



Naamghar Association of America

NEWSLETTER

[HTTPS://NAAMGHAR.ORG/](https://naamghar.org/)

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October- December 2023

MESSAGE FROM THE BOR-MEDHI

Dear community members and well-wishers of NAAM,

While the world was opening up and relaxing from the Covid pandemic, we hear the news that some variant of Covid is still very much there. Let us all follow the prescribed guidelines, including that of taking vaccines, not only for our own safety but also for our loved ones and those around us.

Now coming to this last quarter newsletter of 2023 from NAAM, it is my pleasure to highlight a few key points:

- A) We observed and celebrated Janmotsav of Srimanta Sankardeva on December 2, 2023 with Borgeet, Naam-praxanga and Nagaaraa-Naam followed by *Prasad* for the attending *Bhakats / Bhakatanis*. We have included in this newsletter a few photos and lyrics of what we sang and performed.
- B) NAAM is still exploring a formal dialog with the Board of Trustees of the Ved Mandir of East Brunswick, New Jersey for the space for a Community Temporary Naamghar for us.

As you may already know, NAAM is a not-for-profit trust that was granted 501(c)(3) status in 2018. We are an organization for the Assamese diaspora to celebrate the spiritual traditions and the philosophical teachings of the great *Neo-Vaishnavite* Saint Srimanta Sankardeva.

We offer you a forum to express and experience these traditions propagated by Srimanta

Sankardeva, including but not limited to regular *Naam-Praxangas*, singing of devotional songs like *Borgeet*, various performing arts, for example *Xatriya Dance*, *Bhaona* and many more at our annual event, planned for the next year around May. We decided that we would organize the NAAM annual event at a more convenient time for all including the performers and the audience.

We offer everyone the very best wishes for a brighter New Year, the Holiday Season and upcoming *Bhogali Bihu*, our *Bapoti Xahon*.

Finally, I conclude with a *Guru Bhatima* written by Sri Madhavdeba
(<https://naamkirtan.com/node/401>):

Jai Guru SankarXarba Gunakar

Jakeri Nahi Anupam

Tohari Saranaka.....Renu Xata Kauti

Bareko Koruhu Pronam

Sincerely,

Dr. Binoy K. Bordoloi, *Bor Medhi*

Chairman, NAAM

Email: binoy.bordoloi@gmail.com



UPDATE ON FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

- **DONATION TO NAAM FOR TAX BENEFIT:** Consider making NAAM as one of the beneficiaries of your estate planning and/or donate for potential tax benefits for the current tax year (please consult your tax adviser for details).
- ***If your employer matches your donation to a charitable organization (direct or thorough payroll deductions), please add “Naamghar Association of America, Inc.” as one the beneficiaries.***
- NAAM is soliciting your donations via its website (<https://naamghar.org/>), NAAM Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/NaamgharAssociationOfAmerica/>), and the “DONATE” button on this page to fund a community Naamghar in North America.
- NAAM is looking forward to an active participation of the community (Assamese diaspora) for realizing a common dream of building a Naamghar in North America. Please use the “DONATE” button below and/or contact Dr. Binoy Bordoloi at binoy.bordoloi@gmail.com for additional information. Thank you!



Please contribute to NAAM's effort to build a naamghar in North America:



RECENT ACTIVITIES

Celebrating the Janmotsav of Srimanta Sankardeva

On December 2nd, 2023, NAAM observed and celebrated the 575th Janmotsav of Srimanta Sankardeva in Milltown, New Jersey, USA, with Borgeet, Naam-praxanga and Nagaaraa-Naam followed by *Prasad* for the attending *Bhakats / Bhakatanis*.



Nagara Naam performance on the occasion of 575th Srimanta Sankardeva Janomotsava

After traditional recitation of Borgeet, Naam, and prayer performed by the attendees, members of NAAM performed a Nagara Naam as part of Srimanta Sankardeva Janmotsav celebration this year. The team was guided by Sri Bimal Rajbanshi, and he provided the lyrics and demonstrated the Kamrupiya singing style for "Putanaa Bodh".

The team performing the Nagara Naam comprised of Dr. Puran Sarmah as lead singer, Sri Utpal Bora on Nagara, Dr. Binoy Bordoloi and Sri Shyam DevChoudhury on Bortaal, joined by supporting singers Sri Suranjoy Hazarika and Dr. Jukti Kalita. The team wore traditional Assamese attires and showcased the traditional ways of performing a Nagara Naam in every aspect.

