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Neo-vaishnavite Movement of Assam: A case Study of Mayamara Vaishnavism

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Abstract- This Paper is about the Neo-Vaishnavite Movement And its One important Branch Mayamara Vaishnavism. Neo-Vaishnavism of Assam was first established by the sankardeva. The movement started in the middle of the present day Assam at a place called Bardowa near Nagaon and spread over the entire north eastern region of that time from Sadiya in the East and Koch Belar in the west. It was basically a religious movement, preaching the monotheistic faith in lord Krishna, the supreme creator of the Universe not through any worship but singing lord Krishna's name's in Congregational Prayers, ultimately it was not confined only into the corridors of religion but like a wild fire it spread into social, literary and cultural spheres, so much so that a neo-vishnavite Assamese Society came into being a society where all persons Irrespective of casts and creeds could live move and have their beings as equals. At the Time of Sankar Deva's vaikuntha prayana (Passing away), he left his religious order in the hand of his most devoted disciple mahapurush Madhabdeva. But after his death the neo-vaishnavite movement in Assam divided into four sects or Samhati. They are The Brahma Samhati by the Damodardev, Purusa Samhati by Purusottoma Thakur, Kala Samhati by Gopala deva and Nika samhati by Mathura das and padma ata. And Anirudhadeva (a disciple of The Gopala deva who established kala samhati) for the first time Established a Branch of Kala Samhati Satra in upper Assam and which was later on came to be known as the Mayamara Satra or moamaria Satra and his neo-vaishnavite Ideology as the Mayamara Vaishnavism.

Keywords: Neo-Vaishnavism, Vaishnavism, Mayamara Vaishnavism, Anirudhadeva, Kala Samhati.

Introduction

Mayamara Vaishnavism is a Branch of neo-Vaishnavism of Assam, which was first established by the sankardeva. The movement started in the middle of the present day Assam at a place called Bardowa near Nagaon and spread over the entire north eastern region of that time from Sadiya in the East and Koch Belar in the west. It was basically a religious movement, preaching the monotheistic faith in lord Krishna, the supreme creator of the Universe not through any worship but singing lord Krishna's name's in Congregational Prayers, ultimately it was not confined only into the corridors of religion but like a wild fire it spread into social, literary and cultural spheres, so much so that a neo-vishnavite Assamese Society came into being a society where all persons Irrespective of casts and creeds could live move and have their beings as

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Aniruddhadeva first founded his satra at his own village called Vishubalikunchi near Narayanpur in the present Lakhimpur district of Assam in 1601 AD but later (in 1606) shifted it to Naharati, 9 km south of the present Bihpuria of the same district, owing to the raids of the Nishis (dafalas). A man of radical outlook, Aniruddhadeva made the depressed communities and tribes like the Kaivartas, Haris, Nadiyahs and Kacharis, including the poor artisans the target of his missionary activities. Following Sankardeva and Madhavdeva, he also gave initiation to a Muslim tailor named Sheli, renamed as Dhyanaapati. Aniruddhadeva placed these disciples on an equal footing with the caste-Hindus and mixed freely with them, which made him immensely popular in the common circle. For this, he was severely criticized by his contemporaries, but he accepted all challenges with courage and determination. Aniruddhadeva fostered among his disciples a strong community feeling and there by greatly contributed towards social formation in upper Assam, in particular. Aniruddhadeva was a literary genius and an expert musician. Aniruddhadeva rendered into Assamese the 5th Skandha of the Bhagawata and composed the Puranjan Upakhyan based on the contents of the 25th to 31st chapters of the 4th skandha of the above text. Besides, Aniruddhadeva authored a religious text called Bhakti Mangal Ghosa in 805 verses in line with Madhavdeva's namghosa. Aniruddhadeva wrote another text called *Nij-Sastra* in both prose and verse for the senior disciples, who learnt the fundamentals of Vaishnava philosophy. Its recitation, however, is still confined to this class of devotees and the text is considered a secret one. Aniruddhadeva's mastery over music is evident by the fact that he had not only composed 182 devotional songs but had also prescribed raga for each of them.

