CHAPTER V

EDUCATION AND LITERATURE

The cultural quality and the intellectual temper of a nation are best reflected in its literature and educational system. Education plays the key role in the development of virtues, in the inculcation of practical values of life and also social order and progress.¹

The urge to survive made man inquisitive and taught him to rise above his brutal instincts first in the family under the power of patriarch, later in the village under the rule of headman and again in society under the bonds of customs and laws and this laid a gradual foundation for the beginning of conscious education.²

Education in ancient India was not regarded as the end in itself but only as a means to an end namely attainment of knowledge of the Absolute.³ Through out the ages in India the ultimate aim of life being mukti or emancipation, education was sought as the means of emancipation (ātma-gyāna).⁴ Indeed the cultural institutions of ancient India have been transmitted to posterity by a sound system of education and here we get an explanation as to why India and her heritage have survived.⁵ Religion practically dominated every sphere of national life and the sphere of education forms no exception.⁶
The educational system that existed elsewhere in Karnataka continued in Halasi region down the centuries irrespective of dynastic changes that ruled the land. Literary works, epigraphs and monuments shed welcome light on educational system as prevalent in the region.

The system of education was neither state controlled nor state directed although it was generously patronised by kings, noblemen, merchants and other philanthropists. State believed in the spontaneous growth of education. The establishment and control of the educational institutions by the state was not felt necessary as it was held the duty and privilege of every Brähmana to teach by virtue of certain standards of learning and merit of birth in certain family.7

During Rigvēdic and Later Vēdic age, high reverence was shown to learning.8 The gurukul system of education functioning as the school in ancient times, ignoring the vital difference between the individuals teaches them by classes and aim at mass production in education.9 Temple schools and colleges started by the early Hindus were the natural reaction to the Buddhist and Jaina monastic universities. The priests and śchāryas of the temples and mathas carried out the tradition of imparting education.10 Provision of primary education seems to have been existed in almost every village. The practice of supplying free land for the school teachers referred in the inscriptions as bālaśiksādharma or akkarigavṛitti was a wide spread
element in rural economy. The *vidyārambha* ceremony was performed at the commencement of primary education.\(^{11}\) Somēśvara III, the Kalyāṇa Chalukyan ruler observes that after the performance of the *upanayana* a prince should be taught *Vēdas* as well as sciences of weapons.\(^{12}\)

The elaborate scheme of higher education described in the *Smṛtis* for the three upper classes after the ‘thread ceremony’ is found in the commentaries of the period.\(^{13}\) Vijnānēśvara, the contemporary commentator describes at length the primary and higher education. He points out that celibate student should carry on begging.\(^{14}\) This was mainly to teach the pupil humility and to make him realise that it was due to the sympathy and help of society that he was learning the heritage of his race. It also helped to remove distinction between the poor and the rich and also to make society realise its responsibility about the education of the rising generation.\(^{15}\) Thus it may be inferred from the records that the students largely depended on the charity of the rich and the benevolent people who generously endowed the seats of learning. Especially the poor and the deserving students were supported to acquire knowledge and were supplied with food and clothing free of charge.

Contemporary literature-Sanskrit and Kannada shows the importance enjoyed by *guru* in Karnataka. Kannada poets had the practice to mention the names of their preceptors and generations of their preceptor
in their works. The function of the guru or the teacher was to lead the scholar from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge and to remove the lamp of learning concealed under the cover and let out light.

As education and religion were indistinguishable in ancient and medieval times all branches of education sprang from religious rituals and sacrifices. Religious establishments played an important part in intellectual, moral and religious education. Since teaching would be ideal in any serene place charged with holy atmosphere deemed to be an abode of god, temples were selected for imparting education to the students. Temples played remarkable role in making the life of the people meaningful and worthy by also acting as centers of education. Temple was the school where the children of the village learnt three Rs—viz., reading, writing and arithmetic.

Imparting education was not only the duty of the government in the region under study as was the case in rest of Karnataka. The government rendered financial assistance in times of need. It was the responsibility of the self-governing bodies to make arrangements for the education of the young. For this purpose they received grants and endowments. Some epigraphs testify that some times agrahāras were founded by the state but more grew by themselves. The learned Brahmin students from all quarters flocked to them to acquire knowledge at the feet of the teachers. In course
of time these establishments developed into educational centers of the first rank and they were granted all the privileges of the agrahāras, which were royal foundations. Inscriptions are silent about the origin of agrahāras though many of them speak of their patrons in the period of prosperity.

Education and literature were widespread in Halasi region is evident from the existence of numerous lithic records and copper plates. They attest to the high degree of literacy.

