CHAPTER V

"SOCIAL PURITY" MOVEMENT
"SOCIAL PURITY" MOVEMENT

The "Social Purity" movement had as its chief objects, "the total abstinence from intoxicating drinks, purity of private life, the abolition of the devadasi system". Consequently, the movement, in its practical sphere of activity comprised two main activities, namely, (1) eradication of the nautch, and (2) temperance. The reformers considered that "...the maintenance of purity in the relations of the sexes is vital to national greatness and prosperity", and once these 'golden links' are weakened, they feared that "all the strong bonds of civilised society will be weakened and loosed". The protagonists, in their writings and speeches linked up the problem of chastity with the nation's progress. More reliance on reason than on instinct was the main plank of their propaganda and thus they endeavoured to give the movement a rationalistic basis. In essence the movement aimed at the enhancement of the level of the morality of society and to do that it insisted upon the people to observe mental as well as physical chastity and eschew "whatever is base or vulgar,

1. The phrase "Social Purity" was coined by Raghupati Venkataratnam.


4. Rationalism was an important tool of the reformers of this period. "To pursue pleasure as the purpose of life is the animal; to subject pleasure to the purpose of life is man. That follows the lead of instinct, this guides the instinct with reason. Thus animal is the creature of the day; but man is the pilgrim of eternity". Ibid., P.258.
indecent or immodest in study or pleasure, speech or song, faith or sentiment...\textsuperscript{5} While recognising the need for legislation on matters of social purity, the sponsors laid more stress on moulding public opinion to bring out a change in the morality of people.

**Nautch Problem**

In its concrete form, the purity movement was started with the anti-nautch agitation. The nautch question agitated the minds of the reformers mainly on three grounds, namely, (1) improving morality in society, (3) as part of uplift of women (in this case uplifting them from the life of prostitution), and (3) removing the stigma that came to be associated with fine arts like music and dance.\textsuperscript{6} The institution of

\textsuperscript{5} Ibid., P.259.

\textsuperscript{6} R.G.Bhandarkar, scholar and social historian, stated that the nautch would have a debasing effect on the morality of men and women in society and "in a country in which women are trampled upon, there can be no great advance in social or moral matters". *Indian Social Reformer*, September 16, 1894 (Vol.V, No.3). With regard to music and dance, people developed a deep dislike towards them as they were exclusively cultivated by the nautch girls (also known as dancing girls). Others who practiced them were considered morally 'low' in the eyes of others in society. Mrs. Annie Besant was reported to have said that, "Music has been excluded (from the education of girls) because of its shameful association with the nautch girls. Your sons (sic) if they want music, have to mix with the most shameful of characters". C.Y.Chintamani, ed., *op.cit.*, P.276, f.n. See also Abbe J. Dubois, *op.cit.*, P.386, wherein he stated: "The courtesans are the only women in India who enjoy the privilege...to dance and sing. A well-bred and respectable woman would for this reason blush to acquire any one of these accomplishments". Even learning was said to have fallen into disrepute for all other women in the country as "the only females who had from time immemorial learnt to read and write, and even at times to make verses, were the Nautch girls..." Julius Richter, *op.cit.*, P.331.
nautch (or Devadasi) came to be considered as nothing but prostitution. The Devadasis evolved into a 'caste' which, shockingly enough, was exclusively meant for public enjoyment. It was sanctified in the name of religion and was sanctioned by society.

The institution of Devadasi, associated with the temples in the South, has been in existence for quite a long time. It was a survival of medieval feudalism with its princes and feudatories, its dignitaries and officers, who vied with each other in munificent donations to temples, of whom the Devadasis were an inevitable part.

7. The Subodh Patrika wrote, "Not the least urgent of such subjects of reform is the institution of dancing girls among us... These women are a class of prostitutes, pure and simple. Their profession is immoral and they live by vice". Cited in Papers on Indian Reform, op.cit., P.77.

8. Raghupati Venkataratnam, a strong advocate of the Purity Movement stated: "Sexual immorality as a hereditary and acknowledged profession...fortified against the attacks of time and change, and endowed with the privileges of social sanction, is special to this land". See K.V. Gopalswamy, ed. Grace Abiding: Message and Ministries of Brahma-Rishi Sir R.Venkataratnam (Kakinada, 1935), P.148. Edgar Thurston, op.cit., Vol.II, P.126, stated that the institution of Devadasi was one of the inconsistencies of the Hindu religion and "though their profession is repeatedly and vehemently condemned by the shastras, it has always received the countenance of the church".
Such dancing girls took the name of Devadasis, 'servants of the gods'.\(^9\) Gradually they were no longer confined to temples and people began to hire them to provide entertainment (song and dance) during marriages, festivals and also to entertain European officials.\(^10\) Thus their presence during the public functions — religious and secular — tended to ensnare many a young man in the coils of extra marital pleasures. Their songs and dance movements were generally obscene. With their rich dress and trained voices and skilfully manipulating their hands and feet, they became a centre of attention to the impressionable minds of the young. Impressions formed in such a manner and at that young age developed with advancing years and thus "immorality was handed down from one generation to the other".\(^11\)

---

\(^9\) Every temple, depending upon its status and income, had a group of them attached to it. They had certain specified duties to perform like dancing both in the morning and the evening in the temple and also to sing and dance before the deity when it is taken in procession. Parents in the hope of getting special favours from Gods and pregnant women with the object of obtaining a safe delivery, used to make a vow to devote their female children to the service of God. These women had fixed payment of salaries and as these payments were meagre they turned to prostitution and made it an 'art' with the aid of music and dance in which they were adepts. See Lala Lajpat Rai, Unhappy India (Calcutta, 1928), PP.200-02. See J.N. Farquhar, op.cit., P.410. Also see A Lady, op.cit., P.116, who mentioned that the natives around Rajahmundry were very fond of presenting them with the entertainment of dancing girls.

\(^10\) Papers on Indian Reform, op.cit., P.78.

\(^11\) Ibid.
The dancing girl, during 19th century Andhra,\textsuperscript{12} came to occupy an 'honoured' place in society. She was present on all public occasions. Venkataratnam described her: "No part of a town is too respectable for her invitation. No festive occasion, however auspicious, is complete without her presence; to receive a guest or to felicitate a friend, to honour a superior or to celebrate a jubilee, to solemnize a wedding or to initiate a child into learning—aye, at times, to welcome a spiritual head or to parade a religious reviver, her song is the 'Te Deum' of thankful joy, her dance is the exhilaration of enthusiasm".\textsuperscript{13} Dancing girls were patronised by leading members in the society like vakils (advocates), Government officials and businessmen. It was then a matter of prestige to keep a dancing girl as a concubine. The number of such women were estimated to be about 2 lakhs in the Madras Presidency.\textsuperscript{14} Nautch parties were organised in the name of certain prominent individuals and came to be known to the public as Naidu's 'Melam' (Naidu's nautch group) and

\textsuperscript{12} In Andhra the Devadasi girls were called 'Bogams' and 'Sanis' which came to be considered as separate caste ('Bogam' caste and 'Sani' caste). Census of India, 1901, Madras, Vol.XV, P.1, P.151. It further stated that Devadasis are dancing girls attached "to the Tamil (sic) temples who subsist by dancing and music and the practice of the 'oldest profession in the world". \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{13} Venkataratnam's article in C.Y. Chintamani, \textit{ed. op.cit.}, P.272.

