



## **SOCIETY IN MEDIEVAL ANDHRA DESA, A.D. 1300 – 1600: A- STUDY**

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### **Abstract**

Andhradesa lies between 13°-20° latitude and 70° longitude and the Bay of Bengal in the east. A line drawn from Madras to Bangalore and from there to the confluence of the Varada and the Pranahita and from there across the Mahendragiri to the sea shows the extent of this region. The Telugu language is spoken in a wide area. The border line of this linguistic area starts in the north on the shore of the Bay of Bengal. It follows the Risikujla river, crosses the Eastern Ghats and enters the former Bastar State. Then it crosses the Saban river which separates the Sunkum and BIJJI taluqs and reaches its confluence with the Godavary including the southern parts of the districts of Chanda and Pun. From there the line goes south and reaches the confluence of the Manjira and the Godavary. Going farther south, it separates the Kannada and Telugu areas of the Bidar district. From here it runs straight to the south, cuts through the Bellary district and passes through the Anantapur district into the Mysore State taking within its fold the districts of Bangalore, Kolar, Nandi and Chittaldurg. Then it passes through the North Arcot and Chingelput districts and ultimately reaches the Bay.

**Key Words:** antiquity, country, district, people, records

### **Introduction**

The word Andhra as denoting the name of a region occurs for the first time in the third century A.D. in the form Andhrapatha. In the subsequent centuries, the rulers of this area were known as the lords of the Andhra country. It is stated that the country which contains three famous temples, those of Mallikarjuna at Srisailam in the Kurnool district, Kalsvara at Kalyansvarara in the Kanmnagar district and Bhimesvara at Draksharjuna in the East Godavary district came to be known as Telinga. The two names, Andhra and Telinga, in one form or other, have been used as synonyms. The forms Tilang and Tehngana are found in the Muslim records.

### **THE PEOPLE**

The Andhras are a people of great antiquity. Their earliest mention is in the Aitareya Brahmana where they are said to have been living together with the Puhndas, Mutibas, Sabaras etc, to the south of the Vindhya. According to the later Vedic literature there were several states in the Dakkan, like Vidarbha, Kalinga, Assaka and Bhojaka. The Andhras lived beyond these states to their south. The Ramayana mentions the Andhras in connection with the despatch of the monkey hordes in search of Sita. The Mahabharata mentions them in connection with Sahidivasa Digvijaya and the assembly of rulers in the palace built by Maya. One of the Buddhist Jatakas mentions an Andhranagara on the bank of the river Tehvaha or Tel. In the fourth century B.C. the Andhras were a powerful people with 30 walled towns, 10,000 infantry, 2,000 cavalry and 1,000 elephants.

The language of the Andhra people is known as both Andhra and Telugu. The Telugu language is also very old. Several Telugu names of villages occur in the inscriptions of the Pallavas, Salankayanas and Visnukundins of the post Satavahana period. The Sapataiati, a



Prakrt anthology, compiled by Hala of the first century A D, contains many Telugu words. Probably, this language was prevalent in some form or other from an earlier date. Daughters and no male issue. The problem of future succession to the throne loomed large once again. So Ganapati-deva made Rudramba adopt her daughter Mummadamba's son, Prataparudradeva, and nominated him as the heir to the throne next to Rudramba. The monarch died in 1262 A D passing on the vast empire to his daughter, Rudramba.

The medieval Andhradesa was geographically demarcated into three divisions. The plains spread along with the Bay of Bengal called as Coastal Andhra country which comprised the delta plains having alluvium deposits of black cotton soils. This part is very fertile and extensively cultivated by the rivers of Godavari and Krishna and the other rivers like the Vamsadara and Pennar and also covered with dense forests to the east of the Godavari on the side of Eastern Ghats. The Krishna-Godavari Doab had always been the converted area on which all the neighboring rulers had their eyes upon, during the medieval period. The northern portion of the plateau comprised between the Pranahita and Godavari rivers also clad with these forests and had jungle fauna of many kinds. This northern part called as Telinyana consisting of the present Adilabad, Nizamabad, Karimnagar and Warangal districts. The southern part of the plateau known as Rayalaseema comprising of Raichur Doab and diamond mines around Kurnool and Adoni and thick dense forests of Nallamala hills. The whole Andhradesa was a unit of different geographical features with geological and variations. These lands and forests and the plains and hills were all connected by roads and rivers. It remained a cultural and economic unit throughout the history. However, politically, socially, culturally and religiously it did not remain a single unit in history, as it kept on changing hands between various medieval rulers.

