

Dravidian Studies
(A Half-Yearly Research Journal)

UGC Approved No.40721

ISSN 0976-5182

DRAVIDIAN STUDIES

(A Peer Reviewed Journal)
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Vol.XI, Issue No.1

January- June 2026

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Honorary Editor
Prof.L.C.Mallaiah

Chief Editor
Prof. D.V.Sravan Kumar

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DRAVIDIAN UNIVERSITY

Srinivasavanam, KUPPAM-517 425



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Relaunch of Dravidian Studies and Associated Journals: A Milestone in Dravidian Linguistic Research

The Dravidian University, established in 1997 in Kuppam, Andhra Pradesh, stands as a beacon for the integrated development of Dravidian languages and cultures, a vision championed by the late Padma Shri Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao, former Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh and a legendary film actor. The university has dedicated itself to advancing research and education in Dravidian languages, including Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, and numerous lesser-known tongues. Among its significant contributions to Dravidian scholarship is the publication of academic journals, with Dravidian Studies serving as the flagship journal, alongside four specialized journals introduced around 2007: Telugu, *Dravidi*, Kannada, *Kannada Kasturi*, Tamil *Dravida Malar*, and Malayalam *Dravida Dwani*. These journals have played a pivotal role in disseminating high-quality research on the linguistic, literary, and cultural aspects of Dravidian languages. After a hiatus in publication since 2019, the Dravidian University, with renewed support from the Government of Andhra Pradesh, is proud to announce the relaunch of all journals in 2025, marking a significant milestone in the preservation and promotion of Dravidian linguistic heritage.

The *Dravidian Studies* journal, launched in the early 2000s as a quarterly publication, was envisioned as a platform to showcase rigorous academic research on Dravidian languages, which collectively form one of the world's oldest living language families, spoken by approximately 250 million people across South India, Sri Lanka, and parts of Pakistan, Nepal, and the global diaspora. The journal aimed to address critical questions about the recognition, academic care, and evaluation of Dravidian contributions to Indian literature, philosophy, history, and culture. It published peer-reviewed articles on diverse topics, including phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicography, folklore, tribal studies, and comparative linguistics, fostering a deeper understanding of the Dravidian linguistic landscape. Despite occasional delays in publication due to logistical and funding

challenges, Dravidian Studies established itself as a vital resource for scholars worldwide, contributing to the global discourse on Dravidian languages and their interplay with other language families. The journal's interdisciplinary approach also aligned with the university's mission to promote national integration through the study of Dravidian languages and cultures.

The four specialized journals in four South Indian languages focus on the literary and linguistic and literary traditions of their respective Dravidian languages. These journals provide platforms for in-depth research on individual Dravidian languages while promoting cross-linguistic dialogue. They cover topics from ancient inscriptions to modern sociolinguistic issues, enriching Dravidian scholarship and supporting the university's mission of national integration through linguistic studies.

Despite their academic significance, the publication of *Dravidian Studies* and the four associated journals faced significant challenges, leading to their discontinuation from 2019 onward. The reasons for this hiatus were multifaceted, including financial constraints, administrative transitions, and logistical difficulties in coordinating peer review and publication processes. The cessation of these journals since 2019 was a significant loss for Dravidian scholarship, as they had served as critical repositories of knowledge, documenting the rich literary traditions of Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam, as well as lesser-known languages like Tulu. The journals had also facilitated groundbreaking research in the aspects related to Dravidology.

The relaunch of Dravidian Studies and the associated journals represents a renewed commitment by the Dravidian University to advance Dravidian linguistic research and preserve the cultural heritage of South India. This initiative has been made possible through the generous support and encouragement of the Government of Andhra Pradesh, which has recognized the importance of sustaining academic endeavors in Dravidian languages.

The relaunched journals will continue their legacy of publishing high-quality, peer-reviewed research while embracing modern academic trends. The journals will prioritize research on endangered

Dravidian languages, aligning with the university's Centre for Preservation of Endangered Dravidian Languages (CPeDL). By incorporating digital publication formats and open-access options, the university aims to enhance the global accessibility of these journals, ensuring that scholars and enthusiasts worldwide can engage with the rich linguistic heritage of the Dravidian family.

We are proud to announce that we are going to launch the online Dravidian Studies from this edition. we expect you kind cooperation and extend your support as usual.

Kuppam

Prof.L.C.Mallaiah
Vice-Chancellor

A New Chapter for Dravidian Studies

The turn of the decade has brought an unprecedented wave of digital transformation, and with it, a vital restructuring of how regional histories and linguistic heritages are preserved, analyzed, and broadcasted globally. As an online, half-yearly platform, our journal continues its mission to serve as a dynamic oasis for Dravidian scholarship—a space where classical antiquities converge with modern methodologies, and where the foundational values of social justice, linguistic pride, and egalitarian philosophy find their contemporary resonance.

Dravidian Studies is not merely an interrogation of the past; it is an active engagement with the present. From the classical foundational grammar and epigraphy that continuous archeological findings recontextualize, to the complex socio-political frameworks of the Dravidian Movement that shaped welfare economics in South India, this field demands an intersectional approach.

This issue brings together a diverse spectrum of peer-reviewed research across history, literature, temple culture and comparative literature. The current volume highlights these critical areas.

Our Vision as a Digital-First Journal

Operating as an online, bi-annual journal allows us to bypass the physical boundaries of traditional print media, creating an immediate bridge between esteemed global scholars and emerging researchers from historically marginalized communities. Our commitment remains absolute: ensuring high peer-review standards while maintaining an inclusive open-access framework.

By disseminating these studies freely, we aim to deliver the fruits of rigorous academic research directly to the public sphere, honoring the very core of Dravidian intellectual philosophy—that knowledge belongs to all, not just the privileged few.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our editorial board, our rigorous pool of peer reviewers, and most importantly, the authors who trust this journal to host their intellectual labor. We invite our readers to engage, critique, and build upon the ideas presented within these digital pages.

- Prof.D.V.Sravan Kumar
Chief Editor

DRAVIDIAN STUDIES

Contents

Sl. No.	Article & Author Name	Page Nos.
1.	“I am Every Woman”: Beyond the Crust and Into the Core ...: A Critique of HS Anupama’s Nenu Kasturba Ni – A Fictional Autobiography - Prof.Ch.A.Rajendra Prasad	1
2.	A Comparative Study of the Ramayana in Telugu and Kannada Literary & Performance Traditions - Prof.D.V.Sravan Kumar	08
3.	From Vijayanagara Sovereignty to Colonial Revenue Regimes: Governance and Resources in Kangundi (A.D. 1578–1950) - Prof. K. Shyamala	21
4.	Writing History through Gender Perspective - Prof. Aravind Kumar	46
5.	Establishing a Solid Waste Management Plant in Dravidian University using Windrow Chambers Method -Prof. R. Yasoda	53
6.	From the Margins to Manuscript: A Critical Analysis of Akkai Padmashali’s Autobiography - Prof.V.Nirmala	64
7.	Emergence of Dominant Culture and Marginality: A Study of Historical Process in early Andhra Desa - Eluri Harshavardhan	75

8.	Image of Women in Vijaya Tendulkar's Plays: An Analysis <i>- Dr.S.Hemalatha</i>	87
9.	Tirumalai Tirupati Venkateswara Swamy Temple under the Vijayanagara Rulers and Temple Services <i>- Dr. P. S. Ganesh Moorthy</i>	96
10.	Temple as a Health Centre in Ancient India <i>- Balaji Deekshitulu P V</i>	102
	Contributors	113

***Views expressed in the articles are personal opinions of the contributors.
Neither the Dravidian University nor the Editor is responsible for them.**

1

“I am Every Woman”: Beyond the Crust and Into the Core ...: A Critique of HS Anupama’s Nenu Kasturba Ni – A Fictional Autobiography

- Prof.Ch.A.Rajendra Prasad

Before venturing into the exploration of Dr. H.S.Anupama’s “Nenu Kasturba Ni,” which may be referred to as a fictional and/or vicarious autobiography notwithstanding the attempt’s passionate and genuine foraying into the depths of Psyche and Truth on the part of Kastur Ba. It is no surprising to admit that Kastur Ba’s has remained more or less unexplored and/ or under-explored compared to the exploring of the life of the Mahatma which in fact is not surprising since that has been the case of the spouses of all the Great People perhaps across the world. Hence that could be the motivation for H.S.Anupama’s venturing to the ‘Heart of Darkness’ of Kastur Ba. Notwithstanding the obvious feminist leanings of the work, “ Nenu Kasturba Ni,” the task undertaken by the writer Dr.H.S.Anupama is carried out deftly and passionately, perhaps a rare feat well-balanced by the writer. The net result is that there is no attempt to take away the aura of the Mahatma but to voice the not-so-expressed life of Kastur Ba.

As has been mentioned already and to clarify the same, what is being explored is not a ‘regular’ autobiography but a fictional and/ or a vicarious autobiography. Written by Dr.H.S. Anupama, transposing oneself into the persona of the long-dead Kastur Ba, the “ Nenu Kastur Ba,” the autobiography under discussion has an interesting coincidence with the world-famous Mahatma Gandhi’s

autobiography that is both autobiographies are after portrayal and/ or exploration of the Naked Truths of their lives. It is well-known and obvious that Mahatma Gandhi's "An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth" is a canonical work among autobiographies. In fact, the intention behind Gandhi bringing out this challenging work is compellingly recalling as nothing else can be a better reason for writing an autobiography:

"If I had only to discuss academic principles, I should clearly not attempt an autobiography. But my purpose being to give an account of various practical applications of these principles, I have given the chapters I propose to write the title of The Story of My Experiments with Truth. These will of course include experiments with non-violence, celibacy and other principles of conduct believed to be distinct from truth." (Foreword: 4).

Though the genre, 'Autobiography' is taken for granted because of its universal popularity, the context of working on the genre of Autobiography, demands to look at certain fundamental generic aspects of Autobiography including its generic limitations which knowledge may help us to put the present work in a proper perspective:

"If fictional narrative ends with the last event in the story, and historical narrative has no definitive end, autographical narrative (autobiography) ends with the writing of the narrative itself.' In effect, an autobiography is its own conclusion. Auto biographers themselves frequently acknowledge this explicitly or implicitly. ... the point of departure ... however, is that the end of an autobiography is everywhere present in the writing of it. It is therefore not precisely an event, but an event in progress. To translate this into narratological terms, in autobiography the discourse is narrative action. It is this fact, rather than any real or presumed factuality of the events in the narrative, that makes for a meaningful difference between autobiography and its textual neighbours, history and the novel." (Abbott: p. 597).

Reading Dr. HS Anupama's "Nenu Kasturba Ni" is almost co-traversing the landscape / mindscape of the narrative with curiosity, excitement and a little bit of palpitations mingled with a sense of loss, like visiting one's own and nearly-forgotten ancestral house, as

"I am Every Woman": Beyond the Crust and Into the Core ...: A Critique of HS Anupama's Nenu Kasturba Ni – A Fictional Autobiography

explored by the author including the labyrinthine psyche of (Kastur) Ba without being insensitive to that of Bapu. Also, one can't help acknowledging the critical and enthusing tone and tenor set by Volga in the "Foreword" of the book by aptly "not disclosing" in a pre-empting manner, the Source Writer Anupama's great accomplishment—the subtle yet profound unveiling and voicing, without mincing words, of the demands Ba has to cope with as a Woman, Wife / Follower of a Celebrity of World Renown and Mother of four children. Thus Volga's "Foreword" retains / sustains the spell of the magic cast by Anupama and facilitates readers to reap the benefit of pleasure of reading in their first hand when they come into contact face-to-face with Ba—in a way the Mother of Everyone—who unburdens herself to an imaginary interlocutor—maybe every young woman of India!

Thus HS Anupama's "Nenu Kasturba Ni" is doubly pertinent as indicated by Volga in the "Foreword" of the book which facilitates touching the core of the narrative, especially by way of wondering about the fate of the spouses of the Celebrity Reformers, like, Savithri Bai Phule of Jyothi Rao Phule and Rajyalakshi of Veeresalingam Pantulu and the like. In fact the same concern should prompt the readers to dive deeper into the 'Patriarchal Foundations of India,' by way of going down the history of India, chronologically and historically, referring to Siddhartha who turned the Buddha and the fate of Yashodhara, his spouse and the son Rahula who were left behind in the palace, perhaps without even being given any hint of the impending enlightenment on the part of Siddhartha.

In fact the protagonist of "Nenu Kasturba Ni", Ba wonders aloud towards the end of the book, if she (Ba) were to take initiatives like the "initiatives" taken by Bapu what would have happened: be it unilateral decision of observing Celibacy (Brahmacharyam) or Fasting (Upavasam) or Cleaning Pots of Excretion for maintaining hygiene of latrines in the life of Ashrams, and mandating the same as a means to convince the others to fall in line for accomplishing character metamorphoses and in a similar fashion goading others to undertake a series of renunciations. Would Bapu as a husband / man have obliged to fall in line and be part of her "experiments" to the extent of not

able to spare time for his own self and for familial duties, and remain almost indifferent to the feelings and expectations of children?

"Nenu Kasturiba Ni" is a simply told but superbly revelatory narrative of the lives of Ba and Bapu—the mythical and the real. The biographical sketch as a lucid translation of Telugu, which gives the Readers of Telugu the feeling of reading an original text in Telugu itself, showcases, in an engaging and insightful narrative, Mohan Das Karam Chand Gandhi and Kastur Ba. The book records Mohan Das Karam Chand—Moka's 'growing' into the stature of Mahatma from the ordinary, if not humble, beginnings of a Gujarati Bania. Also Kasturba's (Kastur Gopaldas Makanji Kapadia's) self-evolving and /or self-restraining and/or self-effacing wife-hood originating from ordinary beginnings with inherent disadvantages of a woman of the times—of no schooling / literacy and no exposure to the outside world—and getting into a child-marriage with Moka (Mohan Das Karam Chand Gandhi) like getting into a child's play (as was the practice of those times). The more agonising and staple part of the narrative is the subsequent price paid by Ba, consciously or unconsciously, being a 'patient' and 'complying companion' in husband's "experiments" with his life wherein her existence is more or less taken-for-granted. Through a thoroughly researched biographical document but narrated in a fictitious autobiographical mode, the author, Dr. HS Anupama in an empathetic voice accomplishes the feat of portraying and unveiling before us the '(ever)-living' Kasturba or as put forward by the 'Kasturba' of the book, the portrait of a "...Every Woman."

The narrative gains credence as it with equal empathy puts before us the Real Person of Gandhi, keeping intact his the path of Satyagraha (the path of Righteous Anger/ Protest) combined with the path of Upavasam (the path of Fasting) practiced by him, facing the hardship and the ridicules of the society around him with near-equanimity but forcing the same on others with the firm belief of serving them and preparing them for a right cause. In the first place, one can gladly concede that Dr Anupama's sharing of her preparatory efforts for writing this book, founded on research and profound pre-reading coupled with passion and commitment and her visits to the

"I am Every Woman": Beyond the Crust and Into the Core ...: A Critique of HS Anupama's Nenu Kasturba Ni – A Fictional Autobiography
ancestral houses of Ba and Gandhi located in Porbundar and Raj Kot. Almost the readers would get the feeling of visiting them along with Anupama!

Evidencing tactful engaging style of narration through the creation of a three-dimensional, dynamic and growing and vocal protagonist, Ba, Anupama proves herself to be a writer of the 'Cause of Kastur Ba' and in a way of the Cause of Gandhi in the times of threatening challenges to his ideology and the party he founded. The (auto)-biographical narrative has progressed in almost linear manner though told in flashback mode with occasional foraying into the events of past and future of Ba and Bapu lives. Accordingly, the narrative begins to chronicle Ba as a girl and Bapu as a boy and their getting married as children and also a few years after, on attaining the youthful stage, consummating their marriage. Understandably for the couple these years cause songs of experience moving away from songs of innocence. Typical of many a young woman of India or elsewhere also, for Ba the beginning of songs of experience seem to be bewildering and enticing to cope with the intimacies of young and passionate Moka.

The author, while appearing to be chronicling Ba's life in a matter of fact manner, actually unravels the anticipations and expectations and fulfilments and disillusionments experienced by her as a woman of zeal and enthusiasm for life and living. Accordingly the seemingly carefree and / or normal beginning of married life of Ba with Moka undergoes chastising seminal experiences: loss of first pregnancy once, later becoming mother for the eldest son, Hari Lal which would prompt her to address Moka as "Hari's father." Subsequently for a substantial period of separation from Moka as he went to London for studying Barrister and on his return after short stay back in India and failing to be a successful a Barrister, Moka leaving for South Africa for eking out livelihood and the consequent separation from the husband.

In between, though feeling strange, Ba has not failed to be enamoured and enthused by the husband's newly acquired concerns during the stay in London, if not fads, like to live life in style and hygienically. Thus Ba's personality grows and remains as three-

dimensional but never stands as a stereotype. In all these instances, the readers would find Ba, though being at the receiving-end, in the sense following the diktats of Moka as husband and striving to raise the child as single mother and silently coping with the rigors of the absence of the husband, mostly caused as per the wish and desire of him notwithstanding her passionate zeal to live an active life as a constant companion to the husband.

Perhaps, for Ba the more gruelling companionship with Gandhi emerges during their long sojourn in South Africa during which period Gandhi grew into Bai and Bapu and finally and eventually into the stature of Mahatma. The metamorphosing of Gandhi into Mahatma has been founded on Gandhi ‘experiments’ with himself in denying himself many a pleasure including denying the conjugal rights with his wife in the name of observing celibacy without deeply ever bothering about the feelings of his wife for the same. In a similar fashion Gandhi has subjected himself to indulge in the movements of fasting and righteous anger as means to consolidate Indians and Blacks in South Africa all the while being suo moto in taking decisions. Ba has to fall in line with the aspirations of Gandhi and in his specific attempts to found Ashrams, inspired by Tolstoy Farm, and living on the farms, leading a life of austerity and giving up pleasures of food habits of ordinary nature. This period of experimentation and renunciation on the part of Gandhi has been closely corroborated by Ba in taking part with his growing into the stature of Mahatma. However what causes concern for Ba is Gandhi’s unconcerned censuring of Ba, exhibited at least in two instances for her minor lapses, without ever caring to find the reasons and feelings of Ba for the same, in public accusing her of thief-like and being unfaithful to vows and promises taken to lead an ascetic life.

As has been mentioned already, Ba makes sustained efforts to remain as a discerning individual and a woman and simultaneously as an empathetic wife of Bapu. This feat accomplished by Ba ushers in greater convincing about her personality. Thus Ba sustains in her love for Bapu as her husband and as a corroborator and stakeholder of his mission to reform and motive the masses in the Great Act of India’s Freedom Movement. Notwithstanding her discerning ability

“I am Every Woman”: Beyond the Crust and Into the Core A Critique of HS Anupama’s Nenu Kasturba Ni – A Fictional Autobiography

and the consequent agony, experienced by her in her heart of hearts, Ba has been portrayed as a person who could never fail to differentiate the two ‘Gandhis’ one as the person who rigorously chiselled him to become the Mahatma, based on rigorous experimentation with him on renunciations with him and the people around him, of course, with all right intentions which remains a life-long mission for him. The other Gandhi for Ba is the Husband- Gandhi. But the Husband- Gandhi except for fleeting moments and days never became a reality for her. From the anguish of Ba one could comprehend that what has prevented him to be an intimate husband—that is his inability to be put aside his Self or in another words his obsession with his Self even at the cost of not being a ‘normal’ husband and in equal pathetic condition in his inability to remain as a ‘normal’ father.

Thus the book ends with the dying anguish of Ba for her husband who remained, wittingly or unwittingly in the periphery of her life only and failed to touch the core of her existence as aptly visualized and voiced by the author of the book, Dr Anupama ! Therefore the book remains a profoundly touching and revealing tribute to Kasturiba and in a way as a tribute to the Unsung Spouses of Celebrities or ‘Every Woman of India,’ in a way!!

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2

A Comparative Study of the Ramayana in Telugu and Kannada Literary & Performance Traditions

- Prof.D.V.Sravan Kumar

Abstract

The story of Rama has circulated for more than two millennia across South Asia, inspiring a vast intertextual network of written, oral, performative, and visual retellings. Among the richest regional traditions are those in Telugu and Kannada Literatures. This article undertakes a comparative study of major textual versions - Ranganatha Ramayanamu, Molla Ramayanam, Srimadramayana Kalpavrukshamu, Torave Ramayana, the Jain Ramachandra Charitapurana, and Kuvempu's twentieth-century Sri Ramayana Darshanam - alongside performance genres such as Harikatha, Burrakatha, and Yakshagana. Bringing together literary history, poetics, theology (bhakti vs. universalist/cosmic frames), gendered re-visioning, and folk transmission, the essay maps convergences and divergences that illuminate how linguistic communities negotiate pan-Indian sacred narratives while asserting local aesthetic, religious, and social identities. The analysis draws on scholarship of Paula Richman, A. K. Ramanujan, Velcheru Narayana Rao, Gilbert Pollet, and others, as well as reference works and cultural studies resources. The conclusion proposes avenues for digital, multilingual Ramayana research and curricular design in South Indian studies.

Keywords: Ramayana; Telugu literature; Kannada literature; bhakti; Yakshagana; Harikatha; Jain Ramayana; comparative epic; South India.

1. Introduction: Many South Indian Ramayanas

Few South Asian narratives have proven as mobile, adaptable, and contested as the *Ramayana*. A. K. Ramanujan's celebrated essay "Three Hundred Ramayanas" long ago alerted scholars to the multiplicity of narration, each shaped by the linguistic, sectarian, political, and generic context of its production (Richman; Ramanujan). Paula Richman's edited volume *Many Ramayanas* further demonstrated that regional, gendered, and subaltern voices recast the epic to articulate their own concerns, from devotional interiority to social critique (Richman). Within this broader mosaic, the Telugu- and Kannada-language spheres of southern India offer especially fertile ground: each hosts a millennium-deep literary tradition, complex religious ecologies (Śrīvaiṣṇava, Viraśaiva, Jain, bhakti movements), and vibrant performance cultures that keep the *Rām-kathā* audible and visible in public life (Yakshagana; Harikatha; Burra Katha),

This study has three goals. First, it sketches the historical development of major written Ramayana texts in Telugu and Kannada, attending to chronology, metre, and sectarian framing. Second, it analyzes thematic and stylistic differences in the portrayal of key figures (Rāma, Sītā, Rāvaṇa, and others), with particular attention to bhakti (devotional) vs. vira (heroic) registers and to gendered reinterpretations. Third, it situates literary tellings in relation to performance genres like Harikatha, Burrakatha, and Yakshagana—that mediate epic memory at the popular level and facilitate interlingual exchange.

