The growth of non-Brahmin movement and its emergence as a political force in the early 20th century were the spin-off of the developments that took place during the course of 19th century. In the light of this, it becomes necessary to delve into different aspects of non-Brahmin consciousness in the 19th century. An analysis of the course of events in the development of non-Brahmin consciousness suggest that it was more a social upheaval than a political challenge to Brahmins. Hence the focus here is not from a political perspective.

An attempt is made to consider the growth of non-Brahmin consciousness during the 19th century from the viewpoint of a socio-economic and socio-cultural perspective. In doing so, the non-Brahmin awareness during this period is seen as a 'reformist drive' from within non-Brahmin castes.

In the absence of any strong corroborative contemporary documentary evidence to show that non-Brahmin castes were pitted against Brahmins in absolute political terms, an analysis is made to view and project non-Brahmin consciousness as a social reform measure in 19th century.
We have to reason out why the non-Brahmin consciousness cannot be considered from a political angle during 19th century. This is followed by another chapter dealing with the developments in early 20th century wherein an attempt is made to shed more light on the fusion of non-Brahmin consciousness into a movement.

The impact of colonial policies was seen among different social groups in the society. The break-up of old political and social order under the colonial rule affected both social and traditional relations in society. The new revenue, social and cultural policies dislocated people from their occupations and social positions. Amidst these changes various social groups in the indigenous society began an intense quest for new identities and alternatives. During this process their reactions to the colonial rule were multi-dimensional. The growth of public consciousness and the consequent political awakening emerged out of these reactions. Since public life in general was less organised during this period, it can be seen that the emerging consciousness was found scattered among various social groups. The term ‘consciousness’ can be understood in a broader sense which reflects the sprouting seeds of resistance and protest among different social groups. In the absence of a strong ideological force to channel this germinating consciousness, the latter remained isolated at different levels. The origin of social consciousness among the non-Brahmin sections in Andhra during the nineteenth century is to be seen as a part of the general spread of public consciousness in society since such
consciousness among these sections took a definite shape of a caste movement only during the early decades of 20th century.

The emergence of consciousness among non-Brahmin castes was one of the most important developments during 19th century in Andhra. The attack on Brahmin community was spearheaded by Kamsali (Viswabrahmins), Reddy, Vaisya, Baliya and Velama communities. Before a discussion is initiated on this, three important points deserve our attention:

a) The emergence of non-Brahmin consciousness was slow but significant. It gained momentum only by the late 19th century. The attack on Brahmins was carried forward by different castes within their own limitations.

b) The attack on Brahmin community was three-pronged viz., economic, social and cultural and

c) The emergence of non-Brahmin consciousness was not given concrete organizational shape and hence it did not form into a movement. Moreover, the non-Brahmin sections joined hands with Brahmins during the time when they were demanding the

One of the dominant peasant castes, Kamma which was actively associated with non-Brahmin movement in 20th century did not figure in the list of castes that opposed Brahmins in 19th century. However, there is a stray reference to a village by name Kammavari Brahmanapally in Rayalaseema region which suggests that the Sanskritisation process was, perhaps, initiated among Kammas too. But any conclusive assertion in this regard is not further corroborated by contemporary evidence. See Education Department, Consultation No.51, dt. 15.6.1868, Andhra Pradesh State Archives (APA).
introduction of local self-government in Andhra. This was seen in the public meetings organised in 1882 and the participants were drawn from all caste groups. This shows the resilience and flexibility of the non-Brahmin awareness. Such awareness was given definite institutional shape only during the 20th century with the formation of Justice Party.

With the consolidation of the colonial authority there was a change in land relations. This was effected by various land revenue settlements in Andhra of which the dominant and most influential was the Ryotwari settlement. The change in property relations of land badly affected Brahmins for two important reasons. First, they lost the traditional patronage from the rulers which they were enjoying earlier. This was the first development that had its serious bearing on land. Secondly, political control over land was grabbed by the colonial authority which displaced the local rulers. For the British who were

It has been observed by a contemporary writer who participated in the Godavari District Social Conference meetings in late 19th and early 20th century that the narrow casteist tendencies did not yet creep into the contemporary political life. He further asserted that there was no partiality in approach to any public concern and people were united in fighting for their demands. For more details see Sripada Subrahmanya Sastry, Anubhavaloo-Jnapakalunu (Telugu), Vol.111, Rajamahendravaramu, 1966, pp.99-100. It may be noted here that such unbiased and casteless approach in public life was witnessed in Andhra even during the heyday of non-Brahmin movement. Gutti Kesava Pillai, a prominent lawyer in Rayalaseema region disclaimed the non-Brahmin manifesto. See the letter of G.Harisarvottama Rao, dt. 23.2.1917 in R.K.Pillai Papers, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.
primarily interested in land revenue they were not inclined towards extending patronage to any social group. As a result it was Brahmins who were adversely affected. Moreover, under Ryotwari settlement the holder of the land was recognized as its proprietor provided that the fixed amount of land revenue was paid to government. This amount was generally heavy and in practice the Madras Presidency was the highly taxed of the three Presidencies and the amount of tax collected for every one lakh of people was more than the double that collected in Bengal. It means that the ryots, in order to meet the revenue demand, had to till the land themselves or leave it. These changes had wider implications specially for Brahmin land holders. Most of the time the Brahmins remained absentee landlords renting their lands to other peasant groups. They were hardly involved in any agricultural operations. This was possible in earlier period as they received political protection from the local ruling dynasties. Under the colonial rule the land relations of Brahmins were threatened. They began to lose control over their Manyam, Srotrium and Agrahara lands due to the excessive revenue.

