

Inscriptions and temples of Mudhol region

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ABSTRACT:

Mudhol is one of the developed talukas of Karnataka. It is known for its economical and cultural rich heritage. Famous Kannada poet Kavichkravarti Ranna born in this city. Many empires and their feudatories ruled over this area. They left behind cultural legacy. Number of inscriptions found here helps us to rebuild the history of this area. From the Chalukyas of Badami to the British administered here directly and indirectly. They built temples and various donations have been granted towards these temples. Most of the temples we find here are belonged to Shiva religion. among them the Nelagudi Shivalaya and Kalmeshwar temple of Mudhol, Holebasaveshwar temple of Machakanur, Kalmeshwar temple of Malali village, Amruteshwar temple of Belagali are important temples. All these are built during the period of the Chalukyas of Badami. The Rastrakutas, the Chalukyas of Kalyan, the Rattas of Savadatti and Kalachuri rulers. This area is known for its religious toleration during Adil Shahi rule.

KEY WORDS:

Copper plate, Culture, Donations, Inscriptions, Province, Religion, Rulers, Temple,

INTRODUCTION:

Mudhol is one of the important talukas of Bagalkot district of Karnataka state. Geographically it is located at 16.21' N 75.17 E 16.35N 75.28E¹. It has an average elevation of 549 meters and it is about 60 km from the district headquarters of Bagalakot, lies on the left bank of the Ghataprabha river naturally very fertile area. As per the inscriptional records the name of the Mudhol is *Mudhuvolal*, means a beautiful city. Renowned scholar late Dr. B.R.Hiremath opined that the name of Mudhol is came after a person '*Muddana*'². During ancient period it was part of *Belugali-500* and *Jambukhandi-70*, well-known administrative units. It is famous for its literary feats. Ranna, a Kannada poet of renown, is popularly known as "Mahakavi" or the great poet who wrote *Gadhayuddha* mahakavya. This taluka area had a rich cultural heritage. Several dynasties ruled over this region and left legacy of culture. They build temples and liberal grants were made towards these temples and their associates. The temples of this area and inscriptions shed light on ancient history of the region. Mudhol is famous for breeding dog, known as the *Mudhol Hound* famous for hunting which was appreciated by British Empress. Now Indian army is inducted these hunting dogs. Mudhol was one of the 9 gun princely (Ghorpade) states of British India which ruled till 1947. During the British rule it was an Independent state. Historical *Halagali* uprising against the British took place in this taluk.

Archaeological and literary records throw light on the history of this area. We have important epigraphical records of both stone and copper plates helps to understand the history of various dynasties who ruled over this area. They belonged to the Chalukyas of Badami, the Rastakutas, the Chalukyas of Kalyan, the Kalchuri, the Rattas of Savadatti and Adil Shahi and their Jagirdar Ghorpades of Mudhol administered in this area.

METHODOLOGY:

I have used here historical method. This paper based on purely fieldwork. Collected the data and analyzed with the help of Primary and Secondary sources and synthesized finally

INSCRIPTIONS:

Several inscriptions of different rulers have been identified and they help us to build the history of this area. Historically we come to know that the rulers of the Chalukyas of Badami were the first to rule over this area. A copper plate of Mudhol³ belonged to the Chalukyas refers the name of *Pugavarman*. He was son of Pulikeshin-I. He had the title of '*Vijayi*' and got victory in 108 wars. This was the first inscription of this region. The object of the epigraph is to register a second gift (*dwitiya manyam*), apparently of land, in the village of [Ma]ketaka to the deity *Varahideva* by *Pugavarman* for securing good results in this world as well as in the next. The gift land was divided into thirty-three shares, to be enjoyed, apparently by different beneficiaries whose names, however, are not specified. The charter concludes with the usual verse extolling the merit of a pious gift. Along with this one of the Shiva temple of Mudhol resembles the Chalukyan feature and some scholars opined that they might have built temple and various grants were given during their tenure.

