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“EDUCATION IN SAVADATTI REGION FROM ANCIENT HISTORY TO 15TH CENTURY A.D”

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ABSTRACT:

“Vidyadana” was considered as foremost among the *danas* as it nourishes the soil which makes a person to lead a better life here and merit later on. The standard of culture of the people in a region or country is reflected in the system of education that is imparted to them. Right from the early period, ancient Indian education was predominantly religious.¹⁸³ This system of education was considered as a means to attain salvation or self-realization, *atma-jnana* in the ancient period. It was for this reason only that while making religious grants, the kings and queens, officers as well as others many times, also made donations to the educational

institutions, which were usually attached to the temple or *matha* and for the maintenance of the teacher and the taught. Thus usually the temples served as the centres of education.

KEYWORDS: ancient Indian education, self-realization, *atma-jnana*.

INTRODUCTION:

In Savadatti region the various records indicate to the prevalence of the same system of education. The epigraphs also inform that like in other parts of ancient India, in Savadatti region to a close relationship between the teacher and the taught prevailed, for the students usually lived in a common home with the teacher. Hence the disciples were often described in the records as *antevasi*. meaning the home of the teacher, which was also the school, *gurukula*, in those days. For instance an epigraph in Badli informs while giving the list of teachers of *pandita*

it Madhava Bhatta that in the home of Pujyapada resided his disciple Lakshmidēvapandita and the latter disciple was Nagadeva who was instrumental in making the king to grant the land of 1000 *kammas* for the worship of Varda-Janardanadeva and the maintenance of a *danashala* in the temple.¹⁸⁴ Certainly it indicates that the students belonged not to any institution, but to their teachers.¹⁸⁵

The epigraphs of the region under study inform that the temples, *Mathas*, *Agraharas*, *Brahmapuri* and *Ghatikasthanas* were the typical educational centre in the Savadatti region. An inscription from Sogal dated 980 A.D. refers to a grant of Solu-30 of land for the purpose of education.¹⁸⁶ Similarly, an

inscription from Saundatti dated 1087 A.D., refers to a grant made for the promotion of education conducted in a temple called *Ankeshvara*.¹⁸⁷ A record from Badli refers to a grant of six *matras* of land for the purpose of education.¹⁸⁸

The Various Institutions:

The supremacy of the Brahmins is to be perceived in institutions like the *Agrahara*, *Brahmapuri* and *Ghatikas*, where as the *Mathas* and the temples belonged to the people of the respective religious systems.

Agraharas and Brahmapuris:

Though they do not possess the same grandeur and gravity of their contemporary institutions in Northern India, yet the *Agraharas* served the purpose of

small University centers, generally located in villages and managed by the community of Brahmins. From the period of the Kadambas down to that of the Rayas of Vijayanagara we find that the following Agraharas came into being, namely those Belgaum, Kuppatturu, Talgunda, Perur, Naragund. Degame. Nesaragi, Kokatnur. Tel sang, etc.

Both the Agrahara and Brahmapuri were the educational centers where Brahmana teachers called Mahajanas imparted education. If the Agraharas were the settlements of the brahmana colonies in villages, the Brahmapurries were the settlements of the learned. The Brahmanas of these settlements were involved in discharging their six fold scriptural duties, Shatkramas, namely Yajna, Yajana, Adhyana, Dana and Pratigraha-receiving alms. Infact the first three duties could be commonly discharged by Kshatriya, Vaishya and Brahmanas, who were regarded dvijasor twice born, where as, the latter three were to be discharged only by a Brahmanas.¹⁸⁹ The various epithets of the Mahajanas, referred to in the epigraphs definitely suggest that they were erudite scholars in many subjects including the vedas and vedangas. They were centers of education at all levels i.e., primary, secondary and higher. We find in the agrahara of Deganve, arrangements made for bala-siksha (primary education), ghatika-adhyaya-adhyapana (secondary education) and for the teaching Rig-veda and Yajur-veda and for Shastravyakhyana (higher education). Adhyayana and adhyapana were amongst the principal duties of the brahmanis of the agrahara.¹⁹⁰

In the Savadatti region, Degaon (Bailhongaltaluka) village had an agrahara. An inscription dated 1174 A.D. belongs to Kamaladevi, queen of the Goa Kadamba founded the Agrahara here and also refers to the village lands of Degave were divided into forty-seven and three fourth vrittis. (For the maintenance of the Mahajanas, the village lands were divided into shares called Vrittis and the shares were distributed amongst the Mahajanas) each vrittis consisting of sixteen nivaratanas of paddy lands, 60 nivaratanas of lands for growing minor granins and garden land, sufficient to plant 150 betel-nut leaves creepers. These vrittis were distributed amongst thirty-one brahmins.¹⁹¹

Huli Agrahara:

An many as fourteen inscriptions have been found in the places. viz. Huli. This agrahara, as it was called in those early days was considered one of the 18th agraharas most famous in the Belvola country. An inscription from Dambal mentions this fact. The passage quotes:-

"Belvolam Chittaram-amt-a nada
appamnadedupandineta-graharakkam-
olpim-----anupamam Puli-punny agrahara."¹⁹²

