CHAPTER II

REFORM TRENDS IN ANDHRA: A HISTORICAL SURVEY
Hinduism as distinct from Brahminism of the earlier period, has never been monolithic and indivisible. It could be described as a union than a unity. Even in the earlier period, especially towards the close of the Age of Upanishads, there appeared three different approaches to the realisation of God head, viz., the Gspana, Karma and Bhakti margas. The last two were designed for the ordinary masses, while the first was set apart for a chosen few. The Gspana marga led to 'thapasic' practices of meditation and contemplation. The Karma marga led to a proliferation of religious observances and rituals. The third and the last inculcated the ideas of Bhakti or intense attachment to a personal God.

Two separate strands, the scholarly and the popular, may, therefore, be observed in the web of Hinduism. Popular Hinduism has had a distinct of its own, marked by ever so many pre-Aryan cults, polytheistic practices, pilgrimages and the like. When the Hindu society came into a close contact with Islam after the 12th century A.D., Hindu advaita influenced Islam as much as sufism influenced the other. By then, both "feudalism from above" and "feudalism from within", to borrow D.D.Kosambi's expressions, suffered

1. D.D.Kosambi, An Introduction to the study of Indian History (Bombay, 1956), P.343.
a rude shock as a result of an unsuccessful military collision with Islamic hordes from Arabia, Afghanistan and Asia. The consequent disarray in the feudal set-up of the Hindu society was reflected in its religious life. It was this factor which, more than any other, probably led to the rise of a good many movements of religious protests among the Hindus.

The existence of a number of heterodox sects in the Indian society, before the 19th century, professing principles of reform, was a general phenomenon. They emerged in different parts of India including Andhra. They were founded by non-brahmins, especially of those belonging to 'low castes'. These sects, without any exception, denounced the evils associated with the Brahminical Hinduism, such as polytheism, idolatry and even caste observances. Another distinctive feature common to all these sects was 'Guruworship'. To them 'Guru' was something more than a spiritual guide, he was a divine incarnate.2

In Bengal, the most prominent sect was 'Karthabhajas' in Nadia district. The founder was an ascetic

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Bose stated that some of the sects placed the 'Guru' above God. The 'Guruship' was generally hereditary, though sometimes elective.
by name Aulechand who belonged to the early 18th century. They had no faith in caste or religion and in their gatherings, twice a year at Ghospara, people belonging to different castes and religions participated and ate together. Another sect in Bengal was called the 'Spashtadayakas', founded by Rupram Kabiraj. Caste distinctions were not observed while admitting members into the sect. Male and female members lived together as sisters and brothers in the same monastery. However, they were different, in one aspect, from others in that they did not recognise the divine authority of the 'Guru'. 'Balarami' sect was founded by Balaram Hari of a very 'low caste'. The Balaramis ridiculed idolatry and gave up distinctions of caste. The 'Sahebadhanis', 'Bauls', 'Sakhibhavakas', 'Khusi Biswasis' and 'Ramvallabhis' were some other heterodox

3. K.K.Datta, Survey of India's Social Life and Economic Condition in the Eighteenth Century (1707-1813), (Calcutta, 1961), P.4. Amitabha Mukherjee, however, in his book Reform and Regeneration in Bengal (1744-1823), (Calcutta, 1968), P.128, stated that Ram Saran was regarded as the first 'karta' or head of the sect and his son Ramdulal was the real founder of the sect.

4. It is stated that at these two festivals of the Kartabhajas-Dol and Rasjatra-forty to fifty thousand people used to assemble. See Pramatha Nath Bose, op.cit., P.108.

5. Ibid., P.111.

sects of Bengal during this period.\(^7\)

Three sects figured prominently in Uttar Pradesh, viz., (1) 'Satyanamis', (2) 'Sivanarayans', and (3) 'Apapanthis'. The founder of the 'Satyanamis' was Durlandas and the sect was open to all castes and even to Muslims.\(^8\) 'Sivanarayan' sect was popular with the Rajputs at Varanasi and the 'Apapanthis' in Oudh.\(^9\)

A number of these sects derived their inspiration from Vaishnavism. Two such sects in Rajasthan are worth mentioning. 'Dadu Panthis' flourished around

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7. See for particulars, Pramatha Nath Bose, \textit{op.cit.}, PP.120, 112 and 115.

8. V.P.Raghuvanshi, \textit{op.cit.}, P.143. Pramatha Nath Bose called the same sect as 'Satnamis' and its founder as Jagjibana Das, an inhabitant of Oudh. He also stated that caste distinctions were observed by the Grihastha members of the sect, but not by ascetics. See Pramatha Nath Bose, \textit{op.cit.} P.117. However, there was another sect by the same name, 'Satnamis', in the Chattisgarh division of the Central Provinces. Its founder was Ghasi Das of Chamar caste. He was largely responsible for the welfare of the Chamars of this region. \textit{Ibid.}, PP.118-120.

9. Mannandas was the founder of the 'Apapanthis'. See V.P.S.Raghuvanshi, \textit{op.cit.}, P.145. Another sect called Kabir-panthis was numerous in the North, and has penetrated also into Bombay. Founded by Kabir, it rejected idolatry and the ritual worship of Hinduism. See L.D.Barnett, Hinduism (London, 1913), P.37.
1600. Their founder was Dadu, a cotton cleaner by profession, born at Ahmedabad and settled at Naraina, near Jaipur. He prohibited, among his followers, worshipping images and following rituals. The 'Charan Das' sect was instituted about the year 1758 by Charan Das, a merchant from Delhi. They attached great importance to morality and insisted upon a ten-point code of morality. The sect gave up idolatry and admitted men and women of different castes into its fold. They differed from other sects of Vaishnavism in excluding "even the Tulasi plant and Salagrama stone from their devotions."

10. 'Dadupanthis' established one of their great centres at Naraina in Jaipur state and another at Hardwar. Their spread covered, besides Rajasthan, Punjab and Gujarat. It is said that Dadu wanted to unite Hindus and Muslims under his leadership. See G.S.Ghurye, Indian Sadhus (Bombay, 1954, first edn. 1953), PP.196-97.

11. Ernst Rost, ed. H.H.Wilson, Religious Sects of the Hindus (Calcutta, 1958, first edn. 1961), P.57. Pramatha Nath Bose stated that Dadu, the founder of the 'Dadu Panthis' borrowed much of his teachings from Kabir and it should be noted that friendly relations existed between 'Kabir panthis' and 'Dadupanthis'. They discarded the worship of Hindu Gods and also the observance of Hindu rites and ceremonies. They were popular in Northern and Central India. See Pramatha Nath Bose, Vol.I, op.cit., P.40. Also see Ernst Rost, ed. op.cit., P.51.


13. Ibid.
Comming to the Andhra region, Bhakti cult was pre-
dominant during the middle ages, that is, much before
the 12th century A.D. It became militant in course of
time and assumed the forms of Veerasaivism and Sivaishna-
visism (also known as Veeravaishnavism). Basavesara
(popularly known as Basava), of the Karnataka region,
was the founder of Veerasaivism.

Basaveswara denounced caste system, Vedic rites
of animal sacrifices, inferior status of woman compared
to man and the ritual concepts of purity and pollution.
In the social sphere he opposed child marriages, allowed
widow remarriages and pleaded for individual freedom in
matrimonial matters. Being a minister of a Jain king
Bijjala of Kalyan, Basava enjoyed state support to his

14. K. Satyanarayana, A Study of the History and Culture
 of the Andhreas (New Delhi, 1975), P.346.

15. Dr. J. N. Bhattacharjee stated in his Hindu Castes and
Sects that Basava "denied the superiority of the
Brahmins, and tried his best to abolish the disingu-
ction of caste". Quoted in John Campbell Oman,
The Mystics, Ascetics and Saints of India (London,
1905), P.117. Basava rejected caste, denied the
supremacy of Brahmins, condemned sacrifices and
other ceremonies. See D. S. Sharma, Hinduism
Through the Ages (Bombay, 1956), P.47.

16. S. M. Hunasbal, The Lingayat Movement - A Social Revolu-
tion in Karnata (Bharvar, 1947), PP.90-91. It was
claimed, in this book, by Hunasbal that Basava endeav-
oured boldly to work out a programme of comprehen-
sive social reform with the uplift of women as its
guiding principle.
followers and encouraged interdining among them. He was intolerant of his opponents and quite often resorted to force to propagate his faith and suppress them. Though Veerashaivism did not develop elaborate rules of ritual, purity and pollution, a Veerashaiva was assumed to be pure, and the concept of pure and impure mix exists among them even today. It is here that Veerashaivism became a slave to tradition.17

The spread of Veerashaivism in Andhra was mainly due to a scholarly trio, namely, Mallikarjuna Pandita, Sripati Pandita and Manchemma Pandita. It was, however, less militant in Andhra compared to Karnataka because of differences between Basava and Mallikarjuna Pandita. Mallikarjuna Pandita did not discard the caste system but sought to reconcile the caste system with the Bhakti. But the movement of Basava left a deep impression on Andhra society. It started an egalitarian trend which was played down later by the Brahminical creed. In course of time, in these areas, it compromised with the Brahminical creed and perpetuated the caste system.

