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Research Article

Srimanta Sankardev As an Architect of Social Transformation in Medieval Assam: An Analysis of His Reformist Ideology, Egalitarian Practices, and Neo-Vaishnavite Movement

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Abstract

Srimanta Sankardev is recognized for building Assam's Eka-Sarana Nama Dharma tradition. However, he is equally important for creating different ways to express devotion socially, institutionally, and culturally. This research study considers Sankardev as a change maker by combining historical research and a reproducible qualitative content analysis of documents. From 9 verified scholarly and cultural sources, 60 proposition-level units were drawn, prioritizing the 2020–2025 period, of which historical foundations were used for triangulation. A fixed, rule-based codebook developed 17 themes which included equality, inclusion, accessibility of different religions, collective worship, construction of institutions, use of regional vernaculars, and performance of cultural activities. The most dominant dimensions were construction of institutions (28.3%) and performance of reforms (30.0%). Equality and social inclusion had a positive correlation ($\rho = .404$, $p = .001$), and social inclusion was significantly related to equality (Fisher's exact $p = .007$; Cramér's $V = .404$). There was a strong correlation between community participation and collective worship ($\rho = .572$, $p < .001$). The results of the study suggest that the reforms of Sankardev include a system of connected components of accessibility of devotion, participatory congregation, organization, and communication of culture. The study indicates where the boundaries of the study lie: the descriptions of the corpus selected are bounded by the documentary evidence, and do not describe the attitude or behaviour of medieval society in Assam.

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KEYWORDS: Srimanta Sankardev; Medieval Assam; Neo-Vaishnavism; Ekasarana; Social Transformation; Egalitarianism; Namghar; Satra.

1. INTRODUCTION

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Assam had political and religious diversification with syncretic practices of Shakta, tantric and Vaishnava traditions. It was in this period that Sankardev (1449-1568) emerged as a scholar, poet, guru, and organizer. He started a new religious order called the Eka-Sarana Nama Dharma. Modern research views his intervention as more than a divisive school of thought; it involved new media, new institutions and new social contexts (Das & Saikia, 2020; Pathak & Palit, 2023).

This social-reformist interpretation demands nuance. Saying that Sankardev “abolished caste” is historically inaccurate. The devotional space created by his movement allowed for some degree of rank equity by virtue of bhakti, initiation, and participation. Namghars, satras, kirtana, Borgeet, Ankiya Naat and Sattriya traditions provided religious and cultural means for every community to organize and develop (Khataniar, 2022; Chakravarty, n.d.; Das, n.d.). This paper explores those means with an emphasis on the early reformist period while distinguishing the movement's aspirations from later institutional hierarchies.

2. Historical and Socio-Religious Context of Medieval Assam

According to primary sources, medieval Assam was neither socially nor politically static. Political authority was dispersed among the Ahom, Koch and Baro-Bhuyan groups, while the Brahmaputra valley contained many castes, occupations and ethnic groups (Barua, 1969; Neog, 1980). Religious practices spanned local sects and Shakta tantrism to Sanskrit Brahmanism and Vaishnavism. This description is useful as Sankardev's reform did not confront a single orthodoxy. It looked at the mutual interactions among a variety of ritual systems, elite clients and the regional communities. For this reason, older Assamese Vaishnavism studies situate the movement in the broader regional process of religious

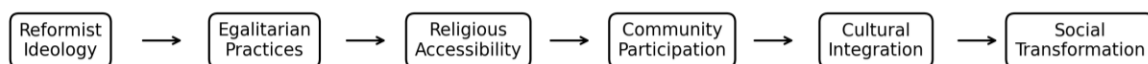
integration rather than in the context of a rupture (Barua, 1994; Dutta, 1990; Nath, 2011).

With the advent of the new devotional program, the emphasis was on simplifying corporate participation rather than performing sacrifice or elaborate mediation. Its social advantage was the capacity to include all estates in the corporation. Radha Das has written a description of pre-modern Assam that stresses that the nama was meant to be inclusive of all castes and communities, while recent studies characterize the Namghar as a place of congregation for devotion, reflection, and cultural activity (Das, n.d.; Bhargav, 2025). Such evidence supports a claim for greater inclusivity rather than full social emancipation.

3. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

This study considers social transformation as a change in the institutional and communicative conditions of social groups during their involvement in collective life. The interpretation is: reformist ideology → egalitarian practices → religious accessibility → community participation → cultural integration → social transformation. With respect to egalitarianism, this study emphasizes primarily the spiritual and participatory equality within the context of devotional practices, and does not suggest this means economic, gender and caste equality. Ambivalence exists towards the process of institutionalization. It maintains norms and practices, but can result in the creation of authority, hierarchy and exclusion.

Vernacularization and cultural communication are of equal importance. Sankardev used literary and performative methods to convert theological ideas into recitable, singable and visible forms. Assamese and Brajavali, Borgeet, Ankiya Naat, Bhaona, visual culture and the Sattriya traditions developed additional paths for the expression of religious ideas. This approach considers aesthetic production as social infrastructure instead of social ornamentation.