\textsuperscript{14} R.C. Mazumdar, \textit{ed. Struggle for Freedom} (Bombay, 1969), P.985. It was, however, not possible to ascertain the correct figure as many of them were perhaps registered in the Census as temple servants.
Pantulu's 'Melam' (Pantulu's nautch group) and the like.\textsuperscript{16} Since, in most cases, officials were the chief patrons of these nautch parties, and were present during the performances, it became obligatory on the part of their subordinates and other common public to be present. It was a practice that all those present should contribute some amount, whether or not one had the ability to pay.\textsuperscript{16}

People took it as an opportunity to attend and encourage such things merely to please the officials and others with power and influence and thus it led to corruption in public life.\textsuperscript{17}

Venkataratnam was the leader of the "Social Purity" Movement in Andhra and in Madras city. He belonged to the second generation of Brahmos in Madras state and a strong protagonist of the Purity Movement there. Venkataratnam (1862-1939), was born in Machilipatnam but brought up in Northern India as his father was a Subedar in the Indian

\textsuperscript{15} Veeresalingam, \textit{Swee\textsc{e}ya}, P.I, \textit{op.cit.}, P.90.

\textsuperscript{16} This practice was called 'Vosagulu' meaning gifts. It was also called 'Vasoollu' (collections). See K.V. Desikachary, \textit{Veeresalingam Pantulu - Jeewitha Charitra} (Telugu), (Rajahmundry, 1954), p.23.

\textsuperscript{17} This was very well illustrated by Veeresalingam. He mentioned in his autobiography that there were a number of schools in Rajahmundry which were meant for nautch girls teaching mainly dance and music. The orthodox people who had neither encouraged nor contributed to the establishment of schools for general education, were, either because of the fear or with the intention of gaining the favour of the officials, paying liberally to maintain the schools for nautch girls. See \textit{Swee\textsc{e}ya}, P.I, \textit{op.cit.}, P.91.
army. He learnt Urdu and Persian languages through which he came to be acquainted with the teachings of Sufi saints. Venkataratnam's teacher in the school at Banda in U.P. was a Bengali gentleman by name Babu Gangadhara Mukherjee who first kindled in him the spark of social and religious reform while teaching him the reforms of Bentinck and Ram Mohun Roy. This helped in broadening his outlook and deepening his religious convictions. On his father's transfer to Hyderabad, he became a student of Aghorenath Chattopadhyaya, a Brahma, at the Nizam's high school which strengthened further his contacts with the social philosophy of the Bengali reformers. After passing out of the school, he joined the Madras Christian college and came under the influence of Dr. Miller, an illustrious Principal of that institution with a magnetic and commanding personality. Venkataratnam's stay in Madras was the major break-through in his life. His non-conformist views got strengthened and his growing interest in Brahma Samaj was given a definite shape with the visit of Pandit Sivanath


19. Indian Social Reformer, Vol.XXIII, No.49, in its editorial commented on Miller: "He was a consistent friend of the social reform movement in which, in its early struggling days in Madras owed much to his wise and helpful advice and sympathy".
Sastry to Madras in 1881. 20

Venkataratnam was a great scholar and a silver tongued orator. After his graduation he joined the faculty of the Pachiappa's College, Madras, and thus commenced his career as a dedicated teacher. With his high intellectual calibre, the purity and nobility of his character and rich spiritual experience he became an ideal teacher of young men. 21 Before he became the Principal of the Pithapur Rajab's College at Kakinada (in 1905), which was a turning point in the history of the Brahmo Samaj in Andhra, he had also served for some time at Machilipatnam, Ellore, Rajahmundry and Secunderabad. 22

20. K.Suryanarayana, op.cit., P.13. Venkataratnam was in the F.A. Class when Sivanath Sastry visited Madras. Deeply impressed by the lectures of Sastry, he became a Brahmo and started working in close collaboration with Mannava Buchohaih Pantulu, his senior in the Madras Brahmo Samaj and editor of the weekly journal 'Brahmapracasica'. His association with Brahmo Samaj is discussed in the next chapter.

21. Like Veerasalingam, his influence on students was phenomenal. Generations of students passed under him infected with the ideals of "social purity" and spiritual enlightenment. Speaking of his teaching abilities, even at the beginning of his career, the principal of the Pachayappa's College, Rev. C.W.A. Clarke pointed out, "In my eighteen years' experience of Indian education I have not met a better teacher than Mr.Venkataratnam; nor have I met one whose personal influence amongst students was as powerful". Cited in K.Suryanarayana, op.cit., P.25. Venkataratnam himself stated that he "elected to be a teacher more for the sacred responsibilities and noble opportunities than for the ample emoluments of the profession...desirous of living...a life from which the young — the hope of our land — may take a hint or two". Ibid., P.4.

22. In Andhra, Machilipatnam, Ellore and Rajahmundry, were the important centres of reform activity then. See V. Ramakrishna Rao's article "A Biographical sketch" in K.V. Gopalswamy, ed., op.cit., P.XII.
While he was at Madras he was instrumental in starting the anti-nautch movement which made quick progress and spread to other towns in the Presidency. Associated with the editorial boards of the journals "The Peoples' Friend", "The Fellow Worker" and the "Brahmapracacica" (the last two being Brahmo journals) at Madras, he was constantly writing in their columns about the "Social Purity" Movement. 23 The basis of the anti-nautch movement, he declared, "is not in fine manners, but in good morals; its aim is not mere elegant breeding, but pure living". 24

Venkataratnam was the President of the Metropolitan Temperance and Purity Association and in that capacity he visited many places in Andhra and spoke on the subject. 25 At the 8th annual session of the Indian Social Conference he moved the anti-nautch resolution. 26 Associations were

23. In his conversion to the Brahmo Samaj, Mannava Buchchaiah Pantulu played a crucial role. The Brahmo Samaj at Madras, from the beginning, associated itself with the work of social reforms. Social reform, they considered, should go hand in hand with religious reform. They were not mutually exclusive and on the other hand mutually complementary. For example, Mannava Buchchaiah, a staunch Brahmo, was actively associated with the social reform movement.


25. K. Suryanarayana, op.cit., P.44.

formed and lectures were arranged to educate the people on the evil effects of nautch, temperance and the like.  

