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## MADAN KAMDEV TEMPLE AND ITS ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS: A STUDY ON SOCIAL MILIEU LINKED ON THE NEIGHBOURING AREAS OF ASSAM, INDIA.

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**Tirthankar Sharma<sup>1</sup>, Sailajananda Saikia<sup>2</sup>, Bishmita Medhi<sup>3</sup> -- Madan Kamdev Temple And Its Archaeological Remains: A Study On Social Milieu Linked On The Neighbouring Areas Of Assam, India. -- Palarch's Journal Of Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 17(6). ISSN 1567-214x**

**Key Words: Social Milieu, Madan Kamdev Temple, Neighbourhood, Perception**

### Abstract

Social milieu linked with Madan Kamdev temple refers to the social environment or settings and surrounding culture of the temple area. Social environment of the temple area consist of the sum total of society's beliefs, traditions, customs, laws and behaviors. Social environment or milieu never remains same over time because change is the law of nature. Change of Social environment is also natural. The speed and extent of change may differ from society to society. In most societies it occurs so slow that is often not noticed by those who live in the society. Modernization involves a simultaneous occurrence of large number of interrelated events and changes. This is because modernization brings about changes not only in the socio economic and material spheres of a society, but it also causes change in the mental and attitudinal spheres of the people. Neighbourhood of the temple area includes both geographic (place-oriented) and social (people-oriented) components. People's perception of the environment is greatly influenced by their social and cultural values. On the basis of the image formed in the mind of the utilizer about the environment he takes a decision and uses the resources to fulfill his basic and higher needs. Madan kamdev temple has different meanings for different individuals belonging to various cast and religion. People living in the same neighbourhood villages perceive the temple area differently.

## Introduction

Madan Kamdev temple is a treasure house of Assam. The ruins of Madan Kamdev temple are sprinkled widely in a secluded place. Madan kamdev temple, popularly known as the Khajuraho of Assam is one such yielding point of wonderful antiquities. This archaeological site comprises of group of ruined temples and depicts the cultural and social influence. The leading status of this site is its stylish sculptural exposure of socio-cultural existence of ancient time of 10 A.D. The sculptures of Madan Kamdev also have the potentiality to flash light on primitive society and culture of ancient Assam (Patwary, 2008).

One of the British officers Captain Delton informed the world, through his article published in 1855 in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, about the existence of vast archaeological ruins near *silsako* of modern *sangsari village* of Greater Guwahati region of Assam (Carrier, 2003). After him the site had waited for hundred years for another scholarly attention. In 1943, Tarini Kanta Sarma wrote an article published in Journal of the Assam Research Society about archaeological importance of the area.