Interpretive model: not a claim of population-level historical causality

Figure 1: Interpretive framework linking reformist ideology to social transformation

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Four areas of recent scholarship may be identified. First, some scholars (Das and Saikia 2020) refer to Neo-Vaishnavism as a socio-cultural movement. They focus on the role of its institutions in creating and defining Assamese life and culture. Hoque (2020) continues this line of thought, also focusing on the cultural, moral and educational value of Sankardev's-era literature. Second, while Khataniar (2022) situates the satra as a primary institution of expansion, Goswami (2020) defines satras as religious, educational, and social institutions. Third,

Pathak and Palit (2023) focus on the historical critical synthesis and the participation of Namghar, cultural activities, and the historical structure of Namghar. Fourth, a growing area of focus is the material and performative culture. Pathak (2024) studies the Namghar as a social reform centre. Deka (2025) studies Vrindavani Vastra as the fusion of imagination and poetry. Bhargav (2025) studies Namghar as a center of social reform.

Foundational studies are essential for Chronology and doctrinal history. Neog (1980, 1995), Sarma (1966) and Barua (1969)

describe the movement and the institutions and provide the Assamese cultural context. This spiritual movement should not be taken as social equality; Baruah (2005) and Nath (2009, 2014) have been critical of such an interpretation. Bhuyan & Goswami (2022) and Bora (2017) have shown that Sankardev continues to be a productive figure and symbol in the contemporary identity of Assam and education. The literature in this field has a many gap. One such gap is the adoption of an appropriate methodology. Most studies in this field remain qualitative in nature. However, a proposition level, content analysis will help cluster the mechanisms of reform in a defined document collection while recognizing that the medieval period is no place for creating text frequency citations and interpreting medieval period population behavior.

5. Statement of the Problem

Sankardev has largely been portrayed through the lens of devotional biography or by broad sweeping cultural renaissance statements. Both approaches can diminish the ways in which reform was expressed and the limitations of this expression. A thorough analysis will allow us to understand the conjunction of ideology and participation, the institutional forms and cultural expressions, while ensuring that historical statements remain grounded in the available evidence.

6. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study has eight objectives. Firstly, the study contextualises Sankardev's reform in the Socio-Religious context of medieval Assam. Secondly, it aims to identify and analyse the essential elements of his reformist ideology. Thirdly, it assesses the egalitarian and inclusive aspects of devotional practice. Fourthly, it examines the Namghar and sattras institutions in terms of their participation. Fifthly, the study analyses vernacular, musical, and performative communication as means of reform. Sixthly, it evaluates the distribution and co-occurrence of reform themes. Finally, it assesses the chanting of egalitarian ideals versus the institutional of hierarchy, and the movement's contribution to the integration of Assamese culture.

7. Research Questions and Hypotheses

RQ1: What were the particular socio-religious circumstances in medieval Assam that Sankardev's reform was a response to?

RQ2: What were the ideological foundations of his programs of devotional and social reform?

RQ3: How was the movement able to express spiritual equality and social inclusion as localized forms of social order?

RQ4: How did the Neo-Vaishnavism movement encourage social inclusion through the extension of religious and congregational opportunities?

RQ5: How did the Namghar and Sattras institutions provide a framework for community worship, education, and community activities?

RQ6: Through what means of dance, music, theater and the visual arts did this movement use vernacular literature to express its reform ideology?

RQ7: What are the predominant reform themes in the documentary archival sources?

RQ8: Do the themes of equality and social inclusion, accessibility and engagement, worship and social participation interact within the scope of the documentary evidence?

The main documentary hypothesis was that if equality and social inclusion are correlated then H11 would hold, if not then H01 would hold. In order to verify the relation between the documentary statements, the exploratory pairs of which one was the hypothesis were formulated as H02/H12: religious accessibility and community participation and H03/H13: vernacular communicative systems and cultural integration. The rest of the associations were considered exploratory including collective worship, community identity, institutions, and performance. The above-mentioned tests address the encoding of propositions and do not address causality in a historical context.

8. METHODOLOGY

8.1 Research Design

A combination of historical, analytical, and quantitative documentary content analysis was performed. The historical perspective was provided by recent journal articles, cultural assets and resources of the institutions, and the established works of Neog, Sarma, Barua and other scholars. The quantitative section was limited to traces of verifiable documentary propositions and did not include any participants, interviews, surveys, or field work.

8.2 Sources and Documentary Corpus

The corpus included 60 proposition-level units derived from nine sources. The corpus focused on social reform, institutions, modes of devotional participation, language, culture, and visual and performative cultures. The unit was based on foundational texts for the construction of a chronology and historical triangulation. However, these texts were not included in the computational corpus as proposition-level digital text was not uniformly available.

8.3 Unit of Analysis

One documentary proposition was conceptually separable. Each proposition was a claim made about a single aspect of the doctrine or social relations, devotional participation, or the activities of an institution, as well as language and culture from a more holistic perspective. Propositions were paraphrased, rather than stated in full length, and retained source identifiers in order to allow for coding against the original material. This design prevents misinterpretation of numerical frequencies as historical persons, followers, institutions, or events.

8.4 Coding Framework and Variables

Seventeen discrete binary themes were identified and organized using a fixed semantic dictionary. These included themes such as equality, social inclusion, vernacular communication, community participation, spiritual equality, ethical and religious accessibility, social harmony, and community

identity. Each theme was assigned a value of one, if its semantic trigger was present, and zero, otherwise. The design is deterministic and therefore inter-rater reliability was not simulated. The Social Reform Orientation Index (SROI) is the proportion of ten core reform indicators present in each proposition, multiplied by 100.

