

A sociological study of the sacred complex in Udupi

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Abstract: Temples have been playing the most essential role in the socio-religious life of the people of this country. The Hindu temples as it is today are a product of centuries of accumulation and amalgamation of several social religious cultural practices of a particular region. A temple in this region and the gods and goddesses within its perimeters and the interrelationships between them represent the social configuration of the region and the representative relationship of the society. The social system of a region influences the religious practices and beliefs of that area. Similarly, the social system influenced the religious structure of that region. In this article, it is stated that the physical buildings or Hindu temples of South Western India reflect the social order of the region.

Tulunadu or the Tulu region is situated in southwestern India. There are a large number of temples belonging to Shaiva, Shakta, Vaishnava, and Ganapatya, in addition to temples or Daivasthana of local deities. Hindu temples are usually devoted to several different Deities. Temples in this region were built in a complex with a main shrine and sub-shrines. Hindu temples of South Western India reflect the social order or caste order of the region. Temples simply reflect its broader social context. Caste in India is a social reality. The structure of the Hindu social order is hierarchical in nature. Society has upper castes and lower castes. In an extended temple complex one can find deities of all social groups. Such deities were placed in the temple complex in such a way that reflected the social order of the region. Temples also have a main deity at the center, subordinate deities in the second circle, the gods of some particular castes or communities placed in the next circle. The Daivas shrine of the aboriginals is placed in the subsequent circle or the outer circle of the same temple complex. Thus, the gods of the original inhabitants of Tulunadu, the Dalit generally called the Daivas are part of the main temple but were kept in the outer circle of the temple. The Vedic gods were worshiped with tantric rituals whereas non-Vedic gods were worshiped with folk rituals and animal sacrifice was offered to them. So, it is very clear that religiously, ritualistically, and culturally there is no affinity among these gods. But they were brought together into a single temple complex.

Keywords: temple complex, social hierarchy, Brahmanical deities, non-Brahmanical deities, Daivas, folk rituals, tantric rituals, temple Prakara.

Introduction: Much study has been done in the field of religious history of Tulunadu or Tulu region of south-western India, which includes present-day districts of Uttara Kannada, Dakshina Kannada, and Udupi of State of Karnataka and parts of District of Kasaragod of state of Kerala. Attempts were also made by some scholars, Ramesh K V., in his book A History of South Kanara, Karnataka University, Dharwad. 1970. Balaji, N. Hebbar, in his thesis 'The Sri Krishna Temple at Udupi: The Historical and Spiritual Center of the Madhvite Sect of Hinduism- A Monograph on its Tradition' The George Washington University, 1980., Jagadish Shetty B., in his thesis 'The Agro-Economic Relations and Social Structure in Dakshina Kannada(AD 1000-1600)' Ph.D. Thesis, Mangalore University, 1992. to study temples as an economic institution, as a recipient of land grants from political authorities, and also as a landowner. Social structures had an impact not only on religious beliefs and practices but also on the physical structures of religious buildings. In this paper, an attempt is made to understand the social structure and social hierarchy of Tulunadu or Tulu region of south-western India, as reflected in the construction of shrines for different deities in the temple complex.

Sources: Archeological remains of temples of this region are the main source for the study of the religious history of this area. Dr. P. Gururaj Bhat made a detailed study of the temples of this region. (Gururaja Bhat, P. 'Antiquités of South Kanara', Kallianpur, 1969, Gururaja Bhat, P., Dr. 'Studies in

Tuluva History and Culture', Kallianpur, 1975.) In his study, Dr. Bhat concentrated on iconography, ground planning, temple structure, Sculpture, architecture, etc. Many literary works throw light on the temples of Tulunadu as well as the social system of the region. Gramapaddati is one such text of South Western India belonging to the medieval period that throws light on the social history of this region and reveals the traditional history of the Brahmanas of coastal Karnataka also called Tulu Nadu. This text helps in understanding the relationship between the Brahmanical and non-Brahmanical groups of the region. The text also gives information regarding the migration of the Brahmanas to this region. This text is an important source for reconstructing the social history of the region and contains useful information regarding the Brahmana family and their settlement and the intimate relationship between temporal and sacred domains.