Rastrakutas also ruled here with the help of their subordinates. Inscription of Lokapur in Mudhol taluka refers few names and administrative units and temple of Lokapur built by them. The Lokapur⁴ inscription which is concerned with the rule of Rastrakuta Kannara mentions about the *Chellaketana* family. There is a reference to 'endowments given by *Lokate* who was one of the four sons of *Tailkabbe*. From this it becomes clear that Tailakabbe was Bankeya's beloved wife. They bore five children of these we find mention of Kundatte, Lokate, Dhore, Banka, and Dhonda. Bankeya's second son was Lokate or Lokaditya. Like his father, he was brave and adventurous. He has been referred in the inscriptions with different names as Lokade, Lokatte, Lokayya, Lokateyaras, Lokaditya etc. Bankapur town was built in the name of Bankeya, a descendant of Chellaketan dynasty, Lokapur town was built in the name of his son Lokaditya. They built *Lokamaheshwari* temple, *Lokantah* Basadi and *Lokasamudra* Lake. Present Lokeshwar temple of Lokapur is said to be Lokamaheshwari temple of ancient period. Few Jain images and other broken stone tablets have been identified. These shows that Lokapur was a

famous centre of Jain religion during Amoghvarsha *Nrupatunga*. Along with this Nelagudi a Shiva temple of Mudhol also resembles Rastrakuta architectural features.

The Chalukyas of Kalyan ruled over vast area of Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. In Mudhol and its surrounding area we find epigraphical records and temples which throw light on the Chalukyas of Kalyan. They ruled directly and with the help of their subordinates. Several inscriptions of Chalukyas have been identified in this region. *Rugi*⁵ inscription of Vikramaditya refers *Mahasamanta* a Ratta feudatory, who donated *Agrahara*. The inscription of refers *Tribhuvanamalla* and his .Another inscription from *Kulali*⁶ village refers to the reign of Chalukya *Tribhuvanamalla* ruling from the capital *Kalyanapura*. Nakiseti gave an agricultural land measuring 12 mattaras and a plot of land measuring 12 mattaras and some cash probably as income from the above lands. This land was purchased from three gaundas namely, Ketagaunda, Tailagaunda and Senagaunda. The grant was the purpose of *Khandasputita jirnoddhara, snana, Dhupa, Deepa and Nivedya* of god *Kalidevaswami* located in the village *Kunile* or *Kulile* which was located in Belagola-300. *Mantur*⁷ inscription belonged to the period of *Jagadekamalla-I* mentions that he was ruling from *Hottalakere* region. A Ratta feudatory *Ereyamma* is also referred. Ereyamma gave five *gaddyana* income from penalty to a *Mahajanas* of Mantur. Madhusudanayya and other officers built a lake called *Rattasamudra* in Mantur. Tailpa-III is referred in *Gavimath*⁸ inscription of Mudhol. Ratta feudatory Laxmideva was ruling from *Venugrama*(present Belagavi). His officer Kallapa Chamupa gave land grants to god *Gajeshwar* and *Acharyas* of Panchmath of Mudhol. Another inscription⁹ is belonged to Ratta Laxmideva II, it refers his *Mahadanadanayaka* Settigutta along with Mahabanaju of Belagali who made donations to a local Basadi.

Other feudatories of Kalyan Chalukyas also ruled over this area. *Mudhol*¹⁰ inscription refers that king Bijjala was ruling from Milara *nelevidu*. Another inscriptions is from *Shirol*¹¹ village refers a grant to *Nageshwar* temple of Shirol by four hundred *Mahajanas* of Hiriya *Agrahara* of *Jambhukhandi*. Few officers of Bijjala from Shirol are also referred. *Senubhova* Vishwanthdeva and *Hoddiyara* Hollagavudna are important officers are mentioned here. Damaged inscriptions from *Machakanur* village also mentions donations of five *kolaga* land to a local Shiva temple. Another inscription from the same place mentions officers like *Koriyapa* and *Bora*.