8.5 Data Analysis and Statistical Procedures

Frequencies and percentages represented prevalence across

themes in the corpus. Spearman's rho analyzed associations among binary-coded dimensions. Fisher's exact test was utilized in instances where the expected cell frequencies were below the threshold of conventional chi-square, while Cramér's V was retained to describe effect size. A chi square test was utilized in instances where cell expectations were adequate. All statistical values, tables and figures were generated directly from a 60-row coding dataset.

Table 1. Documentary Corpus and Analytical Classification

Source	Year	Type	Genre	Coded units
Pathak & Palit (2023)	2023	Journal article	Historical-sociological	14
Das & Saikia (2020)	2020	Journal article	Social reform	6
Khataniar (2022)	2022	Journal article	Institutional history	5
Chakravarty (Sahapedia)	n.d.	Institutional cultural source	Institutional history	7
Das (Sahapedia)	n.d.	Institutional cultural source	Communication & arts	8
Goswami (Sahapedia)	n.d.	Institutional cultural source	Performance & education	6
Pathak (2024)	2024	Journal article	Cultural innovation	6
Deka (2025)	2025	Journal article	Visual/material culture	4
Bhargav (2025)	2025	Journal article	Namghar & community	4

Note: The 60 units are proposition-level paraphrases of traceable documentary claims; foundational books were used for triangulation but not for computational coding.

Table 2. Operationalisation of Major Coding Dimensions

Dimension	Operational meaning	Binary coding rule
Equality	Challenge to status hierarchy or explicit equality across caste/status	1 when a pre-specified equality/egalitarian trigger occurs; otherwise, 0
Social inclusion	Access or participation across social, caste, tribal or marginalized groups	1 when inclusion/broad-access triggers occur; otherwise, 0
Community participation	Collective involvement in worship, organization or deliberation	1 when participation/congregation/community triggers occur; otherwise, 0
Religious accessibility	Simplification or widening of access to devotion and religious communication	1 when accessibility/common-audience triggers occur; otherwise, 0
Institution-building	Namghar, sattrā or related organized religious-cultural infrastructure	1 when institutional triggers occur; otherwise, 0
Cultural communication	Vernacular, literary, musical, dramatic, dance or visual means of transmission	1 when language/literary/music/performance triggers occur; otherwise, 0

9. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The documentary evidence suggested that reform was most commonly expressed via cultural-performance and institutional means. The propositions for performance-as-reform appeared in 18 of 60 cases (30.0%), for institution-building in 17 (28.3%), for religious accessibility in 14 (23.3%), for community participation in 13 (21.7%), and for vernacular communication in 12 (20.0%). Equality appeared in 11 propositions (18.3%), along with devotional equality in 10 (16.7%). These figures should be interpreted as the thematic density of the corpus and not as indices of medieval social structures.

The results for co-occurrence support a coupled reform model to some degree. Equality and social inclusion positively correlated ($\rho = 0.404$, $p = 0.001$); Fisher's exact test also showed non-random co-occurrence ($p = .007$; Cramér's $V = .404$). Social inclusion strongly correlated with religious

accessibility ($\rho = 0.541$, $p < .001$). The strongest observed correlation was between community participation and collective worship ($\rho = 0.572$, $p < .001$), and collective worship correlated with religious accessibility ($\rho = 0.430$, $p = .001$). In contrast, institution-building and performance did not correlate at the source-level, $\chi^2(1) = 0.004$, $p = 0.950$, $V = 0.008$. This indicates that institutions and performances are both represented, but are not obligatorily discussed, in the same documentary proposition.

The SROI was highest for the Namghar-and-community genre ($M = 32.5$) and then for social-reform texts ($M = 23.3$) and historical-sociological analysis ($M = 22.9$). Visual/Material culture scored lower as their propositions tend to focus on single dimensions of social-reform; therefore, the index performs as intended, measuring thematic reform density rather than normative significance.

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Reform-Oriented Themes

Theme	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Performance as Reform	18	30.0%	1
Institution Building	17	28.3%	2
Religious Accessibility	14	23.3%	3
Community Participation	13	21.7%	4
Vernacular Communication	12	20.0%	5
Equality	11	18.3%	6
Literary Communication	11	18.3%	7
Devotional Equality	10	16.7%	8
Ethical Reform	10	16.7%	9
Music as Reform	10	16.7%	10
Collective Worship	9	15.0%	11
Cultural Integration	9	15.0%	12

