

## **Tourist Places of Aland Taluk**

**Basavaraj**

Department of History, Govt First Grade College, Sulepeth, Karnataka, India - 585324

[Email. basavarajsb21@gmail.com](mailto:basavarajsb21@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** Tourism is an age old activity of mankind. It is the fourth wide-spread industry of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Tourism has got a broad meaning. It can be defined as 'an activity where in people visit a place and stay there quite a while for change.'<sup>1</sup> Karnataka is a heaven for tourists because it has got rich cultural, historical and religious heritage. Tourists are being attracted to the architectural sites, national parks and national reserves. Gulbarga, a district in Karnataka, is a fine tourist centre. It has given shelter to both Sharana and Sufi traditions.

**IndexTerms – Kuntala desha, Kshemalinga, Dravida style.**

### **I. Aland: Origin**

Aland was previously called 'Anandi'. It was called 'Alandipura' as Bhavani Anandi Devi resided here. Later on, people started calling it by name 'Aladi'. Much later, it became 'Alandiya' and then 'Aland'.<sup>2</sup> The reference of the name 'Aland' occurs in Nimbargi inscription dated 1046 A.D. for the first time.<sup>3</sup> The Aland inscription dated 1082 A.D. also refers to 'Aland'.<sup>4</sup> The place was used to be called Kuntala Desha also.

### **II. Geographical Conditions:**

Aland is situated to the North-West of Gulbarga and is about 46 kms away from it. It is 500 metres high from sea level. It falls at longitude between 76°21'<sup>1</sup> and 76°52'<sup>1</sup> and latitude between 17°20'<sup>1</sup> and 17°46'<sup>1</sup>. It is spread in 1,735 sq kms and its population is 2,99,854.<sup>5</sup> To the East of Aland lies Gulbarga, to the West lie Akkalakot and Umarga, to the North is Basavakalyan and to the South of it is Afzalpur.

### **III. Historical Background**

Narona is a village in Aland which is related to both Padma Purana and Ramayana. It is the birth place of the river called Amarja. It was an administrative unit which consisted of one thousand villages under it in ancient period. It was ruled by many great kings of different dynasties. Chalukyas of Kalyan, Kalachuri, Yadava, Vakatakas, Bahamani Sultans, Mughals, Peshwas and Nizams were significant among those who ruled it. It noteworthy that the Queens of Kalyani Chalukya dynasty have also ruled over the land. Chandraladevi, the Queen of King Vikramaditya VI,<sup>6</sup> Malayadevi, the Queen of Jagadekamalla II<sup>7</sup> and Barmaladevi, the Queen of Someshwara III<sup>8</sup> have ruled over Aland, Bodhan and Nimbargi.

Aland was an administrative unit which consisted of one thousand villages under it. It comprised of some of the villages of present day Afzalpur, Aland and Chittapur, and villages of Usmanabad, Solapur in Maharashtra and villages of Basavakalyan in Bidar. One thousand villages of above said talukas had Aland as their capital city. Other such capital cities were Ananduru-300, Gunkanadu-120-6-, Maramba-94, Attiniru-80 and Kempanavetti Ganapur.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Sites to be Visited**

The taluka of Aland has got many architectural sites, monuments that attract tourists. They are:

### **IV. Kshema Mahalingeshwara of Narona**

Narona is situated about 25 km away from Aland. It is in the South-East direction to Aland, on the way to Kadaganchi. It is situated in the North-West to the city of Gulbarga, on the way to Chinchanasuru. It is about 34 kms away from Gulbarga. The temple of Kshemalinga is about 2kms away from Narona.

Narona is referred to as 'Naravani' in inscriptions. It is also one of the villages under Aland as we come to know from an inscription dated back to 1142 AD.<sup>10</sup>

### **V. Mythological Background**

It is said that Ravana's spirit haunted Rama when he was returning after killing Ravana. So, he started visiting teerthakshetras (holy places). He came to Kshetrapala and found some rest here. Rama told Laxmana that the place was not haunted by Ravana. That is how the place got its name 'Narona'.<sup>11</sup> Because it was considered a place for pilgrimage, hence the name 'Kshetraphala'. Phallus worshipped by the people is called 'Kshemalinga'.<sup>12</sup>

The place has got many water-bodies and rich variety of flora. Kshemalingeshwara is rightly called 'the Kashi of the South'. One can witness 8 pushkarnis here. That is why it is considered a holy place. The temple and its surrounding makes up 85 acres of land. Greenery around, water source and beautiful sculptural works- all make the place worth visiting. Kshemalingeshwara temple is directed northward. That is, its facade faces the North direction. It has got sanctum sanctorium and path for circumambulation. Some of the pushkarnis here are big in size and a few, small. The important pushkarnis are Narasimhateertha, Lakshmiteertha, Rudrateertha, Bhavaniteertha, Indrateertha, Ramateertha, Guptateertha and Mallikarjunateertha.