The Madras Hindu Social Reform Association also took up the issue along with the Metropolitan Association and the missionaries (under the auspices of Dr. Miller) and thereby the issue gained strength and momentum. A memorial was presented to the Madras Government on this issue which was not favourably considered. However, the native public opinion "rejoiced at the news that the question has been taken up by certain ladies and gentlemen in England who have set themselves to ensure non-attendance of Governors and other Government officials at nautch parties. The Collectors and the Governors on the pretext of inspecting the country go through the districts to enjoy this singing and dancing by these fallen women. But their days of pleasure and enjoyment are numbered". Lord Wenlock, Governor of Madras

27. See for example, the 'Purushaardapradevini', July-August 1892, reported a news item that "eloquent addresses were given by R. Venkataratnam Naidu, M.A. and V. Lakshminarasimham, B.A. at Machilipatnam, on behalf of the Social Purity Association, formed for the promotion of purity of thought, speech and conduct in our countrymen of all ranks".


(1891-96), was the first prominent official who refused to attend that type of entertainment. His example was followed by several other Government officials. Another notable incident that took place in Madras during this period was known as "Norton's affair". The reformers protested against the admission of Eardley Norton to participate in the proceedings of the Indian National Congress during its session at Madras in 1894, on the ground that Norton was violating public morals by living with a woman who had not obtained divorce from her husband.

The critics of nautch reform put forward the theory of "recognised outlet for human passions", and that, in case the system abolished family life would be threatened with destruction. The opponents of Venkataratnam said that he had personal hatred towards nautch girls and was irreligious. They held the view that his efforts were bound


31. The resolution to this effect was introduced by Miss Muler and was ably seconded by Venkataratnam. The reformers won the day. This incident later on made Ranade, after a thorough discussion, to draft a resolution declaring "that no one whose private life was not pure should be accepted as a leader in any sphere of national movement". See Indian Social Reformer, Vol.XLIX, No.40. See also K. Suryanarayana, op.cit., p.40. See for details of the incident, S. Natarajan, op.cit., PP.101-102.

32. K. Subba Rao, Revived Memories (Madras, 1933), P.228. Subba Rao was one of the reformers associated with the movement. He wrote that they were accusingly called "Boy agitators" and declared that, "if music and dancing were disassociated from the evil traffic, then these arts will be restored to their pristine glory". Ibid., P.232.
to fail as he was seeking to remove the Himalayas. Venkata
ratnam himself summed up the opinions of the critics. "One
party traced it to a lurking hatred for the dancing girl;
another discovered it a crusade against music; to some it
appeared to be a graceless exposure of a small national
weakness; to some others it was no better than quixotic
attempt to cure the irremediable". 33

Veerasingam, while condemning the evil, traced its
historical origins. Originally its aim was to patronise
fine arts but ultimately it ended in prostitution. In the
verses, cited on the subject, he cautioned that "family men
should not touch the lips of a prostitute which are kissed
by all and sundry". 34 He described the mother of a prosti-
tute as the "agent of the God of Death" (Yamaduta'), who
would squeeze wealth from bidders for her daughter's affec-
tions and desert him when he becomes a pauper. 35 Columns
of his journal, 'Vivekavardhani', were used to condemn the

33. Venkataratnam's article in C.Y. Chintamani, ed. op.cit.,
P.271. See also M.R. Appa Rao, Brahmarshi Ragupati
Venkataratnam Naidu (Telugu), (originally a talk given
during the Centenary Celebrations of Venkataratnam),
(Kakinada, 1962), P.11, wherein he gave in detail the
criticism of Venkataratnam's opponents on this problem.
Also see in this connection the two articles by Ch.
Venkata Sastry in his Kathalu-Gadhalu (Telugu),
Venkatasastry, in these articles, argued that there
is a necessity for the maintenance of a caste exclu-
sively to perform fine arts. Also he stated that by
removing the nautch profession, prostitution cannot be
done away with and the movement was, according to him,
swimming against the current.

35. Ibid., P.52.
evil as well as to exhort people to give up this evil practice and lead a pure life. To educate people on this issue, he used his creative talents and wrote satires of which mention should be made of 'Vesyapriya Prahasanamu' in which he ably met all the arguments of the opponents of the reform, like the possible damage to music and fine arts if the nautch is abolished. Through one of the characters he stated, "due to prostitutes and nautch parties there is reckless spending through which many have become paupers. The frequenters of prostitutes' homes are ruining their health too. Also this practice has become infectious as young fellows are imitating the evil ways of the elders. People say that the development of music will be affected if the institution of Devadasis is discouraged. This is a misconceived notion. On the other hand, as music is now the monopoly of Devadasis family women are loathe to learn and practise it. Nautch girls are using it as a bait to lure men. It will be stopped when family women are encouraged to learn music which will be possible only when prostitution is rooted out from society. Further, prostitutes' children should be made to marry and settle down in life instead of following their family 'profession'." 

36. Ibid., Vol.I, P.43. The satire was apparently hilarious. But it contained several passages which were educative and highly critical of some of the local officials (not named). It raised a big controversy in Rajahmundry. Veeresalingam mentioned in his autobiography, that all but one school of prostitutes was closed in Rajahmundry, for which Veeresalingam was much criticised and ridiculed. This made him seriously think of resigning his teacher's profession and become more independent. See Veeresalingam, Sueeya, P.I, op.cit., P.92.
The press in Andhra and a few writers took up the cause of the anti-nautch movement. They started publishing articles, and brief but effective farces and tracts exposing the evils connected with the institution of nautch. In 1880, a small farce 'Parihasollasini' was published ridiculing the nautch 'profession'. It convincingly portrayed the evil consequences inherent in the 'profession' and pointed out that several families were being ruined due to that.37 A tract in verse form, on the ways and methods employed by nautch girls, 'Varakanthaprayarthana' was written by Desu Lakshminarayana.38 After describing the tactics, used by nautch girls, the author warned the people to be chary about them.39

In 1881 the students at Rajahmundry, under the auspices of Veeresalingam, started a movement against nautch parties, similar to the one started at Madras. They convened a meeting in 1893 to sign the memorials sent by the Madras Association to be submitted to the Governor of Madras on this issue.40 It was observed that even though "the student

38. D. Lakshminarayana, Varakanthaprayarthana (Telugu), (Bezwada, 1909).
39. Also in this connection, reference should be made to G.V. Appa Rao's Kanyasulkam, op.cit., in which a beautiful dancing girl, Mathuravani, is the major character and more, the nautch reform question is presented critically through a self-styled reformer Greesam. Also, 'Kondubahatteeyam', a play by the same author, treats of the same theme through a dancing girl, Manjuvani. See G.V. Appa Rao, Kondubahatteeyam (Vijayawada, 1954).
population of this place...seems to have risen against the useful reform, although we are sure that such students form but a small minority even now. But the question has within the last few months assumed too much importance to be confined to students and their Debating Societies. It has engaged and is still engaging the best attention of the press and the intelligent public." 41

In the Godavari District Social Conference, in 1897, a resolution was passed "not to get up nautches at the time of marriages". 42 The students at Rajahmundry and Kakinada signed pledges that they would never attend nautch parties and indulge in any form of activity that would violate the principles of social Purity. 43

The pledge ran as follows:

1. "I will not attend any gatherings where nautches are present, or invite them myself, or do anything also that tends to encourage them.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid., June 1897. The conference was presided over by Veeresalingam who spoke on various social evils including the 'nautch' and passed resolutions on all of them. Several such conferences and meetings were taking place all over the northern Circars and Rayalaseema discussing social reforms and passing resolutions on them. It shows the dissemination and spread of reform ideas all over Andhra.