#### OBJECTIVES

1. To identify how Andhradesa fall under the control of Muslim rule
2. To identify patriotism of Hindu kingdoms against Muslim expansion
3. To identify Hindu –Muslim relations in medieval Andhra
4. To identify position of women in medieval Andhra
5. To identify fairs and festivals of medieval Andhra
6. To identify establishment mixed culture in Medieval Andhra
- 7.

On the eve of the Muslim invasions into Andhradesa, Prataparudra II (1299- 1323 A.D.) Was the last ruler of the Kakatiya dynasty. He then had to face the Muslim invasions by five times under Alla-ud-din Khilji and his successor Ghias-ud- din Tughluk. Prataparudra II and his Chiefs gave stubborn resistance to the Muslim invaders. But ultimately in 1323 A.D., they had to succumb to the superior military organization and persistence of the Muslims.

It may be observed that the era of Kakatiyas brought a new epoch in the Andhra country which served as a standard for the succeeding dynasty the Reddis of Kondavidu to emulate and improve. This phase of royal grandeur was accompanied by the general rise of civilization bringing about a taste and refinement in dress, decoration, manners and other fields of social activity. At this time Allauddin Khilji, the ruler of Delhi initiated, a policy, whereby south India had to become a prey to successive Muslim invasions. This policy of Allauddin was however limited to loot and plunder. He did not have any idea of bringing the



south under his direct rule. The four important kingdoms of the south the Yadavas of Devagiri, the Kakatiyas of Warangal, the Hoyasalas of Dvarasamudra and the Pandyas of Madura, before the Brunt of Muslim arms and had to purchase peace by offering all the booty and tribute that Alla-ud-din wanted. Yet Alla-ud-din's general Malik Kafur's campaigns did not have any permanent results. So were the campaigns of Prince Junakhan, entitled Ulghkhan, son of Giasuddin of the Tughluk dynasty. They were different in character and did not have permanent effects. By about A.D. 1323, Prince Juna Khan, now the Sultan Muhammad Bin Tughluk, brought almost the whole of the south India under the authority of Delhi. In the Telangana, he appointed his own military officers to carry on the administration. The havoc wrought by the Muslims left the country with an ugly face, with temples demolished, men and women massacred and agriculture destroyed.

A liberation movement was soon organized by Nayakas who survived under the king Prataparudra II headed by the Musunuri Chiefs, named Prolaya Nayaka and Kapaya Nayaka. Prolaya Nayaka freed the Coastal Andhra country by about A.D. 1325. The Western Andhra slipped out of the control of Muslim authorities by A.D. 1328-29, as a result of the rebellion engineered by Araveeti Somadeva, a Chalukya Kshatriya prince of lunar race. The Telangana was liberated and Warangal seized by Kapaya Nayaka by about A.D. 1336-37.

Soon after liberation, the political turmoil was changed by the rise of many kingdoms in Andhradesa. In the Telangana tract, the Musunuri family ruled with their capital at Warangal. Side by side with them, the Recherla chiefs carved out a principality comprising Rajukonda and Devarakonda rajyas. In the Coastal Andhra, the Reddis were making themselves supreme. By about the same period in A.D. 1336, the kingdom of Vijayanagara was founded by the Harihara brothers of the Sangama dynasty on the banks of the river Tungabhadra with their capital at the newly-built city Vijayanagara. Within a decade after these events, the Deccan broke away from the Delhi authority. In the year A.D. 1347, the Bahamani kingdom was established by Alla-ud-din Hasan Gangu Bahaman.

