

NOMINATION FORM ICH-02 FOR INSCRIPTION ON THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST IN 2010

A. State(s) Party(ies)
India
B. Name of the element
(i) Name of the element in English or French
Sattriya Music, Dance and Theatre
(ii) Name of the element in the language and script of the community concerned, if applicable
søERxa sZgEt, n#tY Aar_ nafY
(iii) Other name(s) of the element, if any
Nil
C. Characteristics of the element
(i) Identification of the communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned
<p>The Communities and groups practicing Sattriya Music, Dance and Theatre, with its sub-stylistic variants are located in different parts of North-eastern India. The communities which are distinctively associated with it are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The Assamese Hindu Community in the entire Brahmaputra Valley in Assam including Majuli, the river-island of the Brahmaputra, ii) The Rajbanshi Community in Chatrasal in the bordering areas of Assam as well as Cooch Behar in West Bengal, iii) Some groups of the Nocte Community in Arunachal Pradesh, iv) Some groups of the Bodo Community in Assam and Nagaland border, v) Mising and Sonowal tribes spreading over different areas of the valley and

<p>vi) Some groups of the Naga tribes living within Assam and bordering areas of Assam and Nagaland.</p>
<p>(ii) Geographic location and range of the element and location of the communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned</p>
<p>Geographic location of the Sattriya tradition ranges from some areas in the Arunachal Pradesh, in east to Cooch Behar, West Bengal in the West with the vast expanse of the Brahmaputra Valley in Assam and parts of the Barak valley in southern Assam.</p>
<p>(iii) Domain(s) represented by the element</p>
<p>The element in multiple forms is manifested in the following domains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Performing Arts. It is performed as rituals in daily prayer services as well as festivals. The tradition plays a very important role in social practices. Some of the parts of the element are also specially held as religious ceremonies in connection with life cycle of the individuals from birth to death and even beyond. ii) Social Practices It forms parts of social practices, religious rituals and festivities. iii) Traditional Craftsmanship The element provides an avenue for the exposure and growth of traditional craftsmanship. iv) Oral Tradition The expression is an orally transmitted tradition v) Knowledge and Practices concerning nature and the universe The tradition forms to be instruments of an indigenous knowledge system with a philosophical outlook on the relationship between God and Man.

<p>D. Brief summary of the element</p>
<p>Sattriya Music, Dance and Theatre is a composite body of multiple forms of artistic expressions combining music, dance, drama and other allied arts bearing great significance and impact on both spiritual and social life of Assam. Based on a vast corpus of devotional compositions in Brajavali as well as in vernacular Assamese and woven with a melodic and rhythmic structure distinctive of its own, this body of cultural expressions is inextricably associated with rituals and ceremonies in the Sattria, a monastic institution of Vaisnavite faith and learning. Permeated with intense spiritual fervour and educational value, the Sattriya tradition has become an indispensable part of the religious, social and cultural life of the practicing community as a medium of internalizing the experience of the Divinity.</p> <p>Always performed with deep emotional attachment to the accompaniment of drums and cymbals, this is a unique testimony of religious experience integrated with aesthetic elegance. The style of music and dance combining elements from the pan-Indian and Indo-Mongoloid traditions is distinct from the major schools of North and South Indian music and dance. The theatre also, celebrated as a tradition next only to the Sanskrit drama and theatre, has several distinguishing features of its own.</p> <p>The Sattriya Music, Dance and Theatre incorporating melodic and rhythmic improvisations from time to time, is mostly a group work having a performance text orally handed down to generations.</p>
<p>1. Identification and definition of the element (cf. Criterion R.1)</p>
<p>The Sattriya Music, Dance and Theatre emerging from the Sattria institution, together is a vast cultural space, combining vocal and instrumental music, dance, theatre pursued by the monks of the monastic order. And it has contributed to the growth of other allied arts like painting, miniature painting, woodcarving, mask-making etc. Drawing on Indian musical traditions and their canonical texts like the <i>Natyasastra</i> and the <i>Sangita Ratnakara</i>, and musical features of the Indo- Mongoloids it has grown over the centuries, as a parallel tradition to other styles of North and South Indian music, dance and theatre. Continuing as an unbroken stream, both ritually and aesthetically, with a large repertoire of performative texts, it is deeply embedded in the social</p>

psyche of the community and has been an effective source of cultural integration and interaction, mass education, wisdom and learning.