2. Conceptual & Methodological Notes

Ramayana studies span philology, performance studies, religious studies, and cultural history, a comparative project must balance breadth and specificity. The researcher adopted the following working principles:

i. Textual plurality: No single "original" controls meaning; instead they track dialogues among narrations (Ramanujan; Richman).

ii. Language ecology: Telugu and Kannada literary cultures often borrow from Sanskrit but assert vernacular agency-e.g., by domesticating epic settings into local landscapes or cuisines (Ramayana Kalpavruksham; Velcheru Narayana Rao, “Politics of Telugu Ramayanas”).

iii. Genre matters: Oral/performative media (Harikatha; Burra Katha, Yakshagana) reshape narrative emphasis, character affect, and moral messaging for lay man.

iv. Reception history: Later devotional practices (Rāmakōti name-writing, Ramanavami festivals) feed back into textual production (Velcheru Narayana Rao; Harikatha).

3. Telugu Ramayana Corpus: Overview of Major Texts

Telugu boasts a prolific Ramayana corpus-morethan forty partial or full adaptations according to reference surveys-with four works generally regarded as complete epic narrations: *Ranganatha Ramayanamu*, *Bhaskara Ramayanam*, *Molla Ramayanam*, and Viswanatha Satyanarayana’s modernist-traditional *Srimadramayana Kalpavrukshamu* (Ranganatha Ramayanamu; Ramayana Kalpavruksham).

3.1 Ranganatha Ramayanamu (Gona Budda Reddy, ca. 1300-1310 CE)

Composed in -17,290 dwipada (couplet) verses. *Ranganatha Ramayanamu* renders Valmiki’s narrative into a lyrical Telugu metre suitable for recitation or song, facilitating village-level devotional circulation (Ranganatha Ramayanamu). The work is structured in seven kāndas and includes creative expansions-e.g., an early episode in which young Rama injures Manthara, providing a psychological seed for her later hostility, and the popular tale of Rama blessing the squirrel who helps with building the bridge to Lanka (Ranganatha Ramayanamu). Its mix of narrative fidelity and didactic interpolation anticipates later bhakti pedagogies.

3.2 Bhaskara Ramayanam

Although less widely read today and under-studied in English scholarship. *Bhaskara Ramayanam* is cited in surveys as one of the four complete Telugu Ramayanas. Further archival work-especially

manuscript comparison and metre analysis-remains a desideratum (Ranganatha Ramayanamu). The researcher tries to it here to acknowledge the breadth of the tradition even where secondary scholarship is thin.

3.3 Molla Ramayanam (Molla, 16th c.)

The earliest extant Ramayana in Telugu was authored by a woman, Molla’s “Kanda Ramayanam” is prized for its accessible diction and brevity (-870 verses across six kāndas; it omits Uttara Kānda) (Molla Ramayanam). Molla self-presents as a devotee writing for common folk rather than courtly patrons, deliberately eschewing ornate compounds in favor of lucid, emotive lines an aesthetic that has invited feminist recuperation (Kindig: Molla Ramayanam). Modern critics note resonances with Pothana’s devotional humility and with women’s oral performance traditions documented in Richman’s volume (Molla Ramayanam; Richman).

3.4 Srimadramayana Kalpavrukshamu (Viswanatha Satyanarayana, 20th c.; Jnanpith 1970)

Viswanatha Satyanarayana’s monumental work re-narrates Valmiki through a neo-traditionalist Telugu lens, combining classical metres with vivid localization-critics remark that the epic narrates as if unfolded in a Telugu cultural landscape, complete with regional foodways (“Ramayana Kalpavruksham, Ramayana Kalpavruksham; Velcheru Narayana Rao, “Politics of Telugu Ramayanas”). Awarded the first Jnanpith for a Telugu writer (1970), the poem re-sacralizes Rāmā as fully divine (contrasting with humanist readings of Valmiki) while experimenting with characterization and motivation (Ramayana Kalpavruksham).

3.5 Mandaram Translation (Vavilikolanu Subba Rao, 1902-08)

Nicknamed as the “Andhra Valmiki,” Vavilikolanu Subba Rao produced a verse-for-verse Telugu translation of Valmiki’s Sanskrit Ramayana, motivated by the belief in the mantric potency of the Sanskrit syllables and the desire to convey the sanctity in Telugu (Vavilikolanu Subbarao; Velcheru Narayana Rao, “Politics of Telugu Ramayanas”). His multi-volume commentary sought textual precision at a time when print culture was canonizing Valmiki’s text for vernacular devotional readership.

4. Kannada Ramayana Traditions: Textual Range

Kannada literature hosts plural engagements with the Ramayana across Jain, Vaisnava, Shaiva, and modern secular frames. Three long works anchor the tradition: the Jain *Ramachandra Charitapurana* (Nagachandra, 12th c.), the expansive *Torave Ramayana* (Kumara Valmiki, perhaps 16th c.), and Kuvempu's modernist *Sri Ramayana Darshanam* (mid-20th c.). Folk theatre - especially Yakshagana-has been equally crucial in public domain.

4.1 Ramachandra Charitapurana / Pampa Ramayana (Nagachandra, 12th c.)

Nagachandra (honorific Abhinava Pampa) crafted the earliest extant Kannada Ramayana in champu metre within a Jain doctrinal framework (Nagachandra; Hoysala Literature). The text markedly diverges from Valmiki: Ravana is refigured as a tragic, ultimately purified figure, Lakshmana (not Rāma) slays Rāvana; and Rāma eventually embraces Jain asceticism and attains nirvāṇa (Nagachandra; Hoysala Literature). Such reconfigurations align with the *Pauma-cariya* lineage of Jain *Rām-katha*, which often downplays sacrificial violence and reinterprets dharma through karmic non-harm (Jain Version of Ramayana; Nagachandra).

4.2 Torave Ramayana (Kumara Valmiki / Torave Narahari, ca. 16th c.)

Widely regarded as the first complete Vaidic (non-Jain) Kannada adaptation of the entire epic, Torave Ramayana comprises 112 sandhis (~5,000 verses) in Bhamini Shatpadi metre (Toraveya Ramayana, "Difference Between Kannada Torave Ramayana"). The narrative frame places Siva recounting the tale to Pārvati. Devotional agenda predominates: characters function as instruments of Rāma's divine will; even adversaries (Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarna, Indrajit) are ultimately figured as devotees destined for liberation (Difference Between Kannada Torave Ramayana). Manthara symbolizes māyā acting to destroy evil; new emphases (e.g., Atikaya as Vira Vaisnava patriot) reflect sectarian influences from Adhyatma and Ananda Ramayana strands (Difference Between Kannada Torave Ramayana; Toraveya Ramayana).

4.3 Sri Ramayana Darshanam (Kuvempu, Vol. 1 1949; Vol. 2 1957; Jnanpith 1967)

Kuppalli Venkatappa Puttappa (Kuvempu), Karnataka's Rastrakavi, re-imagined the epic in free-verse Kannada suffused with cosmic humanism: creation is permeated by a universal mind; all beings, "even the most wicked," are destined to evolve towards perfection (Sri Ramayana Darshanam; Hindu Blog, "Sri Ramayana Darshanam"). Kuvempu stages daring theological innovations-during the Agni-parīksā, Rāma enters the fire alongside Sītā, dramatizing equality before dharma law (Sri Ramayana Darshanam). He expands marginal figures (Manthara, Urmila) and speculates on rebirth motifs (Rāvana/Kumbhakarna as reborn in Lava and Kusha) to explore moral complexity (Hindu Blog. "Sri Ramayana Darshanam"). The work won both Sahitya Akademi and Jnanpith honors and remains central to modern Kannada identity (Sri Ramayana Darshanam),

4.4 Performance Interface: Yakshagana & Regional Theatre

Karnataka's coastal Yakshagana-an all-nightdance-drama synthesizing music, extempore dialogue, elaborate costume, and stylized gesture-regularly stages Ramayana episodes, imprinting visual codes (costumes, headgear) and emotional registers of heroism, pathos, and comedic interludes in popular imagination (Yakshagana; Sahapedia: Times of India, "Yakshamangal Award"; Times of India, "Siddakatte Sadashiva Shettigar"). Yakshagana's flexible scripts allow troupes to highlight local theological emphases (devotion vs, valor), and well-known performers have specialized in Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarna, or Sūrpanakha roles, shaping reception (Times of India, "Siddakatte Sadashiva Shettigar"; Yakshagana).

5. Performance & Oral Pedagogies in Telugu & Kannada Zones

Text and performance interpenetrate in South India; many communities encountered Rām-katha first through itinerant storytellers.

5.1 Harikatha / Harikathe

Harikatha is a composite storytelling form blending song, narration, dance, philosophy, and dramatic gesture; its exponents

recount episodes from epics and purānas to inculcate bhakti and ethical values across Andhra, Karnataka, and Tamil regions (Harikatha; The Hindu, “Harikatha: Storytelling Through Mime and Music, RajRAS; Tell-A-Tale). Historical lineages trace mythic origins to Nārada and to Lava-Kuśa singing the Ramayana before Rama, while modern institutionalization involved 17th-century Tanjavur Maratha court culture and later cross-regional diffusion (The Hindu, “Harikatha”; RajRAS). Telugu polymath Ajjada Adibhatla Narayana Dasu is remembered as a formative modern Harikatha master, and contemporary training schools-e.g., Sarvaraya Harikatha Pathaśāla in East Godavari-continue the art, producing multilingual performers who narrate Ramayana across South Indian languages (The Hindu, “Where Girls Are Breathing Life into Adibhatla’s Harikatha”).

5.2 Burrakatha (Burra Katha)

A three-person troupe (lead kathākar with two side performers) delivers sung-narrated stories accompanied by the stringed burra (tambura) and percussion; veera (heroic) and karuna (compassion) rasas dominate, making the form apt for epic retellings such as Ramayana, especially during festival seasons like Dussehra and Sankranti. Burrakatha has also served political mobilization (anti-colonial, Telangana agrarian struggles) while retaining mythic repertory, illustrating the malleability of Ram-katha for contemporary messaging.

5.3 Cross-Pollination with Yakshagana

Scholars note genealogical linkages: Burrakatha is described as a variant descended from Yakshagana storytelling structures in some cultural histories, underscoring interregional circulation of performance grammars (Telugu Traditions, “Burrakatha”; Harikatha; Yakshagana). In practice, artists borrow tunes, costumes, or comic interludes across linguistic borders, further hybridizing Telugu and Kannada Rām-kathā repertoires.

6. Thematic Comparisons

This section juxtaposes selected thematic nodes across representative Telugu and Kannada narratives.

6.1 Rāma: Human King, God, Cosmic Mind

Devotional Monarch in Telugu: *Ranganatha Ramayanamu* foregrounds royal dharma and divine sanction via lyrical dwipada suited to congregational singing, Rama’s childhood incident with Manthara foreshadows later exile politics (Ranganatha Ramayanamu).

- **Accessible Devotional Heroine’s Lens:** Molla’s concise text extols Rama’s divinity in plain speech accessible to non-elites (Molla Ramayanam).

- **Neo-Traditionalist Deity in Kalpavruksham:** Viswanatha Satyanarayana sacralizes Rāma as fully Bhagavān and “Telugu-izes” the epic landscape, linking devotion to linguistic pride (Ramayana Kalpavruksham; Velcheru Narayana Rao).

- **Cosmic Principle in Kuvempu: Sri Ramayana Darshanam** reconceives Rāma as a manifestation of a universal mind animating all beings; theological innovation climaxes when he enters the fire with Sitā, dramatizing moral reciprocity (Sri Ramayana Darshanam; Hindu Blog, “Sri Ramayana Darshanam”).

6.2 Sitā: Chastity, Agency, Cosmic Partner

- **Molla’s Empathetic Sitā:** Feminist readers prise Molla’s emotive, condensed rendering for foregrounding Sitā’s suffering and steadfastness without baroque ornament (Molla Ramayanam).

- **Telugu Women’s Oral Ramayanas:** Fieldwork in Richman’s volume records women’s songs that reframe Sita’s ordeal through domestic labor and conjugal loyalty, offering a counter-public commentary (Richman).

- **Kuvempu’s Expanded Sitā & Urmila:** Kuvempu elaborates Sitā as cosmic energy and restores narrative attention to Urmila’s sacrifice; his reimagined Agni-parikṣā affirms equality of spouses before law (Sri Ramayana Darshanam; Hindu Blog, “Sri Ramayana Darshanam”).

6.3 Manthara & Alternative Motivations

- **Early Injury Motif:** Ranganatha’s added childhood incident rationalizes Manthara’s later antagonism (Ranganatha Ramayanamu).

• **Manthara as Māyā:** Torave Ramayana allegorizes her as cosmic illusion working ultimately for Rama's salvific plan (Difference between Kannada Torave Ramayana).

• **Sympathetic Expansion:** Kuvempu allocates more textual space to Manthara's interiority, complicating the moral binary (Hindu Blog, "Sri Ramayana Darshanam").

6.4 Rāvaṇa: Demon, Devotee, Tragic Hero

• **Telugu Bhakti Polemic:** While generally an adharmic foil, popular tellings add didactic episodes (e.g., squirrel blessing) that heighten Rāma's contrast with prideful Rāvaṇa (Ranganatha Ramayanamu).

• **Devotee Reversal in Torave:** Adversaries-including Rāvaṇa-are revealed as latent devotees destined for moksha (Difference Between Kannada Torave Ramayana).

• **Jain Tragic Figure:** In Nagachandra's Ramachandra Charitapurana, Ravana's error becomes a purifying moment; karmic resolution ends in liberation (Nagachandra; Hoysala Literature: Jain Version of Ramayana).

• **Yakshagana Charisma:** Stage portrayals often privilege Rāvaṇa's bravura makeup and musical patter, generating audience empathy even in villainy (Yakshagana; Times of India, "Siddakatte Sadashiva Shettigar").

7. Form, Metre and Language Politics

Metre choices and diction encode audience targeting and ideological stance.

Work	Language Register	Metre/ Form	Audience & Ideology	Source
<i>Ranganatha Ramayanamu</i>	Lyrical vernacular w/Sanskrit tatsamas	Dwipada couplets	Singable bhakti pedagogy; early regionalization	Ranganatha Ramayanamu
<i>Molla Ramayanam</i>	Plain, accessible Telugu; minimal ornament	Kanda/ short verse	Inclusivity; woman author addresses common folk	Molla Ramayanam

A Comparative Study of the Ramayana in Telugu and Kannada Literary & Performance Traditions

<i>Kalpavruksham</i>	Neo-traditional high/vernacular mix	Classical metres	"Telugu-izing" Valmiki; literary nationalism	Ramayana Kalpavruksham; Velcheru Narayana Rao
<i>Torave Ramayana</i>	Narrative Champu/Bhamini Shatpadi	Mixed verse	Devotional didacticism; Śiva-to-Parvati frame	Toraveya Ramayana; Difference Between Kannada Torave Ramayana
<i>Ramachandra Charitapurana</i>	Champu Jain idiom	Champu	Karmic ethics; Jain revision	Nagachandra; Hoysala Literature
<i>Sri Ramayana Darshanam</i>	Modern free verse. Kannada	Free verse; Homeric similes	Cosmic humanism; egalitarian dharma	Sri Ramayana Darshanam; Hindu Blog

The move from ornate champu to accessible dwipada or kanda- and later to free verse-tracks shifts from courtly patronage to mass devotional publics and modern literary experimentation (Ranganatha Ramayanamu; Molla Ramayanam, Sri Ramayana Darshanam).

8. Ritual & Public Memory: Festivals, Copying, Schools

Ramanavami festivals across Andhra historically spawned surges of Rāma devotion-chanting, copying the divine name (rāmakoti), and sponsoring dramatic recitations-creating fertile soil for vernacular Ramayanas and performance circuits (Velcheru Narayana Rao, "Politics of Telugu Ramayanas"). Harikatha pathaśālas today train new generations (The Hindu, "Where Girls Are Breathing Life into Adibhatla's Harikatha"). In Karnataka, Yakshagana troupes operate on temple calendars and *harake* vow-fulfillment circuits that can involve thousands of bookings. attesting to ongoing demand for epic repertory (Times of India, "Harake Seva Backlog"; Times of India. "Yakshamangal Award").

9. Gendered Voices & Subaltern Recastings

Velcheru Narayana Rao's contribution to Richman's Many Ramayanas documents Telugu women's oral songs that subtly critique

patriarchal readings by emphasizing domestic labor, conjugal negotiation, and sisterhood (Richman). Molla's authorship provides a literary precedent for such voices to enter the written tradition (Molla Ramayanam). On the Kannada side, Kuvempu expands Urmila and reframes Manthara, while Yakshagana historically featured male actors in all roles yet now sees women performers gaining recognition (Sri Ramayana Darshanam; Hindu Blog. "Sri Ramayana Darshanam"; Times of India, "Yakshamangal Award"). Harikatha schools training girls from multiple linguistic backgrounds further diversify epic voice (The Hindu, "Where Girls Are Breathing Life into Adibhatla's Harikatha").

10. Comparative Synthesis

The following summary distills major contrasts:

- **Scope of Canonical Complete Texts:** Telugu tradition enumerates four canonical full adaptations. (Ranganatha, Bhaskara, Molla, Kalpavruksham); Kannada recognizes multiple but highlights Jain Ramachandra Charitapurana, Torave, and Kuvempu's modern Darshanam (Ranganatha Ramayanamu; Ramayana Kalpavruksham, Nagachandra; Toraveya Ramayana: Sri Ramayana Darshanam).
- **Sectarian Diversity:** Telugu corpus largely Vaishnava bhakti; Kannada includes strong Jain counter-narrative plus later cosmic humanism (Nagachandra; Sri Ramayana Darshanam).
- **Localization Strategies:** Satyanarayana "Telugu-izes" environment; Torave allegorizes characters theologically, Yakshagana costuming localizes visual codes (Ramayana Kalpavruksham; Difference Between Kannada Torave Ramayana; Yakshagana).
- **Gender Interventions:** Molla's authorship and Telugu women's songs; Kuvempu's textual expansion of female agency (Molla Ramayanam, Richman, Sri Ramayana Darshanam).
- **Performance Reach:** Harikatha & Burrakatha embed Rām-kathā in everyday devotional pedagogy; Yakshagana dramatizes heroic spectacle with improvisatory dialogue (Harikatha; Burra Katha: Yakshagana; Sahapedia).

11. Future Directions for Research & Teaching

1. Digital Parallel Text Editions: Align dwipada Telugu stanzas with Bhamini Shatpadi Kannada passages to visualize divergences; incorporate TEI markup for variant episodes.

2. Performance Ethnography: Record comparable Sitā Svayamvara scenes in Harikatha, Burrakatha, and Yakshagana to analyze affect translation.

3. Gendered Reception Studies: Build on Richman and feminist readings of Molla to examine contemporary women Harikatha exponents.

4. Curriculum Modules: Integrate excerpts from Kalpavruksham and Darshanam in comparative literature syllabi paired with performance clips.

Conclusion

Telugu and Kannada Ramayanas remind us that epic traditions live not as monoliths but as dynamic, dialogic repertoires. Dwipada couplets sung in Andhra villages, shatpadi verses declaimed in Karnataka halls, free-verse cosmic meditations by a modern Rāstrakavi, and Yakshagana spectacles share a narrative DNA yet express divergent theological, aesthetic, and social priorities. Comparative attention reveals patterns: Telugu narratives lean towards accessible bhakti didacticism and linguistic self-fashioning, Kannada tellings court doctrinal experimentation (Jain, Vaisnava, humanist) and theatrical spectacle. Both traditions, however, continually re-negotiate gender, morality, and community through the pliable medium of Ram-katha. For scholars, teachers, and cultural practitioners, tracing these interconnections deepens our grasp of South India's plural literary ecologies and offers rich pedagogical terrain.

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3

From Vijayanagara Sovereignty to Colonial Revenue Regimes: Governance and Resources in Kangundi (A.D. 1578–1950)

- Prof. K. Shyamala

Introduction

Before Kangundi samsthanam became a part of Andhra Pradesh, it was a part of Baramahal in the then Madras Presidency. Baramahal is a name loosely applied in English histories to the north-eastern corner of Salem District, Madras, but no longer in use. It apparently included the taluks of Tirupattur, Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri and Uttangarai in Salem, and the Kangundi. The historical atlas of this region can be produced by correlating data on geographical content, ecosystems and the local significance of different types of settlements. Such background data is not readily available in the inscriptions themselves which are the major source for the construction of the history of this region. One has to rely upon the institutional history and the political geography of the settlements.

Baramahal and shifting revenue divisions

The political narrative of the Jagadeva Raya lineage situates the Baramahal region as a strategically significant frontier zone during the late Vijayanagara and immediate post-Vijayanagara period.¹ This tract, granted around 1578 A.D. as a reward for military service in the defence of Penukonda, was sparsely populated, heavily forested, and militarily volatile. The deliberate encouragement of settlement through liberal land grants to followers, migrant communities, and

indigenous populations indicates a systematic effort to transform a frontier landscape into a productive and defensible territorial unit. Within this framework, Kangundi should be understood as part of the Baramahal region, which was shaped by Fort-based administration, palaiyam authority, and agricultural expansion, rather than as a distinct village.²

The fort network described in the tradition preserved by Le Fanu, including Jagadeva-gadai, Raya-kota, Anchetti-Durgam, Ratnagiri, Budi-Durgam, Nilagiri-Durgam, Chendrayagiri-Durgam, and other hill forts—constituted the military spine of Jagadeva Raya authority.³ These forts-controlled passes, forest corridors, and cultivable tracts linking the eastern Deccan plateau with the Tamil country. Kangundi's geographical proximity to these fortified centres places it firmly within this defensive-administrative lattice. Villages like Kangundi served as crucial supply centers, providing grain, labor, transport animals, and tax revenue to the forts, while also gaining from the security and access to irrigated fields managed by the palaiyams.