Veerasaivism, in Andhra, contributed largely to the growth of Telugu literature. The life stories of Saivaite Saints were collected and written in Telugu poetry through the medium of 'native prosody' (Desi matra) in 'dvi pada' metre.18

Sri vaishnavism developed, simultaneously in Andhra, along with the Veerasaivism. Its doctrines were, more or less, the same except that Vishnu was the idol instead of Siva. The original teachings of Ramanuja in favour of social equality (removal of caste distinctions) were, however, not abandoned in Andhra. A few rulers of the dynasties like the Velanati Chodas of Vengi, the Haihayas of Palnad patronised Sri vaishnavism.19

* A metre invented by Telugu poets characterised by simplicity and flexibility. Many popular works of Telugu poets were composed in this metre. Naturally it was held in contempt by the Sanskritists who, by faith, were Brahminical.

18. Among the Telugu poets who professed Veerasaivism mention should be made of Palakuriki Somanatha who wrote Basavapurana and Panditharadhya Charitra and Sarveswara Sataka by Yathavakula Annamayya. Of these Palakuriki Somanatha occupied a high place in the history of Telugu literature. As a staunch follower of Veerasaivism Somanatha undertook missionary work by expounding the principles of that cult and narrating the life and miracles of Basava, in his long poem (written in Dvi pada metre), Basavapuranamu (Madras, 1966, first edn., 1896). The second poem written by him, 'Panditaradhya Charitra' is a great source book of social history of the period. See G.V.Sitapati, History of Telugu Literature (New Delhi, 1968), PP.12-13.

Brahmanaidu of Palnadu (of the Recharla family of the Velama caste) was a Vaishnavaite by faith and introduced certain reforms in social matters. He appears to have discarded caste and custom and encouraged the heterodox practice of inter-dining of people belonging to different castes.²⁰ Among his followers one Kannama Dasu, an 'untouchable', was made the commander-in-chief of his armies and was looked upon as his favourite.²¹ By a fusion of castes Brahmanaidu created a new 'caste', 'Padmanayakakula', the caste of heroes.²²

The collision of Veerasaivism and Srivaishnavism, during this period (the last quarter of the 12th century A.D.), appeared to be an ideological reflection of the

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²⁰ Srinatha, a well known Telugu poet of the medieval Andhra is said to have written a major portion of Palnati Veeracharitra (the story of the Palnad heroes) in a ballad form with high emotional appeal. A few portions of this ballad were written by Mallayya and Kondaiah. See P. Lakshmikantham et al., ed. op. cit., p.123. Also see G.V. Sitapati, op. cit., pp.18-19. The interdining was described as 'Chapakudu' where people of all castes including a Brahman, Anapotu, dined together. See Ch. Veerabhadra Rao, Andhra Charitramu (Telugu), (Madras, 1910), pp.126 and 262.

²¹ See Y. Balaramamoorthy, Andhra Samkshipta Charitra (Telugu), (Vijayawada, 1964), (first edn. 1953), p.113. Also see Sree Umakantha Vidyasekharulu ed. Palnati Veeracharitra (Telugu), (Guttikonda, c.s. 50-40), pp. 71-72. Also see P. Lakshmikantham et al., op. cit., Preface and p.437.

clash of the interests of rival feudal factions. Outwardly it took the form of a conflict between a reforming Srivaishnava sect led by Brabmanaidu and the orthodox sect of Veerashaivism (which upheld caste system and opposed inter-dining and social status accorded to 'untouchables') led by Nagamma (also known as Nayakuralu) resulting in a bloody war causing enormous destruction of life and property. Nevertheless, the ballad clearly hinted at the attempts of Brabmanaidu to do away with caste system under the influence of Vaishnavism.

Both Veerashaivism and Srivaishnavism lost much of their earlier idealism by the 16th and 17th centuries. Veerashaivism brought new castes and sub-castes into existence and started functioning precisely on the basis of caste stratification similar to Brahminical Hinduism.

The Jangams, a new non-Brahmin caste, were a recreation of this creed. Aradhyaa Brahmins splintered off from the main body of Brahminism. Linga Balijas branched off from the numerous community of Balijas, while other non-Brahmin agricultural castes received its impact. Only the lowest

23. K. Lakshmiraanjnam et al., Andhrula Charitra-Samskriti (Telugu), (Kurnool, 1974) first edn. 1951, P.199.
in the caste hierarchy do not seem to have been affected by it. It developed a set of new rituals and superstitions and degenerated into an empty sect of outward ritualism.

It was during this period (in the 17th century), Vemana, a poet-philosopher of Andhra, lived and preached his ideas. The times during which he was born — the last phase of the medieval period — were marked by the weak and corrupt rule of petty princes. There was general lawlessness and decline of arts and crafts. Social life was full of abuses and religion had degenerated into hypocrisy.

Vemana was not associated with any sect nor did he found one. He was a wandering saint, observing the life around him and commenting upon it. He belonged to the Reddi

25. C.P. Brown who 'discovered' Vemana to the Telugus, fixed his period, based on historical evidences, as the 17th century. See C.P. Brown, The Verses of Vemana (Madras, 1911, first edn. 1829), Preface, P.iii. However, R. Anantakrishna Sarma, a great scholar and an authority on Vemana, fixed it as the 18th century. See R. Ananta krishna Sarma, Vemana Upanyasamulu (Waltair, 1971, first edn. 1929), P.32. Biographers of Vemana like V.R. Narla, Vemana (New Delhi, 1970), P.34, believe that Vemana was born in the 17th century (1652) and died during the first quarter of the 18th century.

community in Rayalaseema area. He expressed his views in a simple and lucid style, "useful to a beginner, though neither poetical nor classical". Humour was his characteristic. Gentle irony and sweet humour were at times combined with bitter sarcasm. He wrote in a moralising tone and appealing style using simple language intelligible to common man.

27. He mentioned his caste and place (Kondavidu) in one of his verses. See Ishwar Topa, Saint Vemana - His Philosophy (Hyderabad, 1950), P.3, wherein he quoted the verse referred above. C.P. Brown believed Vemana to be a zangama by caste. Brown, for the first time in 1824, came to know about Vemana at a time when he was forgotten and not mentioned among Telugu poets, through the book of Abbe J. Dubois who wrote about him as follows:

"One of the most famous is Vemana, whose poems, originally written in Telugu, have since been translated into several other languages....His writings, from which I have seen several extracts, appear to me to be most interesting, and are distinguished by much discernment and independence." See Abbe J. Dubois, op.cit., P.275. Brown, who was then stationed at Machilipatnam collected the manuscripts of Vemana's poems and edited them which totalled more than 2000 in number. See C.P. Brown, op.cit., Preface, P.I. Also see K. Veerabhadra Rao, C.P. Brown (1798-1884), (A Biography of a British Civilian in the Madras Presidency, who was also a Telugu scholar), (Telugu), (Hyderabad, 1963), PP.100-112.

30. M.M. Ali Khan, The Musings of a Mystic (Hyderabad, 1966), P.5, wherein he compared Vemana to the Persian poet Sa'di. Vemana was compared with Avvayyar, Tiruvalluwar, saint-poets of Tamil Nadu, Tukaram of Maharashtra, Basava of Karnataka. See V. Subba Rao Pantulu, Sataka Kavula Charitramu (Telugu), (Narsapur, 1957), first edn., 1923, P.110.
He attacked social inequalities and distinctions based on birth on two grounds: firstly, that they were ethically wrong, and secondly, that they would sap the inherent strength of society and pave the way for its disintegration.31 Vemana attacked every external aspect of Hindu religiosity. He showed contempt for those Brahmin ritualists and ascetic devotees who set their hopes of salvation upon formal ceremonies.32 He condemned caste and emphatically stated that it is worth, not birth, that should determine a man's position.33 Idolatry, to him, was the negation of worship and he used all derisive expressions towards those who were


32. "Bald Heads! matted locks! daubing with ashes, harangues, postures, and a religious garb! No man is a saint who is not pure within". Translated by C.P. Brown, op.cit., P.173. There are several verses depicting the same theme like, for example, "can we get salvation by bathing frequently? Well, then all fishes must be saved", etc. Also see Vedam Venkatakrisna Sarma, Sataka Vangmaya Sarvaswam (Telugu), (Madras, n.d.), P.154.

33. See article by W.H. Campbell "The One Great Poet of the People" in V.R. Narla, ed. Vemana through Western eyes (New Delhi, 1969), P.59.
its slaves. He attacked different religions of his time as he found them full of pretension, superstitions, rituals and symbols. He did not argue with reason, as superstition was not amenable to reason, but hit it hard with his simple, yet powerful, verses. Wandering from place to place he concerned himself with problems of men and women and spoke to them through his verses about social evils, exhorting them to liberate themselves from them. He sympathised with the lot of the poor and the disabilities from which they suffered. He realised, unlike other poet-saints, that poverty was more corrupting than riches. However, he could not diagnose the causes of poverty and hence exhorted the rich to share their wealth with the poor. Like Kabir, he believed in

34. To cite one verse, "The senseless fools with notions mistaken, worship the stones as though He dwells in them Glows in Life the Lord of earth and heaven, and not in stone, adorned with many a gem". Translated by M.M. Ali Khan, op. cit., P.31. Also see the article by C.Purnachandra Rao's "Vemana and Social Reform" (Telugu) in Krishna Patrika, dated August 15, 1905. (Published from Machilipatnam).