Derived originally from the Sanskrit word 'Sattrā' which meant a sacrificial session, it has retained the ritual signification of the term in all respects of the institution and its practices under the adjectival cover of 'Sattriya'. It is written and spelt as 'Sattrā' and 'Sattriya', but pronounced by the Assamese language community as 'Xattriya' in terms of the sound syllables 'Xa' as adopted by the International Phonetic Association.

This element as a performative genre is based on the vast corpus of literary compositions born in the wake of the great cultural resurgence during the 15th-16th centuries of Assam. Srimanta Sankaradeva (1449-1568 AD) and Madhavadeva (1489-1596 AD) great saints, poets and composers, preached the devotional faith integrated with pursuit of arts. They were also the fountainheads of this cultural resurgence.

Ankiya Bhaona or the theatre component of this composite matrix, is one of the oldest traditions in India introduced by Sankaradeva. It is a highly stylized and complete theatre tradition, combining music, dance and drama on the one hand, community spirit and creativity on the other.

The Bhaona, enacted on the plays of Sankaradeva, Madhavadeva and their apostolate written in Brajavali and Assamese languages, is staged in the open space of the quadrilateral prayer hall (Namghar) with devotionally inspired audience on three sides of the performance space facing the sanctum. While it has assimilated several features of the Sanskrit drama into its web, it has also internalized elements from the rural community life of the region, and is transcreated with the profound creative imagination of an art visionaries like Sankaradeva and Madhavadeva.

It evolved a highly stylized dramaturgy carrying forward the form and style of Sanskrit theatre in terms of entry and exit of *dramatis personae*, stylized usage of the performance space and theatrical accessories and properties, preliminaries (*Purvaranga*) and epilogues (*Muktimangala*), interplay with music and dance within its texture.

The Bhaona, as a theatre, paved the way for the growth of other allied arts like mask-making, sculpture of wood-carving, costume designing and painting; and promoted traditional crafts and textile having great bearing on the social life and economy. Thus, it has been working as an instrument of social change and mobility, harmony and integration.

The Music component of the element is rich with several types like Bargits, Kirtan, Ojapali, etc. Performance of these compositions as congregational singing in various ritual services as community prayers, is a complete musical genre well-knit with song text, melody and rhythm interwoven with elements drawn from both pan-Indian and Indo-Mongoloid traditions of music. Supportive percussive and other instruments have likewise been devised from surrounding Nature to suit this cultural expression.

The Dance is another component which through the creative imagination of the Sattrā community became a vibrant form wider in structural and ideational space. Derived from the repertoire of dance in the Ankiya Bhaona where dance was a part of the multi-layered genre of preaching the devotional faith, the Sattrā community translocated it in the ritual services, recreated it with new meaning as a medium of community prayer and suggestive enactment of divine episodes.

Like the Music and Theatre, the Dance also derived elements from the canonical treatises of Indian dance and music as well as from the folk and tribal traditions of Assam and North-east India. The result is that a distinct tradition, emerged combining aspects of physical expression, musical structure, vocal style and technique, instrumentation and rhythmic interplay.

The Sattriya art practitioners start imparting training of singing and dancing to young children from a young age in the Sattrā precincts. As they grow, they are given the responsibility of performance in the routine rituals and on festive occasions. This form of institutionalised training with oral tutelage is still going on in the Sattras.

Enduring with undiminished devotional fervour, this composite cultural space continues to play a significant role in the religious, social and cultural setting of Assam. While on the religious plane it continues to be performed as a ritualistic observance in the precincts of the Sattrā, it has received new impetus today with new awareness as a distinct cultural heritage in the social environment.