In the present paper, some temples of South Western India particularly of Udupi District were analyzed to understand the relationship between Social structure and Temple structure. Udupi is located on the west coast of India. Even though it was a part of Tulunadu but Tulu language is not spoken in the entire region. For many centuries it remained an integral part of Alupa Kingdom. Tulu was the language of the common people in the Alupa kingdom. Historical Tulunadu comprised the district of Udupi, Dakshina Kannada parts of Uttara Kannada normally up to Gerusoppe, and sometimes the Ghat region of Shivamogga district. The name Tulunadu was in vogue from the early centuries of the Christian era right up to the close of the Keladi rule that is the end of the 17th century.

Social Structure: Castes are a social reality of Hindus in India. The structure of the Hindu social order is hierarchical in nature. It has a huge impact on people's everyday lives. The Hindu belief says that people are classified into four classes or castes and these castes define what jobs they can do, what duties and what privileges they have. These four casts are the Brahmins, priests, and teachers who occupy the top position in the hierarchy. The Kshatriya rulers and warriors, Vaisyas land owners, merchants, money lenders, and sometimes artisans, and the Sudras the servants, peasants, etc. do manual labour and are expected to serve the higher casts and a fifth group is a group of untouchables called Dalits. Originally the caste must be based on skills, qualities and activities however in real life tradition of casts separates people according to their birth. In addition to these four casts, there were enumerable sub casts further dividing the people of India. This caste and sub castes system was almost permanent in one's life. These castes started as a natural occupational division and eventually, they got religious sanction which made the caste system more solid and socially and religiously superior and inferior. These groups are arranged hierarchically one above the other. Dalits are the fifth class of the fivefold social structure of the Hindu social order. In a sense, Dalits were excluded from every walk of life. The caste system divides Hindu society into rigid hierarchical groups based on their Karma work and Dharma. This caste system is a generally accepted social order which is one of the oldest forms of social stratification in the world which has at least 3000 years of history. For centuries castes dictated almost every aspect of Hindu religious and social life with each group occupying a specific place in this complex hierarchy. It is a social hierarchy passed down through families and it can dictate the profession of a person also. Before analyzing the temple structure, it is necessary to make a note of the social structure of this region. In the early centuries of the Christian era, when the Tulunadu was inhabited by the Kosar people. They adorned their bodies lavishly with jewels. Vaddarse inscription, the earliest inscription of this region which belongs to the seventh century A. D., throws light on the social structure of this region. By the middle of the seventh century A. D., the Aryan classification of society into four castes had come to govern human society in this region. The inscription of this region also refers to many castes and sub-castes which existed in this region.

From the social point of view, there is not much difference in the social structure or caste structure that existed in the Udupi region and the rest of the Tulunadu or what is called today South Kanara and Udupi Districts. The Sahyadri Kanda and Gramapaddati refer to the import of the Brahmanas into this region by the Kadamba Ruler Mayura Varma in the middle of the 4th century A.D., From the 9th century onwards the inscription of this region refers to several casts and sub castes which existed in this region.

Thus, the caste structure of this region during the 8th to 10th century was not much different from the caste structure that existed in the rest of the country. The Koragas were the original inhabitants of this region. The oral tradition of the Korags refers to their King Hubbasiga. The oral tradition of the Brahmans namely the Sahyadri Kanda and Gramapaddati reveals that the Brahmanas were brought to this region. However, it is difficult to fix the chronology of the arrival of the Brahmanas into this region. The tradition in the districts of Dakshina Kannada and Uttara Kannada informs us of Brahmin immigration into the region from Ahichatra in the 8th century and Barakuru was one of the places at which A Brahmin governor is said to have been appointed. But the epigraph of Tulunadu is silent about the introduction of Brahmins to Dakshina Kannada by Mayura Verma. Early historians of the region used the Gramapaddati text in studying the social history of the region. The text reveals that the Brahmanas migrated to this region and they converted local non-brahmin people by investing them with threads of jute. Thus, the non-brahmins become Brahmins in the region. The non-Brahmins of the region were worshipping their traditional gods and goddesses generally called Daivas. When they became Brahmins started worshipping Brahminical gods and goddesses the non-Brahminical gods and goddesses were also installed near temples of the Brahmanas.

