

## CHAPTER III

### DEVELOPMENT OF PAINTING; A STUDY OF ANDHRA JATEEYA KALASALA: MACHILIPATNAM.

'Swadeshi', an outcome of the Nationalist movement, propagating the concept of 'Atma Shakti' and 'Self reliance' evoked tremendous support from Indians all over. The decision of the colonial government to partition the large state of Bengal, hurt the sentiments of Indian masses and provoked the already suppressed Indians to respond to the occasion and show their unhappiness over the policies of the alien government and enhance the unity of Indians all over the country.<sup>1</sup> Indians throughout the country joined together to protest against this injustice meted out to the people of Bengal and assert their strength. The concept of 'Swadeshi' or 'Indigenous' became popular with the acceptance of all native goods and means wholeheartedly. Slogans elevating 'Indian Idiom' became common with people taking pride in their own culture and its rich heritage.

'Swadeshi' was an economic war against the Raj on two fronts, firstly, boycotting British goods and secondly, developing alternate indigenous manufacturers.<sup>2</sup> The movement spread with the discarding and destruction of alien goods which included not only the luxury items but

also simple day-to-day items. Machine made cloth, accepted for its quality and affordable price, was being relinquished and more and more people began to take to handspun 'Khadi' inspite of the fact that 'Khadi' was more expensive and its production a time consuming one. Infact it became so popular that women and men, irrespective of their age, began to work on 'Charka' to produce handspun cloth. 'Charka' and 'Khadi' became the popular terms with almost every house having them and whole family working on it. This idea was carried by Gandhiji later, who popularised the idea of self respect and self reliance.

The ideology of Swadeshi spearheaded both violent and non-violent movements. Boycott of foreign goods included mass burning and destruction of the goods on the one hand and on the other hand, deliberately trying to redevelop the indigenous industries. The movement activated by educated intelligentsia, who could grasp the problems prevalent in a subject society, felt the necessity for 'Self rule' and 'self reliance' .<sup>3</sup> Thus the call of swadeshi received wholehearted support from the people of various walks of life and the first step in this direction was to ascertain the national identity and prove that 'Indians' and 'Indian culture' is on par with the rest of the world. Efforts towards self help began with the use of traditional indigenous methods being stressed upon. The

whole country was seen flooded with Swadeshi schemes. Establishment of new textile mills, improved hand looms, river transport concerns, match and soap factories became a common feature.<sup>4</sup> Together, with the economic aspect, the use of indigenous elements was portrayed as a feature of respect for motherland. Traditional festivals like melas, fairs and jataras were regarded to be methods at drawing the masses into the movement. Implementation of the movements was so strong that people voluntarily began discarding alien goods and took to native goods, to set up a swadeshi approach on a strong ideological background.

The idea of swadeshi spread to every arena including education. It was during this time that Indian leaders proposed the establishment of a native education system. Inspiring speeches and pamphlets enabled the establishment of parallel educational institutions giving importance to traditional values and culture, in contrast to the ones started by the British. Establishment of National schools and colleges invoking the spirit of swadeshi and nationalism became a common feature. These institutions did attract a good number of nationalists, who withdrew from the English schools, foregoing the new scientific concept of education which was accepted by Indians as a necessity and had more job opportunities.<sup>6</sup>

In Andhra a nationalist school was established at Rajhmundry while at Machilipatnam a national college popularly known as the Andhra Jateeya Kalasala was started. Both these institutions had a popular footing in coastal Andhra and had a vital role in popularising the philosophy of 'Swadeshi'. While the national school looked after the basic education, the Jateeya Kalasala concentrated upon higher education and vocational training.

Andhra Jateeya Kalasala had its origin in a resolution of the congress in the year 1906.<sup>7</sup> The institution is the brain child of three great luminaries of Andhra K.Hanumanth Rao, a noted educationist, Mutnuri Krishna Rao, editor of the popular journal 'Krishna Patrika' and Dr.B.Pattabhi Seetharamayya, an educationist and politician who served the Indian National Congress as its president for an year.<sup>8</sup> These three aimed at a model institution which would help people of the region in understanding the nationalist ideology and contribute to the ongoing 'Swadeshi' movement. Infact this was the foremost national institution in South India with varied and composite courses of instruction in literary, scientific, artistic and industrial subjects. The institution had been drawing to its courses students from distant parts of the country to equip them for the struggle of life and enable them in near future to solve various problems that the nation has to face.

The institution was supported mostly by local residents in the form of physical and material help. The governing council of the Kalasala also appealed to people for donations. One of the appeals is as follows :

"We wish to bring to notice of the public that we have been able to correlate the various branches of education, necessary for the higher evolution of our nation and request the noble hearted Grihastas of the country to strengthen the same by their handsome gifts to their children for the service of motherland."

