Chapter - I

INTRODUCTION
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The Andhra and the Aata yab ahmana who belonging 1000 BC. It is said that the Pundarika Sabha and Matha made of Visvamitra's sons who were considered by immoral the 'sob' ce t accept his adoption of SUNASSEPHA. The Andhra must have up the Vindhya mountain and later inhabited in the Krishna Goda. On the Ramayana, it is said that Andhra was south of Godava. In the Mahabharata, Andhra fought on the side of the Kaukara. It is believed that Andhra was one of the kingdoms conquered by Sahadatta at the time of Raja Uyana emperor of Yudh struggling from the above fact it is believed that Andhra were a sub division of Aryan and were following strictly the Aryan code.

The historical period of Andhra began with the Mauryas. Andhra formed part of the Maurya Empire. One of the edicts of Asoka is at Apadu, eight miles from Golconda, near Prathartana in the Greatness of Andhra Empire in his Indica. After the decline of Maurya, the Andhra as under the Satavahanas declared independence. The Satavahanas ruled at Prathartana from about 230 BC. The Andhra Satavahana rule was for
The Ikṣākṣas succeeded the Satavahanas in the Kṣāna Guntur, and they were followed by the Bhatpalayana. The Salakṣhayanas came to power at Vengi while the Kalnaga was ruled by kings of Matha alula V sni kund ns occupied till e Veng eg on after the Salankhayanases. The Chalukya king Pulakesin I conquered them in the seventh century. V hnu ardhana 1 other of Pulakesin II founded the Eastern Chalukya Dynasty in Andhra about 624 A.D. It ruled for over a hundred years. During this period, the Andhra Desa acquired distinct characteristics of its own which reflect in the script and the language employed in the inscriptions.

The Kakatiyas were one of the major dynasties ruled Andhra. Dānagala as capital. They were originally the feudatories of the Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi (Kalyan). King Ammaraja II Beta I declared his sovereignty by establishing a new dynasty in the year a.
1000 A.D. He was succeeded by his son Pola. In 1030 A.D. He was succeeded by his son Beta II who ruled up to 1100 A.D. He shifted his capital to Hanmakonda near Warangal and took the title Tribhuvanamalla. They established themselves on firm grounds by the time of Ganapatdeva (1198-1262 A.D.) despite opposition from the Yada as of Devagiri. Rudrama Devi and Prataparudra (1296-1323 A.D.) succeeded Ganapatideva. The reign of Prataparudra was fluctuated by repeated attacks of the Sultan of Delhi. Though Prataparudra could withstand for a considerable period, he had to succumb to the persistent attacks of Ulugh Khan and was dethroned by the Muslims in 1323 A.D.

There was a movement to liberate the area from Muslim rule. As a result, a new kingdom arose in the area previously ruled by the Kakatiyas. They are Musumuri chiefs of Warangal, the Velama Nayakas of Rachakonda, the Reddies of Kondavdu. The first two controlled the Telangana region while the coastal region was ruled by Reddies. The extreme southern province of coastal Andhra like Udayagiri rajya and the portions of Western Andhra were occupied by the rulers of Vijayanagara.
The Vjayanagar kingdom fell around the fifteenth century into the kingdom. The Vjayanagar empire could not maintain itself for long due to their hostilities with the Gajapatis of Kalinga and with the Muslim state of Delhi during the Vjayanaga period. Andhra faded into the South. The Nayaka rulers of the south especially those of Tanjore made valuable contributions to the South Indian culture and language during the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. The Nawabs of Hyderabad held sway over a considerable part of Andhra.

The Andhra families that migrated still live in the Tamil and other contiguous places and identify for a long time and ultimately the language. The contributions made by the Telugu people, particularly the women folk that lived in Andhra and in the neighbouring regions, is chosen for the topic of the research. Interestingly, the Sanskrit literature claims a number of authors among the famous from the Ved period.

It would be appropriate to reckon with the expectations the contributions made by the women folk to the ancient literary wisdom throughout their entire existence as well as part of the period. It would facilitate to evaluate the contribution of ancient women authors to Sanskrit literature.
The Indian literature is the earliest literatures of the world. As it is observed by Maurice Wintenitz, the history of Indian literature is the history of the mental activity of at least three millennia in speech and writing. Indian literature comprises everything that the word literature expresses in its broadest sense of the term viz religions, mundane, epic, lyric, dramatic, and didactic poetry as well as narrative and scientific prose. It is indeed up se to know that the entire mass of this literature was brought down to the people of the posterity not by writing and reading but by hearing and remembering.

