CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

Various trends in social reform endeavours in the post-Veeresalingam era remain unexplored by researchers. The attention of historians was increasingly drawn towards national movement after the death of Veeresalingam in 1919. Nevertheless, it is true that social reform efforts in early 20th century joined the mainstream of freedom struggle. Many of the social reformers actively participated in the movement during the period of our study. Yet, social reform trends retained a separate identity even when they constituted an integral part of the struggle for independence. In this overlapping, the political activities often surfaced themselves with an imposing vigor and vitality, and the social reform efforts always remained a strong undercurrent of the same without losing their importance. Under these circumstances, it was but natural that the freedom struggle attracted the attention of the researchers to focus upon political developments. The present study seeks to analyse the social reform trends in the post-Veeresalingam era. In the absence of a comprehensive work on this important aspect, a serious attempt is made in the study to throw light on the 19th century developments under the British rule and the early reform trends of Veeresalingam era. The major thrust is to critically estimate the progress and impact of social reform efforts in the post-Veeresalingam period.
The 19th century in India was a period of transition. The changes in the field of education, economy and polity, introduced by the British, resulted in structural imbalances in the indigenous society. The outcome of these changes is significant as the reaction from the indigenous society started building up along with them. A study of this transition becomes a significant area for the historian. The changes at all India level had their severe bearing on Andhra too. The region of Andhra, excluding the Nizam's territories in Telangana region, formed part of the erstwhile Madras Presidency during the entire period of our study.

At the outset, the consolidation of political power by the British was not smooth. The ruling authority in the indigenous society was characterised by multiple centres of dominance. This plurality of political power was represented by local ruling chiefs or the big Zamindars or the local military potentates like poligars or the village level officers of traditional power Structure. The acquisition of political control by the British invariably meant a total disruption of these multiple centres of power. In other words, it was a change of power from indigenous feudal classes to colonial state. During this crucial period of transition, the British did neither lose sight of the earlier


Ibid. The British encroached upon the set of loose and Inter-locked structures of dominance in society and established their supremacy by breaking them.
administrative practices nor ignore their importance. Also they were cautious in introducing new processes of their power. Rather they adopted some of the earlier administrative practices from 18th century administration. For example, during the consolidation of colonial power in Madras Presidency, Thomas Munro could not ignore the influence of village officers like Patels and Karnums in the Ceded districts of Andhra and he personally tried to settle their claims to land rights in an amicable manner.

Despite sincere attempts at adjustment by the British, the dispossessed ruling classes were agitated over the loss of power. The deprivation of power led most of them to resort to revolts against the immediate British authority. The British conquest and consolidation of India experienced severe protest and, for nearly a century till 1857, the discontentment took the shape of armed struggles. The Andhra region of Madras Presidency

3 For more details see Rosalind 0' Hanlon and David Washbrook, "Histories in Transition : Approaches to the Study of Colonialism and Culture in India" in History Workshop, No.32, Autumn 1991, pp.124-25.
The early resistance to the British rule has been discussed in detail in S.B.Chaudhuri, Civil Disturbances During the British Rule In India, 1765-1857, Calcutta, 1955.

Andhra region under Madras Presidency during the period of our study comprised the districts of Ganjam, Visakhapatnam, Godavari, Krishna, Nellore, Bellary, Kurnool, Cuddapah, Anantapur and Chittoor. The present day Telangana region was under the rule of

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witnessed revolts in the territories of Ganjam, Parlakimidi, Goomsur, Vizagapatnam, Palkonda, Godavari and the most far reaching revolt among these was that of Uyyalavada Naarasimha Reddy in 1846 in the Rayalaseema region. All these rebellions may be described as feudal in nature, scattered and localised and motivated by specific interests of the ruling elites. Nevertheless, they reflect two significant facts. First, most of these rebellions received popular support and hence can be termed 'mass-based' outbursts. Secondly, these outrages unmistakably symbolise the quest of the people for a new identity under the changed political circumstances of the colonial rule. It is to be seen that the colonial rulers could not afford to lose the support of landed magnates after 1857 Revolt and infact the earliest

the Nizam of Hyderabad.


nominations to the Legislative Councils in the three Presidencies of British India were mostly made from this section.

