INTRODUCTION

Andhra and the Andhras

It is to the Andhras as a people, not Andhra as a country, that the earliest references have been made. That the region of their habitat later on came to be known as Andhra is evident from the sequel. The earliest known reference is from the Mītakṣerapāṇa Brahmana which speaks of them as exiled sons of Visvanātra as non-Aryans. The same Brāhmaṇa counts the Andhras along with other non-Aryan tribes such as Pundrakas, Sārabas, Pulindas, etc. who were the borders of the Aryan settlement. The Sārabas may be identical with the present Sāvaras of the Visakhepatnam-Srikakulam hill track. The Andhras are also mentioned in the Sāṅkhyavāna Āraṇya Sūtra. The Kāmbha and Sāṅkicca Jatakas speak of the Andhakas. Megastenes gives a detailed description of the then Andhra as having numerous villages, 30 walled towns defended by fortification and towers, with a well equipped defence system consisting of 100,000 infantry, 2000 cavalry and 1000 elephants. The 13th Rock Edict of Asoka refers to the Andhras. The provenance of the Asokan Edicts from Andhra Pradesh is a clear evidence that this region was included within the Mauryan empire and the people over there were subject to the Mauryan regime. According to D.C. Sircar the Andhras in the Mauryan epoch were occupying the northern part of the Deccan. The Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyana speak of the Andhras along with the Cōlas, Cērás and Pāṇḍyas. Vatsyayana in his Kāmasutra makes reference to the Andhra country.
The Jayamangala Vyakhyana, a commentary on the Kāmasutra, locates Andhadeśa to the south of Narmada and to the east of Karnataka in the Dakshināpatha. The Vāyu Purāṇa mentions the Andhras as inhabiting the Dakshināpatha and its reference to them as people of taboo in śrāddha suggests that according to it also they were a non-Aryan people. Besides this Purāṇa quite a number of other Purāṇas too speak of Andhrajātīyas and Andhadeśa.

The first known epigraphical record mentioning Andhra as a country is the Mayidavālmu grant of the Early Pallava KingŚiva-Skandavarmā of the 4th century A.D., in which Dhāṅkatāka is spoken of as the headquarters of the Pallava province Āśdapatha. In the subsequent period Āndhadeśa had also been known as Vēṅgideśa, Vēṅgināṇḍu or Vēṅginemālalamu. The name Vēṅgi seems to be derived from the Vēṅgeyakas, again a people, of the Sēlaṅkāyana gotra. Andhra being located north of Tamilnadu it was known in Tamil as "Vedugavali". But only the name Andhra, derived from the earliest tribe of the region, survived through all these changes.

**Boundary and Topography:**

Physically the Andhra Pradesh lies between 12° 41' and 20° latitude, and 78° 43' and 84° 48' longitude. From Madras in the south to Gopalapatnam in the north, it has a coast line of 960 Kilometers. The coastal strip extends from the Bay of Bengal to the Eastern ghats varying from 75 to 150 kilometers in width. A clear-cut boundary demarcation of the Andhra Pradesh described by Grierson is as follows— "The Telugu country is bounded towards the
east by the Bay of Bengal from Baruva in the Ganjam Dt. in the north to near Madras in the south. From Baruva, the frontier line goes westwards through Ganjam to the Eastern ghats and then southwards crosses the Sabari on the Sunkam and Bijji taluks in the State of Bastar, and thence runs along the range of Bela-Dila to the Inravati; it follows this river to its confluence with the Godavari and then runs through Chanda cutting off the southern border of the district of Wun. It then runs southwards to the Godavari at its confluence with the Manjira and thence farther southwards Bidar where Telugu meets with Kanarese. The frontier line between the two forms of speech then runs almost due south through the dominion of the Nizam. The Telugu country farther occupies the north-eastern edge of Bellary, the greater eastern corner of Mysore. Through North-Arcot and Chingleput, the border line then runs back to the sea. Thus the region under study is bounded by the Bay of Bengal in the east, Orissa and Madhya-Pradesh in the north, Maharashtra in the north-west, Karnataka in the west and Tamilnadu in the south.

The State is topographically considered as consisting of three regions, viz. the coastal Andhra, Rayalasema and Telangana. The districts of Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur, Prakasam and Wallow are in the coastal Andhra. Cuddapah, Kurnool, Anantapur and Chittoor belong to the Rayalasema region. Telangana region is consisted of Adilabad, Nizamabad, Karimnagar, Medak, Hyderabad, Warangal, Khammam, Nalgonda and Mahboobnagar districts.

The chief hill ranges in the State are the Eastern Ghats running across the coastal Andhra from north to south. This range
is disjuncted at various points and consists of dense forests, peaks of varying heights and valleys. The major rivers Godavari, Krishna and Pennar break through the Eastern Ghats to enter the coastal belt and then flow into the sea. Numerous hills of different heights are found interspersed throughout the Rayalasam and Telangana regions.

The most important rivers in the State are the Godavari and Krishna. The rivers Pennar, Tungabhadra, Lingulya and Vamsadhara stand next in importance. There are some thirty streams of which Bahuda, Sārada, Palēru, Manēru, Cundla Kamma and Suvarnamukhi are the major ones. As will be seen in the course of this study, the plains of Godavari and Krishna played important role in the early history of the State. Of these two major rivers the Krishna has greater historical importance. It is variously referred to in the inscriptions as Kannabasāmā, Kanhavenna, Krishnavenna, Krishnavānī, Pērēru, Pērāru, etc. There are three great lakes in Andhra, the Pulicat lake at the southernmost end of the coastal region, the Chiluka lake in the northernmost area, and the Kolleru lake formed by the numerous streams of the Godavari and Krishna rivers.

The Period:

The present study is limited up to the 12th century A.D. In the later decades of the 12th century the Chōla power in Andhra was deteriorating and at the dawn of the next century several feudatories and rival chiefs asserted their independence. Among these the
Kākatiyās got the upper hand. So the upper chronological limit of the present study is the decadence of the Chōla power. As regards the lower chronological limit it is difficult to draw a demarcation. The earliest known inscriptions of the region are the Ascan Edicts which are of general nature and nothing specific to the Andhra country. The Bhattacharjō inscriptions, being of sectarian nature and not of dynastic, also do not fall within the purview of this study. Of the Sātavāhanas only a few inscriptions of the last Sātavāhanas are found in the Andhra country. This study, therefore, ranges from the last quarter of the 2nd century A.D. to the end of the 12 century, i.e. a period of more than 1000 years.

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