Chapter 6

Grāmadevatās- Visual Study from
Art Historical Perspective
(Selected examples from Bangalore Rural district)
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The main focus of this chapter is to make a detailed study on the selected grāmadevatā sculptures prevailing in Bangalore Rural district. The term 'visual study' from art historical perspective may be perceived as one of the important schemes where the art object is studied or analyzed by means of visual observation. It includes the study of general characteristics of the grāmadevatā images as well as the specific iconographic features of the selected examples from various regions of Bangalore Rural district. The various facets of this study such as methodology adopted while studying the sculptures, the general features and attributes of the grāmadevatā, the stylistic study and the symbolism of the grāmadevatā images are studied in this chapter under various sub headings.

Methodology

The study of the grāmadevatā images is mainly based on the data collected and observations made during extensive field visits to the villages of Bangalore Rural district. The data collected during the field visits was further corroborated and properly documented in tabular format and stored in the form of cards for easy reference while structuring the thesis. The details collected about the temples and the icons are as follows:

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<th>Sl. No</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Name of the temple</td>
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<td>Other Temples/Shrines</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>Other observations</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Other observations</td>
<td>Special features</td>
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Table 6.1: Sample card showing the details collected about the grāmadevatās and the temples during field visits by the author.
| 1 | Library/ Ref No. | Quotes |
| 2 | Title of the Book | Text details |
| 3 | Author | Special information |
| 4 | Publisher | Grants |
| 5 | Year of Publication | Inscriptions |
| 6 | Edition | Places/Temples |
| 7 | Illustration | Bibliography |
| 8 | Plates | Index |

**Table 6.2: Sample card showing the details collected during library visits from literary sources to support the data collected.**

The visual studies in the context of the grāmadevatās are studied with specific examples from Bangalore Rural district. The formal study and the stylistic aspects being religious in nature developed in the artistic idiom are studied. The stylistic as well as the aesthetic study throws light on the artistic expression which varied from region to region in Bangalore Rural district. The representations of the grāmadevatās in myth and in visual art helped in conceptual understanding of the grāmadevatā cult. Local variations, elaborations and fusions undoubtedly had characterized the evolution of her new forms and names.

Colourful and horrifying, the images are laden with imagery, symbolism, and dynamism. The corporeal form of grāmadevatās as guardian deities is a departure point for thinking about the Hindu ideas of space, sanctity and protection. Though the grāmadevatā images is merely one motif in a multitude of Hindu religious art, the present study shows that it is distinct in that it articulates many of the significant ideas that are incorporated into temples of Bangalore Rural district.

Early images of the grāmadevatās were coarse and rough. They betray bold turns of rustic imagination. Often only the head is delineated and the torso is left merely a stump to be draped with garments and adorned by necklaces; there would be no arms and legs. Later, when the impact of stylized iconography was felt, the full human figure was represented. Wood was the material commonly employed, and the carving was rough. It was usual for arms to be attached later. There was no distinction as yet between the permanent and fixed image in the sanctum and the processional image. The same image
in the sanctum was also carried about. Sometimes huge clay images were also made and richly painted over; they were immovable and small wooden replicas were used for processions. The early images fitting these descriptions are very rarely worshiped. They have been replaced with huge stone sculptures. Several villages have retained the old images that are placed with the new sculptures and worshiped. The wooden images are worn out and mutilated; replicas of the same are being produced and worshiped at the grāmādevatā temples in Bangalore Rural district.

Whatever the material the image was made of, the aspect was carefully rendered awesome and terrible. The idea was not that she was cruel, but that she was looked upon as the protectress from all evil, ailment, danger and death. She should frighten away the hordes of misfortune and disease, and the enemies. She is represented as trampling over the enemy or the personified evil, and wielding a sword to subjugate the undesirable elements. She rides on a lion and vanquishes the wild buffalo imagined as a demon. She brooks no slackness in the observances that the tribal law prescribes, and she can strike the erring devotee as severely as she does the offending enemy. Few villages in Bangalore Rural district represent their grāmādevatās rendering them awesome and terrible. For example the addition of the projecting teeth exhibits her terrible side. Few sculptures show her benign aspects and are rendered as 'Devi'. At few villages she no longer seems awesome and terrible; she is rendered beautiful smiling at her devotees with affection.

In Indian archaeology, “iconography is normally understood as the science of the attributes of the gods or as the system of these attributes”. This definition is suited to our present purpose; provided “attribute” denotes every element which in a particular case, one figure from another or one class of persons from another. Iconography is a symbolical system of communication. By the word “symbolical” the epic compositions are excluded and by the word “communication” decorative compositions are excluded. The attributes in regard to this study, represents the powerful aspects of the grāmādevatās. To illustrate her as a protector, she needs to be equipped with powerful weapons. The attributes exhibit her strength, giving a sense of protection to her devotees.

“Iconographic” differences are those which involves a difference in the identity of the figures on which they appear. The differences in the representation or the elements which make up the difference are called “iconographic”. “Non iconographic” is the difference between a chakra and a lotus if these elements are represented beneath
different figures. The present study has made an attempt to analyze the iconographic and non iconographic aspects from the selected examples of Bangalore Rural district. The sculptures of the grāmadevātās at Bangalore Rural district are mostly the creations of local artists. The folk artists have used their knowledge and imagination while carving out the sculptures. The early sculptures can be said to be reminiscences of pure folk creation. Most probably with the exposure and interaction with classical traditions, the artists were influenced and tried to assimilate elements in their art. A variety of depictions can be seen from the selected examples of the grāmadevātās of Bangalore Rural district.

Iconography deals with all the elements which are relevant to the distinction of figures. Indian iconography has been described as a symbolical system of communication. At the same time it is also understood that the forms (represented by the monuments) as well as the contents (represented by the texts) are subject to change. A reduction of distinctions takes place in more or less the same form on both sides. The forms as observed in the grāmadevātā images varies, while some are represented by stone mounds, anthills, kalashas, trees etc., some are represented by sculptures that exhibit trends in artistic evolutions.