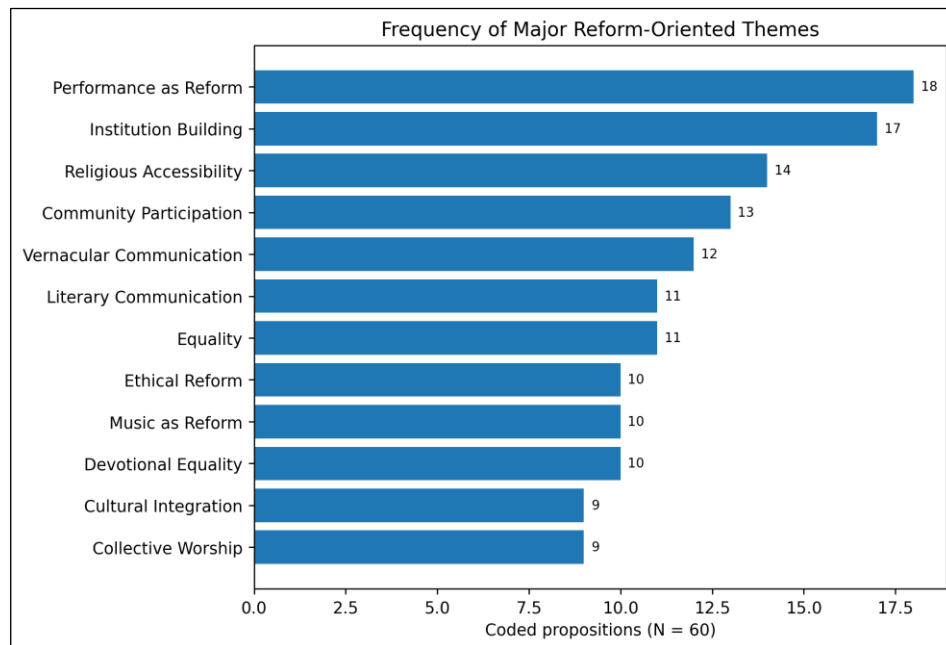


Figure 2. Frequency of major reform-oriented themes in the documentary corpus.

Table 4. Selected Theme Distribution by Source Class

Theme	Institutional cultural source	Journal article
Equality	23.8%	15.4%
Social Inclusion	19.0%	12.8%
Religious Accessibility	28.6%	20.5%
Community Participation	14.3%	25.6%
Institution Building	14.3%	35.9%
Performance as Reform	47.6%	20.5%

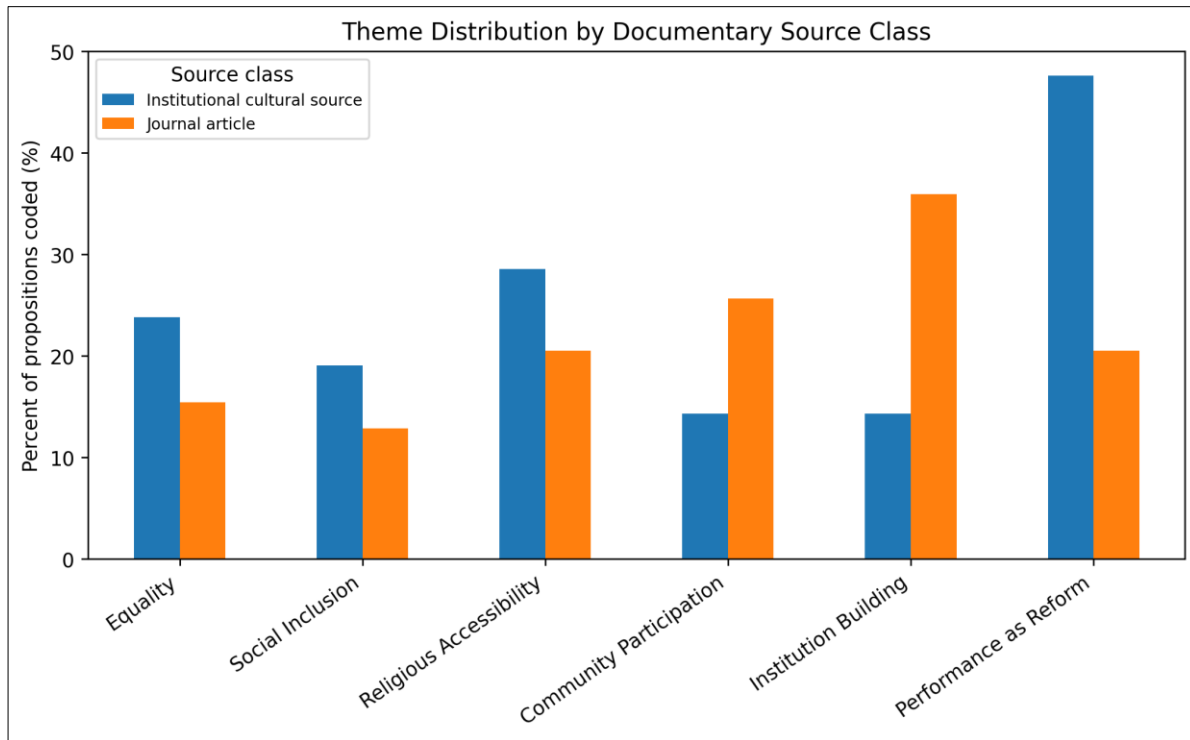


Figure 3. Percentage of propositions coded for selected themes by source class.

Table 5: Association Tests for Selected Documentary Themes

Association	Test	Statistic	p	Cramér's V	Interpretation
Equality × Social inclusion	Fisher exact	OR = 9.38	0.007	0.404	Significant
Religious accessibility × Community participation	Fisher exact	OR = 4.18	0.058	0.284	Not significant
Vernacular communication × Cultural integration	Fisher exact	OR = 4.30	0.069	0.257	Not significant
Collective worship × Community identity	Fisher exact	OR = 2.14	0.593	0.110	Not significant
Institution-building × Performance	Chi-square	$\chi^2(1) = 0.004$	0.950	0.008	Not significant

Note: Fisher's exact test is reported when expected chi-square cell frequencies are small. Cramér's V is retained as a descriptive effect-size measure.

