CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

General Note:

Andhra Pradesh is one of 25 states of the Republic of India. In extent it is the biggest state in South India and the fifth in the Republic.

Andhra Pradesh encompassing the sprawling Krishna and Godavari valleys has been the home of one of the oldest inhabitants of the Deccan plateau. The earliest historical reference to Deccan, known as Dakshinapatha in the ancient period, is in Aiteareya Bhahmana, a vedic work, mentions for the first time in Indian history (assigned to 800 BC) says that the country south of Vindhyas was inhabited by various tribes of people like the Andhras, Savaras, Pulindas etc. Andhra Pradesh first enters the glorious history of India during the great Mauryan reign. The existence of Andhra kingdom on the banks of the river Godavari is mentioned in several Buddhist works of that period.

Soon after the dismemberment of the Mauryan empire peninsular India enjoyed political stability once again under the most impressive royal house namely the imperial house of the Satavahanas (3rd century B.C).

After decline of the Andhra Satavahana power by about the middle of the 3rd century A.D. their empire broke into pieces and fell in to the pattern of the struggle for ascendancy between the centrifugal and centripetal forces.
Several smaller dynasties rose to power and ruled in the regions of the Telugu country.

The Vishnukindins ruled the An̄dhra kingdom from the middle of the 5th century to the end of the first quarter of the 7th century A.D. The dynasty of kings which enjoyed pre-eminence after the decline of the Ikshvakuś is that of the Pallavas (9th century A.D.). After Pallavas the Chalukyas (615-1070 AD) are among the greatest dynasties that held sway in South India.

With the fall of An̄dhra-Satavahana empire the Telugu-speaking people lost their political unity. For a second time the Telugu people attained political unity under the Kakatiyas (500 AD-1323 AD). After the illustrious Satavahanas the Kakatiyas were the first kings to rule over the whole of Telugu land.

The history of the Vijayanagara empire is the brightest chapter in the history of the An̄dras it was founded by the Sangama brothers-Harihara and Bukka in A.D 1336 and it lasted for about 3 1/2 centuries (1681 AD).

While the Southern part of An̄dradesa remained under Vijayanagar the northern parts were under the rule of muslim sultans of the Deccan. One of these sultans was Qutub Shahi who ruled over Telengana. Telengana flourished under the Qutub Shahis. The Qutub shahis were humbled by the Moghal Emperor Aurangazeb who appointed Asaf Jah as Governor of the Deccan. The Asaf Jah soon became independent ruler under the
title of Nizam. The Nizam became involved in the Anglo-French wars in the Deccan and finally entered into a subsidiary alliance with the British in 1800 ceding the whole of the present Rayalaseema (except Chittoor) as the price for creating the subsidiary force in the kingdom. The districts thus ceded are known as the ceded districts. The British had in the meantime acquired several coastal districts except Nellore from Nizam through a treaty. This lead to the bifurcation of Telugu land in to Nizams dominion and the Madras presidency.

Formation of the State:

Prior to 1956 several districts of Andhra Pradesh had been parts of the then Bombay, Mysore, Madras and Hyderabad states. When India became independent the Telugu speaking population was distributed in about 21 districts, 9 of them in the Nizams dominions and 12 in the Madras presidency. In response to the desire of the Telugu speaking people to have a state of their own, the first Andhra state was formed on October 1, 1953 with 11 Telugu speaking districts of the Madras state i.e. Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur, Nellore, Chittoor, Cuddapah, Anantapur and Kurnool. Kurnool became the capital of the New State.

The composite state of Andhra Pradesh came into existence on November 1, 1956, in accordance with the recommendations of the states Reorganisation commission, the Andhra Pradesh state was enlarged by the addition of 9 districts
formerly in the Nizam's dominions—Adilabad, Nizamabad, Medak, Hyderabad, Mahabubnagar, Karimnagar, Warangal, Nalgonda and Khammam. Hyderabad the former capital of the Nizam was made the capital of the enlarged Andhra Pradesh state. The new state has 20 districts; three districts were subsequently created, Prakasam on February 2, 1970, Ranga Reddy on August 15, 1978, and Vizayanagaram on June 1979 taking the total to 23 districts.

Reasons for undertaking the work

Since the dawn of the human history, plants have occupied an important place in the day to day activities of human beings. Forests are the most important resources of plants. Plants and plant products are inevitable for the sustenance of man. Plants play a significant role in maintaining the existence of life on the globe, because they are the "Primary producers". They serve us in providing food, cloth and shelter. Besides plants also provide the human beings with amenities like enjoyable landscapes and aesthetic and recreational needs. So plants have many and diverse uses which have direct and indirect bearing on the human civilization.

The flora of India is very rich in many ways—in number of species, in economic potential, in endemism and not unoften in uniqueness of biological characteristics. Plant resources, including forestry and agriculture, support the living of the majority of our people. Again the vast majority of our people live in villages, in relatively closer
contact with nature and plant wealth. Yet we are among the poor nations of the world, it has been stated that we are not utilising our plant resources and the vast land fully and properly (Pal, 1981; Vohra, 1980).

The reasons are many, we do not have a complete inventory of our indigenous flora (Pal, 1981). We know little about the biology, much less about chemistry, of even our known and recorded flora. We have not fully tapped the folk knowledge which still exists in certain localities. Most of us have not so far fully realized the severity of threats which are operating on natural plant genetic resources of our country (Swaminathan, 1978).

Whatever has been done so far is little compared to what remains to be done. But if the plant resources have to be studied and their fuller utilisation for our people attempted, there has to be an urgency of purpose and rather short time table (Jain, 1982).

In a developing country like India, soil and natural resources surveys play an important role in economic development. Ramachandran (1978) says the importance of survey, exploration and exploitation of the floral wealth of the country needs to be reiterated because of its obvious significance in the country overall socio-economic and cultural development".

The importance of survey of plant resources had also been emphasized by Jain (1978), who says "After independence
our planners realized that in an agricultural country like India where the flora is so varied and rich a proper consensus of the flora of country and its evaluation for economic exploitation is very important”.

The state of Andhra Pradesh endowed with bewildering diversity of vegetational resources, lacks a comprehensive and programmed approach towards its proper survey and exploitation. Gamble’s Flora of Madras presidency (1915-1935) is still the only available reference for the floristic data of the Andhra Pradesh state even today.

In these days of fast depleting vegetational resources due to various reasons and also due to ecological catastrophes, it is an imperative need to prepare a comprehensive list of the existing flora of Andhra Pradesh. As the plant wealth is either directly or indirectly useful to all the type of living organisms which thrive on the surface of earth, it is the need of the hour to have a comprehensive flora of the state. This state flora of Andhra Pradesh will be useful with the progressive line of development, such as the development of forests, agriculture, pharmaceutical industries etc.

Although it is more than 60 years since the publication of Flora of Presidency of Madras (Gamble & Fischer 1915-1935) no attempt has been made to revise the flora. Further the geographical boundaries of the states had been changed after the country became independent. The need for the state floras
has been emphasized by various experts. Hence the present work has been undertaken to revise the flora of Andhra Pradesh with up to date nomenclature.

In the present study the families Oleaceae, Nyctanthaceae, Salvadoraceae, Apocynaceae, Asclepiadaceae, Loganiaceae, Gentianaceae and Menyanthaceae have been enumerated.