Guptateertha flows throughout the year. Others flow only in rainy season. Indrateertha and Saptateertha are just in front of the temple. There lies a temple of Karthik Swami in the middle of Indrateertha. The idol of Karthik Swami has got 6 faces, 12 hands and seated on peacock. There is a throne of Mahadeva over this temple. It is facing the South. Nowadays, it is called the temple of Mallikarjun. Saptarishiteertha is nearby to it facing the East. One can witness beautiful sculptural works here. There is a Hanuman temple on the left to the temple of Karthik Swami, facing the East. People from Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra visit this holy place.

### **VI. Siddharameshwar Ashram of Jidaga:**

About 12kms West to the Aland lies Jidaga. There is a State Highway from Aland to Solapur. on this route, we have a place called Shakhapur. On the left to Shakhapur lies Jidaga. The Ashram is situated on a hill South to the village of Jidaga. The Ashram is called 'Navakalyana Matha'. It was established on 1980 by Shri Shadakshari Siddharameshwar Mahashivayogi.<sup>13</sup> The ashram is a centre of communal harmony.

In the beginning, it was presided over by Shri Yallaling Maharaja, then by Shri Siddharameshwar Mahaswami. At present, the Matha is presided over by Shri Murugharajendra Mahaswami.

Jidaga Matha was established by Shri Siddharama who was born in 1929 to Channaveerayya and Sharanamma. He is re-incarnation of Shri Siddhaling Maharaja. Later on, he was happened to establish about 360 Mathas in Karnataka, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Goa. After his death, Shri Murugharajendra Swami took his place in 2005.<sup>14</sup> He was born in 1985 to Shrimad Channaveerappa and Sunandamma.

On the way to Jidaga, there is a temple of Shri Sharanabasaveshwar the courtyard of which has got 20 pillars. The cupola is in Dravida style. sanctum sanctorium has got a statue of Nandi, the bull god. One can see the statues of Krishna and Gopikas dancing in front of the temple. There is also a vachana mantapa behind the temple. Yallaling Matha is situated near by this temple. One can witness the statue of Shri Yallaling seated on a throne in the sanctum sanctorium of this temple. The courtyard has got 40 pillars. At the doorway, one can see the statue of Shri Murugharajendra. Left to this temple lies the throne of Shri Rameshwara, constructed in 1988,<sup>15</sup> and Anubhava Ashram which is two-storied. There is space for devotees to take shelter here.

As one enters Siddhagiri, one can witness the Kartru Gadduge (the throne of Kartru). On the throne lies the statue of Shri Siddharama. The cupola is built in Dravida style. It is decorated with the small statues of many a god. Nearby, the 36 pairs of rooms have been built as shelter for the visiting devotees in 2008. These rooms are in octagonal in design. It consists of a beautiful garden too. The statue of Shri Siddharameshwar is situated over the doorway. Near these shelters, one can witness the Glass House and Yogashrama. The Glass House was once the place where Shri Siddharameshwara used to live in. It is now converted into an airconditioned room. The things used by Shri Siddharameshwara are preserved here.<sup>16</sup> There is a 'Tapobhavana' near this Glass House. It consists of Siddha Kutir, Siddhashrama, Krishna Mandir and Siddhalingeshwar Gumpa. People from all directions visit the place to get the blessings. It is visited by people from Karnataka, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Goa. the people flock from all directions during the fair.

**VII. Durgah of Ladle Mashaq**

Aland is situated North-west to Gulbarga. It is about 48kms away from Gulbarga. Durgah of Ladle Mashaq lies in Aland. This Durga has got its name after a Sufi saint called Ladle Mashaq, who was contemporary of Khwaja Bandenawaz. It is constructed in 14<sup>th</sup> century and is a centre of communal harmony till today. Ladle Mashaq is one of the greatest Sufis of India, was born on 718 AD. He was the eldest son of Fakruddin Ansari and Bibirani Khatun.<sup>17</sup> His first name was Alauddin Ansari. Later on, people and scholars started calling him Ladle Mashaq. He came from Delhi to Daulatabad and got his spiritual education under the tutelage of Khwaja Nasiruddin Chirasha.<sup>18</sup> He had no interest in worldly pleasures, thus he started travelling far and wide. He came to Aland and resided at the outskirts. A killedar working under Mohammed Shah built Masjid for Ladle Mashaq's prayer and meditation. So, he stayed here for many years and breathed his last on 27<sup>th</sup> of 783 AH.<sup>19</sup> It is on the tomb of Ladle Mashaq that the present Durgah was constructed.

Durgah is situated at the centre of 64 acres of land. It is said that Durgah was got constructed by Malik Saifuddin, a minister in the court of Sultan Firoz Shah.<sup>20</sup> The main doorway is arch shaped. There is a minar on either side of the main doorway. Each minar is of 80 metres high. There are two small on the arch of the main doorway. A little away from the main doorway, there is another door called 'door of eleven steps (gyara seedis). There stand two minars on either side over the door.