36. V.R. Narla, op. cit., P.58. Vemana opined that "the man who relieves the poverty of the sick and destitute shall be honoured even in this life...He alone can be called beneficent who relieves the poor and miserable." See also Ishwar Topa, op. cit., P.57.
oneness of God and his philosophy was universalism - brotherhood of man. 37 He disapproved untouchability and according to him a degraded human status was determined by low character, not by birth. 38

However, Vemana's ideas on women were no better than conventional Hindu view. It was here that Vemana fell from his reforming pedestal. He considered women as source of evil and undependable. She should be kept under check and her movements should be strictly controlled. W.H. Campbell provided an argument to this saying that in India women were opponents of reform soaked as they were with conformism. 39 This only explained a partial truth. What they failed to realise was that conservatism of women was due to ignorance born of their backwardness for which men were largely responsible.

37. "Place one single plate before all people who inhabit the earth; make them eat side by side and bury the caste....". Ibid., P.9.

38. "Why should we constantly revile the Pariah? Are not his flesh and blood the same as our own? And of what caste is He who pervades the Pariah as well as all other men?" See C.P. Brown, op.cit., P.188.

Vemana was thus a great phenomenon in Andhra during the middle ages. His philosophy was primarily humanism. He mainly concerned himself with man and his miserable state in society. His was a revolt against a Hinduism which was infested with castes, rituals and superstitions. However, Vemana, like other social reformers (generally mystic in their outlook and preaching the cult of Bhakti) of the mediaeval times, was only a temporary phenomenon and his influence did not last long. In the absence of any fundamental change in the socio-economic structure of India such attempts were bound to fail. 40

Pothuluri Veerabrahmam, popularly known as Brahmap garu, a Viswabrahmin by birth, was another reformer of this period. 41 Though it is still uncertain as to the exact date of Veerabrahman the consensus among scholars is that he belonged to the period after

40. See D.P. Mukherjee, Modern Indian Culture (Bombay, 1948, first edn. 1942), p.16, wherein he stated that within the constraints of social system they were active revolutionaries but not dynamic ones.

Vemana. Veerabrahmam propagated his reform ideas through poems written in a simple style, called 'Kalagnana Tatvalu'. It was not certainly known whether or not Brahman was a disciple of Vemana. In his childhood, he was under the influence of Veerasaivism as his father was heading the Veerasaiva

42. Some scholars placed him during the 17th century. According to them Vemana came much earlier. See K. Veeraraghavacharyulu, Mana Gurudevudu (Telugu), (Kandimallayapalle, 1963), Appendix, P.145. Others placed him during the 18th century. See for example M.Kodandarami Reddy, Viplavamatapraavakte, Pothuluri Veerabrahmam (Telugu), an unpublished monograph obtained from the author. He placed Vemana around the middle of the 17th century and stated that Veerabrahmam came approximately a century later.

43. 'Kalagnana' means predicting the future linking it up with the present and past. Some scholars believe that 'Kalagnana Tatvalu' were not an innovation of Brahman as some writers are inclined to profess, but in vogue earlier to him, from the period of the rise of Veerasaivism. See for example, B."amaraju, Telugu Janapada Goya Sahityamu (Telugu), (Hyderabad, 1959), P.402, wherein he quoted S.Gopalakrishnamoorthy to establish his point.

44. A statue of Vemana is there even today at the tomb of Veerabrahman at Kandimallayapalle, Cuddapah district. Perhaps he might have come across the poems of Vemana and was impressed by them. This can be illustrated by the fact that Veerabrahmam mentioned Vemana at several places in his poems. The contents of their teachings were, more or less the same, though conveyed differently. Vemana adopted a harsh and satirical tone whereas Veerabrahmam did in an appealing and gentle method. See P. Sambasiva Rao, "Vemana Chitramu" in Bharati October, 1974, (a monthly journal published in Telugu from Madras).
monastery ('Peetha') at Papagani in the Karnataka region,\textsuperscript{45} and had schooling in the Vedic literature.\textsuperscript{46} The social conditions of Andhra during his period were not much different from the times of Vemana.

Veerabrahmam condemned the hierarchical system of caste and believed that the Vedic knowledge could be gained by one and all. Accordingly he had among his disciples men from several castes.\textsuperscript{47} He pleaded for the discontinuance of idolatry and strongly criticised superstitions.\textsuperscript{48} He advocated marriage reform and stated that girls should be married only after they

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\textsuperscript{46} N. Gangadharam, \textit{op.cit.}, P.12.

\textsuperscript{47} Siddhaiah, the foremost among his disciples, was Dudekula (half Muslim) by caste, Kakkayya, a madiga (untouchable) and Annejaya, a Brahmin. See N. Gangadharam, \textit{op.cit.}, PP.91-95. Also Brahman said that the 'untouchables' would one day rise above all social humiliation and occupy their rightful position in society. See K. Veeraraghavacharyulu, \textit{op.cit.}, PP.116-20. Also see Pothuluri Veerabrahmam, \textit{et al.}, \textit{Kalahmanatatvamulu} (Telugu), (Madras, n.d.), P.13.

\textsuperscript{48} N. Gangadharam, \textit{op.cit.}, P.259. Also see the article by T. Donappa, "Vemana, Veerabrahmam" in \textit{Andhra Jyothi} (Telugu Daily), May 20, 1973.
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pass the age of puberty, and admitted women into his order and made them eligible for saimhood. Another significant aspect of his philosophy was his trenchant criticism of untouchability and pollution. Unlike the usual practice of Brahmin Saints to go about asking for alms for their livelihood, he continued his caste-occupation of carpentry and smithy. As this period witnessed sporadic Hindu-Muslim tensions in society, he pleaded for harmony between them. The Brahmins of Pushpagiri were influenced by his teachings, and Nawabs of Kurnool accepted his faith.

Unlike Vemana, Veerabrahmam had several disciples who, after his death, carried on his teachings.

49. See K.Veeraraghavacharyulu, "Mahasamaskarta Brahmamgaru", (hereafter referred to as Brahmamgaru) in Andhra Prabha (Telugu Daily), June 24, 1973. Veerabrahmam himself married a girl, Govindamma after she attained marriageable age. His granddaughter Eswaramma became a 'Yogini' (saint) and unlike her grand-father remained unmarried to propagate his teachings. See J.Nagabhushana Doss, Kalagnanasambita Sri Eswarammagaru (Telugu), (Tenali, 1972), a biography and teachings of Eswaramma.


53. K.Veeraraghavacharyulu, Gurudevudu, op.cit., PP.91-93.

54. Vignanasarvaswam, op.cit., P.1091.
The prominent among them were Siddhaiah, Eswaramma, Yadla Ramadoss, Ya\v{s}antivaru who spread their ideas through the medium of easy and intelligible songs. Even today one could see in Andhra a number of wandering 'sahas' singing the 'Tatvalu' ('philosophical' songs) of Veerabrahmam and others. There are several small centres of worship of Veerabrahmam functioning now, mostly patronised and run by members of Vishwabrahmin community to which he belonged.

While condemning ruthlessly the prevalent social evils, Veerabrahmam introduced an element of despair and pessimism into his teachings. He felt that society was rotten and people had to wait for a better day in future. Thus, like other saints of the period, he did not hold out any hints to raise the society from its decadence.

Of the same yogic tradition, comparatively of modern times, the prominent heterodox sect that deserves

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55. Ibid., P.1194.
56. Ibid., P.727. Also see for a detailed biographical account, J. Nagabhushana Doss, op.cit.
57. See Y. Ramadoss, Yadla Ramadasu Charitramu, (Madras, 1964). Also see B. Ramaraju, op.cit., PP.405-06.
58. Potbuluri Veerabrahmam, et al., op.cit., PP.20,26-34.
59. S.V. Narasaiah et al., op.cit., P.284.
mention was the Nasraiah sect. Nasraiah, a muslim of the Syed lineage died about 1825.\textsuperscript{60} He preached, mostly among the Madigas,\textsuperscript{61} a moral code of good behaviour and also exhorted them not to worship idols and preached the unity of the Godhead.\textsuperscript{62} His centre of activity was the area around Vinukonda and Nasarsaraopet in the present Guntur district and his influence was fairly spread there. To belong to the Nasraiah sect "meant advancement to the Madigas....... It raised them in the social scale too."\textsuperscript{63} They realised that Nasraiah's theism was better than the polytheism of their village cults.\textsuperscript{64} It should, however, be noted that the atmosphere of theism and social dissent created by the Nasraiah sect in Ongole (of the then Guntur district) area was made use of by the missionaries for their own proselytizing efforts. It was in this area that the missionaries reaped a rich harvest by effecting

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\item[60.] Emma Ranschenbush Clough, \textit{While Sewing Sandals or Tales of a Telugu Pariah Tribe}, (A History not in Books), (London, 1899), PP.157-62.
\item[61.] 'Untouchable' castes are divided into two sects – Malas and Madigas. The distinction between the two was explained in the first chapter.
\item[62.] Emma Ranschenbush Clough, \textit{op.cit.}, PP.157-62.
\item[63.] Ibid., PP.163-65.
\item[64.] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
a large number of conversions. 65

The preceding account has shown the existence of a number of heterodox sects, in the pre-nineteenth century era, which introduced from time to time, minor reforms and changes to purify society of its evils. 66 Most of these sects were led by people from 'lower castes' and their following too came mainly from the same source, even though the membership included heterogenous castes. They were motivated by the aim for social betterment which was not assured to them by orthodox Hinduism and hence their rejection of caste hierarchy. It was true that these trends originated generally in personal revolts. Nevertheless they displayed a growing trend of protest in religious and social life. 67 All these movements were independent by nature and were in no way influenced by western ideas. These movements, lacking in organisation and a clear and constructive social programme,

65. The famine of 1876 also played a vital role in this. A discussion of the activities of missionaries in the Andhra region follows in this chapter.