The fact that artistic and literary transformations are of the same type and often becomes difficult to distinguish between the two. This would not be true if it could be shown that the artistic transformations met aesthetic requirements. But there can be little doubt that Indian iconography is ancilla theologiae and that the artists are in principle loyal to the dogma. It is often observed that the minutest details are rendered carefully for the sake of correctness, even at the risk of marring the beauty of composition. At the same time many changes are introduced which offers no aesthetic advantage and which are comparable to the literary transformations. It is therefore on the whole more appropriate to call the artists the colleagues of theologians than to construe an antagonism between aesthetics and dogmatics. The opinion is midway between the two extreme views of those who regards the artist as a mere copyist (translating mythology into stone) and of those who consider him a rebel who uses mythology as suitable material but feels no obligation to represent it correctly. It has to be understood that most of the grāmadevātā images are the work of the local folk artists who have tried their best to bring out all the aspects of the cult in the image. It probably was to render her without any aesthetic concerns and portray her as protector and to do so, it was necessary to showcase her terrible side. In the initial stages of representations, only the facial features have been delineated followed with the additions of arms and legs. Later on with the influence of the classical traditions
additions on her attributes, posture, weapons were taken care of. The development from crude rudimentary stone images to refined artistic sculptures can be witnessed from the selected examples of the grāmādevatās in Bangalore Rural district.

It is also hard to explain the artistic transformations as resulting from ignorance. In the case of late medieval and modern art it is difficult to decide whether an incorrect representation reflects sheer ignorance or a particular type of transformation. But in earlier times the artists may have been familiar with the iconographic tradition. Forms which migrate from one country (culture) to another are likely to be used for more than one motif. But such changes in the meaning do not disarrange the various iconographic systems to which the forms belong. Forms which are similar or identical express different ideas that cannot be confused as long as they belong to different iconographic systems. The systems are only affected by internal changes. The artistic transformations of the grāmādevatā images found in Bangalore Rural district probably suggests the skill of the folk artists trying to imbibe the essence of the cult in their work of art. It also probably seems that the artists attempted to adopt and transform the images influenced by the traditional iconographic system. A stage of experimentation to show case the grāmādevatās in the late medieval period can be witnessed in these examples. Some of the examples also display that the folk artist has tried to achieve perfection in creating the images of the grāmādevatās in Bangalore Rural district. The transformation from simple representations to aesthetic representations could be witnessed in the selected images of the grāmādevatās in Bangalore Rural district.

The selected images were analyzed through the following factors: Association, Conventionalism and Variation. The classification is descriptive and has not taken into account the factors that produced the phenomena.

Association is the tendency to connect to different ideas or forms and it should be understood in a positive sense and in a negative sense. Association in the negative sense is found in art only. Conventionalism is the same “type” is used for different motifs, which may be represented independently or collectively is conventionalism. The ubiquity of certain standard elements can also be regarded as conventionalism. Variation is understood as a tendency towards modification of the arrangement, size, number and shape of the elements. This type of variation changes the iconography radically, while other variations (concerning the cast of drapery, the ponderation etc) have no effect upon the characterization of the figures. Variation causes dissimilation as well as assimilation;
The selected examples of the grāmadevatās in Bangalore Rural district have been studied through these factors.

This research attempts to conduct a general investigation of the grāmadevatās of Bangalore Rural district. During the course of this research a number of sculptures were documented and the author has divided these into various categories of wooden images, stone sculptures, clay and mortar sculptures, brass and silver mukhavadas and conical stones. At few places the grāmadevatā sculptures were fully decorated and photography was prohibited. Few examples of the grāmadevatā sculptures with visible features are analyzed in this chapter.

A format in analysing the sculptures is followed. The Rupa (form) of the grāmadevatās of Bangalore Rural district exhibits a variety. They exhibit the saumya rupa (pleasant appearance) as well as raudra rupa (hideous appearance). The mukha (face) contains eyes, nose, mouth and head with hair also as one of the significant iconographic traits. In sculptures the grāmadevatās are identified on the basis of their mukha. For example Mārāmamma appears with a normal human face, the ferocious look being represented with protruding teeth and she also is represented with pleasant look and protruding teeth.

The grāmadevatās are represented with two, four hands at villages of Bangalore Rural district. Most of the early sculptures are represented without hands. The mudras relates to the hand gestures. The grāmadevatās are usually shown with the abhaya (fearlessness) and the varada¹⁰ (boon bestowing) mudras. The ayudhas are very important iconographic traits in analyzing the sculpture. The ayudhas represented by the folk artists attained more decorative patterns with the evolution of the artistic traditions that can be witnessed in the sculptures of the grāmadevatās of Bangalore Rural district. The common ayudhas represented in the grāmadevatā sculptures are the trishula, khadga, damaru and the patra. If the grāmadevatā is represented with four hands, then all the ayudhas are present, and if represented with two hands, usually the trishula and the patra or the khadga and the patra are depicted.

The grāmadevatās are represented wearing the kirita which are mostly conical in shape. They are also depicted in different postures in lalitasana, padmasana, utkutika¹¹ etc and in standing postures. The abhushanas (ornaments) of the grāmadevatās are minimal. They are represented wearing the hara,¹² kundala,¹³ valaya and the padasara. As the artistic tradition evolved, we can witness the inclusion of keyura,¹⁴ katibandha¹⁵ etc. A few sculptures are depicted with the mundamala.¹⁶
This Thesis has made an attempt to bring out the different aspects in the visual study of the grāmadevatās of Bangalore Rural district from an art historical perspective. Several interesting sculptures were documented by the author during field visits and interesting observations were made on specific sculptures taluk wise.

**Fig 6.3 Representation of Grāmadevatās**

The above chart indicates the representations of the grāmadevatās that are categorized into symbolic, aniconic and iconic representations. The chart is formulated on the available images found in Bangalore Rural district. The representations of the grāmadevatās in symbolic forms are one of the characteristics of the grāmadevatā cult in Bangalore Rural district. The representations witnessed tremendous changes from aniconic to iconic bringing out the forms from the rudimentary stages to aesthetic sculptures at Bangalore Rural district.

**Stone Sculptures**

Stone sculptures of the grāmadevatās of Bangalore Rural district display a variety of artistic traditions. It exhibits the development from the rudimentary to the refined stages showcasing artistic workmanship. The interaction with the classical forms and its influence on the folk artists can be witnessed in the selected examples taken for this study.
Channapatna Taluk

Grāmadevatās Chowdeshwari and Māramma sculptures from Bevoorū are interesting from an art historical perspective. Both the sculptures display different artistic traditions. While one displays the initial stages of development, the other shows refinement in work.

