CHAPTER V

CONTENT AND FORM: REFLECTIONS OF NATIONALIST SPIRIT IN ANDHRA PAINTINGS.

The correlation of content and form, though indispensable, is difficult to understand. The question which is more important has always been controversial factor, though both artists and philosophers have regarded form as an essential and spiritual component of art, while content is considered secondary. Ernst Fisher views that everything in the world is a compound of form and matter, and the more form predominates, the less it is encumbered by matter and the greater is the perfection achieved. Thus he opines that Mathematics is the most perfect in sciences and music in arts, for in both form has become its own content.¹ But can this be adopted uniformly to all arts is a question which needs to be explored. Before any further description it becomes important to note precisely what is meant by 'Form' and 'Content' and how they are interlinked. The question of form and content and particularly to understand this in the context of India, and more specifically Andhra, becomes an integral part of this study.

Content in any work of art, be it painting, literature or music, forms the direct structure of work which
could be studied and understood instantly. Still lifes and landscape painting which formed the popular taste for long have direct content. The scenic beauty, the waterfalls, lake-side views, mountain ranges, forms the subject for this kind of work, popularised by European artists and English art schools. These works represent even today the popular taste world wide.² Although historically such work is not taken as a serious work of art, it cannot, however, be ignored. Landscape and still life which form a part of the academic training in art schools is often looked as amateur work. But it is widely popular and the reasons for this could vary. The content is simple and the viewer can easily relate to the situation, while the form is often uncomplicated. While this is the one aspect of realism there are others which are considered serious works of art. In the work, ‘Gurinica’ by Pablo picasso, the artist reflects on the enormous destruction of both human and material life. This work, considered as an all time masterpiece of the artists, is one of the strongest protests of the time against the horrors of war. After German bombers destroyed the defenceless Spanish city of Gurinica, Picasso painted this scene to show his heart break and rage and to make it a memorial to the city. He distorted forms using only stark black, white and grey tones on a huge canvas to cry out against cruel destruction. The work of strong curves, jagged lines shows moving figures of a
mother clutching a dead baby, a man gripping a knife, a victim being consumed by flames and people and animals screaming alike in agony and terror. In this work, devoid of realistic depiction, the conspicuous element of content is made more thought provoking with the element of creativity attached to the form. In such a work the content is direct but the form adopted manipulates the understanding of the work. 'Gurinica' could be considered as any other creative work, but when the form is appropriately related to the historical event, it has become a masterpiece.

Direct depiction of social realism, though helps as propagatory material, may not seem to vibrate the sensitivities of the viewer. Imagine a society with only social realistic art in any of the artistic forms. Historically it has been observed that such art can be appreciated for some time keeping in view of the content but it is the creativity part in the form which can make the work more interesting and lasting. During the period of two world wars between 1910 to 1945, Europe witnessed a number of artists whose purpose was to depict the war scenes which could be later publicised. Few of the artists were commissioned by newspapers and journals and the artist worked as a photographer, picturising whatever he found extraordinary and suitable to be published in the papers. A few of the prominent newspapers which
encourage such work are Daily Graphic, Weekly Graphic Illustrated London News, The Masses, Inquirer, and The Press. The subject for the works varied form direct war scenes, harassment of the people, poverty, sporting life, reconstruction activities or, in other words whatever the artists felt would be interesting for the people and spread the message of the movements in the society.

In the work 'Entry of Death' done by artist Boris Kustoodiew, the artist represents the anger of the people on the Tsar and his policies to bring about a few reforms in Russia in 1905. In the work, the artist tries to pass the message that, without reforms in the Russian society, it was difficult to survive the wrath of modernisation and the work seems to have gained importance after the Russo-Japanese war in 1905 in which Russia was defeated. The work shows the Tsar as a huge monster. While the people under him are shown as tiny creatures who are unitedly trying to bring down the monster, the Tsar (Plate XXIV).

Illustrated London News carried a few works showing the great Railway strike of 1919. The works show how railway lines were blown off and how commuters were annoyed and worried about the trains. People seem to be panikly moving around to know of the trains while there are a number of police men moving hurridly to stop any
type of violence from the waiting public. Such works are many and Paul Hograth has shown how the artist has been working as a reporter over the years throughout Europe.

