CHAPTER VI
SATVA MATHA AND EDUCATION

In ancient and medieval times, higher education was denominational in character. The Jain dails and the Buddhist vihāras were the centres of higher education for the Jains and the Buddhists. The important agencies of Brāhmaical education in south India were the Ghatikas, Agghakas, Brāhmaica, Śalas, the temple colleges and the mathas. In these institutions education was mostly religious and Sanskritic in nature. In this chapter an attempt is made to study how the mathas served as seminaries of education.

MATHA AS AN EDUCATIONAL AGENCY

The mathas as educational institutions were very popular in the period under consideration. They gradually developed into institutions of higher learning. S. Cūrājaśebar who examined the functions of the mathas in Karnatakas has pointed out that "In no temple perhaps could higher education have been obtained in such fullness or in so many subjects, as was possible in a matha". The epigraphs often refer to grants of land and cash for promoting education in the matha. In many of the mathas, instruction of an advanced type in the traditional fourteen or eighteen vidyas was
offered to students. It is to be noticed here that the Śaiva mathas were the organised public educational institutions. Altekar has pointed out that though several Vedic śākhas and Garapass existed in ancient times, they did not develop into schools. Even the parisāda like Pāṇcāla parisāda which produced some of India's highest philosophy do not seem to have taken any steps to organise public educational institutions. The Śaiva mathas which emerged in the wake of sectarian rivalry in the Tamil country, like their counterparts the Jain Pallis, and the Buddhist vihāras gradually developed into the residences of learned monks and seminaries of education. The Jains and the Buddhists popularised their religion through their monastic ideas and emphasised the system of organised brotherhood accommodated in the rock-cut halls, vihāras and monasteries. Similarly, in the Brahmānical fold, the matha was a typical Indian monastery with monks, ascetics and students living within its precincts. They were invariably attached to some local temples.

SECTARIAN THEOLOGY

The importance of the Śaiva matha as an educational agency can hardly be exaggerated. Its educational activity is more or less linked to the prime task of the institution,
i.e., the propagation of the doctrines of the sect among the disciples and lay followers. Hence, the dissemination of knowledge in the matha was mainly religious in character.

The evidences from the Tamil country indicate the nature of Śaiva mathas as centres of learning and education. It has already been discussed how mathas were headed by devout religious and highly learned pontiffs who had a number of monks as their disciples. The principal occupation of the disciples in the matha had been learning and teaching. The preceptors of the various mathas were well versed in the religious literature and philosophy which they taught to the monks and lay devotees.

Even in the first phase of its history, the mathas of the Bhakti school, though simple in nature, played a significant role in the propagation of religious lore. Pariyāmānas accounts bear evidence for this. The mathas at Tīlal were the centres of Vedic activities. Sēyğalur, the birth place of Chandēśvara in Thanjavur district had mathas where the sounds of Vedic chanting could be heard. The study of religious texts was carried on in the matha at Tīlal endowed by Appūqi aḍigaḷ. Haruyanar-maththa at
Pampuhalur (Tiruppugalur) was the residence of a number of Saiva adiyars who learnt Saiva religious texts. In all probability, these mathas must have promoted Tamil learning besides Vedic lore.

The educational activity in the mathas is clearly understood from the information deduced from the epigraphs. The Kaverippakkam record of Napatungavaran (886 A.D.) sheds some light on the institution as a seat of learning. The phrase maṭṭṭu caṭṭam paramakkal in the record would mean that some persons, highly learned were members of a matha. It is interesting to note that the word caṭṭa is derived from the Sanskrit term chatra generally meaning a student. A copper plate record from Parthivasakharapuram suggests that the word caṭṭakar would mean highly learned scholars. According to it, the caṭṭakar were highly proficient in at least three branches of learning Mīmāṃsā, Vyākaraṇa and Purāṇītva in addition to the Vedas. T.N. Subramanian is of the opinion that caṭṭa was a resident brahmacāri wedded to life-long study and teaching with no other worldly attachment. It is highly probable, as suggested by S. Gurumurthy, that caṭṭakar are to be regarded as teachers placed in charge of the institution rather than...
mere students. No doubt it is so in the context of Kaverippakam record as the epithet norumakkaḷ, is suffixed to maṭṭatu caṭṭa.