This method of handing down literature to the later generations is an excellent way of preservation. The history of Indian literature is not only the history of Sanskrit but also the history of several languages like Pali and Prakrit. It is an established fact that the Sanskrit language in which the ancient Vedas were composed is phonetically one of the most highly advanced languages of the world. The vast literature available in Sanskrit can be broadly divided into two parts viz Vedic and Classical when the religious philosophical aspects dominate in the former part the creative and moral instructions encompass the later part.
The first part consists of Vedas and their auxiliary literature. No one can understand the spiritual life and the culture of Indians without acquiring an insight into the Vedic literature which consists of three parts namely 1 Samhitas 2 Brahmanas 3 Aranyakas. The Samhitas which are the mere collections of hymns, prayers, magic songs, benedictory verses, etc., are four in number. They are the Rigveda Samhita, the Yajurveda Samhita (Black and White), the Samaveda Samhita, and the Atharvana Veda Samhita. Based on these Samhitas, the Vedas are known as 1 The Rigveda 2 The Yajurveda 3 The Sama Veda and 4 The Atharvana Veda. The Brahmanas are prose texts containing the practical or mystical significance of the individual sacrificial rites and ceremonies. The Aranyakas and Upanishads contain the philosophical enquiries with regard to the God, World, and Man. And each one of the Brahmana and Aranyaka attached to one or the other Samhitas mentioned above.

The Indian literary tradition believes that the Vedas are eternal (nitya) beginning less (anadi) and not made by any human being (apauruseya). The Vedic hymns which were composed at some time in the past are attributed to famous personalities of an earlier time. They too were not creators or exact composers of the hymns.
(mantrakartas) but only the recipients of flashes or revelations (mant adrastarah) during their nat tat ors. Thus, the majority of the oldest hymns are attributed to a family of reciters from whom the hymns concerned have come down to us. The sages like Gtsana, Visvamitra, Vamadeva, Atri, Bharadvan, and Vasistha among the sages who are called rs to whom the hymns are attributed. It is a surprise to know that a good number of women seers are associated with the galaxy of these sages. A brief account of those women seers of Vedic period known as brahmavadin s would inspire us to enquire about the women authors of classical period. Some of the women seers are 1 Romasa 2 Lopamudra 3 Visvavara 4 Sasvati 5 Apala 6 Agastya’s sister 7 Ghoda 8 Cho a 9 Jabala 10 Maitreyi 11 Grgi 12 Vacaknavi.

ROMASA

Romasa who is mentioned in the Brhaddevata as the wife of Bhavya Svanaya, a king, is associated with 126 hymns of first mandala where a dialogue will take place between a wandering priest and a pious princess. In the hymn which is similar to a liberal shepherd’s love song, Romasa expresses her youthful excitement on attaining
puberty and challenges her husband to feel her closely since she is no longer immature but covered with dawn like the ewe of the Gandharins. Gandhara or Gandhari is the name of the people in the north west of India. In Rig Veda the high quality of the wool used by the Gandharins is referred to (RV I 126 6 7)

LOPAMUDRA

Lopamudra is the wife of Sage Agastya. She is a seer presiding the first two stanzas of hymn 179 of the first Mandala. It is strange dialogue between the great ascetic Agastya and his wife Lopamudra. She is represented as one longing for her aged husband and tired of his practice of austerity. She feels herself neglected by her husband though she had served him long faithfully. She makes an impassioned appeal for his love and company. It appears that Lopamudra's appeal did not go in vain as Agastya discharged the duties of both his domestic and ascetic life without neglecting the one for the other (RV I 176 1&2)

VISVAVARA

Visvavara belonged to Atri family. The six verses of twenty eight hymns are assigned to her. It occurs in the fifth Mandala of Rigveda. Visvavara apparently a married woman prays Agni the sacrificial
fire for marital happiness and secure life by offering oblations to the
gods at dawn. It is clear that Viśvavara was not only a seer but a
woman who has performed a sacrifice as a right. It is evident from
the fact that this right of performing sacrifice by women was allowed
during the Samhita period (RV V 28).

