

CHAPTER – III

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The Andhra Region was brought under the British control by the beginning of the 19th century. The struggle between the English and French known as the Carnatic wars was started for the control of seas and more particularly for position of strength on the coramandal coast, where important trading factories were established in places such as Machilipatnam, Madras and Pondicherry. With their involvement militarily, they brought a different turn in the contest that was going on between the Nizam of Hyderabad the Marathas and the Nawab of Karnataka with varying fortunes. The rivalry in the beginning was first commercial and that it became both military and political. By 1763 the British supremacy was established in the south and the political power of the French declined. It was thus in the Madras presidency that “The question was decided which of the European nations should be superme in India”¹. However, this did not automatically result in the establishment of British hegemony over Andhra. While most of the Andhra region had been under the de-facto-rule of the Nizams since 1724². In 1765, Robert clive, then governor of Bengal, succeeded, in securing Firman, from the Mughal Emperor Shaw Alam. Who gave away the sarkar districts (The Gangam, Visakhapatnam, Godavari, and Krishna districts) except Guntur, to the British for their support to him in his misfortunes. The Nizam, the subadar of the Deccan, unwillingly conformed the cession of the sarkars to the British through treaty in 1766. The British became, thus the masters of coastal Andhra region stretching from Ganjam to Guntur.

¹ *Imperial gazetteer of India, provincial series, Madras, Calcutta, 1908, Page 19*

² M Venkata Ramayya, Ed *the freedom struggle in Andhra Pradesh (Andhra)* Volume 1, HYD, 1965, page 11



Guntur was occupied by them in 1788. In 1800, the Nizam, a year after the close of the fourth Mysore war, in which he fought in alliance with the British, had entered in to a treaty with the British (under the system of Lord Wellesley's subsidiary alliances) and ceded to the company all the territories he acquired from Mysore earlier in 1792 to 1799. These included the District of Bellari, Kurnool, Cuddapah and Ananthapur, since then came to be known as ceded districts. In 1801 Wellesley annexed the Carnatic region to the British dominion and as a result of which the districts of Nellore and Chittoor were brought under the British power. With this the conquest of the British of Andhra was completed.

Caste System:-

Society in Andhra during the 19th century was based on the caste system of Hinduism. Andhra is predominantly Hindu and Hinduism is structurally based on caste system. In the caste system we find hierarchical ordering of innumerable castes and sub-castes. The village community was a combination of many caste groups, each in general following its hereditary calling and enjoying its fixed status³.

A number of sub castes had branched off from the original varna system, in course of time due to a variety of reasons⁴. The most important of them were geographical expansion and growth of New crafts. In this respect we find certain sub-castes among the Brahmins in Andhra bear names denoting a particular area inhabited by them in the past⁵.

3. For a detailed description of the village community in the Telugu District. See *fifth report of the select committee for the affairs of the East India Company*. 1812 Calcutta 1918 page 85.

4. See abbe J. dubois, *Hindu Manners, customs and ceremonies*, London, 1972, 1 Edn, 1817, pp.14-15.

5. See Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of South India*, Madras, 1909, Vol.1, p.366. Where in he discussed different divisions among Brahmins like 1. Vaidikis 2. Niyogis 3. Tamballa etc. Among these divisions existed many sub-divisions denoting areas, e.g., 1. Murikinadu 2. Veginadu 3. Pakanadu; for an original presentation of the probable historical origins of the division of Telugu Brahmin Community into Vaidikis and Niyogis. See K.V. Lakshmana Rao's article "Andhra Brahmanulaloni Niyogi Vaidika Kalanirnayamu" in Lakshmanaraya Vyasavali (Telugu), Vijayawada, 1965, Vol.1., p.p.1-17; also see Suravaram Pratapareddy. *Andhrula sanghika charitra* (Telugu) Hyderabad, 1950, second edn., pp 425-25. The author quotes a verse from Hamsavimsati, a poetical work written in Telugu by Appala Raju Narayanamatyandu (1800-50) which reflected the social life of Andhra during his period. The verse mentioned different 'nadas' (territorial divisions) such as velanadu, venginadu, pulugulanadu, pragnadu, murikinadu, Renadu.



These numerous sub castes were endogamous groups with intermarriage and interdining strictly forbidden. These caste groups fragmented the society and prevented the growth of common social feelings or consciousness. The caste system in the south is comparatively more rigid than in the north and divided the entire population in to three social groups namely the privileged, the under – privileged and the untouchables (Unprivileged)⁶.

The Brahmans were at the apex of this social hierarchy by virtue of their high position in ritualistic hierarchy and monopoly of traditional learning. Although they were a minority they commanded unchallenged respect and status and acted as the Arbitars of morals in society by virtue of their monopoly over learning and ritualistic supremacy⁷.