Though an institution of protest, there are instances when the colonial government provided Jateeya Kalasala with substantial funds, towards its maintainance. This support by the colonial rulers could be owing to the controverisies among the alien educationists who believed and emphasised on the development of native arts, language and literature. There are, nevertheless, instances when funds were stopped to the schools on the pretext that the teachers in Jateeya Kalasala were encouraging students to participate in the freedom struggle. In a letter to the Minister of Local Self Government departent, Government of Madras, the Secretary, governing body and

the council of Jateeya Kalasala mentioned that the Kalasala gives instruction in Mechanical Engineering, Carpet Weaving, Drawing and Painting in addition to the general education. In the year 1912, the department of industries recognised the industrial section of the institution and the government gave teaching grants from 1913-14 to the end of 1916-17 at the rate of Rs.400 per annum. Rs.800/- was given for 1917-18 . In 1918 grant was suddenly withdrawn on the ground that some of the Kalasala teachers took part in the political movement . Recognition was again granted in 1920 and grant of Rs.1000/- for 1919-1920 was sanctioned. The grants were discontinued for a second time in 1921 on the ground that teachers were taking part in political movements. The G.O also carries the words of the secretary who informed that through the school was being maintained by the generous contributions of the public, it was not able to become self supporting. Hence the governing body of Andhra Jateeya Kalasala resolved in its meeting of 17-12-1927 to approach the government for recognition and grant in aid to run the institution regularly.<sup>10</sup>

Supporting Jateeya Kalasala was a mutual benefit programme for both the founders of the institution and the government. The school run on partial government grant was on the path to fulfill the liberal educator's goal to develop indigenous arts and crafts and make the

school self sufficient as visualised by E.B.Havell and his group. More specifically, development of indigenous arts and crafts had been the idea of many educators to find an alternative to the machine made crafts of England. Special assistance was given to the branches of Mechanical Engineering and Carpet Weaving which had received excellent reports. Secondly, these courses enabled students to live off his talent and skill without much reliance on government jobs. Thirdly, financial grant to the institution would involve the British Government in its activities and this involvement would also help in checking the Nationalist activity in the institution through regular inspection of the various departments.

The institution was named Andhra Jateeya Kalasala not with the narrow view that it was intended only for the projection of Andhra culture but to emphasize that culture in every one, in every arena is to be rooted in the soil, drawing sustenance from the local vernaculars and lead on gradually to a federation of Indian culture.<sup>11</sup>

It has been clearly mentioned in the objectives of the institution that 'It is our aim to prepare for the day when we can give up the use of foreign tongue for the acquisition of knowledge, when the vernacular of our own country are much nearly related to one another than they to a foreign tongue. To seek to realise our common broth-

erhood in thought and feeling through a foreign medium is not only a laborious process for our children to pass through, but also a degrading one into which we are forced against our will and our consciousness at the imminent risk of loosing the very soul of our nation and its culture'.<sup>12</sup>

Keeping this in view, the curriculum at Jateeya Kalasala emphasised to teach the students to love and revere his own mother tongue.<sup>13</sup> The second language that the child was made to learn was Hindi, which has the greater chance of becoming the National language. English came only at a later stage when the student could have good grounding in English, but it was not a compulsory subject. This attitude was not the outcome of hatred towards the English race or language or of a lack of circumstance when the nation was subject to foreign domination but the teachers at Andhra Jateeya Kalasala felt that a student is bound to neglect the essence of his own literature and secondly, could be termed as the effect of the nascent swadeshi movement and the quest to construct a national idiom.

An interesting feature of the courses in Jateeya Kalasala was that all the courses had been correlated with technical and art courses.<sup>14</sup> This accordingly gave necessary training to the hand and the eye, which was

essential to every one not only as an aid to bread earning but as being helpful towards the growth of intellectual powers and real culture, ultimately. Every student of the general course was made to go through a course of manual training such as spinning, carpentry, smithery, drawing and painting as they help in the progress of the general education. This concept of training in vocational courses was also reflected later in Gandhiji's call for self reliance. Similarly drawing was also made a compulsory subject for all technical courses, as it was considered a necessary subject.<sup>15</sup> The culmination and correlation of such ideas resulted in a congenial and cooperative atmosphere in the institution, which enabled the progression of new ideas through discussions and meetings. It also gave the students more confidence, to do their work all by themselves without depending on others.

The institution which had a special status for striving to revive Indian culture had a separate art department, with two sections.<sup>16</sup> One devoted to drawing and painting and the other for oriental art. The founders of the school did not have an insight into art education but had cultivated a taste and felt it was a necessity to have art education in order to emphasize on the superiority of Indian culture. None of the three founders had any training in art but the fact that introduction of art, a

new subject, by these educationists shows how important art was, not only for emphasising Indian cultural heritage but also in earning bread. Art education provided a large number of government and private jobs and made a large number of students self reliant and sufficient. In fact Jateeya Kalasala provided the schools of the region with art teachers and also many of the students took to working in survey offices. A few who were more adventurous went into art direction in films and advertising, thus making 'Art' an important subject of study and living.<sup>17</sup>

The department was thoroughly planned and programmed with regular advice from Abanindranath Tagore and his student Nandalal Bose. The department of oriental art was monopolised by the teachers from Bengal, drawing and painting department was looked after by Erranki Venkata Shastri, while the department of oriental art had Promod Kumar Chatterjee and Ramendra Chakravarthy, both of whom

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were established artists and students of Nandalal Bose. Though inviting teachers from Bengal was expensive, the founders did not compromise in creating an analogous ideological association relating to the broader concept of 'Swadeshi'. The motive to have an institution based on the ideological framework of the 'Swadeshi' seems to have made them start such an institution.

