

CHAPTER VII

SOCIAL MOBILITY

The foregoing political events and diverse economic activities facilitated social mobility in Telangāna in particular and Āndhradeśa in general. Social mobility is of two types, horizontal and vertical.¹ Horizontal mobility is geographical, i.e., movement from one place to another. Vertical mobility is either upwards or downwards in the social status of a family or a group of families. These movements are interrelated.

Horizontal mobility is caused mostly by the pressure of population. Political disturbances and religious conflicts also make people go about in search of patronage and security. In times of hardship or natural calamities, families move seeking better chances of livelihood. Vertical mobility may broadly be defined as rise or fall in social status of a family. Improvement in the economic status of a family generally leads to a rise in its social status and such a rise is quickly possible at a place far away from the native home.² However, the status of a family has two aspects - ritual and actual. The ritual status is fixed by the Dharmaśāstras³ whereas the actual status is determined by economic and political factors.

Both the aspects of mobility, horizontal as well as vertical, are present in Telangāna during the period of the

present study. The factors that led to this in Telangāna region may be said as (1) stable political conditions (2) expansion in agriculture and trade (3) increasing bureaucratisation of administration and (4) large-scale military recruitments.

During the early phase of the period, Telangāna, being an integral part of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa and Cālukya empires, was almost free from political disturbances. There were no doubt troop movements across the region but it was free from foreign attacks and did not become the scene of any major war. With the rise of the Kākatīyas, the erstwhile sāmantas were also suppressed and the region was united under the effective rule of the Kākatīyas. Telangāna could develop a political individuality. About the same time, as Veṅgī lost her political importance and was drawn into Cālukya-Coḷa conflict,⁴ Telangāna attracted different sections of people from the coastal Āndhra.

Mobility of elite groups

The elite groups in the society are generally brāhmaṇas and rulers including civil and military leaders. The radical religious movements and the widespread network of educational institutions, especially ghatikas and mathas, gave rise to a large elite section in the fourth caste also.

Mobility among ^{as}brāhmaṇas

The brāhmaṇa community was one of the most mobile communities in this age. As the Rāstrakūṭas were patrons of Jainism, many Jain brāhmaṇas migrated from coastal Āndhra, especially from Karmarāstra, to Telangāna. The family of Pampa, the first poet in Kannada is known to have left Vangiparru⁵ and secured the patronage of the Vemulavāda Cālukyas. Pampa was a kamma brāhmaṇa, a brāhmaṇa from Kammanādu. Other famous poets Ranna (C.A.D. 993)⁶ and Nāgavarma I (C.A.D. 900)⁷ and Durgasimha (C.A.D. 1200)⁸ were also kamma brāhmaṇas. Some of the generals in the service of Vikramāditya VI, Sarvadeva and Chāvūṇḍa⁹ were of kamma kula. It is of great interest to note that Mādirāja, the father of Basaveśvara, the founder of Viraśaivism, is described in a Kannada poem of poet Harihara as belonging to kamma kula.¹⁰ One of the inscriptions from Sanigaram (A.D. 1149) refers to a daṇḍanāyaka Mandapārya of Ātreya gotra as kammakulābharana.¹¹ On the other hand, the names of most of the teachers in the Ghatikas of Perūr, Alampūr suggest that they were from Karnāṭaka.¹² In the inscriptions of Telangāna and coastal Āndhra, we come across brāhmaṇas with the suffix of bhattu to their names and it is held that they were immigrants to Āndhra from Karnāṭaka.¹³

The great Kannada poet Pampa was a Jaina brāhmaṇa and it is held that his family migrated to Vemulavāda for fear of persecution¹⁴ at the hands of eastern Cālukyas who

were Śaivites. According to the Orugallu kaifiyat¹⁵ many Jains migrated to Anmakonda from Rājahmūḍry because Rājanārendra was hostile to the Jains. Even from Tāmilnāḍu during this period, Jains appear to have migrated to Telangāna¹⁶ and probably settled at Kollipāka,

On the other hand, it was the period when the Śaivite ācāryas especially of the Golakī matha migrated from Dāhala¹⁷ and established several branches of their matha in different parts of Āndhra including Telangāna.¹⁸ The head of the Golakī matha invited vedic scholars of different gotras to Āndhra from Bengāl and Tāmilnād.¹⁹

