



SHAKTI DIETIES IN KALABURAGI DISTRICT-A STUDY ON BHANKUR KARIYAMMA DEVI AND CHINCHANSUR MAHAPURATAI

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ABSTRACT :

Shakti cult is one of the major traditions of Hinduism followed in India since ancient times. It is considered metaphysical reality as metaphorically a woman and Shakti is regarded as the supreme godhead. It includes many goddesses, who are considered as different aspects of the same supreme goddess.¹ It has different sub-traditions that range from those focused on gracious Parvati to that of fierce and horrifying Kali.²



KEYWORDS : Shakti cult , supreme godhead.

INTRODUCTION :

Sruti and Smriti literatures are important sources that deal with the Shakti tradition. In addition, it reveres the texts like *Devi Mahatmya*, *Devi-Bhagavata Purana*, *Mahabhagwata Purana* and *Shakta Upanishads* like the *Devi Upanishad*.³ The *Devi Mahatmya* particularly, is considered in Shaktism to be as important as the *Bhagavad Gita*.⁴

Shaktism is popular for its various sub-traditions of Tantra,⁵ and a number of goddesses within respective sub-traditions. The evolution of pantheon of goddesses in Shaktism started after the decline of Buddhism in India, wherein Hindu and Buddhist goddesses were added to form the Mahavidya (a list of ten goddesses).⁶ The most common forms of Devi found in Shaktism include Durga, Kali, Saraswati, Lakshmi, Parvati and Tripurasundari.⁷ This Goddess focused tradition is very popular in North-eastern India particularly in West Bengal and Assam, where festivals such as the Durga puja is celebrated with great pomp.⁸ Ideas of Shaktism have influenced Vaishnava and Shaiva traditions, with the Goddess considered the *Shakti* or Energy of Vishnu and Shiva respectively and are revered prominently in numerous Hindu temples and festivals.⁹

The earliest archaeological evidence of Shaktism that appears to be of Upper Paleolithic shrine for Shakti worship was discovered in the terminal upper paleolithic site of Baghor-I in Sidhi district of Madhya Pradesh. Noted archaeologists like G. R. Sharma of Allahabad University and J. Desmond Clark of University of California who carried out these excavations dated the Baghor formation to between 9000 B.C and 8000 B.C.¹⁰

Though Vedic literature reveres much about various Goddesses, they are far less frequently than Gods Indra, Agni and Soma. Yet, they are declared equivalent aspects of the Brahman, of Prajapati and Purusha. The Goddesses often mentioned in the Vedic literature include the Ushas (dawn),

Vak (speech, wisdom), Sarasvati (as river), Prithivi (earth), Nirriti (annihilator), Shraddha (faith, confidence).¹¹ Goddesses such as Uma appear in the Upanishads like ancient *Kena Upanishadas* another aspect of Brahma and the knower of ultimate knowledge.¹²

Hymns related to Goddesses appear in the ancient Hindu epic *Mahabharata* particularly in its *Harivamsa* section added later (100 to 300 CE).¹³ Thomas Coburn states "the archaeological and textual evidence implies, that the Goddess had become as much a part of the Hindu tradition, as God, by about the third or fourth century CE".¹⁴ Literature on Shakti worship grew in ancient India, climaxing in one of its most important texts called the *Devi Mahatmya*. This text, is both a result of centuries of Indian ideas about the divine woman, as well as a foundation for the literature and spirituality focused on the female transcendence in centuries that followed as stated by C. Mackenzie Brown.¹⁵ The *Devi Mahatmya* is not the earliest literary fragment attesting to the existence of devotion to a Goddess figure, as stated by Thomas B. Coburn, in his words "it is surely the earliest in which the object of worship is conceptualized as Goddess".¹⁶