The Brahmans were divided into srotrias or Vaidikis on the one hand and Niyogis or laukikis on the other. However this type of distinction was mainly confined to Telugu Brahmins. Vaidikis devoted themselves to the sacerdotal functions of “Teaching the Vedas, performing and superintending sacrifice, and preserving the moral principles of the people⁸. But the Niyogis were secular in character and took to the sword and the pen with equal felicity as generals of Armies and as administrators or amatyas. They were more adaptable and naturally became predominant in matter that really counted position and power⁹. An English civil servant was to observe in 1853 that the secular members of the priesthood of India “ruled the political destinies of the country since the days of Manu (Sic), no matter who held the sword, whether mussulman, mogel, Hindoo, or Mahratta, and have from our first assumption of power ever striven to their utmost to fill the

6. V. Ramakrishna social reformin Andhra (1848-1919). Vikas publishing house New Delhi. Page.3

7. Ibid. page, 4

8. Census of India, 1891 Madras presidency. XIII pp.262-63.

9. Anit seal, The emergence of Indian nationalism. London 1968, page 98.



coffers of the state¹⁰”. True to their tradition, the Niyogies were quicker in responding favorably to the new English learning ¹¹. Other groups of Brahmans in the area were those who had migrated from the Tamil country. The prominent among them were the Arama Dravidas in the Godavari basin, the Dimily Dravidas of Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam districts and the Pudur and Tummagunta Dravidas of Nellore district. The lowest rung among the Brahmins in the ritualistic hierarchy were the Tambala Brahmins who were priests in siva temples. In addition to the division among the Brahmins on the basis of their religious and secular callings, there was another division based on matters of doctrinal differences which led to denominational differences. Some are known as the smartas ¹² and some others as Vaishnavaites ¹³.

The caste groups had different codes of behaviour and etiquette. One for the “higher castes” and another for the “lower castes” the lower castes, in the 19th century Andhra, were seeking to imitate the higher castes and adopt their way of life in rituals and ceremonials. This process called as ‘Sanskritisation’ was followed by a caste are sub-division of a caste. When a caste improved its material status. It did so by adopting Vedic ritual, quitting callings considered degrading or polluting, taking to vegetarianism, child marriage, discontinuing the practice of widow remarriage and giving up taking intoxicating drinks sacrifices of animals and fowls to village goddesses ¹⁴.

10. J.B.W Dypes Salem, an Indian collectorate, Madras, 1853, p.324.

11. According to the 1891 census, of 54,082 Niyogi male members 2878 knew English. On the other hand, out of 56,778 vaidiki male members only 1,674 were educated in English speaking in terms of percentages, 24.69 per cent and 19.10 percent were illiterates among the vaidikis and Niyogis respectively. Anil seal, p.108 Dubashees or interpreters who served both the French and British were drawn from the Niyogis such as Enugula veeraswamayya, vennelacuntly, Soobrow, Kandregula Jogipantulu and Burra Achchanna.

12. Smartas were the followers of the doctrines of sankaracharya which inculcate the worship of both Visnu and Shiva.

13. Vaishnavaites were the followers of Vistnu.

14. Imperial Gazetteer of India, p.32. Two examples may be cited in this context, from among the non-Brahmin castes in Andhra, which have adopted Brahminical customs and ceremonies, velamas and kamsalis (Viswa-Brahmins). See *census of India*; 1891, Vol.XIII, P. 147. The Kamsalis have adopted the caste titles such as ‘Achari’ and ‘sarma’, similar to the Brahmin titles. The male members started wearing the sacred thread after performing regular thread investiture ceremony like Brahmins; also on this, see A. Vaidehi Krishna moorthy, Social and Economic conditions in Eastern Deccan (From A.D. 1000 to A.D. 1250). Secunderabad, 1270, p.p.43-44.



Now the rigours of traditional ideas on pollution and taboos were relaxed and social mobility became quite a common phenomenon. But the caste distinctions persisted, if not inwardly, in the inner recesses of private thinking and feeling. In this sense caste was driven underground, maintaining its sway over men's minds. With the introduction of western education, changes in the traditional economy, rise of new professions and growth of towns and the introduction of railways and other communications- more occasions and opportunities were created for social inter course between different castes. The Brahmins were the first to take to the new education, as fish to water, and occupy salaried jobs such as those of clerks and dubashees (translators) in the government sectors also due to certain social constraints imposed upon them (Brahmins) like abstention from manual work, prohibitions against involvement in trade and business (though less severe in this regard), they turned, in large numbers, to secular vocations ¹⁵.

Social Evils:

It may not be possible to list all the unseemly social deformities but we can mention the most glaring of them. They can be broadly classified as 1. religious 2. social 3. Economic and they can be further divided. For example religious evils can be classified into idolatory, ceremonials and pollution etc.. some of them overlap into social evils and at times economic evils.