SASVATI

The episode of Sasvati describes in detail how a woman of good
conduct and wisdom can restore her husband's lost manhood
Sāsvatī was the wife of Asanga Playogi a king who appears in a
Danastuti (praise of gifts) in Rigveda as a generous patron. Sasvati
is a woman par excellence Owing to an additional stanza a legend
was invented It says that Asanga the son of Playoga was
transformed into a woman by the curse of the gods. On account of
his representation the penance of his wife Sāsvatī and the
intercession of Medhatithi and Medhyatithi he was restored to
manhood much to the delight of his wife Sasvati. This legend is
based on a misunderstanding of the phrase 'every woman' in the
added verse Sasvati addresses her husband in joy and sings out this
stanza (RV VIII I 34)
APALA

Apala is of Atri family. She was an unfortunate woman. The hymn ascribed to her is a prayer to Indra made by Apala for restoring her father's youthfulness and making his field fertile. Apala too was afflicted with a contagious disease which would not allow hair to grow on her body. Consequently she was repudiated by her husband. How she met and worshipped Indra in a curious way and how she got his blessings is the subject of the hymn. Knowing well that the soma juice was Indra's favourite drink Apala, while going out to fetch water, picked up a soma plant on her way and began to crush it between her teeth for extracting juice for Indra. Indra heard the sound. He thought that it was from soma pressing stone. He appeared there and drank the soma from Apala's lips. Satisfied he gave her three boons which made her father's bald head and her hairless limb grow hair in profusion. Her father's barren field was also made fertile. He also made Apala fair skinned and freed her from disease. The hymn also alludes that Indra dragged Apala through the wide hole of his chariot and made her stainless. The Brhaddevata gives the above legend as an instance of god falling in love with an earthly maiden (RV VIII 80 7)
AGASTYA'S SISTER

Agastya's sister whose name is not known (Anāmika) is the seer of the sixth verse of sixth hymn in tenth mandala. In this hymn a prayer is offered to Agni in whom all worldly treasures meet. A heroic call upon king Asamathi of Ikṣvaka was made here (RV X 6 6).

GODHA

Godha was the wife of Vasukra, a son of Indra. The first stanza of the twenty-eight hymn of the tenth mandala is ascribed to her. The hymn is in praise of Indra. It is in the form of a dialogue. Godha says ignorantly that all her friends have assembled and that her father-in-law alone has not come there. But the legend says that Indra, father-in-law of Vasukra's wife, was also present in disguise (RV X 28 1).

GHOSĀ

Ghosā was the greatest among a line of seers who belong to the Kaksivat family. She was the daughter of Kaksavin and a grand daughter of Dirghatamas. Ghosa could not get a husband because of her leucoderma and grew old and remained in her father's house. She invoked the Aśvins who cured her of the disease and made her...
worthy of wedded life  In her prayer Ghosā refers to various great deeds of the Aśvins in helping and curing the blind, the diseased and the feeble  The prayer contains an allusion to the legend of Cyavana who was made young again by the Aśvins  She appeals to the Aśvins to cure her disease and she expresses her intimate feelings and desires  Then praising the Aśvins, the celestial physicians, she says that just as hunters follow the wild elephants, the people seek the Aśvins with oblations thrice a day  She requests them to be near her at night and shower their grace on her  She entreats them to protect Kṛṣaṇa and Sayu and send the drain clouds so that plants of wondrous beauty may spring up  (RV X 39&40)

JABĀLA

In Chandogya Upaniṣad, the name of Jabala occurs  She is considered to be the mother of Satyakama  Jabala is also mentioned as a teacher in the Jaṁiniya Upaniṣad and in the Jaṁiniya Brahmana  There is a famous legend about her  Satyakāma was the son of Jabala  She wanted to educate him under a teacher  The boy approached Goutama, a renowned teacher of that period  The teacher was pleased with the method of approach of the boy and his zeal for learning  As usual, when the teacher enquired about the gotra, parentage and other details of the young one, the boy
frankly said that he would find out these details from his mother and report on the next day. Goutama allowed the boy to go to his mother to know the particulars.