The disciples of Aniruddhadeva came to be known as Moamariya or Mayamoriya and the satra as Maomara or Mayamara. They have a distinct place in the history of late medieval Assam because they organised the first popular rebellion against the Ahom monarchy in 1769, which in course of time paved the way to its downfall and implementation of the British rule in Assam. For this, the Mayamara satra and its gurus were held responsible. Consequently, not only the disciples of Aniruddhadeva, but also the guru himself were severely condemned. The other reason for which the Mayamara Satras got alienated from other satras was that it accepted mainly the depressed people to its order. As

a result, Aniruddhadeva and his mayamara Satras remained in the backlog of study and research. Aniruddhadeva's Naharati Than(Satra Eariler) also not exception in this mater.

Review of Literature

Following are some of the literatures I have reviewed which shall be helpful in analyzing the subject matter. The book entitled, "*The Matak and their kingdom, castes & tribes of Assam*" (1985), by Sristidhar Dutta discuss about the origin of the terms Matak, Moamaria & Mayamara. This book also deals with the racial Origin and Political background of the different tribes and castes composing *Mayamara* or *Moamaria* Community. This book also deals with Anirudha deva and his Mayamara Vaishnavism. In this book we find Aniruddha deva as the main founder of the Mayamara Vaishnavism and the development of *satra* instution in Balikunchi, which was later on shifted to Marnai due to the tribal raids . In this book we also find the main cultural contribution of the Aniruddha deva and the origin of the name '*Mayamara*'. In this book writer give us three different theory about the origin of *Mayamara Vaishnavism* and its historical significant. The book '*Life and Teachings of Sri Sri Aniruddha deva*' which was edited by Dr. Swarnalata Lata Baruah, Retired professor of Dibrugarh University, found some relevant articles related to my topic. Among them "*Sri Sri Aniruddha deva: A Great Scholar and Saint*" which was written by Biswanarayan Shastri is a important one. In this Article Shastri write about how Aniruddha deva established Mayamara Satra at Balikunchi and later shifted to the Naharati Than of Marnay, his Literary Contribution and mith and Reality Regarding to the origin of the Name Mayamara. In another Article of the same book Purnanda saikia wrote under the title of '*The Bhakti Movement in Assam and sri sri Aniruddha deva*', what are the main Contribution of Bhakti Movement to Assamese society by Aniruddha deva and also discuss in detailed about how Anniruddha deva Start a new Branch Of Vaishnavism in Assam under the banner of neo-Vaishnavite Movement of Sankardeva, how far it successful, why naharati Satra, later on came to be known as the Naharati than and what was the main importance of this than to the deciple of Mayamara Vaishnavism. In the Same edited book another Article titled '*origin of the names Mataka, Moamaria and Mayamara & their Historical Significance*' by Sristidhar Dutta Write How the ame Mataka, Mayamara, Moamariya origin, he briefly discuss three different theory regarding to the Origin of the Mayamara or Moamariya and its Historical Significance. The book entitled '*Mayamara Vaishnav Samajar Than Satra Itihas aru Aityjya*' edited by Dr. Dambaru Dhar Nath Discuss about how Naharati Than Emmerged and this than journey From Balikunchi Satra to Naharati Than (Satra earlier). Dr. Nath also write about Religious Rituals which perform every Mayamara Satra and Mayamara community. The Book '*Mahapurush Sri Sri Anirudha deva*' written Manik Gogoi Give us full coverage of Anirudhadeva from his Early life Work and Till his death. The

