

INTRODUCTION

Scope of the subject

Telangāna* is one of the three natural regions of Āndhra Pradesh. It comprises the ten North-Western districts of the state extending between $77^{\circ} 5'$ and 82° E. longitude and about 16° and 20° N. longitude. The region is bounded on the north by the states of Mahārāṣṭra and Madhya Pradesh and by Karṇāṭaka and Mahārāṣṭra on the west. On the east it touches the coastal districts of Guntur, Krishna and East Godavari. On the south it is separated from Rāyalasīma by the River Krishna. Within these boundaries Telangāna has an area of 1,14,864 sq. kms. and an approximate population of 20 millions.

*Telangāna is also called Telingāna. The word Telingāna is explained with reference to the three śaiva ksetras (three liṅgas) of Śrīśailam (Kurnool District), Dāksārāmam (East Godavari District) and Kāleśvaram (Karimnagar District). With the exception of the last place, rest are located outside the region. Therefore, Telingāna is not an appropriate name to the region. The word Telangāna is explained as the land of Telugu speaking people, (Telugu + Ānemu). But Telugu is not only the language of the region but of the entire Āndhra people. During the period covered by the present study, Āndhradeśa and Triliṅgadeśa were used as synonyms. Early Muslim writers used the word Teling or some of its variants to denote the kingdom of Pratāparudra which embraced almost entire Āndhradeśa. After the formation of Hyderabad Subah by the Asaf Jhahis, which included Telugu, Kannaḍa, and Maratwāḍa regions, it is likely that the Telugu-speaking parts were called Telingāna or Telangāna. As the latter word is being widely employed in recent times, it is adopted to denote the region in this study.

In spite of certain points of similarity with Rāyalasīma comprising the districts of Anantapur, Chittoor, Cuddapah and Kurnool and with parts of Guntur and Krishna districts, Telangāṇa has physical identity and individuality of its own, with a fairly good rainfall, dense forests and a variety of mineral wealth. The region invites the attention of scholars with ample scope for study. Politically till the rise of Kākatīyas to sovereign authority (A.D. 1163), Telangāṇa formed a part of the Cālukya and Rāṣṭrakūṭa imperial systems and absorbed many social elements and cultural traits flowing from the western Deccan. Even after the fall of the Qutb Shahis (A.D. 1687) and till the formation of Āndhra Pradesh in 1956, Telangāṇa remained separate from the rest of Āndhradeśa.

Telangāṇa, for the above reasons, merits a special study. But so far, no attempt has been made at it. The importance of regional and local history in understanding the complexity of national culture is being recognised and regional imbalances in Indian historiography are held responsible for the emergence of extreme type of regionalism, plaguing India.¹ Further, as the Japanese scholar Karashima² points out that for historical investigation, a small area and a short period are best suited. Such a selection gives good scope for a detailed study of the forces at work in the area and during the period and their impact on the people and enables one to arrive at more accurate results.

The author, therefore, has chosen the economic and social forces at work in Telangāṇa during the period A.D. 1000-1323 for her study.

Review of Earlier work

Till recently the interest of the authors of Deccan history has been centred round dynasties such as the Early Cālukyas, Rāṣṭrakūṭas and Later Cālukyas and in their scheme the socio-economic aspects occupied an insignificant place and much less regarding the regions like Telangāṇa as they formed parts of mighty imperial systems. Moreover, as the above dynasties had their seats in Karṇāṭaka, their kingdoms are generally known as Karṇāṭaka empires and engrossed the attention mostly of Kannaḍa historians. It is natural that the regions like Telangāṇa, though extensive in area, received scant attention from such historians. In The Early History of the Deccan edited by G. Yazdani,³ dynastic approach has been adopted. The major dynasties like the Sātavāhanas, Vākāṭakas, Early Cālukyas, Rāṣṭrakūṭas, Later Cālukyas and Kākatīyas only attracted the attention of the historians and therefore the work suffers from two serious shortcomings: (1) the lack of continuity and (2) omission of an account of the feudatory or sāmanta ruling families which played a conspicuous role in the economy and culture of their respective regions. However, N. Venkataramanaiah has made a special study of the history of Cālukyas of Vemulavāda⁴

because of their significant role in the conflicts between the Rāṣṭrakūṭas and Eastern Cālukyas.