The event was live telecasted on Facebook Live. Interested readers of this article may visit Naamghar Association of America's Facebook page to watch the performance and other programs from this year's Srimanta Sankardeva Janmotsava celebration. Below is the story behind the performed Nagara Naam.

We hope you can better understand watching the video in NAAM Facebook page after reading the story in English first.



A FEW WORDS ON BORGEET

By Gayatree Sarma

বৰগীত বোৰ উচ্চ মানৰ নৈতিক আৰু আধ্যাত্মিক ভাবৰ ওপৰত প্ৰতিষ্ঠিত ব্ৰজাৱলী ভাষাত ৰচিত শাস্ত্ৰীয় ৰাগযুক্ত ভক্তিমূলক গীত। মহাপুৰুষ শ্ৰীমন্ত শঙ্কৰদেৱ আৰু শ্ৰীশ্ৰী মাধৱ দেৱে ভক্তি ধৰ্ম প্ৰচাৰৰ বাবে গীত, বাদ্য, নৃত্য, নাট্যকে ধৰি বিবিধ কলাৰ আশ্ৰয় লৈছিল। এই সকলোবোৰ কলা সমাজৰ মন মুহিব পৰা একো একোটি সুন্দৰ পৰম্পৰা ৰূপে গঢ় লৈ অসমৰ সংস্কৃতি জগত জাতিস্কাৰ কৰি তুলিছে। বৰগীত আৰু নাটৰ গীতবোৰ মিলি ৰাগ সংগীতৰ এটি নতুন ধাৰা গঢ় দিছে।

বিৰিন্দা বনে খেলত মধুৰ মূৰাৰী

বৰগীত: ৰচনা শ্ৰীশ্ৰী মাধৱদেৱ

ৰাগ: বেলোৱাৰ

তাল: ৰূপক তাল

ধ্ৰুং: ॥ বিৰিন্দা বনে খেলত মধুৰ মূৰাৰী মোহন মধুৰ হাসি মুৰুলী বজাৱত । ইতিনি ভূৱন অধিকাৰী ॥
বিৰিন্দা বনে খেলত মধুৰ মূৰাৰী । পদ ॥ সাৰদ ইন্দু নিন্দি আনন সুভিত । ৰঞ্জিত মধু মধু হাসে ॥ অভিনৱ জলধৰ তৰিত জৰিত যৈছে । তনু সুভিত পীত বাসে ॥
বিৰিন্দা বনে খেলত মধুৰ মূৰাৰী ॥ ৰতন জৰিত মণি মঞ্জিৰ ৰঞ্জিত । পদ পঙ্কজ পৰকাষা । ভকত পৰম গতি ভাৱে মজোক মতি । মাধৱ এহু অভিনাষা

॥ বিৰিন্দা বনে খেলত মধুৰ মূৰাৰী মোহন মধুৰ হাসি মুৰুলী বজাৱত । ইতিনি ভূৱন অধিকাৰী ॥ বিৰিন্দা বনে খেলত মধুৰ মূৰাৰী ।



Renowned Assamese and Hindustani classical singer in our community, Ms Gayatree Sarma performed *borgeet* on the occasion of the Janmotsav of Srimanta Sankardev on December 2, 2023 in New Jersey.

The author is a resident of South Brunswick, New Jersey and can be reached at gayatree_sarma@hotmail.com.



PUTANAA BODH (ELIMINATION OF PUTANAA)

By Purandar Sarmah and Shyam DevChoudhuri

Kongsa was a daemon king of Mathura. Since Mother Earth could not tolerate the atrocities committed by Kongsa and other daemons anymore, so she prayed to Lord Brahmaa to give relief. He was pleased with her prayer and assured her that Lord Bishnu would take a human incarnation to eliminate all these daemons. After the wedding of sister Daibaki with Basudeva, Kongsa was piloting a chariot to drop his sister at her husband's palace. At that time a heavenly voice warned him that he would meet his demise at the hands of Daibaki's eighth son. So, he returned to Mathura and made his sister Daibaki and in-law Basudeva prisoners. Whenever they gave birth to a child, Kongsa would come and eliminate them. Their eighth son was not an ordinary human. His Almighty Lord Bishnu himself took human incarnation and was born as a child to Daibaki. He also sent Jogamaaya who lived in heaven to the King Nanda's palace. As a result, Jogamaaya was born as a child of Jashodaa, wife of King Nanda in Gokul. After Lord Bishnu was born as a child, he guided father Basudeva to exchange him with Jogamaaya who was born in Gokul.

