In order to study the culture of a country its literature is taken into consideration as it is helpful to a certain extent. So also its script which reflects an aspect of culture. In view of this it has become necessary to investigate and analyse the scripts that have spread the length and breadth of our country in general and in our region in particular. The birth, rise and usage of a script, depends upon a particular region, its people, their attitudes towards life and cultural traits.

**Kannada Script:**

The Sirsi region has been ruled by several dynasties and they have patronized language and literature along with scripts. We find the art of writing in scripts right from the early periods.

It is said that *Brahmi* is the origin of all the languages in India. Likewise the Kannada script is also of *Brahmi* origin and it has undergone a gradual artistic development through the ages. The Kannada script has flourished in the region right since the Kadamba period. There are several inscriptions where we find artistically carved alphabets with box-headed flourishes. Some Kadamba inscriptions have been written from the bottom to the top. For eg. Mrigesavarma's inscription at Banavasi characters of the Satavahanana period are beautiful in appearance with the tip of the head
triangular in shape like a nail head and curved at the bottom. Some alphabets are "rectangular" and called box headed characters.

The Kadambas along with the Vakatakas had not only political but marital relationship with the Guptas and so Gupta influences naturally are perceptible. An important affinity is noticed in the box-headed script used in the early Kadamba inscriptions. The most perfect example of this variety is found in the Talagunda inscription of Kakustavarman. The letters are long, narrow and artistic. The spread of the box-headed variety in the south, through the Vakataka area, is observed in the Kadambas of about 4th, 5th centuries A.D. The Talagunda inscription shows the most regular and artistic writing among the early Kadamba inscriptions and is greatly due to its being engraved on stone, unlike those of Mrigesavarman that are on metal plates. Among the vowels 'i', 'u' and 'e' are noteworthy, the first lacking the central stroke seen in the Vakataka counterpart. The letters kha and ja lack the rectangular base and the box-head respectively, of the Vakataka script again. Noteworthy letters are da and dha, ta and tha the last with the circlet in the center, ba with the small inward indentation to the left and la with a long beautifully curved tail end. The subscript na and ya are noteworthy. Medial a, as it occurs in two ways in the case of na, i.e. in a continuation of the letter or as an additional mark is noteworthy. The medial marks for i, u and r are ornamental and u rather unobtrusive.
**Tigalari Script:**

An increasing interest is evident these days in studying culture, folklore etymology and so on. In fact, the research conducted in the Dravidian languages during this one century is quantitatively more than all that had been done earlier. Brighter light is thrown by scholars on the 22 main languages and 11 subordinate languages of the country. These languages have been classified as of the North-Dravidian, South-Dravidian and Central-Dravidian groups of people. People speaking Dravid are found not only in South India but also in the neighbouring countries like Afghanistan and Sri Lanka.

It has been widely believed that among the Dravidian languages only Kannada, Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam languages have their own scripts. It is surprising that our linguists have not paid attention to the script called *Tigalari*, which has been in use over a long period of time among the family of the Dravidian languages.

Commonly we hear that a language has both audio and video qualities. As there are two aspects, regional and social to the audio feature of a language, the video one also has the same. The *Tigalari* script is a fine example of this. It has been in use from the very ancient times in the coastal region of the state. Mainly this script has survived and developed in the families of the Vedic Brahmins and in the Mathas. Thus this script is of the
upper classes of people, one often finds a social script and a regional script\(^2\) in use at the same time.

*Tigalari* is sometimes being called *Tikalari*. The script is as unfamiliar as its origin. The word can be analysed as Tigal+Ari. Here Tigul means Tamil. In ancient days Tamilians were called Tiguls. This is clear from the edicts and also Kannada poetry. Therefore, *Tigalari* is a corrupt form of Tamil Arya (respectable Tamils). Brahmins who resided in the Dravida region regularly used this script.

Tigalari script contains sound symbols of fifty alphabets. It has its own sound modulating technique. Sound is used with variations to produce different meanings. One can observe a pervasive combination of vowels and consonants in this script. Here there are no prolonged sounds of E and O as in the Devanagari. *Lui* and *Lui* are found instead. This can be construed as an evidence of trying to spread Sanskrit in the Dravid regions. Hence we find a combined trait of both these languages here. The chronological growth of this peculiar script could be traced from various manuscripts. Due to a Dravidian attraction, various experiments have been tried out on the script. The writers have been using Kannada numerals with the Tigalari script.

