CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

PREAMBLE

In the religious history of India, the Buddhism and the Jainism were originated in India for opposing the vedic system which prevailed in the 6th century B.C.

The earliest evidence of Buddhism in South India with particular reference to Karnataka appears in the Mouryan Age from the edicts of Ashoka. The religion played vital role right from this period and continued up to end of 14th century AD. The history of Buddhism and its art in Karnataka is unique and significant. Attempt is made here to know the beginning and its development through their relics.

The spread of Buddhism can be proved by the existence of Buddhist remains like vihara, chaitya stupa. The Buddhist sculptures are evident in the sites like Banavasi, Chandravalli, Brahmagiri, Karle, Kanheri, Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda, Ajanta, Nasik, Junnar, Bhaja, Aihole, Kadri, Balligave, Torke, Kolivada, Indi, Lokapur, Rajaghatta, stupas, Chaityas and viharas are noticed in the above said places.

In due course of time, during the reign of the Kushana ruler Kanishka, Buddhism witnessed the split into Hinayana and Mahayana sects. The latter was very much influenced by the vedic system and incorporated the same into its fold.

These two sects were wide spread in India and abroad. This was extended to south India in general and Karnataka in particular, as
early as 3rd century B.C. during the period of Ashoka of the Mauryan dynasty. Later, it was vigorously developed during the period of the Satavahanas, Ikshvakus, Chutus.

**Conceptualization:**

The concept of Buddhism and its ideals were meant for the transformation of people's development and of individuals, physical, mental, spiritual and religious, Buddha means “The Enlightened one.”

R.C. Hiremath is of opinion that “Buddhism in Karnataka” is just an attempt to discuss Buddhism and its spread in different parts.

A Sundara, “Buddhist archaeological remains in Karnataka” is an special attempt of the sites in concern with Buddhism, they are; Chaityas, stupas, viharas and other sculptures.

Percy Brown, “Indian Architecture Buddhist and Hindu period”, tried to compare Buddhist and Hindu architecture with the culture and civilization of the people. Hence, Buddhism was developed religiously and socially for the benefit of the people.

**Nature of the study:**

This work is an attempt to study Buddhism in Karnataka that prevailed during the times of Mauryas, Satavahanas, Iksvakus and the Chutas. The rise of Buddhism assumed a new era in the history of India, during the period.

Ashoka followed the path of Dharma by adopting the principles and the morality of Buddhism. He tried to preserve the virtues of Buddhism by honouring Buddhism to a greater extent. He built many
Buddhist monasteries, stupas and Viharas. He inscribed the importance of Buddhism in his rock edicts. Buddhism stretched from India to various parts of South Asian countries and adopted by various dynasties like the Chalukyas, Hoysalas and pre-Satavahanas. The rulers of these empire devised many novel methods and effective system to meet the excellency of the time. The history of Buddhism and its art and architecture requires an indepth study of its cultural contributions and the social achievements which no doubt, attracted the attention of the scholars.

Buddhism in Karnataka has not been studied with special attention and exhaustively. Buddhism influenced not only the social and cultural life of the people but also the political and economic development. The excavated sites at Sannati, Rajaghatta, Donigudda etc. requires special attention to know more about them in detail.

The present research falls within the broad specialization of Buddhism in Karnataka. Religion has been an all pervasive and all powerful force holding the minds of men all over the world and at all times. It has been a motivating force and determining factor and shaping the history of human culture with all its manifestations like art, literature, values of life, ethics and polity.

It is well known fact that, religion without royal patronage had never survived and prospered. Religion and royalty were interwoven in each other in such a way that one had no existence without the other. It is in this context, the topic chosen for research viz., “Buddhism in
Karnataka with special reference to Art and Architecture assumes special significance.

The rise and the growth of Buddhism in Karnataka is a significance epoch in the annals of South Indian History, especially in the context for preservation and protection of the traditional values of life. The vedic institutions, heritage, customs and traditions and what ever a culture symbolizes against the onslaughts of vedic rituals.

The system of religion in Karnataka did not differ materially from that of the ancient times. The Mauryas and the Satavahanas were the patrons of religion. As the art of vedic sacrifices and the rituals became more complex, the necessity of a new religion was much more important to save the masses from the clutches and bondages of the Brahmins.

For the maturity and growth of religion, encouraging and patronizing was the urge and need of the hour. The rulers equally contributed for the vitality, vigour and growth of Buddhism. Consequently, Buddhism in Karnataka in particular and India in general opened a new avenues in the history of its religion.

Aims and objectives:

The present study is limited from the earliest period to the vijayanagara period up to 1336. To maintain the objectivity in the study, it was best to visit the Buddhist sites in Karnataka, Besides tracing the religion and its growth, aspects of chaityas, viharas, stupas, monasteries, rock cut caves aims at testing the following hypothesis and establishing the truth. There is belief that religion was
exclusively domain of the high class, especially the Brahmanas, this was believed by the people later and therefore it needs to be examined in the true spirit of religion and proper historical perspective secondly religion was considered as more superior than other and there was no scope for secularism.

