

A Study of Colonial Telugu School Textbooks (1877-1947)

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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

PRAVEEN KUMAR DONTI



**Centre for Historical Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067
India
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Certificate

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “A Study of Colonial Telugu School Textbooks (1877-1947)” submitted by Praveen Kumar Donthi in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY is his original work and has not been submitted for the award of any other degree of this university or of any other university.

Praveen Kumar Donthi

We recommend that the dissertation may be forwarded for evaluation.

Prof. Mridula Mukherjee
Chairperson
Centre for Historical Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067

Dr. Indivar Kamtekar
Centre for Historical Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067

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Contents

	Page No.
Acknowledgements	i-iii.
Maps	iv-v.
Preface	1-4.
Chapter One Introduction and Historiography	5-35.
Chapter Two Contents of the Textbooks (1888-1947)	36-97.
Chapter Three Veerasingam and his Textbooks: A Case Study	98-116.
Chapter Four Textbooks for Tribals in a Princely State	117-132.
Conclusions	133-139.
Appendix	140-163.
Bibliography	164-175.

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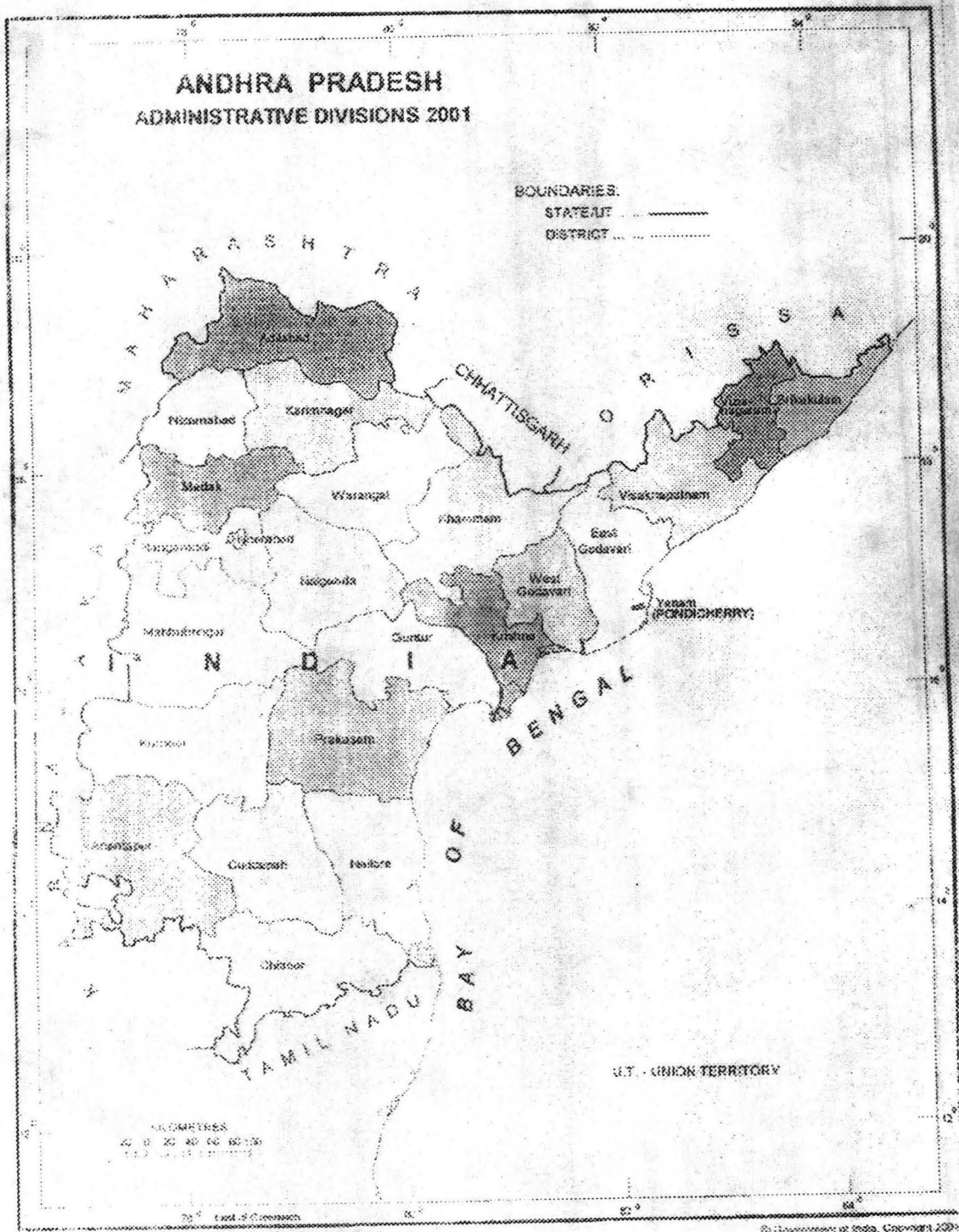
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ANDHRA PRADESH AFTER THE INCORPORATION OF TELANGANA DISTRICTS

ANDHRA REGION IN MADRAS PRESIDENCY
1921

0 50 100 150 MILES



TELUGU SPEAKING DISTRICTS OF MADRAS PRESIDENCY

This is an earnest and humble effort at studying the colonial Telugu School textbooks published and widely used in Telugu speaking districts of erstwhile Madras presidency between the period 1888 and 1947.