The Reddi kingdom was founded by Prolaya Vema Reddi in about 1325 A.D. had a glorious epoch which lasted for a century. Prolaya Vema and his brothers took an active part in freeing the Coastal Andhra country from Muslim yoke. After the liberation, they regarded themselves as natural heirs to the south-eastern portion of Kakatiya kingdom during the reign of Kumaragiri I (A.D. 1386-1402) the splendour of the Reddi court at Kondavidu continued unabated and its authority recognised throughout the Coastal strip. But in the closing years, it also started the partition of the kingdom into that of Rajamahendra Rajya and Kondaviti Rajya. Thus Reddi kingdom became a house divided against itself. The king Kataya Vema of Rajamahendram began to fight with Peda Komati Vema of Kondavidu. This enmity was encashed by the Recherla (Velamaj Chiefs and the rulers of Vijayanagara.

The Recherla (Velama) chiefs made themselves masters of Telangana area after ejecting the Musunuri Chief Kapaya Nayaka in about A.D. 1367 and began inroads into the Reddi territory.

The Vijayanagara king Devaraya I (A.D. 1406-1422) could exploit the internal dimensions of the Reddis. He successfully defeated the Reddis and their allies, the Bahamani Sultans and brought the south-eastern portion of their territories under Vijayanagara rule.



After the death of Pedakomati Vema, the Reddi kingdom was reduced to a weak and disorganised state with the result that the king Devaraya II (1422-1446 A.D.) conquered coastal tract and annexing the Reddi kingdom into the territories of Vijayanagara.

After the withdrawal of Reddis from political horizon, the Andhra country became an arena of conflict among the three major powers, the Bahamanis, the Gajapatis and Vijayanagara rulers. At this juncture the Bahamani power ousted the Recherla chiefs of Rajukonda and Devarakonda out of the Telinyana area. The Hindu cultural institutions in this region received a great set back in their fortunes with the fall of Recherla chiefs (Velamas) rule in the middle of the 15th century A.D. From then on, the regions being in continuous Muslim rule, that of the Bahamanies at the beginning and that of Qutb Shahis afterwards. At this time, the Muslim cultural institutions naturally received a near boost and gradually spread their influence to the entire Andhradesa.

In the reign of Devaraya II (1422-1446 A.D), the Vijayanayara power was dominant in the Rayalaseema area and coastal Andhra. But his weak successor Mallikarjuna and Virupaksha had to face the onslaught of the energetic Kapileswara Gajapati (1435-1470 A.D.), the ruler of Kalinga. He captured Rajahmundry and Kondavidu in the year A.D. 1454. Then he turned his attention against the Bahamani kingdom and successfully wrested from their territory all the Telugu districts. Under the reign of his successors, Purushottama Gajapati (1470-1496 A.D.) and Prataparudra (1496-1509 A.D.) the southern limits of the Odda Empire touched the Krishna River.

During the reign of Srikrishnadeva Raya (1509-1529 A.D.) the Vijayanagara power recovered the whole of Andhra from the Gajapatis. The Vijayanagara Empire fell on evil days after the death of Krishnadeva Raya the reign of successor Achyuta Rama Raya (1529-1542 A.D.) was punctuated by internal strife and external aggression by Muslim states of Nizam Shahis of Ahammadnagar, the Adil Shahis of Bijapur, the Imad Shahis of Berar, the Qutb Shahis of Golkonda and Barid Shahis of Bidar. The Sultan of Golkonda Qutb-ul- Mulk and Ismail Khan of Bijapur tried to occupy the parts of Vijayanagara territory. Finally the defeat of Vijayanagara forces at the battle of Rakshasa-Tangadi (1565 A.D.), sealed the fate of Hindu empire. But the empire survived for a few years under Venkata II (A.D. 1586-1614) with the capital at Penugonda. The whole of Andhra in the Coastal tract and Telihgana passed under the authority of the Qutb Shahis of Golkonda which occupied these territories after the battle of Rakashasa-Tangadi. The Golkonda general Mirjumla aided by Bijapur general Mustafa khan ultimately drove Sriranga III, the last ruler of Vijayanagara and partitioned the kingdom. Thus the whole of Andhradesa including Rayalaseema came under the sway of Muslim rule by the year 1652 A.D. Again Aurangazeb invaded Golkonda, defeated the king Abul Hasan and annexed the entire Andhradesa into Mughal rule by the year 1685 A.D.