However, what is more interesting for us here is the depiction of the content. It can be observed that the artists, despite being simple illustrators, had the freedom to express and develop their creativity. The form adopted in each and every work seem to differ and, as many of them were single colour reproductions, the themes were more susceptible? Artist here worked towards two main activities, firstly to bring about an impression of the ongoing movement in the continent and, second, in enhancing his own creativity. Had he concentrated only on theme(content), viewing himself as an illustrator, the works, would not attract the viewers for long. Can direct-theme be appreciated always in literature, painting or music? At some point every work needs to be different and enhance the creativity not only for the artists but also for the viewer.

In India, Bengali artist Chitta Prasad seems to have worked in similar manner having procured a job in a newspaper where he worked as an illustrator/cartoonist. Both the newspaper and the artist seem to have had similar ideology of representing the oppressive activities of the British and other local masters over the Indian
masses. Chitta Prasad worked profusely depicting the activities of the British and the autocratic Nizam of Hyderabad in the country (Plate XXV). In most cases the activities of the two were inhuman and merciless. The content of the work seems direct and the form adopted also near to realistic art which made the works purely propagatory in nature especially the ones published in newspapers. However, his other unpublished work is rather more creative and enables the viewer to think profusely before taking any decision.

A much closer relationship is there between content, form and patron. Artist, though works independently, the ideas of patronage works upon him subconsciously. He directly represents whatever he would like to. There is a subconscious dependence upon the ideas of the patrons and the art he likes. As illustrators of newspapers despite the patron and his ideas, the artist has a liberty to work on themes which otherwise seem harsh. But as an independent artist dependent upon society and patron, there is a necessity for the artist to depend upon the patron.

The best example which can be taken into consideration in this regard is that of our country, which witnessed various art movements. Prior to the advent of Muslims in the country, India has the tradition of art,
which concentrated on religious themes and works were basically for the wider audience in the form of murals and panels on the walls of temples and palaces. There were very few works commissioned which were small in size and were mainly used as book illustrations.\textsuperscript{10} This kind of work was relegated to the background with the coming of muslims. With them came the miniature style of painting concentrating on secular themes which was totally a new tradition for the Indian artists. The works were devoid of any extravagant display of gold and silver. The colour scheme was generally simple and flat in nature with the emphasis was on the facial expression of the figures and intricate designing. The theme for the works emphasised on portraits, durbar scenes, sporting activities, incidents in political life, fights etc. They are more informative than works sidelined by the influence of traditional Romanticism. The shift from the popular Hindu art to the Persian miniature was sudden and native artists too began to adopt to the new style primarily to be on par with the new tastes of the rulers. This shift by the artist is essentially owing to his dependence upon the patron who was conditioned to appreciate a particular style of painting.

This is not just one example. There are many more in Indian history. The second major shift came with the arrival of the Europeans in the country.\textsuperscript{12} Artists, people
and the ruling classes who, until the advent of the British, practised and enjoyed miniature works began to discard the old form to the new European academic art. This sudden change was due to the acceptance of new art which belonged to the new patron. Europeans brought academic art in oil colours and emphasised on textual patterns and shading effects. The new tastes were furthered with the new English education. The art was adopted voluntarily by the new English educated middle class of the Indian society whose tastes seem to have been conditioned by the education adopted. The new art became so popular that Zamindars, Rajas, Landlords and almost all the educated sections of the society preferred to have these works, discarding the earlier works. Again, this change in the popular taste has been described by the art historians as a natural change in taste while it could also be seen as an effect of the change in tastes of the rulers. However, Raja Ravi Verma's case is slightly different. He adopted to the new art due to his exposure to European painting and then his quest to develop something different for the Indian mind. He successfully combined the European academic style to that of popular Indian mythological themes which until this time were sidelined by secular themes. The voluntary acceptance of his oleographs by the Indian masses shows the popular taste in India. Work of Ravi Verma, especially the ones which concentrate on mytho-
logical and traditional themes, have been readily accepted by the common man and have been considered as good works of art. The ready acceptance of the works cannot be seen as individual credit of either content or form. Rather the native Indian with English education was familiar with the Indian mythology and was conscious of it, while he was also trained to appreciate academic works, considered to be of higher aesthetic value. As such, the viewer in India was convinced of both the content and the form. This was until the criticism meted out by Haveli, Coomaraswamy who considered the works to be neither totally Indian nor European.

Ravi Verma's work can be placed slightly different from that of the work taken up by the traditional artists patronised by the royal households. These artists were forced to adopt to the new tastes of the masters, both to satisfy them and to earn their living. The change adopted by these artists was drastic but seemed to be the only alternative. As such it could be observed that copies of European academic art became a fashion and there was a great demand for such works and the artist worked according to its demand in the market. The change in the taste of the Indian audience depended upon the new Western education and aesthetics which received support from the new educated class. The change here was in total i.e., in both form and content. Although the artist was suc-
cessful in creating new works of art his position is reduced to that of being a mere imitator, who made copies of European academic art.