We also come across an inscription of Adil Shahi period, which mentions donations to a local Shiva temple. This inscription belonged to Ibrahim Adil Shah of Bijapur. It refers Honnapa son of Narasapa Konadapas brother. They made a special grants to a Shiva temple *Kalmeshwar* for its renovation by the orders of Adil Shahi rulers of Bijapur. This is one of the best example for religious toleration of Shahi rulers.

During the period of these rulers the all the kings, subordinates and officers have encouraged the overall development of this region. They build temples, various grants were given. Socio-Economic prosperity was flourished. They also maintained the equality among all religions of the society.

TEMPLES:

I have surveyed throughout the Mudhol taluka region and collected the evidences of temples, sculptures and inscriptions which throw light on the temples Culture of this area. Most of the temples are belonged to Shiva religion. The Shivism is existed in this area since long back. Many temples are in good condition. But most of them are renovated and few are fully ruined.

Among them *Mahadev* temple, which is called as *Nelagudi* (which means underground temple). It is 12 feet below the ground level. Oldst temple of this region. It is built during various rulers and resembles the features of the Badami Chalukyas, the Rastrakuta and the Chalukyas of Kalyan temple architecture. East facing temple has Garbhagruha, *Antarala* and *Navarang*. It is a *nirandhar* temple, having ancient *Shivaling* in the Garbhagruha (sanctum). The doorway of the Garbhagruha is decorated with beautiful sculptures. It is in trishakha model. Various sculptures like war scenes, erotic, dancing figurines, *ardhagambha* and pot like sculptures are engraved. In the lower panel of doorway the *dwarapalakas* are carved beautifully. In the *uttaranga* part of the doorway a beautiful *makaratorans* is created. In the *lalata*, Ganesha engraved. In *Antarala*, the platform is constructed in both sides of the passage. The doorway of *Antharala* is simple but is

having *jalandras* in both sides. This *jalandara* made temple more beautiful. In the *lalata* of *antharala*, Gajalaxmi sculpture is engraved. There is spacious *navaranga* with four pillars in the centre. They are beautifully carved. The sculptures like flowers, pots like, birds and Puranic scenes. The corner pillars of the temple also have beautiful carvings. Nandi is installed in the middle of the *Mantapa*. Along with this the temple has *Pilasters* all along the wall. The beams of *Navarang* is engraved with *Sapatamatrika*, birds, Gajalaxmi, Brahma, Shiva, Kalingamardhana and other miniature sculptures have been beautifully embossed. The *Bhuvaneshwari* (ceiling) had a beautifully carved *Ashtadikpalaka* panel. The *Nataraj* with the centre, *Indra*, *Agni*, *Yama*, *Niruti*, *Varuna*, *Kubera*, *Vayu* and *Ehsan* are created. But the most of the part of this panel is damaged and renovated. We can see a doorway in the Northern Part of the Temple. The *devakoshtas* (cell) in the *Navarang* are also renovated. The sculptures of Ganesha and *Saptamatrikas* are kept in the *Navarang* both of them are damaged. The temple is below the ground level and houses have been built around it. So its outside sculptures (*Horabhitti*) cannot be seen. The *Shikhara* part of the temple is fully renovated. The entrance doorway of *Mukhamantap* is built during *Rastrakuta* period with the Gajalaxmi in the lintel of the doorway. Two pots have been erected on the upper side of the door. The temple is fully painted and many features are not seen perfectly.

Another Shiva temple in the *Mudhol* is *Kalmeshwar*. It is facing east and built in the *Kalyani Chalukyan* style. It has *Garbhagruha*, *Antarala* and *Navaranag*. An ancient *Shivaling* is installed in the *Sanctum*. The door of the *antarala* is decorated with the *jalandaras*. The *Navarang* has four pillars and *pilasters*. They are decorated with *Kalayan Chalukyan* features. Nandi is installed in the middle of the *Mantapa*. In the lintel of entrance of *navarang*, an inscription is fixed dated 1620AD belonged to famous *Adil Shahi* ruler *Ibrahim Adil Shah-II* and it refers an officer *Honnapa* of *Adil Shah Sultans* of *Bijapur* who granted charities for renovation of this temple. The *shikhara* and *bhitti* (outer wall) part of the temple are fully renovated and very difficult to know the features of the temple fully.