These Muslim invasions and continuous Muslim rule and their permanent settlement in Andhradesa led not only to the establishment of Muslim political power but also - to the emergency of Hindu, Muslim cultural interactions in the field of festivals, dress and ornaments, popular amusements, literature and architecture. The Vaishnava Bhakti movement and Sufi movements gave a part to the social reform ideas and communal harmony between Hindu Muslims.



### Organization of the study

This study divided in to six chapters 1. Chapter deals with Introduction and Aims, Objectives, Review of Literature. 2. Chapter deals with Political conditions of Andhradesa and fall of Andhra under Muslim rule and patriotism of Andhra kings. 3. Position of women in Medieval Andhradesa and social institutions. 4. Fairs and Festivals of Medieval Andhradesa 5. Traditions and Customs of the society. 5. chapter deals with fairs and festivals of the society. 6. Conclusion

In Andhradesa which had experienced long periods of glory with brief interludes of decline in between, in the age after the Kakatiyas, the polity, society and culture witnessed an epoch of full-fledged efflorescence under the Reddis, the Rayas and the Velamas. The glory had become fully embodied in expressions and endearing phrases such as Mahitan-dhradesa and Mahaniyandhradesa in contemporary literature.<sup>148</sup> The glory of the Andhras under the Kakatiyas, reminiscent of the splendor of the Andhra Satavahana age in its manifold facets found its echoes in the Musunuri Nayak, the Reddi and the Raya periods and had thus become embedded under subsequent rulers in the life and culture of the Andhra race, Andhra nation and Andhra nationalism fully blossomed.

The medieval period brought cultural changes by the advent of Muslims in North India and the same had been continued particularly in the beginning of 14th century A.D. to Andhradesa. The Muslims became permanent settlers in the Andhra country along with Hindus and became fifth caste in the population and thus disturbed Hindu social order. Islam with its declaration of equality and denunciation of caste distinctions opened its doors wide open to the members of the lower castes in the Hindu society. There appears to have been some decline in the Brahmin community during this period. Therefore, the continuation of Akkanna and Madanna as the principal administrators of Abul Hasan was questioned by the Mughals. The lower castes in the society became educated and began to question the authority of Brahmins in the sastras and their superiority over the other classes. Sudra desired equal rights with the Brahmins. The Muslims began to compete in various professions like trade and commerce with such Hindu Telike communities like Vaisya and Balinga communities and artisans.

At first the Hindu rulers resisted Muslim domination and tried to protect the Hindu Dharma. But they did not maintain because of political reasons, the Hindu rulers were urged to give their daughters in marriage to Muslim adversaries to sue for peace. The common people also might have matrimonial alliances with Muslims. The marriage customs of both people interacted with each other. It was witnessed by the work Kulliyat written by Muhammad Quli. According to him the Muhammadans and Hindus followed each other marriage customs. The Muslim custom like applying henna (Hind, mehndi) to the bride and Jalwa Ivulg Julwaj was followed by the Andhra Hindus. The Hindu custom of holding a curtain between bride and bridegroom followed by the Muslim communities. The work Kulliyat mentions the custom like romantic ceremony existed in both Hindu and Muslims. These delineated synthesis of marriage culture led towards the formation of the composite civilization in Andhradesa.

The festivals were the most common means of amusement to Hindus and Muslims.



