Appendix I

List of Surveyed Satras in the Nagaon District under the Present Study:

The following are major and minor Satras affiliated to four Samhatis (sects) scattered all over the district of Nagaon. With respect to their affiliation, Brahma, Purusa, Kala and Nika they have been listed accordingly. A survey of the Satras has revealed the fact that most of these Satras have undergone changes in various respects in course of time, some of which have zeroed down to virtual non-existence. However, the rest have continued to survive maintaining the traditional activities and values of Vaisnavism in Assam.

A. The following are the Satras affiliated to the Purusa Samhati:

1. **Bardowa Narowa**: Established in the beginning of the 16th century, this Satra of the purusa samhati has its original base in Dhakuakhana, one of the districts in eastern Assam. Presently situated under Batadrava mouza in Bardowa. In 1799 A.D. the Satra was formally divided into two during the rule of the Ahom king, Swargadeo Kamaleswar Simha also known as Suklingphā (1795-1811). Now this Satra has a total of 8 branches scattered in the district of Nagaon alone. Important among them are the Bardowa Barfāl, Bālisatra, Rampur and others. Of these the Rampur Sattra is extinct completely. The Sattradhikāra is selected on a hereditary line. This Sattra is functioning well covering both religious and other associated cultural areas. Regular conduct of rituals along with festivals is a key
feature of this Sattra along with the preservation of many traditional artefacts in the Batadrava Museum.28

2. **Narowa Rāmpur**: Due to the illegal inhabitants occupying lands awarded to it through land grants by the Ahom kings of that period, this Sattra has completely become extinct. The Department of Archaeology, Government of India, offered a grant of Rupees 1 lakh to this Sattra for its preservation but it could not be taken up due to circumstances and human resources. Although there is a constant negotiation going on with the state to revive the lost heritage of the Sattra yet no effort is noticed regarding its preservation. Since independence of the country, the estimated 390 bighās land of the Sattra has been under the clutches of the illegal immigrants from across the border. Situated in between Dhing and Bardowa this Sattra was once one of the most prominent and influential ones. The era of Bhakti Movement in Assam saw the potential growth of such a religio-culturally affluent Sattra.

3. **Narowa Bālisatra**: Located at a distance of about 5 kms. to the east of Bardowa on the Bardowa-Dhing road, this Sattra has a unique history. Dāmodara Āta’s visit to recover Bardowa after the demise of Śaṅkaradeva led to the establishment of this Sattra on a patch of sand-dune along the river-bank and hence the name Bālisatra (bāli meaning sand in Assamese). The Sattradhikāra is selected hereditarily but in recent times, the constitution of the Bālisatra management committee has made provisions for electing the heads in a democratic way. It contains several manuscripts, the illustrative version of the Bhāgavata and many indigenous objects of daily use. Due to the impact of western education and lack of efficient people to administer, today this Sattra is in a poor

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28 Situated very close to the Bardowa Thān is this museum which houses many indigenous and valuable assets of the Sattras mainly from the district of Nagaon
state of functioning. However this Sattra is famous for housing elaborate accounts on dance-drama, music, dance and sculpture. The Sattra lands are now under the threat of possession by the illegal settlers and a few acres of these lands have been mortgaged and utilized for cultivation (see fig. 37).

4. **Narowa Bhetiani**: Situated at a stretch of 1 km east of Bardowa under Bhetiani mouza, Bhetiani Sattra was founded by the son of Dāmodara Ata, Harendra Narayan. There is no proper functioning due to lack of funds and collective effort of the laity.

5. **Narowa Tolibeel**: Located in a village called Sonari under Dhing mouza, this Sattra has made a contribution to the art of sculpture. Indigenous items like *dobā* made of brass, seven tiered *simhasana*, manuscripts and masks are kept in the *manikīta*. The historicity of this Sattra in the field of *cāri-prasangas* and *bhāonā* and other forms of music are slightly diminishing today. It houses one library and a *nāmghar*.

6. **Salaguri Bardowa**: Popularly known as Sorufāl or Koāmarā, it was established in 1799 A.D. at the command of the then *Ahom* king, Swargadeo Kamaleswar Simha (Neog 2008, 119). Like the Narowa counterpart, all important and sacred rituals and festivals are held from time to time. Examples cited are the celebration of the birth and death anniversaries of the saints and founders, *phālgutsava, janmāṭami, rāsa* and also conducting dance-dramas accompanying with music and dance. Culturally strong this Sattra has its head selected on a seniority basis and till date it is administered well. Another interesting note to be made regarding its administration is that since 1958 the Bardowa *Thān* Committee is taking care in its functioning of both the Bardowa Narowa and the Bardowa Salaguri Sattras. As a result of this, there has been a
constant interaction between the two prominent Sattras resulting in the increase of its socio-cultural paraphernalia. While taking part in one of the auspicious phālgutsava in the main kirtan-ghar of Bardowa thān, it has been witnessed that individuals belonging to both these Sattras have collaborated and taken part in all the ritual acts and performances. Dual performances from members of both the Sattra-division with respect to nām-prasangas are another notable feature on such occasions. Many important dramas containing the excerpts from the Bhāgavata were written in this Sattra by several apostles. In Nagaon apart from this Sattra, there are several other Sattras of the same order. Important among them are Āibheti Salaguri, Āibheti Nasatra, Leteri Salaguri.