It is now a small village in Saundattitaluka in Savadatti region, this place was then situated in the division of Belvola -300, which was like the heart of Kuntalanadu. This agrahara was fairly an extensive one. The number of the mahajanas of this agrahara was one thousand. Records indicate that it was divided into a number of wards, probably. The names of some of these were as follows:

Raviyanageri,¹⁹³ Kalasavaigeri,¹⁹⁴ Ghaisasageri,¹⁹⁵ Kattiyageri,¹⁹⁶ Shivayagiri,¹⁹⁷ Kakkuligeri¹⁹⁸ and Yerandageri.¹⁹⁹ In one context it has been stated that Raviyanageri consisted of 100 mahajanas²⁰⁰ and Ghaisasageri, Kalasavaigeri and Shivayageri also had an equal number of them. It is quite likely therefore that each of these words had hundred mahajanas of since the number was one thousand, it stands to reason that the whole agrahara was divided into ten wards though the names of all the streets are not known. The names of some of these wards are indeed significant. Raviyanageri for instance appears to have been named after Ravikimayya, who figures as one of the Mahajanas. Probably he was the chief in that ward. Ghaisasageri was obviously a ward where the Ghaisas or Ghalisasa lived. It has been noted above that Ghalisasa in general stood for a teacher, trained in a Ghatika. In same way Yeranadageri has been described as a street of oil plants. The Mahajanas of this place like those of others were learned, noble, and virtuous. Inscriptions are eloquent about their qualities as scholars and teachers in other places. They are stated as having mastery over Ramayana, Mahabharata. Manu, logic etc.. It is, however, unfortunate that details regarding the students or the

subject taught or not available. But the reference to the teachers their qualifications and subjects which they had attained proficiency all go to indicate the educational activities of this place.

In the Savadatti region Kokatnur village had an Mahagrahara. An inscription dated 1235.A.D., records a gift of land and garden made by Parvara Ballaha Mallamayya, the Mahaprabha of "Mahagrahara Korggatnur" included in Kanambade-300. which was a sub-division of Karahada-4000 province, for the benefit of the temple of Bhavashuddhadeva of the place under Parvara Ballaha Basavarasa.²⁰¹

Similarly another inscription from Telsang belong to Vikramaditya-VI. states the agrahara of Telsang noted for its 500 learned brahmanas and situated in Kalambade. Kampana of the province of Karahada-4000 in the Kuntala country.²⁰²

Another inscription from Belgaum dated 1199 A.D. refers to Kartavirya-IV of Ratta family protecting the eighty four mahajanas from his nelevidu at Venugrama.²⁰³ An inscription from Kerur dated 1149 A.D. records gifts of land, house, etc. to God MulasthanaKoppeshwara of Keruvaragrahara in Koravalli-150, the donor were Jayadevayya, Jayasimha deva who were governing the Kuhundi-3000 division.²⁰⁴

The Kabbur inscription dated 1204 A.D. informs about the existence of Piriyaagrahara, great agrahara at Kabburin Kuhundi-3000 division.²⁰⁵ An inscription from Khadakalat dated 1174 A.D. refers to agrahara at Latti.²⁰⁶

Brahmapuri :

Next to the agraharas, brahmapuris were another important centers of learning. They were localities in a village or town, either agrahara or otherwise, exclusively meant for the residence of otherwise, exclusively meant for the residence of Brahmins. There is one record from Raibag which says that their were one hundred houses in thatBrahmapuri. The passage says-

"Brahmpurigeyanam mane"²⁰⁷

Another record from Bagi i.e. Raibag speaks that "PrayagebadgalaBagi (it is like Prayag).²⁰⁸The expressions like balasikshe suggests that arrangements were made for the primary education or study of elementaiy sciences. A grant of thirty nivaitnas of land was granted separately for Balasikshe.²⁰⁹ In the same way the work Kramita²¹⁰ i.e. a person who recites the vedic texts in particular manner and also the names with suffix viz.,Kramita. Vishvanatha. indicating the person who or their forefathers proficient in the recition of the vedic texts. An inscription from Huli states the following.

"Jana-PujanaPriyaramahiranayagarbbha
Brahma mukha-Kamala-Vinirggte—Ru(Ri)-g-yaju
S-Sam-Artharvana- SathraAshta-dasa-smri(smri)tipurana
Kavyanataka -dharma agama pravinarum
spta-soma samastha-avabharit(th) avagahana
Papavitika(kri) ta gatrarumkamchanaka(la)sa-sista-shat-chhatra-
chamarpanchmahasabda-gatrika-bheri-rva-ni-nam-(na)
ditrum-asri(ta-jana)kalpa-vri(vri)
ksharamahita kalamatakarum-eka-vakyarum,"²¹¹

It is interesting to note that, Kamaladevi, queen of Shivachitta Kadamba founded another Brahniapuri of thirty Brahmin families at Degave mentioned in the Degave inscription.²¹² It also refers to the grant of Kamaladevi brings out the real nature of the establishment of Brahniapuri. The land allotted for the Brahmapuri was divided among the principal Brahmin families. A portion of the land was often made over to temple of the agrahara for meeting the expenses of religious ceremony. The shares allotted were as follows –