The course in drawing and painting, including a specialised course in oriental design, was formulated in such a way that no longer were students made to copy from Greek statues and models nor was importance attached to academic realism. This concept was replaced by copying from Indian culture, models, architecture, mythology and painting, as advocated by E.B.Haveli. Another more prominent factor was the solemnity attached to creativities which was looked at as a basic factor for understanding and appreciating any Indian art.<sup>19</sup> Subsequently it was the concept of excellent creativity which has provoked English educationists, officials and rulers to appreciate Indian arts and crafts and further take example of it and help revive the fast diminishing creativity in Western arts and crafts. The course in drawing was made to concentrate upon, keeping in view the necessity to have perfection in drawing, to enable any further creative work. Infact drawing was a compulsory subject and later the student could proceed to the specialised course in oriental art or go in for orientation in crafts section of the institution. °

Erranki Venkata Shastri was a self taught artist with a brief stay at Madras school of arts. He emphasised on having good back ground of drawing, which, he firmly believed, helped in the creative work. This aspect of Shastri was helped and supported by his friend, Gadicherla

Ram Murthy, who was a regular visitor at Jateeya Kalasala. Gadicherla Ram Murthy, an art teacher at the National school, Rajahmundry did give a few demonstrations of drawing classes at Jateeya Kalasala and encouraged the students in perfecting drawing first and later take to specialised courses.<sup>22</sup>

Students of the school seemed to be aware of the 'cultural conflict' dominating the art scene in the early 19th century India, but the sole goal of the art students at Andhra Jateeya Kalasala was to formulate and develop new Indian art placing Indian culture superior to that of the West. This was admitted by Alluri Satyanarayana Raju, an artist, who had been attached indirectly to the Kalasala, and its teachers and students for long.<sup>23</sup> He observed that if he had taken to the Anglo-Indian school of art, i.e. academic realism, he would have defiantly earned more, as there was a ready market, but the fact that he nor his friends at Jateeya Kalasala did not take to this was due to the strong 'Swadeshi' ideology prevalent in all classes of the society. The credit for this goes to the teachers of the art department who vehemently supported the new movement. Although the teachers from Bengal had a comparatively short stay, they were eventually successful in spreading their mission of developing Indian art.<sup>24</sup> The teachers in fact set an example for their students with their work. James H Cousins observed

that Promod Kumar Chatterjee's work was a combination of the philosophical and sentimental idea together with the strong notion of placing Indian art high and this made his work very interesting and set an example for the young Indian students of art (Plate III).<sup>25</sup> Promod Kumar Chatterjee was a widely travelled artist. He visited Kailash Manasarover, Tibet and various Buddhist viharas by walk and made number of sketches and painted several paintings which have been published along with his writings in Bengali journal 'Parabhashi'.<sup>26</sup>

Promod Kumar Chatterjee, the dedicated teacher of the Jateeya Kalasala worked profusely on themes which concentrated on Hindu mythology and various dazzling stories which left the Europeans totally confused. Works such as 'In praise of Lord Chaitanya' shows a disciple in ecstatic mood, a common feature in any Indian religious festival. The picture shows a large number of devotees assembled to sing in priase of lord Chaitanya. The work 'Shankara Tandava' shows Shiva in an angry mood, killing an evil Rakshasa. His interest towards Buddhism enabled him to make a series of works showing 'Buddha' as a unique human being. His works published in Telugu journals. 'Sharada' and 'Gruhalaxmi' regularly, showed the artists effort to maintain the Indianness in the works. Orange colour has been profusely used for maintaining the serenity in the saintly figures. While the darker

shades are used for elevating the main theme of the work. The works have a saintly feeling with most of his works concentrating on religious and mythological themes. Promod Kumar Chatterjee was as a conscientious teacher, been a great influence on his students at Machilipatnam.

Potluri Hanumantha Rao, an artist and a student of the Jateeya Kalasala, recalled that Ramendra Chakravarthy was a versatile artist who firmly believed in the superi-

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ority of Indian tradition and culture. Imbued with the ideology of the times, Chakravarthy worked on the lines of the Bengal school and it was his thorough knowledge of Indian culture and heritage which provided him an opportunity to teach at Jateeya Kalasala. Under the guidance of these two teachers, students of the school were successful in developing and continuing the new pattern of art, which had subtle but very powerful implications.

The school also had a few lectures by eminent personalities to instruct the students about Indian art and aesthetics. A few months after the starting of the Kalasala in 1910, Ananda K. Coomarswamy visited the institution and delivered few lectures on Indian art. It was also observed that Nandalal Bose too visited the institution and participated with the students in working on a few paintings.<sup>29</sup>

Jateeya Kalasala attracted a large number of stu-

dents from all over the country, irrespective of their social and economic background. Being the only premier institution in the south, under the nationalist banner, it had attracted students from the whole of south India.<sup>30</sup> Students of all castes and religions joined this institution as the education imparted was not only practical and job oriented but also secular. Secondly, it had also lowered the minimum qualification for technical education. The minimum qualification for drawing and painting course was third form or eighth class and for oriental art, first form or sixth class as the minimum qualification. Finally the fee charged was comparatively less, with Rs 2/- for drawing and painting and Rs 3/- per year for oriental art. More important, parents of the students willingly sent their children to the institution as it was less expensive comparatively and they were confident that there would be no cultural conflict, as the ideology was just native, within the purview of swadeshi.<sup>32</sup> They were also sure of the job opportunities putforth in this type of college education.

