



Social Identities of Western Andhra Pradesh 900 AD to 1323 AD

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Abstract: Social identity and identification have a historiographical significance in the analysis of history. Famous examples can be seen in the cases like Maurya Chandragupta being considered as a Kshatriya origin quite against the Hindu sources on the ground of the Buddhist sources. In the same way the Pallavas were identified to be of Brahmana caste on the basis of their gotra Bharadvaja and tracing their descent from Asvatthama, the son of Drona, teacher of archery according to Mahabharata. The Calukyas of Vengi were said to be of the purified bodies by the sprinkling of the waters of avabhrdha snana of an asvamedhasacrifice. In the case of Andhra much discussion was made on the caste of the Satavahanas basing on the claim recorded in the Nasik inscription of Gautami Balasiri, where in Gautamiputra Satakanni was said to be "Eka bahmanasa".

Key words: Odhra, Kakatikula, Janu Tenugu desi metrics

Theme

The Calukyas of Vengi were said to be of the purified bodies by the sprinkling of the waters of avabhrdha snana of an asvamedhasacrifice (Asvamedhavabhridhasna na pavitrikrita vapusham Calukyanam kulamalankarishnoh). In the case of Andhra much discussion was made on the caste of the Satavahanas basing on the claim recorded in the Nasik inscription of Gautami Balasiri, where in Gautamiputra Satakanni was said to be "Eka bahmanasa". Prof. Romila Thapar opined that this type of enquiry may be disposed of with a single statement, that it is not scientific, as all the identities are never permanent. But, it should be understood that the equation of a scientific analogy for certain empirical social argumentations cannot be taken all the time. This problem is as old as Mahabharata, and when the origin of Karna was enquired to qualify him to compete with the Princes of Pandu and Kuru families of Mahabharata, the famous translator Nannayabhattaraka, of Calukyan period, has said it as...

"Surula janmambu surala janmambunu

Nerula janmambu neruga
nagune"....

(is it possible to know the origin of the heroes, gods and rivers). They are all draped in some unknown unit, whom the historians used to call in their jargon as, myth, mystery, tradition and obscurity.

This kind of quest is essential in almost all the social groups, those emerged as the ruling communities. The period from 600 to 1350 AD is qualified by many invasions of the assaulting groups from outside the physical area of the country. The Calukyas commenced the cue and the Tughlaks put a temporary end to the same. During this period, polity and economy were thoroughly disturbed and any powerful social group that can promote stability claimed every right on polity and economy.

The problem did not start with the claim; but it started when the ruling community wanted to stabilise its power. The society had to be convinced that the



ruling family can be provided a social acceptance as the same had considerable antiquity and socio-cultural heritage. There lies the identity.

Political impact of the Calukyas of Kalyani

The Kakatiyas, who succeed the political impact of the Calukyas of Kalyani in the western parts of Andhra Pradesh and made out from them a kingdom extending to the Bay of Bengal, were of obscure origin. The words like Vadde, vrishni, yvashti, Suryakula, Sudra... all is found to qualify them. But the specific term Kakatikula was also used in the case of the Kakatiyas.

Kakatikula is the name of their family and all the scholars are obviously considering that the goddess Kakati, is a variant of goddess Kushmandini of the Jaina pantheon and they were primarily the Jainas. Subsequently they had embraced the Vira Saiva cult. According to Vira Saiva ideology every person, who embraces Vira Saiva cult is sacred irrespective of his caste even though it is durjati (bad caste).

The predecessor of kakatiya dynasty, Kakartya Gundyana was said to be of vadde kula. The vadde was a corrupt form of Odhra and they might have come down to this place in the Calukya – Rashtrakuta incursions, whose area of martial activity extended into Cedi region, which is a strong hold of Jainism since the times of Kharavela (C.165 B.C.) and also to the areas like Elichpur (Acalapura), Kirondol (Kiranapura) and Dahala, which are of Odhra and Kalinga units and qualified by Jaina affiliations. They were the worshippers of Kakatamma by faith; braziers (vadde) by profession and Sudras by caste.

The Kakatiyas since the beginning of their political career had relations with the Viriyala chief the chiefs of Ayya family, Kotas of Natavadi, Yadavas, the Indulru chiefs and the Calukyas of Nidadavolu (Niravadya pura) and most of them are belonging to the Sudra caste. In the Kundavaram and Upparapalli inscriptions the emperor Kakati Ganapati admitted him to be both of the solar origin and Sudra caste. It is a clear evidence that the Kakatiyas were Sudras by caste.

The Kakatiya period obviously found the predominance of the members of the Sudra family like, Recerla family, Musunuri family, Ayya family, and others. Jayapa, the brother-in-law of Ganapati deva holding the fiefs of Ayya family, was a famous Gajasahini. The Kayastha chiefs like Gangaya Sahini; Jannigadeva extended their submission to the Kakatiyas. Besides the groups of Vira Saiva mendicants dominated the society. The Gurus like Visvesvara sambhuvu played a dominant role.

