



A Historical Study of Saligrama Taluk

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Abstract: *A Historical study tries to comprehensively capture the impression of man on his surroundings and his imprints from the earlier stages till present. Tracing the past, finding the relevance of it on the happenings during the course of the time is a necessity and objective of potent research papers. With this objective and focus this paper “A Historical Study of Saligrama Taluk”, is being written. Currently, Saligrama is one of the eight taluks of Mysuru district that lies on the banks of river Cauvery. Saligrama is in the Northwestern border of Mysuru district and shares its borders with Hassan district. To construct the history of Saligrama taluk, we have many literary and archaeological sources.*

Key words: *Saligrama, Art and Architecture. Chikkahansoge, Hansoge, Saligrama, Chunchanakatte, Bherya Channakeshava, Yoganarasimha, Kodandarama, Channakeshava, Ananthanatha Basadi, Neminatha Basadi and Parshwanatha Basadi.*

Saligrama is one of the eight taluks of Mysuru district that lies on the banks of river Cauvery. Saligrama consists of three hoblis- Saligrama, Chunchanakatee, Mirle and has 129 villages. The Geographical location of Saligrama Taluk is 12.56° to 12.38° North latitude and 76.25° East to 76.28 ° East longitude. Most of the taluk is on the banks of the river of cauvery and consists of fertile irrigated land. Cauvery flows three kilometers from Saligrama town where a dam by name Chamaraja Annicut is built during 1895 by Diwan Sheshadri Iyer.

To the north of Saligrama is Hassan district, to the north east it has Holenarasipura Taluk (Hassan District), to the South east it has KR Nagar Taluk (Mysuru District), to the South

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west it has Periyapatna Taluk (Mysore District) to the northwest lies Arakalagudu Taluk (Hassan District).

Geographical features:

Saligrama is part of Deccan Plateau and it lies in the Southern part of the plateau, which is 600 to 800 meters above sea level. It is neither fully plain nor uneven. The taluk is made up of rocks dating back to preambic era (280 to 300 million years) consisting of metamorphic rock structures of granite and rough crystalline rocks. The taluk slopes from west to east and the river Cauvery flows accordingly. Cauvery which originates in Kodagu runs through Saligrama taluk and is the main lifeline of the taluk. At Chunchunakatte it forms twenty-seven meter falls. The taluk mainly depends on south-west monsoons for its rains. The average mean temperature of the taluk is around 25° C. The taluk is associated with three main seasons of summer, rainy and winter season. During monsoon season the humidity will be 20 percent during daytime.

History:

Earlier traces: Saligrama taluk lies in the Cauvery basin. Many megalithic and Neolithic sites have been discovered in and around Mysuru district. More than 60 sites have been discovered belonging to stone ages in 6 taluks (Periyapatna, Hunsur, Mysore, HD Kote, T Narasipura, Nanjungud Taluks) of Mysuru district. But, no sites belonging to Stone Age period have been discovered in Saligrama or KR Nagar Taluk. Based on the geological features noted above, circumstantially, the Stone Age people might have left imprints in this part as well. This provides further scope for the study.

Mythological references: Chunchunkatte, myth logically was part of Dandakaranya. In Ramayana, there is a reference of this place, where Rama and Sita are said to have spent time during their exile. In Chikkahanasoge, near Shantheshwara Basadi, there is an inscription belonging to 11th and 12th century, which states Shri Rama built 64 Jain basadis and it was conserved by Marasingha of Ganga Dynasty and later restored by Changalvas.

The history of Saligrama taluk can be taken as far back as **Mauryas**. Chandragupta Maurya, founder of Maurya dynasty, migrated to Shravanabelagola, along with Jaina Monk, Bhadrabahu and performed Sallekhana. Saligrama Taluq is at a distance of 40 Kms from Shravanabelagola. In the later years and centuries Saligrama taluk emerged as an important Jaina Centre and its roots can be traced from this event. After Chandra Gupta Maurya, as per

Taranatha's (Tibetan Historian) accounts his son Bindusara is said to have ruled till Mysore. Later Ashoka during his time sent his Dharma Mahamatras to spread principles of Buddhism to this region of Mysore.

After Mauryas, **Gangas of Talakad** who ruled from 5th Century AD to 10th century AD in the South had huge influence in Saligrama and its surrounding areas. Earliest inscription of Ganga is Sri Purusha's copper plate inscription found in Saligrama. It mentions his coronation and grant given at that time. It also gives genealogy of Gangas. Apart from this Rachamalla-I's Saligrama Grant Inscription and Chikkahannasoges Hero Stone Inscription having reference to Bhutuga I are noteworthy to mention. These inscriptions mention grants that have been made during Ganga period and also reveal their patronage to Jainism and other administrative activities taken up by them. After Gangas, **Cholas** extended their administrative influence over this part during the period of Rajendra Chola, which is established by Hampapura and Kuruballi Inscriptions found in this region.