Table 6. Spearman Correlations among Major Documentary Dimensions

Dimension	Equality	Inclusion	Participation	Collective worship	Accessibility	Cultural integration
Equality	1.000	0.404	-0.145	-0.078	0.248	0.042
Inclusion	0.404	1.000	0.232	0.216	0.541	-0.046
Participation	-0.145	0.232	1.000	0.572	0.284	0.006
Collective worship	-0.078	0.216	0.572	1.000	0.430	-0.176
Accessibility	0.248	0.541	0.284	0.430	1.000	-0.011
Cultural integration	0.042	-0.046	0.006	-0.176	-0.011	1.000

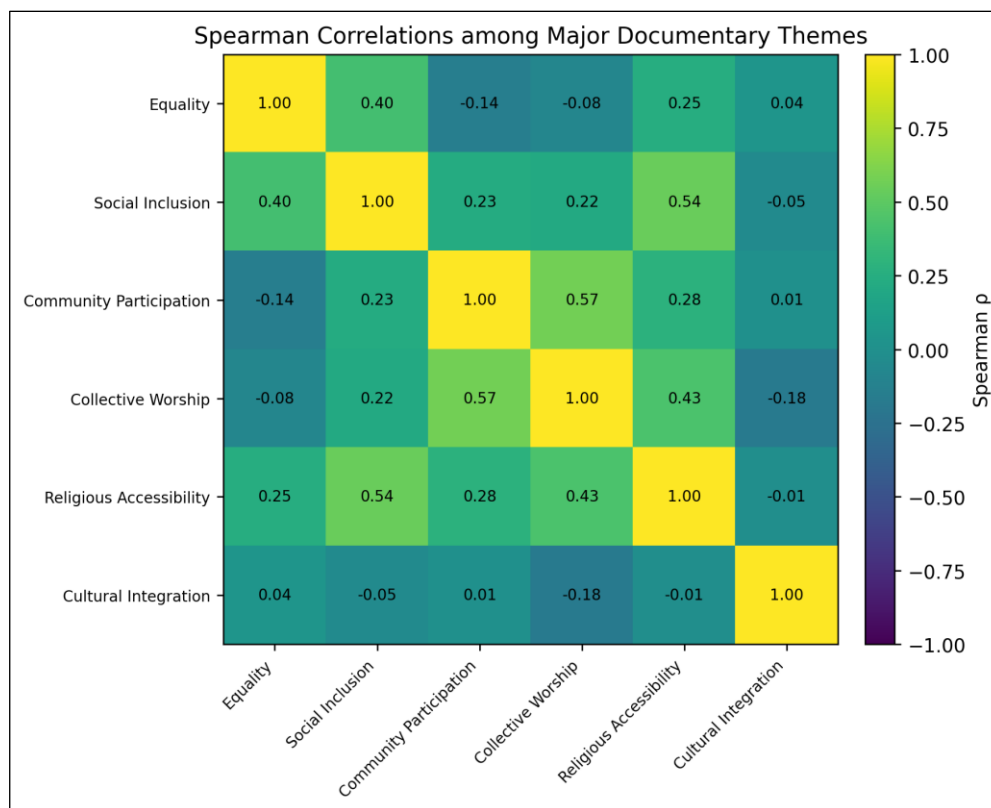


Figure 4. Spearman correlation matrix for major documentary themes.

Table 7. Social Reform Orientation Index by Documentary Genre

Genre	n	Mean SROI	SD
Namghar & community	4	32.50	18.93
Social reform	6	23.33	19.66
Historical-sociological	14	22.86	18.58
Institutional history	12	19.17	13.11
Communication & arts	8	18.75	17.27
Performance & education	6	13.33	10.33
Cultural innovation	6	11.67	11.69
Visual/material culture	4	5.00	5.77

