CHAPTER IX

INFERENCES

In the foregoing chapters a sincere attempt has been made to explain on the basis of sculptural sources. Hoysala period has been considered as the home of glorious culture. By observing the sculptures of this period, we can say that women enjoyed a high position in society.

Before ending “Women in Hoysala Sculptures: A Cultural Study (1000 – 1346 A.D.)”, some tentative conclusions arrived from our study may be given.

The chief merit of the Hoysala architecture and sculpture is that it elevated architecture to the level of a fine art by harmoniously combining sculpture into it.

The minute carvings which the Hoysala artists loved to create gave a new turn and dimension to the architecture and sculpture in South India. As they were bent upon achieving something original in the field of art, they did not imitate the lefty creations of the Cholas or the sand stone temples of the later Chalukyas. They chose the fine grained soap stone which determined the course of the Hoysala art.
Women played a dominant role during the said period. Queen Shantala, Queen Bommaladevi, Queen Padmaladevi, Queen Umadevi, Queen Ketaladevi, were distinguished administrators who took active part in the political affairs of the said period.

Queen Shantaladevi and Princess Hariyaladevi, were called as Saraswathi in fine arts.

The wives of many of the Hoysala generals and ministers were also well educated like Lakshmale, Gangarasi, Sitadevi and Bachaladevi. Women of the royalty spent their time and leisure in helping the kings in administering small territories and accompanying their husbands on tours visiting temples. Vishnuvardhana’s Queen Bommaladevi was managing a crown riding school and under her there was Ananthapala Sahani or trainer.

Women were considered competent to assume a responsible position during the said period. Chandavve was appointed as the manager of Kunjeswara temple at Hiriyuru. Ketaladevi, Queen of Ballala II was acting as the regent during the absence of the king Ballala II.
The girls during the said period were married quite early. Kanyadana was a popular marriage. Polygramy was the most common practice during the said period.

Different occupations has been in existence during the said period. Flower-garden making and flower selling was an important occupation during the said period. A variety of flowers and scented leaves were grown by the Malegaras. They lived in separate blocks called Malegara Keri. Malegaras were florists were well known for tieing flowers of various garlands costumes and ornaments. Bangle sellers was another important occupation during the said period. Selling of Bangles by individual vendours moving from one home to another and villages to villages with Balemallaras containing bangles of varieties of colours and sizes has been in practice during the said period. As wearing of bangles has been considered as auspicious token for the women folk. Bangles became an essential ornament to them. Hence certain families of bangle sellers took to manufacture and selling of bangles in the said period. Usually like the Malegaras, the Tambuligas were the betel growers and betel sellers during the said period. Their chief occupation was to cultivate betel leaf creepers in their respective gardens. Infact Betel leaves was a regular commercial crop during Hoysala period. Medas were another caste based on occupation that was carried on by both sexes of this period. Tailoring was another important occupation of
the said period. They were highly skilled in the art of making
dresses of different designs. Ghaltivalitis and Gandhigas was
another important occupation of men and women. Galas was
another occupation their routine life was to sell milk. Thus
different types of occupations were in existence during the
said period.

Festivals whether religious, social, royal and seasonal
have played an important part in the life of the people during
the said period. In fact giving grants to the festivals on many
occasions became an established custom in this period. Most
of the Jaina festivals were celebrated in Basadis. Shivarathri
was celebrated by the Saivates. Tirunal Tirunate Bhimand
Dvadasi, Indra Parva, was celebrated by the vaishnavas.
Coronation festival, Ikkikimba utsava was celebrated by the
Royal families during the said period.

The Hoysala State followed the policy of religious
tolerance, the Hoysalas extended equal royal patronage to all
religious so as to maintain religious harmony among the
people. The freedom of religion, worship and faith paved the
way for the people to follow the diverse faiths and to lead a life
in peace. Vinayaditya was the follower of Jainism. In the
beginning king Vishnuvardhana encouraged Jainism but later.
The concentrated more towards Vaishavism. Vishnuvardhan’s
senior queen Santala was staunch Jaina. King Narasimha
followed the footsteps of Vishnuvardhana. Ballala II was a staunch follower of saiva faith. Narasimha II and Someswara was a staunch saiva. Narasimha III was the follower of Jainism. Ramanatha a staunch Saivite. Ballala III was a Saivite. But, all the Hoysala kings followed the policy of religious tolerance and gave along with their queens liberal grants to all the religions.