Bevoorū Chowdeshwari: The Chowdeshwari sculpture from Bevoorū enshrined inside the garbhagriha is approximately 7.5 to 8 feet in height (PL-186). The sculpture is interesting because of its height. Grāmadevatā Chowdeshwari is in a seated posture in the lalitasana, with four hands carrying the trishula, khadga, damaru and the patra and is flanked by two guardians on either side. The hand carrying the patra rests on the hood of a snake. The decorative prabhavali has floral motifs with the kirtimukha.17 The deity is ornamented and the drapery is shown in incised lines. The goddess wears a kirtīta and a five hooded serpent hood is visible.

Other Observations and Notes

Though the sculpture is huge, her pleasant appearance surrenders the devotee in devotion. The goddess looks as though she is alive and in action, prepared to take care of her devotees.

Beooru Māramma: Grāmadevatā Māramma of Beooru is a small sculpture represented without hands; the goddess is depicted wearing ornaments and the kirtīta. Another sculpture of a head placed next to Māramma smeared with turmeric and vermilion is also worshiped (PL-187).

Other Observations and Notes

The earlier representations of the goddess with only the head can be seen all over Bangalore Rural district. The village was considered to be her body. The main sculpture most probably would have been installed later and could be considered as the next stage of representation with the addition of ornaments etc.

Doddanahalli Māramma: Doddanahalli Māramma's sculpture is believed to be very old.18 The deity is in a seated posture on a raised pedestal holding the trishula, khadga, damaru and the patra (PL-188). The prabhavali is decorative with the five hooded serpent. Māramma is represented wearing a necklace and the kucchabandha19 can be clearly seen.
The ferocious aspect in the grāmadevātā is shown by the artist through the agnikesha which is sculpted aesthetically.

**Other Observations and Notes**

The sculpture of grāmadevātā Māramma of Doddanahalli probably suggests the evolution in the artistic trait. From the rudimentary stage, a change in the representation of the image can be witnessed. The inclusion of facial features, ornaments and the kirita shows the development of the imagery in the representations of the grāmadevātās of Bangalore Rural district.

**H. Mogenahalli Māramma:** H Mogenahalli Māramma is approximately 1.5 feet in height. The sculpture is installed on a raised platform. The sculpture without hands wears a kirita and looks composed (PL-189). Most of the early grāmadevātā sculptures are represented without hands.

**Other Observations and Notes**

The artist most probably has tried to bring out the feminine characteristics by sculpting the breasts and also has tried to introduce the element of drapery with incised lines. The assimilation of other characteristics brings out the stages of development as witnessed from this sculpture.

**Kannasandra Māramma:** Māramma of Kannasandra is a new sculpture. Seated on a raised plain pedestal in lalitasana, holding the trishula, khadga, damaru and the patra, she is ornamented with haras, valaya and the padasara. The prabhavali is decorative with scroll work, floral patterns and motifs. The flow of the drapery falls on the pedestal (PL-190).

**Other Observations and Notes**

The sculpture looks very recent, depicting Māramma as Devi. All the attributes of the classical deity is given to the grāmadevātā elevating her status to a universal mother.

**Muniyappanadoddi Māramma:** Muniyappanadoddi Māramma is a black stone sculpture, seated on a pedestal in lalitasana, holding the trishula, khadga, damaru and the patra. Another image of Māramma is placed below the pedestal. Māramma is shown in a light drapery, with little ornamentation (PL-191). The prabhavali is sculpted with floral motifs.
**Other Observations and Notes**

The sculptor has tried to bring out the ferocious aspect of the deity in the sculpture. Māramma sculpture placed below the main deity is depicted wearing a kirita and with very less ornamentation. Both the sculptures suggest the work of a folk artist trying to bring in all the iconographic traits of a classical sculpture to the grāmādevatā image.

**Munkunda Māramma:** Munkunda Māramma is approximately 3 feet in height, in a standing posture, holding the trishula, khadga, damaru and the patra on a plain pedestal (PL-192). The sculpture with its beautiful drapery brings out the aesthetic elements and suggests the influence of classical forms.

**Other Observations and Notes**

The folds in the drapery display the skill of the sculptor. The prabhavali with its design goes aesthetically well with the sculpture of Māramma. Little ornamentation can be observed in the sculpture; the artist has attempted to portray the character of the deity. The deity looks as though she is all set to perform her duty of guarding the village. The halo which is attached to the sculpture suggests that a new prabhavali has been sculpted to the existing sculpture.

**Santhemoogenahalli Māramma:** Santhemoogenahalli Māramma sculpture is kept in a house due to the renovation of the temple. The sculpture is approximately 4.5 feet in height. The stone is greyish black in colour and displays a bit of glaze because of the constant smearing of oil. The sculpture of a male deity placed next to Māramma is believed to be her guardian. The grāmādevatā is in a standing posture holding the trishula, khadga, damaru and the patra with a seven hooded serpent over the head. The prabhavali is visible and looks attached to the image.

**Other Observations and Notes**

The drapery is interesting as the sculptor has aesthetically introduced an element of design in it. The ornamentation is also interesting with the hara, valaya, katibandha, the long mundamala and the padasara. The sculptor has tried to bring out the ferocious aspect of the deity (PL-193) by placing the mundamala. The influence of the iconographical aspects of a classical deity can be witnessed in this sculpture.
Devanahalli Taluk

Channarayapattana Sollapuradamma, Karagadamma and Bandi Mankalamma: Channarayapattana’s Sollapuradamma, Karagadamma and Bandi Mankalamma sculptures are enshrined inside the garbhagriha. Grāmadevata Sollapuradamma sculpture is in a seated posture installed on a raised pedestal (PL-194, 195, 196). She holds the trishula, khadga, damaru and the patra and wears a kirita. She wears ornaments such as haras, kucchabandha and the paddeda. The drapery falls on the pedestal in a rhythmic fashion. The prabhavali with the kirtimukha can be seen. She looks composed and ready to bless her devotees. The sculpture is interesting with the relief work of the guardian holding the dagger and the shield.

Other Observations and Notes

The Bandi Mankalamma and the Karagadamma sculptures are also sculpted in the same manner with slight changes in the design of the prabhavali. The design is very interesting; the guardian is sculpted as though he is wearing the armor. All the three sculptures are sculpted in the same manner with slight changes in the design of the prabhavalis most probably to make the identification easier. The workmanship displays the skill of a trained sculptor.