writer give full detailed about the early life and how Anirudhdeva initiated in the Kaljhar Satra And how Anirudhadeva established His own Satra in Balikunchi and later on transferred to Naharati. The book entitled '*Mayamora Adya guru Sri Sri Anirudha deva aru terar Dharma Dhara*' written by Bhudhar Das give us detailed image of the 17th ce Religious life of Upper Assam, he also briefly discuss about the Main Contribution of the Anirudha deva to the Neo-Vaishnavism and to justify this Bhudhar Das briefly Discuss the Whole Work of him from Bhaktimongal Ghosa to the *Nij Sastra*. Das also discuss the Main Reason why the Bhakti Mongal Ghosa not Allow to read any Ordinary person and why double initiation is needed to Read this book and why this book only read in Midnight by specific and Authorized Village old man Group. The Souvenir '*Sri Sri Anirudha devar Dharma Darshan Aru Sampratik Mayamara samaj*' is edited by Dultan Gogoi. In this Souvenir an article named '*Mayamara Vhaisnav Dhmar Aidyaswar sri sri Anirudhadeva*' written by Dr. Birendra Kumar Gohain writes about Why Anirudhadeva was called as a Aidyaswar by his disciple And how Anirudhadeva Transfare his 1st Mayamara Satra to Naharati than(earlier Satra). Another article on the same book '*Anirudha deva Ek Awalokan*' written by Phanidhar Bora, mainly discuss about the Ideology of Anirudha deva and the difference between *neo-vaishnavism* and *Mayamara Vaishnavism*. The work also talk about *Nij Sastra* of *Mayamara* Community and the secret reading of the book by some double initiated old *Mayamara* community disciple. The article says that some of old scripture along with *Nij Sastra* are preserved in the Naharati Than (Earlier Satra). The book entitled '*Srimanta Sankardev aru Anugami Gurusakal*' a book written by Bhu dhar Das we found the life history of Anirudha deva and his Mayamara Satra instutions. Here Das discuss about early life of Aniruddha deva and how Aniruddha deva Initiated into Kaljhar Satra by Gopal deva and later on how Aniruddha deva established his own Satra Instution in Balikunchi of Narayanpur area at first and Later on due to Tribal Raids shifted to Marnay area which is about 9 km. far from the Balikunchi. The Souvenir entitled '*Tumixi Xuhrida Aatmaa Priyatama*' 2015 a Souvenir of Srimanta Sankardeva Sangha, In this Souvenir a Article titled '*Vaishnavbad, Sri Sri Anirudhadev Aru Mayamara Dharmiya Sanskriti*' written by Susil Kumar Gogoi. Gogoi writes about what is vaishnavbad, what is Mayamara sect of neo-Vaishnavism, Main deference between the neo-vaishnavism and the mayamara vaishnavism. Mr. Gogoi also writes about the Main Principles of Mayamara vaishnavism which is not found in any other sect of Neo-vaishnavism in Assam.

Objectives of the paper

The present paper has the following objective-

1. To highlight Neo-Vaishnavism of Assam
2. To highlight Mayamara Vaishnavism and its Origin.
3. To analyze the Organizational framework of Mayamara Satras of Aniruddha deva.

Methodology

The present study is based on historical and analytical method. The data or facts have been collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources included both the published and unpublished written documents in the archives. Secondary sources have been used to supplement the primary sources. They include various books and articles written by different scholars on the Neo-Vaishnavism of Assam, Mayamara Vaishnavism.

Origin of Mayamara Vaishnavism

Mayamara Vaishnavism is a Branch of *neo-vaishnavism* of Assam, which was first established by the sankardeva. The movement started in the middle of the present day Assam at a place called Bardowa near Nagaon and spread over the entire north eastern region of that time from Sadiya in the East and Koch Belar in the west. It was basically a religious movement, preaching the monotheistic faith in lord Krishna, the supreme creator of the Universe not through any worship but singing lord krishna's name's in Congregational Prayers ,ultimately it was not confined only into the corridors of religion but like a wild fire it spread into social, literary and cultural sphers, so much so that a *neo-vishnavite* Assamese Society came into being a society where all persons Irrespective of casts and creeds could live move and have their beings as equals. At the Time of Sankar Deva's *vaikuntha prayana* (Passing away), he left his religious order in the hand of his most devoted disciple mahapurush Madhabdeva. But after his death the *neo-vaishnavite* movement in Assam divided into four sects or *Samhati*. They are The *Brahma Samhati* by the Damodardeva, *Purusa Samhati* by Purusottoma Thakur, *Kala Samhati* by Gopala deva and *Nika samhati* by Mahura Das and padma ata. And Aniruddhadeva (a disciple of the Gopala deva who established *kala samhati*) for the first time established a Branch of *kala samhati* Satra in upper Assam and which was later on came to be known as the *Mayamara Satra* or *moamaria Satra* and his *neo-vaishnavite* ideology as the *Mayamara Vaishnavism*. The terms 'Matak' and 'Moamaria' or 'Mayamaria' are used in an identical sense because all the members of the *Matak* community are also disciples of the *Mayamara Satra*. According to the *Satradhikars* of the *Mayamara Satras*, the actual term is not 'Moamara but 'Mayamara' The *Mayamara Satrar Vamsawali* contends that the appellation 'Mayamara was given to their original *Guru* Aniruddhadeva by the Ahom king Sukhampha Khora Raja (1552-1603), being impressed by the former's mastery over *maya* or magic, by which, he could create a cobra out of an empty pitcher and then make it vanish simply by touching the sides of it. From this incident, Aniruddhadeva's *Satra* came to be known as 'Mayamara'. R.M. Nath gives a different interpretation to the origin of the term 'Mayamara'. Nath states that "the *Moria* sect of the Austrics, who were originally known as the *Mei-Morias* settled in the north-eastern part of the country which was later known as the head or the 'Mahtak' or *Matak* country. Later on they mixed up with the *Bodos* and other tribes and were known as *Morans*, while their tribe-name was changed from *Mei-Moria* to *Maya-Moria* or *Moamaria*. But his theory is not supported by any other source, nor is there any evidence to ascribe Austric origin to the *Morans* against their well-founded