7. Āibheti Salaguri: Situated at a distance of about 10 km west from Nagaon town under Hātichung mouza in a village named Rāidengia, this Sattra was established under the initiative of Kanakalata Āi, wife of Caturbhuj Thakur29. It is housing many unique manuscripts, sanchipotia puthi and many indigenous objects mostly used in the rituals such as bar-soria, dobā, sarai,orgha, idol of garuda, bonsibādan etc. The heads are selected on seniority basis and this Sattra has disciples from all communities. Possessing once around 2000 bighās of revenue-free lands (nispikerāj) granted by the Ahom ruler, Jayadhvaja Simha30, this Sattra is at present economically sound as there is a constant flow of revenue in cash or kind from the area of land given to the Salaguri Āibheti Nasatra under the same mouza. With the subtle amount of fund generated by the village laity, the satra-griha, which was in a dilapidated condition, has been reconstructed.

29 Grandson of Ṣaṅkaradeva.
30 The neophyte Ahom king Sutamla alias Jayadhvaj Singha (1648-1663) who accepted the Brahmanical order of Vaisnavism (brahma samhāti).
8. **Āibheti Salaguri Nasatra:** Under the same *mouza* near the Salaguri Āibheti is located this Sattra which has to its accord 1478 *bighās* of revenue-free land. It houses the relics of Śaṅkarađeva’s footprints, endowments sent by the *Ahom* rulers to the apostles of the faith in the form of indigenous articles such as *śarai* made of brass alloyed with silver. The *Sattradhikāras* are selected on seniority basis. Till date this Sattra is quite influential one with disciples from every nook and corner of the state following all Vaisnava traditions.

9. **Leteri Sālaguri:** Situated in the outskirts of Nagaon town at Dhing is Leteri Sattra—a branch of the Bardowa Salaguri Sattra. Due to the absence of a regular head to administer the Sattra, the other important officials have taken the responsibility to conduct the regular affairs. But in the present survey it has been found that this Sattra has become non-functional because of its location and dearth of funds for its restoration.

10. **Samaguri:** One of the most affluent Sattras of Nagaon once, its glory has diminished greatly. Located at an approximate distance of 21 kms. from Nagaon adjacent to the famous Samaguri *beel*, a home for the migratory birds and fish-breeding, economically this Sattra was sound. At the time of establishment in 1585 A.D. by Purusottama Thakur’s grandson, Dharmanarayan it was in Koliabor. But in the later part of the 18th century it was shifted to Samaguri under Nagaon sub-division. Culturally rich with heritage, this Sattra is now totally on the verge of extinction.

11. **Dighali Purana (old) Bhogbūri:** Situated on the bank of the river Sonāi, under Hātichung *mouza* in Rāidengia village, its state of functioning is not smooth. However it has a reputation for cultivating the Sattriya culture in the form of *bargits*, *nām-prasanga*, *bhāonās* etc. One of the exponents
of bargit in Assam, Amiya Mahanta belongs to this Sattra. The senior member of the family holds the position of a Sattradhikāra.

12. Dighal Natun (new) Bhogbāri: Located in Hātichung mouza under Jajori police-station, it is functioning well till date. The kirtan-ghar and manikāta of the Sattra are big and spacious for regular congregation and other performances. All cultural activities within the Sattra are carried out in grandeur. This Sattra boasts of possessing a strong tradition of wood carving and has a good number of such beautiful wood craft works.

13. Mothorbori: Established by the same founder of Samaguri Sattra, it is under Raha sub-division of the district. It is located at a distance of 4 km (approx.) west of Raha in a village called Baropujia.

14. The following four Sattras were established by Śāṅkaradeva’s grandson, Purusottama Thakur. Among the twelve apostles anointed by him for preaching the tradition of Vaisnava faith in the state through establishment of Sattras, Vasudeva Bhagawati was one.

Five Sattras, namely Latābowa, Ratanpur, Dhawali, Tāmulbāri and Bārbhagiā-Bākariāl were established in course of time by his grandsons and great-grandsons in this corner of the state. Out of these five, the first four are situated under Nagaon mahkuma and the fifth is under Koliabor mahkuma respectively. A detailed note on the present condition of these Sattras is given below:

a. Latābowa: Presently this Sattra is located under Khātowal mouza to the north-east of Nagaon town. Many of its indigenous artefacts are in a
dilapidated condition due to lack of proper support as well as conservation methods, natural calamities as well as political and social imbalances. Since the time of British rule in India this area has been under constant pressure from immigrants. And occupation of Sattra land has been going on and is becoming a contentious issue. The Sattra is under the administration of a hereditary head and this has been continuing since then.

b. **Ratanpur**: Under the same mouza on the bank of the Kolong is situated this Sattra. Inspite of the many reasons for its poor functioning, it has maintained its tradition and is running with a Sattradhikāra who is hereditarily selected. It has lost its past glory in present times.

c. **Dhawali**: It is situated very close to the Latābowa Sattra to the northern bank of the river Kolong. At one time it was a rich and affluent Sattra maintaining its all socio-cultural forms, but now its past glory is diminishing.

d. **Tāmulbāri**: It is located in a village called Teliāgon under Khātowal mouza close to the National Highway-37, at an approximate distance of 14 kms. east of Nagaon. It has stopped functioning and has lost its traditionality, even though there is a regular appointment of a Sattradhikāra for administering it.

e. **Bārbhagia-Bākariāl**: Established in the year 1831 A.D. it is located in Koliabor, belonging to the line of Purusottama Thakur. It is more prominent than the rest of the four above mentioned Sattras located in Nagaon. Daily rituals and all other important occasions are celebrated with
a large number of disciples, irrespective of caste and creed. A total of 15 bighās of land is under the possession of this Sattra now.