Joint family was the practice of the day. Patriarchal society prevailed. The prosperity of the entire joint family was the normal theme of the prayer to god whenever religious ceremony took place.

The epigraphs which refer to the Mugila family of Gandanarayanasetti gave many garudas, Lenkis and Lenkas. They were known for their abilities in music and patronage to poets. They served the cause of the Hoysala expansion in the 12th and 13th century. They probably played a significant in the battle that ensured between the Hoysalas and the sevunas. At the same time they were the garudas of the Hoysals rulers. They served as loyal administrations in their capacity as Mahasamanthas and Mahaprabhus and put down the disloyal mandalikas of the empire. In short the Mugile family symbolized the valour and spirit of the Marital class of the time. Since they were bound by vow of death with their Hoysala masters and since death should come to them any
movement, their valour in the war-field was unmatched and unbound. The sense of sacrifice made them dashing warriors against the Hoysala enemies. We are fortunate to possess such precious epigraphs from Bachalliagrahara in K.R.pet taluk of Mandya district because they not only provide us an insight into the altruistic suicide of the garudas, but also into the specific services rendered them at military and administrative levels. The hereditary character of the cult may also be noted in this example.

In short the cult of garuda underlines a value system which had been natural outgrowth of a feudal warrior polity. The cult of garudas was unique custom of the Hoysala ruling elites. It demonstrated the supreme sense of loyalty and sacrifice to the paramount authority at Doraamudra. No doubt they constituted a very important pillar of Hoysala polity.

Lenkitis stood by their husband, looked after his needs etc., like the Garudas, Lenka’s Lenkitis also believed that their individual existence had no meaning after the death of her husband. They sacrificed their life once for all as they were bound by social values and love for the husband.

Suicide was obligatory and refuse to carry out this would be worse than the threat of death. Suicide is committed
because it is accepted by the society as the correct and right way of enhancing the family’s goals and values. The unimpressed loyalty of an obedient wife/wives to her husband was the goal and it had to be demonstrated through the termination of one’s own life after the death of her husband.

Women during the said period observed sahagamana form of sacrifice. Sahagamana literally means going to greater. It stands for the burning of the wife on the funeral pyre of her husband. The woman who burnt herself was called a sati. Those who did not perform Sahagamana were held in great dishonour, and their kindred shaved their heads and turned them away as disgraced and a shame to the families. The shaving of the head was meant as a punishment for those who violated the customary practice of committing sati during the Hoysala period. She could reach heaven by burning herself with her husband was now an added attraction. It should also be noted that the hoysala society never compelled her to cases of sati recorded appear to be voluntary.

Many Mahasatigals are a standing proof for the fact that women were equal to men in boldly welcoming death, and many joyfully embraced death as velevalis and mahasatigals. Velevali and sahagamana are the obverse and the reverse of the same goal. They stand for the self-sacrifice, one for the
sake of the master or mistress, the other for the husband. The sources for these two forms of voluntary sacrifice were gratitude, devotion, love and belief in the other world. Society expressed its appreciation of satis, honoured them through setting up mastikals and thus gave them and their families great prestige and esteem. Many a time divinity had been imposed on such mastikals. Even today in some villages, the tradition of worshipping such mastikals in continued.

Voluntary self-sacrifices practiced by the followers of Jainism only, was the rite of sallekhana, the most popular variety of death by Samadhi. Sallekhana is a sacred act undertaken for the sake of dharma. From the standpoint of dharma, sallekhana is resorted to for two purposes. One is the protection of ancient dharma of one’s own community which one has accepted and adopted. Another is the realization of one’s own self-Atmiya dharma. A person can achieve fulfillment of his life only through the proper observance of his dharma. That sacrifice is sallekhana, the person who takes up this vow would give up food and all types of company, always think about his karmas and repent, ceaselessly meditate and pray to the supreme being to grant the boon of salvation. All the while he would be sacrificing his body. According to Jaina faith, a person’s happiness or sorrows in the next birth depend upon and are shaped by the emotions that dominate in him at the time of his death. This is a great penance which can lead
the person to the fount of everlastings bliss. Sallekhana was observed by the persons of all social categories attest to the popularity of this vow among the people who upheld aloft the spiritual value enunciated by Jainism.