In the reign of Vijaya Kampavarman, Miraṅjana Ouvāvaṅ, the head of the maṭṭa at Tiruvōriyūr was a great scholar. Chaturāṇana Pāṇḍita of the Kālamukha maṭṭa at the same place were all erudite scholars. Mallikārvijuna, the chief Kālamukha monk of the big monastery at Koṇumbāḷūr (Pudukkottai district) was a master of Vēdas. This teacher was supported by an endowment of eleven villages made by the Koṇumbāḷūr chief Bhūti Vikramakēṣari (10th century A.D.) Thus by the close of the tenth century the maṭṭa had grown into a seat of higher learning.

The services rendered by Śaiva maṭṭas in the field of education, in the second phase of their history, are borne out by a few inscriptions. In the maṭṭa at Tirukkundai Sīhāggiyatturai (probably Tiruvigalikāli), provision was made by a certain Kuṇṟatu Narāyana (1229 A.D.) for the maintenance of certain Brāhmaṇ students of Vēdānta from the Malayalam country. (Vēdānta visīttu niṟkkum Malayāla Brāhmaṇaparkku). This maṭṭa seems to have been a residential
institution attracting scholars from outside the state. In the reign of Naravarman Sundara Pandyas II, the 
Madivalaikku Perumal-matha in Sreradevi (Tirunelveli district) flourished as an important institution and provided instruction in various sastras to students. A teacher of this matha, an expert in the sastras, was paid three kurinji paddy daily as remuneration. The students were fed in the matha. A certain Tatpurushasivasesvara, the preceptor of the matha at Tiruvanaikka koll during the time of the Hoysala king Vira-Ramanatha was a professor of Saiva Siddhanta. That the matha was a seat of highly learned Bhattas is known from a Chola record from Uthiramur Chaturvedimaigalam. This inscription refers to the qualifications for admission to a share in the bhatta-vritti. It specifies that the bhatta should not own shares in the village lands and reside in the matha constructed by the donor for a period of three years.

Guru Somesvara also called Ivarasiva, the preceptor of Kulottunga III, son of Srikantha Sambhu was a great scholar well versed in eighteen vidyas (Siva-darsanas). He was capable of expounding the glory of Siva as taught in the Upanisadas. He is said to have written a
work called the *Siddhāntaratnākara*. Venkayya opines that the above Iśvarāśiva is identical with Iśanaśiva, the author of *Siddhāntasūra*. Trilōṣana Śivāchāryya was the author of *Siddhāntāravali*. The above scholars belonged to the Gōlakī school of Śaivism.

The evidences from the contemporary Deccan give us further information on the Śaiva māthā as centres of higher learning in general. In this regard the Malkāpuram record gives a detailed account of the educational activity in the Gōlakī mātha at Mundaram (Andhra country). By considering this mātha as a model educational institution, one can clearly understand the role of the Śaiva mātha as an educational agency in the medieval South India. The inscription states that a portion of land was assigned for the maintenance of the Suddha Śaiva monks. There were three teachers appointed for teaching the Vedas, viz., Rig, Yajur and Sama and five teachers for teaching logic, literature, Agama and philosophy. Each of these teachers received some portion of land. In the same mātha, provision was also made for the itinerant Śaiva mendicants who had devoted themselves to study. The chief of this establishment has been described as an expert in the intricacies of the Śaiva
faith, well-versed in the Śaiva doctrine, learned, the foremost among virtuous Brahmans and a great naishtika teacher. Many other records from outside the Tamil country are quite informative in this aspect. It is interesting to know from the Ārụḍi record that the disciples had their religious knowledge through regular seminars. It states that the monk Praśantaśiva carried on discussions with qualified men who were all experts in knowledge relating to Śiva. The preceptors specialised in their religious philosophies. The record mentions a pontiff who taught the liberal doctrine of Śiva to his disciples. The pontiff of the Koṭiya maṭha is said to have been an expert in Jain, Lokāyata, Baudha, Lakula Siddhānta. The teacher of the Paṅcaliṅga maṭha is said to be an effective orator who refuted the tenets of the Baudhas, Miṃamsakas, Śāṅkyas, Advaitas, Digambaras and Lokāyatas. It is evident that the monk was familiar with these branches of theological knowledge. The above evidences clearly indicate that, in general, the curriculum was theological in nature, but it also included the philosophical systems of the rival sects.
SECULAR EDUCATION