15. **Karcung:** Located under Hātichung mauza in Rāidendia, this Sattra has its main branch in Sibsagar district of Assam. Bhāonās, nām-prasangas, janmāśtami, pācati are the major rituals that attract large crowds to this Sattra. It also houses 6th and 7th episodes of the Sanskrit version of the Bhāgavata with illustrations. Majority of laity of this Sattra belongs to the Kaivarta community, being a depressed caste, with a strength of around one thousand. It can be cited as one of the important Sattras of the purusa samhati in Nagaon. This Sattra had large land endowments as revenue-free (nispikherāj) out of which 1228 bighās were taken over by the government without any compensation. A part of the revenue-free land of the Sattra is now in the occupation of illegal migrants resulting in economically indigent condition today. Out of 83 bighās and 4 kathas that remained, much of the portion has been encroached illegally bringing misfortune to the Sattra. The Sattradhikāra is from the brahma samhati sect although the Sattra belongs to purusa samhati established under the ordination of Caturbhujā Thakur, the younger brother of Purusottama Thakur.

16. **Karcung Tele Pohukota:** Another important branch of the same Sattra Karcung, it is to the east of the town at Tele Pohukota. The Sattra is functioning well with a feast of nām-prasangas, celebrating death anniversaries of the saints and all other related rituals.
17. The following Sattras brought under survey were established by Caturbhuja Thakur and his wife Āi Kanakalata.

a. Nācānpār: Situated under Jāgiāl mouza near a place called Dakhinpat, the present status of this Sattra is non-functional. Considering the modern amenities of life, the families of the Sattradhiṅkaras have started moving to the town in search of new avenues leaving their ancestry behind. As a result, since a long time this Sattra is without a head to administer. Today its administration is looked after by other Sattra dignitaries from the village laity. This is one of the reasons of its negligence towards growth and stability.

b. Nepāli: Started under the tutelage of Āi Kanakalata, it is located under Hātiĉhung mouza in Jajori. Its major branch is in Teok in the Jorhat district of Assam. Nām-prasanga, saints’ day, birth of Lord Krisna are the important days observed with all related rites and rituals. Presently it is in a poor state of functioning.

c. Kobaikota: Economically sound and culturally affluent, it once boasted of having several acres of land. It houses the historically famous tank known as ‘Mahdhowa Pukhuri’ which is now been encroached by illegal settlers and has been used for the benefit of a mosque and a madrassa. The present situation is grim as it has gone into the clutches of illegal intrusion. As a matter of concern, it has shifted many of its traditional artefacts to the Batadrava museum. A wooden box containing the manuscripts has also been given to the State museum for preservation. The influx rate is so high that almost all the original land holders have

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31 Stated in one of the dailies published from Assam, The Assam Tribune dated July 13, 2012.
vacated the place in fear. As such the Sattra has lost its officials, disciples as well as its sanctity. One of the most notable features of this Sattra is that there is no permanent residence for the heads within its premise. In 1972 A.D., the Sattra has joined the *Ek saran bhagawati samaj* and since then it has been functioning under their tutelage. Disciples throng in huge numbers from neighboring villages during ceremonies and rituals. *Pāl-nām, bhāonā, janmāstami* are held every year.

18. *Rupnārāyaṇ Elengi Bebejia*: Situated at a distance of 5 kms west of the Nagaon town this Sattra is a collateral branch of the Porābheti Sattra in Kolīabor. Due to lack of adequate resources for running the Sattra and supporting domestic needs the Sattra functionaries looked for other avenues of employment and relocated themselves in other professions and places. The Sattra at present has virtually become culturally insignificant in course of time. It had 500 *bāghās* of revenue-free lands under its possession in the past but with time it has lost all its landed properties.

19. *Nikāmul Uriāgon*: Very close to the National Highway-37 is situated this branch Sattra with its headquarter in Tezpur, the neighboring district of Nagaon (63 kms approx). One of the principal *purusa samhati* Sattras it has disciples spread all over the state. The *Sattradhikāra* is not a permanent resident of this Sattra, he often pays visit from Tezpur. Functional in present time with disciples from the village, it houses an old as well as a new *simhasana* or *guru-āsana*. Other various forms of artefacts are now preserved in the Nikāmul Sattra, Tezpur.

20. *Letugram Puranigudām*: Located at a distance of 10 kms. (approx.) from the main town and east of the river *Kolong*. Once culturally rich and
affluent, the Sattra now has to its credit very less number of laity. However all rituals related to important occasions are held regularly.

21. Bālisatra Jamunāmukh: This Sattra is situated under Gorubāt mouza in Jamunamukh area of Nagaon, on the south bank of the river Kapili. This is the only Sattra surveyed in this area. The economic condition of this Sattra is unsound, and the number of disciples affiliated to it is also less as compared to other Sattras of the district. It was established in this area just before the advent of the British in Assam. The Sattriya heritage as well as the cultural expressions has virtually become extinct.

22. Puranigar/Puranighar: One of the oldest in the order of purusa samhati Sattras, it is situated in Koliabor sub-division of Nagaon district under Pub-thoriā mouza. The Sattra houses the guru-padaśila which is one of the valuable assets along with some important traditional artefacts through which it has gained popularity to a variable extent till date. Devotees of the faith come in large numbers from the village laity to offer prayers and this has been functional since the time of its establishment. The Sattra is being administered by Sattradhikārās, who without undergoing the nirmali-lowā-prathā has been performing their tasks solemnly till date.

23. Mādhātāri: Situated under the Pub-thoriā mouza it is also known as Madha Āta Sattra after the name of its founder head, Mādhavanarayana. Much of its historic assets were destroyed by fire in 1931 A.D. (Neog 2008, 135). After being reconstructed, the Sattra has started functioning with regular observances of the tilthi and performances like rāsa-yatra, pāl-nām etc. in a traditional way. The Sattradhikārās regularly discharge administrative as well as religious responsibilities.
24. **Rupnārīyāṇa Porābbeti**: Historically significant, this Sattra being established in the year 1697 A.D. has a record of having 20 pāiks donated by the Ahom king, Lakṣminātha Simha (1769-1780 A.D.) and around 494 bighās of land for the benefit of the Sattra. It has branched out into many minor Sattras in Nagaon which have also gained popularity in course of time. Disciples are from different parts of the state and it is due to this gathering of people which has enabled it to survive. The important rituals and festivals celebrated both yearly and month-wise are the tiiti, jannāštami, doul-utsava etc.