In Karnataka society, heroism was a highly significant social value like sacrifice and renunciation. These two were the social values in ancient and medieval period. From the beginning, the people of Karnataka were noted for their bravery and valour. When the thieves fell upon the villages for the sole purpose of plundering them the people themselves took up the responsibility of protecting themselves, their property and their villages by counter attacking the thieves and driving them out at great risk to their own lives.

Henious attempts were also made frequently to outrage the modesty of women. Such anti-social acts used to take place generally after the war, when the victor, while plundering the land of the vanquished, used to molest women also. At that time no self-respecting person could keep quiet. He tried to protect them till his death. The most frequently recorded event in the inscriptions was the cattleraid. The living tradition of India is to regard cows as sacred and also as wealth. They were both spiritual and economic wealth. When one group sole the cattle, the loser group regarded it as its sacred duty to recoverheroic values. We also find bravemen
who sacrificed their lives by participating in the border disputes during the hoysala period under study.

Thus, self-sacrifices in the said period was very popular. Garuda system, Velevali, Jolavali, Lenkavali, Lenkas, Siditale, Sallekhana and Sahagamana were different forms of sacrifices prevalent during the Hoysala period. Women-Garudas has been identified in sculptures.

The photographic illustrations so far described have the characteristic features of classical touch in representing dance movements. The theme, many a time, is connected with mythological stories. The costumes and jewellery were refined and suitable to the theme and character. Apart from such dance forms, we also come across with several sculptures on the walls of temples connected to the themes and sequences such as hunting, holi scene, stick dancing, group dancing, mixed dancing etc. An entertaining dance recital of today has classical items in the beginning and while concluding, few items of the above said nature are added. The Idea is to entertain all sections of the spectators.

In the Hoysala period many themes are around lighter aspect are represented sculpturally. The reason may be that dancers adopted such themes to reach the masses.
The illustrations of the photographs presented so far is an attempt to recognise the various forms of dance traditions that prevailed in Karnataka during the Hoysala period.

Dance and Music echoed through and through in the medieval temple architecture of India. Rhythm, balance, beauty and harmony epitomised the temples through the elegant and poised movements of the images so richly carved. The dance traditions practiced in the respective periods and the orchestra supporting dancers were the favourite subjects to sculptors. They have captured the credences in stone and immortalized the art of dance and music. The sculptors were highly dance-conscious and this could be felt in their perceptual application of dance techniques in original form as rendered by Bharata. The images in beautiful, elegant, flowing movements, innumerable in number embellished the otherwise simple architecture. The dances and musicians in vibrant movements occupied decorating door jambs, niches, ceilings, windows, capitals, plinths, lintels, windows, towers and recess of walls. It is here in Karnataka that experimentation in the development of structural temples took a massive turn under the patronage of Hoysalas.

The Sculptural representations show that dances, dance teachers and musicians closely followed the tradition of natyasastra. Even the sculptors were highly dance conscious
and their perception in adopting dance techniques in its original form rendered by Bharata could be observed in their artistic expression.

The female dancers outnumbered the male dancers in the said period. Learning dance and music was the pre-requisite of an accomplished lady in the Hoysala Society. The Inscriptions speak of royal dancers and praise gloriously their histrionic talents. Queens of Hoysala, time, Echaladvi, Padmala, Boppadevi, Santala and Bommala were accomplished dancers and musicians. Inscriptions describe queen Santala and Bommala as “Sangita Nritya Sutrādhare”. This gives an impression that they had their own team of artistes and choreographed the dance compositions in the functions organized in the temple premises.

The bracket-figures of Hoysala period are known for their tri-flexion bendings. This style stressed on the bendings of waist and limbs, the posses although, fundamentally based on Bharata’s principles, in their presentation they convey continuous movement and interesting theme, coated with erotic sentiment (sringarabhava)

Mrdanga, in its pretent form was the main accompaniment of dance sequences during Hoysala period. Mardale and dhamani were also used as substitute drums.
Dancers in Nritya sequence are supported by more than one drum. Fretted. Vina, drone instrument and Kinnari veene were popular stringed instruments. A complete orchestra supporting dance in sculptural panels included mrdanga, Masdala and dhamani, a stringed instrument, flute and cymbals and Natyacarya and a female singer. In variably the cymbal players were well-dressed women. The Hoysala dance sculptures are rich in giving various patterns of jewellery, head-dress, and costume. Though they appear heavy and come in the way of free movements, it cannot be denied that they have far reaching effect on the on looker. The elaborate head dress, tasseled jewellery and shooting movements created uniqueness that is typical to Hoysala art.