Hindu festivals depended upon mythological, historical and astronomical considerations. Muslim festivals were limited and they must gather at the mosques for prayers during festival days. The different kinds of Telugu songs connected with the Muharram festival such as Jangnama, Paneh thani Pak and Martriyas shows that the Hindus not only co-operated with Muslims in performing Muharram but also directly worshipped the Muslim God. The Muslims celebrated Hindu festival Dipavali and follow Hindu manners like fire-works, crackers and candle lamps during their Shab-i-Barat festival. It seems that the Muslims followed a leaf out of the Hindu calendar for their festivals. The Muslim festival Nauroj having similarity to that of the Hindu festival Vasantostava by using sprinkled coloured water mixed with scent, musk and amber. The kite flying of Muslims during Nauroj was also followed by the Hindus. The Muslim festival Miragsal was performed by both Hindu and Muslims. The Muslim fastings during Shab-i-barat and Hindu fastings on the day of Sivaratri festival also having same similarity in Andhradesa, this might be mutual influence of both sections. Sultan Abul Hasan could have been believed Hindu God Sri Rama and perform Sri Rama Navami festival every year. The Islam custom like salaam was performing by the Hindus on the occasion of Mahanavami festival during the reign of Vijayanayara. The Hindu custom like sighting new moon by Muslims during Ramzan was the Hindu impact on Muslims, The Hindu fairs or jatara having the same similarity with Muslim fairs or Urs. Both Jatara and Urs conducted once in a year to commemorate a sacred event. The Mahakali Jatara was performed by both Hindu and Muslim people in a local term, Mankhal Maisaram by Persian influence in Telang Andhra near Ibrahim patnam (in modern days). The king Abul Hasan also attended to Mahakali Jatara along with Hindu ministers Akkana and Madanna. All Hindu and Muslim people performing Hindu Pochamma Devi Bonalu Jatara, during the reign of Abul Hasan. The Hindu Uddemari Jatara also enjoyed by Muslim people. Abdul-lah Uutb Shah attended to Golluru Jatara with Nivedya offering to Sri Venkateswara by the influence of Akkana and Madanna. Hindu people in Telang Andhra worshipped the tombs of Muslim saints during Urs along with Muslim people. The Hindu Jangam who was the head of the Lingayats saiva worshipper at Madhyal village in Gulbarga district participated in the Urs of a Muslim saint Gesu Daraz. It is evident that Hindu people also believed Muslim religious customs. Even in the reign of Vijayanagara the Muslim people either by employing or trading in Rayalaseema attended to Durga Jatara see and enjoy. In Telang Andhra the Muslim people participated Mahakali Jatara. It is clear that Muslim people might have believed Hindu Goddess Mahakali.

The close contacts between Vijayanagara and Golkonda and the Hindu and Muslim people living side by side in entire Andhra country led to the synthesis of dress culture. The Persian style of Kullah (Kuleh) had been used by Telugu people while fane type tassels of Telugu turban used by the Muslim people. It is evident by the portrait of Ibrahim Qutb Shah representing both styles Kullah and Tassals on his cap.

The Persian fashion Qaba or Cebaya known as long coat was put on by Telugu people over Dovati. Muslim women wore Hindu saris instead of chadar and veil called naqab. The Persian fashion like dopatta and Pajama used by Telugu women in the upper class of the society. Telugu men also followed the Muslim fashion like wearing Lungi. The Muslim fashion like sound making foot wear used by all sections of Telugu people. The Mughal fashion like Kerchief tied on the belt became the dress of the upper classes of both Telugu and Muslim people in Andhra country. Muslim women followed the fashion of Hindu women by using toe



rings called Mattelu and waist ornament like Oddanamu and also wore forearms by golden bangles by rich and ordinary black and blue bangles called Nallagajulu by poor like that of Andhra women.