The consolidation of political power was accompanied by new revenue policies. Though, in the initial stages, the new revenue arrangements like Permanent settlement and village Lease settlements were tried, the Ryotwari settlement became the predominant mode of assessment and 17 districts out of 21 in the Madras Presidency were settled under Ryotwari tenures. The system, which appeared to be democratic, proved in practice more oppressive in its actual working. The heavy incidence of taxation 12, the torture employed in the collection of rents.

9 For example the Zamindar of Venkatagiri (Nellore district) was among those who was appointed a member of Madras Legislative Council. However, his apathy towards public cause came under attack. See for details *Hindujanasamskarini* (Telugu monthly), January 1889, p.64. In course of time the landed aristocrats who were on good terms with the British government were subject to a paradoxical dilemma whether to support the colonial state or nationalists. This confusion resulted from a fear of insecurity as they were not certain who among the colonial rulers and the nationalists would protect their interests. For a discussion on this see William Roy Smith, *Nationalism and Reform in India*, Yale (USA), 1938, pp.40-41.

This is mentioned by the 1852 Memorandum submitted by the Madras Native Association to the British Parliament. Vide Paragraph no.5 in the memorial.


vagaries of nature and incidence of famines left the peasants in a chronic state of poverty and suffering. Added to this, the superimposition of more exploitative capitalist economy, particularly in the post-1857 period, further precipitated the misery of ryots. These discouraging economic conditions and the most fluctuating variables of taxation did not encourage the accumulation of agrarian surplus. The creation of national market along with the exploitative capitalist economy extinguished the fire of indigenous economic enterprise. All these changes led the people towards agitational modes of protest. The activities of Madras Native Association and its historic memorandum of 1852, submitted to the British Parliament, visibly brought out the bleeding realities of peasant economy in the Madras Presidency.

The countless number of petitions addressed to the Government of Madras from the inhabitants of various parts of Andhra region

The occurrence of famines was witnessed throughout the century. Apart from natural factors, the new revenue policies and destruction of indigenous industry contributed to the outbreak of famines. B.M.Bhatia, *Famines In India : A study in some aspects of the Economic History of India (1860-1965)*, Bombay, 2nd Edition, 1967, p.14 ff. Also see N.Neelakanteswar Rao, "A Critical Assessment of the Administration of Famine Relief during the Famine of 1876-78 with special reference to Andhra Region" in *PIHC*, 40th session, 1979, pp.908-10. The vernacular press came down heavily on the unsatisfactory relief operations of the Madras Government and its famine policies. It was stated that the colonial authorities instituted famine on a permanent basis. See *Jarlda-l-Rozgar*, dt. 3.5.1879 In the *Native Newspaper Reports*, TNA.

13 Barun De, op.cit.

protesting the economic hardships bear further testimony to this. The economic discontent drove the people towards struggle against the colonial authorities and the first political movement was initiated by the Madras Native Association. The Association had its branches spread throughout the Presidency including Andhra. The social base of the activities of the Association was wide and represented both middle and lower classes of people in society. This is attested by the fact that the Association received support from the rural poor including the ryots when it tried to establish its branches at various places in the Presidency and sought support of people.

Along with changes in economic life, the Company administration introduced new education. However, the interest of the Government in its promotion was highly discouraging. The public apathy in this field gave upper hand to Christian missionaries and private individuals like a few enlightened Zamindars and civil servants in establishing and managing educational institutions. The lion's share in this activity had gone to Christian missions whose primary objective was proselytisation and preaching Biblical morals. Another important aim of the new education seemed to be the creation of educated people to fill up lower rungs in the administration. Attempts at

For example see. Petition Registers, Vol.18, No.930; Vol.33, No.956; Vol.39, No.1130, Tamilnadu Archives (TNA), Madras.