Though Telangāna was the core-region of the Kākatīya kingdom, historians of Āndhra laid emphasis on the Kākatīya efforts at the unification of all the Telugu-speaking areas of Deccan under their rule. M.Rama Rao may be said to have been the first to make an attempt at a comprehensive account of the Kākatīya dynasty but his attention was focussed mainly on the political history in his book 'The Kākatīyas of Warangal'.⁵ However, his entire work on the dynasty has not seen the light of the day. The Kākatīya Sañcika edited by him in Telugu contains articles on different aspects of the period but it is limited by the extremely meagre source material available during the thirties.⁶

In the Early History of the Deccan there is a lengthy chapter on the Kākatīyas, contributed by N.Venkataramanayya and M.Somasekhara Sarma.⁷ This is no doubt a comprehensive account but written from the point of Āndhradeśa. Further, the scholars could not describe in detail the social and economic developments during the period because of the limited scope of the project.

The Kākatīyas of P.V. Parabrahma Sastry⁸ is the latest and a very valuable work on the history of the period. Sastry has made remarkable contribution to the early history of the Kākatīyas including their relations with other Cālukyan

feudatories in the region. His work which has fully utilised the epigraphical evidence so far available gives an insight into the administration and society in Āndhra during the Kākatīya period. Pratibha and Kanaka Durga worked on the individual reigns of Rudramadevi⁹ and Gaṇapati¹⁰ and their times respectively.

On the socio-economic history of the period The Corporate Life in Medieval Āndhra of R.Narasimha Rao¹¹ may be called a pioneer study. It throws welcome light on various artisan and merchant guilds and their role in the social and economic activities. The Studies in Economic and Social conditions of Medieval Āndhra (A.D. 1000-1600) by K.Sundaram¹² is too sweeping an account over a long period and the author's main interest was in the conditions of the coastal districts. A.Vaidehi also has made a study of the Social and Economic Conditions in Eastern Deccan (A.D. 1000-1250) but she limited her study to the eastern Deccan i.e. coastal districts of Āndhradeśa.¹³ Her account contains a description more of social and religious conditions and less of economy. Suravaram Pratapa Reddy has written the Social History of Āndhras in Telugu (Āndhrula Sāṅghika Caritra) but it is based mainly on literary sources.¹⁴

Several articles by different scholars on various aspects of life during the period appeared from time to time in journals like J.A.H.R.S., Itihās and Bhāratī.

Present Approach

The present work is an attempt at a study of the economic and social conditions in some detail and their mutual interaction in the limited area of Telangāna during a period of 300 years (A.D. 1000-1323) in the light of the latest trends in Indian historiography. Since the British conquest of India, several European writers have taken keen interest in understanding her past. With the limited source material at their disposal and mostly basing upon the administrative reports prepared by the officers of the East India Company, they developed interesting ideas. One of such is the Marxian concept of Asiatic mode of Production.¹⁵ The essence of the concept is that for ages the Indian economy and, as a consequence, the Indian society have been stagnant being based upon self-sufficient village economy till the British rulers gave it a push during the 18th and 19th centuries.

The concept of Asiatic mode of Production has been a subject of much debate. Very early S.A. Dange¹⁶ applying Marxian dialectics has tried to prove that the Indian society was not totally immbile^a and stagnant and that a careful study would reveal different stages of social evolution. Romila Thaper¹⁷ emphasised the inadequacies of the concept. Karashima has rightly pointed out that self-sufficient and isolated village communities are almost a myth. Recently, Katherine Gough,¹⁸ limiting her study to the district of Tanjavur,

tried to vindicate the concept in a modified form. But her conclusions are open to question. D.D.Kosambi has rightly warned that mechanical application of Marxian theories to the Indian situations would not yield satisfactory results.¹⁹

More complicated is the problem of feudalism.²⁰ The political and socio-economic order of medieval Europe is generally referred to as feudalism characterised by the following features:

1. Hierarchy of rulers resembling a pyramid with the king at the top and with extreme decentralisation of political power.
2. Agriculture being the main source of national income, the nature of landholding determined the relations between the different strata of society.
3. Landlords or local magnates appropriating the surplus produce which is not channelised into productive avenues but wasted away on luxuriant life.
4. Self-sufficient village production, with minimum trade in which money rarely played any role. The economy was thus mainly rural and little helpful to social mobility.

