CHAPTER IV

VEERESALINGAM AND SOCIAL REFORM:
THE UPLIFT OF WOMEN
Veeresalingam and Social Reform; The Uplift of Women

Ideas, by themselves cannot have an effect on an individual, much less on the society, unless they are followed up by action. Ideas become forces to reckon with only when they grip the masses. This is not, however, a spontaneous process. Men of new ideas and new programmes of action carry them to the people around them, propagate them and translate them into regular campaigns. Kandukuri Veeresalingam was such a man.

The atmosphere in which he was brought up and educated and also worked astir with many a new idea both in the case of society and in the case of language and literature. His uniqueness lies in the fact that he gathered them all up and fused them together. But a reservation must be made here itself. Both his ideas and programmes of action were confined to the superstructure of the Andhra Society, and more particularly to marriage and morals, education and dissemination of knowledge. However, he did not completely free himself from the impact of tradition although bourgeois values such as thrift, hard work and frugality made their way into his thinking. He was on balance predominantly 'modern'. His attempts at the reform of literary style stopped half way between the pedantic and obsolete 'Grandhika' and the more popular and intelligible 'Vyavaharika'. It was only when he was about to die that he fully grasped the social significance of 'Vyavaharika'. All the same, he must be given
due credit for having broken fresh ground in all these spheres of social life. In M. Somasekhara Sarma's words, he was the 'Veguchukka' or the 'Morning Star' of modern life in the Andhra Society.¹

His first effort, before he initiated the reform movements, was to endeavour in the creation of a healthy public opinion opposed to the social evils. He endeavoured to bring a change in the minds of people broadly preparing them for reform. Through his efforts he roused public interest over many issues like problems of women, corruption in administration, nautch question, idolatry, theism and the like. To do this he utilised his talents of a journalist (through his own journal 'Vivekavardhaman' and also other contemporary journals), a writer, a speaker and an organiser. Even while he was a student he contributed poems and articles to the bilingual journal, 'Godavari Educationist' edited by Barrow, Headmaster of the Zilla School at Rajahmundry.²

During his stay at Dowaleswaram as Headmaster of the Anglo-Vernacular School (in 1874), he started an association

¹ See M. Somasekhara Sarma's article, 'Veguchukka', op.cit.
² Veeresalingam, Swamy, P.63. Also see T. Venkatasubbarao, op. cit., P.27. The journal contained certain Telugu writings which Veeresalingam was editing. However, his writings in this journal, as also of other journals of this period, were mainly literary in their complexion.
there with a few like-minded individuals as members. To begin with, it discussed in its meetings issues relating to female education and the opening of a Girls' school which was actually started in September 1874. The above association later started discussing the religious and moral issues and also problems relating to the progress of the country and society. 3 Veeresalingam was thus striving hard to spread the ideas of reform among the people around him. In this connection another instance of the kind mentioned above may be noted. During this time, the 'Rajahmundry Provincial School Club' was formed (July 1875) with Basavaraju Gavarraju as its Secretary. 4 Its main aim was to arrange lectures on ethical and social issues and also to make its members lead their lives accordingly, setting an example to others. 5

While he was at Dowaleswaram Veeresalingam joined

3. Veeresalingam, Sweetya, P.I, op.cit., P.84. The association existed as long as Veeresalingam was at Dowaleswaram, holding weekly meetings.

4. Basavaraju Gavarraju later became a close follower and right hand man of Veeresalingam in his reform activities at Rajahmundry. Unfortunately he died prematurely and thus Veeresalingam lost in him a great friend and supporter of his efforts. Veeresalingam was so much grief-stricken at his death that it took quite some time for him to reconcile to the incident. Veeresalingam wrote and published a brief biographical sketch of Gavarraju. See Veeresalingam, Col.Works, Vol.VIII, op.cit., PP.765-801.

5. Veeresalingam, Sweetya, P.I, op.cit., P.89. Gavarraju went to Dowaleswaram and invited Veeresalingam to be present on the opening day of the club. He joined it as a member and spoke on the topic 'Unity' on August 15, 1875. Veeresalingam used to attend its weekly meetings regularly walking four miles from Dowaleswaram to Rajahmundry. For the full text of the lecture on 'Unity' see Veeresalingam, Col.Works, Vol.VII, op.cit., PP.443-53.
issue with Kokkonda Venkataratnam Pantulu\(^6\) who was editing the 'Andhrarabhasa Sanjivani' (published from Madras) by publishing articles in the 'Purusharthapradayini' (published from Machilipatnam).\(^7\) The controversy was over the subject of women's education. "The Editor is against female education and suggests that suitable works be written for their benefit in place of those in use at present".\(^8\) Veeresalingam was banking upon the good will of the publishers of the 'Purusharthapradayini' for the publication of his views. And finding it difficult to conduct an effective propaganda to counter the arguments of the orthodox sections, he decided to start a journal, 'Vivekavardhini' (in 1874).

6. Kokkonda Venkataratnam was on the faculty of the Presidency College, Madras, teaching Telugu. He was then the leader of the orthodox section opposing reforms both in society and letters. He was devoting space in his journal (mainly dealing with the Telugu literature) to propagate against the reform ideas like education for women, taboos the sea journey and opposing the widow marriages. The British government conferred on him the title of 'Mahamahopadhyaya' in recognition of his great scholarship in Sanskrit and Telugu. As there is no single work on Kokkonda Venkataratnam, references to him are found in Veeresalingam, Sreeya, P.I, op.cit., PP.71, 74, 96, 146, 154 and in P.II 120, 153, 162 and 250. Also see G.V.Sitapati, op.cit., PP.135-137 and 276, wherein he was described as "a purist in all respects".

7. Veeresalingam published his views in the form of easy and interesting verses favouring women's education. Verses are included in T.Venkatasubba Rao, op.cit., PP.56-57

In order to focus public opinion on social evils, he wrote a number of satires exposing the steady fall in social and individual values. The most well-known of them were 'Brahmavivaham' and 'Vyavaharadarmabodhini'. They became so popular that the students of Veeresalingam staged them to the public in and around Rajahmundry.

The crowning effort of Veeresalingam in building up a public opinion and creating a necessary climate for his campaign for social reform was the establishment of the Rajahmundry Social Reform Association on September 8, 1878, with half a dozen dependable members to carry on the propaganda work by arranging lectures and conducting weekly meetings.

With this background Veeresalingam commenced his work of social reform in Andhra. Social Reform movements dealing with problems concerning women - female education, 'Kanyakusakam' (bride-price), infant marriages and widow remarriages - are dealt with in the subsequent sections of


10. Ibid. It criticised the malpractices of the people in administration.

11. See the article written by one of Veeresalingam's former students in Yuga Purushudu, op. cit., P.30.

chapter.13

SECTION I : WOMEN'S EDUCATION

The emancipation of women occupied a pivotal place in the activities of social reform movements in India, in general. It is understandable, for, women in this country have lived in social bondage for centuries. The position, they held, by and large, was that of glorified slaves.14 Women, except under the matriarchal system, did not possess property rights, essential to develop individuality and self-respect. Women suffered, broadly speaking, because of (1) lack of social liberty, (2) infant marriages, (3) polygamy, (4) enforced widowhood, and more importantly (5) want

13. Social Reform movements during the 19th century, throughout India, were confined to certain broad issues of reform. Reform of infant marriages, enforced widowhood, temperance, nautch problems, intercaste marriages, and uplift of 'lower' castes, foreign travel and the like. See for a broader view of this presented by Mahadev Govind Ranade in C.Y.Chintamani, Part II, op. cit., P.95, wherein he listed out the issues to be tackled by reformers. These reforms, he stated, were intended "...to check the influence of the old ideas, and promote the growth of the new tendencies".

14. Exception had to be made with regard to the weaker sections of society among whom women had enjoyed certain amount of freedom or liberty as both husband and wife were working as equal partners in their daily chores. However, the position of women with regard to their economic, educational and cultural status, was miserable. Commenting upon the position of women in society the 'Hindu' wrote: 'Married before she acquired the age of discrimination to a boy of whose character and conduct nothing could be known, she is a stranger to all virtues of youth as to the benefits of liberal education; knows no period of life between girlhood and womanhood and is a premature victim to family cares and to the vagaries of her husband". The Hindu, July 4, 1888. Cited in Papers on Indian Reform, op.cit., PP.13-14.
of education. A contemporary writer of this time gave a vivid description of women: "Deprived of all education, confined within the four walls of the house, seeing little of the world and knowing little of it, immersed in superstition and opposed by customs, our women — to our shame be it said — are no better than slaves".

The backwardness of women was attributed to their ignorance resulting from the lack of education. The old pia school education was fast declining and in its place new schools were yet to come into existence. Even by the year 1887 the position was in no way better. The first government institution of a high school rank (provincial school) to be established in the coastal region of Andhra

15. See Sivanath Sastry's comment in this context that "All our efforts for national progress will be unavailing until this load of misery is lifted from the lot of our sisters". Sivanath Sastry, Theistic Church in India (Calcutta, 1986), P.42.

16. R.Venkata Subba Rao, ed. Kamala's Letters (Madras,1902), P.191. He went on to explain the place of woman as wife in a man's life. Though wife is a companion and partner in life, she was treated with scant respect. He quoted a verse from Mahabharata wherein a wife is described:

A companion
In solitude, a father in advice,
A mother in all seasons of distress,
A rest in passing through life's wilderness.

Ibid. P.192. He concluded saying that "Indeed we have no wives but women, no homes but houses".

17. Sanmargadarsani, Native News, September 1887. The journal, while praising the modern methods and principles of teaching, criticised the quality of teachers who were untrained and hence inefficient. It strongly pleaded for the establishment of three Normal schools (Teacher training institutions) in the Telugu country.
Establishment of the Taluk schools, where English was not taught satisfactorily, was the next step that the Company initiated for the spread of education. The desire to learn English, perhaps for reasons of securing jobs, was so intense that the natives did not favour these Taluk Schools. The desire for higher education could further be illustrated by citing an appeal by a girl student for the opening of a school to teach English.

Thus, when education was sparse in Andhra, female education was more so. A strong opposition and apathy existed among people towards this. It was a deep rooted belief for several years that women should not be educated. They felt that it would bring misfortune to families where

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18. S. Sathianathan, op. cit., P. 43. This school had classes upto the entrance examination which was equivalent to Matriculation.

19. The Government was providing equal matching grants to the taluk schools for the erection of school buildings and other non-recurring expenditure. See Public Proceedings, No. 1248, dated 28th August 1861, Madras Presidency. The inhabitants of Kasimkota, Anakapilly (sic), Bimilipatnam and Palkonda (Visakhapatnam district) collected Rs. 534-6-0 and asked for an equal amount of grant which was sanctioned subsequently.

20. One of the Inspectors (of schools) reported that throughout his division the desire for what the natives designate as English education "is intense and is daily becoming more so, and that it exists not only in populous towns but in villages also". Ibid., P. 48.

21. A girl by name Gungumah wrote a letter to Sudhiranjan, a native journal, stating that she had been studying at a Girls' school in Kakinada and she had to leave the school as there was no higher class than the sixth and hence she made a request for the opening of a high school to teach both English and Telugu. Native News, June 1874.
girls were educated. Also a feeling was prevalent that female education was meant only for Devadasis who had to learn fine arts to dance in temples and on public occasions. A prejudice so deeply rooted as this was not to be removed all of a sudden. Endless patience was

22. An interesting instance, in this regard, was given by a Lady, op.cit., P.56. She wrote that they had a Brahmin visitor (post-office head writer at Rajahmundry) to whom her husband broached the proposal of opening a girls' school and asked him whether any girls would join the school. "...but Sreenivasarow said, 'No, what for girls learn (sic)?'...he ended by saying that if a girl learned to read, some misfortune was sure to happen to her relations – most likely her father or mother would die".

23. This view gained strength, perhaps, because of the established custom of Devadasi children alone were attending schools. Kenneth Ingham, op.cit., P.86, stated that the idea of female education was opposed "because it was the custom that only dancing girls and the prostitutes...were taught to read". When separate girls' schools were established later, a plea was made by the public that dancing girls should not be allowed to attend the same schools along with other children and separate schools be opened for them. "A question was raised last year as to the propriety of admitting children of the dancing-girl class into schools supported by the state...the decision of the Government was that no children of this class under the age of puberty were to be excluded". See Report on the Administration of Public Affairs in the Madras Presidency, 1876-77 (Madras, 1878),P.339.

24. Though the opinion on this expressed by Richter may sound exaggerated, nevertheless it was generally true. He mentioned that "...there is the old and deeply rooted belief that women neither can learn nor ought to learn. Even to read the sacred books in the hearing of a woman is sternly forbidden in the Shastras; if her eyes but rest on the holy books for one moment or her hand touch their pages, they thereby become unclean". See Julius Richter, op.cit., P.331.
necessary to undermine it gradually, and to bring about a change in public opinion on this issue. Since learning was confined to a few 'upper' castes and ruling classes in society, and hence these taboos applied only to women belonging to these sections. However, the trend set by the orthodox sections was to continue for long even in modern times not recording much progress on the issue of women's education.

Government's efforts in this direction were almost nil till at least the middle of the nineteenth century when Dalhousie decided to extend support to the education of women which was "likely to lead to more important and beneficial consequences" and bring a "change in the habits of the people". The decision of the Government was subsequently confirmed by the Despatch of 1854. However, no substantial progress was made in this direction in Madras Presidency till the year 1868. Munro's efforts in finding

25. Dalhousie in his orders dated 11th April 1850 gave an indication of his views. "It is the opinion of the Governor General in Council that no single change in the habits of the people is likely to lead to more important and beneficial consequences than the introduction of education for their female children..." cited in Syed Nurullah and J.P. Naik, op. cit., P.95. The minute of Lord Dalhousie was the first official pronouncement indicating the future policy of Government in regard to female education. See for example J.A. Richey, ed. Selections from Educational Records, Part II (1840-59), (Calcutta, 1922), (Published for National Archives of India, New Delhi, 1965), P.47.

26. The year 1868 was significant because during that year Mary Carpenter visited India and at Madras she took special pains to further the progress of female education. This will be elaborated in the following pages.
out the general educational situation in Madras Presidency had revealed that as many as 5,840 girls were on the rolls of indigenous schools, out of a total enrolment of 184,110. The conservative attitude of the Government was in tune with the general attitude of the officials who considered women's education as a forbidden area to enter.

The missionaries were the pioneers in women's education in Madras Presidency. Between 1830 and 1837 several Boarding and Day Schools were opened in Madras by the London Mission, the Wesleyan Mission, the American Mission and the Church Missionary Society. In the initial stages only converts used to attend these schools as caste girls were not allowed to go to these schools. The first caste girls' school was opened in 1843 under the superintendence of Mr. and Mrs. Braidwood with nine pupils.

27. Syed Nurulla and J.P. Naik, op.cit., P.94. According to them the state of female education in Madras Presidency was better than in Bengal and Bombay. Even then the percentage of girls in the total enrolment was only 3.17.

28. "There were no Bethunes in Bombay and Madras where the work of pioneering female education was done by Christian Missions". The first attempt to establish an Indian Girls' School in Madras was made in 1821 under the auspices of the Church Missionary Society."Most, if not all, of the girls' schools started up to 1850 belonged to Christian Missions". See Indian Social Reformer, September 3, 1922 (Vol.XXXXIII, No.1).

29. The missionary conference, op.cit., P.158. It was "not only the pioneer but also parent of all caste girls' schools in the Presidency". Mary Carpenter mentioned about this school and other efforts made in this direction and stated that, "for some time it was found necessary to give the children a small daily payment for attendance; then this ceased and now the anxiety for education has become so great that the scholars pay a trifling fee". Mary Carpenter, Six Months in India (in two volumes), (London, 1868), Vol.I, PP.135-36.
undertook mainly three types of activity, viz., (1) opening of schools for Indian girls, (2) organising orphanages, and (3) zenana education (for women of the middle and upper classes). The progress made by the missionaries (according to the Reports of the Director of Public Instruction) in female education was a little more than six-fold between the years 1866–67 and 1876–77.  

Concerning the Andhra region, the claims of certain writers that there were no girls' schools prior to the one started by the initiative taken by Veeresalingam in 1874 at Dowaleswaram is not correct. The Missionaries had already started a few elementary schools for girls in Visakhapatnam, and Machilipatnam along with many boys' schools in several important towns of Andhra. Besides the contribution of the missionaries, a few local attempts also merit our attention. The native effort was mainly carried out by the aristocracy in the northern Circars of Andhra. A school for the education of Hindu girls was

30. In 1866–67 there were 4,638 girls of all castes and creeds and the number increased to 28,151 by the year 1876–77. Report quoted in The Missionary Conference, op.cit., p.164. It is also worth noting that in the Madras Presidency there were 248 women missionaries as against 301 males in 1901. The major activity of these women missionaries was to spread zenana education. See Richter, op.cit., P.343.

31. In their over enthusiastic attempts to credit Veeresalingam with several 'firsts', many people claimed that there were no girls' schools in Andhra prior to 1874. However, this was disproved by later researches. See for example, the article by D.V.Siva Rao, "Veeressalingam Pantulu garu" in Andhra Prabha, November 24, 1968.

32. S.Sethianathan, op.cit., P.52.
opened in April 1867 at Visakhapatnam by Srimati Janakiamma, widow of Suryaprakasa Rao of the well known Geday family of Visakhapatnam district. After the death of the founder, this school was maintained by her daughter Smt. Rutnamma, wife of Shri G.L. Narasinga Rao, the Zamindar of Anakapalle. She called in the aid of the sisters of the French convent of St. Joseph, who superintended the education. Its curriculum included both English and Telugu in addition to fine arts and crafts like drawing, music and needle-work.

The efforts of the Maharajah of Vizianagaram were better known. In 1868 the Maharajah, Vijayarama Gajapati,

33. Geday family were the estate holders of Shri Mohammedpuram, Anakapalle and other Zamindaries in Visakhapatnam district. A prominent member of this family by name Geday Narayana Gajapati was educated at Calcutta Hindu College for nearly ten years (1840-49) under the guidance of scholars like Dr. Richardson, Dwarkanath Tagore, Raja Radhakant, Deb and others. He was a sympathiser of Brahmo Samaj and personally liked by Maharshi Devendranath Tagore and Keshub chandra Sen. See "Vitarsnaseeli Geday Narayana Gajapati" by T. Donappa in Senadu (Telugu daily from Visakhapatnam), May 13, 1975.

34. The Madras Revenue Register, Vol.III, August 1869. Also see, for example, A. Vadivelu, Aristocracy of South India (Madras, 1903), Vol.II, P.13, wherein it is mentioned that "...Sri Gajapati Rao garu headed an undertaking with a view to promoting female education... which led to the opening of the Vizagapatam caste Girls' school was now under the management of the sisters of St. Joseph's convent, and is solely supported by the Geday family."