Behind it, is also embedded a historical process of interactiveness between the individual and the community resulting in the sustenance of the tradition and its constant re-interpretation. The ramifications thus are extensive in the fields of history, philosophy, as well as aesthetic theory and artistic creativity of the community which fosters the tradition. The Sattrā community with larger social environment around it has in this way undertaken a cognitive view of reconciliation

between tradition and innovation. The community not only has safeguarded this cultural space in the sacred precincts of the Sattrā and handed down to upcoming generations but has also through a process of internalization inculcated values inherent in it and a re-interpretation of the tradition as well. It has thus become a comprehensive, coherent and at the same time organic expression of the whole of the community exuding a worldview of its own which is both harmonious and humanistic.

2. Contribution to ensuring visibility and awareness and to encouraging dialogue (cf. Criterion R.2)

The Sattriya Music, Dance and Theatre together is an outstanding expression of human creative genius and a unique testimony of a living cultural tradition. It not only possesses artistic expressions of profound performance value, it also inheres in its religio-social dimensions of ritual and devotion, and a dialogistic world view. There is another dialogue constantly at work between aesthetic signification and religious devotion (a colloquium between art and religion always going hand in hand). It also upholds the philosophy of interrelatedness between human and divine the impulse of the creative human genius drawing inspiration from nature and the human living world, a wholesome world view through the prism of art and artistic creativity.

But till recently this profound cultural expression has not been seen by the outside world. Inscription of this element will contribute to ensuring wider visibility of the heritage and help in spreading its inner message of tolerance and harmony all over the world. Inscription will also promote the environment in which the tradition has endured and instil a sense of trust and confidence in the community to engage and dedicate itself with redeeming pride towards the safeguarding and sustenance of tradition. It will ensure economic support and a sense of security, to the community and to the performance tradition. Lack of economic support as well as social security in the changed global scenario at times, threatens the process of sustenance and dampens the community spirit which is otherwise moored in the age-old practices and performances.

The composite tradition which is rooted in community participation always promotes mutual tolerance and respect. As the tradition is multiple in character, integrative of diverse forms, respect of cultural diversity is inherent in its spirit and content. As such its inscription in the

Representative list of UNESCO's ICH Programme will strengthen its foundation and ensure wider visibility. It will also greatly contribute to the enlivening of the environment, promotion of mutual respect and dialogue among communities, groups and individuals at a larger level. The inscription will not only bring to light the virtuosity of the performance structure, but will also establish the intellectual profundity and vibrancy of community creativity relating to this element before an international audience.

It has another dimension of promoting a value of nature-friendliness and transmitting it to the younger generation. The constant creative process of recreating and transcreating the existing tradition with variant forms and dimensions will gain tremendous impetus and will stimulate the society and the individuals at work. This will in the long run strengthen a sense of mutual respect among various social groups, embolden the individual-society relationship and thus will contribute to social health, amity and harmonious existence the world over.

3. Safeguarding measures (cf. Criterion R.3)

a. Current and recent efforts to safeguard the element

The Sattriya Music, Dance and Theatre, being a living tradition has an in-built mechanism of its own to safeguard it. There have been considerable efforts towards its promotion from both governmental and non-governmental sectors over the last fifty years.

Ministry of Culture, Government of India espoused various separate measures for Sattriya Dance and other allied arts, such as, financial assistance to professional groups and individuals, building grants to cultural organisations, grants to research projects, award of scholarships to young talents and junior/senior fellowship to outstanding artists and scholars.

The Sangeet Natak Akademi, the National Academy of Music, Dance and Drama has adopted many safeguarding measures for Sattriya Dance and allied traditions. The Akademi, under its Project of Support to Sattriya Dance and Allied Traditions' has given financial support to various activities. It has documented some aspects of the tradition and provided wider avenues to these forms by arranging their performances in its various events and festivals. Several eminent scholars and practitioners have conducted research work with support from the Akademi for their projects as well as publications. The Akademi has awarded 13 senior practitioners and exponents with the highest national recognition of 'Akademi Puraskar' and presented them

before the national audience.

In November 2002, the Akademi started a project of Support to Sattriya Dance and Allied Traditions, such as , training, research, documentation and performance support etc, with a view to safeguarding it in a traditional context and 10 Sattras were identified for giving financial support. For training programme, several renowned exponents were identified to impart training to young learners.