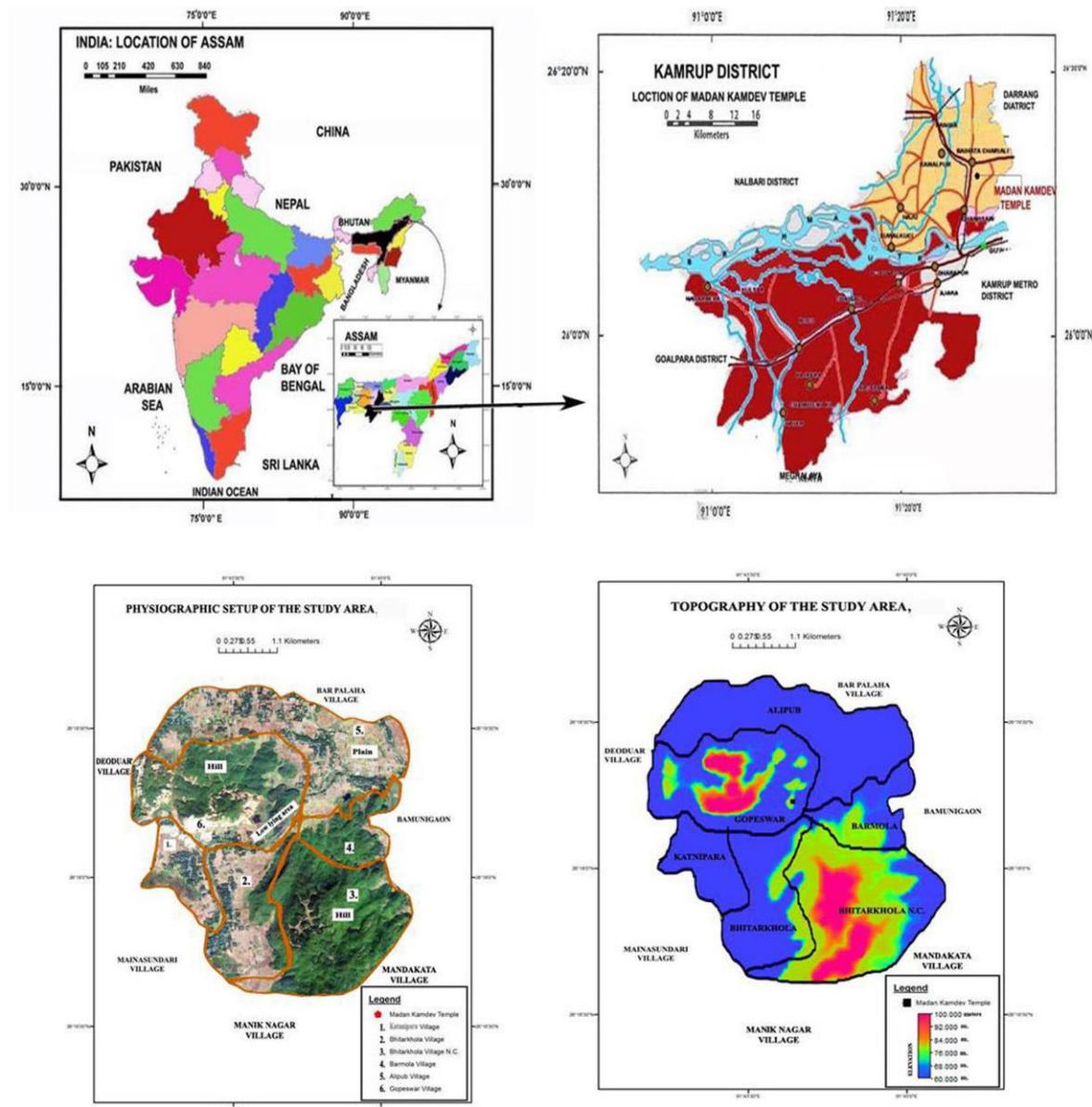
In 1977, the Directorate of Archaeology, Assam had decided to take the responsibility of this site and they have started some exploration work there in phase manner. Initially a very small area adjoining to the living Madan Kamdev temple was selected for exploration. Accordingly after having prolonged survey and cleaning of jungles, in 1981-82 the department spotted out the existence of more than one dozen temples of both stone and brick masonry work in this site, but all these temples are found in a ruined state. Similarly it also exposes temple ruins in two of the nearby hillocks of Madan Kamdev temple, namely Jalpeshwar and Narasinha parvat (Banerje, 1974). In a periodical manner, the exploration work is still continuing and almost in every time explorers' encounters new discoveries. The place has by now grown into a spot of perennial pilgrimage for devotees, and religious festivals have been attracting ever-increasing crowds.

Madan Kamdev temple area has potentialities to enrich the national geography of art and culture and social picture of ancient period (Meister, 2006). This archaeological site itself has an inherent potentiality to light up the facts relating to the cultural tradition of a country and region like Assam (Agarwal, 1995). Directorate of Archaeology Assam, as being a part of their responsibility have constructed a site museum and give protection to some of scattered lying sculpture in the site. It is the need of the hour to take positive steps and conserve the temple area in a more effective manner for future.

Therefore, the Madan Kamdev temple area needs proper investigation for formulating strategies to tone down the problems. With this rationale in mind the present study entitled "*Changing Social Milieu Associated with Madan Kamdev Temple: A Neighbourhood Perception Study*" has been undertaken for investigation.