Sidharameshwar is another temple of *Mudhol* town. It was built during *Ghorpade* rulers of *Mudhol* (Princely state). Though it modern in nature, we can see some of the sculptures used to construct this temple are of ancient period. The entrance doorway is decorated with shafts belonged to the *Kalyani Chalukyan* period. The doorway is having *Trishakha* model. The sculptures like elephant, Peacock and flowers are erected. In the lintel Ganesha is engraved. In the *Uttaranga* of this doorway, three *Nagar Shikhara* models with two *Simha Prabhavali* are embossed. In the bottom of the door two *Dwarapalakas* are created beautifully. These doorframes were brought from nearby village *Belagali*.

Belagali is one of the famous villages of the *Mudhol Taluk*. It is 15 kms away from taluka place *Mudhol*. During ancient period it was headquarters of *Belugali-500* administrative unit. A number of temples, fragmented sculptures and ruined foundations of temples are seen in the every corner of the village. It seems the village had complex of many temples which reflects the culture of the village. Among them *Amruteshwar* is in good condition and partly renovated by *Karnataka State Archaeological Department*. This is the biggest temple of the *Mudhol taluka*. The basic features are intact even after the renovation. The Temple is in *Kalyani Chalukyan* style with red sand stone. It has a *Garbhagrugha*, *Antarala* and *Navarang*. It has three entrances. The doorway of *Garbhagruha* is simple with *sthambhashakha* with *ardhagambhas*. In the upper part (*uttarang*), It has a *nagara* and *vesara shikhara* models. In lintel Ganesha is created. In the *Antarala*, Nandi is installed in the middle. The doorway is decorated with *jalandaras*. In the either side if the doorway, *ardhagambhas* are created. In the upper part pillar is decorated with flowers.

There are four pillars in the *Navaranga*. In the *peethbhaga* of pillars the *nasi* is created. The shaft is square type. The upper part of the pillars are decorated with the flowers, chain like design, circles, octagonal designs, pots and *kalashas*. In the *bodhige* (*potika*) part *nagabhandas* are engraved. The ceiling in the *Navarang* is decorated with inverted lotus. There are four *devakoshtaks* attached to the *navarang* and they are decorated with *Dravida shikhara* models on the top. The temple has *kakshasana* which is made temple more beautiful. The *Navarang* has three entrances. The outer side of the *Kakshasana* is decorated with flower like strips. The *Bhuvaneshwari* (ceiling is) newly created. The *shikhara* is fully renovated. The temple has

kapota, gala, tripatta, kumuda portions in the *Adhistan part*. The outer (*Horabhitti*) wall is simple with having small *kudyastambhas* (walls and columniation) structures and few are damaged. Some scholars opined that some features of the temple resembles the temple style of *Kadambas* of Goa.

Another temple in the Belgali village is *Mahalingeswar*. It is *Dwikuta* (Two chambers) temple with having two *Garbhagruhas* and a common *Mantapa*. Both consisted of Shivalingas. The doorways are created in *Trishakha* model. The four pillars in the middle of the Navarang are decorated with chains and flowers. Two *shikharas* on the *gabhagruha* are fully renovated and can't see any ancient features. *Ramlingeswar* temple is another temple in Belagali. Though the temple is old most of the part of the temple is fully renovated.

Machakanur village is 18 kms away from Mudhol. There is a Shiva temple in the village named *Holebasveshwar*. It is belonged to the period of The Chalukyas of Kalyan. This temple is on the left bank of Ghataprabha River. It is built on the four feet high platform with red sandstone and is in good condition with *Pradakshinapath, Garbhagriha, open Antarala, Navaranga mantap* and a *Mukhamantapa*. Nandi is installed in the *Garbhagruha* and its doorway is simple. There is a open Navarang with 16 pillars. The pillars are carved beautifully with various designs. They are designed with bell shapes, star like and few are simple in nature. The *Bhuvaneshwari* (ceiling) of Navaranga is decorated with lotus and bell shapes. There is platform like circular structure in the middle of the Navarang. In front of the Navarang there are few *ardhagambhas* with having sculptures in their *bodhige*(*potika*) part. The entrance of the temple is decorated with the *Shimha Prabhavali* like, Hoysalas. Its *vimana* is fully renovated. Below the shikhara the sculpture of *bhringi* is depicted and two inscriptions regarding the grants to this temple have been found in this village. This temple will be under the flood waters of *Ghataprabha* River every year in the rainy season, which endangered the temple structure.