Also with a view to creating an appreciative environment and a platform for performance of Sattriya Dance as a Major Indian Dance, 'Nritya Parva', an annual festival of young dancers has been organised since 2001.

It has recently established 'Sattriya Kendra', a Centre for the Promotion of Sattriya Music, Dance and Theatre and Other Allied Traditions at Guwahati. The Centre, since its establishment, has proved to be a catalytic force in inspiring the community to pursue these cultural expressions. The Centre has organized several seminars and festivals of Music, Dance and Theatre, bringing in young talent at work and tried to showcase the sustainable spirit of the tradition.

The provincial Government in Assam, on its own has tried from time to time to address the needs of the tradition as well as the attendant community by providing grants to the Sattra institutions, financial aid to needy individuals as well as pensions and awards to outstanding practitioners and scholars.

At the non-governmental level also, several institutions, associations and organizations have over the years been working for the promotion of the Sattriya by holding seminars, workshops, festivals and trying to create awareness society for the need to preserve the heritage.

Some of the organizations and agencies outside the Sattra institutions working in this field are:

- i) Sattriya Kendra, Sangeet Natak Akademi, Guwahati,
- ii) Sattriya Sanskritic Charcha Kendra, Jorhat,
- iii) Sattriya Sangeet Mahabidyalaya, Jorhat,
- iv) State College of Music, Government of Assam, Guwahati,
- v) Department of Cultural Studies, Tezpur University, Tezpur,
- vi) Centre for Performing Arts, Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh,

- vii) Srimanta Sankaradeva Kalakhetra, Guwahati,
- viii) Srimanta Foundation for Culture and Society, Guwahati,
- ix) Sattriya Kala Kendra, Guwahati,
- x) Sattriya Academy, Guwahati,
- xi) Sangeet Sattri, Guwahati
- xii) Kalpa, A Society for Promotion of Literature, Art, Culture and Social Harmony, Guwahati

Institutionalized teaching and learning of the element among the urban cognoscenti in India and abroad, taking young talents irrespective of religion and gender, are also expanding in recent years which have helped in enlarging the space traditionally held exclusively by the Sattri community and by the Hindu male devotees.

At the level of academic research, documentation and extension a few institutions of higher education of the region are taking up projects related to this element. Special mention may be made of the Tezpur University, which has documented considerable aspects of this element and organized academic deliberations involving community leaders.

Several academic luminaries, engaged in research and extension of the tradition, have also put up efforts at individual as well as public level through extensive research and learned publications etc. towards wider understanding and explication of Sattriya Music, Dance and Theatre.

Books (25-30) relating to diverse facets of the element focussing on their historical emergence, characteristic features and aesthetic values have been written and brought out by artists and scholars. More than one hundred articles and research papers have been published in various journals, namely, *Sangeet Natak* (New Delhi), *Journal of the Music Academy* (Chennai), *Journal of the Gauhati University* (Guwahati), *Nartanam* (Mumbai), *Gariyosi* (Guwahati), *Prantik* (Guwahati), etc.

b. Safeguarding measures proposed

The Sangeet Natak Akademi under its 'Project of Support to Sattriya Dance and Allied Traditions proposes a series of schemes for training, performance, documentation and research work in

Sattriya, Music, Dance, Theatre and other allied traditions of Assam with the objective of safeguarding this element.

The Sattriya Kendra, a Centre for Sattriya Music, Dance, Theatre and other Allied Traditions, Guwahati, established in 2008 by the Akademi, is envisaged to supervise and co-ordinate these schemes which include training programmes, research and survey, documentation and publication which would in long run will help and safeguarding and enrichment of these traditions.

The proposed safeguarding measures under the project are :

- a. to promote the process of learning and performing in the Sattras through adequate input of financial support to Sattras establishments;
- b. to encourage young learners inside and outside the Sattras from the maestros for facilitating smooth transmission of the tradition.
- c. to conduct documentation of the diverse facets of music, dance, theatre and other allied arts.
- d. to encourage preparation of a written grammar in respect of Sattriya music, dance and theatre including its codification, training methodology etc.
- e. to provide financial support to teachers and trained disciples so as to encourage them to take the art with a sense of sincerity and dedication.