## Study Area

Madan Kamdev temple and neighbourhood villages are located under Kamrup district of Assam. It covers an area of 17.39 square kilometers and supports a population of 4,698 (2011) persons. Study region lies approximately between  $26^{\circ}17'56.05''$  and  $26^{\circ}20'32''$  north latitudes and  $91^{\circ}43'26.93''$  and  $91^{\circ}45'51.55''$  east longitudes. The area is bounded on the north by National Highway (N.H.15), on the south by Mainasundari village, on the east by N.H.31 and on the west by the Bamunigaon village. Topographically Madan Kamdev and neighbourhood villages can be divided into three divisions such as hills, plain area and low-lying area. Madan kamdev temple is situated in Devanagiri hill or Madan Kamdev hill. This hill covers an area of 2.87 square kilometers. Gopeswar village is situated in this hill. Bhitarkhola N.C. village is situated in this hill. Apart from hills, the study region has also plain area. The plain area of the study region is about 6.96 square kilometers. The slope of the plain area is low from the east to the west. The plain area has average elevation of about 51 meters from the mean sea level. Mudunkuri channel flows from north-eastern part to south-west direction in this plain area. This river is 5.21 km long from Alipub village to Bhitarkhola village. The study region has many low lying areas like natural pond, water logging etc. The elevation of this zone ranges from 60 meters to 120 meters (Fig1).



**Fig1: Location and Physiographic setup of the study area, 2020**

### Objectives of the study

Based on the background outlined above, the main objectives of the study are-

- To investigate the history behind the origin, growth and development of Madan Kamdev temple and its associated sculpture.
- To understand the socio-economic characteristics of the villages in the temple's neighbourhood.
- To understand the perception of the people of the neighborhood areas about the temple and the work of art and sculpture.

### Database and Methodology

Madan Kamdev temple area has been selected for this study in order to investigate the changing social milieu associated with temple and neighborhood perception. The present study is based on both primary as well as secondary data. The socio-economic conditions of the neighbourhood villages and visitor perception have been studied on the basis of direct field experiences and surveys through well-designed schedule. Neighbouring villages which are located 2km. buffer zone from the temple are Bhitarkhola N.C. village, Barmola village, Gopeswar village, Katnipara village, Alipub village and Bhitarkhola village. Required base materials for the study are collected and compiled from source like Survey of India's toposheets with scale 1:50,000, satellite images, atlases, etc. Required literatures were reviewed to expand essential conceptual structure and appropriate methodology to carry out the work from accurate perspectives.

The secondary data have been collected from government source like the Directorate of Archaeology, Assam to get information about the historical and geographical background of the study area. Meaningful quantitative, cartographic and computer techniques and software (like Arc GIS 10.2.1, MS Excel, and SPSS etc.) are applied in processing and representing the data in the form of tables, maps and diagrams.

### **Result and Discussion**

Madan kamdev temple has rich historical background and its mention is found in different epics and Puranas (Rao, 1914). People live in and around Madan-Kamdeva often like to give historical exposure to this temple complex in reference to a Sloka in the Yogini Tantra which is about the auspicious celebration of Kam triodasi tithi. Highlighting the importance of this

auspicious celebration, the Sloka describes that in the month of Chaita (March- April). People who celebrate the Kam triodasi tithi with utmost sincerity (in utterance of mantra), becomes free from all sorts of sin and received brahmapada, symbolizing moksha (Singh, 2009). The kam triodasi is the main utsava, which being celebrated every year in a traditional way of pomp and grandeur at this temple complex. The Directorate of Archaeology, Assam, has made it confirmed that Madan Kamdev temple is a product of 11th/12th century A.D, when the Pala rulers had maintained their rule in Kamrupa.