He ran to his mother Jabala and asked the details required by the teacher. Jabala frankly informed that she did not know anything about the gotra and who his father was. She said that she lived in many places and worked with many men. She advised her son to frankly admit this truth and seek admission. Accordingly the boy returned to the teacher and spoke the truth. Pleased with the boy's frankness Goutama admitted him and named him Satyakama. Jabala. Thus Jabala spoke the truth and made her son also to speak the truth. Nothing more is known about Jabala.

MAITREYI

In the Brhadaranyaka Upanisad there are references to two outstanding women who could engage the great teacher Yagñavalkya in high philosophical discussions. The first one is Maitreyi, one of his wives and Gargi Vacaknavi, a contemporary and rival of Yagñavalkya and a daughter of sage Vālaknu. Nothing much is known about them except what is described in the Upanisad. It is clear that both are keen seekers after truth.
The sage and renowned teacher of that period Yajñavalkya decided to settle his worldly goods between his wives Maitreyi and Katyayani before renouncing the world. On knowing the desire of settlement Maitreyi asked Yajñavalkya to clarify whether she would become immortal if all the wealth of the world belongs to her. In reply Yajñavalkya said that one can not attain immortality through wealth but can lead a wealthly life. Maitreyi again questioned what she should do with the wealth which could not make her immortal. Yajñavalkya pleased with this question took her nearer and said he would explain to her about immortality and requested her to meditate based on his teachings.

**GARGI VĀCAKNAVI**

Gargi Vacaknavi is considered to be a more accomplished scholar. Asvalayana mentions Gargi along with the ancient venerable rsis. The dialogue between Gargi and Yajñavalkya is found in the Brhadaranyaka Upaniṣad. The subject of their debate is the origin of all things which exists. When Gargi questioned at length on the origin of existence the sage Yajñavalkya obviously perturbed over the nature of enquiry advised Gargi not to go deep into the subject concerning divinity as her head may fall out of her body. She kept quiet temporarily. Again when Yajñavalkya was in an assembly of
sages. Gargi took the permission of the gathering to question the famous teacher saying if he could answer her two questions none in the gathering would be a match to him in describing the Brahman. She advanced to the great teacher Yajñavalkya praising him as the son of a hero of Benaras or from Videha and requested him to answer her two questions. She acknowledged her defeat at the end of the philosophical dispute and declared that Yajñavalkya alone was capable of describing the Brahman and all others should respect him by salutation.

For about a millennium beginning from the last phase of Upanisads up to the eighth century AD it can be counted as a dark period as per the participation of women in the literary activity is concerned. It may be because of the pre non violent social order that was ordained by the strict religious practices of the Sutra period. Another probable reason that the disinterestedness among the women folk such a longtime can not be sustained. Non availability of the literature by fair sex during the above period can also be one of the reasons for their absolute absence. However, the women of Southern part of the country deserves to be congratulated for their attempt to stand by the side of renowned poets of fourteenth century AD and for attaining a respectable position and recognition as poetesses and
women authors Particularly the present attempt is conferrred to the women of Andhra only to consolidate their position among the women writers in Sanskrit
FOOT NOTES

1. *Names of persons and places in the Vedic texts* – Macdonella  
   p 123

2. *History of Dhaśmastra* by P V Karna Vol I p 44

3. *Contribution of Andhra to Sanskrit Literature* by Dr P Srīrama Murthy p 10

4. *Names of persons and places in the Vedic texts*  
   Macdonella  
   p 219

5. *Aspects of Sanskrit Literature* – Sushil Kumar De  
   p 184

6. *Aspects of Sanskrit Literature* – Sushil Kumar De  
   p 180 181

7. *Names of persons and places in the Vedic texts* – Macdonella  
   p 70

8. *The Hymns of Rgveda* – Ralph T H Griffith  
   p 454

9. *Aspects of Sanskrit Literature* – Sushil Kumar De  
   p 184

10. *The Hymns of Rgveda* – Ralph T H Griffith  
    p 550

    p 391

12. *Names of persons and places in the Vedic texts* – Macdonella  
    p 275 & 283

13. *Brihadaranyakopanishad Bhasya* – Siromani Uttamur Viraraghavacharya