66. Considering several religious sects mentioned above H.H. Wilson wrote: "There are several sects that have abandoned all worship of idols, that deny the efficacy of faith in any of the popular divinities, and question the reasonableness of many of the existing institutions; they substitute a moral for a ceremonial code, and address their prayers to one only God...they prove that people are not all (sic) satisfied with the superstitions of their forefathers, and some among them are inclined to enquire, and think, and determine for themselves." Cited in K.K. Datta, op. cit., P.8.

67. See in this respect K.N. Panikkar, Presidential Address, Section III, Indian History Congress (Thirty Sixth Session), December 29-31, 1975, Aligarh, PP.3-5.
succeeded only in creating a temporary stir in society.
They were perhaps more emotional than rational in their out-bursts against socio-religious evils.\textsuperscript{68} Hence their gradual absorption into the established Brahminical order ultimately.

One indirect result of these different sects in Andhra was the growth of a healthy literary trend in Telugu. The reformers employed an easy and spoken dialect to communicate their ideas to all sections of people in society.\textsuperscript{69} Mahadev Govind Ranade stated that the provinces where these movements were popular witnessed the growth of "a literature of considerable value in the Vernacular language of the country."\textsuperscript{70} In his estimate they also "modified the strictness of the old spirit of caste exclusiveness" and, "raised the Shudra classes (sic) to a position of spiritual power and social importance almost equal to that of the Brahmins."\textsuperscript{71} Though this is a generous estimate of the influence of these sects on the position of the sudras it is nevertheless true that an effort was made to remove the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{68} Neera Desai, \textit{Women in Modern India} (Bombay, 1957), P.45.
\item \textsuperscript{69} See G.V.Sitapati, \textit{op.cit.}, P.36. See also V.R.Narla, \textit{ed.op.cit.}, pp.50-67. Though Veerabrahmam's poems are sometimes mystical, the language he employed was easy. So also the other reformers who followed him. See for example B.Ramaraju, \textit{op.cit.}, P.403. See also K.Veeraraghavacharyulu, \textit{op.cit.}, P.99 and for examples of Brahman's poems, pp.105-10.
\item \textsuperscript{70} M.B.Kolaskar ed. \textit{Religious and Social Reform by Mahadeva Govind Ranade} (Bombay, 1902), Introduction, P.XI.
\item \textsuperscript{71} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
social distinctions based on religious sanction. But as long as the Brahmins were enjoying social predominance and sudras were occupying a lower position there could not have been any possibility of the latter improving their social status considerably. The efforts of the reformer-saints were limited by the medieval socio-economic framework and eventually led to the absorption of these ideas and movements with the traditional order, with minor adjustments but without major changes.

BRITISH ATTITUDES TOWARDS SOCIAL REFORM DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY

The East India Company followed till 1813 a policy of laissez-faire in regard to Indian social and religious matters, though there were some isolated Englishmen who evinced interest in social reform and educational activities. Its main interest was trade and the acquisition of territory was only a means for creating wealth in India for their investment. The Company, during this period ruled but hardly governed. The attitudes of the British could broadly be discussed under two heads, namely: (1) Evangelicism, and (2) Utilitarianism or liberalism which were the outcome of a new reforming zeal in

in the wake of the Industrial Revolution in England during the first quarter of the 19th century. The earlier concept of the high ideal of Indian civilization, as expressed by Sir Thomas Munro in 1813, "If civilization is to become an article of trade between the two countries, I am convinced that this country (Britain) will gain by the import of Cargo" 73, was discarded. These two concepts, Evangelicism and Utilitarianism, were movements of individualism which were intended to free the individual from his age-old bondage to authority and superstition. 74 They were the politico-philosophical expression of a triumphant bourgeoisie out to convert its subjects to the supposed benefits of a true religion and a true political philosophy.

Evangelical activities in Andhra

Missionary influence, in the south in general and Andhra in particular, was important as the missionaries were the pioneers of education in the history of modern India. 75 In their educational endeavours they were far ahead of the government. 76 Before assessing the influence of the missionaries over society and reform movements, a brief account of their educational and

73. G.D.Bearce, *op.cit.*, P.125.
75. Nurullah and Nayak, *op.cit.*, Intro., P.VI.
76. G.D.Bearce, *op.cit.*, P.170.
proselytizing activities is necessary. The first signs of missionary activity go back to the year 1597 when two Jesuit Fathers and a Brother were at the court of Venkataramulu in Chandragiri (now in Chittoor district) where they stayed till 1615. Their labours were not much of a success. Fr. Mauduit was the first to convert among the Telugus, the first converts being a widow and her four children in 1701. The missionaries, in order to endear themselves to the natives, led a life of true sanyasins by giving up non-vegetarian food. "In fact they stood on a level with the strict Brahmin and were therefore called 'Romapuri Sanyasins' or Roman monks." Punganur became the cradle of the Telugu Christians from where it gradually spread to Venkatagiri (Nellore district) which became a big Christian settlement later, and to Krishnapuram, Hindupur (in Anantapur district), and China Ballapuram (Bellary district). By 1736 thousands of people were

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77. A Father, *History of the Telugu Christians* (Trichnopoly, 1910), P.1, Foot note. The book is a graphic description (in the form of letters) of the early efforts and difficulties of the missionaries.

78. *Ibid.*, P.12. The first baptism took place at Punganur (Anantapur district). The family probably belonged to the Velama caste. Thus the beginnings of Christianity in Andhra were made in Rayalaseema area. This was perhaps due to the fact that the Christianity was fairly spread in Karnataka region which borders Rayalaseema. In Karnataka, by 1736, there were in existence churches and chapels and thousands of people belonging to all castes were in its fold. See *Ibid.*, PP.20-24.


80. *Ibid.*, P.73. Father de la Fontaine's labours here were aided by the patronage of local Rajah.

baptised and at Venkatagiri alone 2242 conversions took place under the auspices of Father Calmette. 82

In the initial stages it appeared that poverty was the main reason for the people to embrace Christianity as the missionaries offered them some jobs. However, it cannot be denied that even wealthy and powerful Velanati and Ponnekanti Reddis were taking to Christianity. 83 Also, in addition to the prevailing social structure which was rather humiliating to non-brahmins, certain methods adopted by the missionaries to spread their faith made their efforts successful. 84 Owing to the political unrest and the continuous vexatious plunderings of the Maharattas and the destructive activities of poligars, by the year 1743, a number of Christians migrated to Cuddapah and Nellore districts and by 1759 the Jesuits and their activities declined under the attack of the Portuguese on the one side and the Nizam's army on the

82. Ibid., P.255.
83. Ibid., PP.125-26. Of the first five converts (one widow and four children) the eldest of the children was taken into the church service.
84. The methods they adopted were: (1) acquisition of vernaculars, (2) circulation of Christians literature, (3) opening of schools, (4) condemnation of social evils, (5) efficient organisation, and (6) personal courage and suffering. See Ibid., Introduction, P.VI.
The Company's attitude, which was favourable to the missionaries prior to 1765 changed afterwards under political compulsions. It adopted a strict religious neutrality for the sake of political supremacy. From 1793 to 1813 the Company strongly opposed proselytisation by the missionaries. It is significant to note that though they baptised a good number of people, "...a large portion of these were aged persons or little children, or the sick and dying." Speaking about probable results of their activity Rev. R.C. Paul remarked that the custom of seclusion of women was gradually disappearing among the natives.

After the decline of the Jesuit activity, by 1740's, a new era in Christian endeavour began in the wake of the Evangelical Revival which was sweeping the West during the

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85. The Nizam's armies destroyed churches at Kambaladinne and Maddigubba (Kurnool district). Ibid., PP.291-92. Also see for an account of the earliest missions in Cuddapah district and other parts of Rayalaseema J.D. B.Gribble, op.cit., PP.276-77. Some of the important settlements in Cuddapah district were Wayalpadu, Kambaladinne and Siddhavatam. See Rev. R.C.Paul, History of the Telugu Christians (Madras,1929), P.12.

86. This comment might have been made quite inadvertently. Even so it shows the type of people they were converting into Christianity. Ibid., Introdcution, P.VIII.