3 This was brought out clearly in the petitions from Brahmin land holders to the Governor of Madras. One such petitioner represented that the references from old documents would reveal that the rulers generously donated lands to Brahmins where as the British government did nothing in this direction. The welfare of Brahmins was completely ignored by the colonial rulers. See for details petitions No.22 and 23 in G.J.Somayaji (ed.), Jateeya Likhita Bhandagaramdali Telugu Lekhalu (Telugu), Waltair, 1957. The neglect of the colonial government in extending favours to Brahmin landlords was a conscious attempt since such favour would ultimately affect the revenue interests of the British.

4 A.Sarada Raju, Economic Conditions in the Madras Presidency, 1800-1858, Madras, 1941, p.50.
demand from the government. The loss of political patronage further aggravated the problems for Brahmins. As a result, the relative isolation of these people from land in the earlier period was gradually giving way to their total alienation from the same. When the hold of Brahmins over land relations was weakened under the British rule, some of the non-Brahmin Zamindars in Andhra began using force in grabbing the lands held by Brahmins. Such a forceful usurpation was evidenced by the late 18th century and the beginning of 19th century. The non-Brahmin castes began, thus, asserting their supremacy over land. By the middle of 19th century the emergence of non-Brahmin castes as landed magnates picked up momentum.

The construction of Godavari and Krishna anicuts was a major development which largely contributed to the rise of non-Brahmin castes such as Reddies and Kammas. The areas which benefitted from these two anicuts were earlier reeling under poverty. The conditions in society were characterised by stagnation, heavy taxation on cultivators, depression in agricultural prices and the like. The construction of Godavari and Krishna anicuts

Manyam, Srotium and Agrahara denote the land donations to Brahmins.

In an exhaustive report on the economic conditions in Northern Circars, the Commissioner refers to grabbing of Brahmin lands. The Zamindar of Ramachandrapuram, Kochherlamudi Ramachandra Raju, dispossessed many Brahmins and usurped their Inam lands by force. The Zamindar was much despised by the people for such an act. See for details the communication addressed to the B.O.R. by the Commissioner for Northern Circars (February, 1796) in Godavari District Records, Vol.842, pp.313-317, APA.

For a detailed description of these conditions see G.Niranjana Rao, "Changing conditions and Growth of Agricultural Economy in the Krishna and Godavari Districts, 1840-1890", Ph.D Thesis,
resulted in unprecedented changes in the agrarian economy of Andhra. The net results of the anicut construction were the growth of surplus grain production, increase in the value of land, growth of commercial agriculture, development of market towns etc. It was estimated that the shift from dry to wet crops in the post-anicut period would raise the productivity of paddy and in fact rice acted as a catalyst of commercialisation in agriculture. In course of time agricultural lands were passing from non-cultivating castes to the cultivating peasant castes like Kamma, Kapu, Reddi and others.

The concomitant results of new canal irrigation schemes virtually obliterated subsistence agriculture and created a near mono crop economy in delta regions, thus transforming them from areas of frequent famine to one of intense wet rice cultivation. Paddy quickly became a commercial crop, being cultivated largely

Andhra University, Waltair, 1973, pp.13-78.

The construction of the anicuts was accomplished by the brilliant engineering skill of Arthur Cotton. He was already famous by then with the construction of irrigation projects across Coleroon in 1835. Cotton, with his able assistant C.A.Orr, could complete the Godavari anicut construction and the Krishna anicut work was looked after by his other associates including C.A.Orr. For more details see Lady Hope, General Sir Arthur Cotton : His Life and Work, Calcutta, Reprint, 1964 (first edition, 1900), pp.80-90 and 117-130. Also see A.Prasanna Kumar and I.Dosagiri Rao, "Sir Arthur Cotton and the Growth of Godavari District" in Indo-British Review., Vol.VIII, Nos.1-2, pp.116-120.


G.N.Rao, Transition, ibid. However, middle and rich peasant communities could not emerge in other areas like Rayalaseema due to various factors like heavy land assessment, non-completion of irrigational projects like Kurnool-Cuddapah Canal, old agricultural technology etc. For details see, Ibid.
for the market and the region became an important supplier of rice for other parts of Madras Presidency.

The growth of rice production and trade stimulated the development of local agro-processing particularly rice mills in towns and larger villages. The expansion of trade and communication resulted in the 'money economy' of delta region.

Changes in land revenue policy contributed to the commercialisation of agriculture. The gradual removal of intermediary class of Zamindars, who controlled much of the land in the region, gave an impetus to agricultural growth by allowing greater part of profit to the cultivator. The introduction of Ryotwari system promoted production for the market and by confirming ownership rights in land, it also paved the way for the development of a market in land. The enhanced productivity of the delta lands after irrigation and increase in population meant that there was a growing demand for land and consequently land prices also rose.


Continuous rise in grain prices during most of this period contributed to the growth of economy and a general increase in prosperity. The commercialisation of agriculture picked up momentum and this is proved by the fact that 427. of rice produced in Guntur District during 1920s was exclusively meant for marketing purpose.