It is observed that artists, survived with the dual objectives of portraying social realism which was both useful as propagatory material and to represent historical events. Second, in developing a new aesthetics according to the popular tastes. Though the first one is not very popular in our country, the second was accepted and worked upon. It is here that subject is raised to the status of content by the artists attitude, for content is not only what is represented but also how it is presented – the context and the degree of social and individual consciousness. A simple subject like harvest can be treated as a charming idyll or as a conventional genre picture or the victory of man over nature. In short, everything depends upon the view of the artist on whether he speaks as an apologist of the ruling class, a sentimental Sunday tripper, a revolutionary socialist or a disgruntled peasant. In the same manner a revolutionary movement could also be represented either in a direct form or symbolically by using a few symbols of the movement. Any number of examples, shown historically, emphasize that form plays an important role in any given work of art, while content became a part of it. It is the form which makes the content important or interesting.
To study the context of form and content with in regard to India and specifically Andhra is an interesting one. As mentioned earlier India witnessed a number of changes in art forms over the centuries. The quest to explore the new tastes along with satisfying the patrons could be seen as two important reasons for the development historically. The coming of Europeans brought in a number of new ideas in various spheres of life. Every aspect of social, economic, political and cultural life was touched upon. Change in the first three areas were prominent with drastic developments all of a sudden, while in cultural arena it was subtle and slow. New education brought in new ideas of social life with protest against traditional formative living. The movement was supported by the common man who was dependent upon the changes in the society, while the royal classes and the rich remained overtly static in their thinking. Education did receive support from people of all classes but the progressive ideas had a few constraints. Nevertheless new education played a vital role in the furthering of new ideas. Coupled with new ideas was development of new political and economic life which gradually slipped into the hands of the new alien rulers.

With the mounting pressure of social, economic and political spheres, culturally too the effect of the new
rulers was felt. Indian artists deliberated upon to bring out works similar to those of the western masters, the rationale behind this development or change has been discussed earlier but what is of interest to this study is how form and content could be seen either as two separate entities or two aspects totally interlinked in the context of India.

Academic art, popularised and trained in the art schools, became a common feature of the 19th century Indian society with every English educated Indian supporting and appreciating it. The miniature style which preceded it was totally relegated to the background. The period of transition from miniature to academic art saw the development of a new art form in which the content portrayed is relative to the English and European merchants and their activities in the country. The British army, the Indian flora and fauna and such other specific features of the aliens were coupled in the miniature form. Though such works of the transition period are very few, they, nevertheless, show how the alien rule was projected by the artists.

A major shift in the artistic activities of the time came with the acceptance of European academic art relegating native Indian art to the background. This was supported by the Indians and the British alike, as for
Indians, it meant prestige while for Britishers it was a
upnecessity. Still life, portraits, landscapes, flower
vases, single figures became a common feature which were
apparently more interesting due to the realistic ap-
proach and more effective and impressive medium i.e.,
oil and water colours. These works were so popular among
the Indians that those who could buy originals had origi-
nals with them, while those could not buy were satisfied
with oleographs. The royal households of Baroda, Mysore,
Travancore, Pithapuram and others were flooded with these
works replacing the native paintings. Impetus to the
tastes of the rich came with trained students from the
art schools and trained students. These students were
able to bring out imitations of renaissance art and aca-
demic art, and as such, had heavy commissions in the
initial stages. The content here was totally alien and
new but the ready acceptance was mainly due to the simple
subject which was convenient for the viewer to relate
himself to. Infact there was no necessity for any ef-
fort towards thinking of the distorted form. For ex-
ample, a still life consisting of vase with flowers could
be seen as a work for aesthetic beauty. Whatever is
portrayed has a definite understanding, unlike the work
Gurinica where the viewer needs the support of theme or
title or an explanation. In other words, the work rein-
forced the ideas of Romanticism which had its
repercussions throughout the literary movement in Eu-
Their works continued to be popular until the coming of the Raja Ravi Verma and others of the kind, who successfully combined the Indian theme and western form. Ravi Verma took to religious and mythological themes which were easily accepted by the Indian masses. This combination of Indian themes was a revolutionary change, for until then religion was used in a totally different form. The vegetable colours and opaque texture along with illustrative material in the form of writings suddenly became unpopular with the arrival of more expressive and beautiful figures worked upon in western academic style. The works could encapture the native mind as the themes were popular, while the 'Form' made the content seem new and different figures of 'Saraswathi', 'Radha', Ram', 'Harishchandra', 'Laxmi' and 'Sita' became a common feature and this was more so with the availability of cheap oleographs of the originals. Not only did the masses admire his work but he was commissioned by a number of royal households to work on popular themes. The palaces of Mysore, Jaipur, Baroda, Travencore have a wide collection of his works. These works despite their popularity were severely criticised for being cheap reproduction of European art. But it is a fact that the popularity of the work remains due to the harmony of content and form.
Contrary to this school where academic art was given prominence, a school which emphasised on native elements in form and content began to develop under the auspices of Abanindranath Tagore, E.B.Haveli, and A.K.Coomarswamy. The school popularly called, 'Bengal School' strove to develop Indian painting retaining Indian subject and form. Inspiration was taken from Indian miniatures, mural paintings of Ajanta and when it was more to show that oriental art was no less, Japanese and Chinese art was also taken up. This resulted in a new form of art which is termed Indian but was more to emphasize orientalism. The art form spread to many other minor regions of the country where in this art was taken up seriously and was considered to be highlighting Indian culture and tradition.