The people of the Hoysala period were lovers of music. Among the stringed instruments ekatantri Vina, rudra Vina, Naga Vina, Vina with round or oval boards users known to them. It is interesting to note that the rudra vina is presently known as rabab among Mohammed musicians of Persia and Afghanistan, and rubeb among those of Arabia. The percussion instrument of the Hoysala period have their survivals in the present day Karnataka and other states. Thus, the Mardala of Yore resembles very much the modern South Indian tavil or dholak of North India. Dundubhi the Kettledrum represented in the sculptures is none-else than a nagara, nakkara or danka of the present day. The survival of
damaroo is still to be seen in the states of Karnataka, Andhra, Tamilnadu etc.,

As for the solid instruments clappers, bells, cymbals and gongs were known to the period. The clappers were played solo or in groups while dancing rhythmically and such plays are known in the present days by the name Kolata in Kanarese and Kolatam in Telugu, The cymbals were generally played in tune to the dancing or in play an mandirs. The gongs generally constituted an item of musical instrument in the temple rituals and religious processions. Music and dance played a significant role in the religious and secular life of the Hoysalas.

Games and amusements of the period reveal the standard of culture and social harmony. They were not merely a source of personal enjoyment but also a medium of social and communal contact for the development of good will and individual skills. They sharpen the skill, intelligence and interest of the individuals. Dice, Kolata, Anekal, Hunting, Animal fights, Arachery, Jalakrida, Snake-Charming and people gave special attention to pets and derived amusements, Wrestling, Acrobats were the famous games and amusements existed during the said period. Another important amusement was drinking. An interesting piece of sculpture depicting Vishakanye gives an idea of Nagnitude of intoxication of the people during the said period. The effort of the sculptor to
depict a Vishakanya, indicates the existence of such ladies who where habituated for drinking poison. Vishakanye’s were used by ancient rulers for destroying their enemies. During the said period Hunting was a popular pastime. Hunters of both sexes were well-versed in hunting. There were different methods of hunting like Gorivents, Tohinavents and sohuvents. Varieties of nets and weapons were used by the hunters in catching birds and animals. Dogs were trained by the hunters. Hunters collected all sorts of possible precious materials that were available in the forest during hunting. They showed their mark of respect to their overlords by donating gifts like elephant tusks, skins of tigers, cheetas and boars. Hunting has been regarded as a hereditary art i.e Kulavidya, sometimes, people went for hunting for earning their livelihood. Hunting was encouraged by the Royal family. The sculptural wealth of Hoysala temples reflect intensely the pastimes, and speaks of the civilized mind and the aesthetic outlook of the people and give an idea of the gay and positive life they led.

A Huntress with a dog carrying bow and arrow is depicted. This shows that in the 13th century women in the tribal society were participating in the hunting of animals. And this sculpture can also be interpreted as Guardsman with sword is shown in one part of the temple. The houses of noble men and the king had guards at the door and entry was
probably restricted to such places. A lady moving with attendants represents the scene in the upper strata of society particularly in the palace.

Today, even though Government has banned hunting, and they will be punished and put behind the bars and fine them. But huntress in the tribal areas wear the same type of dress as mentioned above and they sell honey for their livelihood, skins of different animals are exported and they are used for medicines also. Even today, hunters use swords, bow and arrows as their weapons for hunting.

Costumes is one of the cardinal necessities for a human living. It is indeed a marked characteristic of any culture. Fashions and costumes are very interesting to observe and infact they are the facets of the human self-expression. The tastes and tendencies of an age are distinct marked by the type of clothes a period fancies. From this point of view the illustration of costumes in the Hoysala sculptures are alluring and varying. The Hoysala Sculptures divulge scanty dress for royal ladies and discloses no dissimilarity when compared to the costumes of the ladies of the lower class. This disparity in statute does not seem to have affected the style of costume and practically we find the same dress used by the queens and the ladies of the lower class. However, as in the case of kings, the queens and other royal princesses of the Hoysala
Sculptures reveal sparse dress. Garments were made from cotton, silk and wool. References are often found to the process of embroidering and designing the cloth. Clothes with figures of elephants, lions, deer, swams, Creepers are referred to clothes with floral and geometrical designs such as flower buds. The sculptures in the Hoysala temples depict the garments they wore are almost identical with regard to texture, type etc.