Here. There is a need of testing the hypothesis thirdly, there is also a need for examining the co-relation between Buddhism and Brahminism on one hand and the developments of monuments, viharas and chaityas on the otherhand. Perhaps, the most important hypothesis in their context in Indian culture and its regional off shoots, is the idea that every facet of Indian culture and its regional offshoots had stemmed but of vedic foundation, without the understanding of which no comprehension of the former is possible.

The major problem that needs to be examined is as fallows.
1. was religion exclusively spiritual in nature?
2. whether Buddhism received equal patronage by all the rulers.
3. Whether Buddhist spread, roots and shoot only in India or it crossed the border?
4. What was the role of Buddhism in Karnataka and how far it progressed?
5. What was the role of chaityas and viharas?
6. What does the excavated sites reveal more about Buddhism etc?

The present study proposes to make a modest attempt at finding of some reasonable solutions in the content of the culture and historical background of religion in Karnataka.
The aim of developing religion was however to preserve its old culture. According to the requirement of the society and to revolutionize the social order, consequently, the religion existed during vedic could not win. The favour of the people could not succeed in preserving its aims and ideals, which opened new avenues in the history of its empire and there by unifying and reforming the whole society.

Justification for the study:

Earlier works:

The present thesis is one modest attempt at subjecting the above hypothesis to the acid testing. The rise and spread of Buddhism is noteworthy of its rich contributions, which led to the growth of great historiographical writings.

Ever since the “Buddhist culture” of Vasant Taltaje1 was carried out, it has been attracting the attention of history scholars. The more productive phase in the Karnataka historiography was found in three decades. Publication of few regional monographs and presentation of a few research papers, next in three decades in some special seminars and conferences. Again, there appeared a fresh interest in the subject during the last two decades, thanks to the lead taken by A Sundara, H.R. Raghunath Bhat, officers or Archeological survey of India others.

Dr. A. Sundara 2 excavated a site at Banavasi in 1972. By this he was able to draw the attention of the scholars towards this fascinating subject.
Varaprasad Rao and I.K. Sharma have taken great lead in deciphering the Buddhist inscriptions found at Sannati.

The early Chalukya Art written by Rajashekara, S. stresses most on the Buddhist sculptures, temples of Aihole and Jaina sculptures.

Recently, a site was excavated at Rajaghatta of Doddaballapur taluk of Bangalore dist. Vihara complex, monasteries and bath-buildings belongs to 3rd and 4th century, Buddhist votive stupas were found, apart from this a stucco Buddha image was found.

Again Kulkarni R.H. came across a two sculptures of Buddha Yaksha at Banavasi. It shows that Yaksha figures dated 3rd century B.C.

In the recent years M.S. Krishnamurthy has published a noteworthy research papers one on "Buddhism in Karnataka with special reference to Sannati. It throws some light on sculptures. Buddhas footprints, Bodhi trees.

Excavations conducted in various parts of Karnataka reveal the early historical antiquities. The excavations at Brahmagiri by M. wheeler, excavations at maski by I.K. Thaper, Excavations at Banavasi by M. Sheshadri and excavations at vadagaon Madhavapura by A. Sundara and B.K. Gururaja rao have thrown a flash of light on the early culture of Karnataka.

In 1954, the late Kapatral Krishna Rao of Gulbarga first noticed here an ancient site, with the numerous sculptures, some with
symbolically main episodes of Buddha's life such, as Vajrasana with Buddha pada under the Bodhivriksha, memorial panels and numerous Brahmi Inscriptions of 1st and 2nd C.A.D. therefore he is responsible for the notice of the Buddhist site first at Sannati.

The findings of sculptural evidences at Sannati by M. Sheshadri in early 1960 and subsequent excavations at Sannati by the Directorate of Archaeology in the last decade (1990's) have revealed the significant material pertaining to the early history of Karnataka.

Later, S. Nagaraj carried out the survey in Sannati area and brought out some more Buddhist remains. He noticed sculpture of Buddha, decorated pattike, inscriptions, fort bricks and ancient antiquaties. M.Sheshadri, during the course of his exploration in Gulbarga district, he explored sannati area and brought to light some more details of Buddhist remains at the place. The remains are a Stupa mound, a large number of broken sculptures, two inscribed Ayaka pillars, a slab with throne, the foot prints and the Bodhi tree, some inscriptions, pottery, beads, shell, bangle pieces, and a habitation site. He is dated them to circa 1st C to 3rd C. A.D.