35. The strength of the school was 38. They included girls from Brahmin, Komati and Telaga castes. See Educational Proceedings, No.204, 8th May 1867, Madras Presidency.
established a school at Vizianagaram for Rajput and Brahmin girls. To this central school were affiliated seven branch samasthanam schools maintained by the Maharajah. None of the Maharajah's schools received any aid from the State and they merited admiration from the authorities of the Government.

Girls' education was patronised by the Rajah of Pithapur also. A Girls' school was started at Kakinada in 1868 with a monthly contribution of Rs.100/- (recurring expenses), and Rs.300/- per annum towards the purchase of prizes to be given away to girls of special merit. Furthermore he donated a site and an amount of Rs.900/- for the construction of a school on this site.

36. It was run at an annual cost of Rs.12,000/- . It had 165 girls and 9 teachers, "...and to the Maharajah will belong the renown of being the founder of an institution that as far as I know, has no rival in India at present". From the report of R.Bowers, the Inspector of Schools. See Educational Proceedings, No.396, 26th November 1868, Madras Presidency.

37. Ibid.

38. Madras Education Commission, op.cit. It stated, "The Maharajah of Vizianagaram and the missionary bodies, are alone yet in this work amongst us here". Carmichael, the District Collector of Visakhapatnam, played a prominent role in the promotion of female education in the northern Circars. He used his contacts with the Zamindars of Visakhapatnam district to the benefit of this cause and actively encouraged them to open Girls' Schools. Later on when he was transferred to Ganjam district as District Collector he followed the same policy there too. See T. Rajagopala Rao, A History of Indian Social Reform in the Nineteenth Century (Telugu), (Madras 1901), P.90.

39. See Sriram Vecrabrahmakavi, Sri Pithapura Samasthana Charitramu (Telugu), (Pithapur, 1938), P.252.
Mary Carpenter's visit to Madras in 1867 gave a much needed stimulus to female education. Her efforts deepened greatly the interest of the Government as well as the public in this regard, and in the same year a few Girls' schools were established in the city of Madras, the chief among them being Sreenivasa Pillay's Girls' School.\(^{40}\) She realised the need for a Normal School to train women teachers as the rules of the Government Grant-in-aid laid down that to become eligible for the grant a teacher should necessarily hold a certificate of competency.\(^{41}\) A meeting was convened, at her initiative, which was attended by "enlightened native gentlemen" to consider the subject of the Normal School and it issued a statement requesting the Government to open a Female Normal School.\(^{42}\) It was a milestone in the spread of female education in the South as it clearly indicated the genuine interest of the natives in this regard, though they were acting at the instance of an English lady.\(^{43}\) Subsequently the school was opened in 1870.\(^{44}\)

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43. Mary Carpenter addressed a letter to the Secretary of State for India on the need for establishing a female Normal School. In the course of the letter she stated, "female education is now generally accepted by enlightened part of the native community as very desirable, and Girls' schools are established...by native gentlemen themselves". See for the full text of the letter, *Ibid.*, PP.157–62.
44. S.Sathianathan, *op.cit.*, P.73.
In the Andhra region, the orthodox sections led by Kokkonda Venkataratnam were still voicing vehement opposition to womens' education. The reformers took up the issue of education for women on two grounds, viz., (1) that it would lead to the happiness of the individual who receives it, and (2) that it leads to social progress in general. A plea for the opening of more schools for girls was made by them. In 1872 Kokkonda started publishing articles in his journal opposing womens' education. The orthodox sections, in their fears and misapprehensions with regard to this issue, resorted to quoting of ancient texts to justify their position. If the orthodox

45. A few novels based on social conditions and activities of reformers of this period were written by the contemporaries of Veeresalingam, with Veeresalingam and his co-workers as characters in them. One such novel by N.Satyanarayananmurthy, Suseela (Vijayawada, 1967), portrayed vividly the opposition to Veeresalingam's ideas of reform.


47. Kokkonda wrote in his journal Andhra Bhashaganjivani that, "...the Hindus of former days were (sic) very wisely refrained from educating their females, and considers (sic) that they did so because it was their impression that females when educated might possibly excel the males; they would then, feeling their superiority, not to (sic) be subservient to them and more over might possibly conduct themselves with more freedom." See Native News, September 1872.
sections were led by Kokkonda, Veeresalingam led the reforming group and answered him through the columns of 'Purushhardapradayani'. His ideas on this subject bore fruit in 1874 when a Girls' school was started at Dowaleswaram. This event opened a new leaf in the movement of female education in Andhra as it initiated a definite move in the direction of the spread of the movement. Earlier efforts in a similar direction are stray individual attempts which did not form stepping stones to a movement of social reform, as definitely as they did in the case of Veeresalingam's attempts.

Now, at this juncture, the need for a separate journal was felt by Veeresalingam not only for the spread of reform ideas but to answer his critics also. A campaign, advocating women's education, introduction of English language and through its medium western knowledge, was started in the

48. By then Veeresalingam did not start his journal 'Vivekavardhami'. He published his articles sometimes in his name and at other times under the pseudonym 'patriot'. See T. Venkatasubba Rao, op.cit., P.56.

49. See Veeresalingam, Sweety, P.I, op.cit., P.84. Veeresalingam was working as Headmaster of Anglo-Vernacular school at Dowaleswaram in 1874. There he gathered round him a few young enthusiasts, inclined towards reform and they inspired the local philanthropists to start a Girls' school. This school, though not the first Girls' school in Andhra, was significant in the sense that it was started by the collective efforts of a few ordinary and yet enlightened people in a small place under the influence of reform ideas and hence it deserves special note.
columns of 'Vivekavardhani', the journal started by Veeresalingam. To ridicule the writings of Veeresalingam, Kokkonda started a new journal with the name 'Hasyavardhani'. Veeresalingam also started a new journal, 'Hasyasanjivani', a supplement to his 'Vivekavardhani' to repudiate Kokkonda's propaganda. Veeresalingam, in his newly started journal, gave a reply to an article of Kokkonda, entitled 'women do not deserve education', under the title 'men do not deserve education'.

The movement was gaining momentum in other parts of the Andhra region too. Societies were springing up in Machilipatnam, Visakhapatnam and Bellary to advocate female education. The pro-reform papers like the 'Hindu' gave

51. See Veeresalingam, Sweya, P.I, op.cit., P.96. This method of ridiculing Veeresalingam's reform ideas and starting new journals for this purpose by such learned and scholarly people like Kokkonda was resented, in recent times, by scholars. See for example A. Ramapati Rao's article, "Veeresalingam Pantulu Garu" in the 20th Anniversary number of Andhra Sangham (Calcutta, 1973).
52. The sarcastic style of the article clearly demonstrates the fact that the reformers decided to hit back at the orthodox sections, and thus in the process, educate the masses too. An extract from this article has been referred to in Chapter III, Veeresalingam's social ideas, f.ns.68 and 69.
53. Information on these centres is found in scraps of news items published in vernacular journals and reports on native news papers. Details of these associations are given in the subsequent pages in the context of spread of education.
expression to these ideas in its columns. It wrote, "A radical change is necessary in many of our customs and institutions....But there is one evil ... present degraded condition of our women.... their seclusion and their ignorance have made them entirely unfit for the exercise of that elevating and chastening privilege which is theirs by nature....The kitchen would cease to be their world, the priests should cease to be their moral preceptors... and their minds should be opened by a high and liberal education."54 Scholars like Dasu Sriramulu (1846-1908) from Machilipatnam championed the cause of female education during this period.55

Veeresalingam was pleading through the columns of his journal 'Vivekavardhani' for the publication of specially prepared text books for the Girls' Schools and suggested to the Government that they should institute awards for their compilation.56 Citing the example of the establishment of a Girls' High School at Poona, Veeresalingam requested the Government of Madras to open a similar institution in the Andhra region also.57 As a fitting finale

55. Dasu Sriramulu practised what he preached. Not caring for the adverse public reaction and social ostracism, he educated his daughter and also taught her music. (Music was supposed to be learnt exclusively by dancing girls then and others learning it would be put to severe criticism of the public). See Mahakavi Dasu Sriramulu Jayanti Sanchika (Telugu), (Hyderabad, 1975), p.8. 
56. Vivekavardhani, Native News, March 1884. 
57. Ibid., November 1884.
to his efforts, he started a Girls' School at Rajahmundry in 1881.58

Veeresalingam's journal for women, 'Satibhitabodhini' (first issue was published in April 1883), set an example and inaugurated an epoch of women's journals in Andhra. This journal was exclusively devoted for women and it contained writings, particularly scientific topics on women's health and care of children and the like. It served a great deal in disseminating knowledge to women.59 Many women's journals like 'Hindu Sundari', 'Zenana', 'Telugu Zenana', 'Kameswari', 'Chintamani', 'Savithri' were started.60 Quite a number of articles written by women writers, appeared in these and other contemporary vernacular journals on topics like 'female education', 'early marriages', 'widow remarriages', 'fine arts'.61

This period also witnessed the publication of a number of tracts in Telugu by men and women on female education:

59. Veeresalingam, Swesda, P.II, op.cit., P.406. The journal was run till 1890 and it was publishing much material useful for women such as biographies of eminent women, moral tales, notes on house-keeping etc.
60. For particulars of these journals see T.Ramachandra Rao's article "Women's Journals" in K.R.Seshagiri Rao, ed. op.cit., PP.124-25.
61. See for example the volumes of Savithri, for the years 1904, 1905, 1907; Telugu Zenana for the years 1898-1905; Krishnapatrika, 1901-1907; The Kameswari, 1907 and Kalpalatha, 1905.
Mention may be made of a few of them. P. Lakshminarasamba published a tract called 'Mahila Kalabodhini'. Two other tracts namely 'Stri Dharma Bodhini' and 'Stri Vidya Pancharatna Vishayam' by M. Venkaiah were written in the form of verses. Another important tract 'Strividyaasara Sangrahama' was by B. Pattabhirama Sarma. He mentioned that the lack of education and liberty for women were the twin causes for the misery and degeneration of India. M. Balakrishnamoorthy from Parlakimidi (Ganjam district) published 'Balika Hitabodhini', useful for women. R. Venkatesivudu published a small book "Elements of Domestic Economy".

In this connection mention should be made of a good

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62. She edited and published a women's journal from Kakinada called 'Savitri'. Being a close follower of Veerasingam, she played a prominent part in the women's movement in Andhra. See Savitri, February 1904.

63. B. Atchamambar, Abala Sachcharitra Ratnamala (Lives of Noble women in three parts), (Telugu), (Madras, 1901), Introduction.

64. Kalpeletha (a monthly journal edited by A. Kameswararao Pantulu and published from Visakhapatnam), February 1904 and June 1905. The editor of the journal reviewed the two tracts.

65. B. Pattabhirama Sarma, Strividyaasarasangrahama (Telugu) (Gudivada, 1911). The author quoted extensively from the 'Smritis' and 'Srutas' to establish his argument in favour of women's education.


67. Indian Social Reformer, Vol. VII, No. 8 (October 25, 1896), stated that the book contained information regarding air, light, cleanliness, water, food, clothing, jewels, income and expenditure, diseases etc., and the book was written in an easy style.
number of articles and books written by Veeresalingam on the problems relating to women. He wrote 'Deharogyadharmanabodhini' (in 1889) an essential book dealing with the health problems of women. He published another book 'Patnihitasoochani' in 1896. He wrote kavyas and satakas on women. In one of the satakas he wrote, "As education enables people to discriminate between good and evil, girls should also learn along with boys....Education gives them confidence and courage to face hardships and find solutions to their problems". He composed verses on worship of mother ('Matrupuja') and father ('Pitrupuja') for the sake of young girls. In these writings he endeavored to present a high place for woman in family

68. 'Deharogyadharmanabodhini' was a scientific book which was serialised in his journal for women 'Satihitabodhini'. See Veeresalingam, Sweeya, P.II, op.cit., P.208.

69. The book deals with the problems connected with child birth and upbringing. See Veeresalingam, Col.Works (Rajahmundry, 1951), Vol.VI.

70. Ibid., Vol.V.

71. A few verses from this satak, 'Nitidipika' are reproduced in his autobiography. See for example, Veeresalingam, Sweeya, P.II, op.cit., PP.209-10.

72. In one of the verses on 'Matrupuja' he said, "Mother is verily a Goddess on earth and we shall respect her feelings". Ibid., P.211. In another article 'Woman as Mother' he gave expression to similar views. "Mother provides the basis of the family's peace, cleanliness and grace. She is the pillar of unity among the members of the family. If she happens to be an educated woman, it is undoubtedly a blessing. Then she would be in an ideal position to bring up children in a healthy climate imparting to them qualities of respectful obedience, truth and goodness". Veeresalingam, Col.Works, op.cit., Vol.IX, PP.4-11.
and society and stressed the need for their education which in turn would bring enlightenment to homes in general. Among his books on women the most popular and interesting was the 'Satyarajapoorvadesa Yatalu'. It is a humorous book modelled on Swift's Gulliver's Travels. It is a powerful satire on the conduct of conservatives among males and their reactionary ideas with regard to women, and as a whole the domination of men over women.

Veerasingam translated his ideas in this regard into practical activity by starting a Girls' lower Secondary School as an appendage to the Widows'

73. On this a contemporary critic commented: "It is a place where the roles of men and women are reversed. Men bring up children, do household chores, they are put even under seclusion ('gosha system')... men are not given education and all teachers are women.... widowers are deprived of their moustache..." See R.Venkata subba Rao, op.cit., PP.196-97. Written under the influence of the English literature these satires had the sole aim of social reform and as such they were not, on all occasions, the best literary pieces. His total preoccupation, as well as identification, with the reform movements made him somehow include these ideas in his writings, thus undermining their artistic value to that extent. See the article on his farces ('Prahasamalantu') by S.Gopalakrishna moorthy in Yugapurushudu, op.cit., PP.141-46.
The school gradually gained importance and even those women who were under seclusion started attending the classes unmindful of the opposition and adverse comments from the elders in the family and orthodox sections in society.  

Private efforts to start schools by individuals inclined to reform were not only meagre but they were in no way an ideal solution to the problem in question. Nevertheless these efforts demonstrated the influence of the movement on the public mind and also willingness of the public in co-operating with the efforts of the reformers by financing as well as sending girls to the schools. In 1889 a Girls' School was started at Bhimavaram (the present West Godavari district). By 1894 it grew into a fairly big school with 90 girls on the rolls. M. Ramakrishna-sastry was the moving spirit behind it and by the year 1906,

74. This school (started in 1905) was in addition to the one (Girls' School) he started in Rajahmundry in 1881. They were contemplating to make the school, if possible, a high school and thus facilitate its pupils to pursue collegiate education. There were 50 girls. Also a few family women were on the rolls in addition to a few of the grown up girls. For the sake of family women who could not attend the school during the regular hours, arrangements were made to run 'zenana' classes for them thrice in a week in the building meant for women's prayer meetings. See, for a detailed account of this, Telugu Zenana (a monthly Telugu journal exclusively devoted to female education), January 1905. Also see C. Lakehsminarasimham's Autobiography op. cit., P. 202.

through his consistent efforts, he got a grant of Rs.800/- from the government. The school had by this time premises of its own with a strength of 133 pupils. At Guntur, the local women's organisation ('Guntur Stree Samajam') established a school in 1908. To start with, it had one teacher. By 1911 they were contemplating to have a third teacher.

Following the same example, Chilakamarti Lakshminarasaimham, a close follower of Veeresalingam, set up a school for scheduled castes in Rajahmundry in 1909 and named it after Raja Ramamohun Roy.

The movement in favour of the general uplift of women and their education in particular was spreading. Conferences, lectures, educational and cultural activities became the order of the day. Women's Associations were established at several places. A few details regarding this activity would show to what extent the movement spread.

76. *Krishnapatrika*, 15 March 1906.
78. He found it difficult first to get a house to establish the school. Thereafter he could not get pupils and then to find teachers to work in the school became a problem. Lakshminarasimham overcame all these problems and managed the school efficiently. See C. Lakshminarasimham's *Autobiography*, *op.cit.*, pp.249-50.
79. *The Hindu*, May 24, 1911 commented: "Ladies Conferences are organised solely by ladies for the promotion of culture and advancement among Telugu women."
In 1899 a meeting convened under the auspices of the local reform association at Vijayawada discussed women's education and passed resolutions urging the Government to take effective steps to promote female education.  

The 'Arya Bala Samajam' at Endaganddi was established in 1904 and had a small library. It was holding, on an average, three meetings a month. In October 1905 at Guntur a large conference of women took place and resolutions touching on the problems of women like education, marriage etc. were passed. As far back as 1897 an association called 'Veeresalinga Kavi Club' was established at Kumudavalli (near Bhimavaram in West Godavari district) and was holding regular meetings, annual functions till almost the 1920's. Veeresalingam was actively associated with this club.  

'The Hindu Girls' Education Society' at Bellary was one such leading association established for the promotion of women's education. The officials and other local gentry came under the presidency of T. Varadarajulu (District Munsiff) and formed the society to promote Girls' education.

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81. It celebrated the annual function in October 1905. Krishnapatrika, November 15, 1905.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid. Also see for particulars of its 8th Anniversary (in 1905), Krishnapatrika, December 15, 1905.
including music and other useful arts. In Guntur a female association 'Stri Sanatana Dharma Mandali', "was doing splendid work organising social gatherings and meetings and maintaining schools and also organised a ladies conference for the Andhra country".

At Machilipatnam an association by name 'Brindavana-pura Stree Samajam' was established in November 1902 under the leadership of Bhandaru Atchamamba and Oruganti Sundari Ratnamamba. The aims of this association were: (1) to strive for the eradication of social evils, (2) to work for the spread of women's education and learning of fine arts, (3) to teach useful crafts like knitting and sewing, and (4) to arrange lectures on health problems of women and other useful topics. The association used to meet twice a month and had a membership of forty, even though a good number of non-members were also attending its functions. It had acquired a good collection of books (bought with the membership fees) and set up a library and had a peon to

84. Telugu Zenana, April-May 1905 (Vol.12, Nos.10-11).
85. The Hindu, June 7, 1910.
86. Krishnapatrika, February 7, 1909. The association had ceased to be active after a couple of meetings and was revived in 1904 (September 17) by the initiative of women like N. Saraswathamma, P. Satyavathamma, V. Parvathamma, C. Pankajamma and others. From then onwards it was active till 1920's. (Krishnapatrika, published from Machilipatnam, was a popular vernacular journal of this period that gave maximum coverage of news to the activities of social reform associations).
87. Ibid.
88. Ibid.
distribute books, newspapers and journals to the members. 89

An association exclusively meant for the spread of women's education ('Stree Vidyabhivardhane Samajam') was established for the two districts of Godavari and Krishna in 1907. 90 In order to encourage and develop education among girls, the association conducted essay competitions and awarded gold medals to the winners. 91

At Visakhapatnam, it was reported, 'Sri Bharati Samajam' was started in 1905 and had 15 members. They were discussing, in addition to problems of local concern, issues like female education and early marriages. Arrangements were also provided to teach household arts. 92 The 'Samajam'

89. Krishnapatrika, October 10, 1905. A good number of books were donated to the library of the association by M. Bhujanga Rao Pantulu (editor, 'Manjuvani'), Brahmamanda Rao Pantulu (Proprietor of Sujana Press), R. Venkatasivudu (editor, 'Zenana') and Veerasesalingam. The moving spirit behind this association, during this period, was M. Rajabeyamma.