15. Instances are many in this connection. The Sataka (generally, a composition of one hundred verses instructing people on morals and good behaviour) literature of this period abounds with versus conveying the change of the life-style of Brahmins. See, for example, Seshadri Ramana Kavulu. ed.. *Bhaktirasa Sataka Samputam* (Telugu), Madras 1926, Vol.II, P.P. 260-61. G.V. Appa Rao, a well known Telugu poet and play wright, and a contemporary of Kandukuri Veeresalingam wrote a great social play 'condemning the sale of brides, *Kanyasulkam* (Telugu)', in which he portrayed some of the orthodox Brahmins not only mouthing these ideas even while sending their children to learn English to secure lucrative jobs in the government. G.V. Appa Rao, *Kanyasulkam* (Telugu), Madras, 1968, first edn. 1897, pp 34, 95 and 223.



Most cruel of the socio religious evils was sati. This evil was prevalent for many centuries mainly in the upper castes. When the husband dies the wife was also burnt along with the body of the deceased husband. It was called as *Satisahagamana* ¹⁶. It was more prevalent in Bengal than in other parts of the country. The less cruel socio religious evils were hook – swinging and fire walking ¹⁷. These evils were also prevalent in Andhra. Domestic labour was worst of the economic evils. Which was also prevalent in Andhra ¹⁸. Despite the declaration of the board of revenue in 1818 that the agricultural labourers were free, they frequently work on contract and were bound to the same villages and families during their life time ¹⁹.

The existence of such slavery on large scale in the pre colonial period cannot be disputed. Moreover they persisted even during the British rule. The popular legends such as *Bala Sanyasamma Kadha* ²⁰. Points this out.

The sub-ordination of woman in Hindu Society was confirmed and strengthened with the passage of time and became a settled fact in the feudal stage of the country's development. Neither the Muslim ruler nor even the British ushered in a totally new and higher stage of social development for their own reasons.

The British needed a domestic prop to their authority and for that they need revitalisation of the moribund Feudal order. This necessarily tended to perpetuate. All the social ills and evils, despite the superficial attempts of the British rulers such as Bentinck

16. Judicial consultations, Nos.2 and 4, April 6, 1821; Nos.11-12, July 27, 1821; Nos.11-12, July 27, 1821 (Madras presidency) T A.; also see vennelacurthy soobrow. *Life of vennelacurthy soobrow*, Madras, 1873, P.51. He wrote, "I visited the ceremony of the widow of Toomoo Pellpaiah who had just died burning herself on the funeral pyre of her deceased husband". It occurred in 1822; John A.C. Boswell, ed. *Manual of the Nellore District* (in the presidency of Madras), Madras, 1873, P.250; Rev. William Howell, ammissionary of London missionary society at cuddapah in 1830s recorded two instances of 'Sati', and in another case prevented its occurrence with the help of the police. *Missionary Chronicle* (L.M.S.), Dec. 1831 London, PP-642-43,

17. Elijah Hoole, Madras, Mysore and the South of India. London 1844, II, edn, p. 357.

18. For an instance of domestic slavery in Andhra see D.R. Benaji, *Slavery in British India*, Bombay, 1933, P.81, wherein he mentioned that in 1817 in Visakhapatnam district a seven- month child was sold for eight rupees.

19. See Dharma Kumar *Land and caste in south India*. C.U P. 1965 pages.45-48.

20. Sanyasamma Kadha (anonymous, Telugu) Madras 1972.



to wish them out of existence by means of legislation. Mere legislation, unsupported by popular approval, could not do away with such practices. It could show that the rulers were at least benevolent or at worst hypocritical. To sustain a dying social order in their own selfish political interests and at the same time try to legislate them out presents the double talk of the colonialists ²¹.

The most glaring among such skills and evils that beset the Andhra society in the 19th century were *Kanyasulkam* (Bride price) and the Nautch problem. *Kanyasulkam* produced in its turn, evils such as infant marriages and cases of premature widowhood. The condition of the widow in the upper castes was tragic. The widow head was shaved and all ornaments taken off and the unfortunate woman was deprived of all pleasures of life. She was not even allowed to participate in family ceremonies as her presence was thought to bring misfortune ... She became often an object of contempt and maltreatment.....²²

This miserable condition drove some of them to prefer death to much torturous existence; many committed *sahagamana* (Self-immolation). Sometimes the birth of illegitimate children led to infanticide. Among the So-called lower castes in the countryside widow remarriages were not unknown, though among the upper castes they were almost absent.

Devadasis* (Nautch-girls, known as *Bhogamvalli* in Telugu) came to be considered as a synonym for prostitutes. They developed into an exclusive caste of their

21. V.Ramakrishna-Social reforms in Andhra 1848-1919, Vikas publishing House, "New Delhi" 1983, P.11.

22. See for a graphic description of widows and their miserable plight in society, the novel written by Kandukuri Veeresalingam *Rajasekhara charitramu*, written in Telugu. Veeresalingam wrote it before 1880. The novel gives a vivid account of social conditions of Andhra during the 19th century. See K. Veeresalingam, Col. Works, Rajahmundry, 1950, Vol.IV, PP. 1-231; *papers on Indian reform* (editor not mentioned) Madras, 1888, pp.78-79. V.P.S. Raghuvamshi, *Indian Society in the 18th century*, New Delhi, 1969, P.106.



own “having its own laws of inheritance, its own customs and rules of etiquette” ²³.