The oriental art course had directly taken its support from the Bengal school with the students being trained to copy Indian works of art, Chinese and Japanese prints and designs and finally developing new works of art on the same lines. At no instance they were encouraged to academic art inspite of the popularity it gained in the

society. After an initial training in normal Drawing and Painting, which was a common course for all in Andhra Jateeya Kalasala, students of Oriental art section, had a well constructed course to appreciate and take support from the 'Indian art', while most specimens for the training belonged to Indian art. Students were also introduced to Chinese, Japanese and Mughal art patterns, analogous to Sister Nivedita's advise to Indians to first love and respect their own culture which, according to her was in the broader concept of Asia.<sup>33</sup> At a later stage of the course students were left free to concentrate on their own creativity and the teachers encouraged them to create works of art with localised scenes and subjects.

Though the school had two separate sections, there were practically no strict rules, restricting students to share or work together. The friendly atmosphere with caring shoulders of the teachers for ready support and discussion encouraged the progress of art.

The institution had many visitors and appreciators. Opinions of a few illustrious visitors are as follows :

"The institution is unique and has done excellent work for the spread of National Industry and National art. Recently with the support of an artist, promod Kumar Chatterjee

from Calcutta, they have been teaching the new and venerated Indian art and the result, thanks to Mr. Chatterjee, has been excellent, as can be seen from the exhibits in the Bengal art section of the Kalasala."

"Visited the Kalasala today saw much that is interesting and useful. With more public support the institution would be able to help the renaissance of Indian culture and art even more than it does at present. The painting section is unique in a way and I would suggest that special attention should be devoted to scenes and objects peculiar to Andhradesa."<sup>36</sup>

"I saw the art section very interesting and the work is of a high standard in the workshop where practical as well as instructional work is being done in the laboratory, the library and carpet shop. The atmosphere of its place, very good and the association of caste boys and non-caste boys is excellent. A most interesting institution, the staff struck me as of its best."<sup>37</sup>

The institution as such was a worthy one, with in-

teresting work being produced. An important provision of Jateeya Kalasala was to send students to various other institutions like Shantiniketan, Mysore and Madras to further their talents by providing them scholarships. These scholarships were not regular but depended upon the tastes and generosity of the Royal households of Pithapuram, Challapalli, Nizam of Hyderabad and, of course, the Government itself.<sup>38</sup>

Art at Machilipatnam, as understood, took support from Bengal school of art, not only in the form of content but was based on the same ideological framework. Firstly, work conducted at Jateeya Kalasala was no doubt a reflection of the education and training imparted. Teachers of the school were themselves a new breed of nationalist artists, showing the students various examples of the new developing art in the country. Secondly, the strength of Indian art, literature, mythology and religion were stressed which helped the students. The pertinent question which arises is, can the work of the students be termed as a separate movement for was it only a passing phase which disappeared after initial existence. The question needs to be answered and explained systematically, taking into account the large chunk of work turned out in the school and the interest shown by the students, teachers and public in learning and creating new works of art, the social background of

the artists. Andhra Jateeya Kalasala in its role as a pioneering art institution attracted not only regular art students who could join the department as regular students but many more who were interested and could not join the institution for various reasons, but took active advises and guidance from the teachers and students there.<sup>39</sup>

According to Alluri Satyanarayana Raju the atmosphere in the institution was so congenial that students like him who did not join the institution on regular basis, and never felt any complexities in approaching the teachers and students and learning new patterns. Infact every one was welcomed to attend the regular evening discussions on various subjects like politics, theology, religion, economics, literature and the upcoming theatre movement.<sup>40</sup> It was this feature which made the department so very well known among art lovers of the region with in a short span.

Thus the institution achieved a two fold development. It was started with an aim to project and develop Indian art and crafts enabling students from South India to participate in this long term process and thus enabling the spread of the sprit of 'Nationalism' and 'Swadeshi'. Secondly, Jateeya Kalasala seems to have enabled students of the region to be self sufficient and

self reliant, which was something Gandhiji and his followers stressed upon throughout the freedom struggle.

Adavi Bapi Raju, the well known writer, artist, musician and art director from Saripalle village near Bhimavaram, had been interested in drawing and painting since childhood.<sup>41</sup> It was, however, his meeting with Oswald Jennings Couldry, Principal of Government arts college, Rajahmundry, who was influential in the development of a movement in Rajahmundry, which made him concentrate on English literature and learn painting. Unlike his contemporaries at Rajahmundry, Bapiraju could not join J.J.School of Art Bombay, due to financial constraints. But due to his regular discussions at Andhra Jateeya Kalasala where he learnt wash technique and learnt to give prime importance to Indian subject. Though initially, before coming to Jateeya Kalasala he had a stint in copying European academic art, he later concentrated only on Indian themes and styles. Bapi Raju being a poet was successful in picturising lyrical mysticism in his works 'Gowri poja', 'Swetha Tara', 'Samudraguptudu', 'Bharati', 'Telugu Thalli' and 'Sasikala' (Plate IV).

