



# A study of value pattern of inmates of monastic *Satras* of Assam, India

Gayatree Goswamee<sup>1</sup> and Srijani Das<sup>2</sup>

1. Department of Education, Gauhati University, Guwahati, India

2. Department of Education, Jagiroad College, Morigaon, India

## Abstract

The present study was undertaken with the objective to study the value pattern of the young inmates of the monastic *Satras* of Assam. The data was collected both from primary and secondary sources. To develop the conceptual framework the authors had to depend upon the *charit puthis* (biographies) and books on history of Assam and to know the value pattern of young inmates of monastic *Satras*. Data had been collected from six monastic *Satras* of Assam. To know the value pattern of young inmates the investigators administered a questionnaire "Study of Values Test". The study has revealed certain interesting facts about the value pattern of young inmates, like most of them possess a very well balanced value pattern. The inmates have scored very good score (Average Level and above) in all six types of values. The most notable feature of the value pattern of the inmates is that they possess very rich social, religious, economic and aesthetic values. In the present day society where degradation of values is affecting every sphere of life and people has become very much self-centered and unsocial. Monastic *Satras* still provide training inmates to be social and to love to people. Hence, humanity the methods of teaching and parenting prevalent in monastic *Satras* can be an ideal or model for modern parents and school system.

**Keywords :** Development of Monastic *Satras*, Inmates of monastic *Satras*, Monastic *Satras*, Value pattern.

## 1. Introduction

The progress of a society has always been influenced by many positive and negative social factors. One negative factor of the present society is the laxity of social and moral values, especially among the young generation, who crave for easy money and a life of material pursuit. The lack of morality and the incapability to differentiate the good from the bad has reached to such an extent that many of them even do not refrain from indulging in criminal activity. Erosion of moral values has raised serious doubts regarding the effectiveness of modern school system and parenting style in the training of young minds in the right path of productive action.

The childhood and adolescent period is very much crucial for development as during this stage a child develops attitudes and values towards

various aspects of life and learns skills and habits for future life. Normally, apart from formal schooling, parents play an important role in grooming their children in the right path. In monastic *Satras* of Assam, where every member leads a life of celibacy, instead of real parents, the foster father takes that responsibility.

The *Satra* was brought into existence by the *Vaishnavite* saints headed by the great religious and social reformer, Srimanta Sankardev (1449-1568), as a center for religious propagation and discussion. As a religious and socio-cultural institution, the *Satras* still have an imperishable impact on religion, culture, fine arts, education and social life of the people of Assam. Das (1981) in his study "Sankaradeva as an Educator" has revealed that the *Vaishnavite* movement played an important role not only in the religious

field but also brought a change in the mental, spiritual and moral aspects of the people of Assam. Again, Nath (1991) "Barpeta as a Centre of Assamese Culture, a Study in Tradition and Change with special reference to the *Satra* Institution" has remarked that the *Satras* have tremendous influence on the cultural, social, educational and community life of the Assamese people at large.

The *Satra* institution under Madhabdev and Damodardev, two famous disciples of Sankardev took a monastic turn, Sarma (1999). Therefore, at present, there are mainly two types of *Satras*—monastic and non-monastic. But there are some monastic *Satras* which have non-monastic elements and some non-monastic *Satras* with monastic elements.

The unique features of a monastic *Satra* are—

- It is an establishment away from the township or villages resembling an ancient day hermitage (*asrama*).
- A long approach till the gateway called *karapat* or *batchora*.
- Well marked boundary made of bamboo and thatch. Within the campus the four rows of residential quarters (*baha*) of the celibate devotees on four sides, the prayer hall (*namghar*) and the *Manikut* in the middle.
- The devotees and the *Adhikaras* (head of the *Satra*) lead a life of celibacy, wear very simple dress (white kurta, dhoti and gamocha) and eat simple food.

Monastic *Satras* have similarities with the Buddhist and the Jain monasteries where the inmates live a life of celibacy. But the difference is that in a *Satra*, inmates live in a family made up with only male members and the young inmates are brought up in a homely environment under the utmost care of the *Burha bhakat* (head of the *Baha*) of the *Baha* (family). The members of the *Satra* are taken into the fold very early in life and the entire responsibility of their upbringing rests upon the *Burha bhakats* who are like father figures to all the inmates of the *bahas*.