Nine Bhattopadhyayas	¾ share each,
13 Bhattopadhyayas	¾ share each,
God Shri Kateshvara	5 shares,
God Shri Kamalanarayana	5 shares,
Goddess Shri Mahalakshami	5 shares,
Dining Hall	3 3/4 shares,
Explaining Shastras	1 shares,
Explaining Rig-veda	¾ shares,
Explaining Yajur-veda	¾ shares,
Teaching Children	½ shares,
Drinking water and place for fire	½ shares,
For teaching Ghat-kadhyaya	10 Nivartanas,
For the tank	9 Nivartanas,
For each share	1 field, measures by cow'shide
Narsimhabhattopadhyayas	1/8 shares,
Ishvarabhattachopadhyaya	1/8 share, total 50 shares.

Ghatikasthanas :

Ghatikasthanas, also called Ghatika or Ghalique, was another significant center of higher education, which is frequently referred in the inscription.²¹³ Even though different theories have been put forward by scholars with regard to the exact meaning and significance of the Ghatikasthana, certainly it was a reputed centre of higher learning. In the opinion of Dr.Chidanand Murthy, because of installation of the Ghatikayantra, time keeping device, in the temples which was also essential for the Jyotishi. astrologers, the place got name the Ghatikasthana, where vedic education was imparted to the brahmanas.²¹⁴ Those who distinguished themselves in scholarly disputations and discussion, were called GhatikaSahasa, Ghalissai. Ghaisa in the records.²¹⁵ Thus we can say that the Ghatika-sthanas were not only the centers of higher education but also the centers of scholarly disputations and discussion.

Undoubtedly, Raibag (taluka place in Savadatti region) was having one of the earliest Ghatikas in the history of Karnataka. Because of an inscription from Hannigeri, while informing the location of the land grant, mentions the existence of a Ghatikasthana.²¹⁶ Soma, grand-son Lakshamarasa, the maneverggade of Mailadevi, is described as Sarasvata-Lakshmi. Suddha-jivham. Arrangements for the ghatikasthana were made in the village Degave, while converting it into an agrahara.²¹⁷

Thus forming of the educational centers and making gifts of land for the maintenance of the teachers and the taught by the rulers and their feudatories indicate that the authorities of Karnataka liberally patronized educational activities.

Mathas :

Another important agency through which education was imparted to the student was the Mathas. They were normally attached to the temples. As we know there were many such Mathas in Karnataka during the ancient period. Like the Agraharas, Brahmapuris and Ghatikasasthanas. the Mathas also used to arrange for imparting education.

With regards to the Mathas in Munavalli (Savadatti region). The Panchalingeshvar temple and the Matha attached. An epigraph from Munavalli states that a gift of land was made to Gahadevamuni, the disciple of MalayalaJnanarasi-Brativeshvara and his disciple Dharmarashimuni. for feeding and maintenance of the teacher, who was teaching the Koumara-Vyakarana, the students in the Mathas attached to the temple of Panchalingeshvaradeva at Munavalli.²¹⁸ The very term KouramaVyakarana means imparting grammar education to the youth pupils in the Matha and thus indicating the importance attached to the field of education. In fact Dharmarashimuni. who was teacher of Gahadeavamuni, was not only well versed in the Samaveda but he was also the acharya of the Panchalingeshvara temple. He was well known for his Brahmacharya, asceticism and tapanence.²¹⁹

Another record from Munavalli introduces the saint Sarveshvaradeva and states that the member of his line were the heads of the Mathas at Velugrama (Belgaum). Nesarige, Gokage, Kottumbage, in Halasige-12000 and Golihalli.²²⁰ Another inscription from Saundatti informs to MahasamantAnkaras made to a gift of land for worship and offerings and feeding the ascetics and the students in the temple Arikeshvaradeva.²²¹

As far as the subject taught in this various educational centers are concerned, no definite information is available in the epigraphs of the region under study. However, we can presume, on the basis of the information available from other areas, that usually Vedas, Vedangas, Vyakarana(Grammar), Tatva (philosophy), Puranas, Kavya (Poetics) etc, were taught to students at these centers.²²²As mentioned earlier, one Mahadhava Bhatta an epithet Sakalakala brahma, i.e, mastery in arts.²²³ The same inscription also states that at the Brahmapuri in Badli, there was Acharyas well versed in Dhashagranthi, Vyakarana, Panini etc.²²⁴ The various epithets the teachers had before their names like Galisasa, Kramita, Mahavadi, Vachaspati etc, were perhaps the indication of their degrees.

From the qualifications of Sthan-acharyas, acharyas, tapodhanas, Jain gurus, Chieftains, officers and others we find that a numbers of subjects were being taught in the above institutions, besides the education at primary stage of reading, writing and arithmetic. We also find direct references for arrangements made for teaching them as in the Degave inscription or the Dodwad plates.²²⁵

Thus it can be said that the arrangements were made for the education of the people by establishing Agraharas, Brahmpuris, Ghatikasthanas and the mathas which were also the centers of cultural activities of ancient period.

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