Little information is obtainable from the epigraphical records of the region about the centers of primary education. The temple priests in the villages (aiyyās or aigal) imparted primary education of reading, writing and arithmetic. He was also called akkariga. Primary education was in Kannada while higher education was in Sanskrit. It was known as bāla-sikṣā. After teaching the Kannada letters children were introduced to Kannada language.

The main centers of higher education were agrahāras, brahmapuris, ghaṭikas and the mathas attached to the temples. Agrahāra was a town by itself consisting of corporate Brahmin community whose profound scholarship attracted students from distant places. It was here that people of diverse classes and religions assembled. Here education of an advanced type was disseminated to all in different branches of human knowledge.
Funds were provided for the establishments of the teachers in a separate colony and for maintenance of the students. The *agrahāras* differed from *brahma puris* in that while former consisted of the whole village donated to the learned Brāhmaṇas by the king (or any of the chiefs) for conducting educational and religious activities the later was a mere Brahmin colony in the village. *Brahma puris* were centers of learning. They were located in villages or towns exclusively meant for the residence of Brāhmaṇas. There were *brahma puris* in the *agrahāras* of Hubli and Kanakapura as mentioned in the inscriptions of the places.19

It is interesting to learn from the record of Halasi region that the *agrahāra* of Kanakapura in Kundūr-500 was granted for the burning of incense in the temple of Sōmanātha of the *Saurāstravīśaya* by mahāmaṇḍalēśvara Jayakēśī II at the time of his marriage under the direction of his father-in-law Vikramāditya VI.20 The *agrahāra* henceforth became god’s *brahma puri*.21 Indeed this is a rare instance when an *agrahāra* was granted for some other purpose.

*Smṛiti* law contemplates students of upper classes as receiving higher education at the dwellings of Brahmin teachers.22 Generally situated at some distance from the city, villages were chosen for the *agrahāra* because of the pure and cheerful atmosphere, open and delightful spaces,
the smiling meadows, the shady groves and the green fields. This best explains why Kamaladevi, the Kadamba queen, chose Dégāon in the vicinity of Halasi as the site of agrahāra.\textsuperscript{23} However in course of time the agrahāra on account of its own importance and intercourse with the outside world grew into a flourishing city.

\textit{Agrahāra Kuppattūr} is described as an ornament to the ocean-girdled Kuntala country, ever filled with Brāhmaṇas, well versed in \textit{Vedas} and \textit{Śastras}.\textsuperscript{24} An early instance is the agrahāra of Tālagunda, which is said to have been founded by mythical Mukkaṇḍa Kadamba who brought 32 Brahmin families from \textit{Ahichhatra} (in present Bareilly) and settled them at Sīthānākundūr, where they taught people.\textsuperscript{25} Iṭṭagi near Khanapur was another important agrahāra under Kadambas of Goa the resident Brāhmaṇas of which were said to have been free from the defects of Kali age.\textsuperscript{26}

Besides advancement of learning in their kingdom, kings were swayed by prevalent belief that the establishment of agrahāra promoted the well being of the founder. The agrahāras were of different types like anādi-agrāhāra (Eleyapurvaḷḷi), Mahā-agrāhāra (Dēgāon), Sarva-agrāhāra (Haliya) and Dēvarahubbali).\textsuperscript{27} Agrahāras of Kanakur, Iṭṭagi, Amminabhāvi, Tambūr were also prominent.
Agrahāras consisted of corporate Brahmin communities who were called as the mahājanas. They managed the affairs connected with the agrahāra. The council of Vedic scholars was in course of time designated as the Mahājanas of agrahāra villages throughout the medieval period of Karnataka. Therefore mahājanas were the heads of the Brahmin families who enjoyed the benefits of agrahāra villages. The scholarship and religious awareness of the mahājanas was noteworthy. The following description of the mahājanas of Amminabhāvi agrahāra would apply to any mahājanas. Yama-Niyama-Svadhyāya-Dhyāna-Dhāraṇa-Mauna-Anuṣṭhāna-Pūrāṇa-Japa-Samādhi-Śīlasampannam.

The Brahmin donees of the agrahāras were often described in inscriptions as being zealous in discharging their six fold scriptural duties or Satkarma-yajana (performance and supervision of sacrifices), adhyayana (study), adhyāpana (instruction specially of the Vēdas), dāna (making gifts) and pratigraha (receiving gifts).

It appears from such description that society looked those who were learned and righteous, with great respect.