The sari-like lower garment seems to have found a congenial home during this period. The sculpture has successfully visualized the various types of dresses that the male and female wore. Mini-dresses, under garments and other sewn clothes were not uncommon among women. They were worn by dancers. The musician’s dress depended upon the types of instruments the specialized in the single string instrument player wore a narrow pieces of cloth, becoming his humble profession. Unlike the cotton and silk clothes the costumes prepared out of natural flowers and creepers were used as a traditional practice by the rich and the royalty on special occasions like Vanakeli, Jalakeli and Mallayudda. The use of flowers garments were confined to a particular social group like the royalty, harem, prostitutes and other high officials. The tribal folk wore the garments of peacock feathers.
The use of cosmetics on all occasions became part and parcel of that life. Cosmetics were used by all class women. The use of cosmetics varied from season to season. Cosmetics were used on ceremonial functions and on the festival days. Cosmetics were also used by maid employees of the palace. Scented chemicals, all powders, eyetex, eyeliners and scent were used during the said period. They were applied to faces, upper parts of the body so as to give colour complexion and beauty to the skin. The ladies of nobility and the upper classes were extremely after cosmetics. Jewel Box and betel Box also formed the items in the kit bag of the toilet articles. Among the represented fans, the square shaped fans, Mirror, Comb, Makeup writing material, Foot-wears have been very popular during Hoysala period.

We are amazed at the varieties of hair-styles exhibited in the temple premises of the Hoysala period. Beautification of hair is innate in human nature. But one thing is certain that the people who showed remarkable taste for variety and fashion as regards their dress, are naturally expected to have bestowed the same artistic skill and meticulous attention in the arrangement of their hair. The plaited, bunned, twisted, letting-loose, tufted, knotted hair patterns along with elongated crowns, half-crown and hair dressed with wreathers of flowers and jewels are found in ample numbers during the said period. The style such as opasa, hair-parted into plaits in
any number, kurira-the horn shaped style for long hairs, kumbha-pots shaped coil set vertically and horizontally, kapardas crown shaped coiffure, siman-pastivs of the hair on the fore head, and curly hair in front is set in a beautiful way and the hair at the back is held in two storeyed roundish bun which appears like a free style coiffure was in existed during the said period. Queens, Princess, Female Attendants, Female Devotees, Amorous couple, Female Musicians, and Hunters, depict a fine variety of hair styles in the sculptures of the said period. This hair-style appears to be almost the monopoly of South India. Even to this day, the women of South India, Karnataka, Andhra, Gujarat and Maharastra show great liking for the above said hair-styles. Many of the hair styles like lambulalca , simhakesara, Kesapasa (bun) curly hair, etc that appear in the sculptures survive even today. The practice of leaving cikaras or bhraamasakas on the forehead, as seen in the sculptures in the case of some women, continues to be fashion amongst modern women.

Hoysala style of sculpture is distinct. Could it be possible for any one to count the varieties of garlands, necklaces, bands, bangles, ear-rings, arm-ornaments, shoulder ornaments, anklets, girdles and Brhmasutras on the sculptures of Hoysala temples. The ability of creating thousands of patterns, adoption of different types of materials in making jewels was the speciality of the Hoysala period. The
art of Jewellery reached high level in the period and was brought to a very high artistic standard of refinement and elegance which was in keeping with the spirit of the age, Goldsmiths were expert during the said period.

