constructed by Kamrupi Pāik with the patronisation of King Naranarayana. Later on, the King Lāmminarayana established a Satra there for Damodardeva. Damodardeva breathed his last here in 1520 Saka era. After his departure Bhitaruādhāp Satra became fully decadent and only Baikuntha-purī survived.

29 Chaudhury, M.M.(ed.); 1886 Saka: 'Guruleelas', by Hemray, p. 140