CHAPTER I

SECTION I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

Mahabubnagar District lies between $15^\circ 2'$ and
$17^\circ 14'$ of the northern latitude and $79^\circ 10'$ of the
Eastern longitude. It is separated from the Kurnool
and the Guntur districts by the rivers Krishna and
Tungabhadra which constitute its southern boundary.
Hyderabad District lies on the north, Nalgonda district
on the east and Raichur and Gulbarga districts on the
West.

The boundaries of the modern district more or less
coincide with the natural features of the area. The
river Tungabhadra flows in a south-easterly direction
from the west forming the southern boundary. The river
Dindi on the eastern side separates this district from
the Nalgonda District. On the western side a branch of
the Balaghat range passes through Kosgi, Kodangal and
Koilkonda taluqs of Mahabubnagar District. This range
forms a boundary from the north-western side up to the
confluence of the rivers Shima and Krishna. The con­
fluence of the rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra takes
place at Kudeveli. The region in between the confluence
and the river Dindi is the Amarabad plateau which rises
to a height of 2800 ft.
The nucleus of the district in the light of these physical features, naturally would be the 'doab area'. The region in between the rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra is the doab area, which is popularly known as the Raichur Doab. The rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra are perennial and deposit annually, a rich alluvium making the soil fertile. The fertility gives ample crops, leading to economic prosperity. This in its turn encourages growth of activity in all fields of life and culture. Conversely the northern parts and the eastern part, i.e. Amarabad plateau of the district lag behind in the run due to the lack of agricultural resources.

The Doab is mentioned in the inscriptions of the Chalukyas of Badami as 'Chalukya Visaya'.\(^1\) The Chalukyas of Kalyani inscriptions mention as 'Seredorenad' and also 'Sindhuuga mantara desa'.\(^2\) K.A. Nilakantha Sastry rightly sums up the importance of the doab as:

"The Tungabhadra has served as a historic natural frontier right through the centuries; the Chalukyas of Badami, the Rashtrakutas, and the Chalukyas of Kalyani


\(^{2}\) E. l, Vol. XII, p. 295
to its north, and the Pallavas and the Cholas to its south, not to speak of the Gaṅgas who were mostly subordinate to one or other of these powers, made several attempts to extend their sway across the river and only met with indifferent success.\textsuperscript{3}

The ancient routes which connect this land with other parts of the country are as follows:

The route that connects Badami and Pattadakal with the south branches off at Pampatirtha and goes across Ij, Konadani to Alampur. The other route which connects Alampur to the south touches Kandana\textsubscript{4}voli (Kurnool) and joins the main route near the Nandikanuma pass at Gidchalur. From Vinukonda this route branches off to Kanchi and the other to the Vengi. The route that leads to the north touches Panagal referred to in Vinayaditya's Inscription and Bodhan from where the route branches off to Ajanta through Paithan and another to Nachya Desa. Since ancient times trade and commerce was brisk and along these routes and the economic activity fostered cultural exchanges and influences.\textsuperscript{4}

\textsuperscript{3} Nilakantha Sastry, K.A., \textit{A History of South India}, London, 1955, p. 43

Although this region was under the sway of the Mauryas and the Sātavāhanas, no reference to the important centres or to the general administrative divisions, is to be found in the epigraphic sources. The earliest epigraph that mentions this area is found only in the Ikṣua ruler Rudra Purusa Batta's Gurzala Inscription dated A.D. 299. This record refers to some donations made by a private individual, Nodukasiri to the God of Hālampura which is identified as Alampur. It may not be out of place to make a digression on the place name. Hala means plough and it was the practice during the Ikṣua period to donate land which is measured in terms of Hōla. The inscriptions of the Chālukyas of Badami mention Hālampura. The inscriptions of the Chālukyas of Kalyani refer to the place as Hālampura or Hatampura. Those names, Hālampura and Hatampura are synonyms. It thus becomes evident that Hālampura identified with Alampur, must be an Ikṣua township.

The eclipse of the Ikṣua power in A.D. 306 marked the beginning of the Kadamba rule in this region, but no epigraphs of this dynasty are forthcoming.

7. Sreenivasachar P. & Desai P.B., op.cit., p. 32-40
The Chalukyan empire was established in A.D. 534 by Pulakesin I but this region was conquered only in the time of Kirtivarman I. No information is available about this region during the reign of Mangalesa. Pulakesin II who succeeded to the throne conquered eastern Andhra and established the Chalukyan line at Vengi in A.D. 624. The Tummeynuru grant states that the doab area (now forming the Mahabubnagar District) is known as Chalukya Vishaya. Lord Sangaomayana at the confluence of the rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra is also mentioned.

