

# Education System in Noorumbada

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*Abstract- The standard of culture of the people in a region or country is reflected in the education that is imparted to them. 'Ancient Indian education was predominantly religious'. This system of education was considered as a means to attain salvation or self-realisation, atma-jnana in the ancient period. It was for this reason only that while making religious grants, people many a time, also made donations to the educational institutions, which were usually attached to the temple or matha and for the maintenance of the teacher and the taught. Thus, usually the temples served as the centres of education. Obviously, the various records indicate even in Noorumbada the prevalence of the same system of education. The epigraphs also indicate that, as in other parts of ancient India, in Noorumbada too, a close relationship between the teacher and the taught prevailed, for the students usually lived in a common home with the teacher. Hence, the disciples were often described in the records as anicvasi, meaning the home of the teacher, which was also the school, gurnkiila, in those days.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

For instance, an epigraph in Rattihalli while giving the list of teachers of Niravadya Pandita informs that in the home of 'Pujyapada' resided his disciple Udayadeva Pandita and the latter's disciple was Niravadyapandita, who was instrumental in making the king grant the village of Kadramidi for the worship of Shankha Jinendra and the maintenance of a danashala in the temple (SII-XVIII, No.11).

Certainly, it indicates that the students belonged not to any institution, but to their teachers. The epigraphs of the region, under study, suggest that the temples, Mathas. Agraharas, Brahmपुरi and Ghatika-sthanas were the typical educational centres in Noorumbada

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the granted land. Agraharas, Brahmपुरi and Ghatika-sthanas were the typical educational centres in Noorumbada

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The above record clearly suggests that during the early Chalukyan period itself, an eminent educational centre, Ghatikakshetra at Noorumbada was already well established and definitely several educational centres of different kinds must have existed in the region, at that time.

The epigraphs of the region clearly indicate that in the early history of the region, the Jain temples served as centres of education and its preceptors performed the dual functions of imparting education as well as attending to priestly activities.

Even though the available records do not furnish much information about the educational activities like the subjects taught, the numbers of students and teachers, yet they certainly shed some light on the reputed teachers and their disciples. Of the Jaina educational centres, which were usually referred to in the inscriptions as danashalas. and which were usually attached to a temple, Noorumbada occupies the pivotal place.

The Shankha Jinalaya in Noorumbada had a danashala and it had some reputed preceptors and disciples. The first reference to a danashala along with the Shankha Jinalaya is made in a record dated 11c A.D. It states that the Chalukya king Vinayaditya made a grant of the village Ittige, situated in Banvasi division, for the repairs, worship and offerings to the Shankha Jinalaya and also for a danashala at the

request of Druvadevacharya, who belonged to Mulasangha and Devagana.

It is interesting to note that later during the reign of Chalukya Vijayaditya in 723 A.D, a gift of the village Makari was made by Bikki Ranaka for the purpose of repairs of the Danashala of Jinabhataraka chaityalaya, located in the Shankha Jinalaya premises.

The epigraph also furnishes a list of teachers and disciples who resided in the Jinabhataraka Chaityalaya, viz., Jayadevapanditacharya of Mulasangha was the disciple and son of Ramadevacharya, who in turn was the disciple of Chikkana devacharya.

The last-named preceptor was the disciple of Devacharya. Seven years later in 730 A.D., the same Chalukyan ruler made a gift of the village Kaddama for the maintenance of a danashala in the Shankha Jinendra temple at the instance of the preceptor Niravadya Pandita.

Niravadya Pandita is described in the record as the favourite disciple of Udayadeva Pandita. who resided in the residence of his preceptor Pujyapada Cantevasinah). The last preceptor was a reputed grammarian in Sanskrit. Even during the reign of Vikramaditya-II a land grant was made by the ruler for the maintenance and development of danashala in Dhavala Jinalaya in Shankhatirtha basadi .

The epigraph also states about the preceptor Vijayadeva Pandita who resided in the residence of Jayadeva Pandita, who was a disciple of Ramadevacharya, known for his penance, Paramatapashruta.

Another inscription states that Mahasamanta Jayakesiyarasa Rastrakutaka of Banvasi division, visited the Permadi Basadi at Noorumbada and elevated it to the status of pura at the request of Tribhuvanachandra Pandita, a disciple of Gandavimukta Bhataraka and remitted certain tax incomes to the same. It can be inferred from the above record that the Permadi basadi was upgraded to impart not only higher education to students but also to accommodate a larger number of students.