Bodo origin. It is seen that in case of the other *Satras* of Assam, most of them are named after their geographical location. It is, therefore, probable that the *Satra* was called *Moamara* because it was located at one time, in the early period of its history, on the bank of the *Moamari Bil* which abounded in *Moa fish*. This view was first forwarded by Maniran Dewan. Supporting Dewan's contention, British Officer Robinson stated that the people who inhabited the area close to the lake were called *Moamara* and the *Satra* located therein was also therefore called as such. There is a tribal area in upper Majuli which is still known as *Moamara*, which evidences the existence of a lake bearing that name in that area at one time. The lake might have dried up or washed away by the Brahmaputra, as Majuli is still the most flood-affected area of Assam. The term '*Mayamara*' is found neither in the *Buranjis* nor in the *Chritputhis* (biographies of the Vaisnava saints). Only one official record, a letter dated 8th *Ahara*, 1724 *Saka* (July, 1802) written by King Kamaleswar Singha (1795-1811) to the then Governor-General, Wellesly, used the term '*Mayamara*'. But, in course of time, the term '*Mayamara*' became more popular than that of '*Moamara*', perhaps because, the heads of the *Mayamara Satras* give wide publicity to this term through their published *Vamsawali*. Moreover, as there is hardly any difference in the accent of the word '*Moamara*' to '*Mayamara*', the gradual corruption of the term '*Mayamara*' to '*Moamara*' or vice versa was but very natural. As the *Mayamara Mahanta* accepted disciples from amongst the so called low caste or depressed classes of the society and greatly compromised with tribal manners and customs, the term '*Moamara*' or '*Mayamara*' was also used in a derogatory sense. Haliram Dhekial Phukan, and Maniram Dewan state that because of this reason, the other *Satras* did not keep any relation with the *Mayamara Satra*. My informant also narrate Same thing to me ,he also added that though the word *Mayamara* and *Moamaria* are identical but the meaning of the both work differ from each other. E.A. Gait mentions that the term '*Moamaria*' was a nick-name given to the original disciples Anirudhadeva, who lived near the *Moamari* lake, used to catch and eat a kind of fish called *Moa*. Gait's opinion is echoed in the Census Report of 1881 which states that "The Assamese of the lower districts regarded the *Gosain* and his medly following with some contempt, which they expressed by the term '*Moamaria*, or catchers of the *Moa* fish, in allusion to the fishing carried on by his *Dom* disciples in the lake on whose bank the *Gosairt* had seat." *Imperial Gazetteer* also writes in the same vein. Perhaps, it was this reason that the *Mayamara Mahantas* preferred to designate their *Satra* as *Mayamara* and repeatedly emphasised that the actual name of their *Satra* was not '*Moamara*' but '*Mayamara*'.

Organizational framework of the Mayamara Satra

The *Mayamara Satra* is purely of non-monastic line, Its *Gosain* or *Adhikar* (Head of the *Satra*) and his devotees lead housholder's life with their respective families. Therefore, unlike the monastic or semi-monastic *Satras*, the *Mayamara Satra* at present possesses no *hati* or residential huts intended for accomodating celebate devotees. However, the chronicle of the *Satra* mentions the existence of *Cari-hati* or four rows of residential huts in the monastaries established in various places from time to time. Possibly, till the early part of the twentieth century, there were some devotees in the *Satra* campus, who were leading celebate lives on their own. The

Mayamara Satras were generally established at places away from the humdrum of life. In the structural design of the buildings of the *Mayamara Satra*, certain specialities are noticed. Each of the principal *Mayamara Satra* is marked by the existence of a *Batcara* (Gateway), a *Namghar* (prayer-hall), a *Sastraghar* or *Dharmaghar* or *Mankuta* (Shrine), a *Gurughar* (Satradhikar's residence), a *Than* (cremation ground of religious head) and a tank where at the time of initiation ritualistic baths are taken. The first four are common to all *satras* but the last two are specialities of *Mayamara* only.