Changalvas of Hanasoge were contemporaries of later Gangas and Cholas, ruled directly from here. The first reference of Changalvas has been found in the Jaina Inscription discovered at Chikkahannasoge. Changalavas ruled over Somavarapete, Malambi, Mullur regions and had Hanasoge as their Capital. Changalvas mostly ruled as feudatories to their much dominant contemporaries in the region. About 12 inscriptions of Chanagalva period is found in this region who ruled from 11 to 15 the century. Changalavas were basically Jainas as stated in Chikkahannasoge Inscription of 11th century. During this period Jains had got settled in Saligrama, Hanasoge and other neighboring places and formed ruling class here. By 15th century Changalvas seemed to have embraced Shaivism. A 15th Century work "Shivatatva Chintamani" of Dandesha mentions Changalvas as Shaivas. During the early part of their rule Changalvas extended generous patronage toward Jainism. Most of the 11th and 12th century inscriptions of Changalvas are grant inscriptions, and these grants were towards Jainism. So, during the research special focus is needed towards studying Saligrama Taluk as a Jaina centre and also what influenced Changalvas to embrace Shaivism in later years.

Hoysalas who had matrimonial alliances with Chalukyas grew in power and firmly established dominance over this region around 11th century. Inscriptions belonging to period of Vishnuvardhana, Ballala II, Narasimha III, Ballala III have been found in Lalanahalli, Hebasuru, Degganahalli and Hebasuru. Since the inscriptions span across the period of over five generations of Hoysala rulers we can firmly say this region was their integral part.

During Vijayanagara period who ruled later from 14th century, this part of the region was known as “Hoysala Desha or Hoysala Nadu”.

After the Malik Kafur’s campaign Hoysala Kingdom declined and in 1336AD **Vijayanagara** Kingdom got established. In next few centuries Vijayanagara Kingdom extended their dominance from Tungabhadra River in the North to Kaveri river basin in the South. Naturally Saligrama and neighboring regions came under them. Chandalvas continued to be feudatories of Vijayanagara rulers in this region. Vijayanagara rulers seemed to have made grants towards the progress of Hanasoge, Capital of Chandalvas. Inscription found at Meluru of Virabukkaraya Period, Hebsur Copper plate Inscription of Harihara II, 1643AD Saligrama Inscription of ViraRamarayadeva have provided information of grants made by Vijayanagara Rulers.

After the decline of Vijayanagara Kingdom **Wodeyars of Mysore** became dominant in this region and they continued to rule till Independence. The earliest Inscription found in this taluk belonging to wodeyars is of year 1643 AD Marchahalli Inscription. 1666 AD Bherya Inscription of Devaraja Wodeyar mentions about the grant of 12 villages to Brahmins and renaming Bherya Village as Devarajapura. Then 1667 AD-Mundur Inscription of Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar, 1761 AD-Hansoge Copper Plate Incriptions(2) and many other record mention about grants ,restoration works other welfare activities under taken by Wodeyars.In 1895 a dam by name Chamaraja Annicut is built during Diwan Sheshadri Iyer in Ballur 3 kms from Saligrama. Thus, we can chalk out the history of Saligrama from Mauryas to Wodeyars of Mysore.

Religions in Saligrama Taluk

Saligrama taluk is a place where we find Hindus, Jains, Muslims and Christians living together in harmony. Chunchunkatte, myth logically was part of Dandakaranya. In Ramayana, there is a reference of this place, where Rama and Sita are said to have spent time during their exile. So, it’s a place of significance in Hindu Mythology.

In his final years Chandragupta Maurya along with Jaina Saint Bhadrabahu migrated to Shravanabelagola and performed Sallekana till death. Saligrama Taluk is in close proximity to Shravanabelagola, as such Jainism flourished here. Hansoge and Saligrama are Ancient Jaina Centers and we find many ancient Basadis here. Gangas of Talakad who ruled from 5th to 10th Century extended patronage to Jainism, Chandalvas of Hanasoge who were

contemporaries of Gangas of Talakadu, Cholas, Hoysalas and Vijayanagara dynasties were Jains. During Rajendra Chola, Hanasoge was invaded and Changalvas were subjugated. Cholas were staunch shaivites and built many Shaiva temples here. Avimukteshwara temple in Hanasoge was built by Cholas. During Hoysala period Vaishnavism received patronage and Ramanujacharya also is said to have visited Saligrama as noted in the Inscription found at Yoga Narasimha temple of Saligrama. Later during Vijayanagara and Wodeyar rule many Hindu temples and Jaina basadis were renovated and restored. We can use the Archaeological remains and make a further detailed study of Religious history in Saligrama Taluk.