### **Madan Kamdev Temple: A historical perspective.**

Madan Kamdev temple have survived at least to the year of 1548 A.D., when the occurrence of an earthquake of vigorous intensity have cause unrepeatable damage to this mighty temple complex. That means the periodical renovation or construction works in the very temple complex must have been going on for centuries (Karan et.al., 1976). However, all those construction possibly after 12th century A.D., have lost the original vigor and showed a sign of decline. The discovery of the ruins of brick temples as well as crude natured sculptures (some of them are now conserve to the site museum) are the best proved example of this fact. Scholar has tried to confirm the date of construction of the main temple at

Madan Kamdev temple as in 12th century A.D. This proposition is primarily based on the stylistic evidences of the sculptures affix to the surviving plinth of the main temple.

### **Kalapahar Episode and earthquakes**

Kalapahar was the general of nawab Sulaiman Kararani (1563 A.D-1572 A.D) of Bengal. The famous Koch King Naranayan was the contemporary of Sulaiman Kararani. Naranarayan after establishing himself as an important power in this region, had made an aggressive move towards Gaur (Bengal) under the leadership of his brother Sukladhavaj or Chilarai. The commander in chief of Sulaiman Kararani, Kalapahar had not only resisted the invasion of

Koch army, but also captured the leader of its army Chilarai and put him in prison. After that, Sulaiman Kararani, probably as a counter attack set out for the conquest of Koch Kingdom in 1568 A.D. The leader of this attack was Kalapahar who had successfully subjugated almost all the outlying areas of the kingdom. Thus, the proceeding of the history of Kalapahar normally inspired the people to believe that the destruction of these temples at Madan Kamdev was the work of Kalapahar.

### **Social and Economic characteristics and changing environment of the Madan Kamdev temple's neighbouring villages**

Social characteristics reflect the social quality of human population and level of social development of any area. These include attributes like literacy, sex ratio, level of education; nuclear family etc. and they vary from one village to another village

#### **Literacy**

Literacy is a key for socio-economic progress. According to field survey (2020) the study area has 4,997 persons among which 3,648 persons are literates and other 1,349 are illiterates (Table 1).

**Table 1: Literate people of the study area, 2020**

<b>Village (Total population)</b>	<b>Literates</b>	<b>Illiterates</b>	<b>Literacy Rate (per cent)</b>
<b>Bhitarkhola N.C. (93)</b>	<b>76 (81.72)</b>	<b>17 (18.28)</b>	<b>81.72</b>
<b>Barmola (138)</b>	<b>104 (75.36)</b>	<b>34 (24.64)</b>	<b>75.36</b>
<b>Gopeswar (364)</b>	<b>236 (64.84)</b>	<b>128 (35.16)</b>	<b>64.83</b>
<b>Katanipara (983)</b>	<b>673 (68.46)</b>	<b>310 (31.53)</b>	<b>68.46</b>
<b>Bhitarkhola (1,600)</b>	<b>1,287 (80.44)</b>	<b>313 (19.56)</b>	<b>80.44</b>
<b>Alipub (1,819)</b>	<b>1,272 (69.93)</b>	<b>547 (30.07)</b>	<b>69.93</b>

Source: Field survey, 2020. Figures within brackets indicates the percentage to the total population

#### **Sex Ratio**

Sex composition of the villagers is very important for significant demographic analysis. Changes in sex composition reveal the Socio-economic and cultural life pattern of a society in diverse ways. The study area supports a population of 4,997 persons. Out of the total population of the study area male constitutes 2,801 persons (56.05%), while the females 2,196 persons (43.95%)(Table2).

**Table 2: Sex Ratio of the villages, 2020**

<b>Village</b>	<b>Total population</b>	<b>Number of Male</b>	<b>Number of Female</b>	<b>Sex Ratio</b>
<b>Bhitarkhola N.C.</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>50 (53.76)</b>	<b>43 (46.24)</b>	<b>860</b>
<b>Barmola</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>86 (62.32)</b>	<b>52 (37.68)</b>	<b>604</b>
<b>Gopeswar</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>196 (53.85)</b>	<b>168 (46.15)</b>	<b>857</b>
<b>Katanipara</b>	<b>983</b>	<b>543 (55.23)</b>	<b>440 (44.76)</b>	<b>810</b>
<b>Bhitarkhola</b>	<b>1,600</b>	<b>933 (58.31)</b>	<b>667 (41.69)</b>	<b>714</b>
<b>Alipub</b>	<b>1,819</b>	<b>993 (54.60)</b>	<b>826 (45.40)</b>	<b>831</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2020. Figures within brackets indicate the percentage to the total Population.