Although limited, the available inscriptions support this geographical arrangement. Inscriptions from Virapakshipuram (1619), Kankanhalli (1621), Kolagattur (1622), and Chennapatna Taluk (1623) together indicate a consistent administrative presence of the Jagadeva Raya dynasty throughout the Baramahal-Chennapatna region. The repeated appearance of names like Rana Pedda Jagadeva Raya, Ankusa Raya, and Immadi Jagadeva Raya suggests a stable dynasty, not a fragmented one.⁴ Because Kangundi was in the same area as these inscription sites, it would have been under the same tax and political control. The lack of suzerain names in inscriptions from 1621 to 1622 suggests a brief period of political independence. During this time, villages like Kangundi were directly governed by the Jagadeva Raya administration, without any external overlordship.

From an administrative and revenue perspective, the Baramahal functioned as a palaiyam-based fiscal unit characterised by shared sovereignty between local chiefs and imperial authority. Revenue was extracted not merely through land tax but also through control over forest produce, pasturelands, and trade routes. The

inclusion of Kangundi estate into this system implies its participation in a pluralistic economy combining wet and dry cultivation, forest exploitation, and service obligations.⁵ The presence of firangis on the fortified Kangundi hill emphasising military attentiveness indicates that rurality in this zone bore obligations for provisioning soldiers and maintaining communication lines, integrating Kangundi into a militarized revenue economy.

The repeated shifting of capitals from Jagadevagadai to Rayakotai and back further underscores the frontier character of the Baramahal. These shifts were not indicative of administrative deficiencies; rather, they were adaptive measures in response to military threats originating from Bijapur, Golconda, and, subsequently, Mysore. Kangundi's enduring presence within this fluid political landscape demonstrates the resilience of village-level institutions, even amidst dynastic changes. Furthermore, the Baramahal's holdings remained largely undisturbed following the capture of Chennapatna by Mysore forces in 1630 A.D, implying that villages such as Kangundi continued to operate as revenue-producing and agricultural entities under new political authorities.⁶ Viewed through a frontier and political-ecology framework, Kangundi emerges as part of a managed frontier where state power was negotiated through settlement, environmental transformation, and militarization. Forest clearing, tank construction, and the extension of cultivation were inseparable from fort building and military service. The Jagadeva Rayas' policy of attracting migrants such as Golconda Vyapari Brahmans and integrating local populations reflects a conscious strategy of social engineering aimed at stabilising frontier territory. Kangundi's historical role, therefore, lies in its function as a site where ecological resources were converted into political authority and fiscal stability.

In this analytical reconstruction, Kangundi can be securely fixed within the Baramahal territory governed by the Jagadeva Raya dynasty, operating under a palaiyam system that linked forts, villages, forests, and revenue flows. The importance of Kangundi is most readily apparent when considering its structural role within a frontier polity, mediated between imperial power and local interests. This ancient estate thus exemplifies how seemingly minor settlements

played a critical role in sustaining early modern South Indian political formations through agrarian production, military logistics, and negotiated sovereignty.

Colonial Intervention: Forests, Mining, Revenue, and Administration in Kangundi (A.D 1760–1850 A.D)

The incorporation of Kangundi into colonial administrative structures occurred in stages between the mid-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries CE and fundamentally altered existing relations between land, labour, and authority. During the colonial period, the zamindari encompassed 319 villages, with the population growing dramatically from 54,052 in 1891 to 64,446 in 1901, the highest increase (19%) recorded in any district portion.⁷ This remarkable population growth was largely attributed to the continuation of gold mining activities from the adjoining Kolar gold fields, which created employment opportunities and attracted settlers from neighbouring regions, establishing the area as an economically vibrant zone within the broader South Indian landscape.

Prior to British intervention, Kangundi formed part of the Mysore state under the Wodeyars and subsequently under Haidar Ali (A.D 1761–1782 A.D) and Tipu Sultan (A.D 1782–1799 A.D). Revenue administration during this period was based on a combination of zamindari control, customary rights, and state demand, with significant autonomy exercised by local chiefs over forests, grazing lands, and tanks. Contemporary accounts indicate that upland tracts such as Kangundi were valued not only for agricultural output but also for forest produce, cattle wealth, and mineral resources.¹

British involvement began decisively after the Treaty of Seringapatam in 1792 and the final defeat of Tipu Sultan in 1799. The re-organisation of the Baramahal and adjoining tracts brought Kangundi into a newly defined administrative framework governed by the Madras Presidency. Captain Alexander Read was appointed to oversee revenue settlement in these regions, and his surveys between 1792 and 1796 provide the earliest systematic colonial assessments of land use, cultivation, and resource distribution. Read's reports repeatedly note the ecological fragility of upland and semi-arid regions, warning against excessive revenue demand in areas

dependent on dry cultivation and pastoralism.² Although Kangundi is not named explicitly in these reports, the descriptions of the Upper Palar uplands correspond closely to its environmental and agrarian conditions.

One of the most significant colonial interventions affecting Kangundi concerned was forest management. From the early nineteenth century, forests that had previously functioned as shared resources under zamindari and customary control were increasingly classified as state property. The expansion of railway construction and military infrastructure created a demand for timber and fuel, leading to intensified extraction in the Eastern Ghats and adjoining uplands. As per the official records, the Madras Railways had received highest share of 7800 tons of fuel wood from Kangundi in 1880-81. Early forest regulations, formalised later under the influence of officials such as Dietrich Brandis in the mid-nineteenth century, curtailed traditional access to forest produce and redefined tribal and pastoral communities as encroachers on state land.³ In regions like Kangundi, this process disrupted established subsistence patterns and accelerated the marginalisation of forest-dependent groups.

Colonial Interventions and the Land Relations

In the earlier times, the affairs of the villages of the south were controlled by a headman. There was a concerted system of regulating common affairs, and division of labour was practiced in the different trades and professions., by individuals receiving a regulated remuneration. The ownership by the individual, however, in the soil itself was at first weak, for land being abundant, it was the property of him who linked to take it, and there being more in reserve, occupation alone could give land only a slight marketable value. Ownership gradually grew stronger as occupants increased. The primitive form of village corporation remained intact in many places, the only difference being that the lower orders had been to a considerable extent, emancipated in course of time, and the Government had assumed the additional duty of assigning waste lands to new occupants.

The present region of Kuppam has undergone different levels of land ownership ranging from the communal ownership by the tribals

to the feudal ownership by the zamindars and then to individual ownership by the people in general. The village community that sprang up after constructing the habitus, formed a democratic body among themselves, based on the occupation. The distinctive feature of this system of village corporation was that the dominant race claimed a strong proprietary right in the lands of the village, whether cultivated or uncultivated; that they gave no franchise to strangers and that in their own internal administration they tended to practice communism, and to that by a single headman. In other respects the arrangements were the same as in the more ancient form. The government had no concern with the distribution of land and it was believed that they settled the land tax, not with the individual cultivator but collectively with the village authorities. This is evident from the village of raju peta where the dominant caste of Reddi gained control over the villages by being the Jodidars till the dawn of independence.

The rulers who ruled the South India followed the well organised precept of Manu, that rulers should protect the cultivators and ensure peace to the community in return for a share of groos produce from their lands, consistent with the fertility of the soil. The method of collecting land tax both in cash and kind, as it prevailed in the earlier Ganga period, was continued in the Chola period also. Land tax was collected either directly by the government or through an intermediary body, the village assembly. Proper care was taken to include all the rights of the purchasers like water rights, etc., in the transfer documents relating to the lands. Land transfers were made either on Ajna kaayam (fixed price) nor on Peruvilai (by auction) or on gram sabha (price fixed by the auction carried out by the village assembly). Under the Vijayanagara rulers, the land revenue administration was left in the hands of the palegars who were mighty military chieftains. The land survey proved to be a failure as no uniform measurement was employed throughout the empire. Apart from land tax there were about 60 other taxes. Lastly, the land owner did not cultivate his land directly. The land was cultivated either by the tenant who took 2/5th of the gross produce as his share. Sometimes the land was cultivated by the croppers who were paid annually. This paved the way for the rise of the middlemen in agriculture.

Under the Mohammadan rulers, land revenue continued to be the main source of state revenue, but it was assessed higher at 1/3rd of the gross produce for wet lands and half of the gross produce for dry lands based on a systematic survey of the lands.

Captain Alexander Read's revenue experiments in Baramahal, which also shaped the administrative environment of places like Kangundi, were grounded in meticulous empirical inquiry. Read relied on village registers, cultivators' testimony, and comparative estimates of crop yield to assess land revenue. Rejecting the extraction of half the produce of good years, he argued instead for claiming roughly half the average produce, recognizing the risks inherent in dry and semi-arid cultivation.⁸ In regions such as Kangundi, where rainfall uncertainty and dependence on livestock were pronounced, such moderation was essential to prevent land abandonment and rural impoverishment.

The intellectual collaboration between Read and his assistant Thomas Munro played a decisive role in shaping early colonial land policy. Munro initially criticised Read's assumptions about labour productivity and subsistence requirements, arguing that agricultural output did not increase in a fixed ratio to labour input.⁹ However, Munro gradually came to share Read's broader conviction that excessive revenue demand undermined cultivation and that stability and moderation were essential for rural prosperity. Their correspondence reveals the early articulation of principles that later crystallised into the Ryotwari system, a framework particularly suited to regions like Kangundi with fragmented holdings and limited agrarian surplus.

Despite these insights, Company policy took a contradictory turn with the introduction of the zamindari settlement under Regulation XXV of 1802. In Baramahal, this experiment involved the creation of mittadars or estate-holders who were expected to act as revenue intermediaries. The system proved disastrous. Revenues declined sharply, estates fell into arrears, and cultivators faced increased insecurity. In dry tracts such as Kangundi, where profit margins were already narrow, zamindari demands accelerated land abandonment and distress migration (Francis 187–203; Dykes 11–18). By the 1820s,

large portions of Baramahal had reverted to direct government management, vindicating Munro's long-standing argument that intermediaries neither secured revenue nor promoted agricultural improvement.¹⁰

The reassertion of Ryotwari principles in Baramahal marked a return to policies more closely aligned with regional realities. Under Ryotwari settlement, individual fields were assessed separately, occupancy rights were secured, and cultivators were encouraged to invest in land improvement without fear of enhanced assessment. For Kangundi, this shift was particularly significant. Its dry lands, pastoral economy, and fluctuating cultivation cycles could not sustain fixed landlord rents but could adapt under a ryot-based system that allowed flexibility in landholding and cultivation.¹¹ By the mid-nineteenth century, much of Salem district had reverted to Ryotwari tenure, and areas like Kangundi continued as viable agrarian settlements within this framework. In Baramahal, dry lands paid an annual tax equivalent to ½ to 3.5 rupees per acre while wet lands paid 2 to 14 rupees in 1792. Different taxes were levied for different crops. Sugar cane was taxed 72 pagodas per candy. Hyder Ali introduced a system of revenue administration by officer in a hierarchy which was later imbibed by the British when they assumed power. the most striking feature of his land system was the granting of the taccavi loans to the poor ryots. But as the Sultans were engaged in constant wars the revenue was collected by leasing out the villages individually or in groups to middlemen. Under the British, the history of land revenue settlement in the district may be divided into four distinct stages. They are

- (i) The introduction of Read's settlement or the beginning of the ryotwari system
- (ii) The experiment in the zamindari settlement and its decline
- (iii) The extension of the ryotwari settlement during 1871-74 for the rest of the district.

In 1792, because of the treaty of Sri Ranga Pattanam, after the first war with Tippu, the major portion of the district of Salem as also Baramahal came into the hands of the East India Company. Col. Read was appointed as the collector of Baramahal and Salem and was

immediately ordered by the Government to introduce a new land settlement in the district, based on the lease system which was prevalent in the region till then.¹² The permanent settlement was introduced by Mr. Cockburn, in Baramahal by dividing it into 66 estates and sold in auction to highest bidders and the permanent assessment for each estate was fixed. But the system of Permanent settlement received a setback when the estates were sold for arrears of revenue. This was mainly due to the high rate of assessment on the estates. By 1805, about 49 more estates were sold to the government in the Baramahal. By 1813, there was a heavy loss of revenue, in the Baramahal of about 11 per cent and in the rest of the district of about 26 per cent. To remedy the defects of the permanent settlement, the Inam Settlement was made by Read by distinguishing them as Inam villages and Minor Inams. Inam villages are mostly Shrotriyams granted to Brahmins on favourable tenure. The Inam settlement of 1862-66 superseded the previous tenures by making the proprietors of the share villages to get a commuted Jodi (favourable quit rent) fixed with reference to the past collection. Largest number of Inams were met with only in the three big palyams of Hosur taluk such as Shulagiri, Berigai and Denkanikota.

An Elaborate survey was carried out between the 1793 and 1797 which continued undisturbed till the new settlement of 1871-73. During the progress of the survey, Read followed temporarily the native system of the collection through intermediaries. But Read thought that it was not practicable in Salem where the Government's share of the land produce fixed by Hyder Ali was high strung and was unjust. He wanted to introduce a settlement with the ryots which was just to them, and at the same time, did not involve any sacrifice of the state revenue. Thus the Ryotwari settlement was introduced by which each land was assessed according to its quality with freedom to the cultivator to keep the field or to throw it up and take another after informing the authorities in time. Read's settlement which commenced with Balaghat, was later widely extended by Munroe after an interval. In order to exact more revenues, during 1802-1805, the Havelly lands were parcelled into Mootahs or large blocks and put to auction, and the estates in the jagir were also permanently settled. This procedure was adopted in the newly acquired Baramahal district but the results were not favourable.

The Board of Revenue acquired a partiality for the time-honoured village system which was believed to be best adopted to the country. The Revenue had indeed for ages been settled with reference to village. During the trouble times, following the Mohammadan invasion, the large districts had been assigned to zamindars and renters. A separate assessment on individual holdings was not rare; but the village was still as we have seen, the unit of communal life and the settlement were in general effected for the village. Between 1808-1822, the village leases first triennial and then decennial, were tried in the district.

The village leases were not actually what they had been in former times and what the board intended them, to be i.e a settlement with a village through the head men called as Jodi dars who would be responsible and substantial men of the village and who worked merely as the representatives of the people and not for profit. The leases thus in practice turned out to be a kind of Zamindari system with smaller units and without the benefit of the tradition of the landed aristocracy which might act as some check to opposition.

It is said that during the colonial period, the villagers paid the tax in the form of cash measuring a coconut shell to the Zamindars. The tax was also collected in kind. However the farmers were only the tillers of the soil who were exploited by the zamindars by taking the whole of the crop production. The tillers were given the grains once in fortnight based on the total members in the family. The Balijas who were the agriculturists were given the lands by the Zamindars popularly known as 'Gurikaallu' on tenurial basis. Half of the share in the produce is taken by the zamindars. It is also said that the farmers gave 4 to 7 rupees for cultivating the lands belonging to the zamindars. At present the lineage groups of the zamindar class known as 'Chinna gurikaallu' does not own any land.

With in each village headman was given lands in recognition of their rights of local authority as well as to render their position representative of the state's power at large. A head man came from the locally dominant castes. Various village officials, artisans and servants were also given inam (more properly, manyam) lands by the

state. Manyam, a term meaning honor or privilege was used at times for all inams, though in a more marked sense it was used to label land grants given to village servants whose task was to maintain and operate irrigational facilities to village officers or headman, to priests of small village temples or shrines, or to other local personages whose obligations ranged from service in village festivals to service to the local officials or state servants. Inam titles of them became used as social (that is, caste) titles, designating as they did a local privilege/occupation that established a direct link with the king and with the local political/social system. The manyam was given to the Mala caste men known as Thotimanyam, the barber's manyam known as Mangali manyam, the horse grazers were given the lands in the name of Gurralla manyam. The Thoti or a Mala Caste man, who is the incharge of water management is still given the 'Mera' in the form of a rice stag bundle one Vaadi or one balla of grains which weigh 5 kgs for a crop or for every water drain into the land known as 'Thoomu'. The caste and class relations are clearly understood through the land relations. Many of the castes own small land holdings and they rarely lease out the land to others. However, the huge inputs required for the agricultural production is not meted out by the farmers and so they lease out the land to their kins men or the neighbours. There are three types of share croppers in the villages. To the first category belong those who take land on lease and pay half of the produce to the land owner. The owner shares half of the expenditure spent on fertilizer and irrigation by tube wells. This pattern of share cropping is called *Koulu* or *Koru*. The second kind of share croppers are those who take land on lease and pay a fixed amount of grain after harvesting the crops, particularly paddy. How much the share cropper will have to pay is decided on the basis of a contract before he takes land on lease. If crops fail because of natural calamities, the share cropper cannot pay the full rent, then the amount is negotiated by both the parties. This pattern of share cropping is called '*Guttha*'. The third type of share croppers is those who pay the rent in cash at the time of taking land on lease. In case of any natural calamities, the land owner does not give part of the rent back to the share cropper. This is why the rent which is paid at the time of leasing in land by the share croppers happens to be less than the share cropping. All these

contracts are for the duration of one year. After a year, fresh contracts are made between the share croppers and the land owners.

In addition to many inams granted to villages and local temples in the form of Manyam lands given to local priests and village servants, many inam grants are also made to Brahmans, temples and charities of various sorts. The history of Inam grants – itself a Persian bureaucratic term used from late medieval times to impose a new kind of state order on older political forms-reveals the extent to which the terms that came to be used as “caste” titles were themselves political in origin and meaning. Caste appears in part as the sedimentation of older political systems, the residue of a social formation that had lost its political dynamic as a result of British colonial conquest.

In Kuppam region, the Inamdars termed as the Jodidars who held the lands of two or more villages under their control, could exact the revenues and labour from the people and still claim to be the aristocratic class, by exercising their power during the annual festivals of the deities in the villages. The Villages such as Dalavai kothapalli, Kuppiganipalli, Rajupeta, etc. stand as the examples for the Jodidar system. Despite the Kuppam’s marginal social and political position, there was strife between the Brahmans and the ruling class of valmiki, for the control over the region. But the Brahmins were certainly respected, and the Brahmadeyam lands were also granted to them for their services in maintaining accounts and also for their ritual status. As per the Indian Law report, Nagireddi, the Karnam, the village servant employed in revenue duties within the meaning of the Revenue Recovery Act II of 1864 (Madras) in the permanently settled Zamindari, attached the property of a land holder and sold under the said Land II Act to enforce payment of a sum said to be payable by him an amount of Mera due to the karnam in Kangundi Zamindari.¹³

During the reign of Javvaji Venkatapathi naidu, the 28th Zamindar who ruled the Kangundi Zamindari between 1918-1950, was a product of colonial legacy. He introduced several reforms during his rule. The measurement of the lands through the methods of Paimaishi and Chengavarisa were found to be ineffective. The shape

of the lands and the area of the lands in various directions were not known. There were civil cases in the courts about the land disputes about the boundaries. The Zamindar ordered for the measurement of the lands by surveying the lands between 1919-1922. A sum of 1,75,000 was spent in this regard. The planning was prepared for each village, and for each land. The palari river flows in the slopy region amidst the forest tracts in the zamindari. The forest area covering nearly 55,000 acres was a fertile zone with tamarind, sandal wood and such other trees. People depended on the forest for fuel wood, fodder, also for the foliage.

It is from the Kangundi Zamindari that the railways and the kolar gold mines depended upon these forests for the fuel wood in mining and in running trains. The sandal wood oil factories in kuppam region depended upon these forests for the sandalwood. Hence the process of industrialisation in this region depended upon the available resources from the forests. These forests were guarded by the Zamindar’s armies and were administered under the Madras Act of section 26. These forest reserves were supervised by the forest panchayats consisting of the villagers as members.

Land Tax system in Kangundi Zamindari

The exacting of the revenues from the taxes was the major source of income to the Zamindari who owed their allegiance to the British. As a part of the direct payment of the tax to the treasury under the Ryotwari system, the farmers used to pay the taxes such as Khadduna and Kishtubandi etc. The Inamdars and Minor Inamdars such as Jodidars who were supposed to pay the quit rent cess to the Zamindars were not paying in time. But the Britishers forced the Zamindars to pay the Peshkush. Many civil cases were filed against the Inamdars who evaded taxes. After the introduction of the Ryotwari system, the new Inamdars and Izaradars were registered as sub land holders.

At Rajupeta, the Jodidiars belonging to Reddi caste, exercised their authority over the villages and the people were forced to work on the agricultural fields, where they were given a piece meal. It is said that bonded labour known as ‘Vetti’ was in vogue. More than hundred ploughs were made to work on the lands belonging to the

Jodidars. Major portion of the quality grains were given the landlord where as the tiller is given the left overs. Here the land relations were such that a hierarchy had built up in the land ownership. The Zamindars were the owners of the lands under whom the villages were divided among the Inam dars. Roads were laid from Vijilapuram to Badugumanipalli and a 6-mile road which joins the Kuppam-Palamaner road was also constructed. On the orders of Court of Wards, the renovation of tanks was ventured and wells were dug at various places. In 1921, when a fire accident took place in the village of Bellakogila, houses were reconstructed for the farmers. The houses in the villages such as Kurubala palli, Mittapalli and Kamatamur were reconstructed when they met with fire accident.

The habitus is formed with the encouragement of education in the Zamindari. Schools were found in the town of Kuppam with headquarters at Vijilapuram where the Zamindar resided. During the second World War, when there was scarcity of food supplies, the Zamindar imported the food grains and fed the people. Because of their close relations with the British, the Zamindars were English educated and they were imbibed with the spirit of making the zamindari as a subservient to the British.

Animal Husbandry was encouraged in the region. As per the orders of the Director of Agriculture during 1927-28, Non gazetted agricultural staff were appointed at various towns in the presidency. Besides routine minor works and annual repairs, separate quarters for a farm manager, a cart shed and inspection shed were set up at Palakuppam. An operation shed for the veterinary hospital at the cattle farm in Hosur was also raised.