Art and Architecture

Most of the Saligrama taluk lies in the Cauvery basin. And since Pre historic times Cauvery basin has been place of human activity. From the time of Mauryas till Wodeyars of Mysore, Saligrama taluk has passed through the rule of many dynastic rule and these dynasties have left their impression in various forms of Art and Architecture. Chikkahansoge, Hansoge, Saligrama, Chunchanakatte, Bherya , Mirle are places of architectural significance in taluk.

Saligrama is a place of historical significance as it lies on the banks of River Kaveri. A total of 21 Inscriptions have been found in this place. Saligrama was a Jaina centre earlier but after Hoysalas emerged in the region it also developed as a Vaishnava centre. Vaishnava Saints Ramanujacharya and Nammalvar , said to have visited this place. In Saligrama we find Yoganarasimha temple which can be identified with Chola and Hoysala period. Apart from this we have Ramanuja, Shambhulingeshwara and Jyotirmaheswara temple. As mentioned earlier Saligrama apart from being a Vaishnava Centre was also an Important Jaina Centre. Here we have Ananthanatha Basadi, Neminatha Basadi and Parshwanatha Basadi.

Chikkahanasoge is located 15 Kilometres away from Saligrama. It was a prominent Jaina Centre and served as capital of Changalvas. Here in Chikkahanasoge we have Adinatha basadi said to be built by Vira Rajendra Changalva. From the inscription available in the basadi we get to know the “Jaina Guru Tradition” that was prevalent here. In the outskirts we have Hoysala style Rameshwara Temple. In this temple we find two Jaina inscriptions of 10th century period making it evident that at the outset this temple belonged to Jaina sect and was initially a Jaina basadi.

Hanasoge is located 15 Kilometres away from Saligrama and a place of historical significance. Hanasoge has Avimuketshwara Temple built during Chola period.

Chunchanakatte lies on the banks of Kaveri River and a place of historical and mythological significance. On the banks of River Kaveri we can find Kodandarama temple of Vijayanagara style. In and around the temple we have 8 rock inscriptions. Every year during the period of Makara Sankranthi a grand fair is held for a period of 15 days. Kaveri River forms a fall here and an anicut is built here across the river by Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar.

Bherya is 10 kms from Saligrama. Here we have Channakeshava Temple of Hoysala Period. Channakeshava Idol installed in this temple depicts Dashavatara of Vishnu. Nearby Channakeshava Temple there is Anjaneya Temple where an Inscription dated 1666 AD is found. It mentions about converting Bherya as an Agrahara by granting 12 villages and renaming it as “Devapura” by Devaraja Wodeyar and his son Devaraya Mahipal.

Mirle is 13 kms from Saligrama and lies on the banks of River Kaveri. In Mirle a total of 8 Inscriptions have been found in this place. Channakeshava ,Yoganasimha Kodandarama and other ancient temples are found here. Inscriptional records mention about the restoration activities carried on these temples by Changalvas in 15th Century AD. While Channakeshava and Yoganasimha temples have influence of Hoysalas style of Architecture and Kodandarama temple belongs to Vijayanagara period.

Devitandre is 3 Kms from Saligrama. Here we have ancient Deviramma and Saptamatrike Temples. In Deviramma temple we have an Inscription dated 1492AD which mentions about the grant made by Umattur’s Deppanaodeyar for Annual fair held in this temple. Even today Annual fair is held in this temple.

Pashupati is 15 Kms from Saligrama and is on the banks of river Kaveri. Many ancient Caves have been identified here. So, there is a high probability of this place being a **Pre historic period site** which needs further archaeological study.

Conclusion:

This sums up the brief historical outline of Saligrama Taluk from Prehistoric period till the time of Wodeyars of Mysore. Some of the key observations that can be derived from the above outline is Saligrama taluk has ample Literary, Inscriptional and Archaeological sources for constructing a ceaseless past of the historical era. Though there haven’t been any

pre historic sites discovered in the taluk, so far, the research study can take it as an important intent to be fulfilled. Even in terms of Culture and Religious history Saligrama Taluk has rich past. From being an important Jaina centre during Mauryas, Gangas and Chandalvas it later came under the influence of Shaivism due to the hegemony of Cholas in the region. Later when Hoysalas emerged into supremacy in the Mysore Region it emerged as an important Vaishnava Centre. So through the course of various eras we can notice the cultural and religious blend that the taluk witnessed, which provides an important motive for taking up further research.

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