Scholars admit that the features of European feudalism are not applicable to the Indian conditions. Harbans Mukhia²¹ even denies the very existence of feudalism in India. D.D. Kosambi²² held that Indian feudalism was mostly 'from above'

implying thereby that it was more political. D.N. Jha²³ is of the opinion that from the later period of Gupta rule to about A.D. 1000, a mode of production similar to European feudalism was prevalent at least in north India. R.S.Sarma²⁴ observes that the history of Indian feudalism is uneven because of vastness of size and perplexing diversity in regional situations. Even in a particular age, no uniform pattern can be applied throughout India.

Recent studies by Champakalakshmi,²⁵ Subbarayalu²⁶ (Tamilnad) M.G.S. Narayanan²⁷ (Kerala) and N.R. Nandi²⁸ (Karnataka) reveal a fresh approach to the history of south India from the above points of view with encouraging results. Particularly the studies in Cola history by Burton Stein,²⁹ Kenneth Hall³⁰ and Noboru Karashima³¹ and others are significant in the application of the concepts of feudalism and the segmentary state.

This work is a modest attempt to study the socio-economic development in the Telangāṇa region from the above point of view. It begins with a survey of the political background keeping in view of the concepts of oriental despotism which became one of the articles of faith with the English historians Sir Henry Maine and James Mill and the concept of 'segmentary state' which Burtan Stein applied to the Cola empire. How far the polity developed feudal characteristics has been examined.

In Chapter II different types of landholding such as Crown lands, Agrahāras, Devabhogas and the nature of landholding in peasant villages are examined. The keen interest evinced by the kings, sāmantas, officials, guilds and private individuals in the development of irrigational facilities is discussed. Agricultural production pattern is described. Land and agricultural taxes are discussed at the end of the Chapter. Taxation was no doubt heavy but did not break the backbone of the peasant.

The channelisation of surpluses in the agricultural production into industrial activity is discussed in Chapter III. Among the industrial activities, the growth of textile manufacture and oil production and the artisan communities involved in these industries are explained. Non-agricultural industries such as the metal industry and other miscellaneous types of production are outlined in this Chapter. Taxes on industrial communities are briefly outlined.

Chapter IV deals with trade. The various organisations of trade such as the Nakaram and Pekkandru are discussed. The growth, expansion and diversification of Nakaram network and its integration with itinerent merchant guilds such as Ayyāvali-500 and artisan guilds like Telivevuru into larger corporations such as Ubhayanānādeśi pekkandru are discussed. Various trade centres and trade routes are outlined. Taxes on trade and the machinery of tax collection are also discussed.

The Kākatīyas attempted to standardise land measure, coinage and units of measurement as necessitated by economic development. This aspect is briefly outlined in ^{the} Appendix.

The next three chapters are devoted to the study of contemporary society with a view to examine social changes that occurred during the period under the impact of the above economic developments.

A discussion on the social structure forms the content of the Chapter V. The inadequacy of the Cāturvarṇa system and the concept of Aṣṭādaśamahāprajā to explain the contemporary social structure is examined. The major factors that were responsible for the structural changes in the society such as the absorption of aboriginals, economic developments, religious movements and political fortunes are outlined.

The classification of society on the basis of occupations appears to be more appropriate than the traditional method of looking at the society as a conglomeration of castes. As such, the society of the period is analysed into four major social groups viz., priestly class, ruling class, agricultural communities and merchant and artisan communities. The role of these groups in the contemporary social, political and economic formations and the changes that took place as a result of the factors are explained in Chapter VI.