For example see, Godavari District Records, Vol.6753, pp.323-325; Andhra Pradesh State Archives, Hyderabad (Hereafter APA).
proselytisation were made through religious instruction in educational institutions always with an eye on new converts. The government also supported the activities of missionaries, sometimes covertly and at times overtly. The aim of such instruction was intended to inculcate ideas of faithfulness and obedience among the learners. On the other hand, the employment opportunities created by new education displaced many people from traditional avocations. The growing demand for English education and jobs under the Company government lend support to this fact. 18

The growth of towns and education in Andhra from the mid 19th century witnessed the rise of new professional classes mainly drawn from the middle classes of society. 19 The new educated middle classes comprised mainly of people belonging to different professions like teaching, law, medicine and civil service. 20 They symbolised a new spirit of social mobility and intellectual freedom and shouldered the responsibility of disseminating new

18 For an account on the changing popular perception in this regard see Sripada Subrahmanya Sastry, Anubhavaloo - Jnapakalunu (Autobiographical Reminiscences in Telugu), Vol.1, Rajamahendravaram, 1955, pp.37-41. He describes how the traditional Brahmin sections were increasingly changing over to new education and employment under the Company during the nineteenth century.
19 V.Ramakrishna, Social Reform in Andhra, New Delhi, 1983, pp.34-35.
20 For details see B.M.Bhatia, "Growth and Composition of Middle Class in South India in Nineteenth Century" in the Indian Economic and Social History Review, Vol.11, No.4, October 1965, pp.345 ff. Also see P.Subramanian, "Tamil Society in Nineteenth Century" in the Journal of Madras University, Vol.VII, No.1, January, 1980, pp.73-89.
ideas in the society. They formed the social basis for reform movements in Andhra. Kandukuri Veeresalingam became a pioneering leader of social reform in Andhra and was responsible for far-reaching changes in the contemporary society.

Growth of education and new middle classes in Andhra became one of the most important factors in the growth of journalism. In the initial stages the vernacular press remained confined to specific middle class concerns. However, it soon emerged into an effective instrument of public opinion. It assumed the historical role of enlightening people on issues of public concern including reform issues and acted as an instrument of public protest of repressive colonial rule. Apart from being one of the potent factors in the growth of press, the educated sections were actively involved in establishing public societies, debating clubs and public libraries where public issues were discussed. These two developments provided a platform for people to demand their

   From mid 19th century there was a vigorous growth of Telugu press. Some of the journals like *Vivekavardhani* of Veeresalingam were devoted to reform issues. For example see *Vivekavardhani*, February 1878, pp.28-34. The vernacular journals served as effective tools for people to discuss their problems in their columns and generated a public awakening in society.
24 In Andhra there were a number of these public bodies by late 19th century. For details on one such society see V.Ramakrishna, "Kakinada Literary Association - A study in the Stirrings of Early Political Consciousness in Modern Andhra" in the *Proceedings of Andhra Pradesh History Congress*, 8th Session, Kakinada, 1984. More details about various public societies are discussed in Chapter. IV.
rights from the colonial state.

Another fact of the spread of new education was the popular resistance to the teaching methods in the system. The religious instruction in schools by Christian missionaries invited severe opposition from all classes in the society. The religious propaganda in schools and the support of the government to these activities were criticised by people and protested by public bodies. When the Madras Government paid scanty attention to the public protest, people began searching for alternatives. As a part of this programme they established separate Hindu schools and withdrew children from missionary schools. Though by no means these efforts did equal the educational activities of the missionaries, they timely warned the government about the undesirable religious interference. The resistance to the proselytising educational activities formed one of the important aspects of modern education. Apart from these, the establishment of Rate Schools which were supported by voluntary popular contributions in the form of additional land or water tax was one of the significant aspects of modern Andhra and this experiment was first initiated in the Godavari region. Most of the people

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**25** For example see Paragraph No. 17 in G.O. (Public), No. 1044, 9.7.1859, TNA and G.O.(Education), No.142, dt. 26.5.1871, APA.


who voluntarily contributed to these Rate Schools were drawn from agricultural non-Brahmin castes. This voluntary effort symbolised the growing urge among these sections of society towards self-enlightenment and social improvement.