Textbook was at the heart of colonial pedagogy. The control, selection and distribution of ideological knowledge was done through the textbooks. It is often seen as the 'legitimate knowledge'. The textbooks are important historical documents, hence it is significant to study them. This helps us understand an interesting aspect of colonial education. Unearthing the content of these textbooks will add to the corpus of knowledge of the history of colonialism in India. As the content of the colonial textbooks especially of vernacular kind is not given due importance, this work, I feel will help fill a gap.

Though the textbooks were published since 1820 in Madras presidency I could not look at them as they are unavailable. I could lay my hands on the textbooks from 1888 till 1947. The content of the books prior to that was learnt to an extent from various government reports.

There are three chapters in this dissertation apart from the introduction and conclusion. The introduction traces the origins of textbooks culture. It touches upon the early landmarks in the history of textbook publishing like the founding of 'the Madras school Book society', the Shimla text Book conference of 1877, the founding of 'Madras

text Book committee' etc. The nature of early textbooks is also discussed. This introductory chapter provides necessary background for the following chapters.

The first chapter throws light on the content of the text Books. It has been attempted to trace the change, or lack of it in these text books during the period under study. Various subjects have been closely looked at and the changes have been noticed. Change in the nature of the content was induced by the change in the base of authorship. Imperial ideology was seen and the lessons symptomatic of the same were also numerous.

The second chapter is a case study of an author and his text books. The author selected is K. Veeresalingam, the pioneering social reformer of Andhra. His approach to textbook writing and various nuances related to it are touched upon. How did he make use of textbooks to propagate his reform ideas, and how is ideology was coming across in the books written by him, how lucrative was the job of writing etc are all discussed. His Approach to the language question too is touched upon.

The third chapter as a contrast to the preceding chapters and is about the text books written for tribals-Gonds, in their own language using Devanagari Script. This is a pioneering experiment in tribal education of Andhra implemented as Gond education scheme of 1943. The two primers prepared for children and Adults is given due attention. The lessons were exclusively drawn from their cultural milieu. They are translated and used for this chapter.

Many conclusions are drawn upon the education in 19th and 20th Century India. The Gap between colonial curriculum and the culture is not as a cute as it has been argued. The curriculum stressed a lot on colonial beneficence. It was not static and new subjects were introduced over a period of time and the treatment of the content too changed.

The tribal textbooks, though doesn't show any overt signs of hegemonic ideology but the process does. The textbooks were a means to an end. The end goal being the co option of the tribals into mainstream, as they will be introduced to Urdu and Telugu after they were familiarized with the script. The content has shown a degree of essentialising too.

A Note on the Sources:

The Telugu textbooks consulted for the first chapter were available at the committee section of Andhra Pradesh State Archives, Hyderabad. When they were consulted the cataloguing was not done. Hence the reference numbers are not given.

Apart from that I have consulted various Government reports of Madras Presidency which were available at Tamilnadu State Archives, Chennai. The Reports of Government of Hyderabad were also consulted at A.P State archives.

For the third chapter, I have consulted the Gondi readers available at the library of Tribal Cultural Research and Training Institute [Masab tank, Hyderabad].They were translated and used.

I have also made use of the microfilms of 'Madras Mail' and Native News Paper Reports available at Nehru Memorial Museum and Library [New Delhi]. They were helpful for the information of the early stages of the period under study.

The autobiographies of Kandukuri Veeresalingam [1848-1919], Konda Venkatappayya[1866-1949] and Christoph Von Furer Haimendorf were also used according to the necessity. While the first two are Telugu publications, the third is in English.

I

Introduction and Historiography



“What you want a nation to become, must be effected in its schools”

-G.W. Leitner¹

It's a truism that every imperial power seeks to perpetuate its hegemonic status. Critical to its dominance is the control of knowledge preserving and producing institutions. Schools are a good example. The 'hidden curriculum' socialises the child in its ideology and the young are conditioned to accept the inequality as natural. Teaching through the textbooks is the modus operandi of colonial pedagogy. Textbooks act as entry points of power into the collective consciousness and also play an important role in the transmission of colonial ideology. This study is an attempt to understand how and what was transmitted through colonial Telugu school textbooks.