Doddagollahalli Chowdeshwari: Doddagollahalli Chowdeshwari temple has three sculptures enshrined inside the garbhagriha. The temple is under renovation. The Chowdeshwari sculpture placed in the middle is approximately 2.5 feet in height (PL-197). She is seated on a pedestal holding the trishula, khadga, damaru and the patra and wears a kirita. She wears ornaments like haras, kucchabandha and the paddeda. The prabhavali is sculpted with the kirtimukha. The other sculpture next to Chowdeshwari worshiped as her sister is also sculpted the same way with a little difference in the height. The interesting aspect in this temple is the Bhairava sculpture placed next to grāmadevata Chowdeshwari. The Bhairava image is approximately 1.5 feet in height. The Bhairava is holding the khadga and the patra and is depicted with the agnikesa. His vahana is also visible.

Other Observations and Notes

The presence of the Bhairava sculpture suggests the association of the grāmadevataś with Shiva. Most of the grāmadevata ś temples can be seen with the Linga in the garbhagriha worshiped along with the grāmadevata.
**Doddaballapura Taluk**

**Chilenahalli Māramma:** Chilenahalli Māramma sculpture is placed along with seven stones of uneven size that are smeared with turmeric and vermillion. The sculpture of Māramma which is approximately 1 foot in height is in a standing posture with two hands holding the khadga and the patra. Except for the kucchabandha no other ornaments are clearly visible (PL-198).

**Other Observations and Notes**

The lion behind the goddess which is not clearly visible suggests that the sculptor has probably tried to depict her as goddess Durga. The incised lines suggest the folds of the drapery and are clearly visible. As the sculpture has been buried inside the ground, other features are not visible.

**Shiravara Sappalamma:** Shiravara Sappalamma is placed inside the garbhagriibha. The deity in relief is in a standing posture but the image is buried inside the ground. The artist has portrayed the deity with ayudhas and abharanas like the hara, valaya, kiritā and the kucchabandha which are visible. The goddess has a pleasant appearance (PL-199).

**Other Observations and Notes**

The sculptor has tried to bring the characteristics of the grāmadevata in this sculpture. The extension to her right side suggests that the sculptor has tried to place her vahana but cannot be clearly seen because of its present condition. The presence of the seven stones of uneven size can be related to the concept of the Saptamātrikās in the folk realm worshiped as Yelumandya (Seven Mothers). The presence of flowers, turmeric and vermillion indicates the regular worship conducted to these deities.

**Hoskote Taluk**

**Kaju Hosahalli Māramma:** Māramma sculpture at Kaju Hosahalli is an interesting sculpture in relief. Māramma is in standing posture wearing the kiritā and holding the ayudhas in her four hands which are not clearly visible because of its condition. The deity is represented in a simple manner with less ornamentation and is represented without drapery. She stands on the horns of the buffalo. The placement of the hands looks out of proportion and suggests the work of the local sculptor (PL-200).
Other Observations and Notes

The sculpture probably belongs to an earlier period and represents Durga or Mahishasuramardini. The sculptors have represented the demon Mahishasura in a symbolic form. The sculpture probably belongs to Ganga period on stylistic grounds. The Ganga sculptors represented Durga with either eight or four hands, standing on a buffalo, having the abhaya, chakra, shanka and the katihasta. These sculptures were installed near the tanks or river beds.20 The people of Kaju Hosahalli relate the sculpture with the mythology of Māramma as she stands on the buffalo and worship her with devotion.

Kamarasanahalli Sappallamma: Kamarasanahalli Sappallamma sculpture is enshrined in the garbhagriha placed on a square platform. The deity is in lalitasana holding the trishula, khadga, damaru and the patra (PL-201). She wears the haras, kucchabandha, padasara and the kirita. The prabhavali is plain with the kirtimukha.

Other Observations and Notes

The sculpture is depicted with three heads placed below her and her right leg rests on one of the head. The sculptor has tried to symbolize the destruction of the evil in the sculpture. Assimilation of elements by the artists to bring out the aspects of the grāmādevatā can be witnessed from this sculpture.

Kurubarahalli Doddamma: Kurubarahalli Doddamma is a free standing sculpture holding the trishula, khadga, damaru and the patra and wearing a kirita. The sculpture is without the prabhavali. The deity looks composed as though trying to relieve the devotee of his distress (PL-202).

Other Observations and Notes

All the ayudhas and the abharanas are brought out aesthetically well in the sculpture. It also suggests the work of the folk artist probably trying to merge his skills and the influence from the classical cults.

Muthkur Māramma: The grāmādevatā is carved in relief, holding the trishula, khadga, damaru and the patra. The sculptor has not used the iconometry but has tried to bring out the concept of the grāmādevatās in relief by placing the deity on the head of the buffalo. The ayudhas are not clearly visible as they are adorned with garland and smeared with turmeric and vermilion (PL-203).
Other Observations and Notes

Muthkur Māramma sculpture looks slightly crude but the sculptor has attempted to bring the concept and essence of the grāmadevatās in an aesthetic manner. The relief probably suggests the development of imagery of the grāmadevatās of Bangalore Rural district. From crude stones to representations with the additions of facial features and the representation in relief suggest the development in the imagery as witnessed from this sculpture.

Narayanakere Dodda Māramma: Narayanakere Dodda Māramma sculpture is a latest sculpture. She is in lalitasana seated on a high plain pedestal holding the trishula, khadga, damaru and the patra. The ayudhas are beautifully sculpted. The abhushanas like the hara, valaya, padasara are beautifully decorated. The kucchabandha is absent. She is sculpted wearing a kirita (PL-204).

Other Observations and Notes

Most of the contemporary sculptures of the grāmadevatās are being made at Shivarpattana (Kolar district, Malur taluk). The sculptors follow the traditional system and methods in preparing these sculptures. They adhere to the iconography of the Devi in sculpting Māramma or any grāmadevatā images.

Kanakapura Taluk

Bandiganahalli Māramma: Bandiganahalli Māramma is a very interesting sculpture. The sculpture is heavily decorated, in a standing posture, holding the trishula, khadga, damaru and the patra. Her drapery is shown in ornamentation. Her abhushanas include the haras, kucchabandha, bahubandha, vyjayantimala, katibandha, padasaras with the kirita. The prabhavali with the kirtimukha is decorative (PL-205). The sculptor has aesthetically brought out the essence by portraying the face of the goddess in a contemplative way.