The growth of non-Brahmin consciousness under the changed socio-economic conditions in the 19th century was a significant development. It assumes importance in the light of the growth of new education free from the ideological influence of Brahmins and creation of employment opportunities under the Company government, irrespective of religion and caste. The completion of Godavari and Krishna anicuts by the middle of 19th century witnessed the rise of economically dominant non-Brahmin castes in coastal Andhra. All these factors created a social awareness among non-Brahmin castes in demanding equal opportunities with Brahmins in education, employment and local bodies like Local Fund Boards and Municipalities. This social awareness had different characteristics under the new colonial set-up, when compared to earlier forms of non-Brahmin protest, which most often criticised external aspects of Hindu religiosity. It is argued by some scholars that under the Company administration the prepondering


influence of Brahmins on Hindu Law and the Imperial System of dispute management viz., the Anglo-Indian Legal System which initially associated Brahmins in its formation, were responsible for supremacy of this caste in 19th century\textsuperscript{30}. For them, hence, nineteenth century was a 'Brahmin Century' which represented the 'Brahman Raj'\textsuperscript{32} and the twentieth century which witnessed the emergence of non-Brahmin movement against the dominance of Brahmins was an 'Anti-Brahmin Century'\textsuperscript{32}

It cannot be denied that Brahmins were associated with Company administration not only in the field of dispensing law but also in various other capacities such as dubashees and other small job holders. It is unhistorical to label periods of history on the basis of caste as it is equally erroneous to compartmentalise it on the basis of religion. The non-Brahmin protest was not a unique phenomenon under the East India Company administration and this form of social protest was witnessed both during the ancient\textsuperscript{34}.


This expression is used in Pamela G.Price, "Ideology and Ethnicity under British Imperial Rule : 'Brahmins', Lawyers and Kin-Caste Rules in Madras Presidency" in \textit{Modern Asian Studies}, Vol.23, Part.I, 1989, p.162. It is argued that utilisation of Brahminical codes in the legal system under the Company administration resulted in the supremacy of Brahmins and often times they alone benefitted from the system.


\textsuperscript{34} See for example R.S.Sharma, \textit{Sudras in Ancient India}, Delhi, 1980 p.200 ff; Romila Thapar, "Social Mobility in Ancient India with
and medieval periods. Under the British rule there was a perceptible change in the socio-economic conditions. The new education, social and moral values introduced by the colonial state created an altogether different atmosphere where one has to look for and carefully analyse the new social interactions and relationships. Increasing dependence on a single set of factors in our analysis of social set-up may often lead us towards developing historical inattitudes in our conclusions. On the other hand, the growth of non-Brahmin consciousness was fairly witnessed during nineteenth century in Andhra. There are a few significant aspects of this. The demand for equal rights in education, jobs and local bodies was a major factor in the emergence of non-Brahmin consciousness and this was witnessed more among the upper non-Brahmin castes like Reddy, Vaisya, Baliya, Kapu, Kamma and Velama. The non-Brahmin consciousness during nineteenth century was not influenced by narrow casteist tendencies despite the fact