90. Kameswari (monthly Telugu magazine from Visakhapatnam meant for women under the editorship of P. Suryanareyana Sastry), March-April 1907.

91. Ibid. The girls were to be tested in the two books of Veerasesalingam, viz., (1) Stri Niti Dipika, and (2) Satyavathi Charitram.

92. Krishnapatrika, May 28, 1909. The journal published a summary of the talk given by V. Venkataratnamma on the occasion of its fourth anniversary. The editor commented that the opening of women's associations such as this are an indication of the great change that was taking place in Andhra.
held its fifth anniversary under the presidency of Budhavarapu Varalekshamma in May 1910 and discussed along with the annual report, problems concerning women. A meeting of the citizens of Visakhapatnam met and resolved to request "the Government to establish in Vizagapatnam a school for the Higher Education of Hindu women". The District Collector forwarded it favourably to the Government.

At Anantapur, an association by name 'Sarada Mandiram' was started in 1909 and was holding weekly meetings. That the movement was spreading to the interior parts of Andhra was indicated by the fact that associations were established at Bestavarapu Pet (Kurnool district) and Aska (Ganjam district). At Kakinada a women students' association

93. The Hindu, May 18, 1910.
95. Ibid., August 27, 1909.
96. Ibid., June 11, 1909. The association was mainly concentrating on educational activities.
97. Ibid., December 1905. The speech delivered by K. Venkataramanamma was published in its columns in which she extolled the services rendered by Veeresalingam to the cause of women.
was formed under the leadership of P. Lakshminarasamamba.  

The need to establish more women's organizations was 
stressed in an article by A. Narayana Rao under the title 
"The Mission of Ladies' Associations".

Apart from several district and other lower level 
social conferences which discussed female education as 
one of the many items on their agenda, special reference 
has to be made to the Godavari district association confere­
ences at Rajahmundry (1914) and Peddapur (1915), the 
Kurnool district conference (1914), the first Bellary 
district conference (1914) where the question of female 
education received special attention.

For the first time an all-Andhra women's conference

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98. Savithri (Monthly journal published from Kakinada), February 1904. The editor P. Lakshminarasamamba, a close follower of Veerasingam, played a prominent part in the women's movement in Andhra. 'Savithri' was one of the leading women's journals edited and published by a lady during this period.


100. Public Proceedings, No. 517, 28 April 1914, Madras Presidency. The Conference at Rajahmundry took place on 21st, 22nd and 23rd of March 1914. At Peddapur the conference was held on 6th and 7th March 1915. See Public Proceedings, No. 774, 18th May 1915, Madras Presidency.

101. Public Proceedings, No. 1298, 8th October 1914.

was organised at Guntur in 1910. It was presided over by P. Lakshminarasamamba. Delegates from all over Andhra attended it. The conference laid main emphasis on the female education. The conference pleaded for the inclusion of vocational education along with general education in the curriculum and suggested the starting of at least one school, to begin with, in each district. It was noteworthy that women's organisations, realising the need for vocational education, started demanding its

103. At the National level, since 1903, a Ladies' section was added to the Indian National Social Conference and a women's conference was held in 1909. See R.C. Mazumdar, ed. *op. cit.*, P. 994.

104. See the Presidential address of the conference published in *Guntur Pradhama Andhra Mahila Sabha Upanyasamanjari* (Telugu), (Guntur, 1910), PP. 7-11. The volume consists of speeches delivered during the conference.

inclusion in the schools.  

The Conference noted with gratification that women's associations were being established in villages where regular weekly or fortnightly meetings were taking place. 

The impact of the movement was felt throughout the

106. The need for vocational education for women was realised by reformers like Veeresalingam and they pleaded for it. See for example Veeresalingam, Col.Works, Vol. VIII, op.cit., PP.456-57. Though not on the same lines, this tendency was prevalent among the Madras reformers also. Justice Muttuswami Aiyar stated, "Another matter which requires attention is that the curriculum which is designed for girls should not be framed too much on the pattern of the curriculum prescribed for boys. It should be specially adapted to the wants of women in life...they should be enabled to lay in a stock of knowledge which will be of service to them in managing the house, ...in bringing up training children (sic), in enforcing attention to cleanliness...in rendering the home neat and tidy, in imparting to the home life a tone of cheerful contentment...and in acquitting themselves well and honourable amidst all the vicissitudes of life as wives, daughters and mothers". Journal of National Indian Association, 1883, PP.577-78. Cited in Papers on Indian Reform, op.cit., P.26. The difference in the attitudes of Veeresalingam and leading women from Andhra, and the Madras reformers was noticeably visible. Veeresalingam pleaded for vocational education to make women self-supporting and independent and to acquire useful skills in life. Muttuswami Aiyar was laying more stress on making women better house-wives and at best women of enlightenment. Also see the Presidential address of K.Nageswara Rao at the 22nd Guntur District Social Conference (Telugu), (Bezwada, 1913), PP.16-17, wherein he suggested that women should be trained to undertake medical, nursing and teaching professions which would suit their temperament.

107. Ibid., P.25. That the movement was spreading into the country side and women were evincing interest in education, reading of journals, arranging meetings and lectures was observed by M.Kameswaramma in her articles "Hindu Streela Prasthutha Sthithi" in Andhra patrika (Telugu), (annual number), April 1911.
Andhra region and it was visible in several fields. Its impact on journalism (starting of women's journals) has already been dealt with. Besides the publication of several vernacular tracts, a good number of articles on various issues dealing with them were being published regularly in contemporary journals. One special feature of this movement was that it threw up a few women as powerful writers. Considering the general backwardness of women both educationally and culturally, the contribution of these women writers was no mean achievement. The leading writer, in this connection was Bhandaru Atchamamba (1874-1906) the author of 'Abalasaaccharitra Ratnamala' ('Lives of Noble Women'), in 1901. She mentioned in the 'preface' that she wrote the book, (1) to disprove the established view that women were weak and unwise, (2) to disprove the false

108. The same journals from which the activities of women's organizations are quoted published good deal of materials on the subject. The standard of the articles was not high as they were meant for women who were not at this time highly educated.

109. Referred above in f.n.63. The book was written on the basis of records available in Hindi, Marathi and Telugu and also the 'History of the Telugu Poets' by Veeresalingam and the articles published in 'Zenana' and 'Satishabodhini'. The contents of the book were first published by Veeresalingam in his journal 'Chintamani'. The author was in Maharashtra for some time and learnt the Marathi language and translated from it into Telugu the lives of Maharashtrian women reformers like Ramabai. Perhaps she was also influenced by them to some extent. See preface to the book by B. Atchamamba, op.cit.
reasoning that women, if educated, would be spoiled and (3) to provide enlightenment to her Telugu sisters. 110 She undertook a tour of Andhra in 1903, giving lectures and organising women's associations. She provided shelter to many destitute women and persuaded her younger brother-in-law to marry a widow. 111

K. Seethamma (1872-1934) was another renowned writer of this period. As a young girl she was brought up by Veeresalingam and was thus influenced by his ideas. She assisted him in his reform activities concerning women and worked as an honorary teacher in the Zenana School and was also one of the organisers of the women's wing of Rajahmundry Prakshanama Samaj. 112 She wrote the biography of Veeresalingam in verse which merited recognition in the literary circles. 113

110. Ibid.
111. Telugu Zenana, February 1905. Also see Savithri, January-February, 1905.
112. See the article of V. Lakshmikantamma "Neti Vidushi-manulu" in Yugapurushudu, op.cit., PP.98-99. Also see the article by G. Sitapati "Pantulugari Samakalikulu" in Ibid., P.189.
113. See K. Seethamma, Sri Kandukuri Veeresalingam Charitraamu (Kakinada, 1921). It was not the first biography of Veeresalingam. The earliest biography of Veeresalingam (in Telugu) was by T. Venkatasubba Rao (referred earlier) published in 1898. Seethamma's biography consisted, approximately, of 740 verses written in traditional style. As she was closely associated with Veeresalingam and his work, the account she gave of him was more a glowing tribute than a critical analysis of his life and work. See for the review of the book in Bharathi, February 1963. See for a brief biography of Seethamma in Vignanasarvaswamu, Vol.VI, op.cit., P.1199.
In addition to this she wrote the biographies of Lady Jane Grey and Abalyabai, and some satakas and small booklets on duties of women. She presided over the ladies section of the first Andhra Conference (for separate Andhra Province) in 1913 at Bapatla.

Another woman who emerged as a powerful writer and organiser was P. Lakshminarasamamba. She was the first woman editor of 'Savitri', a monthly journal published from Kakinada exclusively for women. In addition to being a journalist and organiser of Kakinada women students' organisation ('Stri Vidyaadhini Samajam'), she also wrote a tract on female education, 'Mahila Kalabodhini'.

The impact of the movement could further be noticed in the attendance of women delegates to the District Social

114. B. Atchamamba, op. cit., Preface. Indian Social Reformer, (Vol.XII, No.13) November 24, 1901, had the following to say in its columns about Seethamma. "There is a lady K. Sitamma, disciple of Veeresalingam, who translated the English poem 'Lady Jane Grey', organised ladies associations and lectures in Cocomanda which created quite a sensation in Cocomanda".

115. V. Lakshmikantamma's article in Yugapurushudu, op. cit., P.99. This was a clear indication that women began to take active interest in political problems of the day which augured well for the national movement later.

116. Referred above, f.n.98.

117. B. Atchamamba, op. cit., Preface. Also see Yugapurushudu, op. cit., PP.97-102, for a number of other women writers of this period and particulars of their writings.
Conference held annually.\textsuperscript{118} With the spread of education and other cultural activities, women began to associate themselves with the public service activities like opening of hospitals and other social service programmes.\textsuperscript{119} The growth of literary, cultural, educational, scientific, reform associations and debating societies and social clubs in Andhra was remarkable during this period.\textsuperscript{120}

Discussing broadly the spread and effects of the movement for women's education and the enlightenment it brought about in the Telugu districts, a contemporary stated: "Female education, though still at a low level, is however rapidly progressing. In 1881, there were in all 67 schools for girls and 2,569 girls attended them. In 1908 the number

\textsuperscript{118} See for example R.Venkatasaivudu, \textit{Samskriti, op.cit.}, P.75. Women delegates attended the Godavari District Social Conference held at Eluru in 1897. This was the first District Social Reform Conference organised in the Andhra region. Also see Upasamasamajari, \textit{op.cit.}, P.25, wherein it was stated that delegates from several parts of Andhra attended the Social Reform Conference held at Kakinada.

\textsuperscript{119} \textit{Savithri, op.cit.}, January 1904.

\textsuperscript{120} District-wise break-up of the Associations was as follows: Ganjam - 13; Visakhapatnam, - 16; Godavari - 26; Krishna - 19; Bellary - 17; Cuddapah - 10; Nellore - 9; Kurnool - 6; Anantapur - 3; See Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency, 1890-1900 (Madras, 1900), Appendix, P. XXVIII-B. The break-up figures broadly indicated the intensity of the general impact of the movement in these districts. Rightly the native district of Veeresalingam (Godavari) topped the list. The three other districts where the reform activity was popular were Krishna (19), (where Machilipatnam is situated); Bellary (17) in the Ceded districts and Visakhapatnam (16).
of schools increased to 329 and girls to 17,091. There are three or four Telugu journals edited and published by Telugu ladies themselves. In all chief centres in the Northern Circars there are found Ladies Associations, where women gather in large numbers, have lectures, Kalakshepams, music parties etc. Some times social matters also are discussed. In some places women have been able to establish their own schools for girls wherein addition to ordinary education, music, sewing, etc. are taught. Ladies conferences are organized where lectures on female education, women in ancient India, domestic economy, home sanitation etc., were given by ladies themselves.... The Telugu woman has developed a passion for lectures, social gatherings and street processions....now that she is more ready to throw aside the old ideas, practices and traditions, the society is sure to powerfully change in no distant future".121

SECTION II : EARLY MARRIAGES AND 'KANYASULKAM'

A major reform activity that engaged the attention of Indian reformers as a whole was in the field of marriage reform. It included movements against infant marriages

121. The Hindu, April 25, 1911. This is an extract from the article written by an anonymous writer under the caption "The position of Telugu Women".
and 'Kanyasulkam' ('purchase of brides') and widow re-marriages.

It was calculated that, by the close of the 19th century, there were 24,257 married girls below four years of age in the Madras Presidency. Out of this 11,904 were in the Northern Circars alone, comprising the districts of Ganjam, Visakhapatnam, Godavari, Krishna and Guntur.122 Almost half of the total number were in the Northern Circars though population of the region was one-sixth of the Presidency. This number, however, did not include the statistics of the Ceded districts which amounted to one-fourth of the total number of early marriages.123 Married girls between the age groups of 5-9, in the whole of the Presidency, were 1,44,482 of whom 72,102 were in the Northern Circars.124 Here again more than half of the total number of infant marriages took place in the Circars.

Infant marriages were common mainly among the Brahmins. The non-Brahmin castes were gradually adopting many of the customs of the Brahmins in their attempt to acquire a higher social status. Though the practice was glaringly unreasonable

122. Census of India, 1891, Vol.XIV, Madras, Table VIII, Part B. Also see Chintamani, February-March, 1898.
123. Census of India, 1891, Madras, Vol.XIV, Table VIII, Part B.
124. Ibid. The Ceded districts amounted to 21,753. It is thus clear that early marriages were most common among the Andhra regions of the Presidency.
and unscientific, it came to be defended on religious grounds. Consequently, parents who did not perform early marriages were considered as flouting the sacred texts and hence 'sinners'.

In Andhra there were solitary voices of protest against this social evil even before 1850. From then onwards a public debate was going on, in the press and on platform, on this issue. Dampuru Narasaiah (of Nellore district), editor, 'People's Friend' (at Madras) and an assistant teacher at Pachayappah's High School at Madras, published a number of letters on this issue, in 'Madras Times', 1865. This was the earliest recorded tract on infant marriages in South India by a Telugu intellectual working in Madras. Quoting extensively from Smritis (including Manu) and Sastras in which marriage rites were mentioned, he declared that infant marriages were "not only opposed to common sense, but are also contrary to the very sentiments and doctrines expressly promulgated"

125. "Reprehensible is the father who gives not his daughter in marriage at the proper time (8 years)." See D. Narasaiah, Letters on Hindu Marriages (A reprint of the Letters that appeared in the 'Madras Times'), (Madras, 1867), P.6.

126. This was dealt with in Chapter II under the section 'Pre-Veerasingam Reform Trends'.

127. Narasaiah published letters not in his name but under three different names, G. Venkanna Shastriyar, C.V. Runganatha Shastriyar and C. Amunta Rama Shastriyar. The letters discussed the pros and cons of infant marriages which were later on published in a book form. See D. Narasaiah, op. cit., Preface.

128. Ibid., PP.3-4.
in the sacred formula pronounced on the celebration of the marriage itself; and in the sacred books on which our marriage rites are founded.\textsuperscript{129} He also expressed advanced views such as freedom of choice to be given to girls in choosing their husbands.\textsuperscript{130}

Veerasingam took up the issue on the same basis, quoting the Shastras, that infant marriages were not justified. He propagated his views through his journals, 'Vivekavardhani', 'Zenana', 'Chintamani' and 'Satya Samvardhani'. Writing in 'Vivekavardhani' in 1884, he stated that 80\% of the girls married quite early became widows. He made two suggestions in the form of practical measures to prevent the recurrence of infant marriages; (1) fixing a time limit for married men to appear for the university Entrance Examination and also making them ineligible for scholarships or prizes, and (2) preferring unmarried candidates for public employment. The journal complained that the Government was complacent in this matter because it was

\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., P.1.

\textsuperscript{130} While doing so, he was talking of the enlightened days. He stated, "The question then is this, are Hindu females to continue to be given in marriage while they are yet mere children, in accordance with ancient usage, or...in accordance with the spirit of more enlightened days, to abolish this custom and follow the more convenient and reasonable practice...Hindu females not only To choose a proper mate But proper time to marry?" See Ibid., P.10.
afraid that "it would hurt the religious susceptibilities of the Hindus".\textsuperscript{131}

The vernacular newspapers followed suit and discussed the problem from various angles. News coverage was given to highlighting the glaring examples of infant marriages. 'Vartadarsani' brought to the notice of the public the case of a young girl of thirteen, who, became pregnant, and died in childbirth. It lamented that so many young girls were victim of "the accursed practice of child marriages".\textsuperscript{132} It regretted that the Government did not take any steps to pass an Act for its total abolition.

Infant marriages reached such absurd proportions that ten-month old children (sometimes even less) were married.\textsuperscript{133} In a long article on this topic, 'Satyasamvardhani' concluded that early marriages would lead to the

\textsuperscript{131} Vivekavardhani, November 1884, Native News, 1884. Another vernacular journal Sammargadarsani, January 1885, protested against early marriages and the concomitant evils. It pleaded with the Government to take steps to stop the evil. Native News, 1885.

\textsuperscript{132} Vartadarsani, April 1894. Native News, 1894. (The journal was published from Nellore). A former student of Veeresalingam, and, a reformer later, V. Suryanarayana Rao, in his autobiography, Suryanarayameeyamu, op. cit., p.18, mentioned that his sister was married at the age of 7 to an old man who died soon, leaving her a widow. Several instances of child marriages were mentioned by C. Lakshminarasimham in his autobiography, op. cit., pp.10-11 and 20. Also see in this context Vennolaounty Soobrow, op. cit. Soobrow himself married child-girls who prematurely died of childbirth.

\textsuperscript{133} Budhavidheyi, March 1888, Native News, 1888. (The journal was published from Machilipatnam). Telugu Zenana, June 1899 (Vol. VI, No.12) published a news item that in Sangivalasa village (Visakhapatnam district) a female child of 18 months was married to an young man of eighteen years.
physical and mental degeneration of the nation. 134

Early marriages could be attributed to several reasons. Apart from the disproportionate numbers between the two sexes (the number of eligible men including widowers was greater than that of women for the reason that the widowers were permitted to remarry whereas widows were not), there were other causes like (1) prohibition of intercaste and also inter-sect marriages, (2) disallowing endogamous ('sagotra') marriages, (3) restrictions imposed by horoscopes and astrology with regard to the compatibility between boys and girls, 135 and (4) alleged restrictions imposed by the Shastras with regard to the marriageable age of girls. Owing to these factors, the poor were selling away their infant daughters, and the rich were purchasing the brides,

134. Satyasamvardhani, June 1895 (Vol.IV, No.6). Other journals also published a good deal of material in the form of verses, articles, short farces on this problem. See for example Telugu Zenana, July 1900 (Vol.8, No.1) which published verses under the title "The Condition of Ladies". Also see an article which dealt with the health hazards of early marriages in Krishnapatrika, February 16, 1908. Hindujana Samskarini (a bilingual journal from Madras edited by M.Butchaiah Pantulu), June 1888, questioned that if the edict of the King of Abyssinia could cut off the noses and heads for such trifling offences as taking snuff or smoking, why not the Government appropriately punish such parents who perform infant marriages? See Native News, 1888.

