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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

**THE EPIGRAPHICAL SOURCES SHAPING THE HISTORY OF INDIA: A STUDY ON DOCTORAL RESEARCH**

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**Abstract**

This article solves the hypothesis of how epigraphical sources shape the history of India, especially in the study of history in the doctoral research in India. The epigraphical sources are the important sources for writing the history of India, from the Pallava period to the Nayak period. The study of inscriptions provides authentic records of historical evidence. Many historical facts have been unearthed by these written documents. They exist in the temple inscriptions, copper plates, palm leaf records, caves, and walls of the temple structures. It is couched in the language current at various periods and localities, such as Sanskrit, Pali, mixed dialect, or the languages of southern India like Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam. The textual references are captivating, especially when they provide relevant descriptions of the kings and kingdoms. The key to unlocking the mechanisms of historical writing by the rulers helps to know the history by modern historians. Their contributions to the development from the Palalva period, indeed, the studies have often been neglected in modern historiography. The early research is made by analyzing inscriptions in the doctoral research, particularly in the historical research in India. This study is analyzing the special sources shaping the history of India in the doctoral research.

**Keywords:** Epigraphical sources, Shaping the history, Historical sources, Modern historiography.

## **Introduction**

The epigraphical sources are the important sources for writing the history of India, from the Pallava period to the Nayak period. The study of inscriptions provides authentic records of historical evidence. Many historical facts have been unearthed by these written documents. They exist in the Temple inscriptions, Copper plates, Palm leaf records, Caves, and Walls of the Temple structures. It is couched in the language current at various periods and localities, such as Sanskrit, Pali, mixed dialect, or the languages of southern India like Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam. The textual references are captivating, especially when they provide relevant descriptions of the kings and kingdoms, the key to unlocking the mechanisms of historical writing by the rulers helps to know the history by modern historians. Their contributions to the development from the Palalva period, indeed, the studies have often been neglected in modern historiography. The early research made by analyzing inscriptions in the doctoral research, particularly in the historical research in India. This study is analyzing the special sources shaping the history of India in the doctoral research.

## **Doctoral Research**

Doctoral education worldwide is an important component of three missions of Universities: Education, Research, and Service to society. Traditional education is increasingly shaped by global dynamics.<sup>1</sup> There are many branches under the umbrella of social science research, and they all focus on people, institutions, and interactions. It might involve empirical research, action research, life history, case study, feminist research, narrative inquiry, self-study, intervention research, ethnography, evaluation research, and so on. In addition, it is not common for doctoral students to understand other kinds of research, such as theoretical research, historical research, analytical research, or conceptual philosophical research.<sup>2</sup>

The curriculum structure of advanced degrees is rooted in over 700 years of tradition. Writing theses and dissertations as part of the academic curriculum has a history almost as long, although not much

documented information is available to the present day. As a historical introduction to their text on the successful thesis and dissertation for students and faculty at institutions of higher learning.<sup>3</sup> As academic institutions became established with levels of degrees up to the master and doctorate, the latter was regarded as the capstones of success.

## **Epigraphical sources in India**

India is a treasure house of inscriptions written in many languages, where Tamil occupied the front in volume, around 20,000, followed by the language of Kanda around 10,600, and Sanskrit inscriptions reached around 7500, and 4500 in Telugu.<sup>4</sup> Most of the inscriptions in the language are noticed from the third century B.C.<sup>5</sup> The nature of the epigraphical sources might be behavioral patterns represented in the writings recorded in the temple and public places and other religious institutions, private palaces, forts, ashrams, and houses.<sup>6</sup>

Epigraphy is the study of inscriptions, which are depicted on the temple walls, rocks, pillars, copper plates, ware, metals, palm leaves, potteries, conch shells, clothes, mural paintings, and coins. It could be the most important source for conducting studies of ancient humans' lives and livelihoods. It deals with the art of writing process and distinguishes human historical conciseness. The Indo-Muslim inscriptions are generally on paper, known as farmans and sanads.<sup>7</sup> Epigraphy is the branch of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). The Government of India is a research wing dedicated to the epigraphical survey and research. The inscriptions found along the length and breadth of the country form the authentic sources for reconstruction of the history of India.<sup>8</sup> Epigraphy not only deals with lettering but also concerns itself with the subject matter of ancient inscriptions. The Arabian writer Alberuni from the eleventh century expressed his opinion that the Hindus do not pay much attention to the historical order of things and become careless in relating the chronological succession of their kings.<sup>9</sup>

## **Shaping the history**

History is an important subject; enquire about the past in nature.<sup>10</sup> The study of the past, especially in

the doctoral research, is confined to analysing the literary sources with the primary sources like inscriptions, given the new path to know about the ancient past. From a historical point of view, the inscriptions are very important and available in the languages of Sanskrit and Dravidian. It is mainly for these reasons that epigraphy is a primary rather than a secondary subfield within Indology. The relationship between epigraphy and history is one of undue encroachment of the former upon the latter.<sup>11</sup>

### **Research conducted through epigraphs in Doctoral Research**

The doctoral research has been conducted in the history department of universities and colleges for the purpose of exhibiting. On the consequences, the researchers do the research in the beginning stage on concentrated topics like temple studies, social studies, and cultural history. Later it would be extended through the gender studies, like women and transgender studies. Also, they focused on exhibiting the history of tribals and other studies. This approach has changed through the year. All research has been done by the researcher to analyse the primary sources and secondary sources. For considering the ancient studies, especially the temple studies and kingdoms, mainly focused to analyze the inscriptions. The universities whose doctoral research has been studied for the past few years are the following:

**Table No.1: Thesis conducted gleaned from inscriptions**

S. No	Year	No of Research thesis
1	1967	1
2	1977	1
3	1979	1
4	1980	1
5	1982	1
6	1991	2
7	2017	1
8	2018	1
	Total	9

Source<sup>12</sup>

The Shodhganga enlisted the thesis directly mentioned about the inscriptions in the title. From the department of history in India, through analyzing the inscriptional sources.

1967 to 2018 around 8 Thesis are conducted in University and colleges. However, they are lot of studies related to inscriptions made by the researchers registered in Shodhganga alone. Indeed, there are 818 studies are registered under the temple study, which primary related to inscriptions.<sup>13</sup>

**Table No.1: Article conducted gleaned from inscriptions**

S. No	Year	No of Research thesis
1	1913	1
2	1982	1
3	1986	1
4	1999	1
5	2001	2
6	2017	1
7	2019	1
8	2024	2
	Total	10

Source<sup>14</sup>

The Google scholar enlisted the article directly mentioned about the inscriptions in the title. From 1913 to 2018 around 10 articles are conducted by the scholars indexed in google scholar. However, there is lot of studies related to inscriptions made by the researchers registered in Google scholar alone. The other data base namely research gate also having the article related to inscriptional studies.<sup>15</sup>

### **Conclusion**

History is the face of every nation, exhibited the life and life of the ancient people. This history has been described by the primary sources, shaping the history of India. Temple architecture has been built by the kings and royal families and donated the assets and amount for upliftment of the same. Also, they registered the events depicted the epigraphical sources in India. Indeed, India has been known for treasure house of inscriptions, helping the researchers made their research high esteem. The doctoral research is made by analysing the inscriptional sources, because the only authentic sources to known about the King rule. Thus, the doctoral research vastly conducted in

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