87. Ibid., P.294. Even if one accepted this claim, in the absence of any other evidence pertaining to this period, it was not much of an achievement to mention about. For the seclusion of women was mainly prevalent among upper castes only and the number of conversions among them was negligible.
last years of the 18th century. Under this influence new societies sprang up in Britain and America, some of which were eager to carry their message to Asia and Africa. In South India this new wave of Evangelicism was spearheaded by five societies, namely, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, London Missionary Society, Church Missionary Society, Wesleyan Mission, and the Free Church Mission of Scotland. 88 Endowed with a sound organization and considerable resources, they opened a number of schools, seminaries, printing presses in various places in South India. Also, simultaneously, they started a powerful agitation against the restrictions imposed by the Company upon their activities in India. Subsequently the Charter Act of 1813 relaxed the rule of non-entry of the missionaries into India. With this, the above missions started their activities in full swing in the Telugu districts. Their proselytisation campaign went hand in hand with their educational activities with which we are more concerned. In fact it would be wrong to treat them separately. The fact of the matter was that educational activity was an appendage to their evangelical programme. 89 Charles Grant, the high

88. For a good account of the activities of these missions, see Julius Richter, A History of Missions in India (translated by Sydney H. Moore), (London, 1908).

89. Their main object was evangelisation. In order to spread their Christian gospel the Indiansociety should be purged of its evils. To do that education was essential. See Kenneth Ingham, Reformers in India, 1793-1833. An account of the work of Christian Missionaries on behalf of Social Reform (London, 1956), P.4.
priest of Evangelicism and the father of modern education in India, expressed the same in no uncertain terms when he remarked that Indian society was in a depraved condition due to ignorance and want of a proper religion. Therefore Indians should be educated first and then converted to Christianity. The promotion of education and, through it the material prosperity in India, Grant believed, would "...serve the original design with which we visited India, that design so important to this country - the extension of commerce". The missionaries affirmed that the spread of Christianity would ultimately strengthen British position in India since every convert, in his own interest and security, would be loyal to the British. These arguments did not weigh with the government though the British manufacturers cleverly grasped their significance. Charless Grant being an influential Director of

90. Charless Grant wrote the book, "Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain, particularly with respect to morals and the means of improving it", in which he made some significant remarks: "The true cure of darkness, is the introduction of light. The Hindoos err, because they are ignorant.... The communication of our light and knowledge to them... would have great and happy effects upon them, effects honourable and advantageous for us". The medium through which the Western 'light' and 'knowledge' were to be communicated was, of course, the English education. H. Sharp, ed. Selections from Educational Records, op.cit., P.81.

91. Quoted in Eric Stokes, op.cit., P.34.

the Company, a member of Parliament and a person with first hand knowledge about India saw to it that the Charter Act of 1813 was passed with clauses pertaining to education and to lifting restrictions upon the activities of the missionaries. Commenting upon the situation J.C. Marshman stated: "Thus commerce became the handmaid of religion and under their combined influence, the gates of India were open at once to the cottons of England and the truths of the Bible". 93

The Charter Act of 1813 was a landmark as well as a turning point in the history of Education in India. Large amounts of money were granted towards educational expenditure, eventhough the government did not spend all the money sanctioned. 94 However, the large scale missionary educational activity amply compensated this lacuna. A good number of missionaries landed in India and established English schools. In a way the missionaries could be credited with laying the foundation of modern education in India.

93. Quoted in Ibid., P.59.
94. Of the moderate amount of Rs.50,000/- sanctioned to the Madras Presidency even by the year 1848-49 (by then the collegiate department was also organised), only little more than half was expended and by 1853 a balance of over Rs.3,00,000 had accumulated. See The Eighteenth Annual Report from the Governors of the Madras Presidency, 1848-49 (Madras, 1849), PP.8-9. Also see Syed Nurulla and J.P.Naik, op.cit., P.79.
The London Missionary Society started its work in 1795 in South India and its first centre in Andhra was established at Visakhapatnam in 1808 and at Cuddapah in 1822, the latter growing into an important centre from the proselytisation viewpoint. The mission had an English school at Visakhapatnam and also a school for female education. Perhaps this school was the first of its kind organised by alien enterprise. The London Missionary Society extended its activities into the neighbouring Ganjam district establishing schools at Chichawal (present Srikakulam) and Chatterpore.

The Church Missionary Society opened its first Telugu mission in 1841 at Machilipatnam. During 1843-58 it did considerable work, preaching and distributing pamphlets. Machilipatnam developed into an educational centre. Two schools, one each for boys and girls, were started and soon a college under the able guidance of the well known missionary Robert Noble was established. Referring to

96. S. Sathianathan, *op.cit.*, P.52.
97. Ibid., See also D. Sadasivan, *op.cit.*, P.15 foot note.
99. The college was later named Noble College which gained renown as a sound educational institution in Andhra. Robert Noble was successful in converting a number of high caste members including Brahmins into Christianity. See Julius Richter *op.cit.*, P.195. Also see M. Venkata Rangachar, Vol.I, *op.cit.*, P.74.
the boys' school at Machilipatnam, the Director of Public Instruction wrote: "The boys' school had long had the reputation of being the best in the Northern Circars". It spread its activity, by the year 1859, into the neighbouring areas, particularly to the towns of Vijayawada and Eluru where it established schools for boys. That an ancient urban and industrial centre like Eluru had only this missionary school till the year 1893 showed the backwardness of education in Andhra.

During the same period, on behalf of the Pennsylvania Synod Society, Rev. C.F. Heyer organised schools in Guntur, Pratipadu and Nallapadu (Guntur district). The first girls' school was started by him in 1842. The number of schools at the end of Fr. Heyer's first year's stay at Guntur had risen to seven with ten teachers and one hundred and eighty pupils. Simultaneously, the

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100. Quoted in S. Sathianathan, op.cit., P.52.
102. Reports were being published in the native newspapers deploring this state of affairs. The editorial comments were made exhorting the rich and educated natives to take the initiative in opening schools. One such plea was specifically made in the case of Eluru. See Hinduja nasam karan, a bi-lingual journal published from Madras by M. Butchaiah Pantulu, one of the earliest Brahmans from Andhra settled in Madras, Vol.9, No.3 (October, 1893).
104. Ibid.
American Baptist Missionary Society started its work in Guntur district, establishing centres at Guntur, Gurajala in the Palanadu area where they established two elementary schools. A centre was started in 1866 at Ongole. The American Baptist missionaries at Ongole, especially Rev. J. Everett Clough converted large numbers of untouchables during the famine of 1876. Clough obtained sole responsibility for the construction of the Buckingham canal for three-and-a half miles as a famine work and worked on it for six months. The coolies, mostly from the Mala and Madiga communities, were drawn towards Christianity in these times of economic distress.

Although the Christian writers denied that these conversions were due to terrible famine conditions, they had to acknowledge the same in their writings, perhaps

105. S.Sathianathan, _op.cit._, P.52.

106. The Missionary Conference : South India and Ceylon, 1879, (Madras, 1880), Vo.I, PP.36-37. The conference met at Bangalore in June 1879. The particulars of participants revealed that there were Telugu missionaries in the Church service from 1858 onwards, e.g., P. . Jugannadham at Vizagapatam (sic) and Manchala Ratnam at Bezwada (sic). Besides there were a number of European Missionaries at Bluru, Rajahmundry, Bellary, Madanapalli, Guntur, Nellore, Cocanada (sic) and Narsapur. See _Ibid._, PP.VII-IX.

107. _Ibid._, PP.37-39. By 1881 it was estimated that a total of 12,804 were converted. Also see _Vignanasarvaswamu_, Vol.III, _op.cit._, P.440.
The Free Church Mission and to some extent the American Baptist Mission conducted their activities in Nellore district. In the districts of Cuddapah, Kurnool and Bellary, the London Missionary Society was conducting its activities.

In the Godavari district missionary activity started in the late thirties of the 19th century. Around 1840 the North German Missionary Society began its operations around Rajahmundry which were continued by the American German Lutherans in 1851. A new mission was established

108. Julius Richter, op. cit., P.218, wherein he stated: "But it was the famine which first gave the decisive impetus to this mass movement". A.T. Fishman, a missionary who made a study of Madigas in Kurnool district in Andhra showed how conversion was induced through the offer of material gains. See A.T. Fishman, Culture Change and the Unprivileged : A Study of Madigas in South India under Christian Guidance (Madras, 1941), PP.6-7.


111. Reference to this is found in Letters from Madras by A Lady, op. cit., PP.72-73. She stated that, "At Nurapur two missionaries were staying. They were English shoemakers, Mr. Bowden and Mr. Beer.... They are living completely among the natives, teaching and talking to them, and distributing books". She also mentioned that they had started a small school, with five or six boys, to begin with. Their work was mainly among the Madigas of this region.