There are some myths regarding its origin and development. The Tigalari writers of Uttara Kannada say that this script entered Karnataka from the Malayalam country. In the past, Brahmins who wanted to study Astrology and Ayurveda often visited Kerala and they brought the script to
Karnataka. Thinking that the Vedas and Sastras should not be regarded by commoners, in order to protect their sanctity, the Tigalari script was used they say, But this is another myth.

Many proofs are available to prove that the Tigalari belongs to the ancient time. In 1290 A.D. in an inscription³ in Maling Agrahara, in the Mysore district, it is mentioned that villages were donated to those that taught the Rigveda, and Kannada through the Tigalari script. That means the study of Kannada and the Tigalari script went hand in hand.

Scholars believe that all the scripts of India have originated from the Brahmi Script⁴. The following are from the list:

1. Devanagari and other related scripts.
2. Kannada and Telugu scripts.
3. Grantha, Tamil, Malayalam, and Vattelettu scripts could be detected in all the three divisions⁵. Tigalari script branched off from the Malayalam and Vattalettu and it is known as the intermediary script of the two. But it is difficult to guess at what period of time the Tigalari script branched off from its mother stock. There are people who say that the Tigalari is the language used for writing books. There is difference between the Tigalari used for writing books and that spoken by the people.
Some scholars say that it is a Tulu Script by origin. Dr. A.C. Burnel who has been totally devoted to the study of the South Indian scripts is among them. Tulu is one of the five Dravidian languages and Tigalari might be its script. In reality, there are many proofs to show that Tigalari is not Tulu in origin script. Dr. Burnel\(^6\) agrees that there is not even a single instance of a Tulu having used Tulu (script). This point, he has highlighted in the introduction to his books. In the Tigalari manuscript bark-books there are no Tulu sentences. At the same time there is a lot of difference between the Tigalari and the Tulu alphabets. When we observe the alphabets of the pure Tulu we find there are no emphatic words as are in Kannada\(^7\). Thus, there is much difference between Tigalari and Tulu. There is no script for the Tulus. Tigalari script is not the Tulu one.

Manuscripts written in the Tigalari are numerous. In the library of the Sringeri Saradamba Temple, at the Svarnavalli math and houses of Vedic Brahmins in the Sirsi region they lie scattered. There is no effort to collect and preserve them in one place made. There are enough books of Tigalari in the Kannada Research Centre, Dharwad and the Kannada Research Institute, Mysore. In short, there are several thousands of Tigalari manuscripts that can be found in different places.

For the sake of convenience, one can separate the Kannada manuscripts written in Tigalari from the Sanskrit works in it. Theoretically there are three groups of these books. Science like Astrology and Ayurveda,
literature, and works concerning the Vedas, Upanishads and Agamas. The Tigalari manuscripts contain 4 Vedas, 18 Puranas, Upanishads, Ramayana, Mahabharatha. Navodaya Kavya, Agasthyasrama Varnane and Narmada Mahatme, are among the best books in the poetic form available in the Kannada Research Institute, Karnatak University, Dharwad. In the same manuscript collection, there are some wonderful works like Shaiva Karunamrit Siddhanta. Shivatattva Vivekakyana, Sankhya Yoga, Prayaschitendu sekhara, Jataka Lekhana Sangraha, Vaidyasar Tarka Sangraha, Mantrawad and Abhinava Saravati.

Language and Literature:

Sanskrit and Prakrit were the earlier languages in the region. These languages were patronized by the kings. Almost all the inscriptions of the pre-Kadamba period in Karnataka are in the Prakrit, sometimes displaying an influence of Sanskrit. It reveals that this language enjoyed popularity among the ruling and learned classes. Even the donations given to the Brahamans are recorded in the Prakrit language. With the advent of the Kadambas, Samskrita assumed the status of the official language and pushed aside the Prakrita.

The Samskrita position as the official language must have had its repercussions on the literary activity of the region. This is evidenced in the fact that the records of non Brahmanic creeds like Jainism and Buddhism were written in the Samskrita language despite the fact that their canonical
literature to a great extent was in Pali or Ardhamagadhi. There is a tradition that the great poet and dramatist Kalidasa visited the court of the Kuntala king as an emissary of the Guptas whereupon he wrote the work *Kuntalesvaradautyam*. If there is any truth in this tradition it will have to be maintained that the Kuntala king was no other than a Kadamba king. There is no lack of evidence in the Kadamba inscriptions for the existence of great Sanskrit poets. Many of their records are excellent examples of poetic compositions though the names of the composers are not always known. The Talagunda inscription of Kadamba Kakusthavarma written by Kubja is the best example of the *Kavya* style. The earliest inscription begin with an invocation to Vishnu in Sanskrit and records the purport in Kannada. By about the middle of the fifth century A.D. numerous Sanskrit words had entered into the usage and style of the time. Once the use of Kannada was approved in the record of the rulers, it did not take long to assume importance as a language of inscriptions. These were read and understood by the common people. We notice an epigraph in Kannada in the period of the Kadamba king Ravivarma.

