



STRUCTURAL FORMATION OF AGRAHARAS IN MEDIEVAL SOUTH INDIA –A CASE STUDY OF HOSAHOLALU AGRAHARA

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the significance of establishing Agrahara in sub urban locality & highlights the HosaholaluAgrahara as a center of superior education & learning. An Agrahara was the most important center of education and learning in medieval south India. The Brahmans who were well versed in the Vedas and other branches of knowledge were to transmit their learning and scholarship to pupils in this Agrahara. There were several political issues behind the creation of a scholastic center. These Agraharacenters were concerned with secular education along with religious and traditional education .The work of teaching was regarded as a sacred duty by all masters and not a merely a business transaction. The kings & their political atmosphere supported several kinds of political readjustments& setting up of an agrahara was one of them.

KEY WORDS Agrahara , Promotion , Learning , Political Readjustments, Societal Impact.

AGRAHARA OF HOSAHOLALU

This Agrahara was the most important center of education and learning in south India. It was a village given to a group of Brahmins for their maintenance while they engaged themselves in learning and education. The income from these villages was enjoyed in perpetuity by the descendants of the original donors. As the main duty of the Brahmins was to acquire knowledge and all other worries were kept at a distance. The Brahmans who were well versed in the Vedas and other branches of knowledge were to transmit their learning and scholarship to pupils in this Agrahara. There were several political issues behind the creation of a scholastic center . The kings & their political atmosphere supported several kinds of readjustments& setting up of an agrahara was one of them.

EPIGRAPHICAL EVIDENCES

An Epigraph of Krishanrajapete where the place of present study is located, registers the gift of land below a tank to Somayya for offerings to god Somanatha by Hulegere deva, son of Sapeyaketayawhen Madanna son of Ishwarapeddi was the Masaveggade (Kr 8 EC Vol.VI- The Introduction – pp1-12). The gift was made with the approval of pandaladeva the officer of Hosavolalu under padumanna the Senubhova (Kr 8 EC Vol.VI- The Introduction – pp1-12) of MahapradhanaMadi deva dannayaka, Dekanna and all the mahajans of Hosavolalu. This place had been converted into an Agrahara renamed Rayasamudra by the Mahajanas of Hoysalanadu and Kongunadu.(Kr 8 EC Vol.VI- The Introduction – pp1-12)



GIFT OF LAND-

Hence this Agrahara was created as a gift to well versed Brahmans with a promise to promote learning among students of that vicinity. A large number of pupils from different parts of Southern India flocked to this center for higher learning. As this center imparted education of an advanced type several students from Tonnuru, Tondanuru, Kikkeri, Sindhagahtta, Melukote, Bachenahalli, Somanathapura, Mahisha mandala, Madapura, Lakshmipura, Kalale, Channarayapattana, Pandavapura, etc came here to study. These students were very eager to learn education from the hands of several masters who excelled in their subjects such as Nyayangashastra (Jurisprudence) and Ganitha (Mathematics) Tarka (Logic) Philosophy Vyakarana (grammar) etc. Philosophy Mathematics, Astronomy and Astrology were the important subjects which were taught generally in all these study centers. such as Nyayangashastra (Jurisprudence) and Ganitha (Mathematics) Tarka (Logic) Philosophy Vyakarana (grammar) etc (Kr 8 EC Vol.VI- The Introduction – pp1-12)

LOCATING AN AGRAHARA

The Hosaholalu Agrahara was situated at a nearby distance from the town of Kogunadu. This was a key & strategic place in the Hoysala empire. Great care was taken in the selection of this town. The City was selected on the basis of its proximity. Its scenic beauty quietness tranquility and large space was primarily taken into account & its boundary line. Several lands were earmarked for building temples in the nearby vicinity. It could afford accommodation for any number of students. It could hold privileges such as

land and serving people. It was large enough to hold temples of magnificent nature.

Moreover it was bordering a big tank and River Hemavathy - a big tributary of River Cauvery, flowed in the bordering villages closely. The elevated hills in the west ward direction enhanced the scenic beauty of this place. The land was fertile Paddy and Ragi were grown along with cotton and silk. The place had contacts with markets of Srirangapattana, Mysore and Pandavapura. The land routes connected the markets of Melukote and Todanuru on the northern borders Channarayapattana and Hassan on the southern borders. Akkihebbalu and Holenarasipura on the eastern borders and Santhebachenahally and Sasalu on the western borders and hence it was suitably located to be an a focal learning point. After the center became an Agrahara two Vaishnava temples came up gradually one in Kikkeri another in Akkihebbalu. One Lakshmi Narasimha temple was built in Holalu itself. Another village renamed as Hariharapura was also converted into an Agrahara by the then ruling Hoysala king. A great area was thus located and it was renamed as Holalu Agrahara by Hoysala king Narasimha III. In course of time this Agrahara grew into a learning center forming a university called as Ghatikasthan.

EDUCATION IMPARTED

The type of education imparted here was different from that of other mutts and temples. They were concerned with secular education along with religious and traditional education. Because this center catered to all types of learned masters and pupils from different localities. Traditional learning included the Four Vedas and their countless Commentaries while secular learning



included Mathematics, Logic, Metallurgy, Botany Agriculture, Astrology philosophy, Astronomy etc.

STRUCTURAL FORMATION

After it was created a large bodies of students were attracted to this center through Shishyavritti which meant attracting students through scholarship. This was established by the grants made by the rulers and by the village head men for earmarked purpose such as Dhoopa, deepa, naivaidya, geetha, nritya, ahaara, khanda, sputita, jeernodhadhara, yateenamvidyarthinam cha satramnimitam (EC vol 5 BK I 1,85 1049 A.D). There were instances of well versed Brahmans joining together to form an Agrahara for the purpose of carrying educational activity but here learned Brahmans were attracted to settle here to promote learning (Mudigere inscription no.36 E C Vol. VI p.5).

CHARACTERISTICS OF AGRAHARA-

Several inscriptions in which the subjects taught were also recorded. The education so imparted was residential in character. The teacher Acharya or punditha or Bhattastayed along with the students. This created a rare atmosphere of reciprocal and joint living and benefitted the society to a very large extent.

METHODS OF TEACHING

In the ancient Indian method of teaching, 'the individual' and not a group was the immediate concern. In this Agrahara also the individual pupil was given highest concern. This assisted in building up a strong master pupil relationship and consequently personal attachment between the preacher or preceptor and the pupil and the master was of an abiding nature. The work of teaching was regarded as a sacred duty

by all masters and not a merely a business transaction. In the age of sutras also a definite code of ethics, principles and regulations both for the teacher and the taught was laid down, here during Hoysala kings also the master pupil relationship was held high. The violation of any of these principles was treated as a sin which could not be rectified by any expectation. It attracted severe punishment also. Education taught here included both mundane and ultra mundane life of man and hence it played a significant role in the life of and process of internal development of an individual. This education inculcated the spirit of dutifulness, faith, morality and self discipline. This education was always considered a necessity for attaining sublimation of life or salvation. Men were given the knowledge of the almighty his ultra powers and cognizance god through religious instruction and practicality.

CONCLUSION:

The Hosaholalu Agraharawas a superior learning center created to become a sub urban center attracting students from distant localities. The Agrahara gradually became a great center of learning with temples added, residential buildings, the revenue generation sources were added. Kings took imperative steps to ameliorate the center in to a higher educational axis. The work of teaching was regarded as a sacred duty by all masters and not a merely a transaction of benefactions. This center had a great socio religious impact & it lived up to the expectations of medieval south Indian society.

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