112. In 1840, Rev. L.M. Vallet took up his residence at Rajahmundry for conducting the missionary activity. See for a detailed account of the missionary activities at Rajahmundry, Henry Morris, op. cit., PP. 24-26.
at Samullotah (sic) by Rev. A Long who came from America in 1858.\textsuperscript{113} As there was already a Provincial school at Rajahmundry, the missionaries opened a museum instead of starting another school and reading room which were frequented by local people.\textsuperscript{114} Missionary work was spread into the interior, and protestant missions at Palcole and Nursapure were started.\textsuperscript{115}

Thus the missionary activities embraced the whole of Andhra region. Education was their main interest, although they were running orphanages, medical centres and industrial establishments. There was considerable increase in the total number of Christians (as shown in the table below) in Andhra between 1857-78.\textsuperscript{116}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Native ordained agents</th>
<th>Baptised christians</th>
<th>Adherents unbaptised</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>2,318</td>
<td>1,505</td>
<td>3,823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>29,574</td>
<td>83,396</td>
<td>1,12,994</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evangelicism aimed at spreading the gospel away as

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., P.25.  
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., P.26.  
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., P.40.  
\textsuperscript{116} The table is based upon the statistics furnished in The Missionary Conference, \textit{op. cit.}, P.442.
many natives as possible in order to gain more and more adherence to their religion. This did not always take a directly religious form. Missionaries tried to seize control of education through which they could better mould men's minds at their most impressionable age. Along with the establishment of Anglo-vernacular schools, through which they desired to convert the higher castes, the missionaries established several elementary schools in the countryside. Indigenous schools were mainly catering to the Brahmins and a few non-brahmins. Stirred by the teachings of the missionaries, the Mallas and Madigas began to request for more schools in the second half of the 19th century. In order to satisfy this demand the missionaries established a teacher training school at Machilipatnam. The motives of 'untouchables' in falling under the influence of missionaries were, firstly, to gain a status in society which was denied to them by caste Hindus down the ages and to win favours of the government through the intercession of the missionaries. A substantial number of them belonged to the 'lowest' castes.

116. G.A.oddie, "Christian Conversion in the Telugu country 1860-1900: A case study of one Protestant Movement in the Godavari-Krishna delta", in The Indian Economic and Social History Review, Vol.XII, No.1 (Jan-Mar. 1975). That there was a constant demand for more schools is clear from several contemporary writings. "The first request from converts was a school", and people understood the social advantage to be derived from learning. See J.A.Sharrock, South Indian Missions (West Minister, 1910), P.221. Also see A Lady, op.cit., P.132, wherein she stated "there is always something doing in the way of schools, and certainly an increasing willingness to receive our books."
castes. Their worship was primitive. Their way of living and their occupations were looked down upon as degrading. Therefore by giving up that type of life and adopting high-caste customs, they wanted to get away from social ostracism. It is doubtful whether they, in fact, derived this benefit as social evils like untouchability are still very much in evidence in the countryside. However, it is true that to some extent the converts got social justice and legal protection because of their contact with foreign missionaries, and through them with the government. In some cases Christianity offered education and in others a few material advantages. But, on the whole the advantages were more psychological since they gave the converts a feeling of self respect and equality.

The most important contribution of the missionaries was in the field of education. When the indigenous education was inadequate to meet the needs of the times, and when both the company and private educational enterprise were lagging behind, it was the missionaries who provided education at all levels to both Christians and non-christians. For the whole of the Madras Presidency a comparative

117. See G.A. Oddie, op.cit., P.76.
118. Ibid., PP.77-78. See also The Missionary Conference op.cit., PP.445-46, wherein it was stated that conversions "...cannot be attributed to an enlightened spiritual awakening....".
analysis in the growth of missionary schools and pupils was as follows: In 1857 there were 20,000 pupils in missionary schools which received grants from the government and hence under its inspection. In 1878 the number of pupils rose to 300,000. These figures did not include pupils in missionary schools which were not under the purview of the government. Similar strides, though at a slower pace, were made in girls' education. To illustrate this it may be noted that in 1857 there were 8,990 girls in mission schools whereas in 1878 the number increased to 26,209. Missionaries were the first to start several girls' schools in the Andhra region. Also there were a number of women missionaries who carried on 'zenana' education.

While not belittling the missionary efforts in the sphere of education, it is necessary to state that all their educational effort was neither completely altruistic

120. Ibid., P.453.
121. During the 1820's girls schools began to appear in Duddapah and Bellary. At Visakhapatnam Mrs. Dawson whose husband was an agent of the London Missionary Society collected some 20 Indian girls for instruction. See Kenneth Ingham, op.cit., P.87.
122. 'Zenana' is the interior part of a household. Since women were under seclusion, women missionaries were instructing them inside their homes.
123. See J.Richter, op.cit., P.343.
nor reformatory. It was done with a conscious motive of spreading Christianity. Bible was necessarily taught in schools and scripture stories were used regularly.  

There were objections and organised protests against this. The result of this agitation was that the teaching of Bible was prohibited temporarily.  


125. One of the earliest vernacular journals of Andhra Purushartha Pradayini (published from Machilipatnam) published a news item in its Vol.V, No.7 (July, 1876) issue. "The missionaries at Masulipatam (sic) have been doing good work by opening and conducting several schools, and to derive the good of being educated, our boys and girls must bribe them as it were with the reading of a Bible lesson". Also see Public Proceedings, No.305, 26th Feb.1861, Madras Presidency. A letter was received from two natives complaining against the teaching of the Bible in schools and requesting the government no to interfere with native customs and privileges.

126. In this regard the efforts of Gajula Lakshminarasu Chetty are worth mentioning. Born in 1806, he became the earliest popular leader in Madras. He was the guiding spirit, as president, behind the Madras Native Association, which was the precursor of the Madras Mahajana Sabha. He fought against the introduction of caste disabilities Act which was favourable to converts to Christianity. He convened a public meeting (a forerunner of all modern protest political meetings in South India) and submitted a 'mahajur' (memorandum) with nearly twelve thousand signatures and sent it to England. For a comprehensive account of Gajula Lakshminarasu Chetty, see G.P.(G.Parameswaran Nair), Representative Men of Southern India (Madras, 1896), PP.142-64. See also Y.Vittal Rao, "Gajula Lakshminarasu Setti - A pioneer of the Freedom Movement" in the Journal of the Andhra Historical Research Society, Vol.XXII (1952-53). Also see D.V.Sivarao, 1857 - Purvarangamulu (Telugu) Vijayawada, 1957), PP.166-70. Also see B.B.Mazumdar, History of Indian Social and Political Ideas (Calcutta, 1967), P.10.
of their proselytising activities. The schools provided them with an opportunity to teach people about their religion, and places of social intercourse and religious worship. And to provide better living conditions and a suitable career for the converts they had to open some technical and vocational schools and also to provide general education to them as all the converts could not be admitted into the existing schools.

While assessing the contribution of the missionaries towards the enlightenment one should be cautious and objective in his estimates. It is true that their educational endeavours, eventhough religiously motivated, did spread enlightenment among certain sections of society by dispelling their superstitions and making them feel equal and self-respectful in society. Also it contributed to the general spread of education by which a number of high caste people were benefitted by securing remunerative positions in government service. The economic position of the 'lower' classes, despite large numbers of them becoming Christians, did not permit them to reap the benefits of education. Several writers have attributed the rise of modern social reform movements to a response to the

127. "To Christian missionaries education was primarily an instrument for evangelisation". See K.N.Panikkar, op.cit., P.7.

128. P.Jugannatham from Visakhapatnam who became a native missionary stated: "Had it not been for an English education my conversion would have been impossible". The Missionary Conference, op.cit., P.101.
"ethical challenges of Christian doctrine..."130 However, this was not true when one looked at the motives behind the missionary activities which were being freely allowed in India after 1813.131 It was a fact that they have

130. Charles H. Heimsath, Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform (O.U.P., 1964), P.50. Several other scholars have held similar views. See R.C. Majumdar, ed. British Paramouty and Indian Renaissance P.11 (Bombay, 1965), PP.268-84, who held the view that missionaries played a significant role in the enlightenment of Bengal. See Kenneth Ingham, op.cit., P.122 wherein he said, "The missionaries, though an external force, provided an impulse towards social reform in India...." See also N.S. Bose, Indian Awakening and Bengal (Calcutta, 1969), P.118. In a recent unpublished paper, "Social and Religious Reform Movements in Andhra Pradesh in the 19th and 20th centuries" Dr. V. Yasoda Devi stated that "the intense missionary zeal constituted a formidable challenge to the predominantly Hindu Society....the challenge of the West was met by a movement of Renaissance...." Another Telugu scholar D.V. Siva Rao in his article "Christianization of India" published in Immortal Message, Vol.2, No.6 (May, 1940) stated the Christian missionaries had brought about a cultural revolution in India. Also see J.N. Farquhar, Modern Religious Movements in India (New Delhi, first Indian edn. 1967), P.387, wherein he stated that, "the Indian social movement is a direct outcome of Christian missions and Western influence...Christian teaching, effort and example have done more than anything else to quicken the movement." Similar view was expressed by M. Venkatarangaiah in his Bharata Swatantrodyama Charitra, Part II (Telugu), (Secunderabad, 1976), P.97.

131. The circumstances and discussions leading to the lifting of restrictions on missionary activities in 1813 were presented earlier in this chapter.
collected information regarding social evils and forcefully presented them to the British public and the government.\textsuperscript{132} However, it should squarely be stated that their attitudes, writings and conclusions regarding Indian religion and social life were, in most cases, hostile, exaggerated and ill-informed. That their efforts could never have contributed to the regeneration of India might be seen in their failure both to organise any scheme for national education and to introduce a sound scientific and technological curriculum.