Other Observations and Notes

The placement of the patra in the lower left hand is interesting. Heavy ornamentation can be witnessed in this sculpture.
C.D Devarahalli Daityamma: C.D Devarahalli Daityamma is a latest sculpture. The deity is in lalitasana wearing the abhusanas and carrying the ayudhas. The pedestal is also decorated. Her right foot rests on a pig (PL-206). The sculptor has tried to translate the mythology of Daityamma portraying her fierceness by representing her as an ugrarupi.

Other Observations and Notes

The draping of the sari in the contemporary sculptures matches with the drapery of Indian women.

C. D Devarahalli Devarahallamma: Devarahallamma of C. D Devarahalli is the sister of Daityamma but a shantarupi. The sculpture is approximately 6 feet in height. The deity is in a standing posture, holding the trishula, khadga, damaru and the patra. Her abhusanas includes the kundala, hara, keyura, bahubandha, padasaras with the kirta. The prabhavali is slightly decorative with the kalashas depicted on either side. The modeling of the face is soft; the sculptor has tried to portray the benign character of the goddess (PL-207).

Other Observations and Notes

The ornaments are very decorative and beautiful. The kucchabandha is absent. The drapery resembles a skirt and the upper part is left bare. The breast of the deity also have decorations. The artist has portrayed the goddess with projecting teeth. The sculptor might have tried to depict both aspects of benevolence as well as malevolence to portray the characteristics of the grámadevatā.

Magadi Taluk

Kote Māramma: Kote Māramma situated outside the fort is believed to have been installed by Magadi Kempegowda. The sculpture is in a seated posture holding the trishula, khadga, damaru and the patra and her right leg rests on a human head. She also wears a mundamala; the other abhushanas include kundals, haras, bahubandha, kucchabandha and the padasara. The kirta is also designed and a five hooded serpent can be seen over the kirta. The prabhavali is very decorative (PL-208).
**Other Observations and Notes**

The sculptor has aesthetically sculpted keeping the feminine and the divine aspects in mind. The ferocious attitude of the deity can also be witnessed in the sculpture. The decorative and rhythmic pleating of the sari that falls over the pedestal is beautiful and interesting.

**Grāmādevatā:** Another interesting sculpture from the same temple of Kote Māramma also worshiped as the grāmādevatā can be seen along with the Māramma sculpture. The deity in relief work is seated on a lion in lalitasana. Her upper right hand holds a khadga, the lower right hand is depicted in abhaya hasta, the upper left hand holds the damaru and the lower left hand holds the patra (PL-209).

**Other Observations and Notes**

The representation of the goddess suggests the work of a local artist. The khadga that she holds in her upper right hand looks more like a dagger. The sculptor might have tried to represent Durga as she is seated on a lion. The relief work looks plain but it attracts the devotee with its subtleness. The artist has succeeded in bringing the essence of bhakti in this sculpture.

**Nelamangala Taluk**

**Binnamangala Maheshwaramma:** Binnamangala Maheshwaramma is a new sculpture. The deity is in a seated posture. A stone mound is placed next to her. She holds the trishula, khadga, damaru and the patra. Her ornaments are not seen as she is draped and decorated with flowers (PL-210).

**Other Observations and Notes**

The five hooded serpent, the representation of the agnikesa, the presence of the stone mound suggests the characteristic of her cult. The stone mound is provided with artificial eyes and nose.

**Boremaranahalli Maramma:** Boremaranahalli Maramma is a new sculpture. The deity in a seated posture holds the trishula, khadga, damaru and the patra (PL-211).
Other Observations and Notes

The stone mound placed in front of the sculpture suggests its undiminished character. Though new sculptures are installed, the old stone mound has not lost its importance, purity and lustre and is worshiped all over Bangalore Rural district.

Mallapura Durgamma: Mallapura Durgamma is a new sculpture. The deity is installed on a raised pedestal. She is in a seated posture and holds the ayudhas (PL-212).

Other Observations and Notes

The sculptor has represented her as Durga. She is portrayed with her right hand holding the damaru and the trishula and her left hand holds the sanka and the patra. The agnikesa brings out the ferocious attitude; prabhavali has not been provided. The deity looks in compassion at her devotees. The later sculptures of the grámadevatas at Bangalore Rural district are represented as Durga or as any classical Devi.

Ramanagara Taluk

Archakarahalli Patlladdamma: Archakarahalli Patlladdamma sculpture is very interesting and sculpted beautifully. The deity is in a seated posture in padmasana. A linga is placed next to it. She is seated on a decorative pedestal and is approximately 4 feet in height. The prabhavali with the kirtimukha is also decorative. She holds the gada in both her hands and the other hands are in the abhaya and the varada mudras. She wears the haras, valayas, katibandha, kucchabandha and the yajnopavita (PL-213).

Other Observations and Notes

The interesting aspect of this grámadevatas is that she holds the gada in both the hands and the other hands are in the abhaya and the varada mudras. The presence of yajnopavita is also interesting. The height of the kirti looks lengthy, embedded with designs. The drapery that falls over the pedestal is appealing as it balances with the costume. The sculptor has aesthetically succeeded in providing an element of devotion in the sculpture.

Archakarahalli Māramma: Archakarahalli Māramma situated inside the village is as interesting as the Patlladdamma sculpture. The sculpture is approximately 4.5 feet in height. The deity is in a seated posture in lalitasana, holding the trishula, khadga, damaru and the patra. Her hand holding the patra rests on a human head. She wears the
abhushanas like the kundalas, haras, bhujabanda, valaya, katibandha and an elongated kirita. Her right leg rests on a human head. The prabhavali which is sculpted along with the deity has a kirtimukha and looks plain (PL-214).

**Other Observations and Notes**

The face looks as though the goddess is in contemplation but her ferocious aspect is shown by her projecting teeth. The sculptor has balanced the element of devotion as well as her malevolent attitude in this sculpture. The incised lines on the pedestal suggest the drapery of the deity. The sculpture looks interesting with the depiction of the feminine characteristics and also divinity balanced aesthetically well by the sculptor. The floral pattern of the ear rings of the deity balances with her other abhusanas.

