

Dr. Paduru Gururaja Bhat-

A historian with a difference

Dr. Paduru Gururaja Bhat (1924-1978) was a renowned historian of the Coastal Karnataka. His name is to be carved in bold letters among those very few leading historians of India for his research in the uncharted areas of antiquity of Indian Society and Culture, such as the areas of regional social structure, caste-system, clan divisions of both Brahminic and non-brahminic castes and sub-castes, patriliney of brahmins and matriliney of non-brahmins co-existing with cordiality, variety of surnames indicative of the clan origin, temple-worship and spirit (Bootha) cult, the main sanskritic dieties of Panchayathana ,(five dieties:-Vishnu, Shiva, Durga, Surya or Skanda and Ganesha) and thier iconographic details, and many such other topics that were seldom touched by any other historians so far. Therefore ,Dr.Bhat is indeed the rarest among those who combined sociology and culturology with thier historical probe of a region and gave a unique holistic dimention in thier academic endeavour of probing the past.

Apart from more than 350 articles published by him in various periodicals of Kannada and English, his publications in volumes in Kannada Language include -1.Tulunadu,2.Stanika Brahmins in Tulunadu,3.History of Ambalpady Temple,4.Review of Mandarti Temple,5.A Critical appraisal of History,6.History of Udupi,7.Tuluvas of Coastal Karnataka and thier culture,8.Barkuru –the unforgettable capital of Tulunadu,9.Alupa rulers,10.Seven sacred pilgrimage centers of Tulunadu,11.Naga-mandala (Snake-dance worship of Tulunadu,and History of Kadri temple.

His most valuable and unparalleled contribution in English are the two books – “The Antiquities of South Canara”(1969) and his “magnum opus”-”The Studies in Tuluva History and Culture”(1975). The latter work is a gigantic volume of more than 600 pages and 800 plates covering all the social,cultural,religious,history of coastal Karnataka-spread over the region south of “Gomanthaka” and north of “Malayadri”(Malabar) as stated in Skanda Purana and “Keralotpatti”. One can not find another work of others which covers such a vast area of Socio-Cultural interest , that too being based on his own discovery, to improve the accuracy of earlier

research done by the other historians of the past. It is indeed not an ordinary volume but indeed an encyclopaedia of coastal Karnataka, a pictorial presentation.

Thus Dr. Bhat finds an eternal place among those leading historians of South India-Late Dr. Neelakanta Shastri, Dr.Sheshadri and Dr.Bhaskar Anand Saletore – all these three who had hailed in liberal terms the works of Dr.Bhat.

Prof. P.Sripati Tantri  
Pancharsheya,Mahakali Marg,  
Ambalpadi, Udupi.