43. Three such students mentioned this in their autobiographies. See V. Suryanarayana Rao, op.cit., P.169; C. Lakshminarasimham, op.cit., P.182 and A. Lakshmipati, Sweycharitra (autobiography in Telugu), (Madras, 1973), P.27. Similar pledges were signed by the students at Bapatla (Guntur District) under the leadership of Desiraju Pedabapaiah. See K. Hanumantha Rao, 'Sweyajeewitha Sameeksha' (autobiographical review in Telugu), (Rajahmundry, 1973), P.63.
2. I will not use impure language, or tell coarse
jests or sing indecent songs, or indulge in listen-
ing to such language, songs or jests.

3. I will not indulge in witnessing indecent
pictures, paintings, or scenes.

4. I will not converse or read for the sake of impure
pleasure, about subjects that are calculated to
suggest impure thoughts, and will try my best
not to entertain any such thoughts.

5. I will be chaste in body and will endeavour my
best to be chaste in mind, as well as to promote
the cause of purity in general. "

The native press lodged its protest against the system
of having common schools for girls of the general public and
the children of nautch girls. They feared that such an
arrangement would lead to the corruption of the children of
the general public and they might also imbibe the charac-
teristics of the nautch girls. Also they pleaded with

44. C.Y. Chintamani, ed. op. cit., P.281.

45. Several native journals voiced this feeling. For
example, Vivekavardhani, April 1875 pleaded for the
opening of "separate schools for dancing girls".
Native News, op. cit., 1875. Similar views were
expressed by Lokaranjani, May 1875 and Yatharth-
vasani, July 1875, Native News, 1875 and 1878.
the Government to pass legislation abolishing the institution of nautch as the neighbouring Mysore Government did.46

The article published in 'Krishnapatrika' on the Nautch problem in 1909 received remarkable attention from the public including a number of people belonging to the 'caste' of nautch girls.47 It gave a summary of the efforts made by the reformers in this direction in Madras and Andhra. It issued a challenge to the opposing sections to establish its moral basis and its utility to society. Furthermore, the writer appealed to the 'community' of nautch girls to take the initiative to reform themselves in the wake of the movement. The response to this article, particularly from the nautch community, was encouraging. A note from one among them (anonymous) was published saying that nautch was nothing but prostitution and they should put an end to that.48 The note also appreciated the efforts made by the Arya-Vysya Association (a caste association of

46. Mysore was a princely state and it abolished the nautch system in 1909. See C.S. Srinivasachary, op. cit., P.41. See also Sathiavedanusaram, August 1889. Native News, 1889. The measure introduced by the Mysore Government was also hailed by other journals like, The Madras Standard, May 11, 1909 and The United India and the Native States, May 15, 1909. See Native News, 1909.

47. The article was written by A. Narayana Rao in Krishnapatrika, November 5, 1909.

48. Ibid., April 2, 1909.
the Vysyas) to eradicate this evil practice. 49

Immediately after this a letter was published in the same journal by one of the members of the community requesting educated women to undertake the task of spreading enlightened ideas among the nautch girls for which purpose she was prepared to extend financial assistance. 50 The idea of reform thus caught fire among a few enlightened members of the community itself. Two letters, one by a nautch girl (anonymous, from Rajahmundry), and another by a male member of the community, namely Gudiseva Subbaiah (from Gudivada), appeared in the same issue of "Krishnapatrika" expressing similar sentiments, but with a difference. The nautch girl from Rajahmundry while blaming the Hindu society for the miserable plight of her community, pleaded for reform from

49. Caste associations were beginning to appear in Andhra by this time, eventhough they became prominent only after 1920, by which time the Justice Party emerged as the mouth piece of the non-Brahmin castes in the South. Among the Vysyas who strove hard to eradicate this evil mention should be made of Darisi Chenchaiah. A freedom fighter and an advocate of social reform, he along with Bangalore Nagaratnamma and her daughter Yaminipurna Tilakam (both from the community of nautch girls), started a journal and conducted several meetings throughout Andhra. Under their influence, several members of the nautch-girl community gave up their 'profession' and got educated and settled to respectable lives after marriage. See D. Chenchaiah, op. cit., PP.270-73. Yaminipurna Tilakam started at Madras an orphanage called 'Hindu Yuvati Saramalayam' for the children of nautch girls. It was meant to educate and help them settle in life. See K.N. Kesari, op. cit., P.160.

50. Again the letter was anonymous. See Krishnapatrika, April 22, 1910.
within the community. This *suggestion*, coming from one of the members of the 'community', clearly indicated a change in their attitude towards the 'profession' and this could be due to the impact of the powerful anti-nautch movement. Gudiseva Subbaiah betrayed more social consciousness when he stated that when other caste associations were making reform endeavours and striving towards progress, their 'community' also should do the same. He stated that when two women of the 'community' at Kakinada expressed their wish to get their two daughters married, the Rajah of Pithapur contributed Rs.500/- each towards the marriage expenses.

At the instance of the instructions received from the Secretary of State for India, the Home Secretary of the Government of India sent a note to the Chief Secretary, Madras Presidency, to elicit opinions on the extent of the spread of the evil of prostitution, by employing such methods as buying young female children for the profession, and taking

51. Gudiseva Subbaiah in his letter deplored the complacency of some of the educated members (who were occupying positions of influence in the society) of his community for not taking a hand in reforming the 'community'. He also stressed the need for reform from within. *Ibid.* Subbaiah was one of the earliest male members of the community drawn into the anti-nautch movement who later became one of its leaders. He along with other male members of his community, strove hard to introduce reforms like marriages of nautch girls, education to them and the like.
into their fold by marrying them to a God, flower or sword.\footnote{52}
It further enquired whether the sections, No.272 and No.273, under the Indian Penal Code were effective enough to tackle the problem.\footnote{53}

The above Proceedings and their publication in 'Krishnapatrika' roused the attention of and response from the general public and also the community of the nautch girls. Vernacular journals started commenting upon this and suggested the adoption of stronger measures to curb the evil. The 'Krishnapatrika' commented: "The custom of dancing girls bringing up young girls for prostitution should be at once stopped by making necessary amendments in the Indian Penal Code. As long as dancing girls are honoured in temples, in processions and on festive occasions, so long will they not be amenable to any reform. The Paper

\footnote{52. The note dated March 3, 1911, by the Secretary of the State to India was translated and published in full in Krishnapatrika, July 7, 1911. The Governor-General issued the note to the Government of the Madras Presidency on April 17, 1911. The note from the Secretary of State regretted that the Devadasi problem was still in vogue in temples in South India which gave rise to nautch parties and the problem of prostitution which unfortunately had the ritualistic sanction of the Hindu religion.}