25. **Rupnārīyāṇa Khamosia**: Situated adjacent to the main branch of the Porābbeti Sattra, it has above two thousand disciples from all walks of life irrespective of caste, creed and gender including tribes like Kacharis, Tiwas, Karbis (the three constitutes major plain and hill tribes of Assam) etc. The Sattra has both head and a junior head, namely the Sattradhikāra and the Deka-adhikāra. Important rituals associated with many important occasions are still celebrated, among them bhōjana-vihara, pāl-nam, jannāštami, pācati, bhāonā are held from time to time. Presently all such occasions are done in the newly constructed nāmghar of the Sattra.

26. **Rupnārīyāṇa Goniimari**: One of the most influential Sattras under the Koliabor sub-division, it houses many traditional artefacts, some of which are still in use for ritualistic purposes. It is functional with disciples from all over the state. It has a Sattradhikāra who holds a hereditary position. Ankiya-nāt is a special feature of this Sattra and every year a variety of bhāonās takes place in the premise of the nāmghar with the help and cooperation from the laity as well as the Sattra functionaries. This is a major attraction of this Sattra.
27. Gonāmarā Catīl: It is under Sotiāl mouza of Koliabor on the south-east of the Kolong. It is functioning with a Sattradhikāra who looks after the affairs of the Sattra.

28. Bālisatra: Famous for its proficiency in wood-sculpture all over Assam, it houses several traditional artefacts. It is located under Pub-thoriā mouza at a place called Kuwaritol under Koliabor. The newly constructed satra-griha with its compound is another feature of this Sattra. The Sattra is functioning with all its paraphernalia of rituals and festivals on a regular basis.

29. Letugram: Situated under Pub-thoria mouza near Kuwaritol Chariali, the Sattra is also known as Nasatra. The history is that the founders had to flee for life during the time of the Burmese invasions but they returned and established it again. Since then it has been functional with a regular Sattradhikāra who is hereditarily selected. One of the most affluent Sattras of Nagaon, it has housed many indigenous articles. Though a few are in a dilapidated condition, still they are in use.

30. Nikāmul Koliabor: Branching out of the original Nikāmul Sattra in Majuli, it has other collateral branches under Nagaon sub-division. This is a minor branch situated under Sotiāl mouza in Koliabor. The rituals are conducted regularly with traditional values. It has been influential in uniting people from all communities.

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The present Sattradhikāra, Sri Jogeswar Mahanta (aged 80 years) is heading the Sattra single-handedly. He mentioned about the present condition of his Sattra in one of the interviews conducted on 23rd July 2011. He said “...the nāmghar is in a very dilapidated condition; just for the sake of a religious binding I am doing it. Regarding the grants from the government he said, we received a grant paid only in half from the government for reconstruction of the entire satra-griha and the nāmghar, but that grant did not suffix all. I am not clear what happened to the rest of the amount...The Sattra has now become more of a house-hold responsibility bestowed upon my family, rather than the community’s property. If this continues, in another ten years from now it would lose its present status.”
31. Cipahā Hātbor: Established in the year 1730 A.D., the land possessed by the Sattra is through donation by the Ahom king, Siva Simha with an estimated 300 bighās. Bhāonā accompanied by dance and songs is an important feature of this Sattra. This form of art has been popularized mostly amongst the youth of the locality and this has gradually accommodated many young people into the form. This is an important contribution in recent times as it has increased the aesthetic joy of the villagers as well the urban dwellers that had moved away from the village. Functional in form and content, it is culturally rich and active.

32. Cipahā Sorabhoga: Another flourishing Sattra with its location at Koliabor under Sotiāl mouza, it houses several traditional artefacts along with the cultural forms- bhāonā, dances, music, art of carving etc. Chiselled images of some Hindu mythological characters in wood by the apostles are treasured here. Many of the expertises in the ankiyā-nāt belong to this Sattra and they have ably showcased their talents in different parts of the country by way of which they have enhanced the cultural stance of the Vaisnava tradition in Assam.

33. Koliabor Samaguri: This Sattra is situated under Pub-thoria mouza at a place called Samaguri. It is one of the Sattras founded by the family of Śaṅkaradeva’s eldest grandson, Purusottoma Thakur. His son-in-law, Chakrapani originally established it in Majuli. But later during the attack of the Burmese, his successors came and set up another Sattra by the same name. It was established in the years between 1728 and 1730 A.D. In the history of proliferation of Sattriya culture and maintaining its tradition in Assam, the Samaguri Sattra has gained importance for various

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33 As stated by Sri Bhargav Bhuyan in an interview held on 02.02.2012, an informant belonging to this Sattra who is also an active performer in the bhāonās held in the Sattra every year.
considerations. Mask-making and sculpture are important cultural expressions of this Sattra. It also boasts of having a few manuscripts of play for bhāona, written by playwrights exclusively belonging to this Sattra. Among these are Subhadra-haran, Kaśsa-badh, Bāli-badh, Kumor-haran and others. The guru-paduka, seven-tiered simhasana and some illustrated paintings are kept in the sanctum.