Once the visitor enters through the door of the eleven steps, he/she can see Shahmardan Durga on the right side. On the left, there is a 'nagarkhana'. Jamatkhana, Namazkhana, Pushkarani, tomb of the saints on raised platform, a room made of Sandal, an old library, Bulati Gumbaz, etc are the sites to be seen.

Over the tomb of Ladle Mashaq is a dome which is supported by four minars. Ladle Mashaq Urus takes place twice a year- on 27<sup>th</sup>, of the month of Razab and on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of Rabbisani. The people from Karnataka, Anhra Pradesh and Maharashtra visit the place during Urus.

**VIII. Central University of Karnataka**

It is an educational tourist centre which is 18 kms away from Gulbarga and 28 kms away from Aland. It is situated on the State Highway of Wagdhari and Ribbanapalli near Kadaganchi-Suntnoor village. This university is established according to the 2009 Act of Parliament. Sixteen new central universities have been established under this act under the motto 'Equity and Access in Higher Education' in the districts which are lagging behind in education. It is extended over 650 acres of land. Its construction was started in 2009 and was inaugurated on 30<sup>th</sup>, November of 2013. Graduate and post-graduate education is provided here.

**IX. Ekant Ramayya**

There is a memorial of Ekant Ramayya, a 12<sup>th</sup> century Sharana, at the centre of the city of Aland. It is constructed in 1984.<sup>21</sup> He was born to Purushottam and Sitadevi.<sup>22</sup> He was a devotee of Shiva and used to spend most of his time in meditation of Shiva. Thus he got the name 'Ekanta' Ramayya. 'Ekanta' means 'alone'. In this context, it means loves to be alone. Later on, he started travelling and visited places like Ingaleswar, Kudalasangama, Mahakoota, Hampi, Banavasi<sup>23</sup> in order to know more about Shiva, the God. One day, he dreamt that God Somanath had ordered him to visit Abbaluru. It is in the taluk of Hirekeruru in Dharwad now. He went to Abbaluru and went to the old temple of lord Shiva. It was in bad condition. He cleaned it and started staying in the temple. It is said that he argued with Sankanagowda, a Jaina scholar. He spent his last days of his life in Molaganakoppa. It is in the taluk of Shkharipura in Shimogga. He has written many vachanas.

**X. Transportation Facilities:**

There is ample facility provided to visit the place. Both road and railway transportation facilities from Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Maharashtra are available for travellers. NKSRTC buses, taxi and autos are available to roam around in the locality of Aland. KSRTC buses and railways are available for those coming from far off places.

**XI. Culture**

The taluk of Aland has got its own peculiar culture. Men wear dhotis and shirts; women wear sari. Dress-code of the people living in the town of Aland is somewhat modern. People celebrate festivals without fail. The Roti of Jawar, sweet roti and tahari are among the common food here. It is better to visit the place between October and February.

## References:

1. Shivarudrappa. G.S. *Bhaaratiya Pravaasodyama*. PP10
2. Hiremath, S.M. *Saavirada Aland-Saamskrutika Sameekshe*. PP04
3. Gogi, Hanumakshi. *Gulbarga Zilleya Shaasanagalu*. PP51, 53
4. Ibid, PP35, 39.
5. *Gulbarga Zilleya Anki-Amshagala Pakshinota*. 2011-12,PP12.
6. *Poorvokta*. PP37
7. Dr. Shivanand. *Hyderabad-Karntaka Shilashaasana Bhoodaana Shaasanagalu*. PP166
8. Gogi Hanumakshi. *Gulbarga Zilleya Shaasanagalu*. PP51, 52
9. Gopal. R. *Gulbarga Zilleya Itihaasa Mattu Puraatatva*. PP170.
10. Patil. M.B. *Gulbarga Zilleya Gazetteer*. PP 734.
11. Bali, Shankar. *Gulbarga Zilleya Janapada Aitihyagalu*. PP96,97.
12. Tadal, S.R. *Gulbarga Zilleya Veerashaiva Saamskrutika Kendragalu*. PP96.
13. Vijayavani. *Mugulakhoda Amarajyoti*. O2, December-2012.
14. Ibid.
15. Fieldwork
16. Satyampete, Vishwaradhya. *Mathadolagina Baanugagalu*. PP28.
17. *Ansar-e-madina aour aftar-e-deccan*. PP39.
18. Tadal, R.S.Swamy. *Aland Taluk Smarana Samputa*. PP91
19. Ibid
20. Ibid
21. Patil. M.B. *Gulbarga Zilleya Gazetteer*. PP 683.
22. Kulkarni, Swamirao. *Gulbarga Zilleya Kavikaavya Parampare*. PP93
23. Ibid, PP95.