While, on one hand, it is observed that 'content' has always been secondary even in Indian art scene while 'form' remains the vital aspect. Secondly, it is also seen that throughout, 'form' has enabled to have its own 'content' and this is the reason for the long lasting art scene in India. Another major aspect which is of prominence to the present work is to understand the reflections of the Nationalist spirit in Indian painting with particular reference to Andhra.
The ongoing movement of Swadeshi throughout the country had its repercussions in almost every cultural activity. While it was stark in literature and theatre, it was perhaps subtler in painting. This subtility can be owing to many factors which will be dealt hence forth. Indian artist was always conscious of his background and this can be felt in the works of Rajendra Mitra, M.V. Dhurandhar, Raja Ravi Verma who concentrated on Indian themes but also needed to survive as popular artists. As such their spirit of nationalism could be studied as formative way in depicting the Indian idiom. Ravi Verma and his contemporaries have been criticised not for using Indian content but rather misrepresenting the Indian content. Because the content in their work has been able to retain its nativity owing to the academic style adopted. Had he taken to oriental style the situation would have probably been different.

At the same time artists like Chitta Prasad whose work also represented the Nationalist feelings who depicted the vast disparities in the life of British and the natives are also appreciated. Chitta Prasad's works were rather direct representation of the happenings in the society and could be observed as propagatory material. As in Europe during 1914-45 artists who were commissioned to work for the depiction of happenings at war site were also not there, neither is there any in-
stance when Indian artists were prompted to depict the atrocities on the Indian masses.

National art, became a heart throb subject for Haveli, Coomarswamy and Abanindranath. The first radical step in their work was to replace the academic style of art work either in the form of models or paintings. The movement was ardently supported by sister Nivedita who observed in her writings that with this movement there would be rejuvenation in Indian art. The work produced under this banner remained different with static figures, still backgrounds, opaque colours. More than the works, it is the philosophy behind the work which attracted the artists to take to it. The silent protest against the alien rule became strong with the deliberate avoidance of the alien form.

The protest against the imperialists was not felt through the content which would have been direct. This direct representation of the social realism would have probably been closer to the war time works of Europe. However, this could be observed as a silent protest against the British and would come within the purview of Swadeshi movement. The argument gets strengthened with the fact that academic art was totally avoided while they took support from the Japanese and Chinese artists. Okakura Yokoyama Taikan and Hishida Shunso were a few Japanese
artists working with a militant feeling towards orientalism. Okakura's book *The Ideas of the East* provides a picture of a single integrated civilization of the orientation where all of Asia stood unified by race and common 'Range of ideals' that ranged far above the material culture of modern Europe.\textsuperscript{25} Thus ideas of pan-Asian civilization acquired a special relevance. Nationalist pride in India and Indian religion and philosophy, with specific reference to vedic literature, was looked at as the mother land of all Asiatic thought and religion. The movement had received Support from Marget. E. Noble popularly known as Sister Nivedita, who was an ardent follower of Vivekananda and a supporter of militant Hinduism. She immediately mobilised Okakura's polemics in the Indian situation. Her spiritual involvement with the Ramakrishna mission drew her into the cause of nation building in India. Her writings provided a significant role in the revivalist ideology with an assertive nationalism.\textsuperscript{26}

Sister Nivedita upheld that art was an important and an essential vehicle in shaping the nationality. She took support from the brilliant work at Ajanta where the artist according to her affirmed the values of Indian culture, traditions and was also able to recognise the expression of emotion in support of her argument. She looked for a new group of painters who did not come
together on caste or religious basis but on the basis of nation as a whole. She vehemently criticised the destructive commercialism and perpetuation of a debased standards of taste. Thus writings of Sister Nivedita and others of her kind did create an enthusiasm among the Indians to restore and retain their past glory. The result of which was seen in the development of Bengal school of painting.