In his works 'Swetatara' and 'Sasikala', the use of Oriental figures, jewellery and anatomy reflects his association with the teachers at Jateeya Kalasala and his exposure to the Bengal School of art.<sup>42</sup> As an ardent

follower of the nationalist ideology he plunged into the movement in 1922 and was imprisoned for two years. His spirit of nationalism, though not direct in his writings and paintings, did make an effort in placing the Indian culture and heritage superior. For the people of Andhra, the works seemed simple, without any Western complexities and as such Bapi Raju was successful in creating aesthetic awareness among the masses. His works became more popular with many of them being utilised as cover pages in magazines. It was probably for the first time that paintings were used as cover pages. 'Sharada' a journal highlighting the cultural development of the country, started by a noted nationalist Kowta Srirama Shastri, carried a number of paintings on the cover pages. A few issues of Sharda carried a picture of goddess 'Saraswati' (Goddess of learning) with her veena. It conveyed the powerful communication of the motive of the magazine i.e. to spread the cultural heritage of the Indian nation among its people who were gradually being taken over by the new Western culture.<sup>43</sup> The cover pages of the magazines were not monotonous which showed the artists zeal for creativity. Bapi Raju became well known for his paintings which paved way for making new art.

He enhanced the prestige of Indian culture by incorporating native and oriental elements which had philosophical content. 'Bharatmata' a famous work of

Abinindranath, created during the Swadeshi movement inspired Bapi Raju much later to work on the same theme which he named 'Bharati' .<sup>44</sup> This was as famous in Andhra as was Bharatmata in Bengal. His literary background and personal interest in the literature of the country had enhanced the creativity of the artist in evolving a style propounding a nationalist ideology.

Bapi Raju undoubtedly was a great influence on his contemporaries and this was furthered after he was invited by K. Hanumanth Rao to head the art department at Jateeya Kalasala in 1935, where he worked for three years. As the principal of the institution the work of the students in the department had great influence of the philosophy of Advai Bapi Raju. According to Alluri Satyanarayana Raju, Bapi Raju's knowledge, sincerity and skill acted as a great influence on the work of his students at the Kalasala, while the regular discussions on various subjects paved way for the development of creativity among the students of the Kalasala.

His works 'Sasikala' an imaginary diety on whom he has also written a few poems, 'Swayamavaram' , 'Swetatara' , 'Samudraguptudu', 'Mrutyunjaya', 'Suryadeva', 'Bharati', 'Naganrityam', 'Venibhangam', 'Godhuli', 'Tikkana', 'Rundramadevi' and 'Brindavani Geetam' affirm the artist's interest towards the native themes and style. Most of

these works were accepted by the people as 'Good Indian' art which were popularised by various cultural magazines which began to be published by the early 19th century in Andhra. Bapi Raju's inclination towards 'Indian art' can also be seen in films Sati Anasuya (1935), Mirabai and Dhurva Vijayam (1939-40) for which he worked as the art director.<sup>47</sup>

If lyrical mysticism was dominant in the works of Bapi Raju, it was also visible in the work of Ankala Venkata Subba Rao, a contemporary of Bapi Raju. Subba Rao, like many others, initially was taken over by the academic style of painting in which he worked until he joined the Kalasala.<sup>48</sup> As a direct student of Promod Kumar Chatterjee he was introduced to the new Indian art which was developing. Further to enhance the artists talent and skill, he was sent to Shantiniketan for a short stay. And it was here that Subba Rao learnt the intricacies of the new art. As a student of Jateeya Kalasala he concentrated on themes like fantasy, myths and mythology, which could be progressed only after the artist has an insight in to Indian mythology (Plate V). However, he gradually began to work on regional themes of Andhra. His paintings titled 'Village Maids' and 'Vishranti Bhangamu' picturising rural Andhra evoked immense praise from his master Chatterjee, who encouraged him to work on such themes showing the regional cul-

ture.<sup>49</sup> As such his later work began to concentrate on subjects relating to farmers, festivals, village life and women which were accepted by the people for the direct content, which could be related to their experiences in daily life(Plate VI).

Subba Rao in one of his mythic series 'Solar fantasy' depicted the sun god on a charriot of the traditional seven horses, with two mythical bodyguards. This picture became a popular work not only for the deft handling of the work in water colours but the creative theme highlighting the vast arena of creativity in Indian mythology. Subba Rao's series of works, reflecting Indian mythology are not as direct as the works of 'Ravi Verma', but make the viewer think about the instances and locations of the work. Subba Rao generally concentrated on complicated themes and compositions while his handling of the medium and style in water colours is very intricate and passionate. 'Solar Fantasy', which he regarded as his best creation, projects the chariot and horses from the clouds, mesmerise the viewer in seeing a heavenly body coming towards the earth. Much on the same lines are his works 'Takshaka', 'Pagatikala', and 'Nagarjuna'. His colleague and friend Potluri Hanumanth Rao observes that Ankala Subba Rao, apart from being a skilled artist, technically believed in giving his audience i.e., the natives of India a clear picture of their

life. He had once observed that 'we can elevate Andhra culture and prestige by projecting our own cultural heritage and life'.<sup>51</sup> Ankala's later works follow this observance strictly. It was such discussions which were common at Jateeya Kalasala that prompted Hanumanth Rao also to work on regionalised themes.