“Married to presiding deity, they lived by prostitution and were in attendance at private houses on all Joyous occasions” ²⁴.

To maintain the prostitute and to attend nautch performance became status symbol and mark of social standing.

Alcohol drinking to begin with was confined mostly to the lower sections of the society gradually it spread among other sections.

Superstitions:-

Education was limited to a tiny fraction of society and ignorance stayed as hindrance. People were believing in medley of superstitions. For example if an owl perched on a house, it would bring misfortune to the inmates and if a crow cawed on the roof of a house it would bring a guest ²⁵.

Bad omens included, being questioned regarding business on which one was setting out; or directly after leaving the house, catching sight of a single Brahmin, two Sudras, a widow, oil, a snake or a Sanyasi, would thwart the purpose of the visit. Good omens included the hearing of a bell ring, the braying of an ass or seeing a married woman. Or a corpse, flowers or a toddy-pot. Women and houses were often supposed to be possessed of evil spirits whom only a professional witch – doctor could treat. Trees and evil spirits were supposed to be intimately connected, and a stunted or deformed tree was often pointed out as the abode of a devil ²⁶.

23. V. Ramakrishna Social reform in Andhra. P. 12. Edgar Thurstone report on the page 131 “Report on the census of madras presidency 187,

24. John A.C. Boswell Page 215.

25. F R. Hemingway, godawari, Madras district gazettters 1907 P.46. Also J D.B gribble. Manual of cuddapah district Madras 1875, P.292.

26. Ibid.



Child birth was surrounded by a number of superstitions. A pregnant woman was not supposed to see an eclipse. If she sees her child will be born deformed and it was called as *grahanasula*.

Women would rely for the health of their children chiefly on superstitious observances when her children fell sick the mother believed that it was caused by the displeasure of some god or goddess or by the influence of some evil spirit. They would not get their children vaccinated, lest it provoked the wrath of the goddess for interfering with her sport.

Drought was dealt with in various ways like pouring 1000 pots of water over the lingam in the siva temple. Another way followed to invoke *varuna* was that the *malas* would tie a live frog to a mortar and take it round a village in a procession saying "mother frog, playing in water, Pour rains by potsfull". The villagers of other castes would then come and pour water over the *malas* ²⁷.

Religious life in society was greatly effected by the supreme position held by the Brahmins. The festivals like *Sivarathri* and *Vykunta Ekadasi* were popular. There were also local gods and cults to which local people offered gifts. They were called as *Gram Devatas* or village deities. Every village had a shrine to some *Perantamma* or a woman who committed sati, the *gramadevatas* were women. They included *Nukamma*, *Bangaramma*, *Maridamma*, *Pydithalli*, *Muthyalamma*, *Poleramma*, *Gangamma* and others. They had neither clear history nor definite attributes. In some cases buffaloes were sacrificed. In some places either chicken or Goat or sheep is sacrificed. They were all equally held in awe. And were worshiped as averters of dreadful diseases like

27 W Francis, Vizagapatnam, Madras district gazetteers madras 1919 P 265



cholera, small pox etc.... They also grant boons to those who made vows before them and fulfilled them.

A number of ceremonies were prescribed by the Hindu religion in the life of an individual from birth to death. Women and young girls had a good number of religious observances called as *Vratams* and *Nomus*. However Most of these functions were performed by the richer sections of the community who had the means and leisure to perform them. The poorer sections were contented themselves with the less costly but more popular observances ²⁸.

Education:

Education at the beginning of 19th century. Was mainly confined to the pial school system. It consisted of courses in Sanskrit, Arithmetic and Telugu given to pupils by a teacher who taught them on the pial at his house or under the shade of the tree. For this service he was meagerly paid by the parents of the pupils. As those schools had existed for a longtime without much change in their style of functioning and they had become irrational and outdated. The children were generally made to learn the whole alphabet in order. The learning was mainly by rote method. It took sometime to get out of this unimaginative and unscientific method of learning. Lord Munro, the governor of Madras presidency (1820-27) opened a new page in the progress of education. He issued a minute 25th june, 1822). Enquiring into the state of indigenous education on the basis of Authentic sources. He asked for the reports from the District collector on the nature of Education, number of schools and other matters. A.D. Campbell, the collector of Ballari mentioned in his report that the indigenous school-system was not in a flourishing

28. Social reform in Andhra. V. Rama Krishna P. 14.



condition due “to the gradual but general impoverishment of the country”. He further stated that, “every school boy can repeat verbatim a vast number of verses the meaning of which he knows no more than the parrot that has been taught to utter certain words”²⁹.

The main objects of the British in their educational policy were (a) to secure properly trained personnel for the public administration of the country at the lower levels, and (b) to spread western knowledge. The first aim was dominant during 1823-33 when finance of the company were not sound. The Madras school book society was founded in 1820 to enable people to “obtain books at reduced rates”, and also to pursue the necessary changes in school education. During the period 1833-53, the company pursued the second object of spreading western knowledge due to the spread of liberal ideas in England.