So, when Kongsa came to know that his sister gave birth to the eighth child, he came to eliminate the child. As in the past he tried to thrash the child; but the child slipped from his hands and like a fairy flew away to heaven. From heaven she warned – transgressor Kongsa – you better be aware immediately that your nemesis was alive

and was safe in King Nanda's palace. Kongsa could not believe the strange illusion that happened when he tried to eliminate the child. Kongsa went back to his palace and recalled that he thrashed six children of his sister so far and never before that kind of strange things happened. He carefully thought of the next course of action. He called his daemon sister Putanaa and ordered her to go to Gokul where his enemy was born. Putanaa was asked to come back to Mathura immediately after eliminating his foe. After she got the order from Kongsa, Putanaa changed her appearance and turned to a beautiful woman.

Putanaa went to Gokul where King Nanda lived and started eliminating newly born children one by one after giving poison traced nipple in their mouth. Wherever she heard a child's cry, she went to that home. She carefully picked up the child and put poison traced nipple in the mouth. So, when a child sucked her breast, child was no more alive. Putanaa took advantage of mother being away from a child either to run household chores or to get water from ponds/rivers. Immediately after eliminating a child in one house, she didn't waste any time and moved to the next house. Thus, she terrorized the entire City of Gokul. Parents and other family members cried loudly after they found that their newly born babies were no longer alive. On the contrary, Putanaa was very happy that she could eliminate so many children without being get caught.

Finally, she came to the palace of King Nanda.

They had a naming ceremony on that day in King Nanda's palace and the atmosphere around the palace filled with joy and merriment. In the meantime, Putanaa arrived in Nanda's palace. She looked around and could not find anyone there. She took a seat on a flat wooden stool which was lying on the floor. After completing the naming ceremony, the people of Gokul left the palace and went home. The astrologer Saint Garga asked the king to come and to take a seat next to him. He conveyed the king that since the child was born in Basudeva's home, so his name would be Baasudeva. Whereas the child would be known as Krishna. During his lifetime he would assume hundreds and thousands of names. Saint Garga reminded the king to pay his dues to conclude his visit.

No one was around Krishna as his mother Jashodaa and aunt Rohini both were busy doing household chores. Putanaa was delighted to see that no one was around Krishna. Krishna was crying relentlessly inside his room. Putanaa picked up Krishna from his bed very carefully and put on her lap. Elusive Putanaa was not aware that her days were numbered. She put her poisonous nipple in the mouth of Krishna. But the poisonous nipples were nothing to Krishna

as the entire universe was inside him. Lord Bishnu with a human incarnation and as a child knew who she was and the reason behind her putting a poisonous nipple in his mouth. So, he sucked her breast hard enough to make sure Putanaa would not be alive anymore. Thus, she met her end, and her hands and legs were shaking before her body fell on the ground.

One of the enemies of the world was eliminated and when Jashodaa saw a lifeless Putana in her son's room, she was in distress. After Putanaa lost her life, her actual appearance as a daemon woman was revealed. Jashodaa and Rohini both were extremely surprised to see such a huge body. After eliminating Putanaa, Krishna was hiding in-between her two breasts. Jashodaa did not see Krishna first, so, she started crying. She regreted that a female daemon came and consumed her son. After a while she saw Krishna between two breasts of Putanaa and carefully picked him up to put in her own lap. Next, she kissed Krishna as he was resting in her lap. That's how Putanaa was eliminated by Lord Krishna.

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CONTRIBUTION OF MAHAPURUSH SRIMANTA SANKARDEVA TO ASSAMESE LITERATURE AND CULTURE

By Abul Hussain

Abstract: Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankardeva was an Assamese saint-scholar. Study on his life and works is of great academic importance in Assam. The tutorial, cultural and literature contribution by him still influences the fashionable creative works. The ideas, cultural contribution and philosophy of Srimanta Sankardeva became an integral area of the lifetime of Assamese people. Therefore, the investigators have felt the requirement to review about the contribution of Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankardeva within the sphere of Assamese literature and culture in relevancy its educational significance to uplift the moral, spiritual, value based thought, character building and personality development of the long run generation of the people. the foremost objectives of the study are to review the Contribution of Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankardeva within the sphere of Assamese literature and culture and to review the tutorial significance of the Contribution of Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankardeva within the sector of Assamese literature and culture.

Keywords: Assamese Literature, Educational Significance, Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev, Cultural Contribution.