**Bannikuppe Mayamma:** The temple of Bannikuppe Mayamma enshrines two sculptures worshipped regularly. Mayamma in relief work is approximately 4.5 feet in height and the other sculpture a conical black stone exhibits crude workmanship. Mayamma is in a standing posture, the ayudhas or the abharanas are not visible. The placement of the hands is interesting. The drapery is shown in incised lines. The kirita can be clearly seen (PL-215).

**Other Observations and Notes**

The relief also suggests that the deity has taken the responsibility of guarding the village. The folk artist has tried to put the concept and the essence in his work without adhering to any standards of iconography. This sculpture suggests to the fact that the artist is only concerned to translate the concept of the grāmadevătā in his relief work. A silver ornament (vibhuți) placed over the forehead of the grāmadevătā suggest that the worshipers of the deity belongs to the lingayat community.

**Chennelahalli Māramma:** Chennelahalli Māramma is in relief work, depicted in a standing posture holding the trishula, khadga, damaru and the patra. Māramma's ornaments are decorative and the drapery is shown in incised lines (PL-216).

**Other Observations and Notes**

The deity is in samapada posture and is carved slightly in high relief.

**Mayaganahalli Māramma:** Mayaganahalli Māramma is an interesting sculpture. The deity is in seated posture on a decorative pedestal; the prabhavali with the kirtimukha
balances well with the sculpture. The deity adorns the decorated kirita and wears the haras and the paddasara. A thick decorative kucchabandha covers her breasts. She is holding the trishula, khadga, damaru and the patra (PL-217).

Other Observations and Notes

The artist probably is influenced by the classical style. The asana is suggestive of utkutikasana as represented in the matrika sculptures.

**Rangarayanadoddi Māramma:** Rangarayanadoddi Māramma is in a standing posture. The sculpture in relief looks like the work of a local artist. Māramma is sculpted adorning a kirita and wears the hara and paddasara. The drapery looks interesting (PL-218).

Other Observations and Notes

The sculpture looks very interesting. The closed eyes, the depiction of the hands and the ayudhas not only suggests the work of a folk artist but also reveals the merger of influences on these sculptures. The sculpture on close observation creates a feeling of fear as well of devotion, both being the characteristics of the grāmādevatā cult.

The images from the selected examples of the grāmādevatās of Bangalore Rural district display a variety of experiments and bring out the development in the imagery of the grāmādevatā sculptures. Irrespective of the folk artist who probably tried to merge the classical elements or whether he represented according to his style, every image from the selected example is interesting and has a style and intensity of its own displaying the spiritual and the devotional aspects and trying to portray the grāmādevatās as their ultimate Mother who takes care of them and protects the village from diseases.

**Brass Masks**

The Brass masks of the grāmādevatās of Bangalore Rural district display a variety in styles. The masks are usually donated by the devotees as votive offerings to the grāmādevatās.

The mask of Māramma at Bydarahalli (Channapatana Tq) is adorned with kirita and the ornaments. Māramma looks smiling at her devotees and assures them of her protection. The mask with the brass prabhavali depicts devotion (PL-219) and is sculpted
beautifully. Doddanahalli Māramma’s (Channapatana Tq) masks are slightly bigger. The two masks of the sisters are adorned with ornaments (PL-220). The two brass plates of H. Mogenahalli Māramma (Channapatana Tq) are represented in a seated posture. The other plates (PL-221) show variety in designs and are depicted in their satvika gunas. The devotees donate these plates after the fulfilment of their wishes.²⁸

The Devanahalli Kote Māramma brass plates are believed to be very old.²⁹ The grāmadevatā is in a seated posture holding the trishula, khadga, damaru and the patra (PL-222). The brass plate portrays the mythology of Māramma. The beheaded figure suggests the triumph of the good over the evil.

The brass plates of the grāmadevatās from Hoskote, Kanakapura show variety in styles (PL-223, 224, 225). The brass plates of the grāmadevatās from Magadi are stylistically different. The grāmadevatā from Hosadoddi has a decorative kirtita and the ornaments are highlighted. Her satvika guna is depicted (PL-226). The brass plate of Yenegere grāmadevatā is shown with protruding teeth, displaying the benevolent as well as the malevolent characteristics of the grāmadevatā (PL-227).

The brass plates from Nelamangala also display variety in the depiction of the grāmadevatās. Aralasandra Māramma with a decorated kirtita is represented with a brass prabhavali. A brass plate is kept behind to represent the halo. The prabhavali is designed with the kirtimukha; swans are incorporated in the design. The brass relief from Hydalu is interesting. It looks very decorative with the attached prabhavali and the decorative kirtimukha. The deity in a seated posture adorned with the haras, kuchabandha, padarasas, holding the trishula, khadga, damaru and the patra. The sun and the moon are sculpted to show her divine presence from the beginning to the end. Over all the brass relief is decorative (PL-228). The other brass plates from Kenchanapura, Mandigere, Mylanahalli and Vadakunte (PL-229, 230) are decorative.

**Metal Sculptures**

The grāmadevatā sculptures in Bangalore Rural district represent her as a Devi. The metal sculptures are either made from brass or bronze.³⁰ These sculptures are either donated by the devotees or got custom made by the authorities of the temple. The sculptures are worshiped with the stone sculptures and are placed in the garbhagriha. Procession images are also made of bronze at few villages in Bangalore Rural district. The sculptures are very interesting.
The brass sculptures of Channamaregowdanaadoddi Māramma (Ramanagara Tq) looks interesting (PL.-231). The presence of the projecting teeth does not bring out the fierce aspect in the deity. The deity looks as though in meditation contemplating the safety of her devotees. The design of the kundala (ear ornaments) is fascinating.

The idol of Bandimahankalamma from Ramanagara believed to be three hundred years old is interesting. The sculpture of Bandimahankalamma is in a seated posture in lalitasana. She is adorned with kirtita, haras, valaya, katibandha and the padasara. The placement of the ayudhas is very interesting in this sculpture. The upper right hand of the deity holds the damaru, the lower right hand holds the khadga and the upper left hand holds trishula and the lower left hand holds the patra (PL.-232). Usually it is observed that the upper right hand holds the trishula and the upper left hand holds the damaru in almost all the sculptures of the grāmadevatās. Another interesting aspect is the buffalo shown on the pedestal in a crumbled position which is a rare depiction among the brass sculptures found at Bangalore Rural district.