135. Sir T. Madhava Rao, Madras Social Reformer, said, "The difficulties attendant upon the choice of suitable husbands for the girls of a Hindu family are generally many and great, and I am bound to say that these difficulties are enormously aggravated by Hindu Astrology". Quoted in The Papers on Indian Reform, op.cit., P.72.
both resulting in 'Kanyasulikam'.

Veerasingam in his lecture on infant marriages, proved with the authority of the sacred texts that such marriages had no religious sanction. In the same lecture he pointed out the dangerous effects of these early marriages on the health of both mothers and children which he said, would ultimately lead to the degeneration of the nation, physical as well as mental. Such marriages, he stated, would hinder the education of girls and consequently young mothers would be incapable of training their children. Veerasalingam wrote a satire, 'Brahmavivahamu', vividly portraying the evils of infant marriages, 'Kanyasulikam' and extravagant wedding expenses and the like. This social comedy, popularly came to be known as 'Peddayyagari Pelli'

136. Veerasingam, Col.Works, Vol.VII, op.cit., PP.37-38. Veerasingam rightly linked up this issue with the problem of widows and started the crusade against the whole problem in its integrated form. Mahadev Govind Ranade, in his social reform endeavours was concerned mainly with two things, viz., (1) infant marriages, and (2) widow remarriages. He stated that "the Aryan society of the Vedio, or more properly speaking, the 'Grihya Sutra' period, presents the institution of marriage in a form which recognised female liberty and the dignity of womanhood in full". Ranade, after examining carefully various Smritis, concluded that, "the majority fix the minimum marriageable age at 25 in the case of males and the maximum at 50. Regarding females, marriage at the 12th year, and consummation at the 16th year appear to be normal order of things". Ranade pinned his faith on the progress of female education which would lead to the eradication of this evil and also to the better appreciation of female emancipation. See M.B. Kolaskar ed. Ranade's Religious and Social Reform, op.cit., PP.XIV-XVI.
(wedding of an old man), was staged several times in and around Rajahmundry town. 137

The Rajahmundry Social Reform Association championed the movement against infant marriages and decided to work for legislation declaring marriages illegal for girls below ten years of age and for boys below fourteen. However, the consummation of marriage, the Association declared, should not take place before 14 and 18 years of age for girls and boys respectively. 138 The members were asked to take pledges in accordance with its objects that they

137. This proved to be a deadly weapon in the hands of social reformers. It became popular throughout Andhra and when Veeresalingam went to Machilipatnam after two years of its publication, a little girl, to his surprise, recited the whole piece in his presence. Some scholars are of the view that Veeresalingam who satirised the Hindu Society did not spare its leaders who in his view were hypocrites by birth and breeding. See for an account of his satires, K.Lakshmiranjanam's article "Natakamulu" in Yugapurushudu, op.cit., PP.63-64. To the criticism that he was unduly harsh to his opponents he replied that the situation required a stronger dose.

138. K.R.V. Krishna Row, Social Reform Association and its Objects (Telugu), (Rajahmundry, 1894), P.4.
should in no way be connected with infant marriages.\textsuperscript{139}

In 1898 T. Rajagopala Rao, an active reformer and follower of Veerasalingam, delivered a scholarly lecture on 'The Early Marriage' to the students Association at Kakinada. He proved that the Smritis did not sanction it and as this practice existed mainly among the Brahmins and Vaisyas, appealed to the other communities not to imitate them.\textsuperscript{140}

He exhorted the young men who were present in the meeting to boldly undertake the performance of marriages after the attainment of proper age. Malabari's campaign for the Age of Consent Bill aroused much interest in Andhra and papers relating to it sent by Ramade to Veerasalingam were

\textsuperscript{139} The Third Indian Social Conference (met at Bombay) in 1889, in its resolution (1) declared that, "...with a view to prevent early completion of marriages, which leads to the impairment of physical health of both husband and wife, and to the growth of a weakly progeny, cohabitation before the wife is 12 years old should be punishable as a criminal offence, and that every effort should be made by awakening public conscience to the grave dangers incurred to postpone the completion of marriage till the age of 14 at least, as being in accordance with the dictates of our ancient medical works and modern science..." C.Y.Chintamani, \textit{op.cit.}, P.IV, Appendix, P.368. The Social Conference was debating and passing resolutions on this issue from time to time. See for example the resolution passed at Amraoti Conference in 1897 which, in strong terms, condemned the practice of men of more than 50 years of age marrying young girls below twelve and actively discouraged "all marriages where the difference of age between the parties exceeds thirty years". \textit{Ibid.}, PP.369-70.

\textsuperscript{140} T.Rajagopala Rao, \textit{The Early Marriage (A Lecture in Telugu)}, (Beswada, 1898), PP.3-14. In a novel written during this period by G.Kanakaraju entitled 'Viveka Vijayamu' the problem of infant marriages was highlighted. See \textit{Indian Social Reformer}, May 30, 1897 (Vol.VII, No.33).
signed by the members of the Prarthana Samaj and the
Social Reform Association at Rajahmundry.\textsuperscript{141} The Social
Reform Conferences that met in Andhra gave priority to
this issue in their agenda and resolutions were passed
condemning early marriages.\textsuperscript{142} In the neighbouring native
state of Mysore the Government passed a legislation
abolishing early marriages of girls below the age of
8 and boys of 14. It also prohibited by the same law,
marrriages of men above 50 years of age with the girls below

\textsuperscript{141} This act was considered as taking an extreme attitude
in social matters. See R. Venkatasivudu, \textit{Samasmriti},
\textit{op.cit.}, P.15. Two public meetings, in this
connection, took place at Kakinada and Machilipatnam.
The discussion over this issue did not lead to any
division in the ranks of Andhra reformers as it
did at Madras. See Suntharaligam, R., \textit{op.cit.}, P.323.

\textsuperscript{142} See for example The Presidential Address of K. Nageswara
Rao on the occasion of the 22nd Guntur District Social
Conference in 1913. (Bezwada, 1913), P.19. Also see
the news item 'Mandala Sabhaalu' (District Conferences)
in Chintamani, February-March 1898 (Vol.7, Nos.8-9).
the age of 14. 143

'Kanyasulkam'

The practice of 'Kanyasulkam' (purchase of brides) in Andhra could be traced back to medieval times. 144. It

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143. Satyasamvardhani, July 1893. Also see S. Natarajan, A Century of Social Reform in India (Bombay, 1939), P. 103. Condemning Venkata Rao's marriage (54 year old man and a judge of the Court of Small Causes at Madras) with a ten year old girl, Dampuru Narasaiya commented in his paper ('People's friend'): "We advice our Social Reform Associations and friends devoted to the cause all over the country to get up numerously signed memorials to the local Government and the Government of India, asking for the passing of a law in British territory, similar to the regulation now in force in Mysore, for the prevention of Infant Marriages and the marriages of old dotards to young girls". See Indian Social Reformer, November 22, 1896 (Vol. VII, No. 11). The issue was still being debated in the press as late as 1915. As some journals welcomed the proposed Civil Marriage Bill in 1911, some vehemently opposed it. Krishnapatrika, 25 August 1911 supported it while The Aryamatha Bodhini (Kakinada) 31 October 1911 opposed it. See Native News, 1911. Trilinga (Madras), in its issues of October and November 1915, was pleading for post-puberty marriages.

144. There is an interesting piece of information regarding the prevalence of this practice in the South (including the Andhra region) during the times of Vijayanagar Kingdom and the manner of legislation they were effecting during those times in relation to social problems. See S. Srinivasa Raghavaiyangar, op. cit., P. 45, f. n., which stated: "There is an inscription at Virinjipuram, North Arcot district, dated during the reign of Veerapratapa Devaraja Maharajah of Vijainagar, A.D. 1419, which shows that the practice of paying money to parents of girls to induce them to give them in marriage was widely prevalent in medieval times. The Inscription states... 'the great men of all branches of sacred studies of the kingdom drew up... a document containing an agreement regarding the sacred law. According to this, if the Brahmins of this kingdom...Kamadigas, Tamiras (sic), Telungs (sic)... conduce a marriage, they shall... do it by Kanyadanam (gift of girls). Those who do not adopt kanyadanam, i.e., both those who give away a girl after having received gold, and those who conclude a marriage after having given gold, shall be liable to punishment by the king and shall be expelled from the community of the Brahmins".
originated in poverty and also in the apprehension of parents that their daughters might not get married after they grown up. However, this evil practice was mainly confined to the Brahmins and to a lesser extent to the Vaisyas. Early marriages and their attendant evil, widowhood and the legal sanction of remarriage to widowers increased the demand for child brides. Also the idea of having heirs, to perform religious rites after their death and to look after family properties, induced old men to go in for the purchase of brides. The problem of purchase of child brides by aged men inevitably resulted in early widowhood. During the first half of the 19th century this practice was rampant in Andhra. Charles Philip Brown (Acting Criminal Judge at Rajahmundry in 1833) received a letter from a village officer, requesting him for monetary help of an amount of sixty rupees to purchase a bride for his second marriage since he happened to be a widower. 145

Veeresalingam condemned the evil in his 'Vivekavardhani' and also by writing satires and giving lectures. His lecture on 'kanyasulkam' was based on the Shastras which according to him never sanctioned this practice. 146 He stated that

145. Brown incorporated the letter in the English translation of the Telugu Reader and made a note on 'Kanyasulkam': ‘...the more daughters a man has, the better off he is, as there is always a rapid demand for them; but to get a son married is difficult and costs a large sum. A widower finds the difficulty still greater”. See C.P.Brown, Telugu Reader (Madras, 1852), PP.193-94.

"according to Manu and Kasyapa a purchased maiden cannot be a wife but only a maid servant. Accordingly she is not eligible to perform the religious rites intended to propitiate the Manes. The Vaisyas and Sudras had realised this as an evil practice and ceased performing it. However, the self-styled upper caste people (Brahmins) continued to indulge in this devilish practice unashamedly. The Brahmins, judging from this, seem to have lost the capacity to discriminate between vice and virtue."147 Veeresalingam went further and described it as the "sale of human flesh".148 He knew the limitations of the effect of writings on minds of the people. Therefore, as he was well aware of the grip of caste over society, he pleaded for the excommunication from the castes of those who got their daughters married in early age or those who sold their daughters in marriage.149

The campaign against 'kanyasulkam' gained momentum. The Social Reform Association at Rajahmundry took up the issue and propagated for its removal and requested the Government to ban it by law.150 Vernacular journals started

147. Ibid. His popular satire 'Brahma Vivaham' exposed this evil, along with others, associated with the Brahmin marriages.


149. Veeresalingam, Sweeya, P.1, op.cit., P.27.

150. More or less the same arguments used by Veeresalingam were repeated by the Association. See K.R.V.Krishna Row, op.cit., PP.11-12.
publishing articles, farces and verses discussing the issue and ridiculing the orthodox for their adherence to this practice despite the clear sanction made against it in the Shastras.\textsuperscript{151} 'Kanyasulkam' was described as worse than 'slavery' by 'Vartadarsani' and appealed to the Government "to make it punishable under the statute banning slavery".\textsuperscript{152}

A vernacular (Telugu) monthly journal published a long article on the same issue.\textsuperscript{153} It was an authoritative article quoting elaborately from the sacred texts. It stated that brides should be given ('kanyadana') but not be sold away ('Kanyavikraya') in marriages and wife and children were not saleable property like houses, animals etc.\textsuperscript{154}

Maharaja Ananda Gajapati of Vizianagaram made some notable efforts in this direction. In 1887 a survey was

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{151.} Krishnapatrika, March 8, 1908, published a short drama "Akrama Vivahamulu", in which the educated daughter argued her case against the decision of her parents to sell her away to an old man in marriage. The father regretted his fault of educating her.
\item \textbf{152.} Vartadarsani, April 1894. Native News, 1894. Satyasamvadhanam, January-February 1894 (Vol.3, Nos.7-8) described the practice on the same lines when it stated that, "In Southern India a regular slave trade in buying up brides, is carried on by indigent members of the Brahmin caste—women are not consulted in matters of marriage". Requests to the Government, to pass legislation in order to put down the evil, continued even up to 1915. See Andhrapatrika, October 13, 1915. Native News, 1915.
\item \textbf{153.} Sarada (published in Telugu from Butchireddipalem in Nellore district and edited by Y.Kamasastry), May-June and July 1896. The article was published in two instalments.
\item \textbf{154.} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
conducted and statistics were collected relating to 'sulka' marriages in Visakhapatnam district during a period of three years. G.V. Apparao who was a 'reader' to the Maharaja (Ananda Gajapati) referred to the results of the survey in the preface to his play 'Kanyasulkam'. He stated that the number of 'sulka' marriages "recorded reached one thousand and thirty four, giving an average of three hundred and forty four for the year. Ninety nine girls were married at the age of 5 years, forty four at 4, thirty six at 3, six at 2 and three at the age of one — the infants in the last instance carrying a price of, from three hundred and fifty to four hundred rupees a head. Strange as it may sound, bargains are sometimes struck for children in the womb. Such a state of things is a disgrace to society, and literature cannot have a higher function than to show up such practices and given currency to a high standard of morals". 155

The Maharaja moved the issue with the assistance of Valluri Jagannatharao, the treasury officer of Nellore district, in the Madras legislature in 1888. No law could be made on this as the Government considered the matter was connected with the native religion and it might hurt the feelings of the natives. 156

155. G.V. Apparao, op.cit., Preface (1897 edition). This survey might have been one of the stimulating factors for Apparao to undertake the writing of the play.

156. T. Rajagopalarao, op.cit., P.40. The same was reported by Hinduja Champarani (Madras), April 1888. Also see Chintamani, February-March, 1898.
The play 'Kanyasulkam' by G.V. Appa Rao, written during this period, is a significant event. Appa Rao, the author of the play, was the precursor of modern poetry in Andhra. He introduced in his writings the reform trends of his times, and at the same time did not actively associate himself with the reform movement. He mentioned (in the preface) that 'Brahmavivahamu' of Veeresalingam and 'Kanyasulkam' contained "some parallel passages". He presented in a miniature form (in his play) the contemporary social life in Andhra and made his characters (in the first edition) mention twice or thrice the name of Veeresalingam and his reform activities at Rajahmundry. He employed the spoken dialect and thus invited criticism from the 'purists'.

157. He published the play in 1897. There are several works on G.V. Appa Rao in Telugu. Among them, the authoritative work on his life and achievements is written by K.V. Ramana Reddy, Mahadevam (Telugu), (Vijayawada, 1969).

158. Some writers attributed the lasting literary qualities to his works precisely because of this. He was reacting sensitively to the social evils from a distance and as he was not a part of the movement he could write on these evils dispassionately. His works, in particular the play 'Kanyasulkam', reflected the social tensions that existed during his period. Appa Rao's humour was subtle and gentle unlike the direct and sometimes harsh humour we find in Veeresalingam's satires. Veeresalingam was a crusader and Appa Rao was an artist. See, on this, articles "Navyandhra Kavitvamu"—"Manavatha drikpathham" by N. Guruprasada Rao and "Telugu Sahityamuloni Samajikakachaitanyam" by R.S. Sudarsanam in Andhrapatrika (Annual Number), 1969-70.

in literary circles. It may be stated that Appa Rao's play was an artistic expression of the positive and negative aspects of the reform movements and its impact upon individual men and women.

SECTION III: WIDOW REMARRIAGES

The problem of widow remarriages, like that of infant marriages, was not universal. It was mainly confined to the upper castes in society. Among the so called lower

160. In the preface of the first edition he mentioned that, "It has been remarked that the use of what is wrongly termed the vulgar tongue mars dignity of a literary production but that is a piece of criticism one need not heed at the present day when the progress of the science of language has established better standards for judging the quality and usefulness of tongues than the whims of the grammarians of linguistic strata". G.V.Apparao, op.cit., Preface to the first edition.

In its book review column the Indian Social Reformer, February 14, 1897 (Vol.VII, No.26) stated that "Appa Rao deserves to be congratulated for bringing out the play at that stage" and criticised for "the frequent use of English phrases which marred the usefulness of the book as a popular educator". The play was translated into other South Indian languages like Tamil and Canarese and also into the English and Russian languages. See K.V.Ramana Reddy, op.cit., PP.517-18.

161. K.V. Ramana Reddy the biographer of Appa Rao in his 'Mahodayam' threw up this idea though in recent times this has been questioned by some scholars. However, it should be known that during the last decade of the 19th century the writing of a powerful play as this should have been certainly due to the influence of social reform movements which were then active in Andhra.
castes remarriages were not uncommon. In the Madras Presidency, in 1881, though there were 21 per cent of widows among Hindus, only less than 2 per cent of them were widows before they attained puberty. However, the significant point appeared to be that about 12 per cent of the total were below the age of thirty which meant that it was not altogether a problem of no significance. The fact that early marriages were the main cause of widowhood was very well realised by the protagonists of reform and the same was stated in their lectures and writings. The Census of Madras Presidency of 1891 strengthens this view. About 25 per cent of the population were following

162. The trend was changing even among them in favour of prohibition of widow remarriages. For, they too desired to achieve social status by taking to the customs of the upper castes.

163. Government of India, Census of 1881 (Madras Presidency), I, PP.71-72. It stated that "Certainly one-third, probably a larger proportion of the number of Brahman widows are widows owing to this custom (of infant marriages)".

164. The Papers on Indian Reform, op.cit., P.116 stated that in the Madras Presidency every third Brahman woman was a widow which fact indicates that the problem was acute among Brahmins eventhough other castes like the Velamas, Vaisyas, the Kshatrias, the Viswabrahmins (practising the vocations of carpentry and smithy), during this period were highly imitating the Brahmins and adopted many of their customs, rituals and ceremonies.

165. See the references given under the section 'Early Marriages'. Almost all the reformers, whenever they attacked the evil practice of early marriages, did so mainly on two grounds: (1) that it would lead to widowhood, and (2) that it results in adultery.
the custom of infant marriages as a rule; among 15 per cent it was fairly widespread and among the remaining 60 per cent it was rare.\textsuperscript{166} A strong feeling existed among the higher castes against widow remarriages as they came to believe that it was prohibited by the sacred texts and by following these texts they desired to retain their social status and caste rank.\textsuperscript{167}

The miserable condition of widows and this "cruel and unnatural custom, highly prejudicial to the interests of morality and fraught with the most mischievous consequences to society",\textsuperscript{168} induced the reformers to undertake movements


\textsuperscript{167.} \ldots according to a view...held in India, those castes which allow their widows to marry are somewhat looked down upon and lose some measure of their social standing, whereas if any caste desires to mount the social ladder it may often make the first step in this direction by insisting strongly upon the observance of the prohibition." See Julius Richter, \textit{op.cit.}, P.331, i.n.