The developments in the economic, religious and political fields resulted in mobility of social groups on the status scale. This is known as social mobility. Two types of social mobility, horizontal and vertical are witnessed. These factors are outlined in Chapter VII. The migration of brāhmanas from various parts of India to Telangāna, decline of Kṣatriya community and the rise of peasant-warrior community are considered. The mobility of non-elite groups is briefly outlined.

The expansion in wetland agriculture, growth of industry and trade, large scale temple building and establishment of sāmanta and māṇḍalika principalities led to the development of several urban centres all over the region. The process of urbanisation is discussed and the growth of some prominent towns and cities is outlined in Chapter VIII.

The results of this study are presented in Conclusion.

Sources

The study is naturally based upon (1) literature (2) epigraphy and (3) monuments. A serious student of history generally prefers archaeological i.e., epigraphical evidence to literary account because literary works are prone to subjective elements such as imagination and fancy and author's preferences. They are further prone to alterations and interpretations. The archaeological evidence-

epigraphy, numismatics and monuments are free from such defects.

The historical research in Telangāna received stimulus with the establishment of Lakṣmaṇarāya Parisodhaka Maṇḍali. Under the auspices of the Maṇḍali, Dūpāti Seshāchāryulu and Dūpāti Ramaṇāchāryulu known as Seshādri Ramaṇakavulu, Ādirāju Veerabhadra Rac and Gaḍiyāram Rāmakrishna Sarma collected a large number of inscriptions and published them in two volumes entitled - Telangāna Śāsanamulu. In the Hyderabad Archaeological Series, P.Srinivasachar edited 'The Corpus of Telangāna Inscriptions' in three volumes. The fourth volume of the Corpus was prepared by Mallampalli Somasekhara Sarma, and edited by R.Subrahmanyam and published by the Government of Āndhra Pradesh. P.B. Desai and P.Srinivasachar compiled the Kannada Inscriptions of Āndhra Pradesh. The inscriptions in the Alampūr Museum and the Inscriptions of Perūr have been edited in two different volumes by Abdul waheed Khan and Nelaturu Venkata Ramanaiah respectively. B.N. Sastry has published Śāsana Samputi in two volumes, containing the inscriptions from Telangāna Districts and another volume of the Inscriptions of Kandūru Coḍas. The Āndhra Pradesh State Department of Archaeology and Museums has planned to bring out a district-wise inscriptions in separate volumes and so far the inscriptions of Warangal and Karimnagar districts have come out.

The inscriptions especially from temple towns and trade centres such as Perūr, Alampūr, Bekkallu, Māteḍu and Warangal contain a good account of the religious conditions, trade guilds and taxes. But the districts of Adilabad and Nizamabad yielded practically no inscriptions. Most of the inscriptions even from other districts are donative records, generally short in size. Rarely we come across historical prasāstis, royal edicts and administrative records as in Tamilnād and Karṇāṭaka. The inscriptions therefore do not give even a nearly comprehensive picture of the socio-economic condition of the region and the period. That is one of the serious disadvantages under which the student of Āndhra history in general and Telangāṇa history in particular has to work.

Geographically and ecologically several parts of coastal Āndhra and Rāyalaseema, Krishṇa, Guntur, Prakasam and Kurnool districts are contiguous with Telangana though separated by river Krishṇa. As such a number of epigraphs from these regions are also consulted. These inscriptions are published by the Archaeological Survey of India as South Indian inscriptions in volumes IV, V, VI and X.