\footnote{53. Ibid. Also see the United India and Native States, July 15, 1911, Native News, 1911, in which it was stated that "The Secretary of State for India has, we are glad to observe, addressed the Government of India regarding the evils arising out of the practice of dedicating young girls as handmaids of the Gods and the further steps necessary to check the growth of the evil practice.... Drastic measures should be resorted to - no half-hearted measures. These unfortunate girls should be sent to schools".}
feels highly grateful for the efforts of the Government to prevent adoption of minors by dancing girls.\(^54\) In this connection an open letter in response to the note of the Secretary of State for India, signed by 38 prominent members of the 'community' appeared in 'Krishnapatrika'. While gratefully acknowledging the efforts initiated by the reformers in this direction, they realised that such a reform as this would succeed only with the assistance of the Government. They expressed their pleasure at the initiative taken by the Government to introduce steps prohibiting the girls below the age of 16 from being 'recruited' into the profession.\(^55\) This letter was an unmistakable sign of change that was coming about from within the community. At times such reform efforts from within resulted in social boycott and non-cooperation from other caste groups.\(^56\)

\(^{54}\) Krishnapatrika, July 7, 1911. Native News, 1911. It published in the same issue, an opinion from a public spirited individual, P. Narayanasaya (Advocate), pleading for strengthening the Penal Code to curb the spread of prostitution to other communities too.

\(^{55}\) See Krishnapatrika, July 28, 1911. The letter was signed with their names and addresses. They requested the fellow members of the 'community' and also others to hold meetings and pass resolutions to strengthen the hands of the Government in this regard.

\(^{56}\) See also Ravil, January 12, 1911 which reported a similar incident taking place at Peddapuram (Godavari District). It stated: "In Peddapuram 40 families of prostitute community reformed themselves. Local Kamsalis and Devangas grew jealous and refused to work for them and also in the neighbouring villages" which resulted in tension in that area. Native News, 1911.
The Bill on protection of minor girls was introduced in the Central legislature and the same was welcomed by the native press. The 'Hindu' commented that the Bill "will lead to fruitful results, in the social and political progress of the country". Referring to the Bill on the protection of minor girls, 'Krishnapatrika' wrote: "The provisions of the Indian Penal Code against purchasing and buying minor girls, for purposes of prostitution are not adequate enough to put down the evil, which is daily on the increase. It is, therefore, the duty not only of the social reformers but also of political leaders to minimise it as much as possible....As long as the profession of dancing girls is looked upon as ordained by Sastras, as long as the Brahmin priests officiate at their sham marriages and as long as their dances, songs are appreciated in temples and on marriage occasions, the morals of the country will remain as bad as ever. We hope people will hold meetings in support of the Bill and make it a law". However, the Bill that was finally passed declaring the traffic among

57. The Hindu, September 19, 1912. The Durbar (published from Guntur), October 1, 1912, Bharatamata (published from Vizianagaram), October 2, 1912, also supported the Bill. Native News, 1912.

58. Krishnapatrika, September 21, 1912. Also see The Madras Standard, September 1912, which, while supporting the Bill, pointed out, "The Government have a duty, which they can no longer shirk....We have seen what the policy of laissez-faire had led to. The vice has grown in dimension and threatens the very vitals of the society". Native News, 1912.
minor girls to be a criminal offence was not applied to the Devadasis. 59

The results of the reform of a deep rooted and delicate social problem as this, connected with social morality, could not be spectacular. However, the movement was not altogether unsuccessful. Firstly, the movement succeeded in campaigning for the idea that nautch problem was morally ruining the society. It impressed upon the people that the introduction of nautch parties on festive occasions and other public functions was not merely a stigma but an offence. The creation of this consciousness in the minds of the public was no mean achievement. To do away with the nautch entertainment now became a sign of progress and enlightenment. Venkataratnam realised the magnitude of the problem and stated that they could perhaps succeed only to the extent of creating consciousness among a large section of people in Andhra that nautch was an institution that deserved to be eliminated. 60 For example, the zamindar of Pithapur took a decision not to arrange nautch programmes during functions, including wedding ceremonies and thus set an example for others. 61 Another incident was reported by the Indian

59. It was only in 1925 that an Act was passed which extended to the Devadasis those sections of the Penal Code which declared traffic in minor girls a criminal offence.

60. R. Venkataratnam, Sweeyapravachanadyutulu (Telugu), (an autobiographical account), (Rajahmundry, 1941), P.40.

Social Reformer in which a Reddy marriage in a village in Tadipatri taluk (Anantapur district) did not have a nautch programme and exhorted others to emulate it.62

One or two instances of the concrete results of the movement could be mentioned. Under its impact certain prominent male members of the 'community' like Gudiseva Subbaiah, Bhaskarla Eswarudu and a few others started associations to encourage the education of girls belonging to their community and to perform their marriages.63 Their efforts, from within the community, were significant in terms of the support - moral as well as physical - it extended to the movement.

Another significant result of the movement was that certain castes gave up the practice in their fold. It was customary among the Jakkula caste (in Krishna district) to set apart one girl for prostitution. This was given up. The 'Hindu' reporting on this stated: "In Tenali Zakkula

62. Indian Social Reformer, September 15, 1894 (Vol.V, No.3). The journal mentioned that it was the first Reddy marriage in those parts (Rayalaseema area) celebrated without a nautch programme.

63. K. Suryanarayana, op. cit., P. 41. Also see Krishnapatrika, April 15, 1906 which reported a news item that in Guntur town, the male members of the nautch community met and entered into an agreement not to accompany on violin and 'mridangam' during the nautch performances. They further took a vow to educate their female children and get them married. According to the agreement a committee was formed to supervise over the conduct of members of the community and it was empowered to take action against those who violate the agreement by imposing fines upto Rs. 500/-.
caste women were leading lives in prostitution. The community took a vow under the influence of some educated people that they will marry their females and since have acted up to their vow. 64

The impact of the movement could further be illustrated by a report published in the Indian Social Reformer. In Bellary, as in other places, to keep a nautch girl was considered an honour. "Now all that has changed", and even "secret concubinage of anything like a permanent character is greatly on the wane". 65 Furthermore, the report stated that after the starting of the anti-nautch movement, "...an amount of restraint has been brought to bear upon attending nautches will be visible only to the careful observer. Many a man of wealth and position and especially of education, avoids having a nautch in his house on marriage occasions. The anti-nautch

64. The Hindu, June 7, 1910. Also see Edgar Thurstom, op. cit., Vol.I A and B, p.140, wherein he stated that among the Jakkula caste "a written agreement was a few years ago entered into to give up the practice".

movement was gaining ground".66

However, the practice continued in the absence of effective alternatives offered to nautch girls. The problem of their future life worried them, once they gave up their 'profession'. So the entire problem had certain economic overtones connected with it. Ample educational opportunities with financial help during the period of education and providing them with employment opportunities could have solved the problem to a great extent. It was obvious that these conditions could not be fulfilled under the alien rule and hence the continuation of the nautch problem despite the efforts made by the movement for its abolition. Moreover, the movement demanded too high a tone of life from the society at large. It emphasized the moral facts to the detriment of the human factor. It was almost

66. It is significant to note in this context the observations made by C. Chakradhara Rao, President of Eleventh Andhra Provincial 'Kalavanthula' ('Nautch Caste') Conference held at Gudivada in 1945. Referring to the anti-nautch movement launched by Veerasingam he said that "one effect of his (Veerasingam's) destructive criticism was that some enlightened members of Hindu society gave up engaging nautch parties and extending their patronage to the prostitution of this caste. His propaganda was not entirely lost on the members of our caste. The eyes of some of them were opened and they began to realise the harmful character of the custom. Gradually, though very slowly, some unmarried mothers began to get their daughters married; a few male members of our caste were given English education and some others were trained to professions other than that of being associates of nautch parties, which meant abject dependence on the nautch girls". Cited in B. Kesavanarayana, Political and Social Factors in Andhra (1900-1956), (Vijayawada, 1976), P.219.
'Puritan' in its rigidity and moral inelasticity. It might be one of the reasons for the comparative failure of the movement. Furthermore, loose morals were not the monopoly of the nautch girls. Prostitution had its other social facet - debauchery and adultery.