Other important texts on Shaktism are the *Shakta Upanishads*,¹⁷ as well as Shakta oriented Upa (sub) Puranic literature like the *Devi Purana* and *Kalika Purana*,¹⁸ the *Lalita Sahasranama* (from the *Brahmanda Purana*).¹⁹ The *Tripura Upanishad* is historically the most comprehensive introduction to Shakta Tantrism,²⁰ distilling into its verses almost every important topic about Shakta Tantra tradition.²¹ Along with the *Tripura Upanishad*, the *Tripuratapini Upanishad* has attracted scholarly bhasya (commentary) in the second half of 2nd millennium, such as by Bhaskararaya,²² and by Ramananda.²³ These literatures link the Shakti Tantra tradition as a Vedic attribute,²⁴ however this link has been disputed by scholars.²⁵

1. Bhankur-Kereyamma Devi:

Bhankur is a place of Historical impotence, located in Chittapura Taluka of Kalburagi district, Bhankur was earlier known as Bamakuru. It was a part of the Rashtrakuta empire, this village is a sacred place by worship of Kereyamma Devi a village supremacy. This goddess is worshipped by the Brahmin family of Keri Ambalaga village in Aland Taluk. Locals say that she will be walking toward Bhankura village. A young harijan man takes her into the Bhankura village on his shoulders and onto the hill of the village then puts this goddess down here. Tell her to tell her about matter village Gunda (small water source) when you go do not look back. If she turned back she would not see Gowda. The young man turns his back and see, Kariyamadevi sitting on rocky hill and she is a man. The young man also became a stone.²⁶

One day Keriamma Devi came in the dream of Maligouda on the previous day of the car full moon every year in moola star take sister Kagina (river) closer to the jungle and bath the Ganga. All caste going of the population make a "Meesalu Kari Jatra" no diagnosis. She told me that she would not save her. Thus the Keriamma fair is held every year in Bhankur village.²⁷

Keriamma Devi's fair is held in pomp, on that morning worship of oxen takes place evening at the village by Mali Gowda, Police Gowda, Kulkarni in a procession come to devi temple outside the village. All the caste groups of the village gather and prepare for the fair. The priests decorate the shrine and idol of Devi for worship. Shepherds are throwing bhandar, Samagars (Cobblers) bring Divatige and Madigas are flankers. Thus all the caste stand on either of Gowda's cart is rushed to the ground in the running rabbit Gowda should cut a black rope for a single blow from the sword in his hand otherwise it is said that he is killed. Gowda knew that he would not be turning his wife into the throat. She says she will rebuild the keri (lake) when she is tired thousands of people from this village come from villages. Over this entire fair has emotional significance for all religions.²⁸

2. Chinchansur Mahapura Tayi:

Chinchansur village in Aland Taluk Gulbarga District is the location of Chinchansur Mapura Tai this goddess is famous in the region. This village located at a distance of 22 KM North West of Gulbarga district head quarters. The village has a historical background located at a distance of 32KM from Aland taluk well known for the glory of Mahapoortayi. Chinchansuar is also known as Chinchur. It is said that the deity here

was cut off by the hands of a king Mahishasura Mardins mythology the name of this place came to be known as "Choncha" Asur chonduru the village goddess Allamma is known as a Mapuratayi.²⁹

The fair of mahapurtaiyi is celebrated with pomp on the Akshaya Tertiya and Badami Amavasya. Devi's pallakki is decorated with a mango leaves and taken outside of the temple the priest of the village temple, the devotees fill the water pots and put them in front of the goddess until thepallakki passes through, devadasis arts are performed by the mangala mukhis (eunuchs) and other others. The fair is held for a month, people all castes touch the breasts for the tayi. Devis fair ends on Badami Amavasya. On the day of Badami Amavasya Devi's pallakki comes from temple to village temple at 5PM. Then dissatisfied people pay off the head of oil players. This service will take place all night till the devi pallakki returns to the temple. It is quite unusual that the priests of the temple are Harijans.³⁰



Bhankur Kariyamma Devi.



Chanchansur Mahapura Tayi

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