The British maintained four cattle farms, the largest being at Hosur which served the centre, south and west of the presidency. The primary object of these farms was breeding and the milk supply was a secondary object. The ultimate object was to produce bulls of the best type for distribution in the various parts of the Presidency. This entailed the keeping of the number of herds. The kangayam was accepted all over the centre and the south as a good general-purpose animal. Schindhe is probably the best type for the west coast. The Kangayam herd which was kept at Hosur is to produce good

breeding bulls for distribution in presidency. At the same time, efforts were made to try and improve the milk yield by selecting bulls from the heaviest yielding dams for breeding purposes in fact a dual-purpose animal is being aimed at. The Schindhe herd was well known breed for milking capacity. People of Kangundi-Kuppam raised Mysore bullocks and Kangundi used once to furnish animals for use in artillery. The fame of the Kangundi cattle declined though large extents of pasture grounds, called "Kuragam", were set apart for grazing purposes.

The Hosur cattle farm, where fodder was at most importance, extensive experiments were being tried with a few fodder grasses. Kolukattai grass is most promising and attempts were made to replace spear grass by other grasses. In that year, two stacks of hay and two pits of silage were made from spear grass before it flowered. The remainder was combed while still standing to remove the spars and this has materially improved the quality of the hay. The best hay, however, is produced where the grass is cut before it flowered. Rhodes grass was also promising and ten acres gave a yield of 15,000 lb as well as 3 to 4 grazings. The half bred bulls resulting from the first cross are mated.

At Hosur, silage making was a regular part of work. It was used for feeding the live stock during the hot weather. It is a special method of storing fodder against the hot weather. During 1927-28, 762 tonnes of materials were silage. Silo-pits were laid down at experimental stations as a demo to the ryots.¹⁴ Raja venkatapathi naidu, the Zamindar of Kangundi Zamindari, tried to improve the agricultural methods by circulating the books such as 'Pashu sastra' and 'Cheraku' authored by himself.¹⁵ Jaggery making is the large-scale industry that was promoted by the zamindars. Dairy farming was introduced in the Zamindari by bringing Delhi bred buffaloes to kuppam. Annual cattle shows and agricultural fairs were organized during three consecutive years namely 1926, 1927, and 1928. The importance of these shows in terms of producer-consumer relations was pointed out by the zamindar.

Agricultural innovations were introduced to the farmers in the field of technology, cultivation etc. the introduction of iron plough

that were helpful for the deep ploughing were also made known to the farmers. Introduction of better varieties in sugar cane, practice of live planting, trenching, propping, and wrapping, improved furnaces for manuring, improved mills for juicing were some of the cultural improvements introduced by the zamindar. The Sindewahe furnace used for the boiling of sugar cane juice was demonstrated and it is universally adopted and there was a great success in Kuppam and Hosur regions. The hand boring method of tracing the water springs was demonstrated in agricultural exhibitions. All these agricultural inputs gave a boost to the farmers in improving their lives. Based on the agricultural production, there were two categories namely wet crops and dry crops. The land revenue was exclusively realised from the forests.

However, the colonial economic policies and the commercialisation of agriculture resulted in the impoverishment of the people. The outbreak of the diseases such as Plague led to the increase in the mortality rate. Every village had a long history regarding the fatal deaths during the outbreak of plague.

The people of Rajupeta narrate the outbreak of Plague in the following way:

'Once the village was attacked by pilaaki i.e plague and people were dying of vomiting and motions. Then a couple named Reddeppa and Reddemma vowed that they would come to Kasi if the disease was controlled. They also prayed god Viswanatha that they would bring the Sivalinga from Kasi and install it by constructing a temple in the village. Since then, there were no signs of the disease and the couple went on pilgrimage to Kasi by foot and brought the Sivalinga and constructed the temple for Lord Siva.'

Here a village is a composite whole that represent the broader society reflecting the Dravidian social and cultural formations. The caste interrelationships create stable set of obligations, and are maintained by concepts of proper religiously sanctioned behaviour in such a way that the subcastes or social groups establish community bonds. Despite constant change, famine, war, epidemic, and flood,

the village has maintained its cup of life unbroken through the centuries. The racial and cultural composition of village communities further clarifies their structure. Hewitt.J. argues that "the earliest villages in India were those founded by the Dravidian races," described as later Neolithic people who "made the village, and not the family, their national unit."¹⁶ Social organization was matriarchal, with children considered "the children of the village," governed by mothers and maternal uncles rather than by patriarchal lineage. This social logic left deep traces in inheritance customs and ritual authority across South India. The village was also an administrative and judicial unit. According to the him, "every village was more or less a little social organism, self-governed, and had its police and courts of justice".¹⁷ Public expenses were shared, and disputes were settled according to customary law rather than external authority. This autonomy provides an important framework for understanding how villages like Kangundi later adapted to medieval and colonial administrative systems while retaining internal cohesion. Labour organisation within the village community was highly structured. Village officers such as the accountant, watchman, carpenter, and blacksmith were supported by customary grain shares and land allotments. The text records that "all these classes were supported by allowances of grain... and the benefits of gleanings and the sweepings of the threshing floor".¹⁸ Such arrangements underline the interdependence of agrarian, artisanal, and service groups within the village economy.

Revenue administration underwent repeated experimentation during the early colonial period. Initially, British authorities retained existing zamindari structures, recognising the utility of local intermediaries in revenue collection. However, the zamindari system soon proved unstable in semi-arid regions where agricultural surplus was limited and subject to climatic variability. Revenue shortfalls, peasant indebtedness, and land abandonment prompted reconsideration of this approach. By the early nineteenth century, officials such as Thomas Munro argued for the extension of ryotwari principles, under which land was assessed and taxed directly at the level of individual cultivators. Although the full implementation of ryotwari settlement occurred unevenly, its rationale was shaped by

experiences in regions like Kangundi, where rigid landlord control exacerbated agrarian distress.

Administrative reorganisation accompanied these fiscal changes. Kangundi was progressively integrated into district-level governance structures, with the introduction of police stations, courts, and revenue offices. These institutions extended colonial authority into everyday village life, replacing customary dispute resolution with codified legal processes. Gazetteer accounts from the mid-nineteenth century note the growing penetration of colonial administration into rural society, even as traditional elites retained influence through landholding and ritual patronage.¹⁹ The coexistence of old and new forms of authority produced a hybrid administrative order marked by negotiation and contestation.

The Northern Division of Arcot was named because it originally included only the part of the Arcot Subah north of the Palar River. This area was given to the East India Company in 1801, along with the rest of the Carnatic. The part of the Subah south of the Palar River was initially the Southern Division of Arcot. The district's boundaries changed many times during the last century. From the North Arcot district, which had a population of 2,207,712 in 1901, the North Arcot and Chittoor districts were created between 1901 and 1911. In 1911, North Arcot had a population of 1,960,960, while Chittoor had 1,238,742.²⁰ The reorganized North Arcot district included the Arcot, Ami, Gudiyatham, Kangundi, Polur, Vellore, Walajapet, and Wandiwash taluks, which were part of the North Arcot district in 1901. It also included the Tiruppattur taluk from the Salem district and the Tiruvannamalai taluk from the South Arcot district. The reformed Chittoor district was made up of the Chittoor, Kalahasti, Chandragiri, Punganur, Puttur, and Tiruttani taluks, which were part of the North Arcot district in 1901, as well as two taluks from the Cuddappah district.²¹ Colonial administrative records clearly establish Kangundi's former status as a taluk headquarters within North Arcot district. The *District Census Handbook, North Arcot (1961)* retrospectively records that during the early twentieth century restructuring, North Arcot comprised taluks such as Arcot, Arni, Gudiyatham, Kangundi, Polur, Vellore, Walajapet, and Wandiwash.²²

This explicit enumeration confirms that Kangundi was embedded at the core of district administration rather than existing on its margins. Its subsequent removal from North Arcot during territorial reorganisation illustrates the fluidity of colonial boundaries and the state's evolving priorities in aligning administrative units with linguistic, revenue, and political considerations. Kangundi's incorporation into North Arcot must therefore be read as part of the colonial effort to stabilise and monitor this volatile frontier through bureaucratic integration. At the same time, its later reassignment to Chittoor district indicates a reorientation toward linguistic and regional coherence in the post-reorganisation phase.

Kangundi Estate and Gold Mining

Mining activities further integrated Kangundi into the colonial economy. The Upper Palar and Kolar regions were known for gold-bearing quartz veins, and indigenous mining traditions existed long before British involvement. Colonial reports from the early nineteenth century record local knowledge of gold extraction techniques, including shallow pits and washing methods, which were later appropriated and systematised by British enterprises. Although large-scale mining operations were concentrated elsewhere, the presence of mineral exploration in the wider region increased administrative surveillance and contributed to the strategic importance of upland tracts such as Kangundi. Kangundi, located near Kuppam in the southern part of the Madras Presidency, is identified in nineteenth-century colonial literature as part of an extensive auriferous zone of South India. The *Journal of the Society of Arts* describes this region as forming “a vast triangular area, bounded by the Eastern Ghats on the east, the Western Ghats on the west, and the basin of the Krishna on the north,” within which the Baramahal tract occupied a prominent position.²³ Kangundi is explicitly included within this mineral geography, indicating that it was recognised not merely as a local site but as an integral component of a broader gold-bearing landscape.²⁴ The Mysore Reefs (Kangundi), Kenipinkote, and Yerrakonda Gold-mining Companies all operated in this region for a time. Of these, the Mysore Reefs was the most productive, extracting a significant amount of gold. However, the quartz's extreme hardness and the

lode's unpredictable nature, a result of the area's fractured geology, proved too much for the company's resources, and it has since nearly ceased operations.

The reference makes clear that Kangundi Jaghir had already entered the orbit of colonial capital by the late nineteenth century. It states that "the jaghires of Bagalur, Beriki, Sholagerry, and Kangundi have been purchased by companies formed for the purpose of mining".²⁵ This observation is significant because it shows how Kangundi was legally transformed into a commercial mineral property, marking a decisive shift from earlier indigenous systems of extraction to colonial regimes of ownership, speculation, and profit. Mallapakondah hill, located within the Kangundi Jaghire, is described in detail in the source material. The author notes that "the hill known as Mallapakondah is a noticeable feature in the landscape, rising sharply from the plain and containing many old mining sites".²⁶ These sites included tunnels dug deep into quartz reefs. The report emphasizes the extent of the mining by stating that "the excavations extend for a considerable distance into the hill, and are carried through extremely hard rock". These observations clearly show that mining at Chigurukunta and Mallappa konda of Kangundi-Kuppam was not a small or experimental activity. Moreover, the infrastructure remaining from the mining operations supports the ideas of age and organization. Adams's account notes with some surprise that "a paved road, nearly a mile and a half in length, leads to the entrance of the mine".²⁷ This detail is important because it suggests a sustained effort in labor and administrative organization, which are usually seen in mining operations supported by the state or temples in the pre-colonial Deccan. While discussing the ore's characteristics, the author provides specific geological observations. He notes that "the quartz is ferruginous, and although gold is not always visible to the naked eye, careful washing invariably produces fine grains of the precious metal".²⁸ This observation is significant because it shows that Kangundi-Kuppam principality's gold resources depended on systematic crushing and washing methods, rather than simple panning, implying a sophisticated understanding of mineral processing.²⁹

The colonial author, in his writings, consistently expresses astonishment at the technical prowess demonstrated by earlier miners.

He notes, for instance, that "it is difficult to conceive how the natives, with the primitive appliances at their command, could have driven these galleries through such excessively hard rock".³⁰ Although couched in a Eurocentric framework, this observation inadvertently recognizes the presence of sophisticated indigenous mining expertise and labor structures, thereby contesting subsequent colonial beliefs in technological backwardness.

Furthermore, the report's examination of local memory and abandonment is equally significant. It states that "the present inhabitants of the villages in the vicinity appear to know little or nothing of the history of these mines," and it adds that the workings are now "tenanted chiefly by bats and pigeons".³¹ A tradition recounted in the source material indicates that "a sudden influx of water drowned a large number of miners, after which the works were abandoned".³² These accounts suggest a disruption in the continuity of labor and the metamorphosis of Kangundi-Kuppam from a vibrant mining environment into a site of desolation and folklore. The author establishes a connection between the mining operations and the broader trends of early civilization within the area. He observes that the gold-bearing regions are "almost invariably associated with the remains of large towns, temples, and tanks of great antiquity".³³ This observation reinforces the assertion that gold mining in Kolar Gold mining in Kuppam region was integrated into a more extensive socio-economic framework that supported urban development, irrigation infrastructure, and monumental construction.

By the time of colonial rule, Kangundi was primarily seen as a resource frontier. Despite optimistic geological assessments, many mining operations faced difficulties in being revived due to flooding and structural problems. This situation highlighted the limitations of colonial extraction methods that didn't consider local ecological knowledge. Therefore, the changes in Kangundi reflect a broader colonial pattern, where old extractive landscapes were re-explored using modern scientific and financial methods, often with limited success. In colonial records, Kangundi was identified as a zamindari-controlled forest area, closely linked to imperial extraction efforts in the nineteenth century, particularly for railway fuel-wood. The colonial

government could more easily access Kangundi's forests through contracts and leases managed by zamindars. In contrast, the Kalrayan Hills, which were controlled by tribal groups, showed a different pattern. The growth of colonial railroads greatly increased the need for fuel wood.

Dietrich Brandis's 1880–81 records show that about 81% of the Madras Railways' fuel wood came from private forests.³⁴ The Kangundi Zamindari, for example, provided roughly 7,200 tons, making it a major supplier in the North Arcot–Chittoor area. This suggests that the deforestation in Kangundi was a planned, commercial activity, not an unintentional result.

The Palar basin experienced significant ecological harm. Extensive deforestation destabilized the soil, hindered groundwater recharge, and exacerbated the basin's aridity. This trend was furthered by colonial forest policies, exemplified by the Indian Forest Act of 1865, which prioritized imperial infrastructural demands over local ecological equilibrium and traditional land use.³⁵ Consequently, Kangundi serves as a crucial example of environmental extraction facilitated by zamindari systems. It complicates the conventional narrative of colonial forest history by demonstrating the crucial role of private forest management in resource acquisition for the empire, rather than solely focusing on the dichotomy between state and tribal forests.

The cumulative impact of colonial intervention on Kangundi was profound. The redefinition of forests as state property, the monetisation of revenue demand, and the integration of the village into regional and imperial markets transformed the economic basis of society. At the same time, colonial policies often relied on existing social hierarchies, reinforcing zamindari dominance while undermining communal resource management. The resulting contradictions between conservation and exploitation, centralisation and local autonomy shaped Kangundi's transition into the modern period.³⁶

The colonial phase in Kangundi's history reveals how imperial governance reworked earlier medieval structures rather than abolishing them outright. Zamindari authority, temple institutions, and agrarian hierarchies were adapted to serve colonial fiscal objectives,

producing new forms of inequality and resistance. Understanding this period is essential for interpreting later developments in land reform, forest rights, and rural governance in the region.

Beneath the pastoral facade, another, older source of income thrived. The Kangundi hills held the traces of old gold mining, a remnant of a mineral belt that stretched from the famous Kolar fields of Mysore. For a time, the promise of wealth drew in mining companies, including the Mysore Reefs (Kangundi) Gold-mining Company. They did extract some gold, but the reality was harsh. The quartz was incredibly tough, and the rock was full of cracks, making mining both costly and uncertain. Eventually, the operations faded away, then ceased completely. Kangundi's isolation was lessened by the arrival of the railway.³⁷ The Bangalore branch line, having conquered the Ghats, finally arrived at Kuppam, the zamindari's principal station. This development effectively turned the settlement into a vital connection between the Madras Presidency and Mysore.³⁸ Trains did far more than just carry goods; they were also vessels for people, ideas, and the very workings of governance, pulling this elevated region closer to the wider world. Under colonial rule, Kangundi functioned as a zamindari tahsil, a component of the Vellore subdivision, separate from the ryotwari taluks that surrounded it. It was also subject to the southern police jurisdiction, managed from Vellore, along with Arcot, Polur, Arni, and Wandiwash. These details suggest that Kangundi was not a remote outpost, but rather a place where pastoral life, mineral extraction, and modern transportation intersected during the colonial period.³⁹

Conclusion

By situating Kangundi within regional epigraphical networks and long-term ecological processes, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of South Indian rural history. It underscores the value of micro-history for illuminating macro-historical patterns and demonstrates the necessity of integrating archaeology, folklore, inscriptions, and administrative records. Kangundi thus emerges not as a peripheral village but as a historically articulate landscape that encapsulates the complex interplay of environment, power, and society in South India.

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4

Writing History through Gender Perspective**- Prof. Aravind Kumar****Abstract**

Feminism developed the conscious among the women of their place in history, and their relation to history. Feminism discovered that what we consider as history and who gets to write history, which the subjects of history are all subjects to a gender bias. It is men who get to write history they decide who is important, and if they write about women, through man's eyes. Feminist's approach in history brought three developments; one is identifying the absence of women and realizing how most of human history is about men, two identifying the biases in the representation of women if and when women do get included, and third writing of their own history.

Key Words: Feminism, Gender, history writings biases.

Feminism developed the conscious among the women of their place in history, and their relation to history. Feminism discovered that what we consider as history and who gets to write history, and the subject of history is all subjects to gender bias. It is men who get to write history. They decide who is important, and if they write about women, they write through man's eyes. Feminist's approach in history brought three developments; one is identifying the absence of women and realizing how most of human history is about men, two identifying the biases in the representation of women if and when women do get

included, and third writing of their own history. ¹Source material is important for the reconstruction of history, since past records happen to be scanty on women they have to rewrite history, a new methodology is required, beyond men's records and beyond existing frame.² Men possess distinction, whereas women have to struggle for the distinction. Feminist historiography has demonstrated that there is a gendering process. Men write history because they control the public domain. History is that happened in the public domain. Rewriting of history, by those who were excluded from the public domain is possible by challenging this invidious distinction, which fragments human lives. This is truer of women than of the subaltern.

Feminist historians began with the existing frame work, critique them, and refine them and re-interpret them. Feminist historiography asserts that women's experiences are different from men. The assumption is that history is always gendered. If history is engendered there will be a common history, history of humanity. Feminist history writing began in a new domain without any previous examples and without any available sources. In a way this was advantageous. They have to depend on sources like dairies and oral testimonies. In the initial stage they documented the contribution to human civilization. In the second stage they tried to find out why women were excluded in fields like economics, politics, and anthropology. Today's history writing focuses not on the wars conquests, empires, rulers and their focuses on society, social change and different actors in society³.

History is primarily about civilizations, their art, culture, philosophies and religion. Thus history is a part of women's studies. Human history draws information from many sources, art, archaeology, technology, science, politics, and literature and so on. Anthropology shows that women were active in all social systems since the earliest times⁴

In the beginning geographers were not involved in looking at gender. Now geographers started giving attention, an international journal on feminist geography was Coming to India, Saraswati Raju is currently working on how geography affects patriarchy, to find an answer to south India's less gender asymmetric than the north. Their contribution to arts is not less than the men, their role in quilt making

weaving mat, weaving ceramics and folk decorative art, such as designs or wall designs. A basic principle in writing women's history is the patriarchy as the system of male domination evolved to produce female sub-ordination.

Feminist historians like Gerda Learner⁵ have tried to give a historical account of the creation of patriarchy (Learner 1986) while interdisciplinary was inevitable, because gender enters into every aspect of our lives, conceptual problems plague our efforts to introduce gender. Gender is a relational concept in which a woman and a man stand in a certain relation to each other. It is also an identity; one's consciousness is that of a woman or man. It is also a particular ideology using symbolic tools ⁶(Reed 1975). Do women form one category? In a society divided by class, caste and race which betray hierarchies of power, do all women face the same oppression? All the oppression and sub-ordination of women is done by men only. These questions still demand satisfactory answers, and the theory of patriarchy soon ran into trouble as a framework for women's history, of women under patriarchy and as the history of the decline of matriarchy (Bachofen 1967)⁷.

In Indian context, historical research and writing on women took conventional paths, dividing periods into, ancient, medieval and modern. We still follow them regardless of whether they are relevant or not for women. Alternatively there is an attempt to see how women succeeded under different cultures or religious orders, women under Buddhism, under Jainism, under Hinduism, under Christianity and under Islam and so on so forth.

This is done by reading the scriptural texts to see what they say about women. What injunctions, what prejudices, what liberties, or rights are given under each order? (Bhattacharjee, 1990-96)⁸⁸ Bhattacharjee, Sukumari, "Motherhood in Ancient India" in *Economic and Political Weekly*, October 20-27, 1990.

The incidental nature of references to women in regular history pertains only to elite women or extraordinary women. They talked of queen, who wielded Power or of exceptional women like warrior women or saint women. Before Independence, the nationalist upsurge provoked eulogistic tones, on great women of India, which selected

extra ordinary women, partly historical, partly mythological. These were attempting to set record straight regarding the status of women in India to counter the castigation of Hindu society by the colonizers. Altekar's book is a standing testimony to this genre (Altekar 1962)⁹.

The feminist in independent India expose the male bias in ancient India, the analysis of Brahmanical scriptures by Bhattacharjee,¹⁰ Roy¹¹ and Chakravarthi.¹² These are others like the critiques of Hindu society, by Pandita Rama Bai and Tarabai Sinde. Indian feminist today resurrect models from ancient India, but reinterpret them as rebels, instead of portraying them as iconic devotees of patriarchal value (Manushi 1989¹³). The literature is abundant in Bengali writing. This type of history writing had limited parameters and did not base their analysis in totality of the social formulation that would include the economic, social, cultural and political. It was only Uma Chakravarthi, D.K. Roy¹⁴

¹⁴ Roy, D. K, *Women in Peasant Movements Tebhag, Naxalite and After*, 1992. and Kum Kum Sangari¹⁵ who set about doing this, while Chakravarthi and Roy confine themselves to scriptural texts, Sangari broke free of this textual immanence by exploring other sources, which are amorphous in form like prescriptive manuals, records etc., (Sangari, 1999). Today there are historians of regions, of institutions of women's education and of women's struggle. A great empirical work has shown that however much women participate in paid labour, it does not necessarily lessen, sub-ordination because women face discrimination at the work place. The role of ideology is important here and not only the material forces, the sub-ordination of women at home is transferred to market place.

