Chapter VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION
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The Andhra country, from early times owing to its geographical location occupied an important place in the course of Indian history. From early times, her geographical position made Andhra the bridge-head between the north and the south. Interposed between Aryavarta and Dakshinapatha, Andhra had the advantage of contact with both. Therefore Andhra was the first of the South Indian states to receive the impact of the north. Having slowly assimilated the influences from both the regions Andhra worked out a happy synthesis of socio, economic and cultures. The two major rivers of the south, Godavari and Krishna, that flows across Andhra and her long seaboard promoted internal and external trade. The foreign contacts through trade and the consequent economic prosperity produced a cosmopolitan outlook in the Andhra region. This outlook and the spirit of harmony inform every literary and socio-economic and religious movement in Andhradesa.

It is interesting to note, for historians it is extremely relevant to understand that stable occupational sites south of the Vindhyas from the late centuries of B.C., up to the early centuries of the Christian era, with Buddhism as major religious component, are substantially locked in the geographical zone identifiable in the present day state of Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra and not beyond. In our view this was not merely due to ideological appeal that Buddhism had over the populations of this part of the country but rather, that this exuberance with the new religion also coincided with its social and ideological transformation. Geographical location and conditions of this region became the centre of advanced socio-economic activity.

From about the middle of the fourth century B.C. to about the 13th century A.D. this part of the country witnessed the critical development of the institutional forms of state power. For the first time in the history of the sub-continent we now find that the Deccan was the nuclei of State formation. As is well known the pre-requisites for unleashing this process were linked to the gradual spread of agricultural settlements along with a phenomenal increase of trade emphasizing the nodes of permanent settlements and the growth of the formation of certain structures of social hierarchy that mediated in the new urban culture. This was concurrent with continued hegemony of the political suzerainty exercised by the Satavahanas and
also the subsequent political control of the Ikshavakus, Brihatpalayanas, Early Pallavas, Vishnukundins, Salankayanas, Vengi Chalukyas, Chalukya-Cholas and Kakatiyas. The religious belief of individual rulers of these dynasties may differ but the general atmosphere was favourable for the development of structures of social, economic and political power supported the proliferation of land management and its utilization. Undoubtedly, to a great extent, the political unification of the country by the Mauryas and the successful completion of economic revolution for peasant farming society were accompanied by profound changes in ancient and medieval Indian agriculture in general and Andhradesa in particular.

The significance of agriculture arises from the fact that, besides constituting the chief source of national income, it not merely furnishes the means of subsistence to the people, but also provides a source for an exportable surplus. In addition, the produce of the land serves as the raw materials for a large number of manufacturing industries. These factors find ample representation in our sources. Apart from the Brahmans and Kshatriyas, while a great number of Sudras settled as tax-paying cultivators in the newly formed villages. Others were employed by the state and the rich land holders in agriculture and allied pursuits as has been noticed in the inscriptions from the times of Salankayanas in the region. The sources also refer to cultivation, trade and the care of cattle as the duties of the ordinary folk.

Most of the land grants by the Satavahanas and Ikshavakus were made to the Buddhist sanghas for the welfare and well being of the Buddhist creed and fraternity and they were evidently in a privileged position under their rule. Though the motive behind these donations was to earn religious merit for the donors, it helped the state in promoting agriculture. When the population of Andhra experienced a transition from a self-sufficient agrarian society to an urban one that was ambitious in acquiring skills, wealth, and self-respect, Buddhism came to its aid. It provided a matrix of values to meet these needs. Buddhism came to Andhra at a time when conditions were such that it was able to create cohesiveness and order in the society that was going through a change. Newly emerged professional groups found social respect and spiritual satisfaction by associating themselves with Buddhist institutions. The concept of ‘dana’ helped not only to boost the morality of the public but also gave further boost to the economy. There is, however, nothing to suggest that the state relinquished the proprietary rights of the lands donated either
to individuals or religious institutions. Driven by this spirit, the kings took interest in the extension of agriculture and also in improving the irrigational facilities. The guide of odyantriks, the makers of hydraulic engines, indicates that tanks lakes, wells and waters springs were exploited to the maximum for the promotion of agriculture.