In general in the period under consideration, provisions were made for comprehensive educational facilities, both sacred and secular, in the institutions such as ghatika of Kāṇchi, and temple colleges like Bādur Vidyāstāna, Ponneri, Īṟṟiyiram, Tribhuvani, Tirumukkuṟṟal, and Tiruvorriyur. In these institutions most of the teachers and students were Brāhmaṇs. The matha in the Tamil country, which we have discussed so far, were mainly meant for imparting instructions to the disciples and lay devotees in sectarian theology. It was Sanskritic in character, which provided the studies related to and necessary for the maintenance of the Brāhmaṇical traditions of the age. Very rarely, the mathas also undertook to foster non-religious study. The Tiruvāḍutugai record of Vikramachōla (1121 A.D.) mentions that provision was made in the matha at the place for the study of medical sciences like Astāṅga-hūdaya (by Vagbhaṭa) and Charak-Saṃhitā (by Caraka) which deal with indigenous medicine and also of Vaiśikaraṇa and Rūpāvatāra. The students attached to this matha were also fed in the institution which indicates the residential nature of the
as an educational institution. It is of interest to note that this evidence provides the first epigraphical reference to the teaching of medical science in a matha. The physicians who knew the art of tending cattle were also maintained by the mathas to attend to the sick animals.

POPULAR EDUCATION AND TAMIL LEARNING

The Saiva mathas provided the basis for popular instruction by way of recitation and expounding of religious texts. They did serve more or less as important centres for the promotion of education, religious and secular in Tamil learning. In the absence of tangible evidence, it is not possible to bring out the nature of Tamil learning in these mathas. However, certain inferences can be drawn from the available sources which are scanty.

As has already been noticed, the mathas did the principle task of training the band of choristers who sang the Tiruppadigama in temples, and recited the religious texts such as Tirumurai, Tiruchirippaa and other texts. Even in the days of Nayyars religious texts were recited in the matha. Sambandar stayed in the matha at Madurai along with the adiyars and is said to have sung the hymns on Lord Siva.
Tirumūrānava was recited in the temple at Tirunelveli by as many as eleven tapasvins drawn from various mathas in the Tamil country. They were the disciples of several important pontifical heads. It is obvious that they were well-versed in Śaiva literature and philosophy and would have provided instruction to their own students and disciples. In the thirteenth century, provision was made for reading the Mahābhārata, the Rāmāyana and the Purāṇas in the Matha at Tiruttankal, Ramnad district. Altogether Nambi's Śri Purāṇa was read in the Tiruvappiyur temple.

The above evidences are a clear proof of the fact that the mathas provided popular instruction in Tamil by reading, reciting and expounding the religious texts and philosophy and thereby promoted informal education in theology.

The Tamil Śaiva mathas and gubaśas devoted themselves to the cause of Tamil learning. It must be remembered that in the wake of the Bhakti movement the temples and the mathas appeared on the institutional side and the Tamil hymns appeared on the literature side. These sacred hymns in Tamil which were necessary for the temple worship were gradually codified into the Nīnaval by Nambi Appar Nambi,
the contemporary of Rājarāja I. These hymns became very popular in the subsequent two centuries as they provided the emotional and conceptual basis of the sect. The preceptors of the Tamil Śaiva mathas and rubais who were well-versed in the Tamil Śaiva literature, undertook to train the disciples in the art of reciting Mrūppadisāma, and other religious texts.