Post-modernists seek inter alia to develop conceptions of social criticism, which do not rely on any philosophical under pinning. There are many discourses of legitimating. They declare as illegitimate large historical stories and normative theories of Justice or social theoretical accounts of macro- structures. Which institutionalize inequality? In literature the effect of postmodernism is apparent, where scholars are overly pre-occupied with representation. General history writing on women is embedded in large social theories such as those of history, sociology, and psychology¹⁶.

Much effort went into showing how women in the third world, through history, mounted resistances to male dominance. The history of patriarchy now took the form of challenges to patriarchy under new economic and socio-political contexts and how patriarchies get reconstituted. Admittedly gender is not a voluntarily disposable individual characteristic. One can change one's class by becoming wealthy. Fundamentally, all feminism, no matter, of what category, addresses the extraction and transfer of benefits, from women to men on a global scale. The struggle of feminism lay in experimentation with different methodologies, avoiding the aping of the unitary categories of the mainstream philosophy of history. Patriarchy has graduated into an adjective phase, where we talk of different kinds of patriarchies (Chakravarti,¹⁷ and Sangari 2001¹⁸) there followed the critique of positivism and structural functionalism. The departure from positivism came in trying to work out how different social movements can retain their specificity and yet link them to other social realities. Post-modernists seek inter alia to develop conceptions of social criticism, which do not rely on any philosophical under pinning. Social criticism becomes pragmatic, ad hoc, contextual, and local. Apart from post modern engagement with the specificity, tribal etc..General history writing on women is embedded on large social theories such as those of history.

The much acclaimed inter disciplinary approach also has problem. Each discipline has its conceptual categories, for example the history of violence against women. A history student would locate the source in criminal records, police files and newspaper reports. The enquiry gets confined to reported cases. As we all know women have enormous disincentives to repeat cases of violence.

Coming to sub-altern history the colonial stance of sub-altern history leads to defence of tradition, even when these practices are harmful and clearly violate the canons of justice.

The sub-altern studies hardly care to understand that the paradigm they offer is not just a model of an intellectual exercise but an expression of social ideologies. History from below need not glorify different communities, whether poor or tribal or dalit. In the name of celebrating differences, we cannot ignore things which are wrong

according to some universal ethics of right and wrong one has to apply a universal value; however glorious one wants one's heritage to be. A serious problem in feminist historiography is the problem of agency. Do things only happen? Are they only objects or are they subjects? There are now attempts to show women were not passive victims. Any rebellious act is held up as a proof of resistance. Women in the Bhakti movement are often held up as rebels. What is missed is that though these women no doubt discarded normal life they secured sainthood within accepted parameters.¹⁹

Apart from recording women's contribution to the history of their societies women are also involved in the history in the making, through individual action as well as collective action. Women's archives are capturing this through biography, autobiography, and through oral testimony. The repository of myths and legend, folktales, folk art, and folk music belongs to the cultural history of a region or community. There are many Ramayana, many versions of Draupadi's story. These informal ways of coping with history writing in the absence of formal records not given their share in the official records of making history.

Conclusion: If history is all about the past, antecedent events now do we come to terms with its influence in the present or how does our present colour our past? When gender consciousness becomes universal how will our history be? Will we still be gendered beings?²⁰

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5

Establishing a Solid Waste Management Plant in Dravidian University using Windrow Chambers Method

-Prof. R. Yasoda

Abstract

Higher Education Institutions are producing more solid trash than ever before, which is a serious environmental issue that calls for sustainable and scientific waste management techniques. This study focuses on the construction of a Solid Waste Management (SWM) Plant at Dravidian University utilizing the Windrow Chambers Method as an economical and environmentally responsible way to handle biodegradable garbage produced on campus. The suggested method places a strong emphasis on compost generation using controlled windrow chamber technology, aerobic decomposition, systematic collection, and waste segregation at the source.

The study examines the method's practicality, operating mechanism, environmental benefits, and sustainability potential in an effort to decrease campus waste accumulation and promote the usage of circular resources. The implementation of the SWM facility is expected to reduce the need for landfills, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve campus hygiene, and supply nutrient-rich organic compost for university farming and landscaping.

The paper also encourages sustainable campus expansion in accordance with national waste management initiatives and environmental conservation goals. The paper highlights the significance of educational institutions in promoting environmental responsibility and demonstrates how decentralized waste management systems can encourage sustainable development and ecological awareness among students and staff.

Keywords

Solid Waste Management; Windrow Chambers Method; Waste Segregation; Biodegradable Waste; Composting; Sustainable Campus; Environmental Sustainability; Green Campus Initiative.

Introduction

Universities have a specific obligation to contribute to the definition of best practice and to serve as examples of it. However, particularly in developing nations like India, there is frequently a sizable divergence when it comes to the University's own activities. Evidence suggests that many institutions are having difficulty implementing the idea and goals of university "greening"; the successes so far have been sporadic and ad hoc (Sharp 2002). Higher Education Institutions (universities), which are autonomous by nature (Armijo de Vega et al. 2003), should receive the utmost consideration with regard to waste management. Since they are capable of incorporating novel solid waste management practices by nature and would spread to other communities once properly institutionalized.

Waste management is one of the major issues facing higher education institutions. The amount of rubbish produced each day increases along with the number of students each year. In order to extend learning beyond the classroom and instill responsible attitudes, habits, and a long-lasting commitment to Swachhta, whether at home, on campus, or in the larger community, the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, launched Swachh Campus for Higher Education Institutions and Universities. This initiative mirrors the principles of green institutions. In order to properly fulfill their part in proper waste management, students must be aware of environmental issues (Tartiu 2011). On October 2, 2014, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan was introduced nationwide to address issues with

solid waste management and hygienic conditions (Jangra, B., Majra, JP, and Singh 2016).

Higher education institutions have long been viewed as both centres of learning and catalysts for social and political transformation. Higher education institutions expand the frontiers of knowledge in addition to educating decision-makers. They have a considerable economic impact both domestically and internationally because they are important employers and consumers of goods and services (UNEP 2011). The inherent competences among staff and students as well as their interactions with a wide range of stakeholders have been mentioned as additional reasons why higher education institutions can play a significant role in fostering sustainable development (Bailey et al. 2015). People are becoming more aware of the fact that HEIs may both educate and practice sustainability by understanding and reducing the negative effects of their own operations. Through waste management, HEIs can contribute to the cause of sustainability. Hence, the paper presents the design and process of establishing a solid waste management plant at a university.

Need and importance of Establishing Solid Waste Management Plant at the HEIs

The research reveals that university's current solid waste management system is largely unacceptable because it is of lower grade and is more easily accessible, inefficient, of weak social acceptability and legitimacy, potentially hazardous to health and the sustainability of the environment; and financially unviable (Starovoytova & Namango 2018) The investigation has demonstrated, in particular, that the university's open and unregulated waste dumpsite makes all environmental degradation, health effects, and safety violations highly likely.

In his essay "Solid Waste Management in Urban India: Imperatives for Improvement," Singh (2020) makes the argument that encouraging citizen participation, particularly in source segregation and treatment procedures, will increase solid waste management's effectiveness in India. Similar to this, universities ought to encourage student involvement. They ought to be inspired and instructed on the techniques for source separation and

treatment. Additionally, he advised making fieldwork on SWM necessary for all professors and students in order to advance their careers and integrating SWM components into the university curriculum. According to Majumdar (2015), urban waste management should be streamlined through technology, and the SWM system should be made sustainable and techno-economically viable.

Campuses of higher education institutions on a small scale mimic the characteristics of a metropolis, having similar effects on the environment. So, according to Alshuwaikhat and Abubakar (2008), they can be categorised as minor cities. As a result, these campuses can serve as examples for sustainable practices adoption and implementation in the neighbourhood (Parvez, N.; Agrawal 2019). However, Nikhat Parvez, Avlokita Agrawal, and Akhilesh Kumar (2019) in a study on “Solid Waste Management on a Campus in a Developing Country: A Study of the Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee “ reported that there were some areas without dustbins, that there was no waste segregation in the academic buildings, and that occasionally garden waste (leaves and weeds) was burned in some places. Yasoda and Rajendranath Babu (2024) investigated on “ Assessment of Awareness, Attitude, and Practices of University students on Solid waste management in the state of Andhra Pradesh” and the results unveiled that the general level of awareness and the extent of practice of solid waste management among university students in the state is moderate. The results also show that the degree of attitude of students towards SWM is far greater.

The study further shows that there is significant influence of gender on the students’ awareness of swm with respect to SWM Rules and Community participation but students are not much aware of SW minimization, collection & segregation, and SW disposal. Further, the study shows that gender has significant influence on the students’ attitude towards collection segregation, community participation, disposal, and transport of solid wastes whereas there is significant influence of gender on the swm practices with respect to refuse & reduce, and reuse & recycle only. All these studies clearly

indicate that universities have to find the ways and means of sensitizing the students towards SWM practices.

We all have a right to wholesome food, water, and air. The maintenance of a clean and healthy environment can satisfy this right. In light of this, former Vice-Chancellor Prof. Sudhakar Yedla spearheaded the effort to set up a waste management system on the university’s campus. As a result, the study aimed to demonstrate the creation of a solid waste management Plant on the Dravidian University campus as well as to detail the process of assessing the waste generated there, designing the plant, and building it. Residential housing and distinct hostels for boys, girls, and research scholars are available on the campus. **Estimating the wastes for Designing the Composting Plant**

The approach for estimating the waste in the campus is described hereunder:

Total no. of quarters in the campus = 86

Total no. of households on an average = $86 \times 3 = 258$

Waste generated by each household per day on an average on the campus = 0.3 kg

Waste generated by households per day on an average on the campus = $258 \times 0.3 \text{ kg} = 77.4 \text{ kg}$

Waste generated by the students in the hostels per day on an average = 10 kg

Total waste generated per day on the campus = $77.4 \text{ kg} + 10 \text{ kg} = 87.4 \text{ kg}$ approximately

Degradable (wet) waste generated per day on the campus = 40% of total waste = $40\% \times 87.4 \text{ kg} = 34.96 \text{ kg}$ approximately

Total wet waste generated per month on the campus = $34.96 \text{ kg} \times 30 = 1048.8 \text{ kg}$

Density of uncompacted waste = 100 kg/m^3

Volume required for composting 100 kg of waste = 1 m^3

Volume required for composting 1048.8 kg of waste = 10.488 m^3 (for one system)

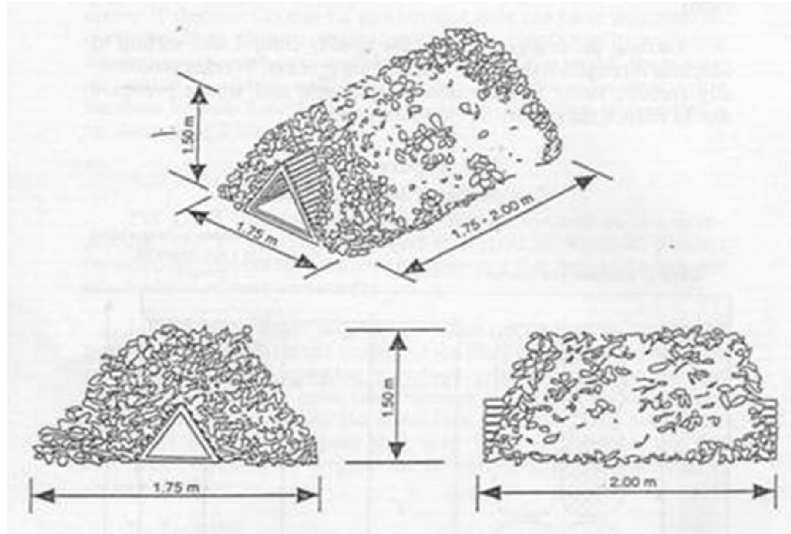


Fig.2: Measurements of Windrow Chambers



Fig.3: Making of the Windrow Chambers

Process of Composting:

1. Collection of waste
2. Screening the waste
3. Placing it on Window chamber
4. Sprinkling cow dung mixture
5. Periodically mixing the waste and maintaining the waste



Fig.4: Sprinkling Cow dung mixture

Temperature Control

First 25-27 days (Thermophilic Phase) – 40-70°C

Subsequent 11 +15 days (Mesophilic Phase and Maturation) – 20-40°C

Turning over

With frequent turning once in 3-4 days

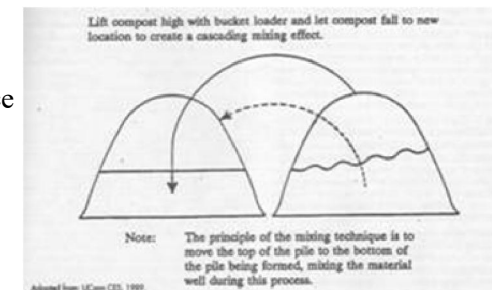




Fig.5: Turning over the waste

Moisture Control

Moisture should not be more than 12%. Manual squeezing should not result in dripping. Maintain moisture by sprinkling water.



Fig.6: Sprinkling water for moisture control

Maturation

Composting process requires a total of 55 days @ 15% of waste as compost.



Fig.7: Maturation Process

- Screening to separate 4mm composting and the residue goes back to the composting chambers



Fig.8: Screening to separate 4mm composting

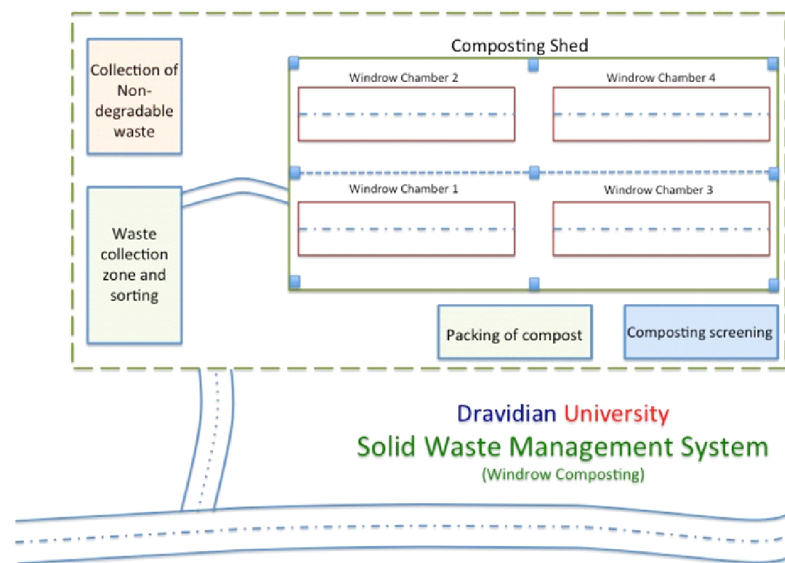


Fig.9: Design of the Solid Waste Management Plant of Dravidian University

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Establishing a Solid Waste Management Plant in Dravidian University using Windrow Chambers Method

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6

From the Margins to Manuscript: A Critical Analysis of Akkai Padmashali's Autobiography

- Prof. V.Nirmala

Abstract

Autobiography has emerged as one of the most powerful literary forms through which marginalized communities reclaim identity, articulate resistance, and negotiate social visibility. In India, autobiographical narratives written by dalits, women, queer individuals, and transgender activists have transformed personal experiences into political testimonies. Akkai Padmashali's autobiographical memoir, "A Small Step in a Long Journey" occupies a significant position within this growing body of life writing because it documents the lived realities of a transgender individual who confronts caste, gender discrimination, social exclusion, and violence while simultaneously constructing a narrative of selfhood, dignity, and activism. The autobiography becomes not merely a story of suffering but a text of assertion, resilience, and social transformation. This paper examines Akkai Padmashali's autobiography as a counter-narrative that challenges dominant heteronormative structures and patriarchal assumptions embedded within Indian society. It explores how the text negotiates identity formation, bodily politics, familial alienation, violence, survival, and activism. The study further investigates the intersectionality of gender, caste, class, and sexuality in shaping the transgender experience. Drawing upon queer theory, subaltern studies, and feminist perspectives, the paper argues

From the Margins to Manuscript: A Critical Analysis of Akkai Padmashali's Autobiography that Akkai's life writing functions as an act of resistance against social invisibility and institutional marginalization.

Key words:

Transgenders, Queer studies, gender, culture, assertion, discrimination, body politics, marginalization.

Literature has long served as a mirror reflecting the social, cultural, and political realities of human existence. However, mainstream literary traditions often privileged dominant voices while excluding narratives emerging from marginalized communities. In recent decades, autobiographical writings by oppressed groups have challenged this exclusion by foregrounding lived experiences that were historically ignored or erased. Among these voices, transgender autobiographies occupy a unique and significant position because they articulate struggles against social exclusion, bodily insults, and identity denial.

In the Indian context, transgender individuals have historically occupied an ambiguous social space. While ancient Indian traditions occasionally acknowledged non-binary identities, colonial modernity and rigid patriarchal structures intensified social stigma against transgender communities. Consequently, transgender persons were pushed to the margins of society and deprived of education, employment, healthcare, dignity, and legal recognition. Their experiences remained largely absent from literary representation until autobiographical narratives began to emerge as powerful forms of self-expression. In *A Small Step in a Long Journey*, Akkai Padmashali, a transgender rights activist and campaigner, thinker, writer, poet, and actor, throws out a challenge to society, demanding not sympathy but acceptance, recognition, and respect. Brutally honest and self-critical, Akkai's writing is a political act in which she lays bare the hurt, humiliation, confusion, insult, love, solidarity and joy that went into making her who she is today. The book narrates her painful yet inspiring journey from childhood struggles to becoming a powerful voice for the transgender and queer community. To quote Akkai, "this journey is 'a journey' we all travel." In her book, she traces her footsteps on her way to finding herself, navigating a sea of

sympathies, pity and transphobia. In other words, her story is nothing short of a quintessential search for acceptance, recognition and respect. In *A Small Step in a Long Journey* Akkai displays brazen optimism in the face of constant challenges and daily struggles. It is a recounting of her life from small child to a transgender rights activist. One can easily discern parallels between her and A. Revathi. The latter's memoir, *The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story*, also follows a similar trajectory. They both worked for "Sangama", a queer rights NGO based in Bangalore, and they share a lot in terms of familial experiences too. As transgender women, they both were initially rejected by their families. It took time and effort to bring them around. The commonalities show the limited options of transgender people coming from weaker socio-economic backgrounds, which are often historically oppressed due to caste in India.

This paper seeks to analyze Akkai Padmashali's autobiography through the lenses of queer theory, feminist criticism, and subaltern studies. It examines how the text articulates identity formation, resistance against social oppression, and the politics of representation. This paper further explores how autobiography functions as an emancipatory literary form for marginalized communities.

Queer Theory and Gender Performativity:

Queer theory provides a significant framework for understanding Akkai Padmashali's autobiography because it challenges normative assumptions regarding gender and sexuality. Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity argues that gender is not an innate or biological reality but a socially constructed performance shaped through repeated acts and cultural expectations. Akkai's autobiography exposes the violence inherent in enforcing gender binaries and demonstrates how transgender identities disrupt heteronormative frameworks. Even her father's brutal behaviour is exposed by Akkai when he found her playing with the girls being a boy outwardly. She says, "My father was worried about his dignity, his prestige. And because of my character, my relatives, my father's friends, and my neighbours always used to tease me. They would ask, 'Why is your son behaving like a girl? It's not right.' People

would call me words like sanga, chakka, and ombattu (derogatory terms for queer and gender-non-confirming people)"

Many of the incidents shared by Akkai reveal the indifferent attitude of the society towards transgenders, including her own family, and the police people too. Her father beats her up with a belt thoroughly and throws out of the house after seeing his son playing with the girls. Without even trying to what is happening inside of his son's body, the father is more worried about his reputation and insults and turns out to be wild to Jagadeesh, the former self of Akkai. She suffers from loneliness due to the alienation. She says, "When I went to play with the girls, they sent me away to play with the boys. When I went to the boys, they told me to go away. They would pull down my pants and my shirt. They would harass me".

Akkai lucidly explores how transgender individuals are discriminated at every turn and at every level. They are usually not readily accepted by their families, and the State as well as its institutions refuse to grant them legitimacy and treat them as equal to their cisgender counterparts. More often than not, without familial and institutional support, there is a lack of financial stability which forces them to do sex work and beg for survival. While these two forms of earning, a livelihood have been linked to the hijra community in South Asia, they are taken up because all other doors are closed and no other opportunities are available. The State, by criminalizing these activities and throwing obstacles in the process of self-identification, is adding to the discrimination they already face and increasing their precarity.

It is here that the importance of community is felt. Akkai describes at length the inner working of the hijra community, its structures and divisions, its rules and strictures, and the ways in which it can be an emancipatory shelter that is defined by solidarity. She writes: "Hijra culture is a culture of great plurality. You can be a Brahmin and can be a chela to a Dalit. You can be a Muslim and you can be a chela to a Christian... Hijra culture is not about the class or caste you come from. It's built on your femininity." Still, the avowed ideals often fail to be fully realized. She herself admits that discrimination still exists within hijra culture, condoned as it takes the form of old customs.

The autobiography reveals the tension between socially imposed masculinity and Akkai's inner sense of feminine identity. Her experiences illustrate the psychological trauma produced when individuals are compelled to conform to rigid gender expectations. In her words, "It is hard to describe how lonely I felt. Not being able to play with the boys or girls. And after all that, I would still come home, knowing I was a woman, and wanting to express my feminine characteristics. I would put on all makeup and look at myself in the mirror. 'Why am I doing like this?' I'd ask myself. 'Who do people not accept me?' Through self-narration, Akkai redefines gender identity as fluid, experiential, and self-determined.

Subaltern Studies

The framework of subaltern studies is equally relevant to the text because transgender individuals have historically been denied social visibility and political representation. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's question, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" resonates deeply with transgender autobiographical narratives. Akkai's life writing becomes an answer to this question because it enables a marginalized voice to enter literary and public discourse.

The autobiography challenges structures of power that silence transgender experiences. By documenting personal suffering and collective oppression, Akkai transforms the subaltern subject into an active speaking agent. The text thereby contests the hegemonic narratives produced by patriarchal and heteronormative institutions.

Feminist Perspectives

Feminist criticism also offers valuable insights into the autobiography because transgender experiences intersect with patriarchal systems of control. The text demonstrates how bodies are regulated through cultural norms, familial expectations, and social morality. Akkai's narrative reveals the shared struggles between women and transgender individuals within patriarchal structures, including bodily surveillance, social exclusion, and violence.