Hanumantha Rao was both a student of Promod Kumar Chatterjee and Ramendra Chakravarthi at Jateeya Kalasala. Taking support and encouragement from his teacher he firmly believed in regionalising Indian themes. His work "Pellipalakki", showing a bride in a palanquin, is a reflection of the marriage procession in Andhra in the early years of the 19th century. This work, a complicated one showing more than 50 accompanists, dressed in Indian attire i.e., women in sarees and pavadas (skirts), men and children in dhoti and kurtas. There is absolutely no trace of the new attire especially among the men folk. The highlight of the picture is a man wearing dhoti kurta, with a Gandhi cap, deliberating the Nationalist fervour among people. Son of a worthy brahmin, Potluri had to break traditional grounds and take to painting. According to him, especially until 1947, his motive was to have thematic paintings which highlight Indian art, culture and heritage. The ideology was more strong as the teachers and the general educated people also firmly believed in this and appreciated his work. Regular speeches

by intellectuals, including A.K.Coomaraswamy, encouraged students of the school to follow the developing Indian art movement.<sup>52</sup> A nationalist to the core, he even believed in using Hindi script to sign on his works as the feeling of self respect was so much that they were trained to avoid anything alien.

Hanumanth Rao in his work 'Motabavi', showing a farmer working on his fields with two bullocks, pulling water out of the well, shows the work done by the farmer in Andhra. His other work is 'Gorumudda' showing a mother feeding rice to her young child. The woman shown amidst a ramshackle house shows immense satisfaction in feeding rice to her child. This, according to the artist, was to show how important the mother figure is in Indian culture. Considered to be the protector of her child, she takes care of her child in every way and this picturing is one simple manner to show the interest of the mother in her son. His other work 'Akshraabhyasam' showing an old brahmin teaching a young non-caste boy, was a revolutionary theme of that time(Plate VII). Having been inspired by the social reform movement of the time, Hanumanth Rao believed in projecting the ideology of a common platform for all and unhesitatingly portrayed this theme. Being a product of the rural background he successfully pictured rural Andhra in his work(Plate VIII).

Much younger to Hanumanth Rao was Madhavapeddi Gokhale, also a student of Jateeya Kalasala, who worked on local themes. An ardent believer in the freedom of expression and Nationalist ideology he worked on many important themes like 'Brahmanaidu', a warrior of the Palanadu war, who evoked lot of self respect among Andhra people(Plate IX) . Gokhale's work has strong ideological content reflecting the Indian social background. The work 'Shantikapotam' a painting full of white regions, a symbol of peace, reflects the artists idea in maintaining peace and harmony throughout the world, which has been portrayed symbolically giving a very reflective title. His participation in the freedom movement, especially the, Salt Satyagraha movement of Gandhiji, made him undergo imprisonment which has probably provoked Gokhale to make paintings such as 'Shantikapotam' to symbolize peace for his disturbed mind. As an associate editor of Andhra Patrika and more important, 'Praja Shakti' he was able to putforth his nationalist ideology not only in his editorial writings but also illustrations. While Andhra Patrika was a more liberal and democratic paper, Praja Shakti was a paper which elevated the work of Gokhale and showed various aspects of life under the British rule. As an associate editor of this newspaper, his work was powerful in conveying the message for socio-economic changes, but was not provocative. A creative genius, Gokhale's work concentrated on social aspects of life. His work

'Avva Manumaralu' , 'Hampi Kathalu' , 'Jatayu' , 'Kashtajeevulu' are popular for the simple content and the style which took off from the Bengal school of art. However, the deliberate deviation from his earlier work was due to his advanced training at the Madras school of art.<sup>53</sup>

Also from the same college hailed Gurram Mallaiah, who was a direct student of Promod Kumar Chatterjee. After an initial stay at Jateeya kalasala for three years, he secured a fellowship to visit Shantiniketan to work there for three months.<sup>54</sup> Mallaiah, a native of a small village Macherla in Guntur district had initially a short stint at academic art but it was the training and discussions at Kalasala which enabled him to work towards a conceptual framework. Mallaiah's works were basically of two types - one is, which has a concentration of oriental themes like 'Varudhmi' where an angle of Indian mythology is made to stand in a garden. This work of Mallaiah is done in the regular Bengal school style, using opaque colours with transparent effect on the dress, while the face of the lady in the work resembles more an Arabian queen rather than an Andhra woman. This is considered to be an outcome of his long association with artists of Bengal school (Plate X ). Similarly in his other work 'Greeshma Sayamkalam' a lady is seen sitting on the terrace with her veena and book. Here too the lady, her face, the building and the whole formulation of the work

is near to a Persian miniature. Similar work has been done by V.R.Chitra who was also a student of both Jateeya Kalasala and Shantiniketan.