Repercussions of the Bengal school of painting were also felt in Andhra as early as 1910, where art movement was in formative stage, with the establishment of Andhra Jateeya Kalasala. The institution as such took its academic support from the initiators of the Bengal school. The teachers of the institution at Machilipatnam came from Calcutta and firmly believed and practised the work of the Bengal school. Further, the political atmosphere with the national movement gaining tremendous response gave impetus to the feeling of developing Indian art. Until this college was started, art in the area was not substantial with most of it being used for religious purposes. The attraction towards the new work which had already been discussed earlier in this study shows how students began to take to the new work. The reasons could vary but there was an enthusiasm to develop an art from which could boast of being totally Indian.
As such the work done by the students of Andhra Jateeya Kalasala continued as an extension of Bengal school with, however, the content being more expressive, although here too there was no direct representation of the British and their activities in the country, the ideology of Swadeshi and Nationalism were portrayed.

The second major school in Andhra was represented by the members of Andhra society for Indian art at Rajahmundry, who had their education at art schools of Bombay and Madras, also struggled to develop their talent within the purview of 'National art' despite their training in the academic schools. Comparatively it was more difficult for the artists of this school to drastically change both in form and content. It was easier for the student of Andhra Jateeya Kalasala to develop as their training was also much on the lines of Bengal school.

The work of the artists of both the schools did have a lot of difference and change as far as 'form' is concerned but the motive to create a strong phase of Indian art was the only bond between the two. Nationalist feelings of the artists was basically shown through the various portraits of nationalit leaders done to bring about consciousness among the masses. Here the form is not important but rather the content, which is the picture of
a leader which helped in creating awareness among the people.

Portraits of social reformers, national leaders and educationists were basically used as propagatory material to reach out to the masses, spreading their message. Portraits of Veeresalingam, Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, Ram Mohun Roy, Subash Chandra Bose, became a prominent feature with most of the public buildings adorning them. Although portrait painting was a new phenomenon, it was used as a medium to initiate the nationalist and progressive ideas. Most of these leaders whose portraits were made were very popular leaders of the masses and their pictures were treated as an agency to create enthusiasm among the masses towards the national movement.

While making portraits of national leaders was one aspect, the other included making imaginative paintings of herioc warriors like Brahma Naidu who stood for social justice in Palanadu region, Rani Rudramma the warrior queen of Kakatiya dynasty who braved the muslim invaders and Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi, who fought against the British. Pictures of such herioc warriors were taken as a source of inspiration to promote the feelings of nationalism. The work Brahma Naidu by Madhavapeddi Gokhale shows the impatient warrior sitting with a revengeful look. This work published widely in Telugu journals was
admired not so much for its aesthetic beauty but for the affirmative content which assured the masses of their splendid heritage. While these two works rejuvenated spirit of nationalism among the masses, yet another important work is that of 'Bharati' done by Adavi Bapi Raju. Much on the lines of Bharat Mata by Abanindranath Tagore, this work of Bapi Raju extolled the pride and prominence of the Andhrrites. The work done specifically within the contours of Bengal school of painting received wide acclaimation. Similarly, Bapi Raju has also worked on many historical figures with the popular work being that of Samudraguptudu, who conquered vast territories of India and ruled unitedly. At the same time he was also well versed in music and this painting of Bapi Raju shows Samudragupta playing veena. It could be emphasised here that the artist was trying to elevate the past glory of Indians and subconsciously trying to construct strong cultural defences. The other reason for Bapi Rajus work being more expressive with a definite content is his literary back ground which enhanced his creativity.

Depiction of 'Brahma Naidu', 'Telugu Thalli' or 'Samudraguptudu' can be seen as works with a definite means of stimulating nationalist pride among the masses which was what the Indians of the time were striving for. The form adopted by both Bapi Raju and Gokhale perfectly reflected their training at the Andhra Jateeya Kalasala.
More than the training, it was the purpose of creating as Indian art school as propagated by the teachers of the Jateeya Kalasala which made the difference. Entangled between the Nationalist movement and the quest to develop a new Indian art form, the artist was successful in developing works which could boast his ego of being an Indian. While this was one aspect of defending one's own cultural practices, the other included picturising the more popular movements.