The Billavas, Mogaveeras, Nadavas, the Bunts, the Brahmanas, and the Jains formed the most influential social strata of the region. It may be said that both the Billavas and The Mogaveeras must have been an important Stratum of original settlers. There must have been certain tribal communities such as the Koragas, the Paravas, and the Nalkes who were also the original inhabitants of this region. The Vijayanagara period in Tulu history witnessed an unprecedented flow of settlers into Tulu Nadu from outside because of peace and tranquility that remained almost supreme all over the Empire. This phenomenon led to a great deal of social, religious and cultural intermixture.

Temple complex: For the first time a comprehensive and exhaustive study of the temple architecture and iconography of the land is attempted by Dr. P Gururaj Bhat. Most of the ancient temples of the region are still alive and are playing a very active role in the social, religious and cultural life of the people. the religious and cultural activities that are carried on systematically in these temples. The inscriptions that are available in most of these temples give details of religious and cultural activities carried out in these temples. The beginnings of temple building activities started in India during the rule of the Guptas around the 4th to 6th centuries. The temple-building activities must have started in Tulunadu as early as the 6th and 7th centuries of the Christian Era if not earlier. In the entire region there are nearly 5000 temples; both major and minor sum of them are incomplete ruins. There are a good number of temples built in the apsidal form and all these go to fairly early dates. A temple is an owner of the land and other movable and immovable property. Temples were also the center of economic activities such as market shares and pilgrims ran educational institutions, maintained manuscripts, provided medical as well as hospital facilities, and in the cultural sphere they promoted dance music theatre, and local festivities. Thus, these temples played an important role in the religious life of people from ancient to the present day. Hindu temples are the symbol or rather a synthesis of various symbols. Hindu temples are conceived in terms of the human organism as well as social organisms which is the focus of the present study.

Dating the temples in Tulu country is a challenging problem for historians because the external form of the temple structure is likely to mislead anybody, even an expert. There are several instances of the temple being renovated several times while the sculpture of the principal deity or the god is unchanged. The main deity or the god could be a thousand-year-old image in a style but the temple appears modern. It is refreshing to find that most of the early shrines were simple structures with a mud wall and thatched roofs. Some of them still retain their original form. The structural vulnerability is subjected to many instances of fire which fact is even recorded in epigraphs. Instead of mud walls and thatched roofs, hard granite or laterite bricks came to be used profusely in the construction of these temples. Early temples of the region are of the Shaiva cult and its branches like Shakta, Ganapathya, etc. Shaivism of the early Alupa period appears to have been influenced by the cult of Shiva as Pashupathi

i.e. the lord of beasts. Based on epigraphic pieces of evidence we may maintain that the predominant religion of this region was Shaivism. Naga worship must have been practiced by the early inhabitants of this region including the ruling family namely the Alupas. The Naga worship of the indigenous family of the Alupas was perhaps responsible to some extent for the inherent Shaiva tendency of the Alupas. Shaivism continued to be the chief religious faith of the state and people during the period of Medieval Alupas. Most of the Shaiva-Shakta temples of this region were built during the rule of Alupas. The temples of this region are apsidal plan generally of the medieval period and are strikingly frequent as in Kerala. Temples also rose when the local deities or heroes were absorbed into puranic institutions. The tribal are the local or folk deities amalgamated in the Hindu temples. Sociologists argue that the social system of a region influences the religious practices and beliefs of that region. The main purpose of this article is how the social system influences the physical structures of religion in that region.