B. The following Sattras belong to the Brahma Šaṁhati (sect) or the Dāmodariya Panthā:

1. Kuruwābāhi: One of the leading Sattras of brahma samhati in Nagaon, it is situated at a place called Gedarbari, 9 kms. from Nagaon town under Hātichung mouza. The Sattra received the Ahom royal patronages during the Ahom kingdom and was once amongst the most influential Sattras of Assam. It has several acres of land under its possession and so it is considered to be rich and a very affluent Sattra. The disciples are still in possession of huge plots of land in and around this Sattra. The Sattradhikāras selected on a seniority basis have been administering the Sattra. Regular rituals commemorating the birth and death anniversaries of the saints (tiṭhi), douł-utsava, janmāśṭami, etc. are celebrated. This Sattra is also said to have a large number of disciples both from the district as well as the adjoining districts. With its affluent status and regular activities, the Sattra continues to have an impact on both socio-religious and cultural life of the society around. Worship of the Sattra idol (vigraha) in the form, Lord Krisna (Gopala) is an important feature of this Sattra, as its forms. According to the land grant document of July 22, 1848 available at the Sattra, Sri Srikanta Goswami, the then Adhikāra of this Sattra had to expend the resources that is the land revenue at the worship of the image of Gopala, after
paying huge revenue to the Government. Based on the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, the manner of worship is similar to those of other Sattras under this sect. The present estimated revenue-free land of the Sattra amounts to 150 pūrā. Every year Sivaratri is celebrated and Lord Siva is worshipped in the Sattra.

2. **Diphalu:** It is situated 3 kms east of Nagaon town on the northern bank of the river Kolong. The disciples from both Kuruwābāhi and this Sattra congregate here on special occasions of rituals. Their allegiance towards both these Sattras is immense. During the field visits it has been found that about fifty per cent of the population is from Kuruwābāhi and the rest from Diphalu. Rich with cultural heritage this Sattra houses the bātcarā, nāmghar, manikūtā and satra-griha and there is a regular interaction amongst the laity through the nām-prasanga, bhāonās and other occasions. It houses important traditional manuscripts both from Vaisnavite and tantric traditions. It administers initiation and ordination (śarana-bhajana) to people coming from all walks of life.

3. **Māhorā Dimow:** Another important Sattra of the brahma samhati is the Māhārā Dimow. This Sattra was earlier situated 11 kms. west of the Nagaon town, in a place by the name Kachamari, but very recently the main Kirtan Ghar had to be relocated from its original place because of the construction of a four-lane road across Nagaon-Guwahati developed by the Highway Authority of India. However the bātcarā to the Sattra has not been demolished. A full fledged institution it follows both brahma and purusa samhati's codes of conduct. It is the nerve center of many cultural forms, like bhāonā, doul-utsava, tithi, janmāṣṭami, rāsa
and it has been continuing till date. Housing the seven tiered *simhasana*, manuscripts, *guru-paduka*, it is reputed to have initiated people from neighboring tribal areas into the faith as informed by one of the members of this Sattra regarding the initiation process in the Sattra.

4. **Āuniātī Nagaon**: Branching out of the main Sattra in Majuli by the name Āuniātī, it has settled down 7 kms. towards east of Nagaon town. The present head of the Sattra is a great scholar of Assam, Sri Pitambar Dev Goswami who comes from Majuli once or twice a year to ordain *śarana-bhajana* to disciples. The administration is looked after by other important set of officials in the Sattra like the āldhorā, medhi, mukiār who take care of the Sattra and maintain a cordial relation with people from the laity in the absence of the Sattradhikāra. This Sattra is affluent from all aspects.

5. **Āuniātī Dhing**: Another collateral branch of the main Āuniātī Sattra in Majuli, this Sattra is situated under Dhing mouza. The Sattra is named after the name of the village and it is functioning through its officials with directions from its headquarter in Majuli. From the data collected from the revenue circle of the district, there is a provision of revenue-free lands in the name of this Sattra. It houses some major artefacts like *sanchipotia-puthi*, *dobā*, *śarai* (made of wood), several idols made of gold and brass etc. It is also popular in the art of sculpture. Masks of

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34 Sri J. Deva Goswami, a retired school-teacher and present secretary-general of Axom Satra Mahasabha has remarked that on one occasion of *śarana-bhajana* he himself got a coveted welcome by the people of the Tiwa tribe, who had gathered to welcome the Sattradhikāra. He had to perform the ceremony on behalf of the head and witnessing the gathering he confidently makes the remark, ‘*amar satriya-sanskriti atut thakibo jodihe ami enedore ek got hoi thako*’ (meaning if we are united our Sattriya-culture will survive in the long run).
many Indian mythological characters are preserved in this Sattra, which are also in use during bhāonās.

6. Āuniāti Samaguri: Located under Bheleuguri mouza in a place called Samaguri Khutarkhāt, this particular Sattra is a branch of the Āuniāti, Majuli. The Sattradhikāra administers the Sattra from Majuli. He frequently visits the Sattra for initiation and other ceremonies. The Sattra is run by different functionaries like the medhi, mukiār, pujari and others in absence of the Sattradhikāra. The nāmghar with the manikāta is spacious and it is in this place that the laity performs important daily and other rituals like nām-prasanga, bhāonā, doul-utsava, rāsa and birth anniversary of the saint.

7. Garamūr Puranigudām: Situated at an approximate distance of 10 kms. from Nagaon town towards east in Puranigudām, this Sattra has branched out of the Garamūr Sattra in Majuli which is one of the most influential Sattras of Eastern Assam. This Sattra has a record of having no permanent Sattradhikāras and as such occasional visits are paid by the head of the main branch. It houses a spacious area for the Sattra nāmghar and manikāta. Boṃsibādan is the principal image of Garamūr. The other set of officials of the Sattra namely; the deuri or bilania, pathak, bharali, pūjāri and medhi are presently administering the Sattra smoothly. The bar-deuri takes care of the daily worship of the deity with rituals besides the nām-prasanga.