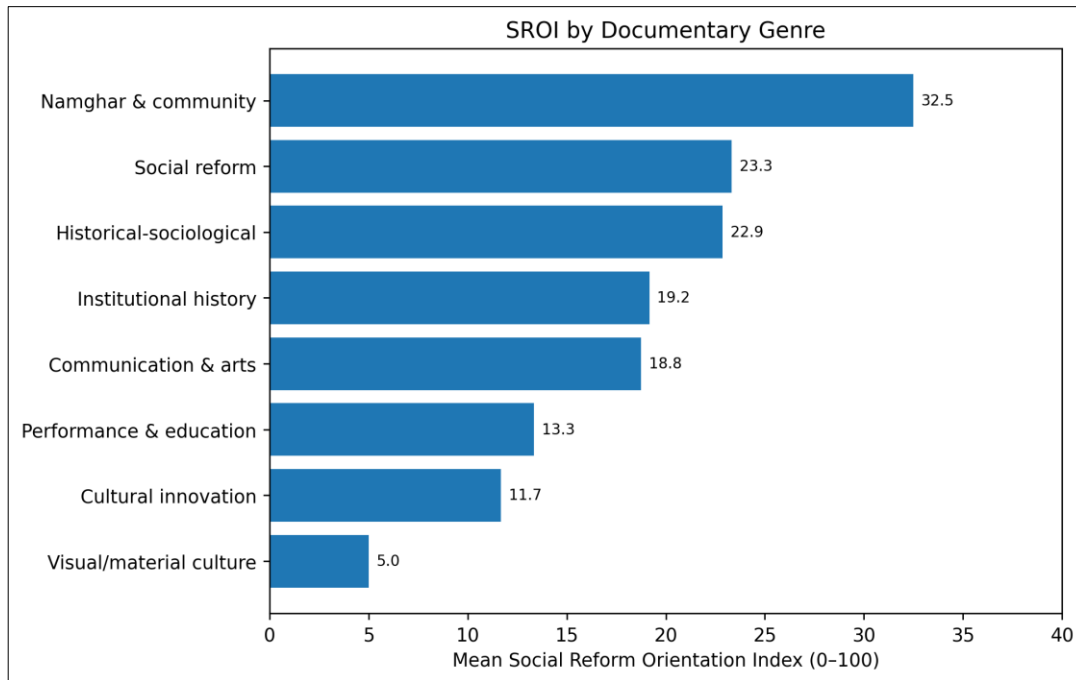


Figure 5: Mean Social Reform Orientation Index by documentary genre.

10. DISCUSSION

The statistical pattern explains the architecture of Sankardev's reform. The most common dimensions are not abstract egalitarian notions, but rather the ways through which a devotional order may be reproduced: institutions, performance, worship, and participation. This is in line with the scholarship that sees Namghars and Sattras as the organizational units and Borgeet, Bhaona, Ankiya Naat and Sattriya as the media of Bhakti (Chakravarty, n.d.; Goswami, n.d.; Pathak, 2024). Reformist ideology gained social traction when it was embodied in places, routines, and cultural media.

The correlation between equality and social inclusion permits a restricted definition of egalitarianism. The corpus associates challenges to status distinctions with access to devotional participation. This is in line with descriptions of nama-dharma as being open to all castes. There does appear to be less of a reliance on priestly mediation in more recent and early literature (Das, n.d.; Neog, 1980). However, the analysis does not show that Sankardev's preaching abolished caste in Assamese society. Pathak and Palit (2023) and the scholarship on gender and social organization do note that status and patriarchal structures were present (Baruah, 2005; Nath, 2009) and that spiritual equality was a type of reform that was partial and historically contingent.

The strongest correlation — between community participation and collective worship — suggests congregation as the bridge between theology and social organization. Nama prasanga, prayer halls, and performances established numerous opportunities for interaction. These engagements could provide collective identity, social discipline, local discourse, and even facilitate social organization without modern democratic structures as defined by a written constitution. For this reason,

the term “democratization” is the most appropriate within these contextual constraints. Here, it refers to liberalization of access to the opportunity to engage in worship.

Design and the incorporation of the vernacular and other aesthetic elements provided yet another dimension to the process. The use of Assamese and Brajavali, together with narration, music, and drama, gave Srikanta the means to express theology outside of the learned world of Sanskrit. Deka (2025) demonstrates that Vrindavani Vastra extends the communicative system and the ‘material,’ as well as the ‘visual’ to the realm of culture. Therefore, the integration of culture occurred through several sensory and institutional modes. Studies on the Vrindavani Vastra, on Assamese art, and Srikanta's historic milieu show that devotional communication permeated and extended itself through design, image, narrative, and performance as well as being expressed through instruction in a written form (Neog, 1971, 1973, 1995). This helps explain why Srikanta's legacy remained integrated with Assamese cultural identity rather than being restricted to doctrine. The later use of Srikanta as a regional cultural symbol should, however, be analytically differentiated from the meanings of his sixteenth-century movement (Bhuyan & Goswami, 2022; Thomas, 2019).

There was a paradox due to the process of institutionalization. Although the sattras preserved texts and traditions of training and art, permanent formalized administration generated leadership, ownership, sub-sects, and Prestige. We must not project these later changes on Sankardev's time. He created a repertoire of reforms (Misajiya). The later Reforms further developed and even classed these.

11. Sankardev's Contribution to Social Transformation

What makes Sankardev special is the synthesis of ideas and structures. The theology of Eka-sarana simplified theology; Namghar practice institutionalized congregational practice; a network of sattras preserved teaching and art; vernacular literature conceptualized the practice of an idea and social participation; together these practices bound together diverse social and cultural groupings of the region. The integration was ambitious though uneven. It permitted inclusiveness without fully eliminating the old order.

12. LIMITATIONS

The most important limitation of this research is the survival, availability and the nature of the sources and the interpretation of history. The 60-unit corpus is purposive rather than exhaustive. The coding scheme used was rule-based which is reproducible. However, this may miss semantic nuances that human hermeneutic coding may capture. SROI and all the tests cited evaluate patterns in Assam study literature. They cannot measure social beliefs and practices of medieval Assam.

13. CONCLUSION

Srimanta Sankardev's social reform activated theology and participation, institutions and cultural communication. Documentary analysis indicates that the movement was represented through performance and institution- building, accessibility and community participation. Equality and social inclusion tended to co-exist. These representations of the movement support the interpretation of Eka-Sarana Nama Dharma as a reform paradigm that expanded options for participation in a devotional way of life and intensified collective cultural forms.