The copper plate records of the Kadambas generally reveal a tendency of their drafters to translate the place-names into Sanskrit though at times the original names are recorded. The Gudnapur inscription of Ravivarma provides such examples of translated locals names (e.g. Mahavenguli for Hirebengane). The same inscription also records such local names as
Kallangodu, Moguru, Indura etc. Sanskrit was so extensively used in royal recordings that even the inscriptions recording donations to the Jaina and Buddhist establishments to be composed in that language itself. Some excellent compositions in the Sanskrit Kavya style can be seen in the Talagunda inscription\textsuperscript{16} of the time of Kakusthavarma, the Banavasi inscription\textsuperscript{17} of Mrigesavarma and the Gudnapur inscription of Ravivarma. That feudatories of the Kadambas like the Kaikeyas also preferred Sanskrit to the vernacular is demonstrated in the Honnavara plates\textsuperscript{19} of Kaikeya Chitrasena.

With the ascent of the Chalukyas of Badami the vernacular began to assume more and more importance particularly for stone records. The copper plate records however continued to be composed in Sanskrit.

The inscription found in the Ratnatraya basadi at Biligi were composed by Bhattakalanka himself\textsuperscript{20}. These are bilingual, composed in Sanskrit and Kannada. These inscriptions are dated 1592 A.D. and 1593 A.D. respectively. His \textit{Sabdhanusasana} is a work on Kannada grammar written in Sanskrit language on the model of Panini's \textit{Ashtadhyayi}. The work informs us that he was an expert in various branches of knowledge like drama, etymology, logic, dance, astrology, sculpture, veda, smiriti, philosophy, puranas, medicine and mathematics. He was also an adept in six languages. The \textit{Sabdhanusasana} also mentions a Vritti called \textit{Bhasamanjari} and a commentary called Manjari Makaranda as having been composed by Bhattakalanka. The inscription\textsuperscript{21} on
his tomb at Kallgudibena in Sonda says that he passed away on 9th November 1654 A.D. Since his tomb is found at Sonda, it may be surmised that he had shifted to Sonda during his last years. The Jaina matha at Sonda even today is called the Bhattakalanka matha obviously in his memory.

At the very beginning of the role of the chiefs of Sonda the mathas of the Madhvas, the Sankaras and the Jainas had found patronage at Sonda Sri Vadirajatirtha, the Madhva pontiff of Udupi, exercised considerable influence on Arasappa Nayaka II and as stated in by the Trivikrama temple inscription, he was also regarded as rayaguru i.e. royal preceptor. Vadiraja is a great name in the history of Madhvaism. He was a scholar both in Sanskrit and Kannada and perhaps knew some other languages like Telugu also. He has left behind a large mass of literature both Sanskrit and Kannada, which can be classified basically into four groups. Viz. Granthas, Vyakhyanas, Tikas and Kavyas.

Among his Granthas, the Yuktimalika occupies a unique place in the philosophical classics of the Dvaitha Vedanta. He has explained the Dvaita tenets in a simple and lucid style in this work. Nyaya Ratnavali is a work, which established Dvaita tenets by condemning the Advaita of Sankaracharya using the ideas of the Advaitins themselves. There are various other Granthas like Haribhaktilata, Srutitavaparakasika, Kalpalata Chakramimansa, Ekadasi nirmaya, Bhugola Nirmaya, Pasandamatakhandana, Sankalppaddhati and Sadachara smriti on different subjects.
The works of the nature of Vyakhyana are *Mahabharata lakshalankara, Mahabharata, Tatparya-nirnaya, Bhavaprakasika* and *Purushasukta Bhashya*. Of these, the second one is a commentary on Madhvacharya's *Mahbharat Tatparya-nirnaya*, while the third one is the Dvaita interpretation of the *Purushasukta* of the *Rigveda*. The Tikas are expositions on the works of the nature of Vyakhanas composed by Madhvacharya and Jayatirtha. The Kavyas include *Rukminisavijaya, Tirthaprabhanda*, and *Sarasā Bharati Vilasa*. *Rukminisavijaya*, has 1241 verses divided into 19 cantos and it displays all the Lakshanas of a Mahakavya. Its theme is the glory of lord Krishna from his birth to his marriage with Rukmini. Scholars have regarded this work as a Mahakavya of great literary merit. *Tirthaprabhanda* is a travelogue with beautiful descriptions of holy places, rivers and the like and as such is an unusual Sanskrit work. *Sarasā Bharati Vilasa* describes the Dvaita tenets, the supremacy of Vishnu, nature and function of Lakshmi, Vayu and others.