I - Historiography

Antonio Gramsci in his, *Selections from Prison note books* postulated influential opinions on education and its role. He saw education as 'an activity in political and cultural hegemony'² Education and culture in his estimation were a part of the superstructure. He posited how hegemony of a class is developed not just by brute

¹ Cited from *Report of the Committee Appointed to examine the Textbooks in use in Indian Schools*, Government of India, Calcutta, 1878, p.85, in Tamil Nadu State Archives[hereafter TNSA]

² Quintin Hoare, Geoffrey Nowell Smith, ed., *Selections from the Prison note books of Antonio Gramsci*, International publishers, New York, 1971, p. 258.

domination of state power but also through organs of civil society, such as laws, schools and the media which assist ideas to permeate and thereby perpetuate the domination of a class as 'natural'. "A critical element in enhancing the ideological dominance of certain classes is the control of the knowledge presenting and producing institutions of a particular society. He further looks at school as the microcosm of the larger society." Its organisational and social relationships accurately reflect the economic, political and social norms of the wider society and its disciplines and pedagogical routines socialise the young towards acceptance of the economic and social status quo".³ These ideas have had a seminal influence on many educational thinkers and theorists.

Most of them treat the school as a mechanism of cultural distribution in a society. Michael Apple for instance views the school as a "vigorously conformist system"⁴ caught in a nexus of powerful set of institutions-political, economic and cultural.⁵ He argues that since it has important effects both as a credentialising and socialising institution, it gives the status of 'legitimate knowledge' to the knowledge of specific groups who wield power in the larger political and economic arena. Their knowledge becomes a 'knowledge for all'. The selectivity of the school knowledge often secures an ideological purpose⁶ and makes all social inequalities seem natural.⁷ They teach a 'hidden curriculum' (the norms and values that are implicitly but effectively taught in schools and are not usually talked about in teacher's statements of ends or goals) that seems unequally

³ Ajay Kumar, *Education and Revolutionary Praxis: The Case Study of Antonio Gramsci*, Un published Dissertation, Centre for Political Studies, JNU, 1991, p. 3.

⁴ Michael W Apple, *Ideology and curriculum*, New York, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979 p. 67.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁶ Apple, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

suited to maintain the ideological hegemony of the most powerful classes in the society, apart from the seemingly neutral overt curriculum in the school. He further argues that “not all groups’ visions are represented and not all groups’ meanings are responded to”⁸ in the curriculum. School controls the forms of meaning it distributes, hence the formal corpus of school knowledge can become a form of social and economic control. The ‘knowledge’ reinforces unquestioning attitudes towards accepted ideas as the school plays its role as a ‘conformist system’. “Accumulation is thus a more accurate term for the school’s intention than assimilation”⁹.

Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the oppressed* argues that “education is suffering from narration sickness”,¹⁰ where the teacher fills the students with the contents of his narration, which are completely alien to his existence, which forces the students to memorise mechanically. Education becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Students patiently receive, memorise and repeat in this, what is called the ‘banking’ concept of education. In this concept “knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negate education and knowledge as processes of inquiry”.¹¹ The ‘banking’ education stifles the students’ creative power which serves the interests of the oppressors. The oppressors want to change the

⁸ Apple, op. cit., p. 46.

⁹ Ibid., p. 66.

¹⁰ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, Middlesex, Penguin, 1972, p. 52.

¹¹ Freire, op. cit., p. 53.

consciousness but not the situation of the oppressed, as it is easy for them to dominate if the oppressed adapt to the new situation. To achieve this end, “the oppressed use the ‘banking’ concept of education in conjunction with a paternalistic social action apparatus, within which the oppressed receive the euphemistic title of ‘welfare recipients’”.¹² This education is also ‘necrophilic’- static and mechanical. It promotes “mechanistic, static, naturalistic, specialised consciousness”¹³ and attempts to control thinking and action. He strongly asserted that there is nothing like a neutral educational process.¹⁴

J.A Mangan in his *Imperial Curriculum* explores the role of British imperial education in the creation of ‘appropriate’ racial images which helps the children of the empire appropriate attitudes of ‘dominance and deference’¹⁵. He argues that stereotypical images, carefully constructed and equally carefully defined, are, therefore mechanisms of control linked to structures in the society which provide stability power and status. One such structure is the education system. Hence the curriculum of imperial schooling is an integral and significant part of the culture of society and an effective source of political power.¹⁶ The curriculum demonstrates the political authority and reflects the distribution of power in the society. He further argues that the colonial curriculum was a means of establishing and perpetuating political inequalities. He concludes that the “textbooks as

¹² Freire, op. cit., p.55.

¹³ Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁴ Freire, op. cit., p. 14.