Due care needs to be taken when assessing the scope of the movement. Sankardev did not eliminate caste, patriarchy, or hierarchy in medieval Assam. Nonetheless, the style of worship he advocated (devotional as opposed to hierarchical), shaped a worship community (congregational) and a worship language (vernacular) through which traditions and practices of different cultural communities (inclusive) were creatively integrated. The ideas took root as traditions and institutions. He was not responsible for a perfect egalitarian society, but the means of social integration that he developed and the redefinition of the site of public expression of Assamese identity and religion were significant.

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Appendix A. Documentary Coding Dataset

The appendix lists all 60 proposition-level units used in the quantitative analysis. Propositions are concise paraphrases of source claims, not quotations. The full binary coding matrix is embedded through the key-code column and was used to generate every table and figure in the Results section.

Unit ID	Source	Proposition	Key codes	SROI
U01	Pathak & Palit (2023)	Medieval Assam combined religious plurality, political contestation and several ritual traditions.	—	0
U02	Pathak & Palit (2023)	Sankardeva's reform redirected devotion toward an accessible common religious centre rather than hierarchical ritualism.	Equality, Religious Accessibility, Cultural Integration	50
U03	Pathak & Palit (2023)	Namghars functioned as inclusive congregational spaces for prayer, discussion and community participation.	Social Inclusion, Community Participation, Collective Worship, Religious Accessibility, Institution Building	50
U04	Pathak & Palit (2023)	Sattras became centres of community organization, textual learning, cultural preservation and spiritual training.	Community Participation, Institution Building	20
U05	Pathak & Palit (2023)	Neo-Vaishnavism challenged rigid caste distinctions by privileging devotion over birth status.	Equality	20
U06	Pathak & Palit (2023)	Initiation and congregational worship created avenues for participation across caste and tribal backgrounds.	Equality, Social Inclusion, Community Participation, Collective Worship, Religious Accessibility	60
U07	Pathak & Palit (2023)	Later institutionalization sometimes reproduced hierarchy and status distinctions within sattra organizations.	Institution Building	10
U08	Pathak & Palit (2023)	Borgeet, Ankiya Naat and Sattriya linked religious teaching with music, drama, dance and vernacular communication.	Vernacular Communication, Music as Reform, Performance as Reform	10
U09	Pathak & Palit (2023)	Brajavali and accessible literary forms widened communication beyond elite Sanskrit learning.	Religious Accessibility, Vernacular Communication	20
U10	Pathak & Palit (2023)	Simplified devotional practice reduced dependence on elaborate rites and priestly mediation.	Religious Accessibility	20
U11	Pathak & Palit (2023)	Collective chanting and scriptural recitation encouraged group involvement in religious life.	Community Participation, Collective Worship, Music as Reform	20
U12	Pathak & Palit (2023)	The movement promoted cultural cohesion but negotiated continually with political patronage and local social structures.	Cultural Integration	10
U13	Pathak & Palit	Women's devotional participation expanded, although	—	0