Temperance Movement

Next to the problem of nautch, intemperance (the drink evil) which was widespread among the people occupied the attention of social reformers. The habit of drink was not new to India. However, the form in which it existed during the 19th century was attributed to the British rule.67 Realising the large potentialities of revenues from excise duties, the administration under the Company promulgated the first excise regulations in 1790-91, "ostensibly for the purpose of suppressing the evils of drunkenness and illicit distillation".68 The evil effects of this sanction and control of the Government were deplorable. The Government officials openly encouraged the sale of liquor and nothing was done to check the spread of the evil as it was fetching large revenues to the exchequer. Liquor shops

67. See W.S. Caine's article "The Temperance Problem in India", in C.Y. Chintamani, ed. OP. CIT., P.87. The author, a member of the British Parliament, took active interest in the temperance problem in India. He visited India, more than once, and made on-the-spot study of the problem and observed its seriousness. At his initiative the Anglo-Indian Temperance Association was formed in London with himself as the Secretary and Samuel Smith, M.P., as President.

68. Ibid., P.88.
were opened in all parts of the country.

This alarmed the enlightened public in India and reformers took up the issue and made it a part of the agenda of their work. They attacked the drink evil on two grounds, namely, social and economic. Firstly, it would lead to the increase of crime in society. Also it would ruin the health of its addicts. Secondly, it is one of the causes for impoverishment, primarily among the poorer sections of society. Venkataratnam, as the President of the Metropolitan Temperance and Purity Association, stated that "to an Indian, temperance has no other meaning, it denotes nothing other than total abstinence". He strongly believed that drunkenness would bring in its wake several other practices which bring discredit to the addicts in respectable society and injures their health. He stated, "Drunkenness is a vice... in certain respects, the most injurious. It not only wastes money but also unnerves the system and injures the moral tone. Thus the drunkard loses in substance, in body and in mind". Veeresalingam held similar views. He stated that intemperance was the root cause for many ills in society. Therefore he pleaded for organised steps to be taken by all those interested in social welfare to remove

69. K.V. Gopalaswamy, ed. op. cit., P.132.
70. Ibid., P.225.
the evil. He grasped the economic motives behind the Government's policy towards this problem and criticised them in his journal 'Vivekavardhani' in strong terms. He stated, "It is disgraceful to a civilised Government to encourage drunkenness, which leads to all evils. Let the Government not bother about the income, but consider the welfare of the people".

The seriousness of the problem and the economic motives of the Government and hence its unpreparedness to prohibit liquor were well grasped by the native press which gave expression to this effect through their columns. A journal by name 'Mandaramanjari' accused "the British Government of encouraging this vice in order to increase the revenue". The editor, while wishing for redressal of the evil, concluded: "Drunkenness was formerly... confined to the lower orders, but is now even indulged in by the higher classes of this country". Noting the growth of the evil and the spread of the movement for its removal, the journals focussed attention on the problem from various angles.

'Andhraprakasika' praised the lectures delivered by Caine,


73. Mandaramanjari, Native News, February 1892. A similar view was expressed by Andhraprakasika, January 1892. It "condemned that the sale of liquor should be made a source of revenue and requested the Government to take proper measures against its spread". Native News, January 1892.
M.P. about the evil consequences of the abkari system.\textsuperscript{74} It further commented: "As a general rule no arrack shop should be opened in a village without the consent of the villagers. These shops were having pernicious influence on the welfare of the common people".\textsuperscript{75} The spread of this habit to women and increase in the sale of foreign liquor were the two new developments which again were criticised by the press. 'Samrajya Pradayini' regretted that the higher classes and even women took to the drinking of liquor in great quantities and requested the Government to take effective measures to prevent the evil.\textsuperscript{76}

A tract in Telugu was published in 1893 enumerating

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{74} In the wake of Caine's visit to India during 1888-89 a number of Temperance Societies were formed. The existing Social Reform Associations also undertook the responsibility of fighting against the evil. Speaking for the whole of India, it was estimated that there were 130 such societies "comprising over one hundred thousand members chiefly from among young and educated Hindus". See P.N. Bose, Vol.II, op. cit., PP.101-102.
  \item \textsuperscript{75} The journal expressed its surprise at the Government policy with regard to Temperance though their religion (Christianity) detested drunkenness. See Andhra Prakasika, Native News, February 1889.
  \item \textsuperscript{76} 'Samrajya Pradayini', February 1892. 'Vivekavardhani' stated the same earlier. "Women are also given to drink. Number of shops where European liquors are sold have increased. No encouragement should be given to the trade of European liquors". Ibid., 1884. A number of other journals like 'Vignanavardhani', 'Lokaranjani' discussed the issue and criticised the Government for its complacency in introducing effective measures to stop the evil.
\end{itemize}
the evils of drinking liquors. In the author's opinion, intemperance was much more harmful and dangerous to the individual and society than the prevalence of nautch. Since its spread was rapid, the author observed, there was urgent need to hold public discussions and educate people against the evil.

Samuel Smith, President of the Anglo-Indian Temperance Association and member of the British Parliament moved a resolution on Temperance in the House of Commons on 30th April 1889. The resolution, though opposed by the Government, "was carried by 113 votes against 100, a majority of 13". Soon after the Government of India conducted a

77. B. Gurulinga Devara, The Lecture on Alcohol (Telugu), (Ellore, 1893). The author was the editor of a journal called 'Maoranjani'. He mentioned in the preface that he based this small tract on the lecture given by Dr. Varadappa Naidu in English. He appealed to readers to distribute the tract in villages and towns so that people would come to know the evils of drinking liquors.

78. Ibid.

79. The resolution runs as follows: "That, in the opinion of this House, the fiscal system of the Government of India leads to the establishment of spirit distilleries, liquor and opium shops in large numbers of places, where, till recently, they never existed in defiance of native opinion and protests of the inhabitants, and that such increased facilities for drinking produces a steadily increasing consumption, and spread misery and ruin among the industrial classes of India, calling for immediate action on the part of the Government of India with a view to their abatement". See Caine's article in C.Y. Chintamani, op. cit., P.91.