The education system of the monastic *Satra* is unique. Das (2009) in her study "The Education System of the Monastic *Satras* of Assam- A Case Study of the Kamalabari *Satra*" has revealed that the monastic *Satras* of Assam, specially the Kamalabari *Satra* possesses a unique and a very successful system of education. Besides laying a great emphasis on religious and moral education, different art forms like devotional songs and dances and expertise on different musical accompaniments are also taught. Importance is also given to the cultivation of good qualities and training of various household and economic activities. Nowadays, impetus is also given to impart formal education.

Such a unique institution has been thriving for many centuries and making immense contribution to society by producing competent individuals is a remarkable phenomenon worthy of in-depth study, more so, in this era of moral degradation. Moreover, much study has not been done in this regard and therefore the present study has been designed with the objective in view to study the value pattern of the young inmates of the monastic *Satras*.

## 2. Methodology of the research

In the present study "The Descriptive Method" of research has been used. The type of Descriptive Research Method applied in the present study is the "Case Study" method.

### 2.1 Population and sample of the study

The present study is basically aimed at depicting the value pattern of inmates of the monastic *Satras* of Assam. At present there are 12 monastic *Satras* in Assam. Some of them have branches also. Again, some *Satras* are running with very few members. The present study has been conducted on five *Satras* of Majuli and one from Titabar. The nature of sampling was purposive. The sample for the present study has included 100 young inmates (14 to 20 years of age) in total. The following table shows the sample of the pilot study—

**Table-1** : Showing the list of the sample.

Sl. No.	Name of Satra	Establishment	No of inmates	Samhati	Place
1	Bhogpur	1528	7	Nika	Majuli
2	Auniati	1653	40	Brahma	Majuli
3	Dakhinpat	1654	13	Brahma	Majuli
4	Kamalabari	1673	10	Nika	Titabar
5	Uttar Kamalabari	1837	10	Nika	Majuli
6	Natun Kamalabari	1936	20	Nika	Majuli

## 2.2 Tools

To know about the value pattern of the young inmates, the investigators used a questionnaire "Study of Values Test" developed and standardized by Dr. R. K. Ojha (Eng. version). The main aim of the questionnaire is to measure the six basic interests or motives in personality-Theoretical, Economic, Aesthetic, Social, Political and Religious. This classification is based on Spranger's Type(s) of Man. The questionnaire has two parts—the first part consists of 30 items with two alternative answers

and the second part consists of 15 items with four alternative answers. In all there are 45 statements with 120 alternative answers. Roughly 20 alternative answers belong to each of the six values. The scale has been standardized on 2450 college students' population in the age range of 17-25 years of age.

### Reliability of the scale

The Internal Consistency of the scale was determined by Split – half Method. The reliability was found as below—

**Table - 2** : Showing Reliability of the scale.

Sl. No.	Values	Reliability Coefficient	Sl. No.	Values	Reliability Coefficient
A	Theoretical	.78	X	Social	.82
B	Economic	.81	Y	Political	.83
C	Aesthetic	.76	Z	Religious	.84

## 2.3 Delimitation of the study

The study was delimited to monastic *Satras* of Assam only.

The study was delimited the study of the value pattern of young inmates only.

## 3. Analysis and interpretation of the results

The following table shows the analysis of the data in regard to the value pattern of the young inmates of the monastic *Satras*.

**Table - 3** : Percentage of responses on all six types of values.

S. No.	Interpretation	Theoretical	Economic	Aesthetic	Social	Political	Religious
1	Excellent	-	-	2	4	-	2
2	Very High	8	10	4	10	2	20
3	High	16	12	12	28	2	32
4	Average	34	48	44	46	52	32
5	Poor	30	14	28	12	16	14
6	Very Poor	10	6	10	-	18	-
7	Extremely Poor	2	10	-	-	10	-

The figures of the table reveal the following facts

**Theoretical Value** : 58% of the young inmates have interest in empirical, rational and critical thinking as they scored Average and above in Theoretical values.

**Economic Value** : Though the *Satras* are mainly a religious institution, yet its inmates have scored well in Economic Values (70%) also. 10% of them have scored very high and 12% high level.

**Aesthetic Value** : 62% has scored Average and above, hence they are good in Aesthetic values also.

**Social Value** : The young inmates were very much rich in social values. 88% has scored Average and above. Significantly no one has scored Very Poor and Extremely Poor Values rating.

**Political Value** : The young inmates were not lagging behind in Political values (56%).

**Religious Value** : The young inmates were very much rich in Religious values. 86% has scored Average and above. No one has scored Very Poor and Extremely Poor rating.