And till 1854 the company did not accept direct responsibility for educating the masses. The second half of the 19 century witnessed comparatively greater progress in Education with the establishment of Anglo-vernacular school in many parts of Andhra. This was facilitated with the establishment of rates schools by G.N. Taylor in the subdivision of Rajahmundry. He opened schools in 1852 on an experimental basis at a Nursapoor, palcole, penoogondah and Auchunta, which were supported by local subscription and their successful functioning attracted the attention of the inhabitants of many of the neighbouring villages. Taylor submitted to the government in 1854, the wishes of ryots of the village in the godawari delta Area: “who have come forward to beg permission to contribute towards the expense of their children’s Education”³⁰.

29. See for the extracts from the letter of A.D. compbell, H. Sharp, ed. Selections from Educational records, part I, 1781-1839, Calcutta, 1920. republished in 1965, pp.65-68.

30. Papers relating to the establishment of village vernacular schools in the subdivision of Rajahmundry Madras. 1856, p.23.



Taylor's System:

Taylor patiently pleaded in the memorandum submitted to the government... "that while the Tamil population are provided with no less than 950 schools, there are but 30 in the entire presidency of Madras, in which efficient Telugu instruction is imparted". His proposal was accepted and came to be known as Mr. Taylor's system (also known as Rajahmundry system of schooling). A.J. Arbutnot, Director of Public Instruction, wrote to the chief secretary, Madras government that "... the greatest credit is due to Mr. Taylor for what has been already accomplished, and the introduction of some what similar system throughout the country"³¹.

The establishment of these schools in the Rajahmundry region created an educational atmosphere and people began.. "to clamour for English and have in many places applied for better teacher"³². Perhaps, in this, one could see the beginnings of enlightenment in the Godavari district which was to become later the center of reform activity in Andhra. The establishment of schools around Rajahmundry was the first major attempt made by the government for the extension and improvement of education in the Andhra Region.

A great impetus was given to education when the 'Local Funds' were created by the government in 1871³³. The local fund act (Act IV) provided funds through house tax for the maintenance of elementary schools, for the training of teachers and for the construction of school buildings³⁴. Act III of 1871 provided for the towns what act IV did for the rural districts. Thus the municipal funds were declared to be applicable to the support of education. As a result of this a number of schools were established.

31. Papers relating to the establishment of village vernacular school in the subdivision of Rajahmundry. Madras 1856.P74

32. Letter of Macdonold, Inspector of schools, to the district collector. G.O. No.329.

33. S. Sathinathin, *History of Education in the Madras presidency* Madras 1894, p.p.84-85.

34. Studies in Madras administration vol.II, pp 73-74



The growth of education in the Andhra region of the Madras presidency during the second half of the 19 century was phenomenal. The following table shows the results of the combined efforts of the government and the private agencies in the field of education from 1862 – 1899³⁵.

District		Number of Institutions	Number of scholars
1	2	3	4
Ganjam	1862-63	28	1,004
	1867-68	30	1,524
	1879-80	564	11,773
	1898-99	1,776	38,212
Visakhapatnam	1862-63	16	635
	1867-68	28	1,402
	1879-80	496	10,167
	1898-99	1,354	34,603
Godavari	1862-63	115	2,597
	1867-68	116	3,330
	1879-80	702	17,476
	1898-99	1,604	53,955
Krishna	1862-63	7	633
	1867-68	26	1,135
	1879-80	731	12,859
	1898-99	1,801	46,937
Kurnool	1862-63	2	133
	1867-68	5	202
	1879-80	228	3,687
	1898-99	670	14,838
Bellary	1862-63	12	828
	1867-68	19	1,134
	1879-80	488	7,973
	1898-99	1,215	27,139

35. This table is based on statistics furnished by the reports of Director of public instruction in the Madras presidency for the year 1867-68. 1879-1880 and 1898-99. Published at Madras in 1868, 1880 and 1889 respectively.



Cuddapah	1862-63	23	569
	1867-68	47	997
	1879-80	308	4,715
	1898-99	841	17,802
Nellore	1862-63	9	204
	1867-68	226	3,918
	1879-80	554	9,685
	1898-99	1,151	27,015

The above table shows that the growth of education was faster in the circars than in the ceded districts. This was due to two factors, viz., (i) The circars which came under the influence of the British earlier had more of its impact than the other regions, and (ii) the educational activities of the missionaries were widespread here. The table further brings out another significant feature: the delta regions of the Godavari and Krishna districts were leading the other districts both in the number of schools and scholars. Significantly this was the region which was comparatively richer and where the urban growth was more than the other regions. Further more, as has already been noted, the godavari district had the benefit of the Taylor's system of 'rate schools' through which a good number of schools were established throughout the district.