Though agrahāras were generally interpreted as the Brahmin settlements, not all the people lived there were Brähmanas. There were other people as well, belonging to different castes and communities and
following various professions but the property rights over those villages doubtlessly rested with Brahmin donees only.\textsuperscript{29}

The corporate Brahmin communities of the \textit{agrahāras} administered the affairs connected with its management. There are few inscriptional evidences to show that in \textit{Halasinnāḍu mahājanas} accepted and donated the gifts by sitting in assemblies or \textit{mahāsabhās}. The \textit{mahājanas} of Amminabhāvi were present when Chandikabbe donated land to a choultry.\textsuperscript{30} \textit{Mahājanas} used to take the consent of other groups when they offered grants to the deity. E.g., Brahmānas of Eleyapurbaḷḷi in \textit{Halsināḍu} gave grants to god Saṃnīgēśvara with the consent of \textit{Kurimba-sēnīgas} of Navalūr.\textsuperscript{31} A unique fact of the \textit{mahājanas} donating to the \textit{Jaina basadi} appears in the Managundi inscription.\textsuperscript{32} The whole village occupied by the Brāhmaṇa as was the property of the \textit{agrahāra}. This is manifested from an inscription, which says Mailāḷadevi before making grant of land to \textit{Jaina matha} at the \textit{agrahāra} of Kuppattūr, bought the land at this village from the Brāhmaṇas.

The assembly being executive body also preformed certain civic functions as well. These probably included arranging religious discourses and philosophical discussions, celebration of religious festivals,
maintenance of charitable institutions and reading of the *Purāṇas* and *Vedas* in the assemblies.

Endowments of properties that were made from time to time by the kings came directly under the control of *agrahāra* authorities. Soldiers and tax-collectors were forbidden to encroach on them or exercise any jurisdiction.33

Reference may be made here to *bhattavṛtti* often occurred in the inscriptions, which relate to the grant of land given to learned Brahmin teachers. It was not merely a stipend for study but also for teaching. It was not only a reward for learning but also remuneration for giving instructions and for carrying on religious and cultural activities.

There are inscriptional evidences of endowments made by the state as well as private individuals with a view to promote and facilitate the cause of education. Kēśavadeva in 1158 AD granted land for teaching three *Vedas*, *vyākaraṇa*, *prabhākara*, *Vedānta* and the like in the *agrahāra* of Tālagunda.34

The queen of Śivachitta was known for the infusion of learning among the subjects. She made grants to teach subjects such as *Veda*, *Vedāṇga*, *Nyāya*, *Mīmāṃsa*, *Yoga*, *Smṛiti*, *Itiḥāsa*, and *Purāṇas* besides the
best system of astronomy to the agrahāra of Dēgāon. The following table gives some idea of these endowments.

Table-I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 bhaṭṭopadhyāyas</td>
<td>1 share each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 bhaṭṭopadhyāyas</td>
<td>$\frac{3}{4}^\text{th}$ share each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 bhaṭṭopadhyāyas</td>
<td>$\frac{3}{4}^\text{th}$ share each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God Śrī Kesava</td>
<td>5 shares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God Śrī Kamala-Narayana</td>
<td>5 shares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goddess Śrī Mahalakṣmi</td>
<td>3 shares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining hall (for the expenses)</td>
<td>$3\frac{3}{4}^\text{th}$ shares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the right of (?)</td>
<td>3 shares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For explaining śāstras</td>
<td>1 share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rigveda</td>
<td>$\frac{3}{4}^\text{th}$ share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yajurveda</td>
<td>$\frac{3}{4}^\text{th}$ share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balasikṣa (teaching children)</td>
<td>$\frac{1}{2}$ share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking place and a place for fire</td>
<td>$\frac{1}{2}$ share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For teaching Ghatikādhyāya</td>
<td>10 nivartanas and 388 kamma in rice field, 10 nirvartanas and 500 kamma in a field yielding grains, two nivartanas and 720 kamma in a field fit for betel plants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the tank</td>
<td>9 nivartanas and 422 kamma in rice field and 8 nivartanas and 424 kamma in a field yielding grain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For each share</td>
<td>A field measured by cow’s hide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narasimhabhaṭṭopadhyāya</td>
<td>$1\frac{1}{8}^\text{th}$ share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isvarabhaṭṭopadhyāya</td>
<td>$1\frac{1}{8}^\text{th}$ share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>50 shares</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The curriculum of the study was very vast, which included both sacred and secular subjects. Inscriptions discuss at length various subjects of study taught in the _agrahāras_. Great care was taken to pronounce the _Vedic_ hymns correctly to begin with. Detailed study of the _Vedas_ was the next step. Besides, subjects like grammar, logic, astrology, astronomy, drama, polity, dancing and the languages including Kannada were taught.