The most important outcome of these economic changes was the emergence of a relatively large class of prosperous peasants or owner cultivators. Kammas, Reddys, Kapus and Velamas constituted the neo rich peasant class. These rich cultivators began to participate directly in the market both as sellers and buyers. Consequent upon this, they came into contact with towns while transacting their business. With the shooting up of higher productivity rate, big farmers could accumulate substantial surplus from their agricultural operations during the early decades of 20th century. These cultivators began investing


It is observed that the social structure that developed in this region contrasts sharply with that found in most of the dry land of Madras Presidency in which rural society was dominated by a small land owning elite. For more details see Baker,C.J. and Wash Brook, D.D., "South India : Political Institutions and Political Change, 1880-1940", Delhi, 1975, p.164.

There were several land owning cultivating castes in Coastal Andhra, the dominant among them being Kamma cultivators. Kapus were probably more numerous than Kammas, but they had in their possession less amount of land. Given any village in the delta region one caste was dominant in so far as land ownership is concerned. For more details see, Upadya Card Boyock, "The Farmer Capitalist of Coastal Andhra Pradesh" in EPW, Vol.XXIII, No.27, 1988, p. 1378.

17 Ibid.
money in agro-industries and it was this capital that resulted in
the rapid growth of rice mills in the delta region.

In addition to new urban and rural interaction the spread of
literacy and higher education among the cultivating peasant
castes was another important development. The importance of
education, in particular, English education was realised by them
as it provided the real key to public employment under the
colonial administration, political power and social status.\textsuperscript{18}

The chain of developments in the post anicut construction
period clipped the wings of Brahmin landlords and they became
unsuccessful as agriculturists.\textsuperscript{19} On the other, newly emerging
non-Brahmin peasants employed workers from their respective
castes and successfully conducted all agricultural operations.
This phenomenon explains the steady decline of Brahmins in
agricultural sector and the consequent rise of non-Brahmins.
This, in turn, provided the required momentum to social and
political developments in the first half of 20th century.\textsuperscript{20} With
a spurt in economic status of non-Brahmin peasants, they began to
seek to improve their social status in contemporary society.

\textsuperscript{18} The Madras Banking Enquiry Committee (1933) reported that in the
delta region, substantial sums of money were made available to
educate the children of local inhabitants.

\textsuperscript{19} For a detailed discussion on this aspect see, G. Haragopal,
"Evolution of Modern Andhra : A socio-economic perspective",
Presidential Address : Section HI in the Proceedings of Andhra

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
Once the economic position of non-Brahmin castes was strengthened and secure, they started demanding equal rights with Brahmins in education, employment and executive bodies like Municipalities and Local Fund Boards. It may be noted here that the new English education under the British admitted people of all sections in society to reap its benefits irrespective of caste, creed and religion. The introduction of English education had two major implications. On one hand it introduced new syllabus and subjects of learning vis-a-vis the contents of traditional indigenous learning where Brahmin teachers had a monopoly. The new education sought to create an educated class of Indians who would fill up the lower rungs of colonial bureaucracy. This was one of the cherished objectives of colonial rulers apart from using the centres of education for proselytising purposes. Under the new educational system all sections of society began to train themselves in the new subjects. Though people of all castes in society joined these institutions, the lion's share was appropriated by Brahmins. Even the members of traditional Brahmin families took to new education who earlier were engaged in professional activities like performing traditional rituals and rites.\(^2\) Such a tendency

A few contemporary autobiographies of nineteenth century intellectuals from Andhra reveal this. It is stated that the new employment opportunities created by English education displaced many Brahmin families from traditional occupations. Under the discouraging economic conditions of the colonial rule these people increasingly took to English education which fetch them an easy earning in the form of employment. For details see, Sripada S.Sastry, *Anubhavaloo - Jnapakalunu*, Vol.1, Rajamahendravaramu, 1955, pp.37-41.
loosened the grip of Brahmins over the indigenous system of education.

On the other hand, non-Brahmin sections of the society also began to avail the new opportunities. Though the growth of education was very slow in the first part of 19th century, they were not ignorant of the benefits of new education. Members from upper castes from among the non-Brahmin sections began to educate themselves in English schools. The mid peasant castes of non-Brahmin sections also realised the importance of new education by the middle of 19th century. This is best exemplified by their efforts in establishing Rate Schools in Andhra. Rate School is a school which was maintained by local contributions from society. This experiment was first initiated in Godavari delta region and later on spread to other parts of Andhra. The completion of Godavari anicut provided ample