### **Level of Education**

The percentage of people in different levels of education in the neighbouring village of the Madan Kamdev temple is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Percentage of people in different educational levels**

<b>Village</b>	<b>Persons in different educational levels</b>					
	<b>Below HSLC</b>	<b>HSLC</b>	<b>HS</b>	<b>UG</b>	<b>PG</b>	<b>Above PG</b>
<b>Bhitarkhola N.C.</b>	<b>63 (82.89)</b>	<b>08 (10.53)</b>	<b>05 (6.58)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Barmola</b>	<b>82 (78.85)</b>	<b>14 (13.46)</b>	<b>02 (1.92)</b>	<b>04 (3.85)</b>	<b>02 (1.92)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Gopeswar</b>	<b>230 (97.46)</b>	<b>04 (1.69)</b>	<b>02 (0.85)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Katanipara</b>	<b>617 (91.54)</b>	<b>47 (6.97)</b>	<b>03 (0.45)</b>	<b>07 (1.04)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Bhitarkhola</b>	<b>973 (75.66)</b>	<b>173 (13.45)</b>	<b>93 (7.23)</b>	<b>07 (0.55)</b>	<b>27 (2.09)</b>	<b>13 (1.02)</b>
<b>Alipub</b>	<b>953 (76.93)</b>	<b>133 (10.74)</b>	<b>87 (7.02)</b>	<b>20 (1.61)</b>	<b>33 (2.66)</b>	<b>13 (1.04)</b>

Source: Field survey, 2020. HSLC= High School Leaving Certificates, HS= Higher Secondary, UG= Undergraduate, PG= Postgraduate. Figures within brackets indicate the percentage to the total literates.

#### Family type

The percentages of the neighboring villagers having nuclear, joint and Extended families are shown in table 4. **Table 4: Family type of the**

**villagers, 2020**

Village	Nuclear	Joint	Extended
Bhitarkhola N.C.	11 (61.11)	7 (38.89)	0
Barmula	22 (68.75)	10 (31.25)	0
Gopeswar	30 (41.66)	38 (52.78)	4 (5.56)
Katanipara	129 (64.50)	64 (32.00)	7 (3.50)
Bhitarkhola	233 (68.52)	80 (23.53)	27 (7.95)
Alipub	213 (58.04)	127 (34.60)	27 (7.36)

Source: Field survey, 2020. Figures in the brackets indicate the percentage to total household.

#### Income pattern

The income of the villagers is not equal and the pattern of income shows a varied range. In Bhitarkhola N.C. village 27.77 per cent households have income less than rupees 5,000 and 55.56 per cent households have income between rupees 5,000 to 10,000. Only 16.67 per cent of the total households have income above 10,000 (Table5).

**Table 5: Income pattern of the study area, 2020**

village	Less than Rs 5,000	Rs 5,000-10,000	Above 10,000
Bhitarkhola N.C.	5 (27.77)	10 (55.56)	3 (16.67)
Barmula	12 (37.50)	15 (46.87)	5 (15.63)
Gopeswar	30 (41.66)	28 (38.89)	14 (19.45)
Katanipara	72 (36.00)	90 (45.00)	38 (19.00)
Bhitarkhola	128 (37.65)	120 (35.29)	92 (27.06)
Alipub	98 (26.70)	124 (33.79)	145 (39.51)

Source: Field survey, 2020. Figures in the parenthesis indicate the percentage to the total household.