Subjects taught in the _agrahāras_ of Halasi region included _sakala_ _Veda, Vedaṅga_, astronomy, _Nyāya, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Smṛti, Itihāsa, Purāṇas, Parajyotisya, Arthaśāstra, Jainasiddhānta, Śabdānuśāsana, sankhyaśāstra, alankāraśāstra_, authors like Patañjali, Chāṇakya and _Śukra_, _vādyā, gītā, nṛtya, and nāṭaka._

_Agrahāras_ promoted a healthy spirit of academic discussions, religious disputations and philosophical discourses and thus acted as a pleasant diversion from the monotony of the ordinary teaching routine.

_Ghaṭikāsthāna_, also called _ghaṭika_ was another important centre of higher education. Earliest epigraphical reference to _ghaṭika_ is in the Tālagunda inscription. Rice considers _ghaṭika_ as the chief place of the assembly of Brahmaṇas. According to Sircar it means the settlement of learned men founded by the kings.
Those who distinguished themselves in scholarly disputations and discourses were called *ghatika-sahas*. There is no reference to the existence of *ghatikas* in the epigraphs of the region.

*Matha* was another educational establishment that played an important role in the cultural life of the people. It was a typical Indian monastery with monks, ascetics and students living within its precincts. *Mathas* were invariably attached to the temples. Founding of a monastery for teachers and pupils does not appear to have been an ancient practice in India. The ascetics were required by the *śāstras* not to possess any property and not to stay long in any one place. Therefore people built shelters to accommodate them when they visited their towns, which were known as the *mathas*. *Mathas* were free boarding houses where students and the ascetics were provided with food and the clothes free of charge. Kings, wealthy and philanthropic citizens gave rich endowments to the *mathas* for their maintenance.

Both the *mathas* and temples through the centuries have been supplementary to each other, both catering to the religious and spiritual wants of the people. In the *mathas* students lived and received instructions both religious and secular and were attached to the temples.
In Kadamba mandala there were pañcamathas dedicated to Śiva, Viṣṇu, Brahma, Jina and Buddha respectively.\textsuperscript{50} Mathas came into existence from 1000 AD and belonged to Śaiva ascetics of Kālāmukha cult. In Halasi region there were probably many mathas as evident from the number of Śaiva temples and the Kālāmukha ascetics referred in the inscriptions.

Adult education was provided throughout the region by making endowments to temples for the recitation and exposition of the epics and purāṇas. The performance of dance, music and drama in temples like the one at Mugad enabled the people to develop a sense of appreciation of arts.\textsuperscript{51} Technical education was mostly imparted in the homes of the craftsmen and their well-organised guilds safeguarded the prestige and efficiency of the respective professions. The construction activity of numerous monuments must have given ample scope for the discovery of fresh talents besides the application of known abilities.

Thus the educational activity indeed served as the basis of the intellectual and moral culture of Halasi region as also its progress.
Language and literature

The cultural quality and temper of a nation can be gauged to a great extent by its literature. Literature besides revealing the thoughts of the time also reflects hopes and aspirations of the people.

Rulers of Karnataka belonging to different dynasties gave patronage to learning, literature and scholarship. There were reputed poets in Kings’ courts. Kadamba rulers of the region being themselves great scholars patronised many men of letters in their courts. For instance Halasi inscription of Harivarma attributes that his father Ravivarma supported holy and learned people with the wealth amassed by just means. Degaon inscription describes the streets of Jayakēśi’s capital as completely filled with the palanquins of his pandits. From this it is evident that the scholars of great repute resided in the region. One of the epithets of King Vijayāditya was Sarasvatibhusana, which speaks of his scholarship.

Sanskrit and Prākrit were undoubtedly the earliest languages in which literature poured out and received royal patronage. Earliest example of Prākrit writer was that of Hāla, the author of Gāthāsaptasati, which probably was the compilation of freely circulating gathas amongst the people. That Sanskrit was the popular language is evident from number of Sanskrit inscriptions dotted in the Kadamba maṇḍala including Halasi
region. Kannada for the first time was lucky enough to enjoy kingly attention under the early Kadambas.

Kings, generals, administrators, nobles, feudatories and other well placed in the society gave patronage to the learned writers and poets. Gōlīhaljī inscription describes Bāgapadaḍaṇanātha, chief minister of Permaṇideva as Kavīṇḍraprakāśa.55

That Prākrit language enjoyed popularity among the royal and learned classes of the society under the Kadambas is evident from the Prākrit inscription of the pre-Kadamba period in Karnataka. Even the brahmādēya grants and the performance of Vedic sacrifices are recorded in Prākrit language.

