

## PREFACE

19<sup>th</sup> century was a period of great changes in India. The British administration of this period brought many structural changes in Indian Society. At that time there was large scale poverty and misery among the Indian agricultural classes. The impact of western culture brought in <sup>a</sup> new out look among the Indian middle classes. Due to the impact of the British, an Urban based, educated middle class has emerged. It took the responsibility and the pioneering role of disseminating western ideas and bringing about a new social and political awakening.

The reforms were mainly initiated by the western educated intellectuals. They also belonged to <sup>the</sup> upper and middle classes. They belonged mainly to higher castes in the Hindu ritualistic hierarchy. The nature of the causes they espoused were also mainly the problems of their communities. For example the emancipation of women in all its facets – Education, widow remarriage, Kanyasulkam (Bride Price) and infant marriage, wasteful marriage expenditure, were some of the issues about which they wanted change, and these practices were found in the upper castes of the Hindu society.

These practices were found not only in Andhra but in the whole Hindu society of that century. The social reform endeavours in Andhra were a part of the all India efforts in this direction. During the same period or even earlier similar attempts were made in Bengal and Maharashtra about which we will discuss in due course. My work covers the Andhra region of the present day Andhra Pradesh. This region was a part of the erstwhile composite Madras presidency. This area was directly governed by the British. This work seeks to study the various reform activities undertaken by the Andhra reformers of that period. Kandukuri Veeresalingam who belongs to this century (1849-1919) was the leader of the reform movements in the Andhra region.



Prior to Veeresalingam we find some significant but stray reform trends in Andhra. But it was Veeresalingam who consolidated these ideas, providing them with a form and a content. He was the first and foremost reformer in Andhra, though people like Raghupati Venkata Ratnam, Unnava Lakshminarayana, Desiraju Pedabapaiah played a significant role as his associates.

Sri Gurazada Appa Rao (1861-1915) was a contemporary of Veeresalingam and both of them lived under the same social conditions. Like Veeresalingam he also took up social issues of his times like women education, widow remarriage, Kanyasulkam, infant child marriage etc. He also wanted to change the Brahmanical society of his times and solve many problems that confronted them.

The social reformers were also against caste discrimination and untouchability. They believed in social justice and universal Brotherhood. They also pleaded for religious tolerance and inter-religious understanding.

While Veeresalingam was an active social reformer and writer, Gurazada Appa Rao was mainly confined to literature. Whatever changes he envisaged in the Hindu society, he wanted to bring them through his mighty pen. He was known more as great writer than as a social reformer. Gidugu Ramamurthy (1863-1940) was also a pioneer in social reform movement of Andhra Pradesh. He mainly concentrated on the literary aspects like change in usage of language. All these three wanted to bring a change in the literary format of writing in Telugu. In the earlier tradition Telugu writing was influenced by a Sanskrit and the language was terse. It was called as *Grandhika Bhasa*. The ordinary form of language was called as *Vyavaharika Bhasa*. Which means the language of the common man. The Sista Vyavaharika means the refined language of the common man and now it is in vogue in Andhra Pradesh. Almost all regional languages of India follow the Sista Vyavaharika style of writing.



The news papers, electronic media and other communication channels follow this style.

Another contemporary and great social reformer of this century was Raghupati Venkataratnam Naidu (1862-1939). He was an eminent educationist, a leader of Brahmosamaj, who has relentlessly worked for the education of the Girl child, Harijan uplift and against nautch practices. He also strived for social purity and temperance. Venkataratnam was highly inspired by the life and teachings, and practices of Veeresalingam and gave his whole hearted support to the reform moment of Veeresalingam.

My attempt in this work is to study and analyse, the contributions made by these thinkers to language, literature, and to social and political reform and assess their place in the modernisations and transformation of the Andhra People and their culture.

Throughout India and particularly Bengal, Maharastra and Andhra we find great reform movements during 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. To some extent there was exchange of ideas and diffusion of social and cultural ideas and ideals among these states. It is also interesting to make a brief survey of the similar social reform movements, like that of Joti Rao Phooley in Maharashtra and Narayana Guru of Kerala. Both had similar goals and did immense service to the weaker sections of the society and to universal education, mainly education of Girls and for the emancipation of women. They have also taken up other issues which did great harm to the society and denied social justice to the large sections of the Indian society. A brief analysis of their contribution for the social progress is narrated.