Vedic scholars also are found migrating from place to place in search of work and livelihood. When new agrahāras were established, brāhmanas from various parts of the land were settled there. The Manthena inscription (A.D. 1199)²⁰ records the establishment of an agrahāra, Mallikārjunapuram by Tribhuvanavidyā cakravartī Manchi bhaṭṭopadhyāya, Gaṇapatideva's priest. Many brāhmanas were gifted even house-sites encouraging them to settle down in the new agrahāra. The Kundavaram inscription²¹ also refers to a new settlement of brāhmanas. Gaṅgādhara, a brāhmaṇa from Vellankipura agrahāra in Vengideśa migrated to Anmakonda and rose to prominence in the service of the Kākatīyas.²² Another instance of mobility of brāhmanas is the case of Indulūri family.²³ These are the instances by talented brāhmanas who sought service at the court.

Ruling elite

There is a strong tradition that the Rāṣṭrakūṭas appointed their own people as the rulers of the conquered regions.²⁴ The Rāṣṭrakūṭa subordinates, the Cālukyas of Vemulavāda and the Kākatīyas seem to have come from Karnāṭaka. But, the Coḍas of Kandūru migrated to Telangāna from Eṛuvanāḍi²⁵ in K^urnool district and became prominent as the sāmantas under the Rāṣṭrakūṭas. The Cālukyas who were overthrown by the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, appear to have migrated to Telangāna and made Anmakonḍa their base.²⁶ It is known that the predecessors of Tailapa II ruled from Anmakonḍa and Tailapa took the title Lord of Trilingadeśa.²⁷ After they rose to imperial position, the Cālukyas of Kalyān followed the policy of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas and many of their generals and ministers are found at important places like Poṭlakere²⁸ Bhuvanagiri,²⁹ Perūr,³⁰ Kollipāka,³¹ Gaṅgāpuram³² and Vemulavāda.³³

During the reign of Rudradeva, after the famous battle of Palnāḍ (A.D. 1176), the velamas appear to have migrated to Telangāna from Coastal Āndhra. The velamas, as the name itself suggests, should have been the original inhabitants of Velanāḍu. They appear to have been an agricultural community of Velanāḍ who rose to political prominence at the court of the Durjayas of Chandol and later in Palnāḍ.³⁴ After their defeat at the hands of the reddis, the velamas might have crossed the Kriṣṇa and entered

Telangāna. It is also not improbable that Rudradeva who was planning to invade Velanādu welcomed the Velamas with the hope that they could be of help to him in destroying the Durjayas. Soon, the velamas became very powerful at the Kākatiya court and justified the hopes of Rudradeva by becoming rāyasthāpanācāryas³⁵ in times of trouble in the Kākatiya history.

Another element that appears to have made the social texture of Telangāna complex was the infiltration of the Marāṭhas. Since the time of Rudradeva there had developed a conflict between the Yādavas and Kākatiyas and Rudra and his brother Mahādeva died at the hands of the Yādavas.³⁶ Rudramāmba avenged the defeats by carrying the victorious Kākatiya arms upto the gates of Devagiri.³⁷ With a view to create more troubles to the Yādava king, Rudrama gave one of her daughters, Rudrama, in marriage to Ellānadeva, a Yādava prince who was at her court.³⁸ In the course of these conflicts, it appears many Marāṭha soldiers and generals were left behind. They moved southward and settled in Ārebhūmi, considered to be a region around Śrīśailam inhabited by the Marāṭhas.³⁹ They rose to prominence at Vallūr-Gandikoṭa. Jannigadeva, the Kāyastha chief of Gandikoṭa became bāhattaraniyogādhipati⁴⁰ under Ganapati.

Mobility of Non-elites

The mobility of non-elite groups was somewhat restricted. They were generally bound to the land and native locality. But, mobility is not completely absent among them. Expansion of agriculture, extensive tank and temple building and development of trade gave rise to movement of people from one place to another leading to the growth of urban centres. The Warangal fort inscription of A.D. 1313⁴¹ refers to the gift of some money to God Sahasralinga Ganapatiśvara by Kāmpus belonging to Sannagara-purāda and Pānuqantiwāda. Evidently, the Kāmpus of Sanigaram and Pānugal moved to the capital city, probably in search of work. Trade also made for mobility. One of the Perūr inscriptions⁴² refers to Aruvanakaram of the place. It was a merchant guild composed of Tamil merchants. They settled down at Perūr and built a temple for Aravanakareśvaradeva.