8. Dakhīnapāt Kacharisatra: Situated very close to Dakhīnapāt Higher Secondary School under Pākhimoria mouza, it has its main branch at Dakhīnapāt Sattra in Majuli. It has acquired land by way of land-grants
by the then Kachari king, Krisnachandra who also provided people for setting up the Sattra. As it was under the then Kachari kingdom and ordained more disciples from the Kachari community it is popularly known as the Kachari Sattra. Since then it has been functioning well maintaining its tradition like the one in Majuli. There is no permanent seat for the head but the Sattradhikāra from the main branch often come and perform the initiation ceremony. Other forms of cultural performances are also carried out with piety. Mostly the office-bearers of the Sattra are responsible for conducting the affairs be it administration, ecclesiastical or financial.

9. Koliabor Jakhalabandhā: Established in the year 1558 A.D. during the reign of the Ahom ruler, Khora Raja, this is one of the oldest Sattras in the Koliabor region. During the time of the first Burmese invasion 1816 A.D. in a part of the Sattra was established in the heart of the Nagaon town at a place called Amolapatty. Once most affluent and socio-religiously and culturally advanced, both the branches of the Sattras at Koliabor and Nagaon respectively have now lost its past glory and their influences in the society have diminished.

10. Hiṭbor Śravani: Established in 1705 A.D. this Sattra came under the clutches of the third Burmese invasion of Assam in 1825 A.D., resulting in the loss of many valuable assets (Neog 2008, 132). This Sattra belongs to the brahma samhati but the purusa samhati order is more in practice in its administration, appointment of the ecclesiastical heads and other observances.
11. **Brahmachārī:** Recognized as one of the prominent Sattras of Nagaon, the Brahmachārī Sattra is located about 4 km. towards east from Puranigudām along the National Highway-37, at a village called Brahmachārī under Khātowal police station of Bheleuguri mouza. This Sattra was established by Viswambar Dev, a bachelor all throughout his life and an ascetic who dedicated his life to the Vaisnavite tradition. From his pilgrimages to Kashi, Brindavan and other religious places he brought idols of Gopinath and Vāsudeva and later he established this Sattra. And at a later period it was shifted to a nearby place called Amoni in the face of ill-treatment in the hands of the Ahom royalty. At this place he stayed with one hundred and twenty disciples and in course of time had a larger following which contributed in transforming it to a full fledged Sattra. The village and the Sattra got the name Brahmachārī as Viswambar Dev was a celibate (*brahmachārī*) himself.

According to the bronze plate inscription presently existing at the custody of Sri Mohan Sarma, the Sattra was donated land and labor such as Chamua, Kādi and Pāik during the days of the *Ahom* king, Lakshmi Singha (1769-1780). Another copper plate made by Kamaleswar Singha states that the Sattra was donated 170 *pūrā* land (equivalent to $140 \times 4 = 560$ *bighās*). Besides these, the *Ahom* king also constructed the *Kirtanghar*, the *manikūta* of the *Kirtan-ghar* and donated the lion based throne for the deity (*simhasana*), the idol of Lord Rama and four engraved stone light pillars. The Sattra has under its possession two revenue-free plots of land, the first one located by the *Kolong* river attained as a result of the diversion of its course and the second one being donated by the Ahom king in and around the Vāsudeva *thān* at Amoni village.

The invaders from Burma (presently Myanmar) destroyed many valuable properties of this Sattra including the seven tiered *simhasana*,...
scriptures written on *sanchi* leaves, big wooden box and many sculptured items which are considered to be a great loss to the Assamese culture and heritage. Nonetheless, the Sattra still possesses a few sculptural items like the *Garuda*, the idols of *Viṣṇu, Agni*, a big drum made of copper, pictured wooden box, manuscripts etc. The Sattra has a number of disciples from Schedule Caste community and other backward classes. Another interesting feature is that people from the Islamic community living in nearby villages come together and show their devotion to the Sattra and contribute to it. The disciples of this Sattra are scattered over the districts of Tezpur and Jorhat too, thus the total number of devotees amounting to an approximate of more than three thousand. Of late the Sattra has distributed its twelve hundred bighās of revenue-free land among the residents of Brahmachārī village. Festivals like the death anniversaries of the *Gurus, janmāśtami, bhāonā, Sivaratri, doul-utsava, rāsa, pācatis*, the mud festival popularly known as *bokā-bhāonā* are regularly held with great pomp and gaiety in the Sattra. *Hirā-nām* is a speciality of this Sattra celebrated till date. The *Sattradhikāra* is elected on the basis of seniority and efficiency. The Sattra Management Committee is formed with various office bearers headed by a President and a Secretary. A branch of this Sattra is now situated in Tezpur and its affairs are conducted by a committee under the supervision of the present *Sattradhikāra* of Brahmachārī Sattra, Nagaon.
C. The following Sattras brought under the survey are affiliated to the 
Kala Śamhati:

1. Daukācapari Sencua: Culturally rich with heritage, this Sattra is at a 
distance of 3 kms. west of Nagaon town. At the time of the infamous 
Burmese invasion, it had to shift its base from Majuli along the mighty 
Brahmaputra and established in Sencua, Nagaon. Presently it has lost 
much of its past glory.

2. Nācanipār: One major and influential Sattra of the kala samhati sect, it 
situated to the east of the Kolong under Khātowal mouza in Puranigudām. 
It comprises of the bāṭcarā, manikūṭā, nāmghar, guru-griha (residence of 
the Sattradhikāra), sprawling areas for congregations and cultural 
performances and also conducts the regular activities of śarana-bhajana, 
dance, drama and music. All these traditional forms are continuing till 
date.

