

EMPOWERED WOMEN IN THE DAYS OF CHALUKYAS OF KALYANA

Sampath Kumar B.E.,

Assistant Professor,

Department of History,

Vijaya College, Mulki, Dakshina Kannada dist -574154, Karnataka, India.

Abstract : Women empowerment is the process of Empowering Women. It provided them to take active part in the field of administration, education, cultural etc., for over all development of the society. In this context women in the days of Chalukyas of Kalyana took active part in all walks of life.

IndexTerms - Chalukyas of Kalyani, Ketaladevi, Lakshmidēvi, Savaladevi, Inscriptions.

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the best ways to understand the spirit of civilization, to appreciate its excellence and to realize its limitations, is to study the history of the position and status of women in it. Thus the study of position of women forms an important chapter in the history of human civilization. The status of women from the ancient period in Indian society has varied in its importance because of changes occurred in social and political conditions. Women of the royal families took a keen interest in the field of administration, religion, education and cultural activities.

The position of women under the Chalukyas of Kalyana was no exception to this and the conditions seem to have been favourable for them even to take part in public affairs when they were inclined to do so. Epigraphical records pertaining to this period reveal the names of a number of women not only belonging to royal families but also those of others lower in rank who distinguished themselves in almost all walks of life like administration, religion, social and cultural aspects of life of the period.

II. IN THE FIELD OF ADMINISTRATION

Like other imperial dynasties of ancient India, Chalukyas of Kalyana allowed a number of feudatories to enjoy autonomy under the suzerainty of the paramount power and wives of some of these officers as well as the queens are stated to have ruled over certain portions in their territory. This is one of the remarkable features of the administration of the Chalukyas. This period seems to have created quite a number of women who took active part in the field of administration. A few (among such ladies), who shouldered the responsibility of administration may be mentioned here.

Ketaladevi: Ketaladevi was one of the wives of Someshwara I was ruling Ponnavaḍa¹ in 1054 A.D. which was an Agrahara. Ponnavaḍa is modern Honwad in Dharwad Dist., It was situated in a division of Bage-50, a circle of 50 villages in a division of 600 (arun nurumbada) villages in the province of Tardavadi-1000 division. Another record from the same place dated 1062 A.D.² refers to her rule over that place. It indicates that she enjoyed this office for quite a long period. She was a generous and pious lady. She is stated to have made grants of land and oil mill to Shaiva temples as well as Chaityalayas.

Mailaladevi: Mailaladevi has been described as Piriyaṛasi of Someshwara I. She was ruling Banavasi-12000 division, with Banavasi as the capital.³ Banavasi 12000 was a big division which was comprised of the present Dharwad Dist., parts of Uttara Kannada and Shivamoga Dist., She was also administering the village Tilivalli known from inscriptions dated 1052-53 A.D.⁴

Lachchalamahadevi: Lachchalamahadevi was another queen of Someshwara I. A record from Belavanti which is dated 1054 A.D. refers to her rule over an Uru (village).⁵ As the record is mutilated, other details are not known.

Kanchaladevi: Kanchaladevi was the wife of Someshwara II, the son and successor of Someshwara I. Inscriptions give glimpse of her versatile personality. An inscription from Gudigere says that she was ruling from the capital Mulugunda, i.e., Mulugunda in Dharwad Dist.,⁶

VikramadityaVI, who succeeded his brother Someshwara II and in whose period the glory of the Chalukyas of Kalyana reached its zenith seems to have had a number of wives, It is known that at least a few among them were incharge of different parts of the territory granted to them as pin money or for personal enjoyment. To name a few here:

Lakshmidēvi: Lakshmidēvi was the favourite wife of VikramadityaVI, has been described as Piriyaṛasi. From the inscriptions it is known that she was incharge of different places for example- an inscription dated 1084 says that she was incharge she was ruling from Kalyana.⁷ Another inscription says that she was ruling the 18 Agraharas and the city of Dharmapura (the Dambal in Dharwad Dist.),⁸ Dronapura modern Doni in Dharwad Dist., was under her control in 1080 A.D.⁹ Another village Nittasangi was also under her control is made known from an inscription dated 1109-10 A.D.¹⁰

Savaladevi: Savaladevi, the daughter of Jogamayya, a Mahamandaleswara of Mangalawada, was another queen of VikramadityaVI. She was ruling Narayangalada Agrahara¹¹ in 1077 A.D. It was given to her by the king according to an inscription, as angabhoga. Piriyaṛketaladevi was holding the governorship of Siriguppe, Kolanur Siriyur.¹² Siriguppe was given to her as Bhattagrama and it was situated in Talakallu-12, a subdivision of Ballakunde-300. If some queens of VikramadityaVI like Jakaladevi, Padmaladevi, Mailaladevi and Abbaladevi were associated with the administration of Ingunige,¹³ Mangola Agrahara,¹⁴ Kanavali,¹⁵ and Linsugur¹⁶ respectively, another wife Chandaladevi was ruling over Alande-1000, which was one of the major provinces of the kingdom.¹⁷