The preceptors of the Tamil Śaiva mathas also had specialised knowledge of Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta. Aruñandā Śivāchārya, the first disciple of Meykandār resided in the matha at Tiruttukaiyur. It is known that Śivānanda Mahāmuni was a great Śaiva exponent at Tiruttukaiyur and probably a teacher of Aruñandā. Umapati Śivāchārya of the time of Meykandār is said to be the founder of the matha at Koppānkuḍi. All the above exponents of Śaiva Siddhānta treatises in Tamil taught their disciples from their respective mathas. Parumākkappuliyur Naṇbī, the author of Tiruvilaiyadal purāpan, a great Tamil classic describing the divine sports of Śiva, was the student of Vināyaka muni, a teacher of the Maṭhakai-matha at Tīlāi where Tirumālāligaiṭṭēvar, one of the authors of Tiruviśaiṣippa is said to have lived. Thus the Śaiva mathas in the Tamil country which were the centres
of higher learning, engaged themselves simultaneously in
the dissemination of religious knowledge and in literary
activities.

LIBRARY FACILITIES IN THE MATHA

The Śaiva māthās acting as centres of higher
learning must have had libraries attached to them, at least
to a few. Though the sources do not give direct information,
it can be inferred from the available meagre sources that
the māthās had libraries also. The inscription 49 from
Aruñjalaperumāḷ temple at little Kāṇchī of a slightly later
period (1359 A.D.) gives data about the library facilities
within the māthā. Though the example relates to a Vaiṣṇava
māthā it is informative and interesting. The record reveals
that a certain Vaiṣṇava gāna was invested with the title
Brahmatantra Svantra Jyar by God and directed to establish
a māthā with the lands necessary to meet the expenses and
that the books prescribed by him should be left with him.
The inscription refers to a collection of books (a library)
which were kept in the māthā and the necessary accessories
related to the library for arranging the books (śvatantra
puṛtakadēkājum vāṇjum upakarapamakalum).
The fact that the māṭha, generally, possessed a library of its own is also borne out by an inscription of the Vijayanagar period (1407 A.D.). It mentions a library belonging to the Śrīṅgārī māṭha. The same library is referred to in another inscription of Devarāya II (1432 A.D.)

In this regard two Pāṇḍya inscriptions throw light on the subject. The temple at Chidambaram possessed a library of its own. The details for its upkeep and expansion are elaborated in these records from the same temple of Jatāvarman Sundara Pāṇḍya I (middle of the 13th century). One of them states that the library called as Sarasvatī-bhāṇḍara was originally established by one Svamīdēva and the inscriptions record the orders of certain Pallavadaraiyan for the organisation and expansion of the same. About twenty bhaṭṭas drawn from various places whose names are however not clearly traceable, were employed in the Sarasvatī-bhāṇḍara for reading, arranging and teaching the manuscripts which were written in grantha (pala pushtakā kalpūrkkavum eludavum, avilttu........vāsup-pikkavum). It is also stated in the record that the scholars were instructed to copy down the records already written and kept in the library. The other inscription makes a special mention of the work Siddhānta Ratnakaram and a few books written by one
Sarasvati déva among the collections in the library.
Provision was also made for writing and comparing the
works both in Tamil and Grantha (*Kirandakalilum ta밀kalilum
aludu vēṇḍuvana. . . . eludi okkampārttu . . . .*

It is believed by tradition that the original
manuscript of *Thiruvēṇakam* was being kept in a silver casket
and offered worship in the *Ambalattādi-matha* which had its
headquarters at Pondicherry.

**MAṬHA AND GHATIKĀ**

Ghatikā was one of the foremost agencies of
Brahmaical education in ancient and medieval South India.
The existence of the Ghatikās in various centres right from
the beginning of the fourth century to the fifteenth century
A.D. is known from epigraphs. Professor S.K. Aiyangar
identifies Ghatikā as a Brahmap settlement while Sastri
identifies it as a corporate college. C. Meenakshi thinks
that the Ghatikā is a place or an institution where scholars
and students particularly from the Brahmap and upper castes
came to seek knowledge. Kielhorn remarks that it was
something like the Brahmapuri. Rice observes that the
word seems to indicate the chief place of assembly for Brahmap
Thus the Ghatika has been variously described as a place of public assembly for Brähmans or a religious centre or an educational colony. The epigraphs refer to the Ghatikas in Tamil country at Kañchī, Vemāgarū and Kāvapur.