3. Hemābari Borbheti: Close to the National Highway 37 under Khātowal 
mouza in Samaguri is situated this Sattra is not much with regular 
activities.

4. Jajori Dahghariyā: Under Hātichung mouza in a village called Jajori is 
located this Sattra. A very renowned Sattra with all religious and cultural 
activities drawing people from all walks of life irrespective of caste, creed 
or sect, the Sattra however lost its past glory in all respects. At present, the 
number of disciples has lessened to a great aspect due to western impact 
on education and culture. It possesses around 50 bighās of land in the 
name of the Sattra. The Sattradhikāras are selected hereditarily. The head
of the Sattra pays occasional visits and supervises its functioning. Every year the *tithi* of Gopāla Atā, the founder-head of this Sattra is celebrated in a big way.

5. **Āhātaguri Hujgaon:** Branching out from the main Āhātaguri Jajori Sattra, it is situated 2 kms. north of Nagaon town on the Nagaon-Juria road. Due to lack of proper administration and irregularity in the appointment of administrative heads to run the Sattra, it has become insignificant today.

6. **Bhotīgaon Gajalā:** Situated close to the NH-37 east of Nagaon town, it is beautified with a *bāṭcarā* surrounded by the *nāmghar* and *manikāta*. Possessing over 3 bighās of land, it was established in the year 1920 A.D. It houses several traditional artefacts used for different purposes and festivals like *janmāstami*, *tithi* etc. are celebrated with honour and gaiety. The members of the Sattra including the present *Sattradhikāra* is very conscious about its religio-cultural identity.

7. **Gajalā Madārguri:** Having their ancestral origin in North-Lakhimpur district of Assam, this Sattra is now located in Samaguri under Khatowal *mouza*. At the time of Burmese aggression, it moved over to the present location as a safety measure. The Sattra is not operational today.

8. **Cecā Sattra:** Situated in the outskirts of Nagaon town, to the east of a place named Dimaruguri, it has its main branch in Dibrugarh district of

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*35* The head of the Sattra, Kesavanada Deva Goswami who is at present a medical practitioner and resides in Nagaon town has made a remark on the present state of functioning of this particular Sattra. He observes that it is sometimes very difficult to go and perform the rituals on time as being a *Sattradhikāra*; he has to keep certain restrictions to himself. But lack of time and his occupation does not permit him to do so. However he mentions about engaging a few office-bearers to take care of the Sattra in his absence. He also feels sorry for not being able to retrieve the glory of his own Sattra.
Assam on the bank of the river Ceri. One of the culturally rich Sattras, the rasa-utsava is a form of popular entertainment attracting huge crowds every year. Observance of nam-prasanga, bhonai, possession of a number of wood carvings are important features of this Sattra.

9. Dihing Sattra: At an approximate distance of 25 kms. west of Nagaon town is located this Sattra at a place called Hariamukh under Raha subdivision. Having its main branch in upper Assam close to the Dihing, it received royal patronages during the Ahom rule, and the Ahom king, Rudra Simha granted revenue-free lands to the Sattra. During the Mayamara revolt in 18th century and the Burmese invasion after it, the Sattra had to shift its base and got re-established in the year 1870 A.D. Known for accommodating disciples from all tribes and communities, this Sattra was devastated by flood in the year 1986. But with the help of the disciples and other officials of the Sattra it started to function since 1991. It has concentrated mainly to the proselytization of people from various socially backward classes. The Sattradhikara is selected hereditarily and the daily performances are held with piety.

10. Bholaguri Sattra: Located under Pub-thoria mouza in Koliabor, this Sattra was established in 1593 A.D. Famous for its contribution in the field of different areas of culture, religion and literature; it houses many important literary works which have been accomplished by the members of this Sattra. In the field of music, dance and drama too this Sattra is well known. The Sattra continues to be in a well to do condition at present.

11. Āmguri Karatipār Nasatra: Situated close to the NH-37 under Koliabor sub-division is this Sattra is functional and it houses a nāmghar, manikāta
in the Sattra premises. It houses many indigenous manuscripts of plays
and other treatises. A few of them have been moved to the History and
Antiquarian Studies Department of the state for preservation.\textsuperscript{36}
Congregations are held regularly, and many a time the Sattradikāra takes
part in the proceedings.

12. Koliabor Dahghar: Located presently in Koliabor under Pub-thoria
mouza, this Sattra relocated its base from North-Lakhimpur due to the
heavy erosion of the Brahmaputra and regular floods. Having settled down
in this part of the state, this Sattra has built a satra-griha very recently. It
is moderately functioning, conducting cāri-prasanga and tithis at regular
intervals with a handful of disciples.

13. Saukājān Gajalā: Branching out from the famous, Gajalā Sattra in
Majuli, it has made one of its bases at a place called Cāmdhora in
Koliabor. In present times, it has lost its glory and is no more functional.

D. The Nika Šanhati Sattras taken into consideration for study in the
whole of the Nagaon district are the Barjahā Sattra, Upar
Doomdoomiyā and Nām-Doomdoomiyā Sattra. These three distinct
Sattras have been taken as a prototype in understanding their
constituent elements, growth and development and their functional
levels.