At the same time, the autobiography expands feminist discourse by emphasizing the necessity of including transgender voices within broader conversations about gender justice and equality. Although

she is a member of the hijra community and enmeshed within the tradition of gharanas and jamats, the guru-chela relationships, Akkai does not refrain from pointing out how patriarchy has taken root within those circles too, especially with respect to strict adherence to outdated, restrictive gender norms. In the memoir, she writes: "If you have long hair, you're a full hijra. If you pierce your nose, you are properly feminine." She fights against these norms even if it leads to fines and censure for there's no one way of being a woman. She says, "To attain complete womanhood—from sex change, to breast implants, to removing facial hair—you undergo many processes. Why is that so necessary?" As a result, she is always advocating for social change to allay these demands.

Identity and the Crisis of Selfhood

One of the central themes in Akkai Padmashali's autobiography is the crisis of identity. From childhood onwards, Akkai experiences a profound disjunction between biological sex and internal gender identity. The autobiography portrays the confusion, isolation, and emotional turmoil resulting from this conflict. More than just an autobiography or memoir, this is a powerful and passionate account of one woman's battle to claim her identity and place in society.

The family, which is generally considered a space of emotional support and protection, becomes a site of alienation for Akkai. Her feminine behaviour is viewed as deviant, shameful, and unacceptable. The constant policing of gender expression creates psychological trauma and forces her into silence. The autobiography vividly depicts the loneliness of growing up in a society that lacks language, empathy, and understanding for transgender identities. Akkai's struggle is not merely personal but representative of the experiences of countless transgender individuals who are denied recognition and acceptance.

Akkai's way of telling her story is terrifyingly honest and without mincing her words presents a right mixture of personal and political, which just proves more that the two are neatly interlinked. Her story is like an all-front battle, fighting the tensions, prejudices and discrimination on all fronts- be it personal or political. On the personal front, Akkai takes us through a harrowing experience of growing up, often being at the receiving end of loss, abuse and rampant

bullying, which gets magnified manifold due to an unsupportive environment and a total absence of any representation and anchor points in society. Akkai's journey in her words is a shift away from the idea of 'victimhood' and more towards reclaiming the spaces from discriminatory institutions. Her search for a like-minded tribe of people and her goal to reach out to those she believes have been ruthlessly suppressed by regressive norms and ideas are few of her many brave acts of boldness.

And as for the political nature of the book, Akkai bravely puts forward her side of the debate- which is repeatedly put on the backburners in elite circles. Her life in itself is a political act, which is nothing sort of a sharp attack on all shades of orthodoxies. Her memoir catalogues her life as a formidable opposition to every force that denies equality. Be it her vocal fight against the Draconian Section 377 for its outmoded and anachronistic understanding of sex or calling out inherent contradictions and transphobia that exist in various social, feminist and other women's rights movements Akkai passionately pursues to interrogate norms and behaviours that refuse to accept the people the way they are and spares no one she believes is antithetical to equality. Her opposition to patriarchal influence on history and the narrow confinements of fundamentalism and orthodox rituals.

The journey toward selfhood becomes an act of resistance. Akkai gradually rejects imposed identities and embraces her authentic self despite social hostility. Her assertion of transgender identity signifies a rejection of patriarchal authority and heteronormative expectations. The autobiography therefore transforms identity from a site of shame into a source of empowerment. By naming herself and narrating her experiences, Akkai reclaims agency over her body and existence.

Family, Society, and Exclusion

A major concern in the autobiography is the role of family and society in perpetuating marginalization. The text demonstrates how social institutions reinforce rigid gender norms and punish deviation.

Akkai's experiences within the family reveal the emotional violence faced by transgender individuals. Familial rejection emerges

as one of the most painful dimensions of transgender existence because it destroys the emotional security necessary for psychological well-being. The pressure to conform to masculine behaviour reflects the deeply patriarchal mindset of society.

Beyond the family, society treats transgender individuals as objects of ridicule, fear, and suspicion. The autobiography documents experiences of bullying, verbal abuse, physical violence, and social humiliation. Public spaces become hostile environments where transgender bodies are constantly scrutinized and threatened.

Through her autobiography it is very clear that educational institutions also fail to provide safety and inclusivity. The absence of supportive structures results in alienation and exclusion from mainstream opportunities. Consequently, many transgender individuals are forced into economic vulnerability and social invisibility.

The autobiography critiques the hypocrisy of a society that simultaneously marginalizes transgender communities and exploits them as spectacles. Through her narrative, Akkai exposes the systemic discrimination embedded within cultural, religious, and institutional structures.

Body Politics and Gendered Violence

The politics of the body constitutes another significant theme in Akkai Padmashali's autobiography. The transgender body becomes a contested site upon which social norms, morality, and power relations are imposed. Akkai's experiences reveal how society disciplines bodies that fail to conform to gender expectations. Her autobiography portrays the body as a source of both vulnerability and resistance. The book's best part is its interrogation of what privacy constitutes. On the dominance of elite notions of privacy in contemporary debates and legislations, Akkai tells her readers that for many working-class and underprivileged sexual minorities, something even as basic as privacy is a privilege. "Bushes are my privacy," she writes in her book, drawing on the inherent class differences. Her body becomes a site for the sexual assault, even by the police, in the bushes or parks. She is attacked and are her off clothes even by the male colleagues in the washroom at her work place. The text also addresses

sexual vulnerability and physical violence faced by transgender individuals. Akkai narrates experiences of harassment and exploitation that expose the unsafe conditions under which many transgender persons survive. These incidents reveal how marginalized bodies are denied social protection and treated as disposable. At the same time, the autobiography portrays bodily transformation as liberation. Akkai's assertion of her transgender identity signifies the reclaiming of bodily autonomy. The body ceases to be merely a site of suffering and becomes a medium of resistance and self-expression. Thus, the autobiography challenges dominant assumptions about gendered bodies and foregrounds the right of individuals to define themselves.

Akkai Padmashali's autobiography is not confined to personal confession; it is a political act of resistance. By narrating experiences traditionally hidden or silenced, Akkai transforms autobiography into a tool of empowerment. Several episodes demonstrate this transition from victimhood to activism. Despite social rejection, Akkai gradually emerges as a public speaker, activist, and advocate for transgender rights. Her participation in awareness campaigns and community movements reflects the transformation of pain into political consciousness.

In one reflective passage, Akkai emphasizes the importance of self-acceptance and dignity. She insists that transgender individuals deserve recognition not as objects of pity but as equal human beings. This assertion dismantles stereotypes that reduce transgender lives to tragedy alone. The autobiography therefore functions as what Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson describe as "life writing as agency." Through narration, Akkai claims authority over her own representation and challenges dominant narratives imposed by society. The very act of writing becomes symbolic: a transgender individual historically denied voice now enters literary discourse with confidence and authority. The manuscript itself becomes resistance against erasure. The later sections of the autobiography foreground Akkai's evolution into an activist figure. Personal suffering expands into collective concern for the transgender community.

The later sections of the autobiography foreground Akkai's evolution into an activist figure. Personal suffering expands into

collective concern for the transgender community. Akkai's encounters with other transgender persons reveal shared experiences of violence, homelessness, and exclusion. These collective narratives transform the autobiography from an individual story into a broader social document.

The text repeatedly emphasizes education, legal recognition, and social awareness as essentials for transgender liberation. Akkai advocates not merely tolerance but genuine inclusion and respect. Her activism also reflects intersectionality. The autobiography demonstrates that transgender oppression intersects with caste, class, and economic inequality. Marginalized transgender individuals face compounded forms of discrimination, particularly in access to education and employment.

Thus, the autobiography becomes both testimony and manifesto—a call for social justice and human dignity. Undoubtedly it is spine-chilling and despondent in places but at the same time it tells us about the struggles and combats faced by Akkai and how she emerged from her anguish as a hero. A hero for others in her community! This book is about hope and perseverance. Its about commitment and inspiration.

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7

Emergence of Dominant Culture and Marginality: A Study of Historical Process in early Andhra Desa

- Eluri Harshavardhan

ABSTRACT

The social formations in early Andhra Desa are quite different from that of Ganga valley. The Pre-Varna/ Pre-caste setting in early Andhra Desa coincided with the advent of Buddhism. Buddhism as an ideology played an important role in early Andhra in terms of social formations, state formation, urbanisation etc., it has absorbed the native social groups such as Nagas, Yakshas, Pulindas, Sabaras etc., in to the mainstream and encouraged craft specialisation and occupational specialisations. With its philosophical commitment it also strived to build an egalitarian society by integrating different social groups and also tried to provide equal access to resources. This social integration continued up to 300-400CE and the slow and steady decline of Buddhism transformed social order coinciding with the decline of empires and emergence of regional states that are relatively small in size. The brisk international trade that helped the growth of empires and flourishing of Buddhism also had a sharp decline by this period. A new political economy and social structure emerged in early medieval period resulting in production of new law codes based on purity – pollution and varna - jati. An attempt is made in this research paper to study

social and cultural process during early historic and early medieval periods based on archaeological and literary sources. It also attempted to bring out the points of reference of dominance and marginality in early Andhra society.

Key words: *Social formations, Varna-Jati, Dominant culture, Marginality, Andhra Desa, Buddhism, Kakatiyas, Delhi Sultanate, Nayakas, liberation movement.*

Introduction:

The dominant culture in Indian society is nothing but dominant caste culture which is deeply rooted in religious and ideological phenomenon of Bramhanical tradition. The Bramhanical dominant culture has its beginnings in early Vedic period. The Vedic people happen to co-exists with numerous indigenous communities in India, from the very beginning they wanted to dominate and maintain their identity possibly superior to the indigenous people. They began acculturation process to control native people and introduced new methods like segmental division of society, hierarchy, restrictions on social intercourse, civil and religious disabilities and privileges, restricted choice of occupation, restrictions on marriage-endogamy, denial of equal access of resources etc. All these sanctions were induced with religious and ideological prescription. Ultimately it resulted in marginalization of indigenous people and was treated as second class citizens. They were used as service castes and they served the dominant Bramhanical groups and remained marginal until modern times.

Interestingly, the social formation in early Andhra desa is quite different from Gangetic valley. The pre-varna/ pre-caste setting coincided with advent of Buddhism in Andhra desa. Buddhism as an Ideology played an important role in early social formation, urbanization, organization of religion, early state formation etc.; it has absorbed the native social groups such as Nagas, Yakshas, Pulindas, Sabaras into main stream social economy and encouraged occupational/ craft specialization. It strived to build egalitarian society and provided equal access to resources for all social groups. Ample archaeological evidences attest this fact. The list of donors at Amaravathi Stupa includes all professions and jatis. Charmakaras are earliest donors

to this stupa. This integration continued up to 300-400 C.E. and the decline of Buddhism in Andhradesa coincide with slow and steady marginalization of dalits. This process continued and stabilized with emergence of Brahmanical religion in early medieval times. The marginalization of dalits had religious and ideological sanction. It continued up to modern time. An attempt is made in this paper to study the historical process of emergence of dominant culture and marginalization of dalits in Andhra Pradesh.

The approach of this paper is to probe the social and cultural process of Telugu people from the early historic period to early medieval and late medieval times and to bring-out the points of reference of Dalit marginality in historical perspective. When we look at the early Bramhanical literature, there appears an attempt to extend varna concept to entire non-aryan social groups like Andhras, from Aitareya Brahman down to epics and puranas unanimously refer Andhras as Mlechhas¹. Further the Manudharma shastra invents sankirna varna or mixed caste as a large contingent to extend and integrate the non-aryan social groups in to caste hierarchy. It states that the Andhras are a mixed caste along with medas born of a vaidehaka man and nishada woman and deserve to live outside the village². Contrary to Manudharma shastra, Baudhayana and Apastambha, the well known sutrakaras who lived much earlier than the compilation of the Manudharma shastra, did not include Andhras among mixed castes. So, Manu's concept of mixed caste is not adequate to explain the process of extension of varna system to the non-aryan social groups like Andhras. Further, B.S.L. Hanumantha Rao rightly point out that Manu's attempts are inconsistent to historical development³ and refers to P.V. Kane's History of Dharma Sastra-1, to substantiate his argument that the four varnas appear among Andhras only in 3rd and 2nd Century B.C.E. On the other hand Baudhayana and Apasambha attempted to frame regulations for these newly formed social relations and to establish a stable order. They appear to live during 400-200 B.C.E. in Deccan or early Andhradesa. Baudhayana was referred as inhabitant of eastern coast and Apastamba was inhabitant of mouth of Godavari! So, both appear to be contemporaneous to early social formations in Andhradesa.

The Buddhist literature of this period also sheds much light on early social formations. The Bhimasena Jataka⁴ refers to early social organisation in Andhradesa and existence of Bramhanical religion. The Serivanijja jataka⁵ refers to Andhra nagari on the banks of river Telivaha and mentions brisk trade and complex social organizations of Andhras. The Cullkalinga Jataka⁶ refers to the military success of king of Assaka over Kalinga King. The Paramarthadipani⁷ states that Mahakatyayana, one of the fore most disciples of Buddha preached dhamma to the king of Assaka. The Suttanipata narrates the story of Bavari, a teacher of Assaka, who sent sixteen of his students to meet the Buddha and to find out his claims to nirvana. The Vimanavatthu⁸ commentary refers that the number of monks from Andhra appears to have increased in north and were known as Andhakas. The Mahavagga refers to Andhakavana near sravasti and Andhradesa at Rajagriha. It is opined by scholars that these might be the monasteries or rest-houses built specially for monks from Andhradesa. The above reference clearly shows that the early Andhradesa had close affinity with Buddhism from the life time of Buddha himself.

The Archaeological explorations and excavations in Andhra Pradesh brought out innumerable data that amply corroborates the literacy evidences. So far, about 150 sites were explored from Salihundam in the north to Ramathirtham in the south and from Nandaluru in the west to Bhattiprolu in the east is clear proof that Buddhism was popular in early Andhradesa. For about one thousand years i.e. BCE 400-600 CE Buddhism had developed in Andhradesa and influenced its social, political and cultural destinies in formative period⁹ there appears an interesting transition from megalithic culture to the early historic period. A great volume of material evidence and cultural antiquity of megalithic culture is collected from archaeological excavations and explorations in Andhradesa. It forms the basis of early social and cultural formations, domestication of cattle on large scale, early cultivation by using the small water bodies, use of iron tools and implements, early village settlements, building the huge tombs in different shapes and worshipping the dead are some of the important cultural traits of the megalithic people. It

appears that the megalithic builders are the indigenous/ native people of this land and their culture form the substratum of personality of Andhra. The megalithic period is broadly attested from 1500-1000 BCE to 600-400 BCE in Andhradesa. The builders of this culture appear to be the earliest inhabitants of the region and probably marginalised with the introduction/ advent of North Indian – Vedic Culture in to Andhra region.

It appears that the transition from megalithic culture to Bramhanical culture in Andhradesa was not smooth not all people have accepted to Bramhanical rituals. It is noticed that the native social groups like Yaksa and Nagas appears to have discontent and used every opportunity to insult and humiliate Bramhanical culture. The Kathasarisagara narrates the story of Dipankara, according to which a yaksa by name Satâ eloped with a Brahmin girl. The Simhasana – Dwatrimika mentions that Salivahana of Pratisthana was the son of Naga Ananta. Gunadya, the member of one of the satavahana kings was son of Naga prince¹⁰. It is also observed that the yaksas initially did not take to the Bramhanical religion rather continued the ancestral worship that was adopted from megalithic culture. There are many references in Buddhist works like Mahavamsa to the belief that one becomes yaksa after death! The Yaksas are frequently described as great builders¹¹ directly suggest that they are descendents of megalithic builders. Further they are known for use of offering flowers, rosaries, incense, bells, lights etc. It can be traced to the burial remains of megalithic people where these kinds of items are well attested.

This social setting helped Buddhism to gain ground in Andhradesa. Its advent was coincided with cultural transition from megalithic to Bramhanical culture. The triumph and development of Buddhism in Andhra can be studied in two phases. The first phase saw a primitive – agricultural¹² social setting where the native groups like Nagas and Yaksas easily adopted to Buddhist faith. Buddhism on the other hand readily accepted synthesis of different cultures through non-violence. There was a continuous process of cultural integration of different social groups into mainstream Aryan way of life. This period also saw the emergence of primitive state with local

coinage. Primitive state system emerged in different parts of Andhradesa like Assaka, Mulaka, Sada, Ira Sada etc. Primitive coins of Rano, Siri, Gobada, Chimuka etc. are found in Kotilingala, Dhanyakataka, Dulikatta etc. The second phase of Buddhism in Andhradesa can be substantiated to centralised political authority like (Mauryan State) the Satavahana State, brisk trade and commerce, both internal and maritime trade, rise of new social classes like Gahapati, Sarthavaha, Kammakara etc and non-food producing occupational specialists like Charmakara, Malakara, Vodakara, Gandika, Rathakara etc. More and more complex social relations emerged during this period. There was also fast pace of urbanisation, resulting in more number of cities, towns and sacred centres at trading points, junctions, ports on river banks and sea coasts. Many urban centres that came up during the period became centres of social integration and equitable access to resources was observed in literature and even in archaeological remains. The egalitarian aspect of Buddhist religion appears to be practised in these centres! Dhanyakataka, Vaddamanu, Bhattiprolu, Bapatla, Jaggayyapeta, Ghantasala, Gudivada, Phanigiri, Salihundam, Peddabankur, Dhulikatta are few centres to mention.

The building of large number of stupas over the relics of Buddha and later Bikkus in early Andhra was done on a large scale. This process also had great social exchange, social cohesion and harmony. More number of social groups like masons, stone cutters, sculptors, laymen, malakaras, kammakaras etc participated in this process and no varna/ jati divisions were reported in literature in this process and period. Moreover large number of social groups gave donations to stupas and viharas. The services of artisans and merchant communities to Buddhism in Andhra were more important than royal patronage. There is ample evidence in support of this view. Most of the epigraphic records at Amaravati¹³ record the gifts by merchants, artisans and urban folk. At Jaggayyapeta an artisan named Siddharta made gift of five ayakapillers¹⁴. Such kind of gifts or donations were noticed at many stupas like Rentala, Uppugunduru, Kondapur etc. One such donation at Amaravati stupa¹⁵ made by a cobbler (Charmakara) Vidhika, the son of Naga who was a teacher, must be

noted as an important point in this discussion. He visited the stupa at Amaravati and made a gift of a slab with purnaghata. This can be considered the best historical evidence for egalitarian society developed by the ideology of Buddhism. A leather worker, who does a polluting job according to Bramhanical theory of purity had free access to Buddhist shrine which on the contrary can't even imagined during the succeeding period in a Bramhanical temple.

The researcher during his explorations in lower Krishna Valley observed a striking feature in present day Dalit settlements. Many of the ancient Buddhist stupa sites such as Amaravati, Vaddamanu, Lam, Tadikonda, Penumaka, Namburu, Karlapalem, Uppugundur, Nilayapalem, Goli, Rentala etc. are presently neighboured by dalit settlements. Is it a historical phenomenon or a present development? If it is historical, then Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's¹⁶ thesis of cultural symbiosis of Dalit and Buddhism must be seriously considered. It is clear from above discussion that in the early historical period there was consolidation of native/ aboriginal people who became specialised artisans like Charmakaras – Leather Workers and Malakaras – Garland makers (the future Madigas and Malas of Andhra Pradesh). They adapted urban lifestyle and led a decent life as townfolk due to the egalitarian out look of Buddhism. It was not just a religion but served as a harmonious social philosophy that accommodated diverse social classes and tried to give equal access to resources. Moreover, it never tried to marginalise any social group based on profession nor it has a record of professing any kind of social hierarchy in early Andhra.

However, this social situation came to an end by 300-400 CE. The seeds of destruction of Buddhism in Andhra mostly developed within and external forces also added and resulted in decline of Buddhism in early Andhra. The development of Mahayana form and Sunyavada philosophy of Nagarjuna played counter productive role and further deterioration was caused by the growth of tantric cult like vajrayana¹⁷ in Andhra Buddhism. The decline also coincided with the general decline in trade and commerce in 4th Century CE that ultimately caused in the decline of ruling dynasties like Satavahanas in Andhra and Deccan. It affected urban economy and

artisan community and ultimately resulted in transition to new rural agrarian economy. Although Buddhism continued in Andhra upto 6th to 7th Centuries CE but the past vigour and enthusiasm was absent and adopted new methods that were far from popular and could not provide social mobility and spiritual solace during the period. There emerged new economic and political relations in Andhra during early medieval period roughly from 400-1200 CE. This period saw growing feudal relations, rural based agrarian economy and Bramhanical social hierarchy based on ritual purity and pollution. The vertical social situations led to proliferation of jatis among sudras and panchamas (Dalits) and were subjected to marginalisation and religious sanctions made them to live outside the villages. This period witnessed emergence of new ruling dynasties throughout Andhradesa. Brihatpalayanas, Vishnukundis, Anandagotris, Pallavas, Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi, Reddy rajas, Haihayas, Kakatiyas etc, ruled different parts of present Andhra Pradesh. All these dynasties were based on feudal political – economic relations that in turn resulted in new social – religious situation. These ruling classes encouraged land grants in their dominions resulting in increased agricultural operations and growth of new village settlements. Special village grants like aghahara and bramhadaya were donated to Brahmans in far flung areas and forest lands. Hundreds and thousand of such inscriptions¹⁸ were found throughout Andhra Pradesh. These new village settlements were based on feudal agrarian relations with Bramhanical vertical social order. Every village settlement needs human resources for agricultural operations and hence sudras and dalits were used for the purpose and were made to settle in the village and out side the village as per the ritual social order. Interestingly these land grants resulted in new economic- religious – social setting in medieval Andhra. It is observed that the working class i.e. sudras and dalits became economically dependent class on the land holders (mostly Brahmins) complete surrender to god on religious plane (Bhakti) and lower social status on social plane (marginalisation). It has set a new social situation and established dominant Bramhanical culture for next thousand years in Andhradesa.