Most of the brass sculptures of the grāmadevatās are usually depicted seated on a horse and are shown as though they are galloping on their vahana (PL.-233, 234). They are adorned with ornaments and are draped in a sari wearing the kirtita and holding the trishula, khadga, damaru and the patra.

**Clay and Mortar Sculptures**

Most of the early grāmadevatā sculptures were made from clay as the folks believed that it is sacred to use Mother Earth to make an image of the Mother. Throughout the world Earth was identified with women in all stages of culture. The fecundity of Earth was taken to be equal to that of women. The worship of Mother Goddess 'from time immemorial' is 'deep-rooted and ubiquitous' in India. Therefore it could be noticed that the early images were made from clay. Later with the introduction of mortar, the images were made using the material. The strength and the longevity made mortar the much preferred material for the grāmadevatā sculptures in Bangalore Rural district. The lengthy relief work, brilliant colour and the decorative scroll work in the mortar idols of the grāmadevatās are the characteristics that capture the attention of the devotees. Most of the idols are painted in red as it symbolizes sacredness and is associated with the grāmadevatās. Mortar is used for permanent sculptures and clay is used to prepare the idols of the grāmadevatās during the jātras all over Bangalore Rural district.
This thesis has made an attempt to document some of the grāmadevatā sculptures which may be unavailable for later studies.

Channapatna Tq

The grāmadevatā sculptures from this region in villages like Kannasandra etc are made from mortar and are painted. All the characteristics are sculpted beautifully to bring the aura of devotion. Various colours are employed by the artist, mostly shades of red, green and yellow to bring in the concept of malevolence and benevolence. Udasallamma of Kannasandra is approximately 6 feet in height, in a seated posture with her leg resting on a head. The grāmadevatā holds the trishula in her upper right and left hand made of metal and studded with red and white stones. The lower left and right hands hold the khadga and the patra; she is depicted with a five hooded serpent (PL-235).

Devanahalli Tq

The grāmadevatā sculptures from Kundana and Matabarlu are painted colourfully. Plaugeamma from Kundana is approximately 7 feet in height, in a seated posture on an elevated platform. The deity is sculpted with the prabhavali having the kirtimukha, painted colorfully with different designs. The artist has also embedded glass pieces to blend in the material and the design. The deity holds the trishula and the damaru in the upper hands. The lower hands hold the patra (PL-236).

The grāmadevatā of Matabarlu is a new sculpture and is approximately 9 feet in height. The deity is in a seated posture and is painted in vivid colours. Her prabhavali and kirtita are very decorative. The artist has aesthetically sculpted the deity and has used lot of decorative motifs resembling folk art (PL-237).

Other Observations and Notes

Usually the lower right hand is not sculpted with the khadga. The artist leaves a space so that during the āṭras or special occasions a metal khadga is placed and worshiped.

Doddaballapura Tq

Sugallamma sculpture of Bashettihalli is in a seated posture. She is portrayed in mild colours and looks smiling at the devotee. The artist has given a peaceful appearance to the deity as she is worshiped as the protector of the children (PL-238).
Cheelenahalli Māramma is approximately 2 feet in height painted in red and silver colours. She is in a seated posture with all the ayudhas. Gowdanahalli Sollapuradamamma is around 5 feet in height. The deity is in a seated posture with all the ayudhas and her right leg rests on a human head. She is depicted with projecting teeth. The artist has also provided two female figures on either side of the deity (PL-239). Palanajogihalli Maheshwararamma is in a seated posture on an elevated platform. She holds all the ayudhas and the lower hands holding the ayudhas rests on a demon's head while her right leg also rests on the demon's head. The sculpture resembles the work of a folk artist in the portrayal of the grāmādevatā and in the use of materials (PL-240). The artist has used glass pieces to decorate the prabhavali. Other villages like Shiravara, Talagavara, Koluru, Obedenahalli etc have the grāmādevatā sculptures of the same type worshiped by the people of the respective villages.

**Kanakapura Tq**

Hosagabbadi Mooguthamma also called as Māramma is in a seated posture. The artist has colourfully painted the sculpture. The ayudhas and the prabhavali are painted in silver colour while the kirta and the abhushanas are in gold colour. Her body is painted in red and is portrayed with projecting teeth. Her upper hand holds the trishula and the khadga. The artist has introduced few additions to the sculpture by resting the lower right hand holding the khadga on the demon's head and the lower left hand holding the patra on the hood of a snake (PL-241).

**Magadi Tq**

Many villages around Magadi have retained the old sculptures. Villages like Anikaranahalli (Māramma), (PL-242) Karagadahalli (Kalahatamma), (PL-243) Kuppemala (Patiladdamma), (PL-244) Machohalli (Ujjani Devi), (PL-245) Thagachaguppe (Gramadamma), (PL-246) Yenegere (Plagueamma) etc worship the old idols.

Karagadahalli Kalaghatamma is represented with her two sisters. She is decorated in the folk manner with folk motifs and other materials like glass etc. The upper right and left hand holding the ayudha rests on the demons head and the lower right and left hand on the hoods of the serpent. Her right leg rests on a human figure in a kneeling posture holding a dagger represented with blood dripping out of it. Somas are placed on either side. The artist has portrayed the mythology of the grāmādevatā by bringing all the elements in the sculpture.
Kuppemala Patlladdamma is shown as though she is seated on a lion. She is portrayed with the other two deities on either side. The artist has tried to portray the grāmādevatā as the Devi. Yenegere Plagueamma is in a seated posture with her right leg on the buffalo's head. The artist has tried to depict the mythology of the goddess in this sculpture.

NelamangalaTq

Villages like Bardipalya (Māramma), (PL-247) Doodabale (Gramadamma), (PL-248) Hasiruhalli (Gramadamma), (PL-249) Kenchanapura (Gramadamma), (PL-250) Mallarbanavadi (Māramma), (PL-251) Mandigere (Māramma), (PL-252) etc., have their grāmādevatās sculpted massively. The artist has used bright colours and decorated the sculptures with various motifs. The backgrounds in these sculptures are also painted with landscapes and curtains. Most probably the artist with his imagination has painted the whole concept by introducing modern elements in the sculpture.