The values of Sanskritisation, attained a new dimension in this social identity. In the previous epochs like the Calukyas of Vengi, the Sanskritisation had a religious bearing. But from the Kakatiya period onwards the Sanskritisation became simply non-religious, though it should not be called secular in to. The rulers had Jaina and Vira Saiva beliefs and this period witnessed a quick socio-cultural metamorphosis on biotic scale and the prevalence of Vira Saiva values suspended the previous ones and initiated a life with altered social values.

All the social values led for the claim of every opportunity by the elite, irrespective of caste and religion. Except



the ritual everything was opened to all and it was for that person or group to substantiate his claim and display his prodigy, valour and ability.

The politico-social aspects of that territorial society did not impose any set of negative duties. The rulers were liberal with all the groups and the only way of scaling values for an affiliation simply were based on the loyalty to the ruling house, non-injuring their sovereign power, non-violation of their laws and contribution to the state exchequer and cultural life. The introduction of the aspects like Janu Tenugu and the use of the desi metrics, instead of marga metrics, is similar to a revolution and a debate as found in modern period as a debate between Granthika and Vyavaharika traditions. They wanted to find in Telugu non-bombastic words in prose, and poetry, but only an aesthetic and rhetoric flavour as mentioned by Palkuriki Somanatha as:

Uru tara gadya padyotkula kante
Sarasamai paragina Janu Tenungu"

The word **Janu** is a gramatical variant of the word Canu.. also may be called as Calu, meaning the way or path. It means Janu Tenugu is a communicable language.

This system offered an opporutnity to all; but it did not stand for a longer period is also evident. It is found in 'Simhasanadvatrimika' of Koravi Goparaju, who belonged to the Western Andhra Pradesh that: As the house wife is characterised by Good conduct and qualities and as the call girl lures by having the ornaments of gold and pearls, Sanskrit has its beauty through the etymological phenomenon and the meaning; and Telugu is beautified only thourgh Yati and prasa.

This discussion is clearly bringing to light that such an open entry to all the social aspects can no longer be tolerated. It is of the two reasons:

1. The kakatiya society did not become purely mercantile and money oreinted and even the trade and commerce promoted only to augment its sources but not to substitute a trader for a farmer.
2. The impact of the foreign element was of very much later period from C.1309-1310A.D. onwards, which marks almost the fag end of the epoch of the Kakatiyas. Moreover that foreign element what they had remained only cataclysmic and not nutritious. That is why the post-Kakatiya period also remained a society of the farmers, by the farmers and for the farmers.

All the vertical relations and mozaic distribution of relations did not have a separate quality to be identified some as purely economic and some as purely social. What all the state accepted as social invariably remained economic too.

Hence, the historiographic standards where the economic and social segmentation and apathy are traced are not at all applicable to the Western Andhra Pradesh and the economic and social identities remained the obverse and reverse of the same coin. Let the identities be temporary, they played a very good role for the promotion of social good through their contribution to religion and culture.

References

1. Divyavadana specifies that he was kshatriya. Tripathi R.S. Op. Cit.P 146
2. E.I. VII Pp. 233-236 Chandaluru grant Kumaravishnu is one of



- the greatest sources to mention their descent.
3. Epigraphia Indica Vol. VII Pp.59-62 Nasik Inscription of Gautami Balasiri.
 4. Romila Thapar - Front Line Oct. 2000 'Hindutva and History' P.15
 5. Musunuri Prolayaka and Kapaya Nayaka played a role in Western Andhra Pradesh since 1300-1336.
 6. 19. Malkapuram inscription of Rudramadevi extols the role of Visvesvara Sambhuvu S.I.I. Vol. X No.395.
 7. This tantamounts to planititional acculturation which means " a mingling of two cultures over a broad area". Tylor E.B. 1991 'Dictionary of Anthropology' P.3. At the same time this includes an upsurge for adapting vedic ideology in life.
 8. Satya Murty K. 'Biotic Scale to sign and symbol - Concept of Vira Saiva - Jaina cults a comparative study' Dr. H. Rangarajan Etal (Ed) 2001 - Jainism in Arts Architecture, Literature and philosophy Pp. 276-286.
 9. Tammayya . B (Ed) 1969, 'Palkurki Somanathuni Basava Puranam' Pp. 8-9.
 10. The word Calu can also form as canu as per the principle Nalayora bhedah and janu is a grammatical varient of canu.
 11. This led for worshipping the woman and cow, which played a vital role in agricultural operations as well as system itself.
 12. The post - Kakatiya period found the role of Nayakas, Reddis and Velamas all associated with cultivation.