However, the Malakāpuram inscription⁴³ records a grant of an agrahāra by Ganapatideva's daughter in A.D. 1261 to Dīksāguru Viśveśvara Śambhu along with the peasants and cultivators. A later inscription from Warangal district prohibited the migration of peasants from a village granted to the brāhmanas.⁴⁴ This might mean, as B.N.S. Yadava suggests, a restriction on the mobility on the peasants and cultivators by the ruling classes.⁴⁵

Rise of peasant-warrior communities

The rise of the peasant-warrior communities and the absorption of aboriginal tribes into the traditional social order are two good examples of vertical social mobility during this period. This is upward movement. But earlier ruling families, supposed to have been ksatriyas, entered into marriage alliances with the rising political groups. This is an instance of downward movement in social scale.

During the Kākatīya period, communities such as the velamas, reḍḍis and kmmas rose to political prominence. They were originally agriculturists (kāpus). The constant warfare during the eastern Cālukyan period gave them an opportunity to join military services. War provided scope for plunder and become rich and powerful. Gradually, through loyal and efficient service, they rose to high positions of status such as mantri, pradhāni, dandanāyaka, māṇḍalika and sāmanta.⁴⁶ Thus, a section who took to arms was formed out of the peasant communities. This may be termed as the nāyaka community and the elite took suffixes like nāyaka, nāyaḍu and nīḍu. The Palnātivīracaritra⁴⁷ refers to vīranāyakas of different communities that took part in the battle of Kārempūḍi. The Mallenāyaka of Māṭeḍu inscriptions⁴⁸ belonged to pulinda community. Rājānāyaka and Kāṭayanāyaka of Godīśāla inscription⁴⁹ were brāhmaṇas. Brahmanāyaḍu of

Palnād belonged to the velama community. Musunūri Prolaya-nāyaka and Kāpayanāyaka are considered to have belonged to the kamma community.⁵⁰ An inscription at Yanamadala (A.D. 1251)⁵¹ refers to a gift by the sons of Muktāsāni, Kāṭamareḍḍi and Bayya Redḍi. In the same epigraph, the son of her sister, Dannesāni, is referred to as Errangommi-nāyaḍu and her brother-in-law as Sūrapanāyaḍu. Thus, the suffix nāyaḍu or nāyaka did not signify a sub-caste but only elites who achieved military authority and official position. It seems that velamas differentiated themselves from other nāyaka communities by calling themselves padma-nāyakas.

Many feudatory families ruling over Telangāna and coastal Āndhra under the overlordship of Kākatīyas belonged to the fourth caste and who rose in status by the strength of their arms. The Koṭas of Amarāvati, the Redḍis of Pillalamarri, Vardhamānapuram and Pālampet are some examples. After the fall of the Kākatīyas, the Āndhra country witnessed the establishment of independent kingdoms at Rekapalli by the kamma chiefs of the Musunūri family, at Addanki by the panta reddis and at Rāchakoṇḍa by the velamas. These examples show the upward vertical mobility of the peasant community.

Satsūdras

The peasant warrior communities who rose to political importance naturally aspired for corresponding social status. The

Bekkallu inscription⁵² of Malli Reddi refers to the upward mobility of the fourth varna. Malli Reddi says that because they were looked down upon as they were supposed to have been born of the feet of Brahmā, they accepted Jainism, practised truth, non-violence and other virtues and became śiṣṭas (pure). Jainism thus raised the śūdras in the social status. The radical śaivite sects introduced the practice of dikṣa⁵³, initiation which gave some sort of ritual purity to the śūdras, who began to claim to be satsūdras. One of the Drākṣarāma inscriptions describes the donor as satsūdracūdāmarī.⁵⁴ These śūdras began to claim even equality with brāhmanas. In the inscriptions of coastal Āndhra we come across statements like Vipparla vamaśa iti vipra kulopamaṇat⁵⁵ and Caturthavamśas caturānana.⁵⁶