Some of the Princesses used to shoulder the responsibility of administration of some places. For example, Mahadevi, who was the daughter of Irvabedanga Satyasraya, and who was given in marriage to a Nolamba chief, was ruling Maravolal, the Marol in Bijapur Dist., in 1024 A.D.¹⁸

Suggaladevi: Suggaladevi, the daughter of Someswara I, was in charge of Nidugundi Agrahara. It was given to her as a Paramesvaradatti grant,¹⁹

Kundamarasa, a subordinate of Irvabedanga Satyasraya and Jayasimha II was in charge of Banavasi-12000, Haive and other provinces. He seems to have had three wives, who associated themselves with the administration of some parts of the territory. They were Jogabbe, Pampadevi and Kundaladevi. Jogabbe and Pampadevi were ruling Ajjadi and Jiduguru respectively. As the inscriptions do not specify the region over which Kundaladevi was ruling and also as the epigraphs describe her ruling thus-Sukhadolarasugeyuttire,²⁰ it can be said that she was ruling jointly with her husband Kundaraja.

Akkadevi: Akkadevi was the sister of Jayasimha. On account of her ability as an administrator she has been considered as one of the celebrated ladies of the period. She was administering different parts of the territory like Pannaleyakote, Kisukadu-70, Tagare-60 and Masavadi-140.²¹ The inscriptions describe her as-

Ari-nripa-mukuta ghatita-charanaravimdeyar

Gamga-sanana pavitreyar-ddin-a natha

Chintamanigal eka vakyeyar-ggunada

Bedamagiyar appa srimad Akkadeviyar.²²

This indicates that she was conversant with the science of warfare. She seems to have had a council of seven ministers.²³ Even she is said to have laid siege to Gokage, i.e., Gokak in Belgaum Dist.,²⁴

III. IN THE FIELD OF FINE ARTS

Apart from the field of administration, some of these ladies (referred to above) belonging to the royal families, noble class as well as the others make themselves known in the field of religion, education and other fine arts. For example-Ketaladevi wife of Someswara I who was known for her varied attainment, was incomparable in her beauty and was known for her generosity and learning and she has been described as (saraswatikarnavatamse). She patronised equally the Jaina as well as Shaiva religious by making liberal grants in the form of land, oil etc., for the worship of the deities.

Inscriptions praise Lakshmidivi as an enlightened lady with mastery over all the fine arts (Sakala Kala Kalapa liladhare). She also has been described as an sakalaladhare, Vivekachudamani and Sharadadevi labda varaprasade. She has been depicted in inscriptions, as one having a handsome personality and was very liberal in making grants for religious purposes. She is said to have made grants for feeding the ascetics, imparting education and the worship of gods.

Inscriptions describe Periyaketaladevi as Sakalaladhare, Abhinava Sarasvati, Anekabhasaha Sangita Vidyadhare.²⁵ Padmaladevi was incomparable in her beauty and like the other queens she too was well adept in fine arts. She also took interest in charitable deeds and her learning earned for her the title Abhinava Sarasvati.²⁶

Along with these women belonging to the royal family and the noble class there were others also who were interested in fine arts, like music and dance. Some of them were appointed dancers and musicians in the temples and were given grants for the services rendered by them. Inscriptions refer to the grants made to such ladies; for example, Periyaketaladevi, wife of Vikramaditya VI²⁷ is stated to have made grants to the musicians and the actors in the temples. Kundaladevi wife of Mahamandaleshwara. Kundaraja shows her interest in music by making grants for this purpose. Another inscription from Bijapur refers to a flutist, two songstresses, two dancing girls, four other courtesans and florist who get substantial endowment of land, for their maintenance.

IV. IN THE FIELD OF RELIGION

Chavanadevi was the daughter of one Duggaraja Dandanayaka. She made grant of land for the service of the god Durgeswara. Another lady named Rebbaladevi, according to an inscription, constructed a temple of Kesavadeva in Puvina-posa vadangile and made gift of land for the freeing houses for the Brahmanas.²⁸ An interesting instance is found in an inscription dated 1083²⁹ where in we find a maid servant named Machabbe was dedicated to the god Sakaleswara by a lady called Rebbakebbe.

One of the ladies who represents the ideal womanhood, service, and dedication, of the period was Attimabbe. If Akkadevi was known for her ability as an administrator, Attimabbe won a perpetual name in the field of religion. Mallappa was her father. She and her sister Gundamabbe were given in marriage to the Nagadeva of the Vaji family. He was an officer under the Chalukyas of Kalyana. When Nagadeva lost his life in a campaign his wife Gundamabbe followed her husband by following the rite of sahgamana but Attimabbe survived as she had to discharge the duty of bringing up her son Annigadeva who was still a minor. The death of Nagadeva brought a change in the life of Attimabbe, it is stated, for thereafter she devoted herself to the promotion of Jaina faith. On account of her pious nature and generosity in making gifts she won the name Danachintamani. She is said to have constructed 1500 Jaina Basadis in different parts of the territory. It is said that 1000 manuscript copies Shantipurana were caused to be written and distributed by her. It is mentioned that Jainapurana was written by the poet Ranna at instance.³⁰

Women also participated in some transactions of the town is referred to in an inscription, dated 1156 A.D.³¹ This inscription mentions a lady named Siriyadevi (sister of Golehanayaka) cited as a witness to a transaction along with the village officers like Gaudas and the Mahajanas.

V. EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

To achieve so much in respective fields, the women of those days must have had proper education. But unfortunately, though we learn that women used to master various subjects and were expert administrators also, we have no information about the mode of education that was given to them. But the titles Sangeetavidyadhare, Sakala Kaladhare, Abhinava Sarasvati, Sakala Kalapaliladhare, Sarva Sastra Prasiddhi, Pratibha Sarasvati, Sahaja Sarasvati, Pandite etc., indicate that at least some training was given to them in education and fine arts. Though the Chalukya inscriptions refer to a number of educational institutions like the Agraharas Gatikasthanas, Bramhapuris and the Mathas, it is hard to say whether women were admitted to such institutions. As noted above women belonging to the royal families and noble class acted as administrators and played their role in social as well as cultural aspects of life. This indicates that women belonging to a higher rank and had some sort of education. There are instances wherein we find some women taking interest in making grants on a large scale to the educational institutions. To give an instance

Lakshmidēvi wife of Vikramaditya VI, is said to have made grant of a village Pomgari to Someshwara Pandita to feed the ascetics and the other students at Sundi.³²

The inscriptions do not mention the ladies belonging to the lower rank, This does not indicate that women belonging to the lower rank received no education at all. Generally, inscriptions pertained to grants made by members of royal families and such as the commoners hardly find a place in such records. Hence, it can be said that they also received requisite education depending upon their choice and ability though the inscriptions do not refer to women who participated in educational activities, either teaching or learning in those educational institutions.

It is to be concluded that the picture we get of the position of women in the Chalukyan days of course is incomplete and indistinct. As observed above inscriptions speak about mostly the members of the royal families and their attainments. Many of the descriptions may appear conventional but it looks as though in many of the cases the description is factual.

As regards the attainments of the other women we have no information, but grants to religious as well as educational institutions is made by some women indicate that the ladies belonging to the lower rank also had freedom to a certain extent. With regard to the education, may be, they received basic education i.e., the minimum of reading and writing at home and were trained to be good house-wives and mothers. Women of exceptional abilities did rise above and had their impact in different fields.

VI. SUMMARY

It can be said that by and large the women in the Chalukyan days enjoyed fairly a secure position in the society, taking active part in all walks of life. It is a distinct feature, however, even royal members of other dynasties of other regions are not heard of to this extent as in Karnataka region enjoyed better position in the society than those of other regions.

REFERENCES

1. Indian Antiquary, Volume XIX, p.270
2. Annual Report of South Indian Epigraphy;1933-34, App. D. 72
3. Annual Report of South Indian Epigraphy,1932-33,App,D.72.
4. Epigraphia Indica,Volume XVI, p. 338 ff.
5. Annual Report of South Indian Epigraphy 1946-47, No. 204
6. Annual Report of South Indian Epigraphy., 1938-39, App. E.No. 110
7. Epigraphia Indica, Volume XV. P. 100 ff
8. Bombay Karnataka Inscriptions (II) p. 145
9. Bombay Karnataka Inscriptions., No. 126
10. Bombay Gazetteer. Vol. I, P. 448; EI, p. 100 ff
11. Annual Report of Indian Epigraphy, 1946-47, No. 227.
12. South Indian Inscription, IX, (i) p. 145.
13. Desai, P.B., Jainism in South India and some Epigraphs, p.230 ff.
14. South Indian Inscription, IX, No. 159
15. South Indian Inscription., XX, No. 61.
16. Annual Report of Indian Epigraphy., 1953-54, No. 241.
17. Jainism in South India, p. 209
18. Bombay Karnataka Inscriptions, Pt. I, No. 61.
19. Annual Report of South Indian Epigraphy, 1932-33, App. D. No. 124
20. Epigraphia Indica.,Volume XV, p. 329 ff
21. Bombay Karnataka Inscriptions, (i) no. 86
22. Epigraphia Indica, Volume XVII, p. 122
24. Epigraphia Indica.,Volume XV, p. 77 ff
25. South Indian Inscription, IX, Pt. I, No. 159.
26. South Indian Inscription., p. 146
27. South Indian Inscription., p. 189 ff.
28. South Indian Inscription
29. South Indian Inscription., No. 158
30. Annual Report of South Indian Epigraphy, 1933-34, No. 147
31. Bombay Karnataka Inscriptions (i) No. 52.
32. Chidanandamurthy, M., Kannada Sasanagala Samskritika Adhyayana. P. 429
33. Epigraphia Indica.,Volume XV, p¹. 102