Hoskote and Ramanagara taluks

Most of the villages around Hoskote and Ramanagara taluks have replaced the old sculptures with stone sculptures. People believe that it is their duty to develop the temple and is a way of showing their gratitude towards the grāmādevatā for the favors received. The belief that by contributing to either install a sculpture or build the temple would improve their condition and the deity in turn would protect and bless them can be found among the ardent worshipers of Bangalore Rural district.

Conical Stones

The grāmādevatās are usually represented by aniconic stones of various sizes and shapes. The conical shaped stones are considered sacred and are revered as the grāmādevatās. The conical stones are usually installed either at the entrance of the villages or at the middle of the village and are left open in the field or sometimes enshrined in temples. Taluks of Devanahalli and Hoskote have more conical stones worshiped as the grāmādevatās than the other taluks. The conical stones measure about 2 feet to 7 feet in length with or without crude carvings on them. They are installed as the grāmādevatās for the protection of the village from diseases and are called as Māramma, Bisal Māramma, Gramadamma etc.

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The conical stones can be seen at villages of Bettanahalli, K. Hosur, Bommavara etc (Devanahalli Tq). Bettanahalli Mārama is placed inside the village and is around 2 feet in height with crude carvings. She guards and protects the village and the villagers in turn worship her with offerings of curds, curd rice etc. Sacrifices are also performed after the fulfilment of their vows (PL-253). K. Hosur Mārama is situated inside the field and is about 6 feet in height with crude carvings on the stone. The lower part is left uncarved while the upper part which sharpens at the edges indicates a kīrīta. The face of the deity is smeared with turmeric and vermilion to clearly bring out the facial features (PL-254). Bommavara Mārama is a lengthy stone of about 6 feet in height smeared with turmeric and vermilion.

The conical stones at the villages of Archalli, Bylahalli, Handenahalli, Muthkur, Thindlu, Muthsandra, Yenagondanahalli etc., (Hoskote Tq) are enshrined in temples and few are placed in the open without enclosures. Arehalli Mārama and Sappallama are enshrined in a temple. The conical stones having crude carvings are draped in sarees (PL-255). Bylahalli grāmādevatās are installed in an open field and are called as rakshana devatas. The three deities are roughly carved with the upper part tapering and with visible facial features. The villagers worship them as they are believed protect them from diseases and disasters (PL-256). Handenahalli Bisal Mārama is situated at the entrance of the village and is installed on a raised platform. The villagers believe that the three idols belong to a very earlier period (PL-257). All the three idols have visible facial features. They are represented with ornaments. The third idol is represented with protruding teeth. Muthkur Mārama is also situated at the entrance of the village and regular worships are conducted for the grāmādevatā. The idol is a crude figure smeared with turmeric and vermilion (PL-258). Muthsandra Mārama is situated inside the village. The deity is carved crudely and the ferocious aspect is highlighted (PL-259). Thindlu Mārama is enshrined inside the temple (PL-260). The sculpture is crudely carved and bears resemblance with Handenahalli Mārama. Yadagondanahalli Mārama is a lengthy conical stone placed at the side of the road and is smeared with turmeric and vermilion and worshiped (PL-261).

The conical stone sculptures found in the taluks of Bangalore Rural district suggest the persistence of the primitive form of worship in these parts. They are given importance during the festivals and jātras and are worshiped.
Wooden Sculptures

Most of the early grāmādevatā sculptures in Karnataka were made from wood which have later been replaced with materials like stone and mortar. The sculptures were made by people belonging to the carpenter community. Light wood was preferred for the carving. At many taluks of Bangalore Rural district the worship of the old wooden sculptures can be witnessed. Villages like Kelegere, Moledoodi, Mylanayakanahalli etc., (Channapatana Tq) have retained the wooden sculptures of the grāmādevatās. Kelegere Māramma is approximately 2 feet in height in a standing posture. The drapery of the sari is shown by incised lines and she is represented wearing the ornaments. Her right hand is in the abhaya mudra and in her left hand she holds a bowl (PL-262). The artist has tried to portray the grāmādevatā with the attributes of a devi. Moledodi Māramma is around 1.5 feet in height and painted. Mylanakanahalli grāmādevatā is approximately 2 feet in height and has crude carvings on it (PL-263). The grāmādevatā of Banavasi (Kanakapura Tq) is also a wooden sculpture which is approximately 4 feet in height. The deity is carved on a lengthy wooden log with only the facial features. The other sculpture from the same temple is approximately 5 feet in height (PL-264, 265). The artist has displayed his skill in carving the wooden sculpture. The grāmādevatā is represented with four hands having the ayudhas and is shown with the prabhavali. The kirtimukha is carved beautifully. The sculpture probably suggests that the artist has attempted to portray the grāmādevatā as a devi. The wooden sculpture of Chennelahalli (Ramanagara Tq) suggests the work of a folk artist. The carvings are very crude and the deity is shown in a standing position. The carvings are not clear and the ayudhas are not clearly visible because of the condition of the sculpture (PL-266).

A variety of images as seen through the selected examples at Bangalore Rural district brings out the development of the imagery of the grāmādevatās. While few images display the tendency to adopt a strongly maternal attitude towards their worshipers, there are others in whom protective attitudes are portrayed. The grāmādevatās of Bangalore Rural district are autonomous and strong willed. They usually tend to act on their own without the reference to any male deity. Some like any normal human being tend to exhibit tendencies such as anger, stubbornness, and impatience, while others appear matured and balanced in their behavior. Many of the features help to establish the link between the grāmādevatās and the devotees by drawing the viewer in, irrelevant of the material that they are made from. However, for many Indian people, these various
goddesses are different manifestations of one great mysterious female divinity, which is referred to as the 'Mother Goddess.' The grāmādevatās are one of the different manifestations of the Mother Goddess worshiped widely among the masses of Bangalore Rural district.

Thus the grāmādevatās of Bangalore Rural district are the product of the interaction between urban influences and indigenous tradition. They are the result of syncretism, the fusion of diverse religious traditions. The grāmādevatās of Bangalore Rural district lend themselves to change because they are on the periphery, and are easily modified without affecting the core of the religion. However, if a religion seeks to remain connected with its people, it makes beautiful sense to put indigenous elements on the periphery because these are the deities who are familiar to the local populace and have helped in maintaining peace, health, happiness, joy and the integration in the life of the rural folks in Bangalore Rural district.
Reference and Notes

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