Literary Sources

The history of sanskrit literature in this period may be taken to begin with Mānasollāsa of the royal poet Someśvara III which is a Manual on Polity. Many poets are known to have

received patronage at the court of the Kākatīyas. Most of them composed their works in Sanskrit, but none of them are very useful as source of historical information. Rudradeva is believed to have composed the Nītisāra, but it is not available. A few verses of Nītisāra translated into Telugu are included in Sakalanītisammatam ~~Nītisāramuktāvali~~ of Singana. Vidyānātha was the court poet of Pratāpa Rudra and his Pratāparudra Yaśo-bhūṣaṇam tries to derive the name Kākatīya and refers to the caste of the Kākatīyas. The Nrittaratnāvali of Jāyapa, the Gajasāhini of Gaṇapatideva throws light on the condition of arts during the period. Nṛṣimhakavi, son of Viśvesvara composed Siddhodvāha inscribed on Ursugutṭa contains beautiful descriptions of Āndhradeśa and the city of Warangal. Rāvīpāṭi Tripurāntaka is believed to have composed a Vīdhinātaka named Premābhirāmanam on the life in the city of Warangal but it is not available in original.

Much literature was produced in Telugu. Its history in the period begins almost with the Āndhramahābhāratam of poet Nannaya (A.D. 1056) followed by the Ganitasārasamgraha of Mallana (A.D. 1060) and the Kumārasambhavam of Nannecoda (c.A.D. 1150). During the period under study much literature was produced. Under the patronage of Telugu Coḍa rulers of Nellore, Tikkana translated the Mahābhārata. He had friendly relations with the Kākatīya king Gaṇapatideva and tradition recounts his visit to Warangal. His junior contemporary, Ketana translated the Mitāksara under the

title Vijñāneśvaram, a commentary on the Yājñavalkyasmṛiti prepared at the court of Vikramāditya VI. Baddena (c.A.D. 1100) wrote the Nītisāra muktāvali besides Sumatīśatakam. These works throw light on several aspects of polity and society. Mārana dedicated his Mārkaṇḍeya purāṇam to Gannaya, an officer at the court of Pratāparudra, whom the work describes as the Mayor of the city of Warangal. During the same period Gona Buddhā Redḍi composed the Raṅganātha-rāmāyaṇam. The translation of Bhāskara rāmāyaṇam was completed under the patronage of Sāhīni Māraya. The most outstanding Telugu poet of Telangāṇa of the age was Pāḷkuriki Somanātha. The Panditārādhyā Caritra and the Basava purāṇam contain useful information on the socio-economic conditions.

The Telugu works that came after the fall of the Kākatiyas but are useful for the history of their age are the Palnātivīracaritra, the Krīdābhirāmam and the Nītisāra-muktāvali. The first work is generally attributed to Śrīnātha and is a mine of information on social conditions of the period. The Krīdābhirāmam of Vallabhāmātya is a translation of Premābhirāmam of Tippana, who was a contemporary of Prataparudra. It contains a graphic description of the city of Warangal, its different Vādas (wards), market places, temples and temple festivals. Mamidipudi Venkatarangiah says that Krīdābhirāmam "throws a flood of light on social conditions in the great kingdom of Telingāṇa under Pratapa Rudra, and as such its value to students of research and

historians is immense". It is a mirror of life in Warangal. The Siddhesvara Caritra of Kāse Sarvappa is a very late work of the 17th century and gives the traditional account of the Kākatīya dynasty. It is based upon an earlier work Pratāpacaritra of Ekāmrānātha. These works contain information more legendary in nature than historical. To this class belongs also the Somadevarājīyam of Kūcimānci Jaggakavi of about the 17th-18th centuries.

Monuments

The large number of temples and tanks that are spread all over Telangāna are the mirrors of the social, religious, economic and cultural conditions of the people in the medieval period. The temples built by the Cālukyas of Kalyān. the Coḍas of Kandūr and Kākatīyas and several other subordinate rulers have been studied by a number of scholars, G.Yazdani, M.Rama Rao, M.Radhakrishna Sarma, B.Rajendra Prasad and S.Gopalakrishna Murthy. The temples at Alampūr, Pānagal, Pillalamarri, Anmakonda, Warangal and Pālampet are some of the best examples of art and architecture reflecting the culture-contacts of the Deccan. The Rāmappa lake, the Pākhāl lake, Kesarisamudram, Udaya Samudram are some of the living examples of the large tanks that were built during the period under study. They reflect the high technical skills as well as their aesthetic sense of the people.

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