The case of the Kākatīyas is itself example of upward social mobility. The early inscriptions give different origins of the family. The Bayyāram tank inscription⁵⁷ says that the Kākatīyas belong to Durjayakula. The rulers of Velanādu were Durjayas who clearly described themselves as śūdras.⁵⁸ The Māngallu plates⁵⁹ and the Khājipet Dargah inscription⁶⁰ call the family as sāmanta vistivamaśa which may mean vistivamaśa who rose to sāmanta status. The term visti has been discussed at length by scholars. It is held that the term meant forced labour employed also in agriculture.⁶¹ The Telugu word vetti, which means forced labour is derivable from the sanskrit word visti. The early members

of the family are Eriya Rāṣṭrakūṭa and Guṇḍaya Rāṣṭrakūṭa. The personal names give rise to the doubt that they belonged to a forest or hill tribe. It seems, therefore, that the Kākatīyas were originally an aboriginal tribe who took to agriculture and then entered the military service of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas. They soon became generals and frontier gaurds of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas. The Lingāla⁶² and Vardhamānapuram⁶³ inscriptions attribute śūdra origin to Kākatīyas. The early members of the dynasty were Jains but from Beta II they became adherents of Kālāmukha Śaivism. As mentioned above, Jainism and radical Śaivism helped the Kākatīyas in rising higher in social status. From the time of Rudradeva onwards, they switched on to brāhmānical religion and attained political supremacy. The Kākatīyas, after Gaṇapati-deva's time were referred to as ksatriyas.⁶⁴ However, Vidyānātha, the court poet of Pratāparudra, says that the fame of the Kākatīya family excels that of solar and lunar races,⁶⁵ implying thereby that they belonged to neither.

Aboriginal tribes

From about the 7th century A.D. many of the aboriginal tribes such as the śabaras, pulindas and boyas were absorbed into the traditional social order. Such a process of acculturation was necessitated by the expansion of agriculture through the multiplication of agrahāras and by increased military requirements. The Rāṣṭrakūṭas recruited

śabaras into their army. Govinda IV, after conquering Vengī, posted his feudatory śabara chiefs who held Vengi for seven years.⁶⁶ The Eastern Cālukyas encouraged the boyas of Boyavihāradeśa to accept service under them. After the destruction of boya kottams, the boyas had spread over entire Āndhra including Telangāna.⁶⁷ They seem to have been admitted into all castes of the Hindu society from brāhmaṇa to śūdra.⁶⁸ Some of them joined civil and military services under the Durjayas of Velanādu and rose to very high positions such as māṇḍalika and mahāmandaleśvara.⁶⁹ Jillaboya was a general in the service of Velanāṭi Rajendracōḍa. His brother Nāraboya, the ruler of Divi, was the founder of the Ayya family.⁷⁰ After the occupation of Divi, Gaṇapatideva married Nārama and Perama, the princesses of Divi and appointed their brother Jāyapa as Gajasāhini in the Kākatīya army.⁷¹ Jāyapa, as already noted, was a great Sanskrit scholar and wrote Nrittaratnāvali, a treatise on dance in Sanskrit.

The pulindaṣ were another tribe that were absorbed into the Hindu social order through military service. The Māṭeḍu records dated in the year A.D. 1120, states that a pulinda chief Mahāsamanta Vemabola Boḍḍamma Mallenāyaka of Māṭeḍu was a bantu of mahāmandaleśvara Kākatīya Prolarāju, who was himself a feudatory of Tribhuvanamalla Vikramāditya-VI.⁷² The statement of Mallenāyaka that the pulinda kula was created by Brahma to protect the four varṇas implies

the high status he claimed. The inscriptions record the building of several temples by Mallenāyaka for gods Īśvara, Nārāyana and Āditya. He excavated a tank called Mallasamudram and granted lands to the temples of Malleśvara, Keśavadeva and Vināyaka. All these lands were irrigated by the waters of Mallasamudram.

The inscription gives a detailed account of Mallenāyaka's geneology. His forefather, Būchena, belonged to Vemabolakula, a clan of the pulindas. The pulindas, as a trans-Vindhyan non-āryan tribe, have been mentioned in association with the Āndhras in the Aitareya Brāhmana.⁷³ They might have lived in northern parts of Telangāna and been gradually integrated into the brāhmānical social order. It is possible that Mallenāyaka remembered his ancestry at the time of the record.

Būchena was described as kotamalla which means 'fighter of forts'. He might have joined the Cālukyan army and distinguished himself in capturing forts. Būchena's third son, Reva joined the army of Kākati Beta, perhaps Beta II, and participated in many wars and protected the Kākatiya kingdom. He received many villages and titles in recognition of their service. These two inscriptions give us to understand how the members of the hill and forest tribes rose in social and political status by the strength of arms. The present donor mahāsāmanta Vemabola Boḍḍamma Mallenāyaka is the son of Reva. Boḍḍama might have been his mother.

Thus, the śabaras, pulindas and boyas who were aboriginal tribes got slowly integrated into the mainstream of the society as different castes through agricultural activity and military service.

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