Such work, cultivated directly out of training and exposure, did not really seem to have satisfied an artist like Malliah who was more innovative and creative. His other work concentrated profusely on simple day to day themes of the society, in which, apart from the interesting subjects, the style too was not rigid with the flow of line and simple colour schemes. In a work "Kuteera parishrama" he has shown a family comprising of four i.e., a young women, a young man an old widow and a small child. All the four people in the painting are seen to be working on the most popular theme- 'weaving cloth' during the era of swadeshi in a thatched house. This work of Malliah evoked tremendous support from his colleagues and teachers(Plate XI). The old lady is seen working on charkha while the young man is weaving on a handloom and the young lady and the boy are seen making spindles of the thread. This work had evoked tremendous response in the society as every one could place themselves in this role, which was a popular activity during that period. Malliah himself was an ardent believer of such work involving the majority in the society.

Malliah had started an institution in his native

village Macherla and named it Navayuga Chitrakala Samithi, much on the lines of Jateeya Kalasala.<sup>57</sup> His institution of Malliah was supposed to have concentrated on the rural children of Macherla and its neighbouring villages who could not afford to go to even Jateeya Kalasala. With the help of a few like minded friends the institution was started and regular visitors to the institution included Gaganendranath Tagore, Pramod Kumar Chatterjee, Ramendra Charkravorthy and Devi Prasad Roy Choudary from Bengal, apart from a host of artists from Andhra itself. The visits of such artists, their lectures and training did contribute to the spreading of nationalist fervour in the remote village. Though the institution was not a very successful one due to regular floods and severe financial crunch, it did help in creating enthusiasm among the locals to know what Indian art exactly is. The misconception regarding the cultural conflict between the Anglo-Indian school and Bengal school was also removed to a larger extent. Malliah as an artist and an art educationist was partly successful in his two projects. This was shown at the exhibition of works of his students exhibited at Jateeya kalasala and gained considerable recognition. Malliah like the teachers of kalasala concentrated on drawing at the early stage of the course. He emphasised the necessity for efficiency in drawing, practised and trained with native models and specimens. This he firmly believed would help the students in understanding Indian art and help in the making of new Indian

art as visualised by the art educationists of the nation.

The result of the influence of Bengal school saw many students going to Shantiniketan to undergo training in painting. Vinna Sessa Rao and Chitra Veerabhadra Rao were two such students. The later popularly known as V.R.Chitra, was at Shantiniketan from 1920-28, studying painting as well as handicrafts. His stay at Shantiniketan provided him with excellent job opportunities. He worked as lecturer at Lucknow art school and later at the Madras school of art. More important he is the only Andhrite to be the principal of kalabhavan of Shantiniketan much

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later. Chitra's initial work is difficult to be discriminated from any picture of the Bengal school. On par with the training at the school the works reflected his association with the Bengal school not only in style and technique but also the themes. Women seemed to have played a conspicuous role in his works. These women resembled women from persia, draped in Indian attire, while the background is flat coloured, with delicate trees and a half moon in the sky. These works which are many in number resembled the Persian miniatures (Plate XII). The women, their facial expression, and physical features resembled the Eastern women but not the Indian women. There is however a drastic change in the figures after he came back to south India. The figures were more Indianised and local which could be associated to the society he was living in. It was, however, not the same with Sessa Rao,

who worked on local themes. Shesha Rao also established a small art school for students at Bhimavaram and taught them Indian art. Alluri Satyanarayana Raju, a disciple and a friend of Sesha Rao, recalls how Sesha Rao read out scenes from Hindu mythology and encouraged students to paint on such themes. Raju himself worked on a number of mythological themes which he feels was an out come of his association with his friends from the kalasala.<sup>59</sup>

Raju also worked on a number of portraits of nationalist leaders, few of which are displayed in his house in Rayalem a village near Bhimavaram. It is, however, his thematic work which provoked the masses, the press and his own colleagues. In one of his works he shows the life of an Indian farmer who is being forced to cultivate and sell his produce to the market. The farmer and his family are shown with shrunken cheeks and absolutely thin bodies, the bullocks carrying the load are also shown shrunken. At the other corner of the work is the rich English officer, seen living in a palatial structure and travelling in an open car with his family. The highlight of the picture is the British flag seen flying on the palace like house, showing precisely how the English exploited the Indians in his area(Plate XIII). This painting of Raju was exhibited at Andhra Jateeya Kalasala and at Vijayawada and earned him excellent name from the nationalists who liked the direct theme and expression. An ardent believer of Gandhi, he has made a number of

portraits of Gandhi and also paintings instilling in a feeling of self respect and self reliance. which, according to him, was an outcome of the necessity of the time and as an artist he played his role in a small way.<sup>60</sup>