The Brahminical origin of the Kadambas and probably the southern invasion of Samudragupta in 4th century AD might have influenced the introduction of Sanskrit as the official language replacing Prākrit. The very first inscription viz. Chandavallī inscription is in Sanskrit (this inscription earlier was believed to be in Prākrit but its restudy has revealed that it is in Sanskrit).56 Of the seventeen stone inscriptions of the early Kadambas nearly thirteen, are in Sanskrit. Literary activities of the region must have had a fresh momentum with the introduction of Sanskrit as the official language. It is obvious from the fact that the works of even the non-
Brahminic creeds like Jainism and Buddhism were written in Sanskrit in spite of the fact that their canonical literature was in Pāli or Ardhamāgadhi.57

Poet Nāgavarmāchārya is the author of Chandrachūḍāmaṇi in Kannada. He held ministerial post under Udayāditya, the governor of Banavāsī. He also seems to have been the poet who composed the Halasi inscription of Śivachitta.58

Kālidāsa is said to have visited the court of Kuntala king identified as Kadamba Kākusthavarma as a Gupta emissary where upon he wrote Kuntalēśvarādautyaṁ.59

The epigraphs fill up the lacunae and make good for whatever is not available from the literary side in the form of regular compositions. The literary flavour was not lacking is evident from the galaxy of poets who were the composers of inscriptions of great literary merit. Though the purpose of the epigraphs was not to create literature but to record events, the aesthetic sense of the writers of the epigraphs have gained literary characteristics. The example of kāvyā style of Kadamba inscriptions is best depicted in Taḷāgunda inscription composed by Kubja and Guḍnāpur inscription of Ravivarma.60
Kannada language, the regional language of the people slowly took the place of importance in the ruling class. The earliest Kannada inscription is the Halmidi stone inscription. Its invocatory part is in Sanskrit and rest in Kannada. Numerous Sanskrit words had entered into usage in Kannada. Halmidi inscription sheds considerable light on the early stages of Kannada language, revealing at the same time the profound influence of Sanskrit on Kannada. Thrust of the local language was too much to be ignored. Gradually Kannada took over as the language of the inscriptions as they were to be read and understood by the common people. Numerous inscriptions, which are of considerable poetic merit, are encountered in Halasi region under the Kadambas of Goa. These inscriptions are mainly in Kannada and are noted for great literary merit. They are both in prose and poetry. The handwriting was careful, well formed and stylish. Sometimes decorative floral designs are drawn in the beginning and the end. They present an interesting reading and one is taken unaware by the style, imagination, diction and musical cadence and is enraptured in going through them. During this period inscriptions took to poetic style. There flourished several poets who were the composers of inscriptions that are mostly in Champu style. The *mula-satpadi* and the *ragale*, the metrical forms that are rare in epigraphs appear in the epigraphs of Halasi region. The term *satpadi* significantly appears in Amminabhāvi inscription.
few inscriptions give the names of their composers. The following poets are noticed in the records of Kadambas of Goa pertaining to Halasi region:

- Chandrasūri of Gaṇadēvi inscription

- Nagārjunapāṇḍita of Mugad inscription (1125AD)

- Chaundoja of Gudikatte inscription (1052AD)

- Vyavahārapatrakavi Viśvarūpa of Ittagi inscription (1062AD)

- Madhusūdanasūri of Halasi inscription (1169AD)

- Yajñēśvarasūri of Halasi inscription (1172AD)

- Govindasūri of Dēgāon inscription (1174AD)

- Gaṅgādharasūri of Kirihalasige plates (1199AD)

Another outstanding feature of the Kannada literature of this period is the vachanas, which literally mean prose language. Vachanas depict high philosophical ideas to the common man and point out socio-religious evils along with the stressed importance of devotion to one god Śiva. Though we do not get direct references to the composition of vachanas from the region under study, it is obvious that Vīraśaiva saints like Allamaprabhu, Siddharāma, Ekāntadarāmayya who were the great composers of vachanas had visited the kingdom of the Kadambas.
The linguistic and structural traits of Kannada language were marked for their beauty, sound and expressiveness. The epigraphs of the region bear testimony to this.

Thus literature registered progress not in volumes but in variety and content.
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4. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
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27. Leela Shantakumari, Agrahāras in Karnataka, Madras, 1986, p.120.
36. *Ibid*.
37. *Ibid*.
55. *KI*, Vol. V, No.64.
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64. *Ibid*, No.2.
70. *Ibid*.