#### 4. Findings and conclusion

The study reveals that the young inmates are very much conscious in respect of values. Most of them possess a well balanced value oriented life style. The inmates have scored very good scores

(Average and above) in all six types of values. The most notable feature of the value pattern of the inmates is that they possess very rich Social Values (88%). According to Allport-Vernon-Lindzey "the highest value for social man is love for people. The social man prizes other persons as ends and is therefore himself kind, sympathetic and unselfish." Another important finding of the study is that 86% of the inmates has scored Average and above in Religious Values. According to Allport-Vernon-Lindzey, "the highest value of the religious person may be called unity". The study shows that though the *Satra* is mainly a religious institution, yet its inmates give more importance to society and fellow human beings. At the same time young inmates are equally good in Theoretical (58%) and Political (56%) values. The inmates also possess good (70%) Economic Values. According to Allport-Vernon-Lindzey, these types of men are "thoroughly practical". They possess good Aesthetic (62%) values also, which imply their love for "form and harmony".

From the study we can conclude that the monastic *Satras* of Assam have existed hundreds of years since the last hundreds of years. They are still existing and performing their duties very effectively. The inmates of *Satras* possess a well balanced value pattern and they are particularly rich in social and religious values. In the present day society, where degradation of values is

affecting every sphere of life and people have become very much self-centered and unsocial, monastic *Satras* still provide training to be social and to love. At the same time, they are (young inmates) practical and politically aware people. The result of the study reveals that the *Satra* inmates are equally balanced in other values like aesthetic and theoretical. Hence we can conclude

that though the boys are brought up in a completely different environment, they receive proper education (by formal, informal and non-formal way) which help them to earn all the valuable qualities of their personality and the methods of teaching and parenting style prevalent in monastic *Satras* can be an ideal or model for modern parents and school system.

### References

- Barpujari, H. K., 2007 : The Comprehensive History of Assam (Vol. - II & Vol. - III). Publication Board Assam Guwahati.
- Best, John W., 1982 : Research in Education. Prentice Hall of India Ltd., New Delhi.
- Bhardwaj, T. R., 2001 : Education of Human Values. Mittal Publication, New Delhi.
- Bezbarua, D. N., 1987 : Bar Charit. N. K. Bezbarua, Jorhat (Assam).
- Bezbarua, L., 2004 : Mahapurush Sri Sankardev Aru Sri Madhavdev. Jyoti Prakashan Guwahati.
- Das, B. P., 1981 : Sankaradeva as an Educator. A dissertation submitted in lieu of the laboratory practical for M.A. Final examination in education. G.U.
- Das, S., 2009 : The education system of the monastic satras of Assam- A case study of the Kamalabari satra. A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of M.Phil. in education. G.U.
- Dev Goswami, K., 1973 : Satra-Sanskritir Ruprekha. Pathsala.
- Dewan, M., 2002 : Buranji Vivek-Ratna (Part II) (Ed.) by N. Saikia, Dept. Assamese, Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh.
- Goswami, N. C., 1984 : Satriya Sanskritir Swarna Rekha. Auther, Majuli (Assam).
- Hazarika, H. K., 2006 : (Ed.) Axomor Satriya Parampara Aru Sri Sri Badala Padma Ata. S. H. Educational Trust, Guwahati.
- Kothari, C. R., 1985 : Research Methodology. New Delhi : Wiley Eastern Ltd.
- Koul, L., 1988 : Methodology of Educational Research. Vikash Publishing House New Delhi.
- Lekharu, U. C., 1995 : (Ed.) Katha-gurucharita. Guwahati.
- Neog, M., 1998 : Sankaradeva and His Times, Early History of the Vaisnava Faith and Movement in Assam. Lawyer's Book Stall, Guwahati.
- Neog, M., 2003 : (Ed.) Guru-carita-katha. University Publication Department, Gauhati University.
- Nath, U., 1991 : Barpeta as a center of Assamese culture, a study in tradition and change with special reference to the Satra institution. A dissertation submitted for the Degree of Ph.D. G.U.
- Sarma, S. N., 1999 : The Neo-Vaisnavite Movement and the Satra Institution of Assam. Lawyer's Book Stall, Guwahati.
- Sarma, S. N., 1999 : The Neo-Vaisnavite Movement and the Satra Institution of Assam. Lawyr's Book Stall, Guwahati.
- Sarma, S. N., 2001 : A Socio- Economic and Cultural History of Medieval Assam (1200-1800 A.D.). Lawyer's Book Stall, Guwahati.