For details see *Selections from the Records of the Madras Government No. XXVI - Papers Relating to the Establishment of Village Vernacular Schools in the Sub-Division of Rajahmundry, Madras, 1856*. This is an exclusive report on the Rate School experiment and other related aspects in the Godavari region. G.N. Taylor, sub-collector of Rajahmundry played an important part in this experiment. He adopted the idea of Subscription or Rate Schools from North Western Provinces where the village schools under the system of *Hulkbandee* were successfully run by local contributions. A recent monograph gives us various details about these schools in the Godavari delta. See J.Mangamma, *The Rate Schools of Godavari*, Hyderabad, 1973. The desire for Rate Schools was simultaneously expressed from the Cuddapah region in Rayalaseema. Edward Porter of London Mission Society informed the Government that the people of this region belonging to cultivating and weaving castes were anxious in extending elements of plain and secular education to their children. He added further that he had already received a contribution of Rs.1200 from people towards this object. For details see, Public Department, Vol.932, Consultation No.46, dt. 3.10.1854, Tamilnadu Archives (TNA).
opportunities for the emergence of mid peasant castes from the non-Brahmin sections. Their enthusiasm in coming forward in establishing Rate Schools was active till the end of 19th century. The motivation for the system was purely indigenous reflecting the inherent urge of these people towards self-improvement and social development. The experiment picked up momentum in the second half of the 19th century with Rate Schools being established in almost all districts of Andhra region. Most of these schools were dominated by people belonging to non-Brahmin castes. For example, out of 980 boys under instruction in 55 Rate Schools spread over three taluqs of Godavari during the first year of operation of the schools, only 284 were Brahmins and the rest (696) were non-Brahmin students. So also out of 37 Committee Members of Rate Schools in Nellore district, only 8 members belonged to Brahmin caste and the remaining 29 members were drawn from different non-Brahmin castes. The preponderance of non-Brahmins on the school committees as well as the rolls of attendance in these schools unmistakably refer to the existence of strong sentiments of self-reliance and an urge towards social improvement among non-Brahmins. It also reveals the slow but significant spread of

For more details see Papers Relating to Op.Clt., pp.54-55. Even in those Rate Schools some of which have been transferred to the control of the Government, non-Brahmin boys were more in number. When calculated, in eight of such schools during the same period (1854), 290 boys out of 442 under instruction belonged to non-Brahmin castes (excluding Muslim students). For details see Ibid.

The information is based on Edu.Dept., No.10, dated 2.3.1867; No.73 dt. 2.3.1868; No.72 dt. 24.4.1868; No.7 dt. 4.7.1868 and CO. (Education) No.142, dt. 29.4.1869, APA.
public spirit among these sections. It is with this new enthusiasm that the people from the non-Brahmin castes began to demand equal opportunities with Brahmins and challenge their supremacy over traditional observances and spiritual pursuits. However, it is to be remembered that these people never attacked Brahmins on the basis of their caste but only questioned their supremacy in the contemporary society. This is attested by the fact that educated members of non-Brahmin sections increasingly associated themselves with social reform movements and took active part in establishing public libraries and public associations during the course of 19th century.

III

From the mid 19th century till the late 19th century, non-Brahmin castes from different regions of Andhra sent a number of memorials to the Madras Government demanding equal rights and share with Brahmins. It is observed that between 1850 and 1880 there were specific petitions addressed to the Governor of the Presidency against Brahmins. The major demands of these petitioners related to employment, share in Local Boards and economic grievances. The following table gives the details of these petitions.\(^{25}\)

The table is based on the Petition Registers, TNA for the years 1854-1879.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of Origin</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Petition Number</th>
<th>Caste Groups Involved</th>
<th>Nature of Complaint or Demand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nellore Town</td>
<td>1854</td>
<td>2771</td>
<td>Anonymous from Sudras</td>
<td>For fair share in employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nellore Town</td>
<td>1854</td>
<td>2983</td>
<td>Anonymous from Sudras</td>
<td>For fair share in employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuddapah</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>1545</td>
<td>Reddy</td>
<td>Against Brahmin Curanam and for enquiry by non-Brahmin officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellary Town</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>2965</td>
<td>From Vaisyas and other traders</td>
<td>For equal share in Local Boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nellore (Ongole Tq)</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>2242</td>
<td>Vaisyas and others</td>
<td>For equal share in employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellary (Rayadurgam Tq)</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>2848</td>
<td>Sudras</td>
<td>Against decisions of Brahmins in Local Board - Request for discontinuance of Brahmins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellary Town</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>3235</td>
<td>Non-Brahman peasant castes</td>
<td>Against revenue payments to Brahmins - Refusal to do so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuddapah (Madanapalli)</td>
<td>1879</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Against Brahmin employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vizagapatnam (Sarvasidhi Tq)</td>
<td>1879</td>
<td>2113</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Against Brahmin judge and his partiality in recruitment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The contents of the above table are significant to our analysis since all these memorials have been categorically opposed to Brahmins and every petition specifically mentions the name of Brahmin caste vis-a-vis the non-Brahmin castes. This
awareness was a novel development in the 19th century. The
tvertical division and a broad-based caste opposition between
Brahmins and non-Brahmins were recent happenings in the society.