## **Plan of The Work:-**

The work is divided into VIII chapters in the I Chapter I have discussed about the concept of Hinduism and Brahmanism and how the popular Hinduism is different from Brahmanism. There were many sects in Hinduism and some of them were started by non-Brahmins. These sects wanted to bring social reform. The main sects are Veeresalingam and Sri Vystnavism.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> Century we had reformers like Vemana and potuluri Veerabrahmam.who tried to reform Hindu society and wanted the society to get rid of its evils.

The British attitude towards social reform and the activities of the missionaries was also discussed.

In the II Chapter I have discussed about two eminent social reformers of the same century one Jotirao pooley (1827-1890) who belongs to Maharastra and Naryanaguru (1856-1928), who belongs to kerala. In a way they were the pioneers of social reform movement in the south and their ideas of social reform were highly significant.

In the III Chapter I have discussed about the social situation of Andhra in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. It deals with the caste system, social evils, superstitions, educational status the role of Christian Missionaries and about the socio-economic situation of Andhra Pradesh in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

In the IV Chapter I have discussed about Kandukuri Veeresalingam. (1849-1919). This study is mainly focused on Veeresalingam and his contribution to the social reform movement. In away he can be called as the father of social reform movement in Andhra in this chapter I have discussed about his social and political ideas and the formative influences on him. I have also discussed about his attitude towards Telugu language and literary style. His out look was rational and he opposed



many evils of the society. Like his eminent contemporaries, he was also a moderate in politics and considered the British rule as a boon.

In the Chapter V. I have discussed about Veeresalingam's contribution to the uplift of women. He is well known for his great work done in the area of women welfare and women progress. He considered that education of women is a priority area. His great contribution to social progress is his propagation of widow remarriages. He not only preached but took active part in performing widow remarriages. He was a prolific writer and wrote number of books. He was also a good Journalist and established monthly Journals to propagate his ideals of social reform. He was a good institution builder and started number of orphanages for the child widows. He also started number of schools for girls education. Veeresalingam opposed Kanyasulkam and he also participated in temperance and social purity movements my study is mainly focused on the contribution of Veeresalingam social reforms in Andhra.

In the Chapter VI. I have discussed about Gurazada Appa rao (1861-1915) and his contribution to social reform in Andhra. Sri Appa rao was a teacher for some time and later became an administrator. His contribution to Telugu literature is praiseworthy. Veeresalingam, Gurazada Appa rao and Gidugu Ramamurthy propagated the usage of ordinary and popular language for the literary purpose. They said the common man must be in a position to understand the writings in his own language. In all most all languages of India this movement of ordinary language becoming literary language became popular. The theme of his writings had social purpose. He dealt with the themes of women uplift, widow remarriages and Kanyasulkam. Like Veeresalingam he also fought for social reformation and change through his writings. Through literature he wanted to reform the society. In this



chapter I discussed about his writings, his views on reformation of language, his views on patriotism, rationalism and women uplift.etc.,

In the Chapter VII. I have discussed about Raghupati Venkataratnam Naidu (1862-1939) Venkataratnam was influenced more by Brahamo Samaj. Veeresalingam and Gurazada Appa rao were also influenced by Brahmo Samaj but the impact on them was not so deep. Venkataratnam has shown great concern for the welfare of women. He wanted respectable position to women and believed in the sanctity of the institution of marriage and family. He believed in the purity in life and purity in action. Really he was a Brahmarshi. He had great respect for K.Veeresalingam and Gurazada Appa rao. Through his powerful writings and eloquent speeches, he influenced thousands of his students and others. He also worked for women uplift, supported temperance movement and like them, he was also Anti-nautch. In this chapter I have discussed about social purity and Anti-nautch movement, his views on sanctity of marriage, widow-remarriages, on Harijan uplift, untouchability and other social issues. As a practicing Brahmo, he believed in Monotheism and disliked idol worship. And at the same time he propagated inter religious understanding.

In the Chapter VIII. I have made a panoramic survey of the social reform movement in Andhra. Since 19<sup>th</sup> Century and tried to analyse the impact of these three thinkers on social reform in Andhra and how far their attempts bore fruit. And how the socio political developments in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century accelerated the social reform movements, by the latter developments like freedom movement for Indian independence. Social reformation is an ongoing process in any country and more so in a developing country like India. Social progress is not dependent on any one factor. The socio economic political and cultural development only leads to the overall development of any society and we are sure that India is in the process of integrated



development. And for this the role of K.Veerèsalingam, Gurazada Appa rao and R.Venkataratnam Naidu is significant and praise worthy.