Yet another inscription describes the intellectual fame of two Jaina preceptors, who were also brothers, viz., Srinandi Pandita and his elder brother Bhaskaranandi Pandita, who were well versed in Ratnatrayas. Chatur Vidharadhanes. i.e... three jewels of Jainism and four types of Jaina rituals: Tantra, Yantra and Grantha respectively (SII-XX. No. 52).

They were the residents of the Thirthankar basadi at Noorumbada and were imparting education to several disciples. The four rituals or the chaturvidharadhanes were Samyaka Darshana, Samyaka Jnana.

Samyaka Tapas and Samyaka Charita. By observing these aradhanes, the Jaina monks got peace and tolerance in life, Shanti and Samyama. The above-mentioned inscription records the death of both the preceptors by the rite of Sallekhana, which was observed for one month, mcisa sallekhana, at Thirthankar basadi at Noorumbada.

## II. AGRAHARAS AND BRAHMAPURIS

Both the Agrahara and Brahmapuri where the educational centres were Brahmana teachers, called Mahajanas imparted education. If the Agraharas were the settlements of the brahmana colonies in villages, the Brahmapuris were the settlements of the learned.

Brahmapuris in the Noorumbada were less compared to the Agrahara as there were not many cities in those days. The Brahmanas of these settlements were involved in discharging their six-fold scriptural duties, Shatkarnuis. viz., Adhyayana-studying Vedas.

Yajna-sacrificing, Dana-giving alms. Adhyapana-teaching Vedas, Yajana-officiating at sacrifices, Pratigrahana-receiving alms. In fact, the first three duties could be commonly discharged by Kshatriya. Vaishya and Brahmanas who were regarded as dvijas or twice-born, whereas, the latter three were to be discharged only by a Brahmana.

The various epithets of the Mahajanas, referred to in the epigraphs definitely suggest that they were erudite seholors in many subjects, including the Vedas and Vedangas.

In the Noorumbada, Rattihalli village had an agrahara. An inscription records the gift of 12 mattars of land made by the officer of the division for the matha and education (IA.X11, p.253 dated 951 A.D.) Similarly, another inscription, while recording a grant of land to the Baladeva Jinalaya by Mahapradhana Baladevayya, the place is referred to in the epigraph as the Agrahara Rattapalli.

As far as the Brahmapuris in the Noorumbada are concerned, the epigraphs of the region throw welcome light. The first reference to the Brahmapuri in the region is made in a very badly damaged record at Siddageri dated 11c A.D.

However, it is the inscription of the period of Bijjala-II, dated 1166 A.D., that gives detailed information about the Brahmapuri at Siddageri. The epigraph tells us of the forming of a Brahmapuri in Rajadhani Pattana at Rattihalli by Sridhara dandanayaka and his brother Macharasa dandanayaka. The Brahmapuri was donated to 52 Brahmanas who were well-versed in different branches of learning.

It is significant to note that the names of all the 52 Brahmanas with their specialised branch of learning is mentioned in the inscription. On the basis of this we can presume that there were different cadres of teaching like Bhatta, Ghalisasa, Upadhyaya and also families of Nayakas like Shankaranayaka, Keshavadevanayaka, poets like Sahajakavi Nagadeva Pandita, Gouda, Pujari, etc.

The various subjects in which these scholars were well-versed, were jyotishya, puraria, ganitha shastra, tarkika (logic), ubhaya vyakarani (grammar) mahavadi (debater), Panini's work, dashagranthi, khandika (criticism), kramita, etc. A list of the names of 52 persons and their specialised subjects is enclosed separately.

The reference to the existence of different cadres in the Brahmapuri, indicates that at this place a provision was made for the imparting of education from elementary level to the higher education. Some of the names that are mentioned in the inscription which formed said Brahmapuri at Rattihalli, indicate that there were non-Brahmanas also, for example, Hadapadaicharasa, Nanimayya, Sankayya, etc.

Yet another Brahmapuri that is referred to in the inscription of Noorumbada is the Brahmapuri at Ranibennur. The Binnauru plates of the 13<sup>th</sup> century states that the Kadamba king Mallapa's crowned queen Padmaladevi established a Brahmapuri at Ranibennur, included in Noorumbada.

The gift of the Brahmapuri was made over to 64 Brahmanas of different gotras, who were the devotees of Vishnu and were well-versed in the Vedas and their meaning. In fact, separate land grants were made to the Mahajanas for specific purposes like some nivartanas for reciting Vedas, for bhattavritti (teaching), for reciting Puranas and for the teaching of elementary science, balasiksha, of proper pronunciation of words and laws of euphony which formed one of the six vedangas.

