

DESIRE, DEVOTION AND THE DIVINE: INTERPRETATION OF THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN ASSAMESE VAISHNAVISM

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY DELHI

JULY 2024

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by

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

to the



INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY DELHI

July 2024

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled '**Desire, Devotion and the Divine – Interpretation of the Role of Language in Assamese Vaishnavism**' being submitted by **NANDINI KALITA** to Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**, is a bona fide record of the research work done by her under our guidance and supervision. In our opinion, the thesis has fulfilled the requirements and has reached the requisite standard for the submission relating to the degree. The contents of this thesis, in full or in parts, have not been submitted to any other Institute or University for the award of any degree or diploma.

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Date: July 31, 2024

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply indebted to my supervisor, Dr. Milind Wakankar for giving me the opportunity to learn from him. He has always helped me to put things in perspective and constantly pushed me to think harder about the idea of *bhakti*. This endeavour would not have been possible without his unrelenting support.

I am grateful to Dr. Simona Sawhney and Dr. Divya Dwivedi for the encouraging discussions, insightful comments and difficult questions. Their help and guidance have been invaluable.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Dr. Bijoy Boruah for generously sharing his knowledge of Assamese Vaishnavism with me.

My grandmother for being one of the few people who did not get tired of my incessant questioning when I was a child. Also, for helping me understand Sankaradeva's language.

Rahul for sharing the joys and pain of this journey. His passion for learning has always inspired me.

I am grateful to my parents for always believing in me. Their trust in my choices throughout the years has been a constant source of reassurance in my life.

Nandini Kalita

July 31, 2024

ABSTRACT

In my research I have tried to probe deeper into the spread of the Vaishnavite movement in Assam. Though I have primarily focused on the figure of Sankaradeva who is considered to be the initiator of this movement in Assam, my study also deals with two other key figures of this movement—Vidyapati and Rupa Gosvamin. My focus has been to foreground the interrelationships and networks that existed in medieval Eastern India which in a way marks a shift from a mode of analysis that centers around one particular figure or event to one that takes into account the deep structures. I have tried to understand the larger milieu that Sankaradeva inhabited and how it shaped the contours of his religious philosophy and literary compositions.

सार

अपने शोध में मैंने असम में वैष्णव आंदोलन के प्रसार की गहराई से जांच करने की कोशिश की है। हालाँकि मैंने मुख्य रूप से शंकरदेव की छवि पर ध्यान केंद्रित किया है जिन्हें असम में इस आंदोलन का आरंभकर्ता माना जाता है, मेरा अध्ययन इस आंदोलन के दो अन्य प्रमुख व्यक्तित्वों-विद्यापति और रूपा गोस्वामी से भी संबंधित है। मेरा ध्यान मध्यकालीन पूर्वी भारत में मौजूद अंतर्संबंधों और नेटवर्कों को सामने लाने पर रहा है, जो एक तरह से विश्लेषण के उस तरीके से बदलाव का प्रतीक है जो एक विशेष आंकड़े या घटना के आसपास केंद्रित होता है जो गहरी संरचनाओं को ध्यान में रखता है। मैंने यह समझने की कोशिश की है कि शंकरदेव किस व्यापक परिवेश में रहते थे और इसने उनके धार्मिक दर्शन और साहित्यिक रचनाओं की रूपरेखा को कैसे आकार दिया।

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