Preface

The Hoysala period marks a brilliant age in the cultural history of Karnataka. In the midst of notable developments in various periods, the history of religious practices and institutions attained great efflorescence. Though an abundance of source material, epigraphical, literary, and monumental, is available, the scholars have not attempted a comprehensive study of the religious conditions of the age as yet. No doubt, a few stray articles have been published in learned journals or this aspect has formed a brief chapter in some general volumes on the history and culture of the Hoysalas. It is for this reason that this topic has been chosen for my doctoral research.

In this study, I have made an attempt to trace the background of the religious institutions in the light of the geographical distribution of the religious edifices, then bearing on the fortunes of the various religious sects that flourished at that time, the beliefs and observance of different ceremonies, festivals and feasts, the varied forms of the Hindu Gods that were recognised and worshipped and the services rendered by the saints and scholars of these sects.

As a result of this investigation, the foregoing monograph has thrown a welcome and clear light on the religious history of Karnataka. I am conscious of the fact that this work does not pretend to be exhaustive but can claim to be the most comprehensive study available.
In this venture of mine I have received much valuable help from the various academic bodies and individuals all of whom I cannot sufficiently thank but express my hearty gratefulness to more important of them here.

Dr. Shrinivasa H. Bitti, Professor and Head of the Department, has not only taken a paternal interest in my academic venture in the post-graduate stage, but also is instrumental in securing the U.G.C. Fellowship and thus enable me to complete this work. I have been fortunate in securing Dr. B.K. Gururajrao as my guide who has taken keen interest in my work at different stages and given necessary instructions and guidance whenever necessary. The University Grants Commission of the Government of India and the authorities of the Karnatak University have been kind enough to choose me for their munificent financial aid which facilitated my research work. I have received much co-operation from the authorities of the Karnatak University Library and K.R.I. Library in collecting reference material. My fellow research student Sri. Shrinivas V. Padiger of the Department has been a source of great help in the initial stages of my work. To all these and a host of others whom I could not individually mention here, I owe a great debt of gratitude and sincerely thank each one of them.

Dept. of Ancient Indian History & Epigraphy,
Karnatak University,
Dharwad.

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(Smt. Vidya Mohanrao Hebbar)

(Smt. Vidya Mohanrao Hebbar)