\textsuperscript{168.} Quoted from the petition submitted by Iswarchandra Vidyasagar in 1855 to prohibit this evil. Cited in Religious and Social Reform of Ranade, \textit{op.cit.}, P.XVII. The early movements in favour of widow remarriage problem in Bengal and Maharashtra were led by Vidyasagar and Vishnu Shastri Pandit respectively. For an analytical account of Vidyasagar's attempts in this direction, see Asok Sen, Iswarchandra Vidyasagar and His Elusive Milestones (Calcutta, 1975), especially the sub-section "A. Aims and Results", PP.28-35 in Section IV. See for Vishnu Shastri Pandit, Ravinder Kumar's \textit{Western India in the Nineteenth Century} (London, 1968), P.293, wherein he stated that Vishnu Shastri was the leader of the liberal Brahmins of Maharashtra in 1870's who sought to reform caste institutions and also to promote remarriage of widows. Vishnu Shastri drew Shankaracharya, the spiritual head of the Advaitists, into the discussion on widow remarriages who, of course, decried against them. However, "his participation in the controversy reflected the deep concern of the orthodox community over the rapidly changing intellectual climate of Maharashtra". Also see G.L.Chandavarker, \textit{Speeches and Writings, op.cit.}, P.94, who referred to the debate between Shankaracharya and Vishnu Shastri. He stated that the discussion had achieved a good result by drawing "pointed attention to the condition of Hindu child widows..."
against this evil in several parts of the country. The treatment meted out to widows was heart-rendering. Veeresalingam gave a vivid description of their condition in his novel "Rajasekhara Charitram", which also reflects many other aspects of social life of his period.\textsuperscript{169} He wrote, "The sorry state of widows in our country moves even an enemy's heart. The parents instead of consoling and comforting their grief-stricken widow-daughters unkindly deprive them of all minimum pleasures of life. The ornaments are taken away from them. Their heads are shaven to make them look ugly and confine them to a deserted corner in the house. They are not fed properly nor clothed adequately. Their lives are made miserable, and they are living like corpses....they are forced to do all the manual labour in the house. A widow is treated as a servant-maid in her

\textsuperscript{169}. Veeresalingam mentioned that he was inspired in writing this by Oliver Goldsmith's 'Vicar of Wakefield'. The novel deals with a typical lower middle class Telugu family and contained the description of the early marriages, marriage expenses, nautch-parties, ghost-doctors, superstitions, festivals for village Goddesses, astrologers, sycophants, hangers-on, a true picture of the dying feudal society. It became a model for novel-writing in Telugu and later novelists like Chilakamarthi Lakshminarasimham followed him in this regard and acknowledged the same. Its impact on the native languages was considerable. It was translated into Tamil and Kannada languages. It was translated into English, "Fortune's wheel", by Rev. Hutchinson and was published in 1887 from London. The London Times, September 30, 1887, in its review described the book as a "Unique novel". The 'Hindu' commented on it saying that "Rajasekharacharitra" marks an era in the annals of Telugu literature." See Veeresalingam, \textit{Sweeya}, P.II, op.cit., PP.162-64.
parental home even by her own sister-in-law. On auspicious occasions her appearance is detested and she is considered as an ill omen. That is how the word 'widow' has become a highly abusive term among us.\(^{170}\) Her pitiable condition evoked much response from the writers of this period who wrote sympathising with her cause.\(^{171}\)

Before the movement for widow remarriages was started\(^{\text{170}}\)

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\(^{170}\) The novel was published in 1880. See Veeresalingam, Col. Works, Vol.IV (Prose and Poetical works), op.cit., P.76. A young widow by name Janakammah published an appeal in the 'Madras Mail' (November 1884) describing her position and pleading for the acceptance of the principle of widow remarriage. The letter is typically representative of the condition of widows of the time. She stated that after being married as an infant she soon became widow and was leading "a life of misery.... I am a sorrowful creature. The dawn of the day brings me the thought that there will be no happiness during the day....I am not allowed to mix in joyous parties, or to wear neat clothes or jewels...How can I feel when I see my sisters and sisters-in-law talking merrily with their husbands?...I am not jealous at all, but simply state the difference of my neglected conditions....I am young and handsome, but I cannot go to my relatives, or companions' or neighbours houses, even in company with elderly ladies of the house, on festive occasions. In the face of the above circumstances can any Hindu show reason why they should not sanction widow marriage". Cited in Papers on Indian Reform, op.cit., P.120.

\(^{171}\) In Andhra, for example, articles and verses published focussing mainly on the conditions of widows were many. Among them two instances where the writers wrote in English may be cited. See T. Sreeramulu, Poems and Reflections (Rajahmundry, 1904), P.1, PP.19, and 44-47. He wrote two poems on widows, 'The Cry of Child Widows' (P.14) and 'A Virgin Widow' (PP.44-47). The author was a contemporary of Veeresalingam and for some time co-worker in his reform activities. Practising law, he edited a journal 'Carlylean'. See also R.Venkatasubba Rao, op.cit., PP.183-94, where he described the condition of widows and concluded that death was much more preferable to the slower torture of the custom of widowhood.
in Andhra in 1879, some attempts were made in this direction in the city of Madras about which Veeresalingam had prior knowledge.172 The two prominent individuals that were involved in the reform endeavours at Madras during this period were R. Raghunatha Rao and P. Chentsalrao, the latter being the Secretary of the Widow Remarriage Association there.173 When the Association was formed (in 1874) with a few like-minded individuals who resolved to encourage widow remarriages, Raghunatharao and P. Ananda Charlu, who wanted the Association to confine itself only to a scholarly discussion of the problem of widowhood, opted out of the Association.174 Though the Association failed to achieve anything tangible in the practical sphere of its activities, it published a few pamphlets and a tract on the desirability of widow

172. Veeresalingam mentioned about these efforts rather disparagingly in his autobiography. For, the Association at Madras became defunct after a couple of years without achieving any results. See Sweya, op.cit., P.I, P.145.

173. Chentsalrao was a native of Nellore town and had gone to Madras to join the service of the Government. He was contributing articles on women's education, and translated the Smritis into Telugu with commentary and published them in 'Hindujana Samskarini' (referred to earlier) with a view to justify the cause of women's education and widow remarriages. See for a biographical account of Chentsalrao in O.Venkata Rangaiah, Konduru Nellori Goppavaru (Telugu), (Nellore, 1933), PP.120-22.

remarriages.\textsuperscript{175}

Prior to the publication of the above tract (in Telugu) there were a few writings in Telugu favouring widow remarriages. In 1864 (the year of Keshubchandra Sen's visit to Madras) the first tract in Telugu on widow remarriages was published.\textsuperscript{176} However, it was not an original work. It was a translation from a Canarese tract.\textsuperscript{177} This was called 'Hinduvivaha Sastra

\textsuperscript{175} In fact one tract 'Stripunarvivaha Sangrahama' in Telugu, pleading for widow remarriages by Paravastu Venkataramacharyulu of Visakhapatnam was published in Madras in 1875 by this Association. The author was invited by the Association to attend its meeting at Madras. See Veeresalingam, Sweeya, P.I, op.cit., PP.145-48. That the reformers at Madras were not turning out any serious work in the field of social reform was observed by Pandit Shivanath Sastry during his visit to Madras in 1881. According to Bipin Chandra Pal (in his Memoirs), Sastry told him that he would come across (in Madras) "a group of educated young men who cut their hair like ourselves and used boots and shoes. I asked him what was the meaning of it. He smiled and said, 'They are the advanced reformers in Madras'. Cutting the hair instead of shaving the head as orthodox Brahmans and using boots and shoes instead of slippers and sandals indicated... the state of things, in Madras...'' See Bipin Chandra Pal, Memoirs of My Life and Times (Calcutta, 1932), PP.386-89.

\textsuperscript{176} See T. Rajagopala Rao, op.cit., PP.21 and 32. He did not suggest that the visit of Keshubchandra Sen in any way influenced the publication of this tract. But it is true, as Rajagopala Rao stated, that the beginnings were made towards the widow remarriages movement only after Keshub's visit, i.e., the Hindu Widow Remarriages Association at Madras was started in 1874. However, Keshub's visit prompted a few local enthusiasts in Madras to make preparations in founding an association called 'Veda Samaj', on the lines of Brahma Samaj.

\textsuperscript{177} Ibid., P.21. About 1850 a revenue official Krishnamayya Nayaka from Mysore city translated a similar tract published at Nagpur. However, Rajagopala Rao did not mention the name of the author and other relevant details regarding this tract.
Sangrahamu'.

Quoting from Manu Smriti, it stated categorically that both post-puberty and widow remarriages were sanctioned by Shastras and as such there was no prohibition against them. He argued that in 'Kaliyuga'(the present epoch of mankind) since the span of life is rather short it would be desirable if girls are not married before 16 years of age. However, under no circumstances, the age limit should be below 12. This, he stated, would eliminate early widowhood too.

Also, articles "in favour of and against widow remarriages were published in 'Purushardapradayini'.

178. A. Srinivasacharyulu, Hinduivaha Sastra Sangrahamu (n.p., n.d.). I secured this tract from Paravastu Venkataramacharyulu's personal collection of books which has been donated to the Andhra University Library, Waltair, by his descendants.

179. Ibid., P.3.

180. Ibid., P.8.

181. Ibid., P.11.

182. An article in Telugu, said to be the summary of a tract published at Benaras in favour of remarriages, was published under the pseudonym 'Hinduvi' from Machilipatnam. See Purusharthapradayini October 1872. In the same issue an advertisement both in English and Telugu was found as follows: "Notice - The Hindu Sastras Sanction Widow-Marriages - a small pamphlet, price one anna and postage one anna". In its November (1872) issue the reply to the above article, allegedly written under the pseudonym 'Ma-Nam-La-Di varu', was published. It stated that the said author prepared a reply in Sanskrit too. Both sides used the Shastras in their arguments though the pro-remarriage view was laying more stress on moral degradation inherent in the prohibition of remarriages. Its August issue of 1872 published a letter through which it can be concluded that at Bellary a few enlightened men led by one P. Srinivasa Rao made some attempts at widow remarriages.
'Tatwabodhini' (from Madras) published a few articles on the same subject, but only in favour of widow remarriages.\textsuperscript{183}

The tract published by Paravastu Venkataramacharyulu can be said in a way to have sparked off the movement in Andhra.\textsuperscript{184} Based on the sacred texts the tract concluded its argument in the following way: "Hence I pray to God to make the hearts of the leaders of the people, to see the need arising out of the changed condition of the present circumstances and prevent social evils like abortions, caused by weak-minded women, by early permitting virgin widows to remarry and thus protect the weaker sex".\textsuperscript{185} Kokkonda reacted sharply to this. He and Dharmavaram Ramakrishnamacharyulu, a poet and popular playwright of traditional (Puranic) dramas in Telugu, wrote to Veeresalingam requesting him to give a suitable reply countering

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{183} Veeresalingam made use of these articles before he delivered his maiden speech on the topic. See Veeresalingam, \textit{Sweya}, P.I, op.cit., P.156.
\item \textsuperscript{184} Refer to above f.n.175. Paravastu was a renowned scholar in Sanskrit and Telugu at Visakhapatnam. He started, around 1865, "Arshamatha Samaja" and was holding talks and discussions once a week on topics of religious and social nature. He held the view that along with the march of time social institutions should also change, otherwise they would become obsolete. Also he held the view that all that belonged to the past was not relevant to modern times. Thus he was giving expression to views which were conducive to the growth of reform ideas. He wrote 27 essays on topics dealing with religion and society and were later edited and published by his grandson under the title, 'Arshamatopanyasamulu'. See Paravastu Lakshminarasimhaswamy Ayyawaralu, \textit{Arshamatopanyasamulu} (Telugu), (Visakhapatnam, 1924, first edn. 1892), P.I, Preface. This book is found in Paravastu's personal collection in Andhra University Library, Waltair. The tract on widow remarriages was included in Part II (as the advertisement indicated) which could not be traced in the above collection.
\item \textsuperscript{185} Cited in J.Gurunatham, op.cit., PP.66-67.
\end{itemize}
the contents of the tract of Paravastu.186 Their calculations went wrong as Veeresalingam was thinking on lines opposed to their viewpoint.187

It was Challapalli Bapaiah, teacher in the local college and an intimate friend of Veeresalingam that first broached the idea of performing widow remarriages to him.188 However, he did not convince much interest in it. He felt that the undertaking of such a heavy task would mean the mobilisation of resources, both human and material, which he did not possess. Still Bapaiah went on prodding Veeresalingam to take the initiative and promised that he would be with him in the movement even if he had to break away from his kith and kin.189

Finally it was decided to circulate a notice informing

187. He mentioned in his autobiography that he was eagerly waiting for propitious time to come when he could witness the happy sight of child widows getting remarried. Ibid., PP.148-49.
188. Ibid. Bapaiah suggested that an organisation should be formed at Rajahmundry to take practical steps in this direction.
189. Ibid. The role of Bapaiah in persuading Veeresalingam to move into action has to be properly assessed. Scholars like Kesavanarayana are inclined to opine that it was Challapalli Bapaiah who was responsible for initiating Veeresalingam into the movement. This is, of course, not correct. The earlier trends in Veeresalingam's career showed that he was fully transformed to reform ideology and Bapaiah, no doubt, gave the needed impetus. See the article of B.Kesavanaraya-
the citizens of Rajahmundry town that Veeresalingam would address on the issue of widow remarriage. When the notice was actually circulated it created a stir among the local orthodox sections. Veeresalingam mentioned in his autobiography that he knew about Vidyasagar's tract on widow marriages but neither did he possess it nor could he get it in time to prepare for the lecture. He relied primarily on the Manu, Yagnavalkya and Parasara Smritis, and the articles published in 'Purushardapradayini' and 'Tatwabodhini'. The lecture was delivered on 3rd August 1879. The meeting place was packed and the Pandits attended in good number. Veeresalingam in his lecture adopted two methods, one designed to meet the requirements of the orthodox sections, and the other of the general public. Firstly, he used the technique of quoting extensively from the sacred texts like the

190. The notice was circulated in July 1879. See T. Rajagopala Rao, op. cit., P. 32.

191. He was not completely satisfied with the preparation. Nevertheless he was thorough with what he read. See Veeresalingam, Sveeya, P.I, op. cit., P. 150.

192. For the text of the lecture see Veeresalingam, Col. Works, Vol. VII, op. cit., PP. 524-83. The lecture was delivered in the Vizianagaram Maharajah Girls' School.
Vedas and Smritis\footnote{193} and, secondly adopted rationalist arguments. After quoting mainly from the Smritis, he stated that the cruel practice of enforced widowhood "is found nowhere in the world except in our country. Even in our country it is confined to the Hindus and among them only to the three upper castes".\footnote{194} He described in detail various other related evils to the problem like infant marriages, illicit sexual life of widows resulting in pregnancy, elopement and the

\footnote{193. The reformers who pleaded for widow remarriage adopted the same method of quoting from the Vedas and Smritis. For example, Isvarachandra Vidyasagar in his tracts entitled Marriage of Hindu Widows (Calcutta, 1976), established his argument with the help of Smritis and Shastras in particular with the help of Parasara Smriti which sanctioned widow remarriages. See Ibid., PP.2, 22, 34 and 70-71. Mahadev Govind Ranade in his article, "Vedic Authorities for Widow-marriage" also did the same. He relied mostly on Parasara Smriti which was expressly intended for Kaliyuga wherein a widow was permitted to marry in five cases of afflictions. See Ranade's Religious and Social Reform, op.cit., P.XIX. By quoting extensively from the Shastras, what these reformers meant was that these social evils had no sanction of the religious texts.}

like. The influence of such widows on family women was pernicious and they too were found involved in immoral activities of sex. To the criticism levelled by the opponents that remarriages would result in the large killing of husbands by their wives, he answered thus: "It is absurd to think that widow marriages would stop infanticide and start the killing of husbands.... It is not so in other countries where widow marriages are common. Even in our country this is not the case among those castes in which widow marriages are not forbidden. Do men kill their

195. Ibid. Iswarachandra Vidyasagar in his "Appeal on the Marriage of Hindu Widows" spoke about the evil consequences flowing from enforced widowhood. He stated, "How many hundreds of widows unable to observe the austerities of a Brahmacharya life, betake themselves to prostitution and foeticide and thus bring disgrace upon the families of their fathers, mothers and husbands. If the marriage of widows be allowed it will remove the insupportable torments of life-long widowhood, diminish the crimes of prostitution and foeticide, and secure all families from disgrace and infamy."

Cited in The Papers on Indian Reform, op.cit., PP.116-17. Also see D.Narassiah, op.cit., P.13, wherein he stated: "We refer to the large extent to which prostitution, public and private, is carried on owing to the continuance of the practice of infant marriages, combined with that equally pernicious usage, the prohibition of the remarriage of widows".

196. Ibid.
wives simply because they have the freedom to remarry?" 197

The Pandits, among the opponents assembled, challenged his arguments which, according to Veeresalingam, were not difficult to counter. 198

The lecture created a big stir in Rajahmundry. The attention of the public was now drawn to the issue of widow remarriages and people were seen in groups discussing the issue among themselves. 199 Soon after, on 17th October (1879), he delivered a second lecture in Rajahmundry. Afterwards, to strengthen his arguments

197. Ibid., P.573. It appeared that his arguments were based more upon reason, even though his reliance on the sacred texts and his knowledge of grammar and Sanskrit helped him much in countering the arguments of his opponents. See T.Rajagopalarao, op.cit., P.33. The argument that if remarriages were permitted wives would kill their husbands hoping to get better ones seemed to have been used for quite some time. 'Shum-ul-Akbar' (Hindusthani newspaper) in October 1873 published a report of its native correspondent on this point. See Native News, 1873.

198. Veeresalingam, Sweeya, P.1, op.cit., PP.150-51. Two pandits, Surji Venkatakrishnaiah and Addepalli Krishnasastri, were prominent in disputing Veeresalingam's arguments. Nevertheless their counter arguments appeared to be outside the domain of the main issue. See for a detailed account of the meeting based on the reports of contemporary issues of 'Vivekavardhani' in T.Rajagopalarao, op.cit., PP.33-36.