The Hindu Ideals strongly support ornamentation of at least a few minimum items. The ear-rings, bangles and chain are considered as symbols of non-widowhood. The elaborately designed jewellery became the aid of beauty and symbol of status. Adornment of make-up with ornaments was considered a necessary adjunct to emphasize the qualities of beauty, courage and wisdom. Most of the sculptures show an almost equal number of jewels on both men and women during the said period, Even the musical instruments are ornamented in the Hoyasala Sculptures. Varieties of Head ornaments called as Mukuta, Kesa Mukuta, Mauli, Kinta adorned with diamonds and pearls were worn by the women of the said period, Head-band with a pendant hanging from its center could be seen from the sculptures. Fore-head ornament, used by all the female class irrespective of the position they held in the society. It is in practice even today with married marwadi ladies. They put on borkes compulsorily on every auspicious occasion. It is interesting also to note that a forehead ornament very similar to lalatikas is still in use particularly in North India, where it is known as bindi.
A variety of ear-ornaments are represented in the female sculptures. They vary in shape and design. The upper classes as usual used gold, diamond and pearl and that of the lower classes used ornaments of brass, beads and ivory. A circular plain metal ring, metal ring studded with gems or pearls, large metal disc, Bud-shaped, sarpakumdala, tubular shape, Makara kundala, lotus shape, ball shape these were different varieties of ear-ornaments were drummers, queens, princess, huntress, female-attendants, fan-bearers, of the said period. Flower ornaments were worn by women of higher status during the said period. The very existence of so many varieties of the ear-ornaments as detailed earlier indicate the high aesthetic sense of the people of the Hoysala period. Many of them have their survivals at present disc-shaped ornaments have survivals in dhenri of Bengal. The bud-shaped ear-ornaments or bead-drops known to the Hoysalas were nothing but the present day lolaki in Karnataka and lolakulu in Andhra.

The sarpakundalas known to the Hoysalas were very elaborate and evolved full blown lotus pattern ear-ornament have survived to the present day work by Karnataka ladies and Kammllu by the Andhra ladies.

Neck ornaments are of two categories namely haras and the necklaces or kanthis. Necklaces of gold or silver studded
with precious stones were used by both sexes. Many of the necklaces of the period under review have their counterparts at present. Mallika-kudmalahara or jatikusumahara depicted in the reliefs are seen worn by the ladies of South India even to this day.

The Mohini image is taken for the measurement of miss India, Miss Universe, Miss World beauty queens to give the final judgement.

Shoulder ornaments were popular during the said period, Almost all gods, goddess, madanikas, female attendants, huntress wore this ornament.

Arm ornament Comprise those on the upper-arm, forearm and wrists. The reliefs’s depict both men and women with armlets of different varieties. The forearms of the Hoysala sculptures, in general reveal the bangles among the females. Wearing of bangles in dozens might have been quite popular with woman in this period. Bracelets, Beaded sting, Finger-rings, waist ornament, Leg-ornaments were worn by the women of the said period. Interestingly this sculptural representation of the personal ornaments get their epigraphical and literary corroboration at several places.
The above said varieties of ornaments is not only famous in India but become global fancy. The designs are found in the catalogues of famous Jewellery manufactures all over the world and its is declared as antique designs which is in great demand today.

Excessive ornamentation can be considered as defect of the Hoysala school of art. The Hoysala artist was so much engrossed in the minite details of the sculpture which must have used all his energies in creating fine ornaments, coiffure, dress, bangles etc. Each of these items can be considered a Master piece in this own right stylization and convention become part and parcel of the Hoysala art. The coiffure seems almost repetitive. The limbs and back show heavy sets.

Thus sculptures and contemporary literature largely depicts the ornaments and costumes used by women during the said period. Ornaments worn by women, naturally depended upon their position. The rich class worn ornaments made of gold and silver often inlaid with precious stones. The lower class fascinated themselves with copper or brass ornaments and the poorest worn strings of glass beads etc.

In the thirteenth century, in Karnataka, there was no well established setup to provide a formal education to
hundreds and thousands of children. For many temples acted as centers of education also, temple sculptures gave the inner message of these epics. Sita and Draupadi stood for sweetness and sorrows of life.

The construction and generous temples by the Kings, Queens, administrative officials, rich people were patrons of temple construction and they made payment to the architects and sculptors for their work. As the recipients of this payment/blessing, which usually consisted of land, the artist often became landowners.

The growth of Vishnuvardhana’s empire necessitated a strong emphasis on the traditional inter-relationship between the deity, brahmans and the king. While the spread of the bhakti movement increased the ritual participation of members of the sudra varna, including the artists, in temple activities. This resulted in a process of sanskirtization of the lower classes.

Thus a careful study of the sculptures reveals that women did not lag behind in contributing their share to the progress of culture. It is the main observation found by me that women belonging to the common class in the sculptures of the said period are scant.