35 See V.Ramakrishna, Social Reform, Op.cit., pp.37-48. Taking the example of Andhra the author tried to show how social protest movements of Medieval Andhra which, drawing their sustenance from non-Brahmin lower castes, were increasingly attacking the traditional and caste-ridden Hindu society. But, under changed economic conditions during the colonial era, the upper caste non-Brahmins emerged as dominant economic groups and their demands disputing equal status with Brahmins were different from earlier period. Apart from questioning the superiority of Brahmins, they started adopting Brahminical rituals and began to demand equal opportunities in education and employment.
that the non-Brahmin sections of the society stood opposed to Brahmanical influence. Such consciousness was positive in the sense that its attack was not aimed at a particular caste and remained mainly as a social protest measure. Moreover, there was no interference of the colonial authorities during nineteenth century, unlike in the early twentieth century, when they extended their indirect support to the non-Brahmin movement. The non-Brahmin consciousness during the entire nineteenth century did not fructify into a caste movement. It is attested by the fact that non-Brahmin sections worked together with Brahmins when both of them were demanding a relative autonomy to local bodies on the eve of local Self-Government campaign. This multi-class approach to a public issue rules out any assumption that non-Brahmin consciousness was narrow in its nature and scope. Even during the 20th century the non-Brahmin social reform endeavours primarily remained serious social protest measures. Many of the leading personalities of non-Brahmin movement proclaimed that the movement was aimed at cutting the Brahminical domination to size and that it was not against Brahmins. Even the activities of Justice Party and its government concentrated primarily on those aspects which

the early non-Brahmin social reform endeavours wanted to achieve. The details of these strands in non-Brahmin movement are discussed in the succeeding chapters.

II

A brief account of socio-economic conditions during nineteenth century would further enrich our understanding of the broad changes that have been discussed in the foregoing pages. The supremacy of the British over South Indian region culminated in 1763 with the decline of French authority. However, this did not immediately lead to the annexation of the territory of Andhra. From early decades of the 18th century, most of the parts in Andhra were under the direct rule of the Nizam of Hyderabad. In 1765, Robert Clive, the Governor of Bengal, could secure a firman from the Mughal emperor, Shah Alam which gave away the Circar districts to the British. In the following year the Nizam reluctantly confirmed the cession of these areas through a treaty with the British. Under this treaty the British acquired important areas such as Chicacole, Rajahmundry, Eluru, Mustafanagar (Kondapalli) and Murtazanagar (Guntur). These areas later formed into the districts of Vizagapatnam, Ganjam, Godavari and Krishna. At the end of Anglo-Mysore wars, the Nizam entered into the subsidiary alliance with Lord Wellesley and ceded those areas

which were acquired during the earlier Mysore wars in 1792 and 1799. The areas thus ceded to the British were Bellary, Anantapur, Cuddapah and Kurnool which came to be called Ceded Districts. In 1801 the Nawab of Carnatic was relieved of his Subah and Nellore and Chitoor districts were added to the British territory. With the inclusion of these areas Andhra came under the British rule.

At the time of the British conquest, the Andhra region was under the management of squabbling crowd of local chieftains like Rajas, Zamindars and Poligars. They regarded themselves as petty kings and exercised the most arbitrary authority. In order to enforce their power they maintained armed men and the Munro Report put their number at 30000 in Ceded districts alone. In the absence of any powerful controlling authority these local chieftains became free-booters. Munro imposed an armed peace upon these unruly group of local rulers.

Society in Andhra during nineteenth century was based on the hierarchical order of various castes and sub-castes. Each caste group followed its hereditary calling and enjoyed a fixed social

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40 Ibid., p.8.


42 Cited in Ibid., p.6.

status. Within the society the lines of orthodoxy were rigidly drawn and caste distinctions persisted. The differences that existed between the 'Right hand' and 'Left hand' castes among non-Brahmins are an example. Each village was a corporate unit comprising within itself the entire machinery of local administration. Each village was headed by a village headman belonging to castes such as Reddy and Naidu and other important village officials were Karnum and the moneylender. The village justice was dispensed by the headman and assisted by other officials. The introduction of new judiciary by the Colonial state resulted in far reaching changes in village administration. Except the office of karnums, all other earlier offices connected with village administration were abolished. Provincial and Circuit Courts were established, the Governor of the Presidency being the final court with a proviso that an ultimate appeal could be made to the Crown. The new judicial system proved to be very