199. Commenting upon Veeresalingam's first lecture, a biographer of his wrote, "It burst like a bombshell on the ranks of orthodoxy and its reverberations were heard in the farthest corners of Andhra". See V.R. Narla, op.cit., P.40.
and be thorough with the sacred texts, he placed orders with
the book shops at Calcutta, Bombay and Benaras for Dharma
Sastras and other relevant material which he needed. In
this connection, it is necessary to note his views on the
Shastras and Smritis. In a meeting at Madras, at a later
date, he was asked to state whether or not he had faith
in the sacred texts. He replied in the negative. He stated
that he was quoting from them for two reasons; to defend
himself from the arguments of the Pandits, and to convince
the people who were mostly religious minded. 200

Soon after the first lecture, the Rajahmundry Reform
Association was organised (1879) with Veeresalingam as the
Secretary. The Association consisted of some of the local
educated people and dedicated workers namely Ch. Bapaiah,
B. Gavarraju, E.L. Narasimham Chetty, B.V. Jogaiah Naidu,
K. Parthasarathi Naidu and others. 201 The Association was
strengthened with the addition of new members like Nyapati
Subbarao Pantulu who was a lawyer at Rajahmundry and Atmuri
Lakshminarasimham, the district

200. Veeresalingam gave an analogy in this regard. When
a blind person was found carrying a lamp he was asked
of its practical use to him. He replied that it
was not meant for him but for others who may step
upon him in darkness. See Veeresalingam, Sweeya,
P.I, op.cit., P.223.

201. The Association was a mixed group both with regard
to caste and profession. The first two were teachers
and Brahmins, Lakshminarasimham was district judicial
officer and a Vaisya and the last two were non-
Brahmins and their professions are not known.
munsiff. Soon came the retaliation from the citadel of orthodoxy. The Sankaracharya of Virupaksha Matham arrived at Rajahmundry, presumably with an open mind, to listen to the arguments of both the parties and give his learned view in the matter. Veeresalingam once again presented his arguments and silenced the opponents. Sankaracharya left the meeting abruptly without pronouncing his views. However, he later issued a threat to the members of the Association that they would be excommunicated if they continued their membership in the Association.

The Rajahmundry Widow Marriage Association issued an appeal to the public for help to conduct its activities.

202. References to these two individuals have already been made in this chapter. Nyapati Subba Rao was for some time the Secretary of the Prarthana Samaj at Rajahmundry and was a great source of help to Veeresalingam in his reform activities in the early years until his brother married a widow under the influence of Veeresalingam which he did not approve of. Then he became an opponent of Social reform in Rajahmundry and started 'Hindu Sabha' and invited Annie Besant and Colonel Olcott to visit Rajahmundry. For a short biographical sketch see Vignana Sarvaswami (Madras, 1961), Vol IV, PP.1205-6. Also see Nayaandhra Nirmatalu (anonymous, Madras, n.d.). Atmuri Lakshminarasimham was well versed in the Vedas and Shastras. Along with Veeresalingam he also took part in arguments with the Pandits of Rajahmundry over the issue of widow remarriage. He was one of those threatened with excommunication by Shankaracharya of Virupaksha Math, See G.V.Subbaraya Gupta, op.cit., P.ii. Also see Veeresalingam, Col.Works, Vol.VII, op.cit., P.768.

It condemned the 'tyrannical' custom and appealed to people to defy it and become free. 204

Veerasingam on behalf of the Association, commenced his tour of important towns in Andhra with a lecture at Kakinada in 1881 where attempts were made to manhandle him. However, they were foiled by

204. The appeal issued in the name of Veerasingam (as Secretary of the Association, in September 1879) attacked the 'tyrannical' custom and urged people to follow the 'true' spirit of the Shastras. It stated: "Custom is the tyrant to whom we universally bow.... We are to obey the law of nature; action is accompanied by reaction. We have (sic) tied ourselves hand and foot and yielded to custom. But nature bids us break the ties and declare ourselves free and we rise from our lethargy". See for the full text of the appeal in Diaries and Letters of Veerasingam, op.cit., PP.150-54.
the timely help and protection rendered by students. Before we deal with the practical efforts made in this sphere and the spread of the movement to the other parts of Andhra, a brief account of the tracts—both for and against the widow remarriages—that were published during this period is given in the foregoing pages.

The first major tract published against widow remarriages was 'Stri Punarvivaha Durvadanirvapanamu' by Vedam Venkataraya Sastry in 1883. Venkataraya Sastry, a contemporary of Veerasalingam, was a great Sanskrit

205. Earlier, at Rajahmundry, in the meeting attended by Sankaracharya, an attempt was made to beat him up. There also the students who guessed the situation came to his rescue. One noteworthy factor of the Reform movements in Andhra was the participation of students somewhat on a large scale. Nowhere else in India, it appears, during the 19th century, reformers had utilised the services of students on such a scale as here. Derozio did inspire and influence a good number of his students. But we do not consider Derozio as a reformer in the sense we consider the 19th century reformers. The views of Veerasalingam on students as potential supporters of his movement and the trust he reposed in them was discussed earlier in the chapter. See for references on the attempts made by his opponents to beat him up in Veerasalingam, Swega, P.I, op.cit., PP. 158-59. Also see Indian Social Reformer, November 3, 1894, (Vol.V, No.10) which mentioned that "...when he gave his first lecture at Cose nada Brahmanas there began to pelt stones at him..." The incidents as well as the support he received from the students were mentioned by R.Venkatasivudu, C.Lakshminarasimham, V.Suryanarayana Rao, A.Kaleswararao, T.Prakasam, A. Lakshmipathi, who were the former students of Veerasalingam, in their autobiographies.

206. V.Venkataraya Sastry, Stri Punarvivaha Durvadanirvapanamu (Telugu), (Madras, 1924, first edition 1883).
scholar working in the Christian College at Madras.\textsuperscript{207}

It was stated in the book that it was blessed and financed by the Sankaracharya of Virupaksha Matham and a few thousands of copies were distributed free.\textsuperscript{208} Furthermore, the author mentioned that the arguments he presented in the book were used against the reformers of his times. He quoted primarily from the Vedas, the Angirasa and Manu Smritis and concluded that a person who married a widow would be condemned as 'Chandala'.\textsuperscript{209}

Another well written and scholarly tract, opposing widow remarriages, was published from Bobbili (Visakhapatnam district).\textsuperscript{210} K. Venkatakrishna Somayaji followed the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{207} For a biography of Venkataraya Sastry see V. Venkataraya Sastry, \textit{Vedam Venkataraya Sastri Jeevitha Charitra} (Telugu), (Madras, 1943). The author is the grandson of Venkataraya Sastry. Also see the article "Vedam Venkataraya Sastry garu" in \textit{Akhunikarambha Sabiti Nirmatalu} (Upanyasa Vyasa Samputi), (Telugu), (Hyderabad, 1975).
\item \textsuperscript{208} V. Venkataraya Sastry, \textit{op. cit.}, Preface.
\item \textsuperscript{209} \textit{Ibid.}, P.22. He countered the argument used by the reformers that Arjuna (of Mahabharata) married a widow by name Uloopi (or Uloochi) by saying that it was not valid because Uloopi was not a human being. She was an invisible 'Naga' nymph to whom the code of human behaviour was not applicable. \textit{Ibid.}, P.102.
\item \textsuperscript{210} K. Venkatakrishna Somayaji, \textit{Vidhaveyivaha Nira sakopyasama} (Telugu), (Bobbili, 1896). The author was the Secretary of a local association called 'Buda-nandini Sabha' of which the President was R.V.S. Ranga Rao (the Rajah of Bobbili). Reviewing the book \textit{Sarada}, August 1896, suggested that, as it was written in an easy style citing the authoritative texts, it might be translated into English.
\end{itemize}
method of presenting the arguments of opponents (in favour of widow remarriages) first and then presented his arguments against them quoting from the Puranas, Shastras and Smritis. 211 Another tract was published on the same lines by Sri Dikshitula Varu, namely 'Vidhava Punarudvaha Grantha Khandanamu'. 212

Among those who opposed widow remarriages through their writings (articles) mention should be made of two scholars, namely (1) Dasu Sriramulu (1846-1908), and (2) K. Brahmayya Sastry (1863-1940). Sriramulu was a lawyer at Machilipatnam and published articles in his

211. Ibid., Preface. The author mentioned that he examined thoroughly the arguments put forward by the protagonists of widow remarriage movements at Bombay, Rajahmundry and Madras.

212. The original tract could not be traced. The author Dikshitula Varu (Nandiraju Lakshminarayana) was one of the pandits that took part in the first lecture on widow remarriages delivered by Veeresalingam in 1879. References to his tract are found in K. Markandeya Sarma, Sri Dikshita Charitamamu (Telugu), (Madras, 1906). Also I have come across a small pamphlet of 11 pages in Telugu opposing widow remarriages in the personal collection of books of Parvastu Venketarangacharyulu, Andhra University Library, Waltair, which did not mention the author, place and date of publication. It is in a question and answer form written in an easy and readable style. With the help of Manu and Parasara Smritis, it went on to prove that the widow remarriages were prohibited in the sacred texts.
journal 'Kalpavalli' opposing remarriages. He was also credited with the publication of a tract on this which is not traceable. However, the most formidable opponent of not only widow remarriage movement but the reform movements as a whole was Brahmayya Sastry. Born in 1863, he studied at Kakinada and discontinued his collegiate education in the middle due to adverse conditions in the family. He started an association 'Aryananda Brindayini Sabha', to spread the ideals of Hindu religion and simultaneously attack the reform activities initiated by Veeresalingam and others. He edited and published the journal 'Aryamathabodhini' from Kakinada and through its columns

213. Dasu Sriramulu, Abhinava Gadyaprabandhamu (Telugu), (Hyderabad, 1973, 8th edn.), PP.5-6. Sriramulu later became a convert to the reform movements and started advocating inter-sect marriages among the brahmins and publication of books in vernacular literature on social matters written in a lighter style to mould the habits and tastes of people in a polished manner. See D. Sriramulu, Telugunadu (Telugu), (Hyderabad, 1974, 6th edn.), PP.XXII-XXIII. Indian Social Reformer, June 22, 1902 (Vol.XII, No.43) reporting about the Krishna district Social Conference (at Vuyyur), presided over by Dasu Sriramulu, commented: "He was early an orthodox man against whom Veeresalingam fought. He published a vernacular pamphlet against the widow marriage".

214. J. Purushotham, Kasibhatta Brahmayya Sastrygari Jeevithamu (Telugu), (Kakinada, 1936), PP.1-3. Even while he was a student he started 'Bhakta Samajam' in Kakinada to spread the worship of God among the fellow students. According to his biographer Brahmayya Sastry was much opposed to the Brahma Samaj and its ideals. However, he adopted their methods of delivering lectures, issuing pamphlets and singing 'kirtans' (songs) in the streets. Ibid., PP.5-8.

215. Ibid., P.8.
launched a severe attack against reform movements. When Veeresalingam wrote a farce ridiculing the practice of shaving the heads of widows, Brahmayya Sastry wrote a rejoinder in the form of a farce.

The Rajahmundry Social Reform Association in its pamphlet (explaining its objects) dwelt at length on the issue of widow remarriages. Besides repeating all the known arguments of the pro-remarriage reformers, it criticised the defects of the Widow Remarriage Act of 1856 in denying the share of a remarried widow in the property of her deceased husband and pleaded with the Government to set it right.

As mentioned earlier, Veeresalingam's trip to Kakinada to lecture on widow remarriages in 1881 was the beginning of the practical work connected with the movement. It also

216. Veeresalingam in his autobiography conceded the adverse effects of the writings in 'Aryamathabodhini' on the minds of the people and to counteract its influence he started 'Satyavadini'. See Veeresalingam Swamy, P.II, op.cit., PP.260-83. See Brahmayya Sastry's lectures attacking the reform ideas and inculcating the tenets of the Hindu religion, N. Chalapatirao, ed. Sri Upamasyapayodhini (Telugu), (n.p., n.d.).

217. J. Purushottam, op.cit., P.12. By 1905, when Brahmayya Sastry started his tirade against the reform movements, conditions favouring opponents of reforms were many. Rajahmundry, the home town of Veeresalingam, itself turned against the social reform movements under the strong influence of the rising tide of nationalism. Further, Veeresalingam's stay in Madras (1897-1904) and the activities of the revivalist reformers like Annie Besant and other organizations propagating the Hindu religious ideals like the Hindu Sabha contributed to this trend. This aspect is discussed in Chapter VIII.

resulted in coming to know a local Vaisya gentleman and the
leader of the enlightened sections at Kakinada and the
Municipal Chairman, by name, Pyda Ramakrishnaiah, who later
donated a sum of Rs.30,000/- towards the movement. 219

219. In addition to his liberal donation of Rs.30,000/-
towards the performance of widow remarriages, he also
constructed residential quarters and gave them in per-
petuity to the remarried couples. Details of this
benevolent act of his are given in his will dated 18th
March 1886 and the document was registered on 6th May
1886. With regard to the background of Ramakrishnaiah
it was referred to in Chapter I under section 'Vaisyas'.
He made several liberal donations towards public
causes such as a sum of Rs.6,000/- to meet the construc-
tion costs of school buildings at Kakinada (which
were opened by the Madras Governor, Grant Duff), and
Rs.1,000/- for conducting music classes in the school.
See the Extract from the Administration Report of the
Pithapur Rajah's College, Cocanada for the year 1888-89
(Cocanada, 1889). Ramakrishnaiah was educated in the
local Anglo-vernacular school and was a Dubashree to
the foreign trading companies at Cocanada port, in
which capacity he had earned large properties. He was
associated with the Native Student's Association,
started in 1877 which soon became a Literary Associa-
tion with a library, reading and meeting rooms to
discuss periodically on 'moral and public topics' to
which he donated Rs.2,500/-. The Association had 43
members and an income of Rs.400/-. In addition to this
Ramakrishnaiah was responsible for the construction
and maintenance of choultries and other philanthropic
works. He was a good friend of the Rajah of Pithapur
and banker to him and to the Zamindars of Nuzvid
(Krishna district) and Polivaram (Godavari). Captain
Taylor, Master Attendent of Madras described him as
"most widely and favourably held in estimation whereas
(sic) good has to be done in the public interest".  
See the "Welcome Address presented to His Excellency
the Right Honourable Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant
Duff, Governor of Fort St. George". Personal Papers
of Pyda Ramakrishnaiah. I am grateful to his great
grandson Pyda Sripiramakrishnamurthy of Kakinada for
giving access to these papers in addition to providing
me with biographical details of late Pyda Ramakrishnaiah.
For correspondence between him and Veeresalingam see
Veeresalingam Swamy, P.I, op.cit., PP.212-13, 253-54
and 295-98.
Ramakrishnaiah was also responsible for the founding of the Widow Remarriage Association at Kakinada. Veeresalingam in the course of the movement visited other places like Machilipatnam, Guntur, Bellary, Bangalore and Madras lecturing on the question of marriage of widows.

**Performance of Widow Remarriages**

Veerasingam was obviously not a person to be content with oral arguments and verbal battles with the pandits. Like Vidyasagar, he was a practical reformer. After thus consolidating the position locally and at the district headquarters (Kakinada), Veeresalingam on behalf of the Association commenced preparations for performing widow remarriages. Some of the students who were inspired by the lectures and general discussions in the town were coming forward to give their consent to marry widows. This alerted the orthodox sections of the town to take care of their sons and they were hastily married and their widow daughters' heads were shaven to make them look ugly for marriage.220 1881 was an eventful year as it witnessed the dynamic working of the three institutions established by Veeresalingam at Rajahmundry, namely the Prarthana Samaj, the Social Reform Association and 'Vivekavardhani'.221

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220. The commotion created in Rajahmundry was vividly described by Veeresalingam in his *Swetsy*, P.I, *op.cit.*, P.171.

221. References were earlier made to the establishment of the Social Reform Association and 'Vivekavardhani'. The Prarthana Samaj (started in 1878) will be discussed in Chapter VI.
With their active support the first widow remarriage
was celebrated on 11th December 1881.

This event created an unprecedented stir in the
town and a number of attempts were made to stop it.\footnote{Non-cooperation came from all sides. The Purohits, cooks, musicians and others were prevented from taking part in the function, eventhough about 30 people attended it and took betel. Attempts were made to kidnap the bride and the groom and beat up Veeresalingam. A writer under the abbreviated name G.R.S. described in the article "One of the great Men of India" in Swatantra, April 17, 1948, the event: "On December 11, 1881, in Rajahmundry, the local authorities apprehended breach of peace. A revolutionary event was timed to take place on that day and the bulk of the public were opposed to it. The mood of the people was angry and sullen. Angry mobs collected at street corners...Elaborate police precautions were taken...there gathered...a group of friends. Their leader...short, thinly built person was Veeresalingam...a Telugu Pandit...of limited resources, had brought the bride and bridegroom...in the teeth of powerful opposition...and joined them in wedlock". Though this description sounds exaggerated, the situation, in general, was the same.}
to look after the security arrangements. Elaborate police bandobust was made. In addition to this, students were keeping constant vigil. A contemporary student who was present on that day described the event:

"About 500 students of us attended the marriage. We were guarding all streets and lanes leading to our 'guru's (Veerasingam's) residence throughout the night. We all ate there during the marriage and yet the priestly classes could not excommunicate us as we did not care for all that. Except Basavaraju Gavarraju, all other leading members of the Widow Marriage Association and followers of Veerasingam deserted him during the marriage. Those few who attended the marriage performed 'penance'. Soon after,

223. Veerasingam, being a teacher in the local Government School (under the headmastership of E.P. Metcalfe, who was a sympathiser of the movement) and editor of 'Vivekavardhini' which made a name by this time for its bold and candid expression of views and in particular attacking the corrupt local officials, had no difficulty in enlisting the support of the Police Department. His friendly relations with the officials and their assistance to him in such activities as this have made some scholars to interpret his attitude to be 'passive' towards the Raj. This is too simplistic to explain his political views. As we have seen earlier, like the other 19th century reformers, Veerasingam too had certain limitations in properly assessing the British rule.

224. Sixty constables were posted at the venue of the marriage (residence of Veerasingam) and along the route of the marriage procession. As the Hindu constables were suspected to be friendly with the orthodox sections, Christian and the Muhammadan constables were brought specially from other places. See Veerasingam, Viveka, P.I, op.cit., PP.188-92.

225. V.Suryanarayana Rao, op.cit., P.166.
on December 15, a second remarriage took place and this time the reformers took out a public procession of the newly married couples in the streets of Rajahmundry. The District Collector came from Kakinada to attend the function. 226

Social boycott began in right earnest. It took the form of disallowing the people connected, in any way, with the remarriage, to approach wells and enter temples. 227 It was followed by excommunication letters issued by the Sankaracharya to all those (nearly thirty of them) who attended the remarriage and a few others at Kakinada, including Pyda Ramakrishnaiah. 228

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227. Indian Social Reformer, November 3, 1894 (Vol.V, No.10) stated: "...those who participated in these remarriages and even those who attended as mere sightseers were boycotted and teased by the people...people who had any concern with these marriages and who happened to live in rented houses were summarily ejected by the landlords and prevented from getting other houses to live in...they were denied access to wells and temples...".