The military and physical sports like wrestling, dueling, hunting and horse riding were similar to Hindu and Muslim rulers. The Hindu indoor games like chess, dice and pulijudamu might have been followed by Muslim people. Besides bull, ram, cock and buffalo fights were common to both Hindu and Muslim people. Some changes and new games and sports were brought into Andhra country by Muslims. The games like chaugan or polo, khamaddi known as kabadi purely Muslim games were practiced by Andhra people. The Persian games for children like Ziksar and girdnay could have been practiced by Hindu children in Telangana Andhra region playing cards became popular in Andhra country. The Sultans showed great interest in equestrian flying and termed this game as Ishqbazi Hove making;. The Hindu popular amusements Marga and Desi songs and Music was patronised by the Sultans of Golkonda. In fact Kuchapudi and Yakshagana dramas were patronised by the Qutb Shahis. The Persian style of Parasika nrutya (Persian dance; also took place in Hindu dance. The Persian musical instruments like Tabala and Sitar followed by Hindus. The Persian fashion Ghazals also followed by Hindu people.

Sultan Ibrahim Qutb Shah encouraged and patronized Telugu poets. But Hindu rulers never patronized Persian poets. Many Persian, Arabic and Urdu poets were patronized by the Qutb Shahis of Golkonda. The side by side growth of Muslim and Telugu literature and side by side common life of Hindu and Muslim people led to the assimilation of many Muslim words in Telugu literature inscriptions and Kaifiyats. The give and take process of Hindu and Muslim culture are appeared in the Vijayanayara architectural forms and in the edifices of Golkonda buildings and tumbs. The Persian pointed arches were followed by the Hindus for their openings, roofs and decorative purposes, while Muslims followed the Hindu fashion like floral designs, animal designs and bracket supportings. Sometimes the Hindu fashion like earthen pots used for pillars (minarates). The brocket elephant tusks were mixed in the mosques. The Hindu symbolism like lotus, Kalasa and pot were used in the Muslim architecture. The mythical animals and dome are the similar fashion for Hindu and Muslim architectural forms.

#### SOCIAL REFORM IDEAS OF HINDU AND MUSLIM SAINTS

The Vaishnava Bhakti saints of Hindus and Sufi saints of Muslims helped the Andhra people to wipe out caste restrictions. Both Hindu and Muslim saints attempted to bring social reform ideas in Andhra society.

They shared the feelings and aspirations of the common people by their hymns rather than priestly class. The devotional saints of Hindus gave importance to the personalization of God by lovely hymns, sung in the language of the people. Both Hindu and Muslim saints denounced the caste system. They declared that all people equal to attain salvation (Moksha) on the basis of Guna characters instead of caste. They decided polytheism and deplored the Vedic sacrifices. All devotional saints preached unity of God and refused sectarian system. Annamacharya preached equality and criticized religious fanaticism, doctrinal incompatibility and mutual suspicion in the society. He emphasized for unity, harmony and fraternity among the people. He denounced the animal sacrifices at the time of village fairs. He condemned



superstitions in the society. He preached for the emancipation of women through his hymns. Veera Brahmendra Swamy condemned the hierarchical system of caste and other evils. He believed the Vedic knowledge could be gained by one and all. He admitted women, lower caste people and Muslims in his order and made them eligible for saint hood (Kakayya a lower caste man and Siddayya a muslimj. His teachings contributed much for a change in the outlook of Brahmins. All Hindu saints preached for the eradication of untouchability. Veera Brahmendra Swamy advocated non-violence through his work Kalagnanam. He wanted to eradicate intoxication in the society. He condemned idol worship and disguised saints. Through his philosophical works (Siddabodamu and Hamsakalikamba) he fought for the upliftment of women. He encouraged widow remarriage and communal harmony among Hindu and Muslims in the Andhra society.

The Muslim Sufi saints tried for the abolition of all caste discriminations and inequalities in the contemporary society. They admitted Hindus in their order to develop Hindu Muslim harmony. The Khanvah of Syed Muhammad Gesu Daraz held religious discourses with Hindu Yogis for oneness of God to all the people, irrespective of caste, creed and race. The Sufi saint Babayya developed the subject of horoscopy at Penugonda by which he fought for the communal harmony of Hindus and Muslims.

On one side the Muslims believed the Hindu philosophy at Veera Brahmendra Swamy monastery and the other side the Hindus believed Sufi philosophy at Babayya Darga. Thus the Hindu and Muslim saints of this medieval period helped to promote moral and social reform ideas in the Andhra society.

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