The major demand of the petitioners from Nellore was a fair
share in employment and requested the government "to cause
enquiry to be made and a fair distinction of appointments among
all castes impartially"\textsuperscript{27}. For the people of Cuddapah the Brahmin
curanam who was supporting other Brahmins out of fear were
causing much trouble. They requested for an enquiry by Europeans
or any other officer of non-Brahmin caste.\textsuperscript{28} These people
complained of the excesses committed by Brahmin subordinates
working under a few corrupt European Officers\textsuperscript{29}. The
non-Brahmins from Bellary were opposed to the Brahmin monopoly in

It is also true that there were a number of conflicts between
upper castes (both Brahmins and non-Brahmins) and 'low castes'.
Even among the 'low castes' (Malas and Madigas) tensions existed.
For example see the protest petition by high castes against
paraiyahs in Masulipatnam in Pet. Reg., No.3339 of the year 1861,
TNA. For conflicts between Malas and Madigas see Pet.Reg.,
No.2227 of the year 1863, TNA. These conflicts were seen more
between Right Hand and Left Hand Castes. For details see
V.Ramakrishna, Social Reform, Op.Cit., pp.8-9. Also see the
protest letter of Right Hand Caste people who took objection to
the use of a palanquin by a Left Hand Caste man and to the
interference by the acting Magistrate, G.N.Taylor in Pet. Reg.,
Vol.59, No.2787, TNA.

\textsuperscript{27} See Anonymous petition as well as the one by inhabitants of
Nellore town in Pet., Reg., Vol.58, No.2983 and Vol.59, No.2771,
TNA.

\textsuperscript{28} A ryot from Kattakindapalli (Doopad taluq) in Cuddapah district
complained of the excesses. He, in fact requested for an enquiry
by the sub-collector of Nellore, Minchin. See Pet., Reg.,
Vol.68, No.1545, TNA.

\textsuperscript{29} For details see the petition by Venkata Narasu, Madanapalli in
Cuddapah district, Pet., Reg., No. 1928 dt. 17.10.1879,TNA.
the Local Board\textsuperscript{30} and the adverse decisions taken by the Brahmin members\textsuperscript{31}. Hence, they demanded for an equal share in the management of Local Boards and the discontinuance of the biased decisions by Brahmins. The ryots in Bellary district also opposed the decisions of the Deputy Collector of Inam Commission who granted \textit{patta} lands to Brahmins superseding the claims of non-Brahmin ryots\textsuperscript{32}. The Vaisyas, along with the inhabitants of all the villages in Ongole taluq of Nellore district, were much worried that every taluq and village office was filled with Brahmins and a combination of all Brahmins was playing havoc with their lives. They demanded that "Europeans may be appointed to the above offices or in case of appointing natives, persons may be selected in all classes proportionately"\textsuperscript{34}. In Vizagapatnam too the grievance was related to the question of biased attitude of a Brahmin Munisif in appointing his relatives in public offices in the district.

The mercantile community launched this protest under the guidance of Narayanaswamy, Kuppuswamy and others. See Pet. Reg., No.2965, dt. 29.9.1861, TNA.

\textsuperscript{1}\textit{Ibid}. Also see Pet. Reg. No.2848, dt. 20.10.1863, TNA.

\textsuperscript{32}\textit{Ibid.}, No.3235, dt. 26.11.1863.

\textsuperscript{33} The Vaisyas and other inhabitants representing every village in Ongole taluq under the leadership of E.Subbaiah and Kistum Chetty sent their petition to the Government. For details see Pet. Reg. No.2242, dt. 28.3.1863, TNA.

\textsuperscript{34}\textit{Ibid}.

\textsuperscript{35} The petitioner complained against the present District Munisif, Maddirala Sundararao Pantulu, that he was indulging in unfair practices like bias in appointments, amassing huge amounts of wealth etc. See for details Pet. Reg., No.2113, dt. 99.11.1879, TNA.
The study of these petitions and the nature of the grievances show that most of these are related to a fair share in employment and decision making bodies like Local Fund Boards. It is to be observed that the growth of education gained momentum after mid 19th century. Hence, these demands reflect the concerns of the gradually growing members of the educated middle classes among non-Brahmin castes. Their demand for employment and a share in Local Bodies on par with Brahmins point out the direction in which they would agitate in future. The growing consciousness among these caste groups formed the backdrop to the emergence of non-Brahmin movement during the 20th century. Another important aspect is that these people were ready to shed down, at least in 19th century, the narrow caste aspirations in the face of a public issue facing all. It was revealed by their association with Brahmins in the public meetings to discuss the issue of local self-government and arriving at unanimous resolutions. Pursuant to Ripon's resolution on Local Self-Government, the Madras Government tried to garner public opinion in this regard. It asked various district collectors and Municipal Board Members to contact people and know their mind on the present proposal. When the local board members and colonial officials did so accordingly, people from different parts of Andhra assembled in meetings and intimated their opinions to the government in the form of resolutions. These resolutions favoured the immediate introduction of Local Self-Government. These public meetings had a wide social base representing all sections in society. For example, the meetings at Vizianagaram
and Ongole were attended both by Brahmin and non-Brahmin members of those towns. An analysis of the social base of signatories to the resolutions adopted in these meetings testifies this.

By the late 19th century the educated members from among the non-Brahmin castes began their attack on the Brahminical worldview. The monopoly of Brahmins over spiritual and ritual spheres was opposed by various non-Brahmin castes. Viswabrahmins (earlier known as Kamsalis), Gowda, Reddy, Balija, Velama and Vaisya were the major castes which opposed Brahmins in these fields. The attack was two dimensional. First, most of these non-Brahmin castes began undergoing the process of Sanskritisation by adopting Brahminical titles and performing their rituals. It was a process of Brahmanisation of intra-caste rituals of various non-Brahmin castes. Secondly, these people questioned the superiority of Brahmins, claimed equal status with them and at times even claimed superiority over them. These two strands went hand in hand in opposing Brahminical traditions.