#### Dependency Ratio

Dependency ratio is an important demographic index to understand the pressure of children and older person (non-working group) upon the adult



person (Working group). In the study area dependency ratio is found to vary from one village to another village (Table6).

**Table 6: Age Dependency Ratio among the neighbouring villages of the Madan Kamdev Temple, 2020**

Village	Age group			Age Dependency Ratio
	0-14 years	15-59 years	60 and above years	
<b>Bhitarkhola N.C.</b>	<b>24 (25.81)</b>	<b>64 (68.82)</b>	<b>05 (05.37)</b>	<b>45.30</b>
<b>Barmula</b>	<b>40 (28.99)</b>	<b>90 (65.22)</b>	<b>08 (05.79)</b>	<b>53.32</b>
<b>Gopeswar</b>	<b>106 (29.12)</b>	<b>236 (64.84)</b>	<b>22 (06.40)</b>	<b>54.78</b>
<b>Katanipara</b>	<b>280 (28.48)</b>	<b>670 (68.16)</b>	<b>33 (03.36)</b>	<b>46.71</b>
<b>Bhitarkhola</b>	<b>467 (29.19)</b>	<b>1,060 (66.25)</b>	<b>73 (04.56)</b>	<b>50.94</b>
<b>Alipub</b>	<b>533 (29.30)</b>	<b>1,220 (67.07)</b>	<b>66 (03.63)</b>	<b>49.09</b>

Source: Field survey, 2020. Figures within brackets indicate the percentage to the total population

Economic characteristics describe the economic condition of a particular region. There include attributes like income pattern, Occupational pattern, household assets and facilities, fuel use for cooking, drinking water facility etc. and they vary from one place to another.

The socio-economic development of the different neighbouring villages of Madan Kamdev Temple has been observed to vary according to their work. The composite value indicates that the Barmula village is socio economically most developed than other villages (Table7). **Table 7:**

**Variations in the Level of Socio-Economic Development of the neighbouring villagers of Madan Kamdev Temple**

Villages	Literacy rate (X <sub>1</sub> )	sex ratio (X <sub>2</sub> )	Level of Education (HS) (X <sub>3</sub> )	Nuclear Family (X <sub>4</sub> )	Income for more than rupees 5000-10,000 (X <sub>5</sub> )	Dependancy ratio (X <sub>6</sub> )	Composite Z-Score value
<b>Bhitarkhola N.C.</b>	<b>81.72</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>6.58</b>	<b>61.11</b>	<b>55.56</b>	<b>45.30</b>	<b>0.90</b>
<b>Barmula</b>	<b>75.36</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>13.46</b>	<b>68.75</b>	<b>46.87</b>	<b>53.32</b>	<b>1.80</b>
<b>Gopeswar</b>	<b>64.83</b>	<b>857</b>	<b>1.69</b>	<b>41.66</b>	<b>38.89</b>	<b>54.78</b>	<b>-2.08</b>
<b>Katanipara</b>	<b>68.46</b>	<b>810</b>	<b>6.97</b>	<b>64.50</b>	<b>45.00</b>	<b>46.71</b>	<b>-1.04</b>
<b>Bhitarkhol</b>	<b>80.44</b>	<b>714</b>	<b>13.45</b>	<b>68.52</b>	<b>35.29</b>	<b>50.94</b>	<b>1.53</b>

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Source: Primary survey, 2020

### **Socio-cultural changes**

The neighbouring villagers of Madn Kamdev temple follow their traditional culture and social practices but in recent time outside elements start penetrating into the villages. The birth of a female child in a village was regarded as an unwelcome event but in recent years villagers understand the importance of both male and female child. The movement of girl was restricted in the past village society but now outside interaction have improved to mix both boy and girl and movement of them freely. A significant change can be observed in marriage system also. Widow re marriage is possible now in the villages. A boy have to marriage a girl from neighbournig villages at past but now villagers can marriage from far villages. Dowry was common feature in many cases at past but now it is reducing in the villages. The all neighbouring villages have now lost their own societies and now a mix society developed in the study region. Due to the influence of urbanization the village society has now changes and the former traditional village society now became modern society.