I. INTRODUCTION

Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankardeva was a human God within the world and amongst the people of Assam and he's the foremost celebrated name in Assam. He was really the foremost worthy son of God, which is also considered an incarnation by section of Assamese people. Srimanta Sankardeva was a versatile genius, an honest administrator, a spiritual teacher and variety one social reformer. He was all, and each one was in him – a painter, a musician, a scholar and specifically an ideal Assamese of an extended past. Srimanta Sankardeva is kind of a saviour to the Assamese society. He spread Neo Vaisnavism in Assam and regenerated the whole society refurnishing its faith, cultural, social organisation and integrity.

1.1. Significance of the Study

Srimanta Sankardeva could also be a secular saint for the people of Assam. The religious preaching and activities of Srimanta Sankardev contributed too significantly in shaping the Assamese Culture and literature. Study of his life and works is of great academic importance in Assam.

The tutorial, cultural and literature contribution by him still influences the fashionable creative works. Srimanta Sankardeva was a pioneer of Assamese art and culture, language and literature and also of education. Therefore, the investigators have felt the requirement to review about the contribution of Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankardeva within the sphere of Assamese literature and culture in relevancy its educational significance to uplift the moral, spiritual, value based thought, character building and personality development of the long term generation of the people.

1.2. Delimitation of the study

The delimitation of this study is as under:

- This study is delimited to the materials available to the investigators concerning with Srimanta Sankardeva.
- This study is specifying the Contribution of Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankardeva within in the field of Assamese literature and culture.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To review the Contribution of Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankardeva within the sphere of Assamese literature and culture.
- To review the tutorial significance of the Contribution of Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankardeva within the world of Assamese literature and culture.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study is based on secondary data collected from many secondary sources i.e. books, research paper, research articles, reports etc. published in journals and periodical. Some information is additionally collected "Kritan ghosa" of Sankardeva and books written about Sankardeva by some authors. This study is descriptive in nature.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Contribution of Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankardeva within the sphere of Assamese literature and culture.

Poetic Work

Sankardeva's reputation as a poet is sometimes overshadowed by his greatness as a preacher and a spiritual reformer. the most target point behind Sankardeva's poetry is personation of Visnu as karma. this is often often the pivotal theme of the resurgent vaisnava literature of Indian as a whole.

The incarnation was an act of compassion like Christ's which had been the actuation of the nice art and literature of European Middle Ages and after. The greatness of his poetry hinges on this double version that Krishnadivine and his attribute. The name of the poetic work of Sankardeva are Kirtan-Ghosa, Harischandra-upayana, Rukminiharana, ajamil opakhya, Bali-Chalona, Kurukshetra Yatra, Gopi Uddava Samvada, Amrita Manthana etc.

Bhakti Theory

The main intention of Sankardeva to see Bhakti theory is to convert Saktism to Vaishnavism. Books of Sankardeva that established his Bhakti theory of Bhakti Pradipa, Anadi Patana, Nimi Navaridha Samvada, Bhakti Ratnakar (in Sanskrit), Gunamala. Transliteration

Sankardeva rendered Bhagavata Purana (section-vi, viii,i, ii,vii,ix,x,xi,xii) from Sanskrit to Assamese words and idioms of the time. Further, he translated the first canto of Ramayana (Adi Kanda) and last canto (Uttara Kanda).

Drama

Sankardev denoted the beginning of the Assamese drama in fifteenth century which mentioned as Angkia Naat. It's a unique kind of dance-drama. Angkia Naats are complete composition of art with slokas, bhatimas, dance, songs and dialogues, contributing to create a kind of superhuman loveliness. the primary specimens of dramatic prose embedded in these plays are remarkable for his or her intimate, colloquial tone, style and adroit rhythms. He handling of Brajavali during this quite poetic drama is hardly paralleled elsewhere in India. The Angkiya Naats are written by Srimanta Sankardeva as the Cihna Yatra, the Patni- prasada, the Parijat Harana, the Kalia Damana, Rukmini Haran, Keli Gopal, Ram Vijaya.

Song

All the songs are written and composited by Srimanta Sankardeva and Madhav Dev are remarked as Borgeet in Assamese Society for its high value and reputation. Borgeet are a number of the foremost classic devotional songs. The tune and rhythms of those songs are set within the dhrupada tradition and are fixed for all times. They're sung within the same tune and rhythms as within the lifetime of the saint without conscious variation. These tunes have survived the attack of your time and have hunted people's mind for half a millennium. The carefully chosen word, the stately rhythms and deep-set imagery set lyrics maintain the best possible dignity of Borgeet. Thorough of feelings and structural ordinance of spiritual lyrics also the simplest a part of Borgeet that it occupies the very best place of assamese cultural field. Sankardeva composed total 240 Borgeet, but only 34 exist in times. Besides, Bhatima is additionally a sort of panegyrics song written by Sankardeva.