This applies to the trained artists who are present day performers in the age group of 15- 40 also, who are receiving training from renowned exponents outside the Sattras precincts.

- f. to provide financial assistance to potential but financially weaker Sattras as an incentive to take up training programmes in various traditions belonging to Sattriya.
- g. to identify and support senior practitioners and teachers both inside and outside the Sattras to take up training programme in different traditions like dance, music, mask-making, costume designing, instrument making etc;
- h. to promote individual artistes of excellence as well as those of younger generation with incentives to perform and extend the tradition;

- i. to encourage chronicle writings by the Sattra monks on the rituals of the oral performances of biographical narratives practised in Sattras;
- j. to provide grants to Sattras in holding the calendar festivals in which the entire corpus of Sattriya Music, Dance and Theatre with other allied arts are exhibited;
- k. to provide financial assistance to impoverished senior artists in the age group of 50-60;
- l. to provide production grants to professional groups both within and outside the Sattras to take up new productions and choreographic works belonging to Sattriya;
- m. to conduct training programmes in various aspects of Sattriya music, dance, theatre and allied arts like mask-making, costume designing, instrument making etc, may be extended to rural areas and enhancement of the existing rate of remuneration/scholarship may be done.;
- n. to hold more Sattriya festivals and seminars at the national level with a focus on various aspects of the element for its wider understanding. The proposed festivals will go a long way in fulfilling the needs and requirements of the artists and create awareness and an appreciative environment.
- o. to enhance performance subsidy to the artists associated with government bodies in the region is proposed;
- p. to undertake programme of research and learned publications on various aspects of the Sattriya arts is to be undertaken with translation of existing texts in Assamese;
- q. to provide grants for bringing out books on the element.
- r. to provide grants to research scholars who are already undertaking work on various aspects of the element;
- s. to build up museum for Sattriya and allied arts including an archive is to be established. It is also proposed to provide financial support for purchasing of raw materials in all aspects of the element;
- t. to enhance grant to voluntary organisations engaged in training and performance in this regard is to be made;

For implementation of safeguard measures presently proposed, an amount of **Rupees Ten**

<p>Crores with an increase of 20% each year, will be required.</p>
<p>c. Commitment of communities, groups or individuals concerned</p>
<p>It has been explained that this element is a living cultural space preserved by the community both inside and outside the Sattrā. The Sattrā community is fostering it as a part of its ritual practices as well as a cherished sacred heritage. They also practice it on daily and ceremonial occasions. The larger community outside it or at its periphery considers the element as a treasured heritage. This social commitment with constant involvement has always been its inner strength and the impact of this cultural space on the life and culture of the community is pertinently visible with scholars, artists, connoisseurs, teachers and cultural activists and institutions putting their efforts in ensuring its viability and safeguarding.</p>
<p>d. Commitment of State(s) Party(ies)</p>
<p>The State Party which means the Government of India and its various organs and institutions in this context, has affirmed its commitment, more than ever before towards the preservation of this heritage. The Government of India through its Department of Culture, the Sangeet Natak Akademi and other institutions under its command, has adopted policies and programmes to safeguard this element and preserve it as a treasured heritage of the nation. Further, after declaration of Kuttīyattam, Vedic Chanting and Ram Lila as Master Pieces of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO, the Government of India has launched a special Planned Scheme for preservation of ICH in India, which is managed by the Sangeet Natak Akademi. If the proposed element Sattriya Music, Dance and Theatre is inscribed on the representative list of UNESCO, it will receive special substantial support under this special scheme. It may be added for information that the Sangeet Natak Akademi has set up a National Centre of Kuttīyattam in Kerala in 2007.</p>

4. Community participation and consent in the nomination process (cf. Criterion R.4)
a. Participation of communities, groups and individuals in the nomination process
The nomination process of the Sattriya Music, Dance and Theatre on the behalf of the State Party, i.e. Government of India has involved the entire Sattria community and its practicing fraternity. The community has been taken into confidence by involving them into the entire process in which they affirmed their faith and consent and extended their active support. This is because, it is their cherished desire that this composite tradition gets a wider visibility through inscription as an intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO.
b. Free, prior and informed consent to the nomination
Consent enclosed
c. Respect for customary practices governing access
In respect of Sattriya Music, Dance and Theatre, customary restrictions do not exist. They are transmitted as the totality of a religious art and also as an expression of the community spirit. So, in both the processes of transmission and performance secrecy or obscurity governed by customary practices does not find any place. So with this liberal view evident in the community there will not be any hindrance in implementing the plans under the inscription
5. Inclusion of the element in an inventory (cf. Criterion R.5)

The Sangeet Natak Akademi has inventoried different aspects of the element through audio and video documentation in the archive of the Akademi.