During this period there were altogether two different courts at Madras which used to hear appeals from lower courts. One was the Supreme Court which functioned according to the English law and was under the direct control of the Crown. The second was called Sadr Adalat which followed Hindu and Mohamadan laws and used to possess superior authority over the district and other lower courts in the Presidency. Each Court was presided over by a chief justice and two other judges. Digavalli Venkata Sivarao (ed.),
costly, time-consuming and multi-layered when compared to the earlier system.\textsuperscript{47} It had baneful effects particularly on the cultivating classes. For example, under the new administration the number of officers with whom the cultivators had to communicate in respect of the revenue, civil and criminal affairs increased to twenty five as against the earlier five.\textsuperscript{48} As a result the poor peasants were often placed at the mercy of courts where moneylenders could get favourable decisions by engaging lawyers.

The break-up of village as a unit was further enhanced by the introduction of new revenue policies, the dominant one being the Ryotwari system in the South. The initial history of revenue settlements in Madras Presidency was characterised by glaring inconsistencies as evidenced by constant shifts in policy formulations.\textsuperscript{49} Apart from Ryotwari, there were other revenue settlements like Zaminadri (Permanent) and village Lease...

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\textsuperscript{47} One of the popular Madras civil servants, Thomas Munro was in favour of a status quo in the earlier system. When he was made a special Commissioner in 1814 to revise the Madras Judicial System he favoured the idea of the revival of village judiciary under the overall supervision of the district collector. T.H.Beaglehole, \textit{Thomas Munro} and the Development of Administrative Policy in Madras, 1792-1818, Cambridge, 1966, pp.83-104.


\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., pp.31-32.
Settlements. In course of time, the Ryotwari system became the predominant mode of assessment and, under the Governorship of Thomas Munro, the chief architect of Ryotwari, rapidly spread to most parts of the Presidency. Even some parts of the estates, under the control of local Zamindars who became defaulters in paying peshcush to the Company like in Northern Circars, were settled on Ryotwari system. This is because of the fact that there was no hard and fast rule, as in Bengal, that the landlord estates sold for arrears must again be permanently settled with the purchaser. As a result, in the districts that were mostly made up of Zamindari estates, there were considerable tracts of Ryotwari lands. Moreover, many of the Zamindari estates began to collapse in districts like Godavari, Krishna and Ganjam where lavish expenditure of Zamindars coupled with excessive demands from the Government enhanced their rate of decline. The Zamindars could not always cope with the liability to pay peshcush as their expensive life style and discouraging revenue collections from the ryots had a severe impact on the treasury. Furthermore, the cultivators of land were subjected to unmitigated exploitation as their rights on lands under Zamindari estates were not clearly

Right from the beginning Munro and his colleagues argued in favour of Ryotwari system. On the other, people like Hodgson strongly favoured the Permanent Settlement. When Munro left Madras in 1807 the Board of Revenue tried its hand in Zamindari and Village Settlements under the influence of Hodgson. For details See Nilmani Mukherji, The Ryotwari System in Madras, 1792-1827, Calcutta, 1962, pp.65-99.


defined. The Zamindars sometimes forcibly collected land rents from ryots for two or three years in advance when they fell short of revenue collections in order to meet the demand of the government. All these combined to keep the state of affairs in the Zamindaries in a highly discouraging economic set-up.

The spirit behind the Ryotwari system was to benefit the individual cultivator by recognition of his right to land and the elimination of all intermediary levels of revenue exploitation. However, the actual operation of the system proved to be more repressive in nature. The recognition of peasant’s right to land at a fixed assessment proved illusory. Land rent was very high per each acre. The report by the Collector of Masulipatnam, Russel, stated that a ryot on dry land could raise crops worth Rs.99\(^{54}\). After meeting the government’s demand and cultivating expenses, the ryot was finally left with a paltry sum of Rs.9 and 12 annas. Likewise, a ryot who could produce a crop worth Rs.160 on wet land would be left with Rs.10 and 5 annas. The revenue demand under Ryotwari was such that the Madras Presidency became

A few reliable accounts on this aspect are available from the histories of local zamindaries compiled by some of their ruling members. For example a few details in this regard can be obtained from Vastavaya Raya Jagapati Varma, *Peddapura Samsthana Charitramu* (Telugu), Rajahmundry, 1934, p.131.