Community organization of the Mayamara Satras

The community organization of a *Mayamara Satra* consists of two principal sections viz. (i) *Adhikar* or the head, the *Deka-adhikar* or *Juva-adhikar* or the heir apparent and *Padadhikar* or the would be *Deka-adhikar*. In the *Mayamara Tipuk Satra*, *Acarya*, *Mahabhakta* or *Mahabhakat* and *Mahapurusiya* are also incorporated in this category, (ii) The other category consists of the *Sisyas* or disciples. The first category of disciples who are office-bearers generally reside within the *Satra* campus and the second category i.e. the laity live in villages and towns outside the *Satra* complex. In *Mayamara Satras* like those of non-monastic order, headship is hereditary and he is called *Satradhikar* or simply *Adhikar* or *Gosain*. Next to the *Gosain* is the *Deka-adhikar*, briefly *Dekadhikdr* or *Yuvadhar*, meaning the heir apparent or would be *Adhikar*. The *Dekadhikdr* is appointed by the *Adhikar* with the approval of the community of devotees on the basis of seniority. On the same principle, the *Padadhikdr* is appointed by the *Yuvadhar*. The *Adhikar* is the religious head and spiritual guide of the devotees or disciples under his care. Only he has the authority to initiate the devotees or give *Parana* and *bhajana*. Next to the *Adhikar* in power and prestige is the *Dekadhikdr* and next to him is the *Padadhikdr*. When the *Adhikar* remains absent or goes out on *Cahar phura* or religious tour, the *Dekadhikdr* generally performs the duties of the *Adhikar*. The *sisyas* or disciples of a *Mayamara satra*, as in other *satras*, are of two kinds, (i) *Saraniya* and (ii) *Bhajaniya*. Generally, every neophyte just before or after he gets married, is given initiation, in the latter case along with his wife. After initiation, he is simply called *Nam-Bhakat* or *Saraniyal Bhakat*. Similarly, women receiving initiation is called *Nam* or *Saraniyal Bhakatani*. After initiation, he or she is allowed to take active part in religious functions. A *Bhakat* or devotee after remaining *Saraniyal* or laity for a long time, could proceed for *Bhajana* in his matured age, when he is again initiated and promoted to the status of *bhajaniyal bhakat*. He is then given the opportunity to go deep into mystery and philosophy of the faith, participate in the recitation and exposition of the *Nij-Sastra* composed by Sri Sri Aniruddhadeva. A *Bhajaniyal* devotee becomes qualified to hold higher ecclesiastical offices like *Gaon Burdha*, *Barburdha*, *Siromam* or *Bargaonburdha*.

Management of the Mayamara Satra

The management or administration of a *Mayamara Satra* as other Vaishnava monasteries is run by the *Adhikar* with the help of a number of functionaries attached to different departments like the *Sastraghar* or *Marikuta*, *Namghar*, *Yajnaghar* and General management. The *Manikuta* department takes care of the *Marikuta* which is the central chamber of a *Mayamara Satra*. The religious scriptures are kept in a

separate chamber called *Sastraghar* or *Dharma-ghar*. The scriptures consist of the *Nij-Sastra* and the *Bhakti-Mahgal Ghosa* composed by Sri Sri Aniruddhadeva, the *Mukti Mahgal Ghosa* composed by the fourth *Adhikar* of the *Satra* Sri Sri Nityanandadeva and other works composed by later *Adhikars*. The person who is placed in charge of this chamber is called *Namghariya*. His duty is to look after the cleanliness of the *Marikuta* and lit lamps in this chamber and also in the *Than-ghar* every evening. The *Bar Khataniyar* or *Bar-Bhakat* performs the work of *nam-prasahga* (congregational prayer) with his assistants, one or more, called *Khataniyar*. *Yajna-ghar* is found only in the *Tipuk Satra*. From morning till early hours of night, a series of devotional services are held in the *Namghar*. In this chamber, the *Namghariyas* play the *daba* (drum) in the morning and in the early hours of night. Each *Namghar* has also a few orchestral parties known as *Gayan-bayan*. The person in charge of reciting the *Bhagavata* is called *Pathak* or *Patheki*. *Pathak* is assisted by a few other *Pathaks*. The person in charge of cooking and distributing food and *haj* are called respectively *Randhani* (cook) and *Bilaniya* (distributor).