The following temples of the Kondapur region are surveyed to prepare this paper- Kotinatha temple Koteswara. Sri Seneshwar temple Baindoor. Sri Durgaparameshwari temple Saukoor. Sri Brahmalingeshwara temple Maranakatte. Sri Durgaparameshwari temple Mandarti, Sri Durgaparameshwari temple Kannaru, Perthri, Sri Mahishamardini Temple Neelavara etc. They are some of the earliest temples of this region. But there is no evidence to find the date of the establishment of these temples.

In Kundapur Taluk, west of the Arabian Sea, on the bank of Kotithirtha Lake is the Kotilingeshwara temple, which is dedicated to lord Shiva. It is one of the four Muktisthala of Karnataka. The annual car festival attracts thousands of people across the country. Sri Kotinatha temple or Kotilingeshwara temple or Koteswara temple is one of the earliest and biggest temples of this region. This temple must have been built before 7-8th century AD. There is a reference to this temple in the Sahyadri Kanda of Skanda Purana. Nearly 14 inscriptions which belonged to the 10th century A.D. and 14th century A.D. found in this temple complex were documented. 32 inscriptions of the Vijayanagara period were also found there. Many inscriptions which are found outside Koteswara and Kundapura are also referring to this temple. All these epigraphs attach great importance to this temple. Regarding the structure of Kotilingeshwara temple This temple is an amazing building made of granite stone. The huge pillars, slabs and roof sheets are all made of granite stone. According to the oral tradition, the temple has seven prakara (circular paths around the central deity). The linga of Koteswara was installed in the Garbhagriha of the temple. The temple is facing east with the main door being about 10 feet wide and 25 feet tall. The Dwajasthamba is about 100 feet tall with a small Nandi on the top of it. Many inscriptions are found on the second prakara of the temple which speaks about the history of the temple. Small shrines of Shri Ganapathi, Shri Mukhyapraana, and Shri Venugopalakrishna (in this region Shri Venugopalakrishna has been worshipped by the Ganiga community, the oil pressures (OBC) as their family God). are found in the second prakara of the temple.

On the right side, the Chandeshwara Linga was installed. The Nirmalya of the main God is offered to Chandeshwara. The third circle or prakara of the temple has a lot of small shrines dedicated to Saptamatrikas (7 mothers), Subramanya, Venkataraman, Mahishasuramardini, and many bootha gana stones. at the left end, the statue of Veerabhadra, who is considered the protector of saptamatrikas. (in the entire coastal region of Karnataka Veerabhadra has been worshipped by the Weavers community (OBC) as their family God). In the North West corner of the same circle the statue of goddess Hariti was installed. In the 5th outer circle, Boothanatha stone is kept and in the northeast corner of the shrine, Kshetrapala was established. He is considered as the protector of the temple complex. Outside the main door i.e. in the outer pradhakshinapatha Bobbarya stone is kept. This is essentially a bootha or a daiva or a folk god. Naga shrine, olaga mandapa or music mandapa, and okuli pit are found on the outskirts but facing the main shrine. The next circle which is considered the 7th outer circle along with other shrines Kadya shrine, and the shrine of Chikkudaiva, are essentially worshiped by the Dalit communities. Thus, in an extended temple complex at Koteswara, one can find Vedic gods that have been worshipped by the Brahmanas, installed at garbhagriha or the center. In the subsequent circles of the temple complex, the idols of Shri Mukhyapraana, Shri Venugopalakrishna Sri Veerabhadra, and Sri Boothanatha were

installed. These gods were family or community Gods gods of the OBC community, worshipped by non-Brahmins in the beginning. But later on, they were taken into the Brahmin fold, and pooja rituals were performed by the Brahmans. In the outer circle of the same temple complex, the gods of Dalits and the original inhabitants of Tulunadu are worshipped. The Vedic gods were worshipped with tantric rituals as non-Vedic gods were worshipped with folk rituals and animal sacrifice was offered to them. So it is very clear that religiously, ritualistically, and culturally there is no affinity among these gods. But they were brought together into a single temple complex.