¹⁵ J.A Mangan, ed., *The Imperial Curriculum: Racial Images and Education in the British Colonial Experience*, New York, 1993, p. 6.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 16.

ideological statements are common place of educational history. School knowledge is a political assertion”.¹⁷

Martin Carnoy in his *Education as Cultural Imperialism* proposes that schooling is an important component in the capitalist system. He argued that schools have sorted children into social roles within the capitalist hierarchy in a manner that reinforces the social relations of production, and since this particular hierarchy has been achieved in a context of imperialism and colonialism, schools cannot be separated from that context. He says that “Schooling is a part and parcel of European imperialism”¹⁸ as the “primary purpose of schooling was control, not change”.¹⁹ Even when they used education to effect changes, it was an instrument which solidified their control over the peoples of India and Africa. He further argues that British educational policies were designed to achieve political control and keep its people economically dependent on Britain. He concludes by saying that the “primary purpose was to build a cultural dependency among the educated and ruling classes so that revolutionary overthrow would never be a likely alternative”²⁰

Nigel Crook in his *The Transmission of Knowledge in South Asia* proposes a ‘knowledge transmission model’, according to which there is a social agenda behind the expansion of knowledge and its control. This is the agenda of those in the hegemonic position in society; ‘the rich and the powerful’ seek to reproduce their position by transmitting the knowledge of their stable power from class to class, from clan to clan,

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁸ Martin Carnoy, *Education as Cultural Imperialism*, New York, 1973, p. 20.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 81.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 100.

from generation to generation. In this way, class or lineage may continue its existence privileged and unopposed.”²¹ His theory talks about the maintenance of a stable hegemony by the ‘rich and powerful’ by exclusion of the hegemonised from the higher forms of knowledge, cognitive competence and by controlled expansion of knowledge. He used the analogy of the computer in the conceptualisation of knowledge and proposes that “cognitive competence is the storage of programmes (k). Knowledge of facts is the storage of raw data to which these programmes can be applied (M). More precisely I would add cognitive competence is the storage of programmes to write programmes (k1) as well as the storage of programmes to analyze raw data (k2)...’the rich and powerful’ (whom initially we take the liberty to assume to have required K1, K2 and M) devise an educational policy for their society. The expansion of M is beneficial to their social structure and is fairly harmless without K. The expansion of K2 and fortiori of K1 is potentially harmful to the reproduction of society (since it creates the ability to challenge ‘the rich and powerful’ themselves) but their lethal nature is somewhat mitigated if there is little M to work on”.²² The ‘rich and powerful’ withhold K1 and K2 to perpetuate their own hegemony. In case of an external challenge they are forced to transmit ‘knowledge of how’ as opposed to earlier ‘knowledge of facts’, which results in cognitive competence too. This, in turn, weakens the hegemony itself. He concludes that some forms of knowledge are potentially dangerous to the people in power. Through this model Nigel Crook proposes to understand the education and knowledge transmission in South Asia.

²¹ Nigel Crook, ed., *The Transmission of Knowledge in South Asia: Essays on Education, Religion, History and Politics*, OUP, Delhi, 1996, p. 2.

²² Nigel Crook, ed., *The Transmission of Knowledge in South Asia*, p. 4.

Sabyasachi Bhattacharya in *The Contested Terrain* proposes to explore education as “a terrain of contestation between ideologies, interests and powers”.²³ He says that when we look upon education as a part of a certain social formation the inevitable question that comes up is its role in preserving the ‘hegemonic position of certain, social groups’ and the hidden ‘agenda of the state behind education as a social enterprise. He then argues that this is “an area of contestation between the hegemonised and the hegemon, between ideologies promoting system stability and adversarial ideologies, between those who possess the power to provide and control education and those who are the recipients”.²⁴ As an extension to Pierre Bourdieu’s conceptual framework of education for a capitalist society, Bhattacharya suggests that “In the imperial scheme, the production of knowledge is a function attributed to the metropolitan country ruling the empire while the reproduction of that knowledge, its transmission and replication is the function assigned to the education system for the colonised people”.²⁵ He further argues that colonial education is a means of the preservation and reproduction of colonial authority—both cognitive and political. Apart from that in education two simultaneous contestations go on: ‘one between the colonialist versus nationalist ideological positions’ and the other between ‘the privileged and disprivileged’ within the Indian society. He further says that “the contest between nationalism in education with the colonial state is

²³ S. Bhattacharya, *The Contested Terrain: Perspectives on Education in India*, New Delhi, 1998, p. 5.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

inseparably intertwined historically with the contest for hegemony within our society”.²⁶

This struggle, according to him, found its way into the educational discourse.

Krishna Kumar in his *Political Agenda of Education* argues that what is taught in the schools and colleges today acquired the status of ‘valid school knowledge’ under the colonial rule. ‘What is worth teaching’ was decided by the ‘enlightened outsider’s colonial view of the society with the advancement of such a colonial