\(^{55}\) Ibid.

\(^{56}\) Ibid.
the highly taxed of all the three Presidencies and the tax collected in Madras for every one lakh of people was more than the double that collected in Bengal. The following table of revenue collections further attests this fact.\textsuperscript{58}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Income India General</th>
<th>Collection from Madras</th>
<th>Proportionate share of Madras According to Population</th>
<th>Difference in excess</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1860-61</td>
<td>305404720</td>
<td>56616050</td>
<td>45335365</td>
<td>0.296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869-70</td>
<td>351491160</td>
<td>69004310</td>
<td>45336174</td>
<td>0.726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874-75</td>
<td>353095050</td>
<td>73870182</td>
<td>45335730</td>
<td>1.657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879-80</td>
<td>413767870</td>
<td>82513675</td>
<td>45336715</td>
<td>1.536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885-86</td>
<td>417241400</td>
<td>83537703</td>
<td>45336290</td>
<td>2.063</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The high rates of land revenue became one of the potential factors in the spread of poverty among the peasants. Most often the ryot had been in a state of chronic incapability to meet the demand of the government. The ryot was even prohibited from conversion of land from wet to dry under the Ryotwari. Hence, the peasant was tied to the plough till a time when he had to dispose the land in lieu of land rents. Under these discouraging economic conditions the agricultural sector came to throw up a few


\textsuperscript{58} The table is based on the statistics provided by B.N.Sharma in his Presidential Address to the 21st Madras Provincial Conference, Annie Besant Papers, Reel No.3, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi(NMML).
characteristic developments. There was an increase in the number of agricultural labourers. Most of the peasants either sold or mortgaged their lands to moneylenders. They have been reduced to landless agricultural labour from land-owning tillers. Their percentage rose from 12.67 in 1871 to 19.617 in 1891. It shows the upward move in their number. The growth of agricultural indebtedness was noticed. In such a state of affairs the peasant was incapable of reaping any benefits even during the few intermittent favourable periods. The low percentage of purchasing population under the exacting conditions of Ryotwari and absence of any outlet for the peasant to sell his grain in market were two important factors of this. The discouraging agriculture and constant growth of poverty often resulted in the outbreak of famines. Heavy taxation and growth of rural indebtedness ruled out any capital formation in the agricultural sector. This in turn effected the introduction of capitalist agriculture. All these factors had a cumulative effect on society. The seemingly democratic Ryotwari system ultimately proved to be a major colonial experiment in exploitation. The gradual growth of economic discontent in the society was beginning to found expression in popular memorials. The Madras Native Association finally put the economic sufferings of people on its agenda of political struggle by the middle of nineteenth century.

The introduction of new education also resulted in far reaching changes like in the case of new revenue policies. Education at the beginning of 19th century still remained confined to indigenous methods of teaching and the system was known by the name, Pial School system. It was calculated that out of 12,500 schools in the Presidency 750 were Vedic schools and the rest were village schools. Being unaltered in methods of teaching and subjects these schools became outdated. On the other hand, the Company administration did not shoulder the responsibility of popular education. As a result, the earliest efforts in the field of new English education were confined only to Christian missionaries and their activities were motivated by religious considerations.

Till the end of the 18th century all the educational activities were in the hands of Christian missionaries and their influence was to continue in 19th century also. Various mission schools were established in Andhra from the beginning of 19th century. By 1806, the London Missionary Society established a school at Visakhapatnam and, within a few years, it opened two more schools in Bellary district. In course of time missionary

For a description of the system see Charles E. Grover, *Results of Educational Census*, 1871, Madras, 1872, pp.2-4.
Educational institutions were established in many districts of Andhra like Cuddapah, Kumool and Bellary by the London Missionary Society. The first female school also was opened by the Society at Visakhapatnam.