In *Malali* village of Mudhol taluka there is a temple called *Kalmeshwar*. It is built 12 feet below the ground level. The temple consisted a *Garbhagriha, Antarala, Navarang* and recently built *Mukhamantap*. Shivalinga is kept in the *Garbhagruha* and its doors are fully renovated. *mantapa* has four beautifully carved ancient pillars. The chain and flower like sculptures are being engraved on the pillar made the temple more beautiful. They resembles The Kalyani Chalukyan features with square base, above it *Kapota, Kumauda, Tripatta Kumuda* have been designed. In the middle of the pillars pot like designs are (*kumbh*) created. In the ceiling of the Mantapa is decorated with the inverted lotus. The *Devakoshtas* are attached with Navarang. *Vithal-Rukmini* sculptures are kept inside. There is *Nagashilpa* in the Navaranga belonged to ancient period. Nandi is installed in the middle of the Mantapa. The temple is renovated several times. The *shikhara* is also fully renovated and we cannot find any ancient features.

Lokapur is 22 kms away from Mudhol. There is a Shiva temple called *Lokeshwar*. It is an ancient temple and most of the parts of the temple are fully renovated. *Garbhagruha* is renovated and a Shivlinga is kept inside. The *shikhara* part is fully renovated. The Temple is called as *Lokamaheshwari* in the inscriptions. The inscription is belonged to the Rastrakuta king Amoghavarsha and refers his officers *Veera Bankeya* and *Lokate*. *Lokate* is one of the four childrens of *Tailakkabbe*. The present Lokapur is named after this *Lokate*. Few scholars opined that The *Lokamaheshwari* temple referred in the inscription is the same *Lokeshwar* temple of Lokapur. Presently the ancient features of the temple are seen only in the doorway of the entrance of the temple. In the premises of temples, a number of broken pieces of stone tablets and hero stones are kept which throws light on the culture of this area.

In *Mantur* village we can see a number of Shiva temples among them few are fully damaged. *Kallaling* is one of them. It has only *Garbhagruha* and *Mantapa*. The *Garbhagruha* fully damaged by the thieves for the want of wealth (*nidhi*), *Mantapa* has four simple pillars. The *shikhara* is fully damaged.

Halagali village is famous for uprising against British during 1857. There is a *Veerabhadra* temple is belonged to the ancient period and fully renovated. It has *Garbhagruha* and open *Mantapa*. *Veerabhadra* image is installed in the *Garbhagruha*. The *Bedas* of this village who fought with the British kept their arms in this temple. Another Shiva sculpture of this village is *Bhairav* image in the *Borappanakolla* hilly area. A cave is converted into a temple like

structure. Only a single chamber is created and its doorway is having simple decorations. The *Bhairav* image is four feet height. It has *Panapatre* in its hand and skulls like chain in the neck.

CONCLUSION:

By this we can understand how the inscriptions and temples are important in rebuilding the local history. culture prevailed in this area since long back. The Rulers who administered in this area gave shelter to the temples mostly, Shiva temples and its culture. They gave Charities and supported. But over a period of time the temples have been damaged and few are in ruined conditions. One of the interesting thing is that the *Kalmeshwar* temples are almost common in all villages of this taluka. Other than the temples, the Shiva inscriptions, sculptures and other monumental remains helps us to rebuild the Shiva temple culture of this area. All these throws light on the religious activities prevailed in this region. We should aware the people regarding heritage conservation.

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