The opposition of Viswabrahmin (Kamsali) caste people was not new to 19th century. It can be traced back to the Vijayanagar period. They claimed equal status with Brahmins by performing

For more details see the proceedings of the public meetings at Vizianagaram and Ongole in Pub.Dept., Sundries, Vols. 130 and 131, TNA.

See V.Ramakrishna, Social Reform, Op.Cit., Chap.1, Foot Note.30.
rituals like *Upanayana* and the tendency continued. A new entrant in this field during the 19th century was Gowda caste and it also claimed an equal status with Brahmins by adopting their titles. The Reddy caste people under the influence of Arya Samaj began wearing 'sacred threads' according to Vedic rituals. A person from this caste, Chinta Raghunatha Reddy of Vayalpadu village in...

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38 Upanayana means thread marriage ceremony, the performance of which alone entitles a person to chant *Gayatri Manta* in accordance with the Brahmanical tradition. That they were still following Vedic rituals is attested by an anonymous petition from Viswabrahmins at Masulipatnam who demanded that 'in conformity to the proclamation of Her Majesty an order may be issued to the collector to allow the goldsmith and carpenters to go through all the public streets in procession mounting an palanquin on condition of their paying Rs.8.00 per each marriage ceremony and Rs.4.00 per each *Upanayanam* ceremony'. Pet. Reg. 1787, dt. 4.7.1863, TNA. As per the available evidence it is known that the earliest caste journal was published by Viswabrahmins entitled *Viswakarmaka Sampradaya Prabodhini*. The First issue of the journal was issued in July 1876. However, the journal did not live long and became defunct within six months. Its last issue was released in December, 1876. See Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency during the year 1876-77, Appendix, pp.ccxlvii - ccxlix.

39 This is revealed by a petition by Sunderlala who claimed to be a priest to Gouda Brahmins of Bellary. See Pet. Reg., No.2295, 30.6.1859, TNA. Goudas are a toddy-drawing caste of Andhra. They are called Gamallas in South Coastal Andhra. In Cuddapah district they are known as Asilvandlu. 1901 census entered Idigas as a sub-sect of Gamallas. Sometimes they claimed to be Balijas or Telagas who adopted toddy-drawing as a profession. The above Census Report returned some of the Gamallas also as Settigadu or Chetty. They are known as Yatas in Visakhapatnam and Ganjam districts. For more details see Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol.11, Delhi. Reprint, 1975 (first edition, 1909), pp.253-57 and Vol.111, pp.435-37. The *Setti Balija* in Godavari region also claimed themselves to belong to toddy-drawing caste. As noted above some of the toddy-drawers were shown in census reports as Balija and Chetty. Perhaps, *Setti Balija* is a corrupt form of Chettu (Tree) Balija or Chetty Balija. Thus, Goudas or Gamallas, Idigas, Yatas and *Setti Balijas* belong to toddy-drawing caste. The *Srisayana* (Segidi) caste in *Srikakulam* area of Andhra also is a toddy-drawing community and belongs to the group of foregoing castes.

Chittoor district put on 'sacred thread' and came to be called Raghunatha Varma. He further induced people from Balijas, Boyas and other 'lower castes' to wear 'sacred thread'.

The efforts of Balija caste people were reflected in the activities of Kokku Hanumantha Rao. His family migrated from Nellore to Cuntur district during the mid 19th century. He used to chant 'mantras' even during his boyhood and claimed that he had a 'darshan' of Lord Hanuman in his dream when he was fourteen years of age. Then onwards he began learning traditional folk arts and concentrated on Brahmanical literature. Though it is not known whether he adopted Brahmanical rituals, he strongly disputed the superiority of Brahmins and on one occasion he even entered into a philosophical discussion with an 'old beggarly Brahmin' at Vijayawada on the issue of Sanatanadharma. He constantly referred to the existence of non-Brahmin opposition to Brahmin monopoly in the contemporary society.

These are revealed by his *Autobiography*. In fact it is a pseudonym as the author, Hanumantha Rao, claims that this autobiography narrates the life history of the descendants of his father's second wife to which line he also belongs. This book is entitled "Autobiography by Kokku Hanumantha Rao" and categorised under call number Q22 W M71 N37 in Tamilnadu Archives. For other details see K. Hanumantha Rao, *Autobiography* (pseudo.).

By the time he attained thirty five years of age he was initiated into Advaita Philosophy.

Hanumantha Rao narrates his difficulties in facing the Brahm
The reaction of Velama caste members was more vigorous when compared to other castes. Velamas even claimed superiority over Brahmins and such awareness was percolating down to younger generations too. Such an attitude was reflected by Velama students at Bobbili when they refused to attend the town school because they had to sit on the same benches along with Brahmin boys. Only with the intervention of the Bobbili Raja, Velama boys reconciled and agreed to attend the school.