Swadeshi movement which spread throughout the country, propagating the idiom of developing and utilising native products, saw its repercussions in the Khadi movement. Songs, dramas, pamphlets and essays promoting Khadi became a common feature in every town and village of the country. Women folk of the villages and towns got together to work on the charkha and make their own cloth. This popular movement was not neglected by the artists for whom depicting the khadi movement became a popular movement. 'Ratnapu Sandesham' a work by Arya Dasu shows a women carrying charkha, while a child is holding a spindle and walking along with his mother. The title of the work itself shows that the picture had a definite purpose of propagating the philosophy of 'charka' or 'Ratnam'. While in the painting the woman is seen carrying the charkha and going around propagating the philosophy of khadi and swadeshi. In the other work 'Noolu Thiyuta ' by Butchi krishnamma a house wife is seen
spinning on a charkha. The picture gives the impression that the lady is relaxing working on charka after her daily household work. In the work ‘Nooluvadukuta’ by S. Eshwaraiyah, a woman is sitting on the brink of a threshold to take out cotton from the yarn. In the work ‘Kuteera Parishrama’ by Gurram Malliah the artist shows the whole family working on a loom reflecting the importance of cottage industries as believed by nationalist leaders.

A significant phenomenon of these works is that the paintings had mostly visualised women working on charkha while that of men is hardly shown. This probably goes back to the call by ‘Swadeshists’ and ‘Nationalists’ to the women folk to contribute to the ideology of swadeshi and khadi. The call was readily accepted by the women of the country and it was a common feature to see women of the neighbouring areas to sit together and work on charkha, after their daily routine chores, while men are away. As such, the artist as a part of the society, had the opportunity to portray the role of women in propagating the ideology of swadeshi. The above few paintings are examples of artists directly representing the women working on charkha, while, in a few others, the picture of charkha is incorporated deliberately, although the necessity is not felt. The work ‘Tatparata’ by N.Venkat Rao shows a woman, probably a housewife, sitting and decorating a
pot. The intensity of the subject is so engrossing that
the women, dressed in the native Andhra attire, is domi-
nating, while that of her work can be seen as decorative.
The interesting feature here is the picture of a charkha
in the background. The painting would have been complete
even without the charka but the question which arises is
why did the artist incorporate it in the work? This
deliberate infusion of charkha or spindles could be ob-
served as the artists' effort to propagate the subject.
Paintings on this topic are many and were represented by
the artists of both schools of painting in Andhra. Rep-
resentation of the charkha movement, though not direct
did become a part of the form, which made the works very
creative as far as form is concerned and was also passing
the message of charkha.

While charkha was only one aspect of swadeshi, few
artists profusely used Gandhi caps to signify the na-
tional feeling. In the work, 'Dassera Gilakalu' by
Chedatavada S.Krishnayya, the picture shows a number of
youngsters going around for contributions for the Dassera
mela. An interesting feature of this work was the use of
Gandhi cap profusely. The work shows nearly four men
wearing these caps which probably enhanced the feeling
of Swadeshi. In the work 'Marriage Procession' by Potuluri
Hanumanth Rao again the cap becomes a conspicuous addi-
tion. The whole picture is done using dull and dark
colours showing the marriage procession during the night times. While the caps which are probably put specifically, are in white. Picturising popular Indian elements can be seen as one way of contributing to the ongoing movement in the country.

More specific is the work 'Aksharabhyasam' by Potuluri Hanumanth Rao, where in the work shows an elderly Brahmin teaching a boy from probably, from the lower caste. The picture signifies the high caste teacher touching the boy lovingly and showing him a new way to life. This was synchronising with the social reform activities where in one of the main aspects was to remove untouchability. The artist himself was from the Brahmin community and his feeling for this social activity propagated by reformers of the country was shown through his painting.

While these are works in which there was a deliberate attempt to infuse certain elements popular during the time and were also signifying certain factors of the popular movements. A much more strengthening factor for the art movement was to project the Andhra society, its culture, tradition and customs. No longer was the artist of Andhra Jateeya Kalasala or Andhra Society for Indian art making works using themes which were not known to the Indians, rather the artist was projecting his own heritage. Themes showing Andhra villages, festivals, farms,
sports were touched upon and the viewer was more comfortable thematically to which he could relate himself. The opaque colouring with regular designing pattern was contrast to the academic art concentrating on shading and three dimensional effect.