The Role of Christian Missionaries:-

In the spread of education, the missionaries too played an important role along with the government. Even though the individual missionaries were carrying on informal schooling of children in the Godavari region prior to 1836. The first organized missionary school was started in 1836 at Nellore by the free church mission by 1850s the whole region was covered with an elaborate Network of mission schools. It was missionaries who first introduced the printing press in India and published books in Indian languages. They started schools both for boys and girls.

College Education:-

In 1877 three first grade colleges were started in the presidency. One of was started at Rajahmundry. Between 1854 and 1882 in all four college were started in Andhra. Since the public philanthropy was slow, the government was exhorted to open more schools and impart new education to children. Since schools and colleges were started in urban and semi urban area except for a sprinkling of elementary schools in country side, education was by and large urban based.

Moreover the spread of education was confined to the upper and middle classes in the society. The table below shows the Brahmins had an upper hand in higher education.

	Percentage of total Hindus			Other including pariahs
	Brahmins	Vaisyas	Sudras	
College education	74.6	3.2	21.7	0.5
Secondary education	45.5	5.6	45.8	3.1
Primary education	14.4	10.0	68.4	7.2

Where as in the primary level sudras who comprised all the communities other than Brahmins, Vaisyas and pariahs were not comparatively speaking far behind. For the



decade 1876-1886, 73% of the total Hindu candidates. Who successfully completed their university examinations were Brahmins.

In 1888 for every 41 Brahmins of school going age one was at college. However during the same year out of 2004 Vysyas and Sudras who were half the Hindu population only one was doing college education. That education has confined to upper castes in society like Brahmins and Vysyas is further brought out by the following figures for 1891.

Caste	Total males in caste	Percentage of literate
Brahmins	5,51,951	72.21
Vysyas (Komati)	1,44,223	60.46
Belijas	3,52,604	20.12
Kapu or Reddy	1,222,546	9.55
Pariah	9,97,319	2.75

The economic background of the students can be gathered from the report of the director of public instruction 1885-86 which stated that the children of rich land lords were making greater use of educational opportunity. The details for 1883-84 mentioned below will show that those who sent their children to schools and colleges were mainly land holders and officials.

	College excluding professional colleges	Secondary schools (100)
Land holders	38.40	34.00
Officials	28.50	20.50
Petty officials	11.80	17.00
Traders	7.00	7.00
Others	14.30	21.50



This is also born out by the evidence given before the education commission in 1882, by eminent men connected with education. P. Chentsel Rao stated: "The lowest classes in this country do not seek primary instruction at all. Their poverty compels them to employ their children as labourers from a very early age and Pariahs and others of the lowest classes are not admitted to schools in which caste natives have any influence"³⁶.

Economic life:

The establishment of the British rule in the Andhra region did not spell either the doom or the total destruction of the Zamindars³⁷ and Poligars³⁸, in the circar districts and ceded districts respectively. Even though their wings were clipped and many of their erstwhile powers were taken away, their private armies dismantled and their policing functions have continued, they were allowed by the new rulers to collect rents and transmit to the government in their restricted spheres of authority. A sizeable portion of their former holdings was not transferred to the government, and for the rest they were made to pay peshcush on very stringent terms. The Andhra Zamindars were mostly from the upper non-Brahmin castes such as Kshatriyas, Velamas or Kammas. Wealth and social status conferred by caste combined to establish their ascendancy over the society.

36. Education commission, Chentsel Rao was superintended of stamps and stationary in Madras and the fellow of the Madras University were more than decade. He was also officially connected with the administration of schools in the Godavari district under the 'Taylors system'. Rao pladed for the establishment of primary school in each village and that was the only was. According to him, to eradicate illiteracy in such a huge country as India. Rao was one of the leading social reformers of the Madras city along with Raghunatha Rao and others.

37. The number of Zamindars in Andhra was about 870. Nevertheless their political power was much greater. They controlled a quarter of the area of the Madras presidency. The extensive zamindars like vijayanagaram Bobbili, Pithapuram and Venkatsgiri were situated in the Andhra region.

38. Poligar or palayakkaran was the holder of territory, called 'Palayam' in Tamil, 'Palamu' in Telugu, which meant literally an armed camp. It was a strip of territory consisting of a few villages, granted to a chieftan in consideration of the military service that he agreed to render and the tribute that he consented to pay to the sovereign. As a political agency the poligar system was associated with medieval south India. Tamilnadu and Andhradesa (Rayalaseema area) accounted for most of the poligars. See K. Rajayan, *Rise and Fall of the Poligars of Tamilnadu, Madras, 1974, P. VI.*



Agriculture was the main stay of the people. The life of the peasants was miserable, positioned as they were between two sets of oppressors, one hereditary and native and the other intruding and Foreign, Viz the Zamindars and the polygars on the one hand and the company on the other. People connected with land, other than agricultural laborers were 47.32% of the entire population of the province. The agricultural classes, primarily small peasants, suffered due to high rent and over assessment irrespective of the type of settlement that was in operation. Under Ryotwari tenure, the share of the government was theoretically put at half the value of the net produce of the land.