The adoption of Brahminical rituals and questioning their traditional authority could be seen in the efforts of Chilambu Adinarayanappa Naidu. He was well read in traditional domination at Masulipatnam. He was appointed as a clerk in the District Munsiff Court in 1896 at Masulipatnam and for many years his promotion was withheld owing to the "machanisations of Brahmin influence rampant in the district court". He remarks that the Brahmin sect became a stumbling block in the way of non-Brahmin uplift and screened the divine knowledge and philosophic studies from them. Later he got transferred to Munisif Court at Peddapuram where he could get easily promoted with the help of the District Munisif, T.Varadarajulu Naidu of his own caste. See Ibid., pp.10-11. It is to be noted that caste-based patronage was widely prevalent in the society and this tendency was severely protested by the vernacular press. See Vivekavardhani, August 1885 in NNPR, TNA. It took strong objection to caste-oriented favouritism and said that it would create disunion among people.

49 This was reported to the Madras Government by the Director of Public Instruction in his communication dated 14.1.11873. It is cited in G.Ranganaikulu Patrudu, A Brief Account of the Bobbili Zamindari : Chiefly Compiled from the Samsthanam Records. Madras, 1889, pp.66-68. The author of the book was a manager of Bobbili Samsthanam at the time of compilation. The D.P.I. further reported that there was a proposal to establish a school for Velamas only. Raja's interference finally resolved the issue.

50 Ibid., p.66.

He was born into Adivelama caste in 1837. After his education he worked as revenue inspector and police inspector at Pithapuram.
literature and even contributed a few articles to the contemporary Telugu journals. He often entered into scholarly disputes with Brahmins. On one such occasion differences of opinion over a poem in \textit{Mahabharata} led to heated exchanges between himself and Somanchi \textit{Bheemasankaram} Pantulu at Rajahmundry. As against the traditional practice of consulting Brahmins, Chilambu began helping his caste people in fixing auspicious timings (\textit{muhurtam}) for rituals connected with birth, naming ceremonies, travel and marriage.

The efforts of Venkatagiri Raja, Kumara Yachama Naidu are more noteworthy in opposing the Brahmanical superiority\textsuperscript{54}. In his book entitled \textit{Manassakshi} he criticised Brahmanical notions of morality, multiplicity of Hindu Codes and divine origin of Vedas. He condemned traditional fastings, cumbersome rituals, charity to Brahmins and strongly objected to the prohibition of non-Brahmins and Bellary. For more biographical details see Chilambu Chandrasekhara Rao, \textit{Chilambu Adinarayanappa Naidu Gari Pavitramagu Charitraamu} (Telugu), Rajahmundry, 1923, pp. 1-4.

\textsuperscript{52} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 17-18.

\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 54-55. This process came to be popularly called Swasangha \textit{Paurohityamu} and was more visible among Kammas in early 20th century.

\textsuperscript{54} He is also known as Kumara Yachendra Bahadur. For more details on his activities see Alladi Jagannadha Sastri, \textit{Op.Cit.}, pp. 108-110.

\textit{Ibid.} He also authored Gitasara \textit{Sangraham} and \textit{Hindumatha Vtrodhahbanjani}. His books including \textit{Manassakshi} are in Telugu. The latter was translated into English by two scholars (a) C.\textit{Arvamudu} Aiyangar, \textit{Manassakshyam [The Mind's Testimony]} of \textit{Sri Velugotti Kumara Yachendra Bhopala}, Madras, 1888 and (b) Sripati Suryanaryana, \textit{The Manassakshimatam of Sri Velugotti Sarvajna Kumara Yachendra Bahadur}, Madras, 1894.
from learning Vedas. In order to propagate his views he began delivering lectures on his book at Venkatagiril. For the same purpose a separate society, Manassakshi Kutam, was established at Bobbili by its Raja, Venkata Swetha Chalapati Ranga Rao Bahadur.

The Vaisyas too did not lag behind in opposing the superiority of Brahmins and such an opposition could be seen in the efforts Initiated by Atmurti Lakshminaraslmham. He was moderate in his views and a staunch supporter of social reform issues like women's education and widow marriage. At the same time he rebelled against Brahmanical superiority in denying his community access to Vedas. He started studying Vedas and even established a school to teach Vaisya students and the teaching started after the celebration of 'Sacred Thread Marriage'. He went on extensive tours lecturing on Vedas at different places like Gutti, Vizianagaram in Andhra and Satyamangalam,


*Ibid.* Ranga Rao Bahadur was the third son of Venkatagiri Raja and was given in adoption to the ruling family at Bobbili in 1872. He was ten years of age at the time of adoption.


59 He was all praise for the British rule and his view, like in the case of other educated middle class intellectuals, reflects his misguided notion of colonialism. He believed that Britishers were first cousins of Indians as both belonged to the same Aryan stock and hence there was no reason in opposing the colonial rule. However, this 'false consciousness' did not influence his activities in supporting social reform endeavours initiated by Veeresalingam. For more details see *Ibid.*, pp.39-41, 131-33 and 168-69.

Chidambaram, Coimbatore and Kumbhakonam in Tamilnadu. In these lectures he emphasised that Vaisyas should be given free access to Vedas and that the meaning of Vedas should be informed to the entire society. To propagate his ideas he established a Telugu Journal, *Vedardha Prakaslka* in 1901 and various topics relating to *Bhagavadgita*, Vedas and Upanishads were discussed in its columns. Symbolising his efforts in opposing the upper hand of Brahmins over traditional rituals he performed *Agnistoma Yagna* at Masulipatnam and claimed the title of Somayaji.