Relation between the Guru and the Sisyas

The nature of relation between the *Guru* and his *sisyas* (disciples) of the *Mayamara Satras* as well as between the disciples themselves had been somewhat different from other *Satras*. Although *Guruvad* is a salient feature of the *Kala Samhati Satras*, it is in the *Mayamara Satra* that the principle was strictly followed in practice. The disciples of the *Satra* considered their *gurus* to be a living embodiments of God and is called Aniruddhadeva, the *Adyamurtti* or primal image. For them, the *guru* never dies; Aniruddhadeva, simply closes the drama of his life. Any humiliation done to him they considered it to be done on their own persons and were determined to avenge it. It was in the name of their *guru* that they got themselves united on the eve of the *Moamariya* rebellion. Although this tradition has suffered some set back in present times, they still hold their *guru* in high esteem and the latter also makes best efforts to keep close contact with them. He is always accessible to the disciples. Any disciple at any time can directly come to the *Guru* and discuss any problem with him. Community feeling is also very strong among its disciples. They usually come in groups to visit the *Guru*. After harvest, the disciples used to offer a quota of their production to the *Guru*. This practice still exists. It is also their custom to come to the *Guru* to offer *pranam* before or soon after getting married. The disciples generally address the *Guru* as *Deuta* (Father). They also use other appellations like *Dukhani Caran* (His pair of holy feet), *Jivandhan* (wealth of life) and *Gurudeva* (God father). But their *Deuta* is only a senior friend in the community of disciples. To develop more intimate relationship with the disciples, the *Adhikar* undertakes tour programme called *Cahar Phura* or *Prabas Phura* (to be out of the headquarters) from time to time. In this *Satra*, when the disciples bow their heads to him, he also reciprocates doing *namaskar*. This practice could never be imagined in other *Satras*.

Codes of conduct of the Mayamara Satras

The *Mayamara Satras* have some codes of conduct which set up a discipline in the socio-religious behavior in the *Mayamara* society. It had also helped the *Satra* to mould its society to a definite social system. The violation of any code of conduct is considered as *aparadha* or offence. Among such offences *nam-aparadha* (*nam*

meaning God's name and *aparci dha* means offence) is the most serious. After taking ordination, the devotees become *Atds* or *Atais* (originating from the word *Aima*, meaning divine soul) and they are to consider each other as part of the divine soul and also as part of the great community, namely, the human community. Though this concept of universal brotherhood and devotion exist in all *Vaishanava Satras*, it is in the *Mayamara Satras* that the ideal was practiced in reality. Any harsh word or rude behaviour to any disciple is considered as a *nam-aparadha*. Any one guilty of this offence can be penalized by the *Satra-dhikar* in consultation with community of disciples. Till he is not pardoned, the offender remains ex-communicated from the society. The codes of social behaviour are revised from time to time to suit the changed social circumstances and values.

Conclusion

Mayamara Vaishnavism is important branch of the *Neo-Vaishnavism* of Assam. The *Mayamara satras* of Sri Sri Aniruddhadeva have even today a bond of unity among their disciples. It is known that when different castes and tribes like the *Morans*, *Kacharis* and *Chutiyas* were converted to the new faith, Sri Sri Aniruddhadeva and the succeeding *Mayamara Gosains* permitted them great laxities. They were not altogether prevented from following their age-old customs and rites suddenly, which might result in wide resentment amongst them. Even, after their conversion to *neo-Vaishnavism*, some of the adherents continued to worship some of their tribal deities while accepting at the same time Krishna, Vishnu or Hari as the supreme Lord. Although from the point of principle, this should not have been permitted, Aniruddhadeva possibly did not take cognizance of those rites, which were done privately. On the other hand, such relaxation popularized the *Mayamara* sect and contributed to its numerical strength.

In this way, through the elevation of socially backward people by presenting before them a higher and healthier mode of life and by opening the portals of monotheistic religion to all, Sri Sri Aniruddhadeva fostered fellow feeling and universal brotherhood among different castes, communities and tribes and thereby led to the formation of a new society.

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