Seneshwara temple at Byndoor is an important temple of this region. It is a Shaiva temple that must have been built during the 11th century A.D. In the main chamber, the linga of Seneshwar was installed. The images of Bhairava Mahadeva and Chamundi are found in the mid-circle of the temple complex. The statue of Virabhadra is found in the outer circle of the temple complex. It is argued that the Virabhadra statue belongs to the Keladi period or post-Vijayanagara period. Sri Durgaparameshwari temple Saukur also has much religious and cultural significance. Here Sri Durgaparameshwari, Sri Mahakali, Sri Mahasaraswathi, and Sri Mahalaxmi are worshipped in the form of Linga. Virabhadra, Kali, and Naga are worshipped as subordinate deities to the main deity Sri Durgaparameshwari. In the Brahmalingeshwara temple at Maranakatte, Sri Brahmalingeshwara is the main god, and Malayali Yakshi, Yakshi, Haiguli, and Chikku are the subordinate Gods to the main god. In the Brahmi Sri Durgaparameshwari Temple at Kamalashile, Sri Durgaparameshwari is the main god. Sri Virabhadra, Sri Hosamma, Sri Mundantaya, Sri Rakteshwari, and Sri Kali are worshipped in the outer circle. It is very clear from the study of the above-mentioned temples that the Vedic gods, non-Vedic gods, and local gods are all brought together into a single temple complex. In a single temple complex, the shrines of Vedic gods, or the main gods, and non-Vedic gods, or the subordinate gods were built at a regular distance.

In the hierarchical social order, the upper caste people depend on the service of the people who live at the bottom of the social system. The interdependent social setup has existed in this region. In this kind of socio-economic structure, upper caste people had to control the people who lived at the bottom of the socio-economic system. In this socio-economic system most of the landowners, and state officials were Brahmins and other upper-class people. The majority of the working section and the peasants belonged to Shudras or Dalit communities. The landowners wanted to control the peasants and also wanted to prevent them from moving away from their land. Therefore, the way they discovered it was to control their gods. The gods of the peasants were brought and kept in the temple complex of the upper-class landlords. If the peasants wanted to move away from their place they had to move along with their gods. But their gods were under the control of upper-class landlords. Without their permission, they cannot move their god. Thus, it becomes easy for the upper-class landlords to control the peasants. Thus, the upper-class landlords controlled the peasants by controlling their gods.

Conclusion: To conclude it is amply clear from the above discussion that inequality is the product of the cast structure of the Hindus. The Caste has decided the social cultural and religious position of the individual in the society. The cast is always hierarchical in nature and they were arranged hierarchically one above the other. In this hierarchical system, the upper-class landlords wanted to control the working force who were at the bottom of the socio-economic system. In this interdependent social setup, the upper caste people exploited the controlled religious symbol of the people at the bottom level. Thus, the upper-class landlords controlled the peasants by controlling their gods. During the last phase of the Annual special pooja or annual festival of the main God, a special pooja is also offered to the deities of the non-brahmin community which was installed at the outer circle of the temple. It is important to note that the worship of the deities of the non-brahmin community in the outer circle of the temple is a part of the annual festival of the main temple. Thus, the annual festival of the main deity and the special worship of the non-Brahmanical deities are interconnected and complementary. In this way, bringing the gods of the upper caste Brahmin community, the gods of the middle class, and the gods of the lower section of the society within the universal perimeter of the temple and making the festivals held there

interrelated and dependent on each other. There were two purposes found behind such a system. Firstly, the Brahmins were very few in number when they migrated to this region. Intending to increase their population, they offered sacred thread to the non-brahmins of the locality and made them Brahmins. Even though they become Brahmins, the locally converted people continue to worship the deities that they have been worshipping. Thus the dities or Daivas of new Brahmins were installed within the perimeter of the Brahmin temple. Secondly, the service of the lower section of society was indispensable to the upper-class people. so to keep them under their control, they connected the worship of their gods with the worship of the Brahmin gods. Thus, it is an attempt to keep the lower section of society under the boon of the upper castes of society.

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