The Pallava invasion of Vatapi under Narasimhavarman took place in A.D. 641-2 and a period of interregnum prevailed up to A.D. 654-5. In this period Adityavarman, the son of Pulakesin II was ruling Mahabubnagar, Kurnool and Bellary Districts.9 The accession of Vikramaditya I to the throne restoring order, turned a new page in the history of these areas. The Iparunikal grant10 dated A.D. 660 states that Vikramaditya has undergone 'Siva-mandala Diksa' under the Preceptor Sudarshanacharya. Thus begins the royal patronage for Saivism from Vikramaditya's

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8. Ramesan, N., op. cit., p. 43
9. Ibid., pp. 40-44
10. Ibid.
rulo. Baladitya Maharaja, a subordinate chief, was ruling the Chālukya Vishaya at this time. Due to the royal patronage for Saivism and due to the further fact that the religious seat was in the vicinity of Alampur itself, the capital of Chālukya Vishaya, the temple-building activity began with great vigour at Alampur. Vījayaditya I who succeeded Vīkramāditya showed great interest, the royal ladies also evinced interest in raising the temples at Alampur. In Vījayaditya’s reign also, Alampur enjoyed prestige as a religious centre.

The Alampur inscription dated A.D. 713 records the construction of an enclosure to the temples by Iḍānācharya. No inscriptions of Vījayaditya’s successors namely Vīkramāditya II and Kirtivarman II are forthcoming.

After the rise of Rāṣṭrakūṭa dynasty in the Deccan on the fall of the Chālukyan empire, Mahabubnagar district came under their sway (A.D. 757). In this period also Alampur was an important religious as well as a political centre and this can be seen in the munificent grants made by Balavarmarasa, the general of Druva, for the construction of the main gateway and for conducting various festivals.

The Chalukyas of Kalyani gained supremacy over Doonan by A.D. 976 under Talla II. The Chola-Chalukya conflict over the supremacy of Vengi began in the reign of Satyasraya. Though Rajendra Chola was successful in occupying the Chalukyan territory up to Bellary, the coal area remained with the Chalukyas, as Jayasimha was successful in recovering the lost areas. But Chola forces later advanced up to Maski and with the battle of Maski, both forces recognised the river Tungabhadras as the frontier.

The Kalachuri usurpation took place in A.D. 1162. This is attested to by several inscriptions of Bijjala at Alampur.

In the Chalukyas of Kalyani period, the regional history of the Mahabubnagar district can be delineated from the rule of Somesvar. The Kandur Nadu which comprises of the taluqs of Jodegurla, Mahabubnagar, Wanaparti, Kolhapur and the eastern taluqs of Gulbarga district was ruled by Mahamandaleswar Chintinayaka of Ahihaya family. The capital is Kolur.14 Chiddannachoda Maharaja ruled Alampur, Ayahe 300 and Sindvedi in A.D. 1059-60.15 Mahamandaleswar Bijjarasa ruled the modern Ij taluqa.16 Kumara Vijayaditya governed the Kandur Nadu from A.D. 1051-60.17 By A.D. 1073, Chiddama Choda Maharaja extended

15. Ibid., p. 33
16. I.A.R., 1960-61, p. 43
17. T.I., Vol.XXV, p. 254
his rule to Kanne 300, Pedakal 800, Naravadi 500 and Ayaje 300.\textsuperscript{18} This area consists of the present Ij, Alampur, Gadwal and some parts of Raichur district. In A.D. 1084 Udaya Choda Maharaja governed the Jadcchola division.\textsuperscript{19} Udaya Choda Maharaja was the son of Gokarna I and the Kākatiya Prola established him on the throne of Kandur branch of Talugu Chodes. Kumāra Tailapa, the son of Vikramāditya governed Kandur nādu from A.D. 1113-1123.\textsuperscript{20} Puduru was governed by Hallavarasa in A.D. 1087.\textsuperscript{21}

Later inscriptions mention Bijjala’s rule which marked the Kalachuri usurpation.

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SECTION II

RELIGIOUS HISTORY:

Vedic sacrificial tradition which was deep-rooted in the times before Christ, continued with great vigour simultaneously with the tradition of image worship. The Sātavāhana, Ikṣvāku, Śālankāyana, Brhatpalaśāya, and Viśnukundin rulers, in their inscriptions mention the performance of Vedic sacrifices. The excavations at Nagarjunakonda revealed ritualistic structures. Of them is a water reservoir of ritualistic import, which excavators interpreted as the tank meant for the purificatory bath by the Performer of an Aśvamedha. The plan of the reservoir is like Kurma, with the head projected towards west. This reveals the popularity of Vedic sacrifices in 3rd century A.D. The cult of Krishna was widespread in the Deccan in the Sātavāhana period. The Ikṣvāku times witnessed the construction of temples to Mahādeva.