Mostly, these Ghatikas were the centres of Sanskrit education. However, the Ghatika at Kāvapur (Poyyāmoli-mangalam) in the thirteenth century, unlike the other Ghatikas, consisted of a group of Tamil scholars. This development was probably due to the influence of the Tamil Śaiva mathas in the Tamil country which proliferated in large number in the thirteenth century as seats of higher learning in Tamil studies.

The Ghatikas stood in sharp contrast to the Śaiva mathas in their nature. It is highly probable that the mathas were liberal in the admission of students, unlike the Ghatika or the Brāhmapuris which admitted only Brāhmans, and also probably Kshatriyas and Vaiṣyās who ever were eligible for Vedic initiation. "The supremacy of the Brāhmans is to be perceived in institutions like the Āgrahāras, Brāhmapuris and Ghatikas, whereas the mathas belonged to the people of their respective religious system". The Śaiva mathas seem to have been more broad-based and admitted anyone who had devotion for Śiva.
The Śaiva māthās also differed from the Ācārya and other educational institutions in respect of the curricu-

ulum. Besides the Vedic learning, they fostered the study of theology and religious literature and sometimes secular knowledge. Particularly, the Tamil Śaiva māthās and gubhaśas of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries devoted themselves to the cause of Tamil learning, theology and Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy.

Above all the Ācārya existed only in a few places, whereas the māthās spread throughout the Tamil country and carried on the principal task of promoting learning. Hence, it may be concluded that the network of a number of māthās attached to almost every important temple satisfied the basic need of the society in organizing institutions for public instruction.
REFERENCES


6. Ibid., 20:3.


8. Ibid., 21:243.

9. S.I.I., xi, no. 79.


It is a copper-plate registering the establishment of Sālai for 95 satāra at Parthivasākharapuram on the model of the one at Kandajür by the Ay king of Vemāḍu, Karunandadasakkan (866 A.D.)

12. S. Girumurthy, Education in South India, p.18.

13. 372/1911.

14. E.I., xxvii, no.47.


15. 276/1925.

16. 667, 671, 675/1916.

17. 21/1891.


19. Bhatta-vritti is usually a piece of tax-free land (share) given to a learned Brähmapato provide for his living with a view to enable him to pursue his knowledge.


21. A.R.E., 1908, para 64.


28. E.I., viii, no.2; S.I.L., 11, p.514.
29. 15/1933-34.
33. 120, 201, 202/1912.
34. 159/1925.
36. S. Gurumurthy, op.cit., p.25.
37. Saura, pp.126-141.

nauadun tennidait t菅artai kuljede
simu ḍīva tirunnadigattai eḻuttu
poīya nēroli chevinnulas sakkīdan porāv.


40. 546/1922.

41. S.I.I., v. no.1358.

42. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, op.cit., p.677.

43. Supra, it loc.

44. M.Rajamanikkam, Saivasaivavajjokahini, p.220.

45. 380/1908.

46. M.Rajamanikkam, op.cit., p.221.

47. Sāntanacaryar caritam, pp. 17-51.

48. Tiruvilajyadal purāṇam (Nambi), vālīttu, 23.

49. K.I., xxv, p.319.

50. 233/1936-37.

51. 234/1937-37.
54. This treatise was composed by Somesvara or Tavaraśiva, son of Udayar Śrīśamidēvar Śrīkṣaṭasiva.
55. J.M.S. Pillai, The University Environ, pp. 150-151.
56. For details see S. Murumurthy, op. cit., pp. 4-13.
59. C. Meenakshi, Administration and Social life under the Pallavas, p. 224.
63. 292/1909.
64. 301/1909; 51/1932-33.