Sattriya Dance

Sattriya dance or sattriya Nritya may be a major Indian classical dance. it's a dance-drama performance art with origins within the Krishna-centred Vaishnavasim monasteries of Assam, and attributed to the 15th century.

it's a really rich sort of Assamese classical dance which require hard training and hearty dedication from the a part of the dancer. it's supported proper coordination of body and mind of the dancer.

Namghor

The Namghor may be a prayer-house where the devotees, present because the congregation, sign the name of God. Namghor are often considered together of the foremost powerful instrument for popularising a Sankardev's ideology, philosophy and non secular thought and alive it each and each Assamese people's heart from ancient to times. Letter on, Namghor has become the permanent feature of each village, town and city of Assam.

Sattra

Sattra may be a cultural centre for imparting training of stage acting, singing, and musical recital connected with the Bhaona and Sattriya culture. it's also provide academic knowledge. Sattra comprise two major categories- udashin sattra and Grihastri Sattra. In Udashin Sattra, Bhaktas lead celibate lives whereas the bhaktas aren't celibate and enter domestic life in Grihastri Sattra. Sattras are often called as multidimensional institution for participating in religious discourses, sacred cultural practises, art and literature. Sattras are the flag bearer of Assamese enriches culture for conservation, preservation and transformation of the artistic forms and expressions including dance, music, woodcarving, mask-making and theatre that become an integral part of bhakti, were rooted within the existing folk and cultural tradition.

V. CONCLUSION

The central role of Sankardeva in Assamese society may be a religious saint. But his incredible contribution to the sector of literature and culture make him Mahapurusha for the people of Assam. Thereformative Cultural Revolution of Sankardeva made progress within the evaluation of thoughts and development of the society. borgeet, bhaona, music and dance gave this revolution an exception and unique structure. Thoughtfulness behind the drama of sankardeva attracts all people regardless of cast, creed and sophistication. The motive of his drama was to abolish caste discrimination and make unity among the people. His cultural creation Namghor and Sattra also a big contribution of imparting democratic value to the society. Through the cultural activity, Sankardeva tried to project light of education among illiterate people of Assam. Though the entire cultural contribution and literature work of Sankardeva is primarily associated with imparting religious education, it's also great educative value that every institution of Assam practices it through curriculum.

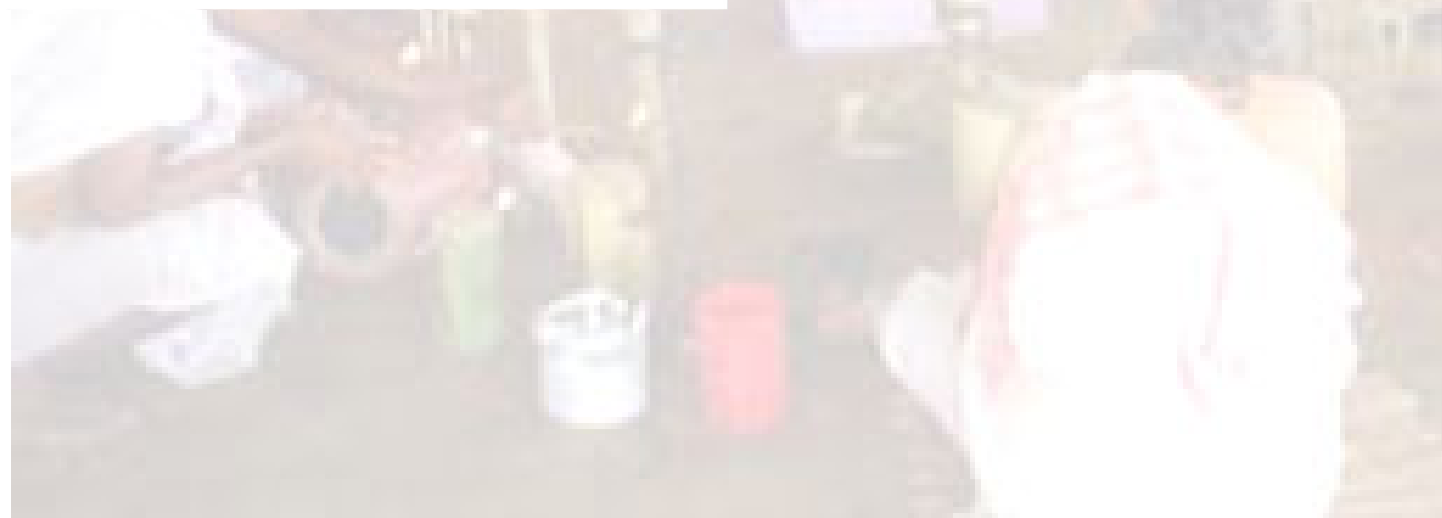
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Q&A

Q: What is NAAM?