228. The orthodox section was so much rejoiced at the action of Sankaracharya that they took out a procession with the writs of excommunication in a palanquin. A similar procession was taken out in Kakinada too. See Veeresalingam, Sweya, P.I, op.cit., P.199.
Veeresalingam and B. Gavarraju, all others including Pyda Ramakrishnaiah performed 'penance'. Such was the grip of the orthodoxy over the minds of the Hindus during that period.

The news of the first widow remarriage was well received in all quarters, especially in Madras. Writing a letter of congratulations, a social worker from Madras, P. Venkatappaiah stated: "May God bless you and the couple! .... Rajahmundry may hence forth be said to live. You have made the 11th of December a very remarkable day in the history of our Presidency.... Madras, as some wish me to believe, will follow in the wake of Rajahmundry".

229. Veeresalingam had high hopes of Gavarraju and even contemplated that he would take up the leadership of the movement after his retirement. But unfortunately Gavarraju met a premature death in 1883 to the great sorrow of Veeresalingam. As Gavarraju did not undergo 'penance', when he died, the Brahmins boycotted his funeral ceremonies. Veeresalingam, assuming the role of a purohit, performed the final rites, with the help of a few friends. Indian Social Reformer, November 3, 1894 (Vol.V, No.10), wrote "....once Mr. Veeresalingam himself had to officiate at the obsequies of one of their party...." Also see Veeresalingam's biographical sketch of Gavarraju in his Col. Works, Vol.VIII, op.cit., PP.763-801.

230. Atmuri Lakshminarasimham (who was denied entry into the temple, which his grandfather built, as a part of social boycott) filed a defamation suit against Sankaracharya which was dismissed in the District Court. However, he won the case at the High Court level. Though the judgement upheld the right of Sankaracharya to excommunicate Atmuri, his method of sending the writ of excommunication was objected to and he was fined Rs.200/- This incident gave a great fillip to the reformers. See Personal papers of Pyda Ramakrishnaiah. Also see Veeresalingam, Sweeya, P.I, op.cit., PP.203-4.

Rajahmundry did become an asylum for widows as they now started writing secret letters to Veeresalingam, intimating their willingness to marry. The reaction to the movement was seen in the formation of two anti-widow marriage associations, one at Rajahmundry and another at Madras.\footnote{232}{Another letter of congratulations from Madras mentioned the formation of one such association at Madras. Divan Bahadur Valluri Jagannatha Rao, from Madras, wrote, "I only hope that at least half a dozen more marriages will take place in rapid succession. The excitement must not be allowed to cool down.... An anti-marriage association is just now on foot here. It can do you no harm". Letter dated 12th December 1881, Madras \textit{Ibid.}, P.194. About the formation of a similar association at Rajahmundry, Veeresalingam mentioned in his autobiography. Beyond this we do not have any other information about them. Formed in the wake of the performance of the first widow remarriage, perhaps they had no concrete programme except carrying on propaganda against such marriages. The publication of anti-widow remarriage tracts (referred above) did indicate that there was some activity opposing this movement. But how strong and widespread it was, one does not know in the absence of any relevant material.}

Veeresalingam was invited to Madras by the two leading reformers of the city, R. Raghunatha Rao and P. Chentsal Rao to deliver lectures on the reform activities at Rajahmundry. This afforded Veeresalingam an opportunity to spread the ideas of reform in general and widow remarriages in particular. He delivered a few lectures in Madras of which the significant one was that delivered on the 'Remarriage of Widows' in the Anderson Hall of the Madras Christian College which he later developed into a small pamphlet entitled "Stri Punarvivaha
Sastrasangraham. This lecture contained several quotations from the Smritis. Perhaps, he purposefully made it appear erudite to convince the pandits in Madras, especially the two well known opponents of widow remarriages and great scholars in Sanskrit, Kokkonda Venkataratnam and Vedam Venkataraya Sastry. Mainly he quoted Parasara Smriti which stated, "If the husband dies or renounces the world or does not return from abroad within the prescribed time or is impotent or becomes loose in matters of sex, the wife is eligible to remarry". He quoted Parasara again disapproving the shaving of the head of a widow. On the occasion of his visit to Madras a 'cosmopolitan' dinner was arranged which was attended only by five people.

233. Text of this lecture is included in his Col. Works, Vol.VII, op.cit., PP.683-751. His lectures at Madras were followed by speeches of his opponents. At Madras Christian College, his speech was criticised by Vedam Venkataraya Sastry, the Telugu Professor in the college, who wrote a tract opposing widow remarriages. Even at Madras attempts were made to assault Veeresalingam. See Veeresalingam, Sweeya, P.I, op.cit., P.220.


235. Ibid., PP.737-38.

236. It was 'cosmopolitan' on two grounds. Firstly, Veeresalingam who was excommunicated by Sankaracharya was present and in fact the dinner was arranged in his honour. Secondly, it was attended by the Brahmans of different sects. Though notice was circulated through out the city only five responded of whom three were Telugu Brahmans, namely Chentsal Rao, D.Narassiah (both referred earlier) and M.Butchaiiah Pantulu, a founder of the Brahma Samaj in South India. The remaining two were Raghunatha Rao, a Desastha Maratha Brahmin and Sesha Aiyar the only Tamilian. See Veeresalingam, Sweeya, P.I, op.cit., P.225.
Rajahmundry reformers, despite the odds they faced, continued to keep up the tempo of reform activity by performing a few more marriages in 1882, 1883 and 1884.237 Iswarchandra Vidyasagar, on hearing the news of widow marriages being performed at Rajahmundry, congratulated Veeresalingam and wished him success in his "exertions on behalf of the unhappy sufferers."238 The Rajahmundry

237. In this connection, the services rendered by Rajyalakshmamma, the wife of Veeresalingam, to the cause of widow remarriages deserve a place in the history of social reform movements in Andhra. Her silent and sympathetic assistance to Veeresalingam in his efforts could hardly be exaggerated. She was aged 10 when she was married to Veeresalingam (who was 13) and was illiterate. Veeresalingam educated her and made her a staunch supporter of the movement. When the cooks boycotted, during the performance of the first widow remarriage, in 1881, she fetched water from the Godavari river and prepared the marriage feast. Later on she served as a teacher in the widows' Home and looked after the inmates with motherly affection and care. It is significant to note, in this context, the opinion of Sivanath Sastry who visited Rajahmundry and had the first hand knowledge of Veeresalingam and his wife and their reform efforts. He stated that "Veeresalingam's wife is a memorable person. On the one hand firm, energetic and dutiful and on the other tender-hearted and charitable. My friend Veeresalingam who had achieved much despite social oppression because he had a wife like her". (See Atmacherit, op.cit., P.303. The day when she died the whole of Rajahmundry mourned her death and felt that Veeresalingam was orphaned. The Hindu, August 2, 1910, in its obituary note stated, "For over 30 years, she toiled hard in the cause of social reform along with her husband bravely facing excommunication and social persecution. Her life had been an unbroken record of self-sacrifice, and her labours contribute largely to the success of the widow remarriage movement"

238. From Vidyasagar's letter to Veeresalingam, October 24, 1882. For the full text of the letter, see Veeresalingam, Sveeya, P.I, op.cit., P.249.
Widow Marriage Association (started in 1879) did not meet formally, before 1884. The activities were conducted by an inner circle consisting of mainly Gavarraju, Bapaiiah, Nyapati Subba Rao, Atmuri Lakshminarasimham and Veeresalingam. It formally met in 1884 (by which time ten marriages were already performed) and passed a few resolutions favouring widow marriages. The Association continued till 1891 as it met for the last time on January 25, 1891. Between 1884 and 1891 only three marriages were performed. 239 Pyda Ramakrishnaiah, the liberal donor for the cause of Widow marriages died in 1886. Therefore, after 1891, when the Association became defunct, Veeresalingam had to bear the brunt of financing the movement. 240 By 1905 the total number of widow marriages

239. The particulars in this regard are taken from Veeresalingam's autobiography which are corroborated by the facts given by N. Krishna Rao, Vitantuvyaha Charitra (upto 1904, in Telugu), (Rajahmundry, 1950). The author was a prominent citizen of Rajahmundry and a follower of Veeresalingam.

240. Though Veeresalingam bore the brunt, he was liberally assisted by other members of the Association, particularly Nyapati Subba Rao who was a prosperous lawyer and Atmuri Lakshminarasimham a rich Vaisya who was also the District Munsiff. However, Subba Rao soon turned into an opponent of Veeresalingam and Atmuri left Rajahmundry on a transfer to Gooty (Bellary district). Help did not come from Madras reformers like Chenteal Rao and Raghunatha Rao, even though his friends like K. Krishnaswamy Rao and S. Rangalal Chetty sent some money (exact amounts are not known). Besides, Veeresalingam got monetary help from Sabbapati Mudaliar of Bellary. See, Veeresalingam, Sweeya, P.I, op.cit., PP.250-52.
performed were 63 of which 57 were among Brahmins (some of which were of different sub-castes), 3 among Vaisyas, one among Viswabrahmins, 241 one of Adivelama 242 caste and another of Vellala 243 caste.

**Spread of the Movement**

The first widow marriage performed outside Rajahmundry was at Madras on June 7, 1883. 245 This marriage boosted

241. The 'Viswabrahmins' are called 'Kamsalas' also. The name 'Viswabrahmin' is of recent origin. They are divided into four occupational groups, kamsali (Goldsmith), Kamchari (Blacksmith), Vadrangi (Carpenter), and Kasi (Stone Masons). They occupy, in the ritualistic hierarchy, the same position as other non-brahmin communities eventhough they rigidly keep themselves separate from all. See under 'Kamsala', Edgar Thurston, Vol. III, op. cit., pp. 141-49.


243. The 'Vellalas' are the leading agricultural community in Tamilnadu. Their social status is that of the Sudras. Ibid., see under 'Vellalas', pp. 361-89.

244. The number included the marriages that took place at Madras, Guntur and Bellary under the initiative and leadership of the Andhra reformers. See N.Krishna Rao, op. cit., p.16.

245. In connection with this marriage Raghumatha Rao betrayed a lukewarm attitude which Veeresalingam resented much. Chentala Rao showed more understanding and extended liberal help in the performance of the marriage. The marriage was a great success to the surprise of the Madras reformers. See Veeresalingam, Swaya, P.I, op. cit., pp. 280-281.
up the morale of the movement since what could not be done earlier by the Madras reformers was now achieved by Veeresalingam. More than one hundred guests attended and took betel, eventhough very few attended the dinner with the couple. 246

At Bellary Veeresalingam found in Sabbapati Mudaliar a strong protagonist of widow remarriages. Mudaliar financed two widow marriages performed at Bellary on the request of Veeresalingam during 1885. These marriages were performed under the direct charge of Mampava Butchaiah Pantulu. 246

At this stage the main problem appeared to be the withal to continue the movement, though the human resources to assist him were very meagre. The vernacular journals

246. Raghunatha Rao and Chentasal Rao did not participate in the dinner along with many others excusing themselves on flimsy pretenses like they were not feeling hungry and not feeling well and they had some urgent business to attend at home. See C.R.Reddy, Veeresalingam Pantulu op.cit. Veeresalingam's reaction to this was unhappiness coupled with contempt. See Sweeya, P.I, op.cit., P.228.

247. This incident took place when Veeresalingam was at Madras to attend the meetings of the Madras Mahajana Sabha and the Madras University Graduates Association which were formed to discuss issues of public interest. Veeresalingam and Raghunatha Rao were invited to the Graduates meeting eventhough they were not graduates but because of their public standing. Two widows were brought to Madras for marriage and when Veeresalingam approached the reformers at Madras, Raghunatha Rao and Chentasal Rao, they requested him to perform the marriages at some other place. For, after the widow marriage in Madras in 1883 the two reformers came under heavy attack from the orthodox sections and hence their unpreparedness to perform remarriages again. Immediately Sabbapati Mudaliar at Bellary was contacted who agreed to perform marriages there. See Veeresalingam, Sweeya, P.I, op.cit., PP.284-85. Also see Leonard, op.cit., PP.168-69.
realised the situation and issued appeals to the public for monetary help. 248

Veeresalingam's departure for Madras in 1897 affected the movement in Andhra region. He took this decision, apparently, to get his writings printed there for which he purchased a press (Chintamani Press). 249 The duration of his stay at Madras was eight years, from 1897 to 1904. His stay at Madras did not completely cut him off from the main stream of the Andhra reform movements. He was in touch with his co-workers in Andhra and attended meetings and conferences that were taking place there. 250

The scene of the reform movements, during the absence of Veeresalingam, shifted from Godavari to other districts, in particular to Krishna district. 251 This happened because

248. See for example Andhra Prakasika, June 1893. Native News, 1893. See also HindujanaSamkarini, March 1899.

249. Another reason which influenced his decision was probably that a metropolis like Madras with its large heterogeneous culture and population might give him more opportunities for his reform work. A vague hint to this effect could be seen in his Sveera, P.II, op.cit., p.90.

250. Veeresalingam was asked to preside over the sixth Madras Provincial Conference at Kakinada in 1902. See Indian Social Reformer, June 22, 1902 and June 1, 1902 (Vol.XII, Nos.40 and 43) which gave a full report of the discussions and resolutions passed at this Conference. At this time Veeresalingam, having got a transfer from Rajahmundry to Madras, was working as Telugu Pandit in the Presidency College at Madras. The Indian Social Reformer described him, in its report, as the "pioneer of social reform in Madras Presidency".

251. Guntur was a part of the Krishna district till 1904.
of two factors, viz., (1) by this time several students who came under the influence of the reform movements at Rajahmundry (as there were a First Grade college as well as a Training College) returned to their original places and initiated movements there\(^\text{252}\) and (2) Raghupati Venkataratnam (here after referred as Venkataratnam) who, as a student, was an active participant of the 'Social Purity' movement and a staunch Brahmo at Madras, was now a teacher at Machilipatnam (Krishna district). Several of his students were inspired by his teachings and joined the movement.\(^\text{253}\)

Guntur and its suburbs became prominent in the widow remarriage movement in the early years of the present century. Umava Lakshminarayana, a former student of Rajahmundry Training College was prominent here.\(^\text{254}\)

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\(^\text{252}\) The observations made by the Indian Social Reformer, November 24, 1901 (Vol.XIX, No.13), in this regard are worth noting. "Everything of great comes from Greek. Time was when the Northern Circars said the same of Rajahmundry. It was the chief stronghold of civilization and enlightenment...Long did thus Rajahmundry act the torch-bearer of the Northern districts of the Madras Presidency with respect to enlightenment".

\(^\text{253}\) Venkataratnam was mainly associated with the 'Social Purity' movement and the Brahmo Samaj in Andhra. His antecedents and views are discussed in the subsequent chapters.

\(^\text{254}\) Lakshminarayana during the later years, became an 'extremist' in the freedom struggle and led the No-tax Campaign in Guntur district during 1920's and was imprisoned. He differed with Gandhi over the details of the movement and for some time continued the movement without calling it off. Also he was one of the earliest intellectuals of Andhra who was influenced by the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. His writings, in particular his epic novel 'Malapalli' (Harijan Hamlet) reflected this. See for a biographical sketch, K.Venkatarae's article "Umava Lakshminarayana", in Navvandhra Nirmatalu, op.cit. Also see Vignanasarvaswam, Vol.IV, op.cit., P.1051. For his place in modern Telugu literature, as an original novelist, see G.V.Sitapati, op.cit., PP.216-17.
marriage took place in Guntur in 1902. Veeresalingam and his wife were invited by the Guntur reformers to conduct the marriage and they went there from Madras and performed it. The event, first of its kind in those parts, caused a furore in Guntur town. Against many odds the marriage was performed in which Lakshminarayana, an young man full of idealism and reform ideas, took an active part. Later on, he performed a few more marriages at Guntur, and came to be called "the second Veeresalingam of Guntur".

Commenting upon the widow marriage at Guntur the 'Hindu' published a letter under the caption 'Social Reform in Guntur'. It stated: "Two or three months back a remarriage of a young woman took place for the first time at Guntur under the Superintendence of Rao Bahadur K.V.Pantulu (Kandukuri Veeresalingam) and his wife....This was too much for the orthodox section which seemed to be strong at Guntur. All those who received the innocent 'Pansupari' (betel or Tambool) and the few students who dined were also put out of caste....Several performed 'prayashchit' or penance and returned to their respective positions in society. Three gentlemen and three students are still holding on".

Discussions and arguments, for and against widow marriages,

256. The Hindu, June 7, 1910.
257. Ibid., January 15, 1903.
followed. A five day conference was organised soon (at Guntur) to discuss the question. A good number of scholars, from all over Andhra, attended it. 258 'The Hindu' correspondent continued stating, "The conference has done one good. It made Guntur people think of social reform.... A few educated men of Guntur seem to lead opposition to social reform. This is deplorable. How an English educated man can ever find himself in opposition to the social reform programmes and use the old world instrument of excommunication against the reformers is inconceivable." 259

This clearly showed that the widow marriage movement was spreading to other places where active discussions were taking place. Tanguturi Prakasam, 260 a student at Rajahmundry during the height of the Reform movements, mentioned that he decided to perform the marriage of his widowed sister under the influence of the social reform movements at Rajahmundry led by Veeresalingam. 261 The conferring of

258. The conference was attended by many scholars. Viswanatha Aiyer, Fellow of Madras University and the District Munsiff at Guntur (at whose residence the first widow marriage was performed) presided over the conference. On the fourth day of the conference a number of people like C.Lakshminarasimham (referred above) T.Sriramulu (editor, 'Carlylean', Rajahmundry), Dasu Sriramulu and others spoke favouring social reforms in general and widow marriages in particular. Ibid.

259. Ibid.

260. Prakasam later became a leading political figure in the Madras Presidency during the freedom struggle. When the first Congress Governments were formed in the wake of the Government of India Act of 1935, he was the Minister for Revenue in the Madras Presidency. He was the first chief Minister of separate Andhra province in 1953. See for a study of Prakasam A.Rudriah Choudari, Prakasam - A Political Study, (Madras, 1971).