P. B. Desai conducted the exploration in sannati after the discovery of the site by Kaptral Krishnarao in 1954 and the further exploration study of the site by Sheshadri in 1968 along with his staff members. The team has noticed some more facts and collected some new materials. Sannati to kanaginahalli to the extent of two miles in circumference, Buddhist remains are spread. They are destroyed stupa remains, inscribed slab on the upperside, Ayaka pillars, these
pillars are inserted in five directions which are considered as the symbols of five great incidents like his birth, renunciation, enlightenment, first sermon, Narvana, on these pillars figures of Buddhist followers and articles were sketched. He compared the Ayaka pillars to Nagarjundakonda, Yaksha figure to pitalhkhora and some decorative bands to Bharahut and other sites to Amaravavati and other places.

Sundara during the course of his “Some more noteworthy sculptures from sannati their implication” Exploration in Sannati region, he noticed some more sculptures at the place. He also has given the demarcation of the habitation site. The site measures about 200 hectares in area located on the leftbank of the river and within a brick fortification wall.

J.R. Howell and others had conducted the excavation on the north-east mound at Sannati jointly by the Hyderabad circle of A.S.I. and the society for the South Asian studies of the British Academy London.

K. Paddayya noticed Mesolithic site including the early historic site during his exploration. During the course of exploration C.S. Patil has collected a number of antiquities belonging to Paleolithic period and noticed some temples of the medieval period in the surrounding places like Sivala, Kolluru and Anabi.

In 1994-95 the officers of A.S.I. Bangalore circle again took up the excavation in the Kanaginahalli stupa mound. It was indeed a large scale excavation. They concentrated their excavation towards
east-west, south-east and south west of the stupa, which was partly exposed by them earlier. The excavation has shown offset entrance provided with chandrasila in the east-west and south of the stupa whereas the entrance in the western and southern sides are found the pedestal probably for installing Yaksha image.

Again the officers of the ASI, Bangalore circle conducted the excavation at the stupa site near Kanaginahalli and brought out the complete layout of the stupa and including its plan and elevation. It also shows many accessory structures like chaityas or votive stupas more then bricks on the periphery of the railing. They consisted an apsidal structure of brick on the south-eastern side, a butting the railing. Another is circular structure with four courses of bricks, on the south of western entrance of the stupa.

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The directorate of archaeology and museum in Karnataka had conducted excavation in Ranamandala area in two seasons of 1993-95 up to 1986 by A. Sundara. Their noticed dis-stone and the Roman pendant and an important circular medallion (i.e. disc-stones with the carrying on both sides. It contains the figures of palm trees, palm date and trees and in between them 3 standing nude goddesses flanked by horse, lion, elephant, deer, stage or ram. Below the feet are shown the fisheries, peacocks and flowers. He has pointed that the nude figure at the center could be a Buddhist Yakshi (?) and point out similar medallion found in nanda-Maurya region like vaishali, Rajagriha, sankisa and kousambhi of pre-satavahana.

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**Significance of the topic:**

Karnataka is well known abounds in epigraphical and sculptural wealth. Inscriptional records, belonging to the various periods are found in a large number. Buddhism was founded with wide objectives in protecting and preserving morality against the vedic culture. Ashoka protected Buddhism with a broad Shelter, protection, preserving and spreading religion was of great significance but for the ruler patronage for literature and learning of educational institutions could not have survived and flourished. The advent of Buddhism during 6th century B.C. not only extended the support and Shelter to the people but also at the same time was responsible for its existence.

The present study with historical perspective makes the research more fascinating and gives deep insight into the study of Buddhism in Karnataka with special reference to Art and Architecture.
Methodology:

In tracing the vicissitudes of a place like Karnataka and its culture one will have to be basically descriptive but this description will have to pass through antecedent stages, which foster the ideas which ultimately crystallise into a coherent description.

In perusing the present work two basic tools for research have been made use.

(a) Collection of published data

(b) Collection of field data.

The collection of published data consisted of both modern works on the subject as well as the ancient epigraphical records bearing on the history and culture of Buddhism in Karnataka, with special reference to Art and the Architecture. After collecting these datas, they are carefully analysed and interpreted in order to cut out worthy information, pertaining to the history and culture of Buddhism in Karnataka with special reference to art and architecture.

The technique of field work has been basically employed for purposes of the study of a subject, several visits were made to the Buddhist sites to make a detailed study. Kadagod, Kalya, Kadri, Sannati, Kapu, Koppal, 'Aihole, Badami, Balligavi, Togarsi, Haralakunte, Dambal, Vajjala, Harasagundgi, Kusnur, Javargi, Chikk Indi, Koliwada, Haigunda, Babruvada, Ankadakatte, in the field work, the author and the research guide have noticed a new Buddhist site at
Tunnur to make a detailed study. While, much of this field data has been used for reconstructing the artistic and architectural history. Thus here we have a blend of published a field data resulting in a descriptive account of Buddhism in Karnataka with special reference to Art and Architecture where in all important stages of research, such as the collection, analysis, interpretation and synthesis have been employed.
References:


2. Excavation Report of Banavasi – Published by Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi.


5. Krishnamurthy M.S. 2006, Buddhism In Karnataka with special reference to Sannathi, presented paper at Indian history congress at Hyderabad.


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