**British attitudes towards social reform before 1850:**

**Utilitarian Trends.**

Early in the 19th century, British orientalists like Sir William Jones felt that the government's duty lay in preserving the old society intact and fostering the development of that society along traditional lines.\textsuperscript{133} Utilitarians considered this a conservative view opposed to change. The rationalist school headed by James Mill who in his "History of British India" found little good in Indian institutions.\textsuperscript{134} Mill's ideas and the views of the missionaries

\textsuperscript{132} Kenneth Ingham, \textit{op.cit.}, P.33.
\textsuperscript{133} G.D.Bearce, \textit{op.cit.}, P.21.
\textsuperscript{134} James Mill wrote that "...reason lay dormant beneath the debris of centuries; Indian thought was puerile, its religious superstitions, customs hidebound and harmful". Cited in Percival Spear, \textit{The Oxford History of Modern India, 1740-1947} (Oxford, 1965), P.202.
on India painted a picture of degenerated Indian Society. The remedy was to inculcate reason and European knowledge. Between these two camps - conservatives and radicals - stood a large number of people from whom came some of the well known administrators of this period. Malcolm's prescription of "proceeding cautiously in a course of gradual improvement" was their policy. The goal of British policy before 1828 was almost invariably that of not disturbing Indian social customs and practices. This was reflected in the remarks of Mount Stuart Elphinstone when the suppression of sati was first proposed.

From 1828 the liberal view gathered strength and winds of change began to blow. Charless Grant became a Director of the Company. Furthermore, after 1819, the utilitarian radical, James Mill, became the Assistant Examiner of India correspondence. He provided much inspiration for many of the reformist ideas and activities in India during the 1830's. Moreover, England itself was then experiencing a wave of reform in the wake of the Industrial Revolution. This reforming zeal found expression in the doctrines of Liberalism, Humanism, Utilitarianism and Evangelicism.

As far as India was concerned it was the school of utilitarian thought that was predominant in the administration.

135. Ibid.
136. "If we succeed we save 100 or 1000 victims from voluntary immolation. If we fail we involve sixty millions in all the horrors of war and revolution." Cited in T. J. Metcalfe, op. cit., P. 6.
They professed that human nature was inherently the same in all races, and that inherited characteristics were readily alterable and also that human nature could be totally changed by the effects of law and education by virtue of their rationality.

The Utilitarian reformers generally viewed India as a land of superstition and despotism. They approached India with certain basic convictions, namely (1) immediate and rapid introduction of reforms, (2) dependence on political, social and economic theories of England as a guide for such reforms, and (3) trust in the vigour of the middle class in reforming India. They visualised tomorrow's India as "middle class, scientific, modernized society". Not that all officials working in India were pro-reform in their outlook. A sizable number of conservatives could be found throughout this period and under Ellenborough and Hardinge they controlled the government itself. Nevertheless the influence of reform trends was not seriously challenged in the pre-1857 period. The overwhelming

137. G.D. Bearce, op. cit., p.156.

138. T.R. Metcalfe, op. cit., p.18. Perhaps the most outspoken and influential conservative of this period was Lord Ellenborough, Governor-General of India (1842-44) and later President of the Board of Control. He rejected the liberal idea of using education as a vehicle of India's moral improvement. He considered it dangerous to reform the customs and habits of the Indian people. He mentioned to a House of Commons committee in 1852 that the policy of extending English education was fraught with real danger, for "no intelligent people would submit to our government".
majority of Indian officials were always infused with that powerful current of liberalism which flowed through contemporary England. Indeed the East India Company's College at Haileybury, where all civil servants received their training, was one of the strongest centres of liberal thought. George Campbell remarked that young civilians came away to India "with a very sound belief in the greatest happiness of the greatest number".139

Apart from various reform measures that the utilitarians undertook — in the fields of revenue administration and judiciary, abolition of slavery, sati, and female infanticide, legalising widow remarriages — they launched education programmes presumably to improve the 'decadent' Indian Society. Both evangelical and utilitarian trends got submerged in their attitudes towards education. They wanted to bring enlightenment to the people of India through western education and knowledge. Similarly motives behind their programme were also almost the same. From the Act of 1813 to the well known Wood's education despatch in 1854 several developments took place in the educational sphere. Wood's despatch settled all conflicts regarding educational policies conclusively and made the state assume responsibility for educating the masses of its subjects.140

139. Ibid.
140. For the details of Wood's despatch, see B.T. McCully, English Education and the Origins of Indian Nationalism (C.U.P., Xerox copy, 1966), PP.135–42.
Nevertheless, the purpose of the colonial rulers in their educational programmes was to serve their colonial requirements namely, (1) to disseminate colonial ideology, and (2) to secure trained servants to fill the ranks of administration of the country. To realise the first objective liberal education was undertaken, and for the second a system of vocational and professional education was organised. Their motives were clearly spelt out by Macaulay when he "asserted that trading with a civilized nation was more advantageous than ruling a backward one" and his well noted expression about creating an English-educated middle class, "a class of persons Indian in colour and blood but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect" illustrates the colonial framework in which the British educational programmes were operating.

141. See, Syed Nurulla and Nayak op.cit., P.83.
142. G.N. Bearce, op.cit., P.163. Macaulay also stated that the Indian government should consider it as its first duty "to educate a class of people who had leisure, social status to benefit from western knowledge". Ibid., P.170.
143. Quoted in Eric Stokes, op.cit., P.46.
144. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., P.7 where he effectively presented this idea. He stated "The alien rule was maintained not simply with the help of police and army but also by an illusion created by ideological influences. In creating this illusion, education, which could help project British institutions and values as the ideal, was conceived of as the most effective instrument. Therefore, the educational enterprise of the government, vernacular, primary or university education, was always within the confines of colonial needs and interests".
The utilitarians did not possess accurate knowledge of Indian conditions. They acted with self-interest. This could be seen in their economic policies which tended to so reorganise the Indian society as to suit the new demands of England's economic system in the wake of Industrial Revolution. However, to the extent that they introduced an era of liberal and humanitarian reforms in social sphere was a progressive measure. However, in contrast, the reform activities of Indian reformers in relation to educational programme were intended to bring about the real regeneration of India.

Pre-Veeresalingam Period in Andhra

The starting of vernacular journal 'Vivekavardhani', by Veeresalingam in 1874 could be considered as the beginning of reform movements in Andhra under his leadership. Prior to that the urge for reform ideas was not totally absent in the minds of the new elite who, under the

145. The comments of G.D.Bearce are worth noting in this regard. "...they were scornful of India's culture and history, certainly in applying liberal and humanitarian reforms, the liberals did not fulfill their expectations", G.D.Bearce, op.cit., P.178.

146. In this context it is worthwhile to note the remarks of R.P.Dutt. "In the earlier period of British rule, in the first half of the 19th century, the British rulers...were performing an actively progressive role, were in many spheres actively combating the conservative and feudal forces of Indian Society. This was the period of courageous reforms...Regid in their outlook, unsympathetic to all that was backward in Indian traditions....these early administrators nevertheless carried on, a powerful work of innovation...". See R.P.Dutt India Today (Calcutta, 1970), P.305.
influence of western thought and philosophy and the reform movements in Bengal during the first half of the 19th century, were aware of social evils. A few instances of genuine urge for reform and recognition of the sorry state of things may be cited here.

Edugula Veeraswamaiah (1780-1836), a Brahmin and a ‘dubashee’ in the Sadr Supreme Court at Madras, left in his travelogue traces of this recognition of social evils and tried to analyse them. While criticising untouchability as not being originally sanctioned by Smritis, he attributed large scale conversions into Christianity to the illtreatment meted out to the ‘lower’ castes in society. He criticised the empty rituals in temples and laid more stress on true

147. Edugula Veeraswamaiah’s Kasiyatra Charitra op.cit., was originally compiled by Komaleswarapuram Srinivasar Pillai and published in 1838. The latest edition was published in 1941 by D.V.Siva Rao with notes and comments. Edugula Veeraswamaiah was a scholar in Telugu, Tamil and Sanskrit with a considerable knowledge in English. The author undertook a pilgrimage from Madras to Kasi (Benaras) via Ceded districts (Cuddapah, Kurnool and Anantapur), and Hyderabad and while returning travelled through the Circar districts (Ganjam, Visakhapatnam, Godavari, Krishna, Nellore). The journey was undertaken at a time when there were no modern transport or communication facilities and undertook this historic journey by palanquin. In this travelogue the author described in detail the social conditions of Andhra prevailing during that period with his comments against the social evils. In helping to know the social conditions of the period under review, it is an important literary source comparable to Bishop Heber’s Journal. His views on religion, caste, untouchability and the like showed a liberal frame of mind and a progressive attitude which was far ahead of his time.