*Ibid.*, pp.70–74 and p.87 ff. *Agnistoma Yagna* is the most important as well as the most intricate *Soma* (Ritual Liquor) sacrifice in Vedic rituals. These sacrifices would normally incorporate animal sacrifices along with a number of other rites. *Agnistoma* is an annual ritual in praise of fire God (Agni) and spans over four days "culminating in morning, afternoon and evening soma pressings on the final day and including two goat sacrifices". However, cow is the main animal of sacrifice. Its performance generally includes seventeen Brahmin Priests. The other important and ambitious Soma sacrifices are *Aswamedha* (Horse Sacrifice), *Rajasuya* (Royal Consecration) and *Vajapeya* (booty or Victory Draft). For details see *Encyclopedia of Religion*, New York, 1987, Vol.6, pp.339–340 and Vol.15, pp.280–30. Atmuri was condemned by the Sankaracharya of *Sringeri* Peetham since Vaisyas were debarred from Yagnic rituals. The Peetham sent a court notice to Vaisya community at Satyamangalam whom the notice claimed, were violating the Hindu traditions under the influence of Lakshminarasimha Setty. It may be noted here that the notice used the suffix, Setty, to his name which is generally used for Vaisyas only. During the performance of *Agnistoma Yagna*, Atmuri Lakshminarasimham deviated from the traditional Brahmanical practice of cow sacrifice for it symbolised an act of violence and instead used a replica of cow made of flour called ‘*pista pasuvu*’. Condemning the practice of cow sacrifice he published a tract entitled *Pasuvadha Khandanam*. For details see *Ibid.*, pp.70–74, 98–100 and p.259 ff. He delivered a few lectures on caste condemning the hold of Brahmins over Hindu caste structure. For example see his
The foregoing efforts of non-Brahmin caste people in asserting themselves during the course of the 19th century signify the fact that awareness was gradually spreading among these sections regarding the issues of social importance. A few aspects assume significance in the growth of non-Brahmin consciousness. Though the beginnings were noticed in their consciousness, it was consolidated into a definite non-Brahmin movement only during the 20th century. The spared of non-Brahmin consciousness was more complementary in its role in society during the entire course of 19th century and did not assume the shape of exclusive caste Identity. The pervasive influence of social reform campaign in the second half of nineteenth century played an important role and under its impact narrow caste divisions were submerged. Even the caste associations in the early 20th century concentrated on internal reforms under the impact of vigorous social reform campaign by people like Veeresalingam. A few contemporary autobiographies of nineteenth century Andhra intellectuals bring out the fact that social life in Andhra during this period did not attain narrow caste identities.

On the other, non-Brahmin sections could readily give up narrow caste aspirations in the face of a popular demand. They

did not hesitate joining hands with Brahmins in demanding a free hand in the management of local bodies when this question became a bone of contention between Indians and the Colonial government. These evidences provide enough proof to the non-sectarian nature of non-Brahmin consciousness. Above all, there was no interference of Colonial state in this field unlike in the early 20th century when it extended an implicit support to the Justice Party, organised on the social basis of non-Brahmins in Madras Presidency including the Andhra region. In the light of these facts it can be safely assumed that the emergence of non-Brahmin consciousness served as yet another instrument of public opinion, and, at least during the nineteenth century, it did not cocoon itself into a narrow shell of caste consciousness.

While the available evidence points to non-sectarian nature of non-Brahmin consciousness, a few writings on 19th century present us a distorted notion of caste consciousness during this period. It is argued by some scholars that under the Company administration the preponderating influence of Brahmins over Hindu Law and the Imperial system of dispute management viz., the Anglo-Indian Legal System, which initially associated Brahmins with them were responsible for the Brahmin supremacy in the nineteenth century. Precisely for this reason they described nineteenth century as a "Brahmin Century" which represented the

For details, see D.A. Washbrook, "Law, State and Agrarian Society in Colonial India" in Modern Asian Studies, Vol.15, No.3, 19981, pp. 652-653. 
Ibid. 

158
"Brahman Raj". According to them the 20th century which witnessed the emergence of non-Brahmin movement against the dominance of Brahmins was an "Anti-Brahmin Century".

It cannot be denied that Brahmins were associated with Company administration not only in the field of dispensing law but also in various other capacities such as dubashees and small job holders. However, it is not historical to label periods of history on the basis of caste as it is equally erroneous to compartmentalise it on the basis of religion. Under the British rule there was a perceptible change in the socio-economic conditions. The new policies introduced by the British created an altogether different atmosphere where one has to look for and carefully analyse new social interactions and relationships. Increasing dependence on a single set of factors in our analysis of social set-up may often lead us in developing historical inattitudes in our conclusions. The available evidence strongly suggests that the nomenclature of "Brahmin Century" to describe the social change in 19th century is a historical misnomer. It also proves at the same time that the emergence of non-Brahmin consciousness was fairly witnessed during this period. It further suggests that such consciousness was highly complementary in public life and at least during the nineteenth century it was non-sectarian in its nature, role and scope.

This expression is employed in Pamela G. Price, "Ideology and Ethnicity under British Imperial Rule : 'Brahmins', Lawyers and Kin-Caste Rules in Madras Presidency" in Modern Asian Studies, Vol.23, Part.1, 1989, p.162. It is argued that utilisation of Brahminical codes in the legal system under the Company administration resulted in the supremacy of Brahmins.