261. See the autobiography of T.Prakasam, Na Jeevithayatra (Telugu), (Madras, 1972, first edn.1946), P.52. The marriage of his widow sister, however, could not take place as she died.
the title 'Vidyasagar of South India', by Mahadev Govinda Ranade and presidentship of the Indian Social Conference in 1898 were the two honours done to Veeresalingam in recognition of his yeoman's services to the widow remarriage movement in the South. 262

The Social Reform Movement at Madras did not gain much from the stay of Veeresalingam there. 263 of the few

262. This observation can be justified in this manner. Strictly speaking, Veeresalingam's efforts were confined only to the Andhra region and also to some extent to the city of Madras. However, there was no other widow remarriage movement in the South conducted on the scale of the one in Andhra. The comparison of Veeresalingam with Vidyasagar was apt on more than one count. Hemachandra Sarkar drew an impressive comparative picture of the two. He wrote, "Veeresalingam pantulu has been called the Vidyasagar of Southern India. Indeed no two public men resembled each other so closely as Iswarachandra Vidyasagar and Viresalingam Pantulu. Veeresalingam belonged to a respectable brahmin family and was a pandit in the Government service. Like Vidyasagar he had a fearless spirit. He was a prolific writer and was the creator of Modern Telugu language. Early in life, he exposed the cause of the unfortunate Hindu widows and laboured all the life for the amelioration of their lot. Unlike Vidyasagar he succeeded in creating a strong party in favour of widow remarriage..." See Hemachandra Sarkar, Sivanath Sastry (Calcutta, 1929), P.48.

263. Indian Social Reformer, November 24, 1901 (Vol.XII, No.13) was also sceptical about this. The journal stated that it "did not know whether Madras town has considerably benefited by the presence there of Rao Bahadur Kandukuri Veeresalingam Pantulu". He also felt the same and gave expression to this, though not explicitly, in his autobiography when he stated that he was an alien in Madras and could not get much cooperation from people who, according to him, were mere talkers and no doers. See Veeresalingam, Suceya, P.I, op.cit., P.283. Veeresalingam had this opinion about Madras reformers from the beginning. It got strengthened presumably with the non-participation of Raghunatha Rao, Chentla Rao and others in the remarriage dinner in 1883 and also by their total refusal to help him in performing two widow marriages during 1885, which were later performed at Bellary (referred above). The reason Veeresalingam gave for leaving Madras in 1904, that it was a city of long distances and could not meet his friends often, may not be a very serious one in this context. He did maintain his own coach and as such it should not have been much of a problem to commute the distances.
widow marriages he performed at Madras, one deserves our special mention as it was the first widow marriage in the 'Adivelama' caste. It was celebrated at his residence and "created quite a stir among the Naidus in Madras and elsewhere". The unique thing that he did at Madras was the establishment of a Widows' Home. This was indeed a remarkable service for widows. This Home was to provide, in addition to shelter, purposeful education by training them in household crafts and needlework. He spent four thousand rupees towards the construction of the building.

264. *Indian Social Reformer*, June 27, 1901 (Vol.XI, No.22). The journal further mentioned about the attempts contemplated by the Adivelama caste Association to excommunicate those people who were associated with the marriage.

265. Veeresalingam must have had prior knowledge of the existence of such Homes in Bengal and Maharashtra through the press, visits of reformers and through the meetings of the Indian Social Conference. Sasipada Banerji's Widows Home was the earliest to be established in 1887, followed by Ramabai's Sharada Sadan at Poona in 1889, and D.K.Karve's Home in 1893 at the same place. See B.B.Mazumdar, *op.cit.*, P.13. For details regarding Sasipada Banerji's Widows Home see A.R.Banerji's *An Indian Pathfinder* (Memoirs of Sasipada Banerji), (Oxford, n.d.), PP.62-72. Veeresalingam, at the time of his departure to Rajahmundry in 1904, handed it over to the Hindu Social Reform Association of Madras and accepted only three thousand rupees for the building. See Veeresalingam, *Sweeva*, P.II, *op.cit.*, P.137. It is said that Veeresalingam's efforts at establishing the widows' Home at Madras were achieved against greater odds than those faced by the similar establishment in Poona by Prof. D.K.Karve. See S.Natarajan, *op.cit.*, P.99.
In addition to this, Veeresalingam, as the Secretary of the Madras Hindu Social Reform Association, provided it with a building and collected over a thousand rupees as the nucleus of an endowment. Furthermore, he started, 'Voice of Progress', a monthly Anglo-Vernacular journal, on behalf of the Association. While he was at Madras he also visited Bangalore and delivered lectures on widow marriages. There he helped in forming a Reform Association to organise propaganda in favour of widow marriages.

Veerasingam had started making arrangements for the establishment of a widows' Home at Rajahmundry even before he left Madras in 1904. The Home was opened in 1905 (16th January) and was named "Sree Victoria Widows' Home". Widows above the age of 18 were eligible for direct admission and others (below 18 years) should obtain the permission of parents. Besides general education some vocational training was provided to the inmates.

266. The comments of the Indian Social Reformer, April 20, 1902 (Vol.XIII, No.34), are worth noting. "Several of Mr.Pantulu's ideas have thus taken shape in the outline.... We have a journal, Reading room and Widows' Home. But they are not active."

267. A thirty-acre site was purchased for the construction of the building. M.Achutaramaiah, a former student of Veeresalingam contributed five thousand rupees towards it. The Rajah of Pithapur gave twelve hundred rupees. To begin with the 'Home' was started at Veeresalingam's residence and it was shifted to its own buildings in 1908. See for details regarding the 'Home', K.Hanumantha Rao's article "Pantulugari Samsthalu" in Yugapurushudu, op. cit., pp.113-17.

268. Announcements in the vernacular press appeared to this effect. See Telugu Zemana, September 1904. Also see Krishnapatrika, March 15, 1906. The 'Home' was primarily meant for poor widows. Food and education were freely provided.
of the 'Home' was the attached school which was open not only for widows but also for other girls. Thus the scope of the 'Home' was enlarged to include the object of catering to the needs of female education. Later he also organised a 'Rescue Home' for fallen women.

Veeresalingam experienced two types of hardships in running the 'Home', organisational and financial. As the inmates were of diverse temperaments it was difficult to manage the 'Home'. Human resources were scarce and this aspect worried him most. In a letter to R. Venkatasivudu he wrote "more than monetary help I am much concerned about the lack of human help. I am worried about the future of Widows' Home".

269. See for particulars Kamaraju Hanumantha Rao's article 'Victoria Hindu Vitantu Saranalayam, Rajahmundry' in Andhrapatrika, 1930-31 (Annual Number). Hanumantha Rao married a widow and was for sometime the Superintendent of the 'Home' at Rajahmundry. Veeresalingam had his residence built on the same site to be closer to the 'Home'. Separate residential quarters were built for the sake of the Superintendent and other guardians.

270. A marriage was also performed for an inmate of the 'Rescue Home'. See Veeresalingam, Sweya, P.II, op. cit., P.359.

271. Letter reproduced in A. Ramaasati Rao, ed. Diaries of Veeresalingam, op. cit., P.100. For sometime Ummava Lakshminarayana was the Superintendent of the Widows' Home. But he resigned and left as his association with extremist phase of the Swadeshi Movement of 1907 was resented by Veeresalingam. See K. Venkatarama's article op. cit. Desiraju Pedabapai (a Brahmo about whom the details are furnished in the VI chapter) was looking after the Home. However, Bapai aih died a premature death dashing the hopes of Veeresalingam and others to the ground. See K. Hanumantharao, Desiraju Pedabapai, Jeevaamriti Rachana Manjari (Telugu), (Rajahmundry, 1928, First edn. 1928), P.177.
The problem of finances was equally formidable. It was costing him Rs.150/- per month and the public donations were not liberally forthcoming. He visited (in 1909) at the age of sixty for donations, Secunderabad272 and Bombay273. He was the guest of Pandit Karve at Poona and observed the working of Widows' Home managed by him.274

As a fitting finale to the services he rendered to the widow remarriage movement, Veeresalingam established the 'Hithakarini Samaj' and gave away all his properties worth 41 thousand rupees to the Samaj through a trust deed registered on May 2, 1908.275 The main aim of the Samaj was to maintain the Widows' Home, Orphanages for destitute children and schools to impart general education and teach...

272. At Secunderabad he was a guest of Govindarajulu Naidu and his wife, the well-known poetess Sarojini Naidu, whose inter-caste and inter-state marriage he performed in Madras in the year 1898. See Padmini Sen Gupta, Sarojini Naidu (Bombay, 1966), P.33, wherein she quoted a newspaper account:..."Rao Bahadur Pandit Veeresalingam Pantulu Garu officiated as the Minister for the sacred occasion".

273. At Bombay he got liberal help from K. Natarajan (editor Indian Social Reformer), G.N.Chandavarkar and K.Nageswara Rao (the founder of 'Andhrapatrika', the first Telugu daily).

274. This fund-raising tour ended with a visit to Bellary and on the whole fetched him five thousand rupees.

275. Except the income that he would get through the royalty of his books, he gave away everything to the society. See the article of K. Hanumantha Rao, op.cit.
handicrafts. The movement registered its further growth when at Guntur, in 1902, a Widows’ Home was organised by a few young reformers led by Unnava Lakshminarayana. It had 16 inmates out of whom 10 got remarried. Afterwards it developed into a reputed Girls High School called ‘Sarada Niketan’. The Trust that managed the Home was presided over by Konda Venkatappaiah, the veteran freedom fighter from Andhra. The Zamindar of Munagala provided it with liberal monetary help and became its President later.

276. The Memorandum and trust deed of the Hitakarini Samaj are included by Veeresalingam as appendices in his autobiography. The Samaj has been running a High School (the only Theistic School in Andhra), a Widows’ Home, prayer hall library and reading room. After the death of Veeresalingam, Venkataratnam became its President and managed the institutions especially the High School and the ‘Home’ with the liberal help he managed to get from the Rajah of Pithapur.

277. The three names that prominently figured in its formation were Unnava Lakshminarayana, P. Krishnaamma Naidu and V. Bhananacharyulu. See the article, "The Guntur Widows’ Home" by A. Narayana Rao in Krishnapatrika, July 1, 1905. The wife of Lakshminarayana, ‘Lakshmibayamma’ rendered valuable services to the Home in helping her husband in its management. For her biographical sketch see Vignanasarvaswamu, op. cit., p. 1055. Also see for an account of their efforts in the field of social reform K. Varalakshamma, Unnava Dampatulu (Telugu), (Srimannarayanapuram, 1963).

278. See for an account of ‘Sarada Niketan’ K. N. Kesari, Na Chinnanati Muchechatlu (Telugu), (Madras, 1953), p. 179. The author, K. N. Kesari (1875-1953), was a contemporary of the Andhra reformers and in this book of his early memoirs referred to them and their activities. He published a journal for women ‘Grihalakshmi’ for a number of years which became popular among Telugu women. Also see for particulars regarding ‘Sarada Niketan’, M. Upendra Sarma, Lakshminarayanalu (Biography of Lakshminarayana and his wife Lakshmibayamma in Telugu), (Hyderabad, 1974), p. 89.

Appraisal

The scope of the Widow remarriage movement was confined only to a section of the society, and that too primarily to the upper castes. It was so because this particular evil was more glaring in these castes, especially the Brahmins. It was not so rampant in the other castes at least until they chose to ' Sanskritise' their way of life. The 'lower' castes had been practising the 'Maru manuvu', method of marriage which permitted a man or a woman to choose a mate as soon as the older one was dead or discarded. It, therefore, afforded little opportunity for them to remain in an unmarried state for long unless they were too old. These things can be illustrated by analysing the caste composition of remarriages performed by Veeresalingam and his followers. As mentioned earlier, of the 63 widow remarriages performed till 1905, 57 were among brahmans (of different sub-castes), 3 among Vaisyas and the remaining three belonged to the non-brahmins.280

Conceding that some of the so called lower castes were gradually adopting the rituals and customs of the castes above them, yet the problem never assumed serious proportions. However, it figured prominently on the agenda of the social reformers of India during the 19th century. In

280. N. Krishna Rao in his Vitantu Vivaha Charitra (History of widow remarriage movement), op. cit., P.16, mentioned the above particulars.
fact, it was a problem which was inter-linked with two other social evils, namely, infant marriages and 'kanya-sulkam'. Considering the serious efforts put into this movement, its results were paltry. The movement originated mainly "to do away with the suffering of child widows" and did not concern itself much about grown-up widows.

Even in Bengal where the movement had its beginnings and also had the benefit at the leadership of Vidyasagar it had not made much progress.

281. Widow marriages are not looked down upon today. But child widows are rare because there are no infant marriages. However, the practice of 'kanyasulkam' is replaced today by 'Varasulkam' (purchase of bridegrooms, or dowry).


283. "...Vidyasagar had little success in his object of promoting marriage of Hindu Widows". Vidyasagar was harassed by the remarried couples for pecuniary benefits and he ran into heavy debts. He was so much disgusted with the whole issue that he remarked: "I would never set my hand to settling widow-marriages if I had known my countrymen to be so worthless and good-for-nothing...My efforts would cease with the passing of the Act. It is for my faith in the words of those do-gooders and benefactors of the country that I have been ruined in health and means". Letter by Vidyasagar to Durga Charan Panarjee, father of Surendra Nath Banerjee, cited in Ibid., P.35. Maharashtra also did not produce glittering results. Commenting upon the movement in general, Henry K. Beauchamp who edited the book of Dubois on Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies stated thus: "The social reformers of the present day are doing all that they can to encourage the remarriage of Virgin widows... So far, however, the success which these reformers have met with is extremely small..." Abbe J. Dubois, op.cit., P.355, f.n.
In Andhra the movement became fairly widespread in the towns. Besides Rajahmundry, the headquarters of Veeresalingam, Guntur, Bellary, Vizianagaram, Visakapatnam, Bobbili, Machilipatnam, Berhampur (now in Orissa) and Kakinada became centres of the movement. It did not, in all probability, reach the countryside, where only a few upper caste families lived. However, the movement created an awareness among the people against such evils and contributed mainly to the dissemination of reform ideas in general. It was a successful campaign against orthodoxy. It sanctified the individual revolt against the traditions and made men more rational in their outlook and independent in action. The entire movement for the uplift of women was a pioneering effort to emancipate them from oppression. It also generated a firm intellectual conviction mainly among the educated sections that women deserved a respectable, if not equal, place in society. Reformers like Veeresalingam with a 'middle class' background could not go beyond the limits of a typical bourgeois intellectual of the 19th century and demand for women the right for a share in ancestral property. The failure of the movement should be seen in the light of the

284. Commenting upon the movement, MehadevGovind Ranade stated that "The agitation of the question for the last thirty years has placed the legitimacy of the movement beyond all danger... and the movement may be said to have survived the attack of the orthodox section". See Ranade’s Religious and Social Reform, op.cit., pp.89-91.
contemporary "society's priorities, with its consciousness and goals of motivated action". 285

Moreover, in some cases, apart from the traditional and orthodox reasons, certain economic considerations too played a part in the slackening pace or general decline of the movement. Parents objected to remarriage if their widowed daughters had inherited property from their deceased husbands and the poor were not prepared to lose the services of a member of the family who was more of a financial asset than liability. This applied to all communities - both high and 'low' - among whom the practice was prevalent. There might have been a few exceptions here and there. Some people could not make their widowed daughters work and contribute to the family income as social taboos and 'status' prevented them from doing so. Those, to whom the widowed daughters were a liability, were willing to perform their remarriages. Even for such people it required much moral courage to break new ground in a matter like this.

In Andhra the impact of the movement nearly dis-appeared in two decades. 286 This may be attributed to the

285. The convergence of the aims of reformers or reform movements and society's priorities and goals would depend upon "the entire social progress". See Asok Sen, op.cit., P.37.

286. The comment of Indian Social Reformer, November 24, 1901 (Vol.XII, No.13) is worth noting. For the performance of widow marriages, "hitherto in the Circars there has been a dearth of bridegrooms; now it is of brides".
following:

1. As mentioned earlier, its scope was limited.

2. The reformers, while mainly concentrating on the performance of widow marriages and their number, rarely bothered about the temperamentual suitability and mutual liking of the couples. Such imbalances, more often than not resulted in the ruin of marital life. 287

3. It was alleged by the critics of Veeresalingam that he was more interested in the performance of new marriages than to take care of the married couples. 288

However, Veeresalingam refuted this criticism by saying that in order to pay the married couples in time, he had

287. Writing about such hastily concluded marriages at Guntur, Krishnapatrika, July 1, 1905 advised the reformers not to perform such marriages. Veeresalingam himself admitted this fact. See his Sreeya, P.I, op.cit., P.244. R.Venkatasivudu was more candid when he wrote that the reformers considered it improper to go into the personal qualities of those people who, making heavy sacrifices, came forward to marry. Whenever these workers, associated with Veeresalingam, attempted to bring this to his notice, he became very angry with them. Such marriages, Venkatasivudu further stated, brought discredit to the movement. See R. Venkatasivudu, Samamriti, op.cit., P.142.

288. Gudipati Venkatachalam, a Brahma and a close follower of Venkataratnam and later a prominent literary figure in Telugu expressed the same views in his autobiography. He had the benefit of knowing about the Widows' Home and conditions in it as his aunt was an inmate there. He stated that when some of the widow marriages broke down, the reformers were not bestowing much concern for such unfortunate women. Also he mentioned that widows had no option in choosing their partners. See G.V. Chalam, Chalam (Autobiography, Telugu), (Tiruvannamalai, 1973), PP.60-61 and 142.
incurred debts.  

4. Several of the couples, it appeared, were not genuinely imbued with either idealism or reformist zeal. They got into the movement with the hope of making money and securing social recognition. When these were not forthcoming according to their expectations, they became disillusioned and developed ill-will towards the reformers.  

5. Veeresalingam's departure to Madras in 1894, when the movement was at its peak, was considered a "distinct loss to the Northern districts that Mr. Veeresalingam should rather abruptly have left the field of his labours in the Circars".  

6. Finally, the community that was covered by widow marriages was small and therefore they were apprehensive of their future prospects. Such a pioneering movement, however, if it had to make some progress, could not pay


290. For example, when a dispute between Veeresalingam and Atmuri Lakshminarasimham arose over the execution of the death deed of Pyda Ramakrishnaiah who set apart Rs.10,000/- to be spent for the cause of widow marriages, the community of remarried couples got itself divided into two factions and took opposite sides. See Veeresalingam, Sweeya, op.cit., PP.356-57.  

291. Indian Social Reformer, November 24, 1901 (Vol.XII, No.13). It continued further on the same point and stated: "There has thus occurred a break in the continuity of reform work in these districts... all practical reform activity there is consequently at a stand-still".
much attention to problems like temperamental compatibility of couples and the choice of widows in selecting their partners and the like. In a way the movement was highly individualistic in so far as it centred round a few individuals. Veeresalingam's Trust - Hitakarini Samaj - did provide scope to look after the community of re-married families. However, it should be remembered that this was only one of its many objects. Moreover, it was not established till 1908 and also its resources were not adequate.

292. For example, the community of newly married couples around Rajahmundry completely relied upon few individuals like Veeresalingam and Atmuri Lakshminarasimham. Atmuri, after his break with Veeresalingam (on personal misunderstandings) became inactive. Veeresalingam, for the sake of these families, did not become a Brahmo for a long time until 1905, even though he was a strong believer in it. Likewise when Umnava Lakshminarayana became actively involved in the freedom struggle the movement was abandoned at Guntur.

293. The total assets amounted to 41 thousand rupees.