Total Archival material from 1954 to 2008 on the element of Sattriya is available in Sangeet Natak Akademi apart from other regional/ provincial/local institutions.

1. Approximately 100 hours of Video, which includes 56 solo artistes and 27 group performances;
2. Approximately 15 hours of Audio, which includes 13 solo artistes and 1 group performance;
3. Approximately 8000 photographs (Colour/ Black and White)

The Sattriya Kendra, Guwahati, Assam, a unit of the Akademi, has also started documenting the

element and is building up an inventory of this element.

Documentation		
a. Required and supplementary documentation		
	Primary materials	Supplementary materials
Photos	10 number of photographs	
Video	1 DVD with documentary film (10 minutes) <i>Sattriya Music, Dance and Theatre: The Arts from the Monasteries of Assam</i>	
Books		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Neo-Vaisnavite Movement and the Sattria Institutions of Assam</i> • <i>Rhythms in the Vaisnava Music of Assam</i> • <i>Sankaradeva and His Times</i>
b. Cession of rights including registry of items : Attached		
c. List of additional resources		
Bibliography		
1. Literary Texts of Sattriya Music, Dance and Theatre		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plays <p><i>Ankavali</i>: (ed) Kaliram Medhi, Guwahati, 1997 (Reprint) <i>Ankiya Nat</i>: (ed) Birinchi Kumar Barua, Guwahati, 1954</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hymnology 		

Bargit: (ed) Kesavananda Dev Goswami, Dibrugarh University, 1996

- Devotional Compositions

Kirtan Ghosa aru Namghosa: (ed) Maheswar Neog, Guwahati, 1962

Srimadbhagawata: (ed) Kesavananda Dev Goswami, Dibrugarh, 2007

Sankarottar Geet Sankalan: (ed) Kesavananda Dev Goswami, Dibrugarh University, 1980

2. Biographical Narratives with contexts of compositions of Music, Dance and Drama

Chaliha, B (ed)	Sankaradeva: Studies in Culture , Guwahati, 1975
Goswami, K. D.	Bargit: Parampara aru Paribeshan Paddhati , Guwahati, 1997
	Sattra Sanskritir Ruprekha , Guwahati, 1968
Goswami, Pabitra pran	Bargeet: A Musicological Exploration , Jorhat, 2001
Mahanta, Bapchandra	Sattra aru Sangeet , Jorhat, 2000
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Neog, Maheswar	Sankaradeva and His Times , Guwahati, 1965
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Neog, Maheswar (ed)	Rhythm in the Vaisnava Music of Assam , Guwahati, 1962
	Srihastamuktavali , New Delhi, 1988
Sarma, Satyendra Nath	The Neo-Vaisnavite Movement and the Sattra Institution of Assam , Gauhati University, 1966
Vatsyayan, Kapila	The Gita-Govinda in the Assam School of Painting ,
Guwahati, 1985	

Contact information

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b. Competent body involved
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c. Concerned community organization(s) or representative(s)
N.A
Signature on behalf of the State Party
<p>The nomination should conclude with the original signature of the official empowered to sign it on behalf of the State Party, together with his or her name, title and the date of submission.</p> <p>In the case of multi-national nominations, the document should contain the name, title and signature of an official of each State Party submitting the nomination. <i>(Sattriya Music)</i></p> <p>Name: <i>ROOPA SRINIVASAN</i></p> <p>Title: <i>Director, Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India, New Delhi.</i></p> <p>Date: <i>25th August 2009</i></p> <p>Signature: <i>Roopa Srinivasan</i></p>

Roopa Srinivasan
Director
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