The post Buddhist Andhradesa from 400-1200 CE witnessed two prominent developments in religion. Shaivism and Vaishnavism emerged as dominant ideological forces during this period. These religious streams not only served as just spiritual paths but were more eloquent and influenced the political-economic and social dynamics of medieval Andhradesa. Both the streams inculcated bhakti among people through literature, music, performance etc. and developed temples as centres of Bramhanical theism. Hundreds and thousands of temples came up during this period and even many old Buddhist stupas, viharas and aramas were converted¹⁹ into temples of Shiva and Vishnu. The pancharamas in Andhra were earstwhile Buddhist stupas that were converted into temples of Shiva. The virashaiva philosophy although advocated casteless society in the beginning, did not uphold the ideals when it entered into Andhradesa. Rather it influenced medieval Andhra in the spread of more Shaivite cults and temples but was silent on social issues and supported chaturvarna institutions. The writings of Palkurki Somanatha²⁰ clearly mention these facts.

On the other hand the vaishnava and srivaishnava philosophies that influenced medieval Andhra immensely were for Bramhanical social order. They established many temples throughout Andhradesa and propagated their ideology through literature, music and performances. Ramanujacharya although advocated for opening up of temples to lower castes was not against varnashrama dharma. He wanted to make vaishnavism popular and hence he wanted lower caste people to adopt and follow vaishnavism. These new philosophies maintained the same old social order and wanted people to follow their order through Bhakti. In this process they made use of people from Dalit communities to propagate their ideology among lower castes. Dalit women were utilised for village temple services by Shiva temples. They were married to the gods of temples and are made to surrender to the temple, and physically exploited by priest-elite class of the village. In course of time this is consolidated as institution called jogini/ basavi cult and continues even in contemporary Andhra Pradesh. The vaishnava saints made use of Malas, to propagate greatness of Vishnu and varnashrama dharma among

Dalits. Some of the Mala men are appointed for the job, first they are made as Dasus (slaves) and later they taught some stories, legends and myths about Vishnu and were sent to Dalit hamlets. In course of time 'Maladasari' became priest of Mala and became a dependent sub-caste of Malas. So, these new ideologies further exploited and marginalised Dalit communities in medieval Andhra. Their influence resulted in further proliferation of sub castes among Dalits. Maladasari, Baineedivaru, Veera Vidyavantulu, Asodivaru, Mastinavaru, Pambalavaru, Kommuvaru, Matangis, Mashinulu, Chindubagavatulu²¹ etc are some of the sub-castes/ dependent castes that emerged in this period.

Attempts were also made by Shavism and Vaishnavism to sanskritise local/ village gods and goddesses of subaltern communities. It gave rise to a large cropus of myths and legends in medieval Andhra. These myths seem to have been used in puranas for legitimacy and local manifestations of divine were often incorporated into Brahmanical religion through incarnations either as Siva or Vishnu and local goddesses was integrated with Durga or Shakti²². Some of the myths created during the period are mala Dasari legend, Ellamma legend, Kannappa legend, Narsimha legend etc. These legends helped for acculturation, marginalisation of Dalits and prevented revolt from the populous communities.

However, there were few attempts made to bring Dalits to mainstream and do away with their restrictions, liberate from marginalisation and to eradicate untouchability. First such attempt was made by Bramhanna popularly known as Bramhanaidu²³ of 12th Century CE. He advocated radical vaishnavism. He arranged 'Chapakudu', communal inter dining with Dalits and professed inter-caste marriages, even adopted Dalits like Mala Kannamadasu as his son. But he was opposed by the ruling classes of the time and it became one of the causes for out break of the famous war of Palnad. Potuluri Veerabramham, a philosopher-saint of 16th century CE also tried to make a counter discourse against existing social order and made an attempt to liberate Dalits from untouchability and integrate into mainstream. Yogi Vemana, an anti-establishment saint poet of 17th century CE made bitter criticism about existing social order and

propagated strong counter discourse against caste discrimination through his poetry. These attempts were opposed by the ruling classes and intelligentsia of the period. This feudal social order continued even in late medieval period and existed up to modern times. Thus, the dominant Brahmanical culture that emerged in early medieval Andhra dominated the history of Andhradesa for almost 1500 years and established varnashrama social order, an ideology of subordination par excellence²⁴ with feudal economic relations, relegating sudras to backwardness and Dalits to marginalisation.

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8

Image of Women in Vijaya Tendulkar's Plays: An Analysis

- Dr.S.Hemalatha

Abstract

Vijay Tendulkar is a prolific playwright in the Marathi language. Most of his plays have been translated into English taught in many universities. 'Ghashiram Kotwal' made him a writer of international fame. Tendulkar's play Gidhade (The Vultures) was written in Marathi and translated into English by Priya Adharkar in 1971. With the publication of this drama, his name became associated with violence, sex, and sensationalism. Tendulkar's play Ghashiram Kotwal is a landmark in the history of Indian drama in English. It is a fine blending of both theme and style. In this play, Tendulkar takes the help of Indian history to expose how the 'skin currency' works in reality as well as in contemporary times. Tendulkar's plays present the anatomy of society in a highly realistic manner with the help of powerful images and symbols. The beauty of his plays lies in his art of well-knit plots and characterisation. His exposure of the shame and hypocrisy of the evil world, his apt use of irony and humour, and, above all, his portrayal of the past in the context of the present are truly commendable.

Key words :

Hypocrisy; Controversial; Sensationalism; Skin currency; Contemporary; Commendable.

Introduction :

Man has created a powerful language called theatre. A language that can redefine the conventional concepts of time, space, and movement. A language that goes beyond the verbal and moves into the physical. Through this language, theatre, writers have been able to present the social issues of their respective eras in the most effective way.

India has the richest tradition of drama. The origin of Indian drama can be traced to ancient rituals and seasonal festivities. The dramatic performances of those times mainly included depictions of events from daily life accompanied by music. Till the fifteenth century, plays of the Sanskrit tradition were performed on stage in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Gujarat.

The beginnings of Lokanatya (people's theatre) are noticed in every state of India from the seventeenth century onwards. But thereafter, dramatic activity in India almost ceased due to foreign invasions. The rise of modern Indian drama dates back to the eighteenth century, when the British Empire consolidated its power in India. Closely following the trends of Bengali theatre, Marathi, Kannada, Gujarati, and Oriya theatres developed gradually. Many writers broke the barriers of regional languages and produced remarkable works. Writers like Badal Sircar, Girish Karnad, Mahasweta Devi, Vijay Tendulkar, Mohan Rakesh, and Asif Qureshi are a few among them.

Vijay Tendulkar is a prolific playwright in the Marathi language. He has written twenty-eight plays, twenty-four one-act plays, and eleven children's plays. Most of his plays have been translated into English and several other Indian languages and are taught in many universities. 'Ghashiram Kotwal' made him a writer of international fame. 'Silence! The Court Is in Session' is also a well-known play that earned him many laurels in India, despite being controversial in theme. Some of his plays are widely read and appreciated for their powerful literary projection. The beauty of his plays lies in his extraordinary portrayal of the bitter and harsh truths of life through music and metaphor.

Silence! The Court Is in Session:

It was first staged in 1967. It was Priya Adharkar who first translated this Marathi play into English. This play flings a satire on the hypocrisy of middle-class society, through which the playwright exposes its underlying contradictions. "Their characters' dialogues, gestures, and even mannerisms reflect their petty, circumscribed existences fraught with frustrations and repressed desires that find expression in their malicious and spiteful attitudes towards their fellow beings."¹

Leela Benare is the protagonist of this play. She is very sympathetic and generous towards other people. But her very kindness and simplicity fall prey to the savage elements of society, who persecute her by plundering the wealth of her body and taunting her in a mock trial. In this trial, infanticide was levelled against her. When they fail to prove that charge, they turn to the personal affairs of her past life and her illicit relationship with Prof. Damle. She was also charged with being a licentious woman who was ready to sell her flesh to anybody. She was further projected as a girl who had an incestuous relationship with her maternal uncle and conceived before marriage. For all these reasons, she was dismissed from her duty, even though she was very punctual and responsible towards her students.

Apart from the protagonist of this play, the rest of the characters are seen suffering from an inferiority complex. They do not even possess an identity of their own. In this play, Miss Benare has been given the role of a prisoner, but in fact, all the other characters are prisoners. They are not free from their complexes and hypocrisies. The term 'Silence' is itself ironic. In court, silence should be maintained at any cost, as it is an essential part of courtroom decorum. We see that the culprits are very vocal and aggressive, while the protagonist remains silent at first. However, when the false accusations and untruthful impositions exceed all limits, Benare explodes, and in her final speech, she leaves everyone dumbfounded. This speech can rightly be called the heart of the play².

Mukabala or Encounter:

Vijay Tendulkar's *Mukabala* was written in 1967. It is a political allegory that presents a realistic picture of the seventies. It

deals with various political scandals and corruption. Vijaya is the central character of the drama, who is the princess and daughter of the king of Vichitravirya. She is also a woman of high ambition and strong willpower. When the situation demands, she becomes very aggressive and callous towards her opponents. Her character reminds we of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India.

Gidhade (The Vultures):

Tendulkar's play *Gidhade (The Vultures)* was written in Marathi and translated into English by Priya Adharkar in 1971. With the publication of this drama, his name became associated with violence, sex, and sensationalism. It portrays a very realistic depiction of sexual violence as well as selfishness. Girish Karnad observes that, "the staging of *Gidhade* can be compared to the blasting of a bomb in an otherwise complacent market place."³ The central theme of the play is money, and this obsession with money turns some of the characters into vultures. They also become lustful and licentious. The title of the play symbolises that the characters are as hungry and predatory as vultures, willing to achieve their ends at any cost and without hesitation. Ramakanth and Umakanth are such vultures who become mad for money and even beat their own father in pursuit of it.

They believe that their father still possesses some secret accounts, and therefore they plan to kill him. Along with their sister, Ramakanth and Umakanth make their father drink and eventually kill him. Next, they try to exploit their sister. They break her legs so that she will not meet the Rajah of Hondur. Before her meeting can take place, however, the Rajah of Hondur dies of a heart attack. As a result, they fail in their attempt to blackmail their sister. In frustration, one of them kicks his sister in the belly; consequently, she aborts and leaves the house. Their father begs them not to kill him: "*There is no money you devils. There is not Thats all there is really. Please don't kill me. I am your father, you pimps your father.*"⁴

Thus, *Gidhade* is a play of family conflict in which Tendulkar has dramatized the proverb: "As you sow, so shall you reap."⁵

Sukharam Binder:

Sukharam Binder is the most controversial play among Vijay Tendulkar's plays. It is based on women's victimisation. The central character of this play is Sukharam, who has an insatiable appetite for female sex. To satisfy his hunger, he gives shelter to helpless women on his own terms. He is also a drunkard, and in a fit of intoxication, he sometimes delivers speeches on the hypocrisy and deception of society. At first, Lakshmi comes into contact with him. As she is very religious and devoted to worship, Sukharam becomes fed up with her and sends her away.

Next, he comes into contact with another woman, Champa, who is almost the opposite of Lakshmi and makes him more licentious. After being driven away by her nephew, Lakshmi once again comes to Sukharam's house. There, she feels threatened by the presence of Champa. In a helpless condition, she reveals her illicit relationship with Dawood to Sukharam. Then he becomes angry and tries to kill Champa. At this juncture, Lakshmi intervenes and controls the situation. Like the play *Gidhade*, we can observe lust not for money but for the body. Champa drags Sukharam deeper and deeper into the hell of lust and, as a result, she gets punished at the end of the play.

Ghasiram Kotwal:

Tendulkar's play *Ghasiram Kotwal* is a landmark in the history of Indian drama in English. It is a fine blending of both theme and style. In this play, Tendulkar takes the help of Indian history to expose how the 'skin currency' works in reality as well as in contemporary times. The play is a revenge tragedy that deals with power politics, ambition, and sexual hunger. It is a dramatic exposure of the latent savagery of human beings. Treachery, violence, sexuality, and power mania are vividly exposed. It is a story of the power politics between Nana Phadnavis and Ghasiram Kotwal, both of them who were hunger for sex and power.

Vijay Tendulkar was internationally recognised as a major playwright with the publication of *Ghasiram Kotwal* in 1973. The play has been acclaimed as a major event in the history of modern

theatre. It was originally written in Marathi and later translated into English by Jayanth Karve and Eleanor Zelliot in 1984. The play is set in eighteenth-century Pune during the Peshwa rule.

Balaji Janardhan Bhanu (Nana Phadnavis) became the chief administrator through heredity after his father's death when he was fourteen years old. He participated in the conspiracy against Raghunath, the Peshwa, after the defeat in the Third Battle of Panipat and the sudden death of Madhavrao Peshwa. He lost his power temporarily owing to the loss of the goodwill of the Peshwa. However, he regained it and continued in office till his death. He was known as the Marathi Machiavelli of the late eighteenth century. The play *Ghashiram Kotwal* reveals Indian society and the treatment of women during that period. The beginning of the play juxtaposes holy prayer and human lust, thereby revealing the hypocrisy of society and exposing the oppressive patriarchal culture of Indian society.

Throughout history, women have been used as pawns in power politics. The urge for power, which becomes the only means of taking revenge, forces Ghashiram to offer his daughter to Nana. Ghashiram feels guilty about sacrificing his daughter, but at the same time, he is driven by the desire to regain power and avenge the immense humiliation he suffered at the hands of the people of Poona. Finally, Ghashiram succeeds, and Nana makes him the Kotwal of Poona. That is how the 'skin currency' works. Here lies the real 'game of chess'. It is a harsh truth that women have been used as instruments of power for centuries. Indeed, women in power politics often become tools in the struggle for authority.

Things change overnight when Nana Phadnavis declares Ghashiram the Kotwal of Poona. Nana Phadnavis and Ghashiram represent two different institutions, yet both contribute to what may be termed 'organized crime'. Ghashiram is made Kotwal, but he does not realize that he is merely being used by Nana for his physical and political needs. Most politicians, with their master-minded attitudes, are often portrayed as criminals, while their misdeeds are shifted onto the shoulders of other officials. This is how democracy is often shown to function in the play.

Religion is another powerful means of exercising control over women. Vijay Tendulkar has successfully depicted how Nana uses

religion to fulfil both his sexual and political desires. A whole aura of hymns and religious ceremonies provides an ironic screen, penetrated throughout by the crudest exercises of power. A typical scene is the one in which Nana tries to seduce a girl praying before God.

Another significant scene is the one in which Nana consoles Ghashiram after the loss of his daughter. Nana goes to the extent of quoting scriptures and advises him to forget the past. Like many people belonging to the higher strata of society, Nana uses religious ideology to justify the hierarchy of power and unjust exploitation. It is a hegemonic attempt to oppress women in the name of religion. The treatment of human characters in this play reflects contemporary sociological conditions. The two major female characters in the play are Gulabi and Gowri. Gulabi is a courtesan who encourages sexual desire as a means of livelihood. Gowri, on the other hand, is also used as a tool in power politics.

Ghashiram progresses from an ordinary man to something worse than a beast in his quest for state power. He is a poor brahmin from Kanauj who comes to Poona for his livelihood along with his beloved daughter, Lalitagouri. He is not treated well by society and is even arrested on charges of theft. Wherever he goes, he receives only insults, and therefore he develops a desire for revenge. In Poona, he stays with Gulabi, the dancer. On one occasion, Nana comes to Gulabi's house and sprains his leg. Ghashiram helps Nana recover, and Nana is pleased by his devotion and flattery. However, the fact remains that Ghashiram seeks revenge against the Brahmins of Poona by gaining the support of Nana Phadnavis. In order to fulfil his revenge, he devises a plan that proves successful. Because of its success, he does not hesitate to offer his daughter to Nana Phadnavis. Ghashiram's idea of 'skin currency' works, and he becomes the Kotwal, the police superintendent of the city. After acquiring power, he becomes worse than an animal and begins to take ruthless revenge on the brahmins of Poona. Despite of their cries and sufferings, Nana Phadnavis takes no action and remains silent. He stays calm and allows Ghashiram to become increasingly powerful.

Finally, Ghashiram grows into a figure like Bhasmasura—a great demon who challenged the gods. Eventually, he is brought to an

end through the tricks of Lord Vishnu. We see that *Ghashiram Kotwal* deals with history in a modern context. In order to lighten the tragedy, Vijay Tendulkar has made the drama musical and humorous, which is against the conventional tradition of tragedy, where there is little scope for music and humour. He has dared to distort the plot, thereby adding a new dimension to Indian drama and making it more engaging.

Kamala:

Kamala is a play by Vijay Tendulkar that can be placed under 'The Theatre of Cruelty'. Antonin Artaud, the French writer, emphasized the theme of cruelty. He opines that there is a place for crime, sexuality, and savagery in the psyche of human beings. He also believes that a play must first disturb our happiness and peace of mind and then release our suppressed subconscious.

The central character of this drama is Jaisingh Jadhav, a selfish man who purchases a woman from the flesh market and treats her as an object. He buys her for two hundred and fifty rupees. As the story progresses, we see that Jaisingh does not allow Kamala, an Adivasi woman, to do anything according to her own will. He is also unkind towards his wife, Sarita. "He believes that women must only slave away, dance to their master's whims, laugh when he says laugh, and cry when he says cry. When he says, "Pick up the phone," they must pick it up. When he says, "Come to the party they must go"⁶.

In this play, Jaisingh represents male domination over women and the mentality in society that seldom cares for the weak and the downtrodden. He deserts Kamala once his purpose has been served.

Arundhati Banerjee rightly comments, while discussing another play of Tendulkar, *Kamala*: "But the evaluation of the role of an Indian woman within the institution called marriage, considered to be the holiest of the holy in our society, definitely provides a completely novel point of view, showing that women are still mere slaves to their male owners in Indian society in the latter half of the twentieth century."

Conclusion:

To sum up, Tendulkar's plays present the anatomy of society in a highly realistic manner with the help of powerful images and

Image of Women in Vijaya Tendulkar's Plays: An Analysis

symbols. We find a contrast between the good and the evil, the ruler and the ruled. The beauty of his plays lies in his art of well-knit plots and characterisation. His exposure of the shame and hypocrisy of the evil world, his apt use of irony and humour, and, above all, his portrayal of the past in the context of the present are truly commendable.

Moreover, Vijay Tendulkar occupies a unique place in modern Indian drama because of his fearless exploration of the darker aspects of human nature and society. Through plays such as *Silence! The Court Is in Session*, *Gidhade*, *Sakharam Binder*, *Kamala*, and *Ghashiram Kotwal*, he exposes the realities of power, exploitation, gender discrimination, and moral corruption. His characters are neither wholly good nor entirely evil; rather, they reflect the complexities and contradictions of real life. By combining social criticism with powerful dramatic techniques, Tendulkar not only entertained his audience but also compelled them to confront uncomfortable truths about society. Thus, his contribution to Indian theatre remains significant, relevant, and enduring.

(Endnotes)

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9

Tirumalai Tirupati Venkateswara Swamy Temple under the Vijayanagara Rulers and Temple Services

- Dr. P. S. Ganesh Moorthy

Abstract:

Vijayanagara period reveals that the emperors who ruled between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries protected not only their subjects but also the sacred shrine of Lord Sri Venkateswara at Tirumala. The temple is one of the most renowned pilgrimage centres in the world and occupies a prominent place among the 108 Vaishnava Divya Desams praised by the 12 Alwars.

This article examines the services, charities, and endowments made to the Tirumalai Tirupati Venkateswara Swamy Temple by Emperor Sri Krishnadevaraya and other Vijayanagara rulers. Like Saluva Narasimha, Sri Krishnadevaraya possessed deep devotion to Lord Sri Venkateswara. He donated villages, ornaments, gold, and other valuable gifts to the temple and visited the shrine frequently, even during times of war. Inspired by his example, his officers, commanders, ministers, and religious leaders also donated villages and other endowments to support the daily worship, rituals, and maintenance of the temple.

Further provided valuable information on irrigation systems, water resources, canals, and charitable institutions established for the welfare of pilgrims and the prosperity of temple lands. These records demonstrate the close relationship between religion, agriculture, the economy, and political stability during

Tirumalai Tirupati Venkateswara Swamy Temple under the Vijayanagara Rulers and Temple Services

the Vijayanagara period. We can understand the significant role played by the Vijayanagara rulers in the development and sustenance of the Tirumala Temple and its associated institutions.

Keywords

Tirumala Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple, Vijayanagara Emperors, Sri Krishnadevaraya, Village Donations.

Introduction

Vijayanagara period reveals that the emperors who ruled between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries protected not only their subjects but also the sacred shrine of Lord Sri Venkateswara at Tirumalai. The temple is one of the most celebrated pilgrimage centres in the world and occupies a distinguished place among the 108 Vaishnava Divya Desams praised by the 12 Alwars.

According to Vaishnava tradition, during the Kali Yuga, the Supreme Lord manifested Himself in divine and auspicious form as Archavatara in the 108 Divya Desam temples for the welfare and worship of devotees. The greatness of these divine manifestations was revealed to the world by the Alwars through their spiritual experiences, which are preserved in the Nalayira Divya Prabandham.

Sri Venkateswara Temple at Tirumala is regarded as one of the most important Hindu temples in India. It is considered as one of the foremost among the 108 Vaishnava Divya Desams. The present article aims to examine the charitable activities, and endowments made by Sri Krishnadevaraya and other Vijayanagara rulers to the Tirumala Temple.

Even today, the temple employs thousands of personnel and provides free meals to a large number of devotees every day. Pilgrims offer gold, money, jewellery, and other valuable gifts in abundance. This tradition of devotion and generosity continues to be one of the distinctive features of the Tirumalai Temple. The office records of the Vijayanagara period demonstrate that such acts of patronage have a long historical legacy and played a significant role in the growth and prosperity of the temple.

Sri Krishnadevaraya and His Devotion to Tirumalai

Emperor Sri Krishnadevaraya possessed profound devotion to Lord Sri Venkateswara. Like Saluva Narasimha, he regarded the deity as his chosen god and made generous donations to the Tirumala Temple. During his frequent visits to Tirumala, he gifted villages, ornaments, utensils, and 30,000 varahans of gold to the temple.