148. Ibid., pp.165-66.
and singleminded devotion to God.\textsuperscript{149} He stated that "the caste system was a creation of man and the division of castes should be functional and hence caste distinctions were untenable".\textsuperscript{150} He disapproved 'sati' and placed his faith in the concept of one God.\textsuperscript{151} As one of the founders of the Hindu Literary Society in Madras during the 1830's he contributed to its activities like the spread of English education and the generation of political consciousness among people by arranging public lectures.\textsuperscript{152} The Society admitted members from different castes. The programme of this body included activities like the promotion of widow remarriage, female education and the uplift of depressed classes.\textsuperscript{153}

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\textbf{149.} \textit{Ibid.}, P.167. \\
\textbf{150.} \textit{Ibid.}, PP.195-96. \\
\textbf{151.} \textit{Ibid.}, P.233. Veeraswamaiah, it should be noted, was a contemporary of Raja Ram Mohun Roy. We do not have any evidence whether or not he was in touch with the Bengali Reform trends. He stated that "according to our Hindu Philosophy God is one which is expressed as "Ekamevadwitiyam Brahma". \\
\textbf{152.} The other co-founders of this society were Komaleswarapurma Srinivasa Pillai and Vembakam Raghavacharyulu. Gajula Lakshminarasu Chetty was also associated with the society later. Srinivasa Pillai liberally donated a sum of Rs.50,000 towards the development of education and started a girls' school in Madras. See A.Ramapati Rao, \textit{Veeresalingam Pantulu, Sambra Pariselama} (Telugu), (Viajayawada, 1972), PP.7 and 17. See also K.Veerabhadrara Rao, 'Achunikandhra Kavitwam meeda Anglasahitya Prabhavam' (Telugu), published in \textit{Udhathi}, November, 1953. \\
\textbf{153.} R.Suntharalingam, \textit{op.cit.}, PP.45-46. The society became inactive during the 1840's when the anti-missionary agitation was at its height. The attempts to revive it in 1846 did not bear fruit and it became defunct. However, the Hindu Literary Society was a forerunner of many a later association like the Madras Branch of British Indian Association in February 1852 and the Madras Native Association in July 1852.
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Vennelacunty Soobrow (Subba Rao) (1784-1839) a young protege and relation of Emugula Veeraswamaiah was also a 'dubashee' in the Sadr Supreme Court at Madras. 154 As a member of the School Book Society at Madras, he brought to the notice of the Government "the very deficient mode of education among the natives" and pleaded for its replacement by a well organised system of education with English as a part of it. 155 He declared that, "the mode of instructing the English language at present not only in the schools at the outstations but of the presidency itself...appear obviously inconsistent with the just principles of affording education", 156 and suggested to the Society the printing of books in English to be distributed at cheap prices.

The most important contribution in this direction was made by Swamyneena Muthoonarasimman Naidoo of Rajahmundry, a district munsiff, who in his book 'The Hitasooochane' 157

154. See his autobiographical account, Soobrow, op. cit.
155. For the detailed report he submitted to the Madras School Book Society see Ibid., PP.65-74.
156. Ibid., P.72.
157. Swamyneena Muthoonarasimman Naidoo, Hita Soochane (Moral Instructor in prose), (Telugu), (Madras, 1862). The author was one of the earliest English educated persons in Andhra. As he died in 1856 the book should have been probably written around 1850. There are 8 essays in this, each dealing with eight different topics like education, marriage, medicine and the like. These essays were earlier printed (1842-47) in a Telugu journal 'Hitavadi' published from Machilipatnam. He has illustrated every aspect of his writing with an episode or a story. The book is written in an easy style. See K. Enoch, "Telugu Vyasa Parinamam" (Evolution of essay in Telugu), an unpublished Ph.D. thesis in Telugu submitted to Sri Venkateswara University in May 1973.
succeeded in drawing the notice of his contemporaries to the social inequities connected with marriage and female education. The book, according to the author, was meant for women "as women need certain type of knowledge concerning their problems".\textsuperscript{158} He pleaded in the book for the introduction of scientific education and for the translation of scientific works from English into vernaculars.\textsuperscript{159} He went on to condemn popular superstitions like the belief in the existence of evil spirits and in the efficacy of the methods adopted by witch-doctors. He exhorted the people not to worship village deities in order to escape from the epidemics like cholera but to observe cleanliness and appealed to them to take proper medical care for their cure.\textsuperscript{160} With regard to his ideas on marriage he was much in advance of his contemporaries. He stressed mutual love and affection between the bride and groom and severely criticised wasteful expenditure in the name of marriage ceremonies.\textsuperscript{161} He mentioned and proved with the help of slokas (read during marriage ceremonies) that marriages were, in the past, performed only after girls attained proper age and maturity of mind.\textsuperscript{162} He thus condemned the system of

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\textsuperscript{158} \textit{Ibid.}, Preface.
\textsuperscript{159} \textit{Ibid.}, P.9.
\textsuperscript{160} \textit{Ibid.}, PP.20-21.
\textsuperscript{161} \textit{Ibid.}, P.165.
\textsuperscript{162} \textit{Ibid.}, P.166.
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child marriages and suggested the marriageable age of 12 for girls,\(^{163}\) and 16 for boys.\(^{164}\) Furthermore he attributed the practice of 'Kanyasulka' (purchase of child brides) to the system of early marriages which resulted in widowhood and immoral practices like debauchery and cruel practices like infanticide etc.\(^{165}\)

Another book, called 'Stree Kalakallolini' was published from Bangalore in 1875.\(^{166}\) The book was meant to meet the shortage of books for girls in the Telugu

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163. Ibid., P.176.
164. Ibid., P.195.
165. Ibid., P.216.
166. Jiyyar Suri, Stree Kalakallolini (Telugu), (Bangalore, 1876). Jiyyar Suri (1850-95) was a Telugu teacher in the 26th Division army girls school at Bangalore. The book has been divided into three parts. The first part called Stri Niti forms advice to females. ....and treats of piety and good behaviour. The second part, known as Stri Vidyamany, contains the authorities illustrative of the propriety of female education, and points out the advantage thereby obtainable by all the members of the family. The third part, or Stri Manaam, treats of the respect due to women..." See Ibid., Preface. The author's ancestors were educators of the native army stationed earlier at Visakhapatnam. When the army headquarters was shifted to Bangalore they too changed their residence. Jiyyar Suri wrote some other works including one on the evils of the 'nautch'. His book 'Stree Kalakallolini' received favourable notices in Journals like 'Vivekavardhani', 'Purushartha Prathayini' and 'Madras Standard'. During the summer months of 1876 he visited several towns in Andhr, including Guntur, Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam, Pithapur, Ellore and Rajahmundry where he met Veeresalingam and others. See for his biographical details Y.Bhashyacharyulu, Sriman Paravastu Jiyyarsurigari Jeevithamu (Telugu), (Bangalore, 1935).
language. Consisting of short essays the book was undoubtedly useful for women folk. Each essay also had an English title, like 'Female education is not contrary to ancient usage', 'The beauty of knowledge', 'Uneducated females are enemies to Children', 'The earth and other elements serve mankind', 'The whole world forms one family', etc. The author hoped that the publication of the book would "...remove the stubborn opinion against female education entertained by so many of our countrymen". He stated in one of his essays of the need for female education "as food is necessary for physical health, education is essential for mental growth".

A significant move in the direction of marriage reform was made by G. Vedantachary, Deputy Inspector of Schools, Visakhapatnam, in a memorandum submitted to the government of Madras in 1870. He stated that "the present style of Hindoo marriages is so very

168. Ibid., P.44.
169. Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Department, G.O.No.97, dated 25th January 1871. Vedantachary submitted in December 1870 the elaborate memorandum running into twelve pages in English with a Telugu translation, to the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Department, Fort St. George, Madras.
ignominous and absurd and their effects so piteous and unremediable....” Summing up the arguments, he stated that early marriages, disproportionate ages of the husband and wife, their mutual ignorance of each other before marriage and the payment of bride-price (Kanya-sulkam') were the notable evils connected with the institution of marriage resulting in widowhood and several other improper and immoral ways of behaviour. He proposed remedial measures like banning early marriages, Kanya-sulkam and fixing up age limit for girls (minimum nine years) and for boys (sixteen at the lowest) and consultation and consent of couples prior to marriage. He drafted a questionnaire on these issues and suggested to the Government to circulate it among leading scholars and public men of all districts in

170. Ibid. For a period of nine months, according to his memorandum, he consulted several scholars in the district, including the most orthodox ones, and came to certain conclusions to be placed before the Government.

171. Ibid.

172. Ibid. He was pleading for civil marriages when he proposed that marriages be registered in the Tahsildar's cutchery before their celebration. He suggested that any violation of the above rules be subject to a severe penalty.
Andhra and elicit their opinions before enacting favourable laws on them.\textsuperscript{173}

Thus by the end of the first half of the 19th century Andhra society experienced the first stirrings of reform activity which became more prominent and pronounced during the 1870's under the leadership of Kandukuri Veeresalingam.

\textsuperscript{173} Though not on same lines, but a similar trend was seen among some scholars during the same period. A tract in Telugu, on the marriageable age of girls, was written by Chadaluvada Anantharama Sastry, the brother of Seetharama Sastry who was a Telugu Pandit in the Presidency College, Madras. The theme of the tract was that a girl should marry only after she attained marriageable age of sixteen. See the Telugu translation of the original Sanskrit text by O. Venkatarangaiah, \\textit{Vivaha-kanya Swaroopa Niroopanam} (Telugu), (Madras, 1928), P.5. It appears that Anantharama Sastry submitted his tract, for approval to Sankaracharya of Kanchipuram. Then followed several tracts criticising and condemning this. To mention only two of the tracts, viz., (a) A native of Madras, Srimana Sastry wrote one tract in Sanskrit, and (2) Gurram Venkanna Sastry of Nellore wrote 'Vadaprasanam', which was approved by Sankaracharya. Anantharama Sastry, as we are informed, gave up his caste later and took part in inter-dining with people of other castes. See K. Purushotham, "Gopinatham Venkata Kavi and other Poets of Venkatagiri Samsthanam", PP.480-82, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Osmania University (Hyderabad), 1970.