The Church Missionary Society began its work in Machilipatnam in 1841 and later on spread its activities to other coastal towns like Vijayawada and Eluru. The Pennsylvania Synod Society under the leadership of C.F. Heyer organised, by 1841, various schools in Guntur, Prattipadu and Nallapadu. Around the same time the American Baptist Missionaries began their work in Guntur District establishing their centres at Guntur, Gurajala, Palanadu and Ongole town soon became one of the most prominent centres of their activities. The American Baptist Mission and the Free Church Mission initiated their work in the neighbouring Nellore district also. In the Godavari region the North German Missionary Society was active in its work by 1840 and Rajahmundry became


67 Ibid.


69 Ibid.


their centre. The work of North German Mission was later continued by the American Lutheran Mission with its branches spreading over rural places like Palcode and Nurasapore. Almost all these missionary societies clubbed their religious propaganda with their educational activities.

Though the work of the Christian missionary societies cannot be underestimated, their educational activities invariably concentrated on religious teaching and conversion of people under instruction. The educational institutions readily helped them as the ideal centres of social intercourse. The Madras Government extended its support to the missionary activities in the field of education as the inculcation of Christian morals among the beneficiaries of English education would ultimately serve their imperial political interests. It is argued that the educational institutions of the missionaries did spread enlightenment among certain sections of society by dispelling their superstitions and making them self-respectful in society. Nevertheless most of the time their activities, both social and educational, have been exaggerated, ill informed and hostile towards indigenous traditions. Consequently there were objections and organised protests against the missionary activities. The introduction of

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new English education with its attendant missionary aspect provided ample scope for germination of counter reaction from society.

The foregoing account of changes effected in the contemporary society by the colonial rulers indicate that there was a break-up in the earlier political and social order. Different social groups were agitated over economic, social and political issues. All these groups were struggling for a new identity under the over powerful alien colonialism and looking for new alternatives to situate themselves against the colonial government.

The nineteenth century society in Andhra underwent a near total metamorphosis during colonial rule. The period witnessed a turbulent transition. The gloomy state of economy was coupled with the slow but significant growth of new education. The impact of Western ideas together with the far reaching economic changes stimulated a new outlook towards social change. The market economy led to the growth of urban centres in Andhra which also served as centres of English education. As a result of these changes, a new urban-based educated middle class emerged on the social setting and shouldered the responsibility of disseminating their newly acquired knowledge in the society. The growth of vernacular press came handy in this process. The economic discontent and the new enlightenment created a stir in contemporary Andhra. At the upper level, these stirrings were
truly reflected in an intense social reform activity. At the bottom level, they were manifested in the growth of early public and political associations which, with the help of commoners, were endeavouring plans to sow the seeds for a political agitation. Till late 19th century, these two strands of public activity could be easily distinguishable. It appears that social reform efforts of Veeresalingam and his followers shadowed other public activities. By the dawn of 20th century, Andhra, like other regions in the country, was drawn into political struggle. Vandemataram, Non-cooperation, Salt Satyagraha and Quit India Movements attracted the attention of millions of people. Extremist activities formed strong interludes now and then. During this period, the political activity submerged reform activity. Most of the social reformers, including radical activists like Gora, were active participants in freedom struggle. The present work proposes to critically analyse social reform activity of these people in the post-Veeresalingam period till the dawn of independence. In doing so, it takes into account the major movements of reform viz., women's movement, non-Brahmin movement and atheist movement. An analysis of these movements reveal the spread of rationalist and humanist ideas in contemporary society. The present study proceeds with an assumption that the social reform spirit was kept alive and reform activities were conducted on an equally enthusiastic scale as during Veeresalingam period.