A: Naamghar Association of America, Inc. (NAAM) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit spiritual and cultural organization formed to construct and manage a Naamghar for the Assamese diaspora to celebrate and perform the spiritual traditions and philosophical teachings of Srimanta Sankardeva. With strong ties with all the *Satras* of Assam, NAAM seek to provide a forum for learned spiritual leaders and traditional artistes to share their knowledge and talent with the current and future generations of the Assamese diaspora.

Q: What are the immediate goals of NAAM?

A: Some of the immediate goals of NAAM include spreading awareness on NAAM initiatives, build a digital media platform, plan for fund raising, and participate regularly in Naam-proxongo. NAAM seeks volunteers from the large Assamese diaspora across the United States to achieve these goals. Please join us (details at the bottom of this newsletter). In our planning activity, the first

priority is to identify what is needed to establish a temporary *Naamghar*. This will make the *Guru Axon*, consecrated by the Sri Sri Auniati Satra Satradhikar, more easily accessible to the public, while we work on the longer-term project of building a permanent *Naamghar*.

Q: Does NAAM collaborate with other organizations?

A: NAAM is actively seeking to collaborate with all community organizations which are willing to help achieve NAAM's mission. NAAM plans to have meaningful discussion with all organizations in our community; please contact us if you would like to be a part of this conversation (contact details at the bottom).



HOW TO GET INVOLVED WITH NAAM?

JOIN THE NAAM WORKING GROUP (WG): We need your help in achieving the dream of building a Naamghar in North America. Therefore, NAAM is open to everyone who is interested in building the Naamghar.

If you are interested in getting involved actively in NAAM's mission, please join the NAAM by

sending an email to: Naaminfo@Naamghar.org. The WG meets regularly via teleconference/video conference to discuss various issues that are related to NAAM and its mission and goals.



NAAM WORKING GROUP TEAM MEMBERS

Following individuals comprise the current NAAM working group (WG) team. ***We invite all individuals who are sincerely interested in the Mission and Goals of NAAM to join the NAAM team.*** The current WG members are:

- Iswar Agarwalla, NC
- Tutumoni Baishya, Assam
- Niraj Barbara, PA
- Dr. Sanjib Bhuyan, NJ
- Pranab Bora, WI
- Lolit Bora, PA
- Subhasini Bora, NC
- Dr. Babul Borah, OH
- Utpal Borah, VA
- Dr. Binoy Bordoloi, NJ (Bor-medhi)
- Manoranjan Bordoloi, NJ
- Monidipa Bordoloi, CA
- Susanto Bordoloi, CT
- Chirayu Kr. Borooah, CA
- Malabika Brahma, NJ
- Debojit Chowdhury, CA
- Niren Choudhury, NJ
- Dr. Bikul Das, MA
- Namita Das, VA
- Dr. Pradip Das, MO
- Rupam Das, Assam
- Shyam DevChoudhury, PA (Secretary)
- Dr. Saswati Datta, OH
- Hemanga Dutta, NJ
- Panchali Dutta, NJ
- Sawmick Dutta, CA
- Prandeep Gogoi, NJ
- Ajoy Hazarika, NY
- Kamalakshi Hazarika, NJ
- Suranjoy Hazarika, NJ
- Priyadarshini Inman, NC
- Dr. Jukti Kalita, NJ
- Lalita Kalita, IL
- Rashmi Kalita, CA
- Sangaurav Kaushik, NC
- Nilanjona Mahanta, CA
- Nabanita Mazumdar, WA
- Chayanika Mohan, NC
- Shakhyar Neog, NJ
- Dr. Yashwant Pathak, FL
- Lelkhika Pathak, Assam
- Anu Perlmutter, VA
- Nilakshi Phukan, NC
- Gayatree Prasad, CA
- Dr. Purandar Sarmah, NJ (Treasurer)
- Vavani Sarmah, CA

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