80. Ibid. James Ferguson, Under-Secretary for foreign Affairs described it as "a very severe vote of censure on the Government of India".
thorough inquiry into the working of the Excise departments of the various provinces, introduced several measures like drastically reducing the number of liquor shops, taxing the spirits high and thus making them costlier and giving due deference to the wishes of the public in pursuing the policy of Temperance. 81 These measures resulted in a temporary reduction in the consumption of liquor. After a brief period the excise revenue increased again.

In the Madras Presidency the excise revenue was mainly derived from the sale of liquors, opium and other drugs. 82 The 'farming system' 83 was the method through which liquor was supplied first. It was replaced by 'the improved excise system' (in 1874) under which the monopoly of supply of arrack or toddy in each district was given to one contractor subject to the condition that he paid duty on every gallon of spirit that was sold. This system gave scope to a serious growth of illicit practices. Finally by the turn of the century the 'contract distillery system' was adopted according to which the sale of liquor in each district was given to the highest bidder.

81. Ibid., P.92.

82. Liquors included country spirit, toddy, locally manufactured beer and foreign liquors. However, the major source of revenue was from country spirit and toddy. See G.T. Boag, The Madras Presidency (Madras, 1933), P.55.

83. By this method spirits were manufactured by the Government and the right to retail was given to farmers.
The abkari income of the Madras Presidency showed a steady increase till 1897-98 when it began to fall.

### Abkari Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>In Rupees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1890-91</td>
<td>1,14,42,528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891-92</td>
<td>1,17,50,056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892-93</td>
<td>1,17,08,478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893-94</td>
<td>1,24,27,482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894-95</td>
<td>1,32,60,158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895-96</td>
<td>1,39,32,406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896-97</td>
<td>1,44,74,066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897-98</td>
<td>1,42,15,122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898-99</td>
<td>1,33,08,181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899-1900</td>
<td>1,30,14,936</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fall in the income from 1897-98 was attributed to by the Government to an increase in the price of spirits and prevalence of plague in Bombay Presidency which led to the cancellation of festivals and inter-state traffic etc. 85 By giving the above explanation, the Government was trying to explain that the increase in the prices of spirits led to a fall in its consumption. This explanation was given in

84. Reports on the Administration of the Madras Presidency for the years from 1890-91 to 1899-1900.

answer to the criticism levelled against it by the reformers. However, this was not correct. During 1898-1900, Madras Presidency witnessed a devastating famine and people were highly impoverished and hence the decline in liquor consumption. Agriculture was seriously hit and as the bulk of clients of liquor drinking came from this occupation, the reduction in income was inevitable. This point established another important factor that the main contributors to Abkari (or excise) income were the hapless poor sections in the society.

After 1900 excise income again showed an increase. By 1906-07 it was Rs.1,96,45,004 and by 1910-11 it reached the figure of Rs.2,63,81,119.

The Temperance movement was spreading gradually. The Indian Social Conference during its 10th session at Calcutta in 1896 discussed the issue and passed a resolution in favour of the movement. Also the Indian National Congress took up the issue and started passing resolutions against

86. The Excise Commissioner reported to have stated: "In a famine year it is only natural that there should be a much smaller consumption by the public of Excise articles, and so the Revenue must fall". Cited in Caine's article in C.Y. Chintamani, op. cit., P.96.


the excise policy of the Government. However, in Andhra, the Indian National Congress did not take up this particular issue until 1921, when the picketing and boycott of liquor shops was taken up as a part of the constructive programme of the Congress. Nevertheless the policy of the Congress gave added emphasis to the Temperance movement.

89. For example the Congress passed resolutions at its fourth session (1888), fifth (1889), sixth (1890) and the sixteenth session (1900). During the 16th session it passed a lengthy resolution on this issue in which it stated that the supply of cheap liquor was responsible for the rapid increase in the consumption of liquors which would lead to "the moral, material and physical deterioration of those classes among whom, liquor etc. have obtained a firm hold....and as intoxicants have already affected the great labouring class....the Indian arts and industries would bear no fruit....This question....is strongly connected with the material progress of the country...." See K. Iswara Dutt, Congress Cyclopaedia - The Indian National Congress: 1885-1920, Vol.I (New Delhi, n.d.), PP.35, 48, 57 and 145. The accent of the above resolution was on labouring class and the destruction of arts and industries. Discussing the role of Sasipada Banarjee in the Temperance movement in Bengal, where at Baranagar he started a Temperance society among the local factory workers, Dipesh Chakraborty brought out certain interesting points as to why these reformers were interested in reforming working class from the evil of drink. Disciplining the labour by removing evils like drunkenness from them and teaching them middle class virtues of 'industry, ambition, sobriety and thrift' and making them respond to the material incentives offered by the employers and thus make them produce more. See Dipesh Chakraborty, Sasipada Banarjee: A Study in the Nature of the First Contact of the Bengali Bhadralok with the working class of Bengal (Occasional Paper No.4), PP.21 and 30. Reformers like Veeresalingam in Andhra extolled the bourgeois virtues of thrift, frugality and the like.

The students at Rajahmundry and Kakinada took pledges of Social Purity under the inspiration of Veeresalingam and Venkataratnam. A well attended meeting at Kakinada in 1908 was addressed by Veeresalingam, Venkataratnam and Chilakamarthi Lakshminarasimham. The reformers undertook tours to various places explaining the ideas of social purity. 91

Veeresalingam and Venkataratnam worked closely together in the reform movements in Andhra. 92

The press (mainly vernacular) continued its crusade against the evil by exposing the economic motives of the Government in not taking stern measures against intemperance, suggesting simple measures which would at least minimise the evil. Its criticism was against the system of auctioning liquor shops. "So long as the licensing of liquor shops is

91. Krishnapatrika, August 8, 1908. Also see the Presidential Address of 22nd Guntur District Social Reform Conference, op. cit., P. 22.

92. Venkataratnam took the lead in the "Social Purity" movement even though Veeresalingam was evincing equal interest in the problem. However, Venkataratnam considered Veeresalingam as 'Nayaka' (leader) in social reform movements. In matters of Brahmo Samaj, Venkataratnam and Desiraju Peda Bapayya were seniors (not in terms of age) to Veeresalingam who for reasons of social reform did not become a Brahmo till 1906. Venkataratnam, by using his good offices with the Rajah of Pithapur, got liberal financial help to maintain the schools and other institutions established by Veeresalingam and became the President of the Hitakarini Samaj after his death. An eulogistic comparison of these two runs thus: "The life of Veeresalingam and the life of Venkataratnam make up the two hemispheres of one glorious orb of illumination for us in the Southern Presidency; Veeresalingam the hero, and Venkataratnam the sage...." See K. Iswara Dutt, My Portrait Gallery (Machilipatnam, 1954), PP. 139-40.
in the hands of the Revenue officers of Government, and the auction system in the disposal of licences is in vogue, we are positively certain that there will be no diminution in the general consumption. The auction system gives the greatest inducement to the promotion of the liquor traffic". 93 Other vernacular journals that dealt with this problem during this period were 'Ravi', 'Andhra Kesari', 'The Bharata', 'The Desabhimani', 'The Vasundhara' etc. 94 Perhaps realising that it was impossible to wipe out the evil completely, Madras reformers like G. Subramanya Aiyar were suggesting to the Government to gradually reduce the number of toddy and other liquor shops. Also, he suggested, that it was necessary to stop the sale of liquor below trees and