Savage methods were employed to collect revenues forcibly from people, but as many of them were extremely poor, ignorant and afraid of the dire consequences, they seldom complained against tortures, of the state or revenue administration, in both the ceded and circar districts, and the attitude of the company were aptly described by Lord macaulay; "Govern leniently, but send us more money, practice justice and moderation, but send us more money, be the father and oppressor of the people, be just and unjust, moderate and rapacious"³⁹.

As a result of such an oppressive system of land revenue, cultivation was unwillingly pursued, and in several cases the cultivators deserted their lands. Furthermore, it resulted in heavy rural indebtedness throwing ryots to the mercy of village sahkars.

The frequent occurrence of famines during the 19 century added to the wretchedness of the agricultural population. Among the rural masses three section of

39 Lord mecaulay in his essay on warren hastings cited in V Ramakrishna, Social reform in Andhra P 28



people suffered most namely, tenants, weavers and agricultural labourers. The famine of 1807 affected all the districts in the circar and the ceded areas. The famine of 1811. Called Nellore famine, was of a serious nature. More disastrous was the guntur famine in the year 1833 which wrought havoc with Guntur District.

The worst famine of the 19th century was that of 1876-78 which affected fourteen districts of the presidency covering an area of 80,000 Square miles. During this famine, three – fourths of million on an average, were on daily famine relief for nearly two years. The government, in spite of a number of reports sent by the district collectors and other revenue officials, did not formulate any rational policy of famine relief or prevention. It was only after great famine of 1876-78 that a commission, under the presidency of Sir Richard strachey, with Sir charles Elliot as secretary, was appointed by Lord Lytton to enquire into the famines in India and suggest the measures of relief and prevention ⁴⁰.

Permanent Settlement:

The permanent settlement with its magic touch of land ownership and permanent assessment, was envisaged as stimulating industry, promoting agriculture and augmenting general wealth and prosperity ⁴¹.

It conferred ownership of the land upon the former feudal intermediaries who held political and revenue powers over large tracts of land. The sponsors of the settlement did not care who the landowner was, so long as the land was cultivated and land revenue was regularly paid ⁴². Since the respective rights of the ryots and the zamindars were left undefined and ambiguous the settlement wrought much mischief. It enabled the

40. Sir John strachey, India, Its Administration and progress, London, 1903, P.225

41. The fifth report, Vol.II, P.172. The court of directors of the East India company recommended in 1795 that the permanent settlement should be introduced in the Northern circars. See Revenue Despatches from England – Despatch of April 28, 1795 (East India correspondence). T A

42. S. Gopal, the permanent settlement in Bengal and its Results, London, 1949, P.17.



zamindars to enjoy enormous incomes, and affluence led them to live on an unprecedented scale. Unfortunately the rights of the peasants were nowhere defined, and thus the cultivators were exposed to unmitigated oppression. The settlement, contrary to expectations, did not introduce capitalistic farming of India. It deprived the peasants of their traditional ownership-rights, and made them dependent upon the zamindars and suffer misery and oppression.

In the districts of godavari, Krishna and Ganjam, the permanent settlement resulted in the beginning in the collapse of zamindars due to the excessive demand from the government. Several estates were either auctioned or surrendered, because of the liability of the zamindars to pay peshcush⁴³.

After putting down the poligars of the ceded districts, Munro undertook a survey of the area and introduced the Ryotwari system under which the condition of peasants became worse. Under the Ryotwari system, the benefit of every ryot being a peasant proprietor at a fixed assessment proved illusory. Land rent was as high as Rs.35 to Rs.50 per acre. The fault lay in the over assessment of land and exacting demands of the administration. This made agriculture completely unremunerative and prevented the formation of capital within the agricultural economy. This system locked the way to the flow of outside capital in to the agricultural sector. The peasants who were in need of cash to pay land Revenue fell into the hands of Sahukars who became the defacto land lords. And in many cases the money lenders and the landlords were one and the same.

43 M P R Reddy, "The Agrarian system of Andhra under the east India company (1760-1820)" can unpublished typed manuscript obtained from the author, pp 170-73 In the first ten years after the permanent settlement, however, the British government was prepared to some leniency towards the Zamindars and proprietors By 1810, however, the attitude of the government had hardened and the inability of the proprietors to pay their revenues was accompanied by an auction sale or a private sale



The British administrators during the first quarter of the 19th century were influenced by utilitarian ideas which to a large extent influenced the official policy of Indian land revenue pressed to pay land revenue in cash, peasants borrowed money. They also took to the production of cash crops and were thus exposed to the fluctuations of money market. The legal system introduced by the British ushered in even more far reaching changes in the agricultural sector than land revenue. Now, poor peasants were placed at the mercy of courts where money lenders could get favourable decisions by engaging lawyers. Earlier, peasants could not be evicted from their lands as the traditional village system was relatively considerate to them.