The record also suggests that there were some Brahmanas and Brahmana families who used the epithet kramita before their names like Devana Kramita, Vishnu Kramita, etc. It denotes the extent of study that the persons themselves or their family predecessors, to whom the epithet is appended, had made.

### III. GHATIKASTHANAS

Ghatikasthana, also called Ghatika or Ghalige, was another significant centre of higher education, which is frequently referred to in the inscriptions. Even though different theories have been put forward by scholars, with regard to the exact meaning and significance of the Ghatikasthana, certainly it was a reputed centre of higher learning.

In the opinion of Dr. Chidananda Murthy, because of the installation of the Ghatika Yantra, a time-keeping device, in the temples which was also essential for the Jyothishi, astrologers, the place got the name Ghatikasthana, where vedic education was imparted to the brahmanas (Chidanandu Murthy M.-Kannada Shasanagala Sanskritika Adhyayana, p. 227).

Those who distinguished themselves in scholarly disputations and discussions were called Ghatika sahasa, Ghalissai, Ghaisa in the records. Thus, we can say that the Ghatikasthanas were not only the

centres of higher education but also the centres of scholarly disputations and discussions.

Undoubtedly, Noorumbada was having one of the earliest Ghalikas in the history of Karnataka. Because an epigraph, while informing the location of the land grant, mentions the existence of a Ghatika kshetra to the south of the land grant made by the Chalukya feudatory Durgashakti of Sendraka family.

(SII-XX, No.3). Another inscription informs that Mahamandaleshvara Jayakesideva made a gift of land in A.D. 1128, for the benefit of the Ghalige, which was attached to the temple of Svayambhu Dakshina Somanatha at Rajadhani Pattana Rattapalli. It is not known whether both the above mentioned Ghatikas were one and the same. However, in the later inscription of the same place, the names of 16 Ghalisasa or the Ghatikasahasis are mentioned.

All these Ghalisahas were imparting education in the Brahmapuri that was created by the dandanayaka Sridhara and his brother Macharasa. The teachers were granted rent free lands, vrutti, by the rulers for their services. For instance, Chalukya Jagadekamalla Pratapa Chakravarti made gifts of several vruttis to the individuals like Somapandita, Upadhyaya Keshavabhata. Rudrabhatta, Yajnesh warabhata. Pujari, etc.

Thus, establishment of the educational centres and making gifts of land for the maintenance of the teachers and the taught, by the rulers and their feudatories, indicate that the educational activities were liberally patronised by the authorities in Karnataka.

#### MATHAS

The mathas like the Jaina vasati or Basadis, were another type of residential centres of education. These were usually attached to the Shaiva temples and the teachers of these were usually the followers of Shaivism. Both religious and secular subjects were taught to the pupils at these mathas.

As regards the mathas in Noorumbada, the Kadambeshwar temple and the matha attached to it, is the earliest one to have been mentioned in the records. An epigraph states that a gift of land

was made to Agastyapanditadeva, the disciple of Samavedipandita, for feeding and maintenance of the teacher, who was teaching 'Koumara Vyakarana' and the students in the matha as attached to the temple of Kadambeshwar at Noorumbada.

The very term 'Koumara Vyakarana' means imparting grammar education to the young pupils in the matha and thus indicating the importance attached to the field of education. In fact, Samavedipandita, who was the teacher of Agastya Panditadeva, was not only well-versed in the 'Samaveda' but he was also the acharya of the Rameshwara temple.

He was well-known for his Brahmacharya, asceticism and tapas, penance. He had to his credit the reputed pupils like Agastyapanditadeva and Monideva, who proudly claimed to be the disciples of Samavedipandita. As far as the subjects taught in these various educational centres are concerned, no definite information is available in the epigraphs of the region, under the study.

However, we can presume, on the basis of the information available from other areas, that usually Vedas, Vedanga, Vyakarana (grammar), Tatva (philosophy), Purana, Kavya (poetics), etc., were taught to the student at these centres.

As mentioned earlier, one Vasudevabhata had the epithet Sakalakala brahmana, i.e., mastery in all arts. The same inscription also states that at the Brahmapuri in Ranibennur, there were Acharyas well-versed in Dashagranthi, Vyakarana, Panini, etc.

The various epithets the teachers had before their names like Ghalisasa, Kramita, Mahavadi. Vacliaspata, etc., were perhaps the indication of their degrees.

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