Apart from these works in Sanskrit, he has composed Kannada poems, which even today are popular among the devout Madhavas.

Vadiraja is known to have lived for about 120 years and passed away at Sonda itself, where his Brindavana even today commands the veneration of hosts of Madhvas.
Sri Gangadharendra Sarasvati, the 24th in the lineage of the pontiffs of Svarnavalli matha wrote a Sanskrit work called Jnana-dipika. It is a history of the Guruparampara of Svarnavalli matha in which several metres like Mattebhavikridita, Sardula Vikridita, Utpalamala etc. are used along with varieties of figures of speech to enhance its effectiveness. It was composed at the beginning of the 17th century.

In the history of Kannada literature the Svadi chief Immadi Sadasivarajendra’s name is memorable. Though a chief of the Sonda Nayaka family, he was gifted with poetic abilities. He composed as many as 18 works on a variety of subjects like Music, Dance, Chess, Devotion, etc. Till recently only his encyclopedic work Sadasiyaniti was known. Now a large number of other works have come to light. They may be classified as follows:

1. Devotional works.
2. Works on Games.
4. Encyclopedic works.

Sadasivaraya was a follower of the Virasaiva faith and as such his devotional works are related to God Siva. His Svaravachanagalu consists of 160 Vachanas tuned to various ragas. It furnishes some historical information particularly the genealogy of the family. Uluviya Mahatme is a praise of the greatness of Uluvi located in the Haliyal taluk of Uttara Kannada district. It is a sacred place for the Virasaivas. The work also incorporates poetic
descriptions of the incidents at Kalyana, murder of king Bijjala and the movement of the Virasaiva Saranas towards Ulavi. His other works of interest are Samasyapurna-Vritta-Kanda, Panchavimsati-lileya Ragale, Tripadi, Jogula padagalu, Kanda padyagalu, Chavadi Prabhulinga Devara Chavadi, Kuliya Ketayyagala Laksha, Mangalashtakagalu etc. Sadasivaraya's work on music and acting are particularly interesting. His Svaravachanagalu consisting of 3 long poems explains the nature and behaviour of classical Ragas like Kambodi, Sankarabhavaram, Kalyani, Saranga, Todi etc, thus being exclusively a work on music. Navarasa Jakkini is another work on music whose poems can be used for worshipping Goddess Parvati. Prabandha is a devotional work expressing devotion to Lord Siva in 35 poems with "Ragalapa" and Abhinaya.

Rayachaduranga-lakshana is the only work on chaduranga (the chess game) written by Sadasivaraya. It describes both in prose and poetry the method and technique of playing chess.

Sadasivaniti is an encyclopedic work consisting of 517 poems in different metres. It deals with various aspects of life like dharma, artha, kama and moksha.

A small work called Sri Sode Basavalingarayana Bhakti Chandrodaya consisting of consisting of 15 poems in the vardhaka shatpadi metre and one Kanda-padya at the end, has been recently brought to light. It was composed by Santabasavarajendra. Its theme is the account of the funeral of
Sadasivaraya, the father of Basavalingaraya. The poet was a disciple of Maleya Mallesa, the pontiff of the Hiriya matha of Banavasi. It seems to be a work of the latter half of 17th century or early part of 18th century A.D.

The work Called *Svaravachanagalu* by Marisanta Basavadeva consists of 78 *Vachanas* composed in classical ragas such as Kalyani, Kambodi, Kedaragoula, Bhairavi, Madhavi, Murari, Mohanakalyani, Yadukula Kambodi, Ragupiti etc. It is important also because it contains some historical information, like the passing away of Basavalingaraya.

**NOTES AND REFERENCES:**


11. CKI.No.4.


14. CKI. No. 28

15. CKI.No.1

16. CKI.No.4.

17. CKI.No.14.

18. CKI.No.23.


25. *Ibid*. 
26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.