The food habit of the study area is also changes. In past villagers use traditional food but now younger generation takes modern food. Habit of taking modern food as breakfast is now common in the study region. Traditional *pitha*, *laro* has been replaced by modern food in the study area. This change has been accepted by the villagers as it save time and energy of the women. The old generation, prefer wild edible plants, green vegetables. In the field of health and hygiene progressive change can be visible. At old days villagers try to care a disease by mantra but now they accept modern medicine. Some old person still belief in traditional process but young generation prefers to adopt medicine.

### **Madan Kamdev temple in the minds of neighbours and visitors**

Madan Kamdev temple is perceived differently by different people and the perception varies with age, sex and social status of the population group. The mind is a set of cognitive faculties including consciousness, perception, thinking, judgment and memory which vary from one visitor to another in the study area. People living in the same neighbourhood villages perceive the temple differently according to their own mental setup. The temple has different meaning for people of different socio economic, cultural and religious background living in a similar geographical environment. Information from the environment of the

Madan Kamdev temple is filtered as a result of personality, culture, and belief to from image in the minds of visitor and neighbours. Visitor's perception of the temple is generally influence by their social and cultural value. To assess the perception of the visitor of Madan Kamdev temple, information has been collected through questionnaire survey. For this

purpose, 100 visitors have been interviewed to know their perception about the Madan Kamdev temple (Table8).

**Table 8: Perception of visitors based on age and gender**

	Source of civic Pride (Archaeological site)	Leisure resource	Place of worship	Other
<b>Young Visitors(27)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Adult visitors(42)</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Elderly visitors(31)</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Male visitors(39)</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Female visitors(61)</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>1</b>

Source: Primary Survey, 2020

Perception of visitors of Madan Kamdev temple varies according to their community and religion. The main religions of the visitors are Hindu, Muslim and Christians. Hindu visitors perceived the temple area as the place of worship and place of God. Perception of Hindu visitors is different than other religion. Madan Kamdev temple is being visited by large number of people every day. They take part in religious activities as well as other socio-cultural activities performed in the madan Kamdev temple. Hindu visitors from different places participate in daily worshipping and annual festivals. Among the Hindu visitors 60.81 per cent people think that Madan Kamdev temple is a place of worship while other 31.08 per cent visitor perceived this place as a archaeological site and other 4.05 per cent think this place as a refreshment area. Among the Hindu visitors 63.51per cent said that the rock sculpture are made by kings on the other hand 12.16per cent said that sculptural are natural and other 9.45per cent said that all these are God created. Generally majority of the Hindu people attracted to the temple area because of temple (68.91per cent) other 10.81per cent visitor came here to visit archaeological site huge gathering of people also attracts Hindu visitors (18.91per cent). There are vast differences of the perception about the temple area among the religious group. Muslim people visit Madan Kamdev for refreshment and picnic. Some Muslim visitor perceived the place as archaeological site. In the study area only 11% visitors are Muslim. Muslim visitor visited the Museum and archaeological remains outside the temple. Their interaction with the place is less than Hindu religion. Christian visitors perceived the place as archaeological site. They visited the place for refreshment purpose and to visit the museum.

### Conclusion

The present work basically deals with the geographical and historical background of the Madan Kamdev temple and its surrounding area, socio-economic characteristics, changing environment of the temple's neighbouring villages. In addition Madan Kamdev temple in the minds of visitors and neighbours has been analyzed with the help of primary data. The history of Madan Kamdev temple is complex and still remains under the warp of darkness. Except an indirect literacy reference in the *Kalika Puranam*, no other form of evidence have been found as yet, to prove the history of this famous temple site. The Directorate of Archaeology, Assam,

has confirmed that the Madan Kamdev temple is a product of 11th/12th century A.D, when the Pala rulers had maintained their rule in Kamrupa. People's perception varies according to their age and gender about the Madan kamdev temple. Youngster perception of the temple is different compared to elderly or mature persons.

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