The themes which ranged from simple mythology to social realism reflected Andhra culture. Simple themes like ‘Gangiredulavaru’, ‘SankrantiDasari’ 'Sankranti', (Harvest festival)' 'Udayabhanudu' (worshipping of raising sun)', ‘Pellichupulu’, at the well, 'FortunateTeller' became popular among the people. Although oleographs and prints of European academic art were available at low cost and in plenty, there were instances when people deliberately avoided them in the houses. Potuluri Hanumanth Rao recalls how Promod Kumar Chatterjee gave the example of Jarasanko the ancestral building of the Tagores, which became a virtual cultural central of the 19th century. At this house Abanindranath and his brother Gagnendranath got all the European academic art replaced by miniature paintings and copies of Ajanta and Ellora caves. The replacement of the works was observed as a way of incorporating new aesthetics into Indian mind and, secondly, as a way to emphasize on Swadeshi and gain self confidence to elevate one's own art. Taking this example, artists of Andhra Jateeya Kalasala were made to work specifically on native themes reflecting the heritage of
Andhra. With this kind of training and emphasis, students of the school deliberately worked on simple native themes.

A comparative study of the works of Bengal school and Andhra Jateeya Kalasala, if done on a broad front, shows that the Andhra Jateeya Kalasala is an offshoot of Bengal school, with the element of form being similar, a major difference between the two came in the adoption of themes. Artists of Bengal seem to basically concentrate on the form with deliberate emphasis on colouring and the style. Themes were secular but cannot be termed to be within the framework of social realism. Rather the themes were more imaginary and creative and the inclusion of eastern element make the works seem different from the native form and content.

The case of the artists of the Andhra Society for Indian art is slightly different as the artists who were trained in the academic art. However, with the ongoing movement of Indianising art, artists of Rajahmundry under the banner of Andhra society for Indian art strove to develop a movement which could be on the same lines. To work on this mass concept was more difficult as they had to concentrate on Indianising of both the content and form. While at art schools students had to concentrate on academic orientation but, back home there was an urge to participate in the nationalist movement emphasizing on
Members of Andhra society for Indian art, with the main aim of promoting art on the lines of Bengal school, worked towards achieving their goal. The themes here changed from still lifes, imaginative landscapes and realistic painting to more creative themes. Themes like 'Siddhardha Ragodayam', 'Pushpalankarana' by Damerla Rama Rao, 'Vilasini', 'Virahini', 'Draksharama Temple, by Varda Venkatratnam considered to be best examples of the art from Andhra Society for Indian art, came to be worked upon. Themes could be Indianised successfully but the form was a difficult aspect to change. The standing figures, their pose and style seemed to be an outcome of their training with the help of Greek models in the art schools. Though the dress and jewellery was totally native, the position of the standing figures, the shading effect on the attire and background made the works seem closer to the training that the students underwent. At the same time the form is neither as directly influenced by the academic style as in the case of Raja Ravi Verma or B.P.Banerjee. It could be observed that there was an effort to emphasize on the changes in the form but were not totally successful in developing a form which could be termed totally Indian. This was a feature which made the works of Andhra society for Indian art differ from the others of the time though they all strove towards the
same goal.

V.V. Bhagiradhi, an artist of the same society, did work on landscapes, which were appreciated by the Indians and westerners alike. An intricate observation of the works shows that, even in the landscape, there was an attempt to make it seem as Indian as possible ie., the situation for the landscapes was generally areas which the artist visited and was familiar with, rather than having imaginary landscapes. In fact this artist was invited by various royal households, officers to visit their areas and make landscapes for them. It could be observed that artists of Andhra society for Indian art, despite certain drawbacks, did try to incorporate certain elements to contribute to the making of a national art, totally Indian in content and form. Bhagiradhi's landscapes were admired by the royal households and a number of them commissioned him to work but his later work, which emphasised on native elements was not given the same support. Despite this drawback of lack of patron for his later work, Bhagiradhi did work to create a native atmosphere in his paintings.