93. The Hindu, February 15, 1908. Native News, 1908. The paper suggested an alternative system of fixed fees. Krishnapatrika, January 6, 1911, commented: "In order to check the spread of drunkenness in India, it is necessary that the Revenue authorities should be divested of the power of granting abkari licences. The liquor shops should be kept closed on all festive days". It suggested that steps should be taken to educate people effectively on the evil effects of intemperance. Also see in this context an article published in Krishnapatrika, April 20, 1918, by K. Nageswara Rao which highlighted the evil effects of liquor and the high incidence of 'drinking' in Krishna district in the whole of the Madras Presidency.

94. The Vasundhara, February 5, 1911 made some constructive suggestions to the Government to stop the evil: (1) The system of selling abkari licences by public auction should be stopped. (2) The power of granting licences by the Revenue Officials should be divested. (3) Spreading the system of local option. (4) No new shop until majority of the people of the locality agree to it. (5) No shops at public places like temples, mosques, schools and the like. (6) No sale of liquor at fairs and during festivals. (7) Women should not be employed in liquor shops. Native News, 1911.
unlicensed toddy on the roadside. The demand of the reformers to reduce the number of toddy and arrack shops was conceded by the Government, first in the city of Madras and then extended to the mofussil places too. Reporting on this the 'Madras Standard' wrote: "We are glad that something has at last been done by the Government for putting some check on the growth of the number of liquor shops and in the matter of their location.... A special committee was appointed to consider the revision of the number and location of liquor shops in Madras town and orders have been recently passed accepting its recommendations that a substantial reduction should be made in the number of shops in the city.... Outside the Presidency town the question of the number and location of liquor shops has similarly been under investigation by special committees in Municipalities and by collectors in non-municipal areas".

There was a substantial reduction of number of shops from 1906 onwards in country spirits, toddy and opium.

---

95. Extract of the speech delivered at Tanjore on Temperance was reported in the Hindu Nesan, March 26, 1908. Native News, 1908. Subrahmanya Aiyar was one of the leading social reformers of Madras and was associated with the 'Hindu' for a long time. He performed remarriage to his widow daughter and thus incurred displeasure and social boycott from the orthodox sections in Madras. He was the editor of Swadesimitran in Madras. See for a biographical account, S.A. Govindarajan, G. Subrahmanya Iyer (New Delhi, 1969).


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Number of shops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arrack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906-07</td>
<td>10,239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910-11</td>
<td>8,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914-15</td>
<td>7,644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920-21</td>
<td>6,008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, as shown earlier the abkari income did not go down correspondingly. This obvious discrepancy was sought to be explained by the Government in terms of material prosperity of the working people. It might be possible that sale of indigenous liquor in the countryside was reduced and the subsequent loss of income was not only compensated but showed an increase through the sale of foreign liquor.

The Temperance movement in Andhra appeared to have been confined mostly to urban areas and in such other places where the reform movements were popular. For example in Bellary it was popular and Sabhapati Mudaliar who was

---

98. The explanation appeared to be naive. As aptly questioned by the Madras Standard, January 23, 1911, why was the same prosperity not evident in the home life and comforts of the people? Native News, 1911.

99. Vernacular press was complaining about the increase in drunkenness "owing to the importation of foreign liquors". Ravi, April 9, 1908. Native News, 1908. The other explanation could be that even though the number of shops was reduced, consumption must have gone up.

100. Temperance was one of the main items on the agenda of reformers and reform conferences in Andhra. A resolution on this problem was invariably there in each of those conferences and other local meetings. Furthermore, as it was a part of the 'Social Purity' movement, wherever nautch was discussed, Temperance also figured in such discussions.
once liquor contractor for three districts of Bellary, Anantapur and Kurnool, gave it up and actively propagated the message of Temperance movement.101 We have no evidence to state that the Andhra reformers had taken the message to the masses. Essentially it was a problem that hit the poorer sections most. In Bengal, at Baranagar, Sasipada Banarjee started a Temperance Society comprising mainly industrial labourers. The Working Men's Society at Baranagar publicly recognised his work and felt thankful to him.102 In Andhra nothing of that sort had taken place.103

101. Bellary was a major centre of social reform (noted earlier). Mudaliar formed "an Association for the Suppression of Drunkenness" and was its President. Shortly after he induced the Muslims of the place to form the "Mussalman Temperance Society". Its President was Kazi Abdul Latef Sahib. Caine narrated experiences of his visit to Bellary: "When I visited Bellary I was the guest of Sabbapati Mudeliar, who showed me his old distillery full of milk-cows, whose milk is mostly distributed to the poor of the city. This admirable man is my ideal of a public spirited Indian citizen, and if we had fifty such men scattered through our Indian empire we could clear out every liquor shop in five years". Cited in P.N. Bose, Vol.II, op. cit., PP.102-103 f.n.

102. An address was presented by the Working Men's Society to Sasipada Banarjee on the eve of his departure to England, in which it was stated that he "faced many difficulties in his campaign against intemperance and its concomitants and his efforts at the furtherance of the cause of temperance". See A. Rajkumar Banarjee, An Indian Pathfinder, op. cit., PP.73-74.

103. This observation is relevant only to practical work among the 'lower' sections of society. Reformers like Venkataratnam and Veeresalingam, in their writings, showed high sense of consciousness of their appreciation of the problem vis-a-vis the poorer sections of society. Venkataratnam in his Presidential address to the first Godavari Adi-Andhra (Scheduled Castes) Conference held at Amalapuram in 1921 appealed to them to give up drunkenness. See K.V. Gopalaswamy, op. cit., P.225.
The local situation (Barangar with a large population of factory workers), must have also played a crucial role in the work of Sasipada Banarjee. However, the movement in Andhra, in this regard remained concentrated mainly on the dissemination and spread of Temperance ideas and inducing students to take pledges of 'Social Purity'. In this connection the 'Hindu' commented that there was growth of intemperance especially among poorer classes and "all the efforts - they have not amounted to much when the effect is taken into consideration - of temperance reformers have so far borne not much fruit, either in the way of checking corruption of spirits by discouraging it by active propaganda or in the matter of bringing public opinion to bear on the Government so as to make them perceive the gravity of the problem and adopt proper and timely remedies ... The good revenue which the Abkari officials are able to bring to the coffers of the State is so tempting that it almost becomes painful to the Government to consider favourably any arrangements which tend to affect that income. And so, the problem of the 'new, dire and additional plague' is as acute as ever". 104 One would be inclined to agree with this clear analysis of the problem as it existed at the time when the reform movements in Andhra were on the decline.