1. R.C. Majumdar, ed. Classical Age, Bombay, 1962, p. 204, 205, 206
2. Ibid.
4. R.C. Majumdar, ed. op.cit., p. 422
under the name of Pushpabhadrāsvāmi. The worship of Kārtikeya and the temple dedicated to God Kārtikeya have also been revealed in the excavations at Nagarjunakonda. The Ikṣvāku rulers, moreover, mention in their 'Prasātis' that they were devout worshippers of Mahāśeṇa. The Aṣṭabhūjasvāmi as a form of Viṣṇu was also known in the Ikṣvāku period, i.e. 3rd and 4th centuries A.D.

The Sālaṅkāyana rulers speak of themselves in their 'Prasātis', as devout worshippers of Chitraraṭhasvāmi, a name of Sūrya. The earliest form of Nṛsiṁha along with Panchāvīra was also current in the 3rd and 4th centuries A.D.

The Viṣṇukūṇḍin period (5th and 6th centuries A.D.) shows a growth in the pantheon. At Yelesvaram the miniature shrines found in the historical strata contained the forms of Śiva as Ardhanārīśvara, Hariḥara, Uma Mahesvara and also the linga. In the Undavalli and Mogalrajapuram caves the pantheon represented in sculpture includes Nātarāja, Govardhana, Varāha Nṛsiṁha, Trivikrama, Līṅgodbhava and Ardhanārīśvara.

6. Sivaramamurthy, C., Indian Sculpture, New Delhi, 1961, p. 64-65
Thus the growth and diversification in the pantheon in the early period provided impetus to the temple construction.

Though numerous cults had become popular by the Chalukyan times the pantheon and the dedication of the temples does not show any sectarian outlook. Essentially the Chalukyan rulers were worshippers of Viṣṇu. The invocations of the Chalukyan inscriptions have the Varha emblem and mention the Saptamātrikas as their protecting deities. The Chalukyas call themselves as the 'sons' of Hārīti and also as 'Parama Bhāgavat'.

Vikramaditya I in A.D. 660 was initiated into Śaivism by Sudersanāchārya undergoing the Śivamāndala dikṣa. His acceptance and patronage of Śaivism led to the numerous temples caused to be built, dedicated to Śiva. The inscription also indicated the existence of Pāsupata, Kālāmukha and Kāpālikas cults in this region. The origin of Pāsupata cult goes back to first or second century A.D. when a Śaiva saint named Lakulin or Lakulīśa founded the sect at Kāyāvarohana (modern Karvan in Gujarat). The sect gained great popularity in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra by 7th Century A.D. The Movement of Śaiva Āchāryas from the north to the Deccan is attested by the fact that jñānasivāchārya from the northern bank
of Ganges came to Pattalakkal as an archaka in Vijayesvara temple. Vijayaditya's inscription also mentions an ascetic named Isanāchārya.

The popularity of Viṣṇu and Brahmā is also evident as the pantheon in the temples shows the various avatāras of Viṣṇu and images Brahmā.

With the advent of the Chalukyas of Kalyani, the sectarian differences seem to have started dominating the religious scene. The Pāṣupata, Kālāmukha, kāpālika cults attain great popularity. Śāktism as a cult also seems to have attained much vigour in this period.

The period of the Chalukyas of Kalyani witnessed the rise of the Kālāmukha cult as a great force in Mahabubnagar District.

The Śriparvata was regarded as a great centre of the Kālāmukha cult in the Deccan. The inscriptions of 9th to 12th centuries at Alampur give a very good picture of the Kālāmukhas, who were mainly responsible for the majority of the constructions at Alampur and Papanasi.

An inscription states that Iruguna Chola Maharna gave a gift of land to the Kālāmukha ascetics in Siddha Somesvara mātha at Alampur. When Stiparvata became a prominent seat of the Kālāmukhas in 9th century A.D., Alampur came to be regarded as the western gateway of Srisila. As a prominent Kālāmukha Centre, Alampur came to be known as 'Brahmesvara Sṭhāna'.

By the middle of the 11th century the establishment came to be known as 'Pancharasi Mahasthāna' after Pancharasi Bhūtaraka, the first adhipati.

At Papanasi also, there was a Sṭhāna and the Sṭhānadhīpatis mentioned in the inscriptions are Lokabharana Pandita and Tribhuvana Pandita. The activities of these sthanas mainly centred on the education of the ascetics, worship, feeding of ascetics, conducting festivals and repairs and renovations to the temples. An inscription refers to the celebration of 'Navarātri festival'.

As mentioned earlier Saktism attained popularity in this period and Yogisvari was installed at Alampur in 10th century A.D. Later literature records Yogisvari as the presiding deity of Alampur and speaks of the latter

11. Ibid.
as a Sākta Pītha. But the sectarian literary works in 13th century A.D., chiefly Panditarādhya Carita make no reference to Yogīśvarī. Ānandakīndam and Skanda Purāṇa refer to Yogīśvarī as the presiding deity of Alampur.

Thus the importance of Alampur as a religious centre coupled with its political importance gave a fillip to the large scale temple building activity.