In the Satavahana Empire agriculture was the main industry. A few inscriptions of this dynasty found in the coastal Andhradesa record gifts of villages and fields for cultivation and plantation of trees to monastic institutions. They reveal us the system of land management during the period. It is interesting to note that the king did not expropriate the lands of the subjects but bought them even when whole villages were granted to monastic intuitions. Sometimes the field was possessed by more than one person the share of each person in the field was specified in fractions of a pana. Land was subject to more than one tax. The content in the records of the Ikshavaku kings represents continuity with the conditions in the Satavahana period and in many aspects presents no break the past. The Brihatpalayana gotra ruler Jayavarman also followed the same system what was followed by Satavahanas. The lone copper plate grants of this dynasty show the extent to which Satavahana administrative traditions were carried on to the period of their successors in Andhradesa. The immunities expressly attached to the bramhadeya in Jayavarman’s grant are the same as those conferred on the bhikhuhala in the Satavahana charters.

However the epigraphs of Salankayanas show some special features in granting land holdings to different donees. The land grants throw some light on land management methods and measures initiated to streamline the land administration. Different officials were appointed to look after the land management which was becoming complicated by the time Salankayanas came to power. It attests the expansion of agricultural activity and land utilization.

The Vishnukundin dynasty which wielded power in the coastal Andhradesa too followed the same policy what their predecessors followed. However the epigraphs of this dynasty clearly mentions measures adopted to identify the land and its boundaries, water bodies, rights of the peasants, measures against the encroachment of the land granted and immunities allowed or the rate of tax to be paid to the state.
It is to be noted that the revival of Vedic faith and culture changed the socio-economic and cultural systems in the region under consideration. Donating land and villages to Brahmanas and religious institutions for propagating Vedic dharma and conducting various services to gods in the temples became a popular practice from the times of early Pallavas and Salankayanas. This practice gained momentum from the times of Vengi Chalukyas.

With the founding of Chalukyan rule in Vengi more settlements and a systematic government seems to have come into being in the region with powerful subordinates and governors under their control. Their endeavour for reclamation of vast areas of forests into arable lands is amply attested by epigraphs. Most of the villages in those days were primarily the settlements of peasants who under the benefaction of the concerned chiefs brought as much land as possible under the plough. The topography of the region provided innumerable streams, small and big, which were harnessed to fill the tanks for irrigations purpose. The land gifted consisted of wet land, dry land and garden lands. The numerous land donations and measures taken to land management remind us the importance and attention paid by the Vengi Chalukyas and their feudatories to agriculture. The donation of lands was an attempt to increase the extent of the cultivable land by donating different types of land and bringing large tracts of fresh territory under the plough by exempting it from paying taxes. The land donated was sometimes for grazing the cattle in the villages and attached to the temples. Under the land management measures the rulers of this dynasty did not disturb the land system that was already in existence and had been long in vogue in any particular region which had been under them or was newly acquired by them. Since revenue from the land was the sheet anchor of state economy, the Vengi Chalukyas evinced much interest and adopted methods like proper survey of the entire land and its classification. After survey and classification a proper assessment was done for a proper and regular realization of land revenue. Rashtrakuta pramukhan and grameyaka have been entrusted the work of land survey, assessment, maintenance of water bodies and tax collection. Thus the rulers promoted agriculture and paved the way for creation of wealth.

As per our sources, the successors of Vengi Chalukyas namely the mandalika rulers followed the same system that was adopted by their predecessors and did not disturb the land administration and its management. They continued the
land donations and brought virgin land under plough and expanded the area of
 cultivable land in the region.

The Kakatiyas of Warangal occupied a place of paramount importance and
interest in the history of Andhradesa. They paid much attention to agriculture. They
had excavated a large number of canals and constructed tanks. A large number of
villages were founded either by themselves or by their subordinates. Under
Kakatiyas land management techniques have undergone changes. It is very well
attested by the fact that when a village is newly constructed in such areas by clearing
the forest, as an incentive to the new settlers the rulers extended several privileges
like remission of taxes for some years, construction of tanks, allotment of house sites
free of cost and provision of protection for their crops, land holdings, and cattle. It is
interesting to note that the rulers did not deprive the individual peasants or their
hereditary right of ownership on a particular land. The state was concerned in
getting its share of the yield in kind or coin that was due from a particular piece of
land. The rulers acknowledged the fact the peaceful administration was possible
only as long as the cultivators were not disturbed and get the share of the state from
the land.

Before concluding this section it is imperative to note one point. A survey of
the land grants which contain a mine of information reveals the fact that all of them
are issued of the accretion of merit to the donor and his parents. All plots of land or
the villages granted had their boundaries properly defined. Natural land marks
generally resorted to were hillocks, brooks, trees or groves and rivers and rivulets.
Boundaries are specified in the notification itself in the records. The privileges to be
enjoyed by the donees were also referred to and they specified in certain terms. This
reflects the systematic methods of land management for the expansion and
development of agriculture in the region under our survey.