\textsuperscript{36} The present Sattradikāra, Sri Prabin Chandra Deva Goswami during an interview on 14.04.11
commented, 'the Sattras are a mirror of the Assamese society. It is our duty to preserve them for
sustenance. However with the help of the state government and with my own initiative, the old
manuscripts have been taken care of for preservation. If such initiatives continue, treasures of the
Sattras will survive for long.
1. **Barjahā Sattra:** Situated under Pākhimoria mouza in a place called Barjahā, it followed the strict discipline in all matters related to the faith. Since the founder of the Sattra was a celibate monk, the Sattradhikāras of the celibate order took the administration into their hands since the days of its establishment. But in due course of time, the number of celibate Sattradhikāras diminished and then the Sattra started functioning under a head from the house-hold Sattras. After a few years it lacked in proper administration. At one time, the Barjahā Sattra was the most influential Sattra in the whole of Assam but today the condition of this Sattra is poor, there is no such methods adopted for the preservation of the traditional artifacts\(^{37}\). There is a complete malfunctioning in the cultural performances as well as the ritualistic performances.

2. **Upar-Doomdoomiyā:** Located at Dhing at a distance of 5 kms. to the north of Bardowa thān, this Sattra is known as Upar-Doomdoomiyā. During the regime of the Ahom king, Swargadeo Siva Simha, a few bhakats shifted their base from Barpeta Sattra to Nagaon. They came and settled at this place and eventually, at the initiative of both the bhakats and the local villagers a nāmghar with manikūta was established. A copper-plate inscription granting revenue-free land was given to this Sattra by the king during his regime. This inscription was lost. And in due course of time, the land allotted to the Sattra was restored during the reign of another Ahom king, Gaurinath Simha. In the year 1706 A.D. around 25 bhakats administering the Sattra were granted lands by the king. At present, these free-hold lands donated to a Brahman (a priest) known as brahmottar have been occupied by the illegal settlers at various points of time and as a result of which the functioning of the Sattra has been

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\(^{37}\) A resident from the Barjaha village, Sri N. Nath said in an interview conducted on 09.12.2011, ‘.....this is an enduring process. The Sattra needs an upliftment from all sides, but somewhere it has failed. We feel sorry that our own heritage is at stake...but we are helpless...nobody takes the initiative….’
affected to a great extent. However, in the midst of these irregularities, a few important events like guru-tithi, janmastami, nām-prasanga etc. are held regularly. The Sattra is however functioning even though there is a poor level of participation of the community in the ritual proceedings.

3. **Nām-Doomdoomiyā**: Presently this Sattra is situated to the north-west of Nagaon town at a village called Nām-Doomdoomiyā. The Sattra is now in Bhakatgaon of the Dhing town. The Sattra got its name from the village itself. It is in a functioning condition today with the support of a Sattra Management Committee. The important functionaries appointed for taking care of the Sattra are the deuri, bharali, medhi respectively. These officials are selected from the laity. It is probably the only Sattra in the district where the death anniversary (tithi) of Mathurādas Burha Āta, an apostle of Mādhavadeva is celebrated with pomp and fervor. Along with this, a fair is arranged by the local villagers known as ahini mela. The ahini mela is held with traditional fervour in the Sattra for three days during the Krisna Caturdashi (fourteenth day after the full moon). It marks the death anniversary of the saint. Bhāonā organized with public participation is its main attraction. The village fair promotes understanding and harmony among the villagers who are laity of Sattras like Kamalabari, Belaguri and Garamur of Majuli in the present day Jorhat district of Assam. Several artefacts used in the Sattra since the time of its establishment have been preserved till date.
Appendix II

List of Satras not Surveyed and not Included in the Study:

There are another set of Satras which have not been included in my research work. These Satras were established at various times in history. Many are off-shoots of the major and prominent branches; the later apostles shifted and settled their base at one place with similar names of the Satras they are affiliated to. A couple of these Satras have also undergone tremendous changes and many are under the threat of extinction. The reasons behind the alteration and decline have been discussed elaborately in the chapters, which provide an insight into a deeper understanding of how and why things have changed in recent years in these once reputed socio-cultural, religious institutions.

The researcher has provided a justification for not including these Satras during my extensive field work. Reports from the field reveal that a majority of the Satras of the district of Nagaon belong to the Kala and Purusa Samhati (sect) which in record has more than two to three of the similar types. In many cases they are of the same name. An example is cited from the Brahma Samhati Sattra of Āuniāti Nagaon, which has an analogous branch each at Puranigudām, Dhing and Samaguri. The aforementioned Satras under similar sub-sect has been taken as a prototype for the study. It is done to mainly emphasize on the point that they belong to the same order and characterizes a similar form. Most of them are influential, though they have to a great extent come under the
shades of decay in present times. Though a detailed analysis is not done of these Sattras yet the names of these non-surveyed Sattras are cited below:

A. **Purusa Samhati:**


B. **Brahma Samhati:**


C. **Kala Samhati:**

Kolakota Sencua, Tupar Kolakota, Daukācapari Huj-Kahuwatali, Daukācapari Pāthori-Ghuriyāgaon, Hemārbari Bogorguri (Jajori), Hemārbari Bheleuguri-Hahsora, Coriputa Ulubari, Coriputa Efaliyābori,
Coriputa Kutuhā, Coriputa Jajori, Coriputa Bejejia, Haladhiāti Efaliyābori, Haladhiāti Morikolong (Siyālekhowā Suk), Haladhiāti Morikolong, Haladhiāti Sencua, Haladhiāti Cakalāghat, Dahghar Kothalkuci, Dahghar Ulubari, Dahghar Bhalukmāri, Āhātaguri Jajori, Mōhdhora, Āmtola Gajalā-Jajori (Da-Fāl), Āmtola Gajalā (Bori-Fāl), Khowramucar Māj Jajori, Khowramucar Cakalāghat, Āmguri Karatipār Puranighar, Āhātaguri (Gundhāmora), Karatipār Bogajon, Kāthpar Barbhag, Kāthpar Sorubhag.

D. Nika Samhati:
Lāiāti (Barfāl, Majufāl, Sorufāl).