Alluri Satyanarayana Raju who was a non-formal student of the Andhra Jateeya Kalasala worked on a few paintings which picturised harsh realities in the society. One of his works, 'Pedavadu' (poor man) shows the
British officer living in a palace like bungalow and enjoying life, going around in cars, while that of the Indian farmer who was made to work for long hours and pay heavy tax to the poverty-stricken one. The work, according to the artist, was considered to be very revolutionary with harsh reality being projected. In yet another work 'Zamindari illu' (house of Zamindar) the artist shows the demarcation between the life of a Zamindar and his family and the underprivileged in the society. These works which are housed in the artist’s home at Rayelam, were popular among the local residents. They did not receive any support throughout, as the work was neither exhibited nor published in any journal. The artist observes that these works were done for his personal pleasure and as such prefers to have them with him. His other works were on simple subjects like 'alankarana' (decoration), 'festivals', and such other common subjects. Interestingly these works with simple themes were published widely and received wide acclamation as being good works of art.

A survey of the content and form adopted by the artists in Andhra raises a number of questions which need to be discussed. Firstly, it has to be observed that themes reflecting harsh social realities under the oppressive British rule were not worked upon, and if worked were not for public viewing. These are, however, very
directly portrayed in poems, plays and essays and were very popular among the masses. Throughout the world, under any oppressive rule, artists, worked as agents to show the atrocities directly. Then, how are we to comprehend the silence of the Indian artist or more specifically Andhra artist be understood. The silence becomes obvious in the case of painting, considered to be one of the most expressive medium

The work of the period despite its coming short need not be looked at as a drawback as the protest against the hegemony of the alien culture was not very harsh and direct but very subtle and long lasting. The work done had twin motives. Firstly, to emphasise on native culture and traditions which would give the viewer an insight into the native culture which was overtaken by the new western culture. New education spread very fast and was also bringing about a few changes. One way to combat these infiltration of western aspect was to attain self respect by projecting and supporting ones own cultural aspects. In other words, depiction of local themes could be seen as a means to construct cultural defences against the fast encroaching alien cultural practices. The second was, of course to develop native Indian art form specifically by using the past traditions of miniature and mural paintings. Here again the motive was to have an altogether Indian form which could survive the
western infiltration of form and content.

Yet another interesting feature which need to be observed is that the artists of Andhra Jateeya Kalasala signed their paintings in Hindi. P. Hanumanth Rao recalls that they were often advised by their teacher Promod Kumar Chatterjee to sign in Hindi and not in English, as Hindi was a language which could be read by many and was basically an Indian language, while that of English was alien. This meticulous approach, wherein the medium of signature too became important denotes the enthusiasm among the students and teachers to create an art movement exclusively Indian, despite the lack of any strong patron. The fact that the artists worked in the new style despite no strong support shows that they were carried by the spirit of the national movement and worked to create genuine Indian art.

Nationalist spirit in the art movement was concentrating upon formulating an Indian school of painting with the acceptance of native themes and form, which were being relegated to background, rather than projecting the harsh realities and oppressive British rule. The school seemed more long lasting and had far reaching effects, wherein even the alien rulers were made to realise that there was a strong Indian school of art and there was an united effort to develop it and stop the infiltra-
tion of western elements. The united effort here includes both the form and content.

The other major question is relating to patronage to artists. With the absence of royal patronage, the artists had to look for alternate patrons. The establishment of schools in various villages, towns and cities provided a large number of teaching jobs to the artists. Jobs were also available in survey offices and botanical research institutions. The availability of these jobs filled the gap created by the lack of royal patrons. Thus the artists were now at an advantage to work on the themes they preferred without depending upon individual patrons. British officers in India and English educated Indians did acquire works of Indian artists but were limited to works in Anglo-Indian style. The new art, which developed with a definite aim, thus remained to be liked by the supporters of the National movement in the country. Thus art in Andhra, as elsewhere in the country continued to uphold the nationalist spirit prevalent in every sphere of activity.
REFERENCES AND NOTES


2. The statement has been made after an elaborate discussion with artists - C. Jagadish, Surya Prakash and P.T. Reddy.


5. Ibid., P. 84.

6. Ibid., P. 67.


8. The relationship between content, form and patron has been touched upon by various art historians. The present statement has been taken from Ernst Fisher, Op. cit; P. 110.


10. Ibid.,


17. E.B. Havell, 'The Basis for Artistic and Industrial Revival in *India*, Madras, 1922, P.12


28. As mentioned by Smt. Swarajya Laxmi, Grand daughter of Gadicherla Rama Murthy, who worked on Charka during the Swadeshi movement, interview held on 1-4-92 at Hyderabad.

29. Ibid.,


31. V.V. Bhagiradhi, Letters of correspondence, (Unpublished)

32. Ibid.,