Among the other serious artists of Jateeya Kalasala are two people, Kowta Ram Mohan Shastri, and his younger brother Kowta Ananda Mohan Shastri, sons of Kowta Sri Rama Shastri, editor of 'Sharada' . Both the brothers had their initial training at Jateeya Kalasala under Promod Kumar Chatterjee for four years. Ram Mohan's work during his stay at Kalasala was a combination of the Indian mythology and the new emerging Indian art. His well known works are 'Saraswati', 'Nereekshana' and 'Nataraju'. He was sent to learn print making and etching at Royal college of art, London. His training programme was partly funded by the Maharaja of Pithapuram.<sup>61</sup> The art of print making encouraged Kowta to make a number of excellent portraits of various leaders of Indian freedom movement, a set of which has been published in the form of a book. His brother, Anand Mohan Shastri had his specialised training with a government scholarship at Mysore under the famous artist Venkatappa, who is himself a student of Shantiniketan. Unlike his brother whose work reflected his western training, Ananda Mohan's work was totally indigenous. His famous works are 'Ajantanartaki' , 'Ekalavya', 'Gollapilla' , 'Grama vedhi' , 'Tikkana Somayaji', 'Sri krishna', 'Varudhini pravara'. The titles

of his works show that Ananda was not influenced by the academic art. Simple and specific, he was like his teacher, who worked on simple native themes, highlighting the common aspects of human life, in a style, popularised by the teachers of Jateeya Kalasala (Plate XIV).

Jateeya Kalasala had many more important artists who worked profusely during their stay at the institution but gradually receded to the background. A common factor for this recession is their accepting jobs in the schools which comparatively were many, with almost every important school having a post of an art teacher. Securing a government job in schools was much easier due to the relaxation given by the officials. Infact, a student having undergone training in art school for three years or having passed the government technical examination privately, along with a teacher training course for 6 weeks, was accepted as a qualified art teacher. Artists like Susarla Venkatramaya, Venkat Rama Rao, Goli Seshayya, S.Vasudev, Y.Satyanarayana Rao, Vedula Venkata Shastri, Arya Dasu, Taliseti Rama Rao, Jagannadha Raju whose works were published in Bharati, though have a say in conceptualising the work of Jateeya Kalasala seem to have relegated to background having secured a comfortable living as art teachers in school. Taliseti Rama Rao who apart from being an art student was also a graduate and had contributed a number of articles on art.

Swadeshi movement seemed to have inspired the art-

ists from the Kalasala. The ideology of the movement made the artists incorporate certain elements directly related to the then popular movement. Charka, Gandhi caps, dhoti, kurta as which can be seen as symbols of 'Swadeshi', began to be included at every necessary stage. This would seem that the artist is aware of the socio-political and economic changes, taking place in the Indian society and was subtly elevating the philosophy of the time through their paintings. 'Ratnapu Sandesham' a work by W.A. Arya Dasu, a non formal student at Machilipatnam shows a native woman of Andhra carrying the charka over her shoulder, while her child is seen with a spindle. The lady with dusky complexion, wearing a traditional cotton saree and with palm trees in the background (a feature of coastal Andhra villages) shows that Charkha had an important role(Plate XV). The title 'Ratnapu sandesham' which literally means 'message of charkha', is the work showing the importance of charkha in Indian society during the struggle for freedom. This particular work received tremendous support from the nationalist leaders who appreciated the artists contribution in taking the message of charkha to the public. The lady in the picture is devoid of sophisticated looks or the new attire adopted from the west and probably is shown keeping in mind the women of rural coastal Andhra. Similarly, another work 'Nooluvadukuta' (spinning of yarn), a work by S.Eshwariah also of the Jateeya Kalasala shows a lady making thread out of cotton(Plate XVI) . While these are two such works

which propounded the message of swadeshi directly, works highlighting Indian mythology, society, the new ideas of people, their way of life and dress helped in visualising the Indianness in the works and also show explicitly the life in rural India. Chedavada S.Krishnayya's work, 'Dassara Gilakalu', shows the youngsters with various toys during the festival of Dassara (Plate XVII). All the youngsters in the work are in their best clothes and the remarkable feature in the work is the Swadeshi cap or Gandhi cap worn by nearly four people. There is absolutely no sophistication in the showing the people except that there are few figures wearing coats over on their dhoties, which can be seen as the popular attire of the time.

Jateeya kalasala as understood was an outcome of the political philosophy in the early 1900's. The education imparted and the ideas propounded together with new political ideology played an important role in the artists mind, who is not immune to the happenings around him. The work of the artist at the Kalasala was with in the framework of the National movement and more specifically the swadeshi movement, aiming at India using Indian art. Despite the certain shortcomings when compared to the Bengal School of art, the artist and teachers of the institution had a definite aim and worked towards it.

## NOTES & REFERENCES

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17.G.O.No.805, Op.cit; see "Curriculum and syllabus relating to art department.

18. Andhra Jateeva Kalasala golden jubilee souvenir, Op.cit  
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19. **Emphasis** on creativity by the teachers of the Kalasala was confirmed by Sri Potuluri Hanumanth Rao, interview dated 6-7-1993, at Vinukonda.

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- 52.Ibid.,
- 53.more details on the artist can be had from Telugu Pratibha Prabhata Rekhalu,Op.cit;
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