A note worthy feature of this period was the construction of the godavari and Krishna anicuts on the initiative of Sir Arthur cotton ⁴⁴. Besides developing cultivation, the British used the rivers as waterways for the transport of cash crops like cotton and tobacco from the interior parts to the centres ⁴⁵. They immensely helped the growth of agriculture in the Godavari and Krishana districts which since then came to be called the granary of Andhra.

Commenting upon the changes in Godavari District since the construction of the anicut, S. Nathamuni Mudaliar, a retired tahasildar from the district, stated: "The wealthier classes were much benefited and the condition of ryots was so much improved by the general high prices that instead of being in the hands of sowcars, they were sowcars themselves.... The vast increase in agriculture by irrigation has very materially

44. The sanction for the godavari anicut was received in 1847 and was completed by 31 march 1852. The work on the Krishna anicut was commenced in 1852 and was completed by 1855.

45. There are nearly 500 miles of canals which, besides carrying water for irrigation, are excellent lines of transport. Furthermore, the godavari navigation system was connected with the Krishna system (with its 300 miles of navigable canals) and from it again into the Backingham canal which runs along the coastline for a distance of 194 miles. Thus from Kakinada to Madras the Canal navigation is about 500 miles. The provision of cheap carriage not only in and around the district but to the seaport (Madras) greatly helped the British to exploit the natural resources of the Godavari district which sprang into prosperity during this period. *Lady Hope, general sir Arthur cotton, His life and works, London, 1900. p. 134.*



improved the condition of ryots.

The construction of railways in this part of the country was commenced in 1890 and was over by August, 1893. It was then called the East Coast Railway. The railways contributed to the further growth of trade and commerce and also made Journey easy and cheap. They also led to the flow of ideas from and direct access to the presidency metropolis (Madras city).

The growth of towns in Andhra began by the middle of the 19th century and many towns came into existence by the close of the century. The movement of rural population to the Urban areas was largely due to the higher wages and greater freedom from caste repression which the towns held out to the lower section of the population and to the superior social and educational advantages and the more varied amenities which they offered to the better – off classes. Generally the railways increased the trade of those places. Where they reached and also created new trading centres along its track. Among other factors that contributed to the growth of towns, mention may be made of the starting of industries, availability of cheap labour, tendency of rich land lords and other similar classes to live in towns, and modern education ⁴⁶.

The raise of the middle class:

The new professional classes (educated middle class) come into existence in the wake of these towns. The revenue settlements on the one hand and industry and commerce on the other failed to develop rural capitalists and strong commercial classes respectively. Middle classes in the madras presidency, therefore, comprised mainly of people belonging to different professions like teaching, law, medicine and civil service ⁴⁷.

46. D.R. Gadgil, the industrial revolution of India in Recent Times, Calcutta, 1948, first edn. 1924, P. 137;

47 See B.M. Bhatia, "growth and composition of middle class in south India in nineteenth century", the Indian economic and social history review, Vol II, No.4, October, 1965,



The progress of the education was more rapid in the Madras presidency after 1857. The middle classes fought for liberal and democratic values and respected the individual but not religious authority. They stood for intellectual freedom and social mobility, and became the carriers of new ideas and provided social basis for and orientation to social reform movements⁴⁸.

The new land relations and the consequent changes in the social fabric of Indian, agriculture was a significant event in the process of the transformation from the pre capitalist feudal economy of India into a formal capitalist economy. Karl Marx spoke of the destructive as well as regenerative roles of the British rule in India⁴⁹.

The destruction of the old village Economy, though it involved much suffering and misery, was progressive event. It was the right step in the right direction of uniting the Indian people Economically in to the unit. It put an end to the isolation of the village communities living in an atmosphere of social passivity and intellectual inertia. Further, the process of converting India into a market for foreign goods brought untold sufferings to the village artisans who swelled the ranks of the landless poor. Pressure on land and the consequent rural unemployment accentuated the agrarian crisis⁵⁰.

Consequent on all this, there developed symptoms of a structural imbalance in the Indian society as a whole during the 19th century. These events, along with the spread of education growth of towns, a modern legal system, political unity, better communications and the rise of new professional (Middle) classes led to the much desired social mobility and social change.

48 Sumit Sarkar, *Bibliographical survey of social reform movements in the 18th and 19th centuries*, New Delhi, 1975, P 1, stated that "Social reform movement of modern period had a upper caste (and upper and middle class) basis

49. K. Marx and F Engels, on colonialism, Moscow, n.d., P 84.

50. Social reform in Andhra, V. Ramakrishna P.36.



However, there did not take place the total break-up of the old economic structure and the full emergence of the capitalist system: and hence social change stopped midway, leaving the country semi – feudal and semi-capitalist, with strong ties between moribund feudalism and emergent capitalism both subordinated to an overpowerful alien colonialism⁵¹.



51. Viewing the developments of modern Indian History in the light of colonialism and its restraints was the concept formulated by professor Bipan Chandra in his presidential address (Section. III), "colonialism and modernization, Indian History congress, Thirty – second session, 1970 at Jabalpur.