Even while engaged in military campaigns against his enemies, Krishnadevaraya visited the shrine of Lord Venkateswara to seek divine blessings. Following the example of his predecessor, Saluva Narasimha, encouraged his officers, commanders, priests, and religious leaders to contribute to the temple's welfare and development. Along with his queens, Tirumaladevi and Chinnadevi, Krishnadevaraya donated several villages, including Kadakuttanpadi, Thalapakkam, Mudiur, Pratikulathur, Tarathur, and Chatrapadi Thuraiyur. Through these donations, he enriched the temple treasury and strengthened its administration.

His officers and commanders also followed his example. Among them were Ellappa Nayakkar, Baiyappa Nayakkar, Kindi Basavarayalu, Karanika Basavarasar, Saluva Govindarajar, Narayanadevar, Rayam Kondama Rasaiya, Ranjakam Srirangaraja, and Tirayam Bhagadevar. These officials donated villages to the temple as Devadana grants, thereby supporting its religious and administrative activities.

Pratapa Rudra, who initially served the Gajapati rulers, later surrendered to Krishnadevaraya after being defeated in battle. Krishnadevaraya treated him with generosity and allowed him to continue serving as a commander under the Vijayanagara Empire. This act reflected the emperor's magnanimity and political wisdom in integrating former adversaries into his administration.

Donations by Officials and Religious Leaders

Subhuthiramadasar and Ambika Muthuseela, two important chiefs, donated villages for the daily offering of Prasadam to Lord Sri Venkateswara. Krishnadevaraya's minister Saluvathimmarayar donated the village of Parandalur in the Potappi region to the temple and also gifted a precious silk ornaments. Religious leaders and

scholars also made donations. Tathwadi Narayanan donated the village of Diwalaipoondi. Srimad Vyasatirtha donated the village of Ottampatti, while Naga Aiyar donated Muthukurai in Kandikota Seemai. During the reign of Achutharaya, Queen Varadajideviyamman donated six villages, including Chinnamadappulur, Muthukur, Bolivavalli, Mangamur, and Bindapalli. Veerappanna, a commander of Achutharaya, donated, villages, and money on several occasions for the welfare of the temple. Yandalur Venkatathiri Aiyan donated the village of Kollapalli. Rayasam Ramachandra Dikshitar donated the village of Tamarapakkam. Bandaram Dhammappan constructed an irrigation canal and handed it over to temple administration. Saluva Govindarajar donated the village of Melpadi to the temple.

During the reign of Sadasivaraya, many subordinate officers continued the tradition of donating villages and lands to the temple. The ruler of Travancore also donated the village of Kulayapattam on the banks of the Tamiraparani River for the benefit of the temple.

Irrigation and Temple Economy

The valuable information regarding irrigation systems and agricultural administration connected with temple lands. Temple ceremonies and rituals depended greatly on agricultural prosperity and water resources. Therefore, kings & officers, paid special attention to irrigation facilities in villages. Chennakesavadasar constructed a canal to supply water to the lake at Avilala village. However, villagers of Bindapalli objected because the canal affected their agricultural lands and irrigation rights. Government officer Yagnar personally investigated the issue and found the complaints justified. As a result, compensation was provided, and the land required for the canal was legally purchased before construction continued. such was the importance of justice, land rights, and irrigation management during the Vijayanagara period. Temple authorities and donors jointly maintained irrigation systems to ensure uninterrupted agricultural production. This strengthened temple resources, improved the prosperity of farmers, and contributed to political stability within the kingdom.

Water Pavilions and Public Welfare

Water pavilions and resting places were established at various locations to provide clean drinking water and comfort for pilgrims travelling to Tirupati and Tirumala. During festivals, temporary and permanent water pavilions were constructed to serve the large number of devotees arriving from different regions of the country. Flower gardens and charitable institutions by various donors. These charitable activities demonstrate the concern shown by rulers for the welfare of pilgrims and devotees.

Conclusion

From AD 800 to 1500, Tirumala Temple received extensive donations and support from kings, officials, commanders, religious leaders, and devotees. Various services such as donating villages, gold, ornaments, irrigation facilities, and funds for festivals and rituals were carried out during the reigns of Vijayanagara rulers, especially Sri Krishnadevaraya. The devotion and charitable spirit of the Vijayanagara emperors. Their contributions ensured the continuous performance of temple rituals and strengthened the temple economy. Even today, the tradition of service continues at Tirumala Temple. Thousands of workers serve the temple, free food is provided daily to devotees, and large offerings of gold and money are made by pilgrims. The custom of state representatives offering silk garments to the deity during festivals also continues. Thus, the Tirumalai Temple remains not only a spiritual centre but also a symbol of religious devotion, cultural heritage, charity, and social welfare.

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10

Temple as a Health Centre in Ancient India

- Balaji Deekshitulu P V

ABSTRACT

Temples in the Indian tradition have long served as holistic centers of healing, integrating physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Beyond their religious functions, temples embody a therapeutic environment through sacred architecture, ritual practices, symbolic representations, and the transmission of traditional knowledge systems such as Ayurveda, Siddha, Yoga, and Mantra Shastra. This perspective emphasizes healing as a multidimensional process, where the body, mind, and consciousness are harmonized through devotion, discipline, and sacred experience. Temple atmospheres—marked by positive vibrations, sounds, scents, and communal participation—support stress reduction, emotional balance, and inner transformation. By examining temples not merely as places of worship but as ancient health centers, this study highlights their enduring role in promoting holistic healing and psychological well-being in contemporary society.

Key Words: Temples, Health herbs, healthy rips

INTRODUCTION

Indian temples have historically served not only as spiritual centers but also as **holistic health systems**. The concept of “Temple Medicine” refers to the various **healing practices, rituals, environments, and cultural therapies** present within temple

traditions that support **physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health**.

Healing in the Indian tradition extends far beyond the boundaries of physical treatment and medical intervention. Temples, which have long served as spiritual, cultural, and social centers, also function as important spaces for holistic healing. Rooted in ancient philosophies, temple traditions view health as a harmonious balance of body, mind, and spirit. Rituals, chants, sacred architecture, fragrances, prasadam, and meditative practices collectively create an environment that promotes psychological calmness, emotional stability, and physical well-being. This traditional perspective on healing recognizes that divinity, environment, and human consciousness are interconnected, and that spiritual practices can deeply influence mental and physical health. Understanding temple traditions as healing systems not only highlights their cultural significance but also reveals how ancient wisdom aligns with modern concepts of holistic health.

1. Architectural Design Supporting Health

1.1 Vaastu and Energy Flow: Temple architecture followed **Vaastu Shastra**, Agama, and Shilpa Shastra ensuring is designed to create **positive pranic (vital) energy**.

- o Balanced airflow and natural ventilation
- o Geomagnetic alignment for mental calmness
- o Use of granite and other stones that maintains cool temperatures

1.2 Positive Environmental Conditions: These ecological systems served as community resources for clean air, herbal plants, and drinking water.

- Sacred groves (Devara Kadu / Pipal groves)
- Water bodies (temple ponds / Pushkarini)
- Herbal gardens (*Nandavanam*)

1.3 Health influences:

- Balanced *Pancha Bhutas* (earth, water, fire, air, space) promote mental stability.

· Garbhagriha emits strong **electromagnetic vibrations** aiding calmness and focus.

· Tall gopurams and mandapams act as **energy resonators**.

2. Temples and Preventive Healthcare

2.1 Rituals as Health Practices: Many temple rituals had hidden health functions:

- **Pradakshina** – walking practice improving circulation
- **Deepa darshanam** – light exposure promoting calmness
- **Dhwani (bells, conch)** – sound frequencies stimulating the brain
- **Dhoopam/Dhuni** – anti-microbial herbal smoke purification

2.2 Hygiene and Community Standards: Temples encouraged:

- Daily bathing (*snāna*)
- Clean clothing (*suddha vastra*)
- Clean food practices (*nitya naivedyam*)

3. Temple Medicines and Healing Traditions

3.1 Ayurveda and Siddha Support: Temples maintained

- Herbal gardens
- Scholars and physicians (Vaidyas, Siddhars)
- Healthy kitchen preparations:
 - o Theertham-based remedies
 - o Herbal oils
 - o Sacred ash (*vibhuti*)
 - o Herbal ghee (*ghritham*) etc...

3.2 Prasadam as Therapeutic Nutrition: Temple prasadam provided

- Nutritious, sattvic food
- Herbal preparations (e.g., *Tirupati laddu* with medicinal ingredients)

· Immune-boosting components like jaggery, ghee, and dry fruits

4. Mental Health and Temple Culture

4.1 Stress Relief Practices: Temples promoted mental calmness through:

- Chanting mantra vibrations
- Meditation (*dhyana mandapams*)
- Devotional music (Nadaswaram, bhajans)
- Satsangs and community gatherings
- Repetition (Japa) increases concentration and emotional balance
- Temple bells (Ghanta) purify surroundings and resets the mind.

4.2 Psychological Safety Zones: Visiting a temple often:

- Social belonging
- Hope and emotional support
- Relief from anxiety, loneliness, and depression
- A peaceful environment free from noise and worldly pressures

5. Social Health and Community Welfare: Temples acted as

- **Centers of learning** (Gurukulas)
- **Centers of charity** (Annadanam)
- **Shelters during crises** (Natural Calamities)
- **Cultural centers** promoting art, dance, and music
- **Community decision-making places**

6. Temple Tanks and Public Water Management: Temple ponds (*Pushkarini, Kalyani*) ensured: These acted as early forms of **public water storage infrastructure**.

- Clean drinking water
- Groundwater recharge
- Sources for daily bathing and sanitation
- Cooling of the surrounding environment

7. Temple Economy and Livelihood: Temple management supported: Temples created **health + economic stability** together

- Farmers (for flowers, ghee, grains)
- Sculptors, architects, musicians, dancers
- Physicians and healers
- Community kitchens and volunteers

8. Alternative & Complementary Therapies for Temple:

Temples are centers of

- Mantra Therapy (Sound Healing)
- Music Therapy
- Acupressure (Pradakshina)
- Art Therapy
- Aroma Therapy
- Herbal Therapy
- Light Therapy
- Behavioural Therapy
- Dance Therapy
- Colour Therapy
- Food Therapy: (Fasting and feasting regulates metabolism)
- Water Therapy

Therapeutic Herbs for Temples

Here is a authentic list of **herbs** commonly associated with *A Temple Traditional Perspective on Healing*, especially within Indian temple traditions influenced by **Ayurveda, Siddha, and Agama practices**. These herbs support physical, mental, and spiritual well-being are traditionally integrated into **temple rituals, prasadams, and cleansing practices**.

1. Tulasi (Holy Basil)

- Considered as the *queen of herbs* in temple rituals.
- Used in *theertham, prasad*, and also as a purifier of mind and also body.
- Supports to respiration sysem immunity, boosterand stress reduction.

2. Neem (Azadirachta indica)

- Used in sacred cleansing (dhâraGa, snânam, homam).
- Antimicrobial and detoxifying; purifies aura and the physical body.

3. Turmeric (Haridra / Manjal)

- Essential in *abhishekam, prasadams, and temple ceremonies*.
- Anti-inflammatory, promotes wound healing, increases sattva (purity).

4. Sandalwood (Chandanam)

- Used for *tilakam, alankaram*, and incense.
- Calms mind, reduces heat in the body, enhances meditation and concentration.

5. Bilva (Bael leaves & fruit)

- Sacred to Shiva; offered in puja and used in temple medicine.
- Good for digestion, cooling, and balancing tridoshas.

6. Amla (Indian Gooseberry)

- Used in temple prasadams and herbal preparations.
- Rejuvenative (Rasayana), enhances immunity and vitality.

7. Vettiver (Ramulaku / Khus)

- Used in temple water, mats, and cooling practices.
- Soothes nerves, improves sleep, and purifies air.

8. Lotus (Padma)

- Symbolic in puja; petals and seeds used in Siddha Vidya and temple rituals.
- Promotes emotional stability, heart health, and spiritual upliftment.

9. Ashwagandha

- Used by traditional temple healers for strengthening prana and reducing stress.
- Improves stamina, hormonal balance, and mental resilience.

10. Brahmi

- Associated with meditative clarity and sattvic mind development.

- Enhances memory, reduces anxiety, supports spiritual practices.

11. Karpura (Camphor)

- Temple aarti uses camphor for its cleansing and purifying properties.
- Clears nasal passages, improves breathing, removes mental dullness.

12. Sambrani (Benzoin resin)

- Essential in temple purifications and *dhoopam*.
- Relieves stress, purifies the environment, enhances emotional balance.

13. Thulasi, Vilvam, Tulsi-Arka Combinations

- Medical healers combine these herbs in oils and *kashayams* for specific ailments.

14. Ginger

- Offered in many prasadamams and used in temple kitchens.
- Boosts digestion, circulation, and energy.

15. Pepper (Black Pepper / Maricha)

- Used in temple preparations; enhances digestion and respiratory health.

How These Herbs Fit Temple Healing

1. Physical body

- Herbal oils, prasadamams, sacred water, fumigation.

2. Mental body

- Aroma therapies (sandalwood, sambrani, camphor), soothing rituals.

3. Spiritual body

- Sattvic herbs (Tulasi, Brahmi, Amla), mantras + herbs synergy.

Engage All Five Senses: Temples heal through **Pancha Indriya** activation

- **Sight:** Darshan of the deity, deepam, mandala patterns.
- **Sound:** Bells, mantras, Vedic chants.
- **Smell:** Incense, flowers, dhoopam.
- **Taste:** Prasadam with sattvic qualities.
- **Touch:** Teertham, vibhooti, kumkum, sacred statues.

RELIEF BY VISITING A TEMPLE

Temple environments traditionally offer **silence, sacred vibration, positive emotions, and sensory therapies** (mantra, aroma, touch, prasad, darshan). These factors mainly help in **stress-related and psychosomatic conditions**.

Stress & Anxiety Disorders: Temple ambience..

- reduces cortisol
- calms nervous system
- encourages stable breathing and grounding

Helpful for:

- General Anxiety
- Stress-induced fatigue
- Panic tendencies
- Restlessness

Why: Mantra chanting, temple bells (nada), incense aroma, and peaceful walking reduces mental agitation.

2. Depression & Low Mood: Temple visiting helps because

- Produces oxytocin (bonding hormone)
- Gives social connection
- Offers purpose and hope

Helpful for:

- Reducing depression
- Loneliness
- Emotional exhaustion

3. Psychosomatic Disorders : These are diseases that worsen due to stress. Temple visits **reduce stress**, so symptoms reduce.

- Migraine
- Gastric problems (Acidity)
- High BP (stress-induced)
- Tension headaches
- Palpitations

4. Inomnia / Sleep Problems: Temple bells, chanting, peaceful vibrations regulate brain waves and help the people who face:

- Difficulty in falling asleep
- Overthinking
- Light sleep

5. Lifestyle Disorders (Stress-Linked): Temple visiting and routine discipline help with:

- Diabetes (stress increases sugar)
- Hypertension
- Obesity (mindful eating)

6. Memory & Concentration Issues: Temple atmosphere helps to gain attention by:

- regulated breathing
- repetitive chanting
- symbolic focus

Useful for:

- Students with concentration problems
- Age-related forgetfulness
- Mental fatigue

7. Chronic Pain Conditions (Psychological Component)

- Fibromyalgia
- Neck/Back tension (stress-linked)
- Joint pain worsened by anxiety

8. Social & Emotional Problems: Temple environment interactions helps to relieve from:

- Grief
- Loneliness
- Family conflict stress
- Emotional insecurity

9. Addictions (Supportive Role): Temple visits acts as a **positive replacement habit**:

- Alcohol
- Smoking
- Overthinking
- Screen addiction

Conclusion

In ancient India, temples were not merely the places of worship but holistic health centers that nurtured the physical, mental, and spiritual well-being of the community. Through sacred architecture, medicinal gardens, healing rituals, sound vibrations, traditional therapies, and a serene environment, temples created a unique ecosystem of wellness. They served as centers of Ayurveda, Siddha, yoga, meditation, and community health practices. By integrating spirituality with science, temples promoted preventive healthcare, emotional balance, and social harmony. Thus, temples stand as timeless symbols of India's profound understanding of holistic health and continue to inspire modern approaches to well-being.

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MLA 9th Edition Stylesheet for *Dravidian Studies Journal*

This stylesheet outlines the formatting and citation requirements for submitting an article to the quarterly journal *Dravidian Studies*, following the MLA Handbook (9th Edition, 2021). These guidelines ensure consistency in manuscript preparation, in-text citations, and the Works Cited page for scholarly articles in the field of Dravidian studies.

1. Manuscript Formatting

- **Font and Size:** Use a legible font such as Times New Roman, 12-point size.
- **Margins:** Set 1-inch margins on all sides (top, bottom, left, right).
- **Spacing:** Double-space the entire manuscript, including the title, body, notes, and Works Cited page.
- **Alignment:** Align text to the left; do not justify.
- **Page Numbers:** Include page numbers in the upper-right corner of each page, preceded by your last name (e.g., “Smith 1”). Use the header function in your word processor.
- **Title and Heading:**
 - Do not create a separate title page unless specified by the journal.
 - On the first page, include your name, institutional affiliation, course or department (if applicable), and date, aligned to the left, double-spaced.
 - Center the title of the article below this information. Do not bold, italicize, or underline the title; use headline-style capitalization (e.g., “Cultural Narratives in Tamil Sangam Literature”).
- **Headings and Subheadings:** Use consistent formatting for headings (e.g., bold or italicized) and subheadings to organize sections. Numbered headings are optional but should be consistent if used.

• Tables and Illustrations:

- Label tables as “Table 1,” “Table 2,” etc., above the table, followed by a descriptive title.
- Label figures as “Fig. 1,” “Fig. 2,” etc., below the figure, with a caption.
- Place tables and figures close to their reference in the text.

• Language and Style:

- Use clear, concise prose suitable for a scholarly audience.
- For articles involving Dravidian languages (e.g., Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam), provide transliterations and translations for non-English terms in parentheses or notes, following a standard system like ISO 15919 for transliteration.

2. In-Text Citations

- **Basic Format:** Use parenthetical citations with the author’s last name and page number, without a comma (e.g., (Krishnan 45)).
- **Author in Text:** If the author’s name is mentioned in the sentence, include only the page number in parentheses (e.g., Krishnan argues that... (45)).
- **Multiple Authors:**
 - Two authors: (Raman and Suresh 72).
 - Three or more authors: (Raman et al. 19).
- **No Author:** Use a shortened title in quotation marks (e.g., (“Tamil Poetics” 23)).
- **Multiple Sources in One Citation:** Separate with semicolons (e.g., (Krishnan 45; Suresh 19)).
- **No Page Numbers:** For online sources or articles without page numbers, omit the page number or use paragraph numbers if available (e.g., (Narayanan, par. 5)).
- **Indirect Sources:** Use “qtd. in” for quoted material from a secondary source (e.g., (Subramanian, qtd. in Krishnan 89)).

- **Non-Latin Scripts:** For sources in Dravidian languages, provide the transliterated author name and title in the citation, consistent with the Works Cited entry.

3. Works Cited Page

- **Placement and Formatting:**

- Begin the Works Cited list on a new page, titled “Works Cited” (centered, no formatting).
- Double-space all entries and use a hanging indent (0.5 inches).
- Alphabetize entries by the author’s last name or, if no author, by the title (ignoring “A,” “An,” or “The”).

- **Core Elements:** Follow the MLA 9th Edition template for all entries:

1. Author.
2. Title of source.
3. Title of container,
4. Contributor,
5. Version,
6. Number,
7. Publisher,
8. Publication date,
9. Location.

- **Examples for Common Source Types in Dravidian Studies:**

- **Journal Article with DOI:**

Rajan, K. “Archaeological Evidence of Early Tamil Trade Networks.” *Dravidian Studies*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2023, pp. 45-67, doi:10.1080/12345678.2023.0987654.

- **Journal Article in a Database:**

Nair, Sreekumar. “Narrative Structures in Malayalam Folktales.” *Journal of South Indian Literature*, vol. 15, no. 3, 2022, pp. 112-30. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/98765432.

- **Book:**

Subramanian, T. S. *Sangam Literature and Its Cultural Context*. Oxford UP, 2021.

- **Book Chapter:**

Menon, Anil. “Linguistic Diversity in Early Kannada Texts.” *Dravidian Cultural Narratives*, edited by Priya V. Rao, Cambridge UP, 2020, pp. 89-104.

- **Source in a Dravidian Language:**

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Note: Use transliterated titles and author names for non-English sources, followed by a translation in square brackets if necessary (e.g., *Tirukkural* [The Sacred Couplets]).

- **Online Source:**

Venkatesan, Archana. “Digital Archives of Telugu Manuscripts.” *Dravidian Digital Repository*, 15 Mar. 2024, www.dravidianrepo.org/telugu-manuscripts. Accessed 5 July 2025.

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“Palm-Leaf Manuscript of Tolkappiyam.” Tamil Nadu State Archives, Chennai, MS 1234, 18th century.

- **Notes for Dravidian Studies:**

- For sources in Dravidian languages, include the original script in parentheses after the transliteration if relevant to the journal’s audience.
- If citing oral traditions or fieldwork, describe the source clearly (e.g., “Oral Narrative, collected by Anil Menon, 12 Jan. 2024, Kerala”).
- For multilingual sources, indicate the language of the source in the citation if not evident.

4. Additional Guidelines

- **Inclusive Language:** Follow MLA 9th Edition guidelines for inclusive language, avoiding biased or exclusionary terms. For example, use gender-neutral terms unless historically or contextually relevant.
- **Abbreviations:** Spell out abbreviations in the text (e.g., “Tamil Nadu” instead of “TN”) unless commonly accepted in scholarly writing (e.g., “ed.” for editor). See MLA Handbook, Appendix 1, for standard abbreviations.
- **Notes:** Use endnotes sparingly for explanatory content, numbered consecutively. Avoid using notes for citations unless necessary for clarity.
- **Submission Requirements:**
 - Check *Dravidian Studies* journal guidelines for specific submission instructions (e.g., file format, word count, or additional metadata).
 - Submit manuscripts in a standard format (e.g., .docx or .pdf) with a cover letter including your contact information and a brief abstract (150–200 words).

5. Resources

- Consult the *MLA Handbook* (9th Edition, 2021) for detailed guidance.
- Refer to the MLA Style Center (style.mla.org) for examples and updates.