	(2023)	formal institutional leadership remained largely patriarchal.		
U14	Pathak & Palit (2023)	The movement's enduring legacy reflects tension between egalitarian ideals and later institutional hierarchy.	Equality	30
U15	Das & Saikia (2020)	The movement emerged as a response to a fragmented social and religious environment in medieval Assam.	—	0
U16	Das & Saikia (2020)	Eka-Sarana Nama Dharma was presented as a reformist alternative to costly and exclusionary ritual practices.	—	10
U17	Das & Saikia (2020)	Sankardeva's religious programme is interpreted as both a spiritual and social reform movement.	—	10
U18	Das & Saikia (2020)	Sattras and Namghars helped organize a shared cultural life among Assamese communities.	Community Participation, Vernacular Communication, Cultural Integration, Institution Building	40
U19	Das & Saikia (2020)	The movement strengthened social identity through language, congregational institutions and cultural conventions.	Community Participation, Collective Worship, Religious Accessibility, Vernacular Communication, Institution Building	50
U20	Das & Saikia (2020)	The reform tradition sought to improve the position of poor and socially oppressed groups.	Equality, Social Inclusion	30
U21	Khataniar (2022)	Sankardeva's Neo-Vaishnavism was a monotheistic devotional movement centred on Krishna.	—	0
U22	Khataniar (2022)	Early propagation relied on congregational gatherings, prayer halls, recitation, music and religious performance.	Community Participation, Collective Worship, Religious Accessibility, Institution Building, Music as Reform, Performance as Reform	40
U23	Khataniar (2022)	Satra institutions were created to disseminate and organize the Neo-Vaishnavite tradition.	Institution Building	10
U24	Khataniar (2022)	The mature structural form of sattras developed beyond Sankardeva's lifetime.	Institution Building	10
U25	Khataniar (2022)	Bardowa and later centres linked collective worship with teaching and performance.	Collective Worship, Institution Building, Performance as Reform	20
U26	Chakravarty (Sahapedia)	Sattras function as socio-religious and cultural centres that preserve philosophy and artistic expression.	Institution Building, Performance as Reform	10
U27	Chakravarty (Sahapedia)	The Neo-Vaishnavite movement is described as religious and social reform with an egalitarian orientation.	Equality	30
U28	Chakravarty (Sahapedia)	Collective chanting and devotional singing made worship participatory rather than exclusively priest-centred.	Social Inclusion, Community Participation, Collective Worship, Religious Accessibility, Music as Reform	40
U29	Chakravarty (Sahapedia)	The doctrine treated devotees as spiritually equal regardless of caste status.	Equality	20
U30	Chakravarty (Sahapedia)	Sattras acted as nodal institutions for religious discourse, learning, art, literature and community life.	Institution Building	10
U31	Chakravarty (Sahapedia)	Sankardeva used Assamese and Brajvali to make religious ideas accessible to broad audiences.	Religious Accessibility, Vernacular Communication	30
U32	Chakravarty (Sahapedia)	Borgeet, Ankiya Naat and Sattriya served as cultural instruments for reform and devotion.	Music as Reform, Performance as Reform	10
U33	Das (Sahapedia)	Nama-dharma spread through collective participation in chanting, singing and listening.	Community Participation, Music as Reform	10
U34	Das (Sahapedia)	The movement sought a broad support base across caste and ethnic communities.	Equality, Social Inclusion, Religious Accessibility, Cultural Integration	50
U35	Das (Sahapedia)	Sankardeva adopted comprehensible language to communicate with common people.	Social Inclusion, Religious Accessibility, Vernacular Communication	30
U36	Das (Sahapedia)	He declared that devotional access should not discriminate between caste categories.	Equality	20
U37	Das (Sahapedia)	Opening worship to socially degraded groups loosened some constraints of the Brahmanical social order.	Equality, Social Inclusion, Religious Accessibility	30
U38	Das (Sahapedia)	Songs, dances and drama were designed to communicate bhakti to popular audiences.	Music as Reform, Performance as Reform	0
U39	Das (Sahapedia)	Borgeet and Ankiya Naat combined literary communication with music and performance.	Music as Reform, Performance as Reform	0
U40	Das (Sahapedia)	Later charita traditions and kirtana sessions helped transmit the movement's collective memory.	Collective Worship	10
U41	Goswami (Sahapedia)	Sattriya emerged from the Neo-Vaishnavite movement as a literary and performative vehicle of cultural renewal.	Cultural Integration, Performance as Reform	10
U42	Goswami (Sahapedia)	The dance tradition connected devotion with a shared Assamese cultural idiom.	Vernacular Communication, Cultural Integration, Performance as Reform	20
U43	Goswami (Sahapedia)	Sattras preserved performance traditions while also operating as centres of religious learning.	Institution Building, Performance as Reform	10
U44	Goswami	Disciples received instruction in Assamese, Vaishnavite	Vernacular Communication, Performance	10

	(Sahapedia)	texts, scripture and artistic disciplines.	as Reform	
U45	Goswami (Sahapedia)	Congregational prayer services and performance practices emphasized collective participation.	Community Participation, Collective Worship, Religious Accessibility, Performance as Reform	30
U46	Goswami (Sahapedia)	Dance, song, instruments and drama were integrated to transmit devotional narratives.	Music as Reform, Performance as Reform	0
U47	Pathak (2024)	Sankardeva's cultural innovations included Borgeet, Ankiya Naat, Bhaona, Sattriya and visual-art traditions.	Music as Reform, Performance as Reform	0
U48	Pathak (2024)	Namghars and Sattras supplied institutional infrastructure for the continuity of cultural practices.	Institution Building	10
U49	Pathak (2024)	Religious devotion and artistic production became mutually reinforcing in the movement.	Performance as Reform	0
U50	Pathak (2024)	Collective ownership and adaptability helped cultural forms remain embedded in Assamese social life.	Community Participation, Vernacular Communication, Cultural Integration	30
U51	Pathak (2024)	Performance spaces and monastic institutions created durable channels for cultural communication.	Institution Building, Performance as Reform	10
U52	Pathak (2024)	Sankardeva's innovations contributed to an enduring Assamese cultural identity.	Vernacular Communication, Cultural Integration	20
U53	Deka (2025)	Vrindavani Vastra integrated religion, literature, painting and weaving within a Neo-Vaishnavite aesthetic.	—	0
U54	Deka (2025)	The textile communicated Krishna narratives through visual and material culture.	—	0
U55	Deka (2025)	Its production demonstrates the connection between devotional imagination and Assamese artistic skill.	Vernacular Communication, Performance as Reform	10
U56	Deka (2025)	The work remains relevant to interpretations of Assamese identity and cultural heritage.	Vernacular Communication	10
U57	Bhargav (2025)	The Namghar combined devotional worship with community organization and sociocultural reform.	Community Participation, Institution Building	30
U58	Bhargav (2025)	Namghars are interpreted as institutions that democratized spiritual participation and supported egalitarian values.	Equality, Social Inclusion, Religious Accessibility, Institution Building	60
U59	Bhargav (2025)	They provided spaces for artistic expression, social cohesion and collective decision-oriented activity.	Social Inclusion, Community Participation, Performance as Reform	20
U60	Bhargav (2025)	The continuing Namghar tradition links religious practice with cultural resilience and community identity.	Cultural Integration, Institution Building	20

Coding note. SROI = (sum of ten core reform indicators / 10) × 100. Binary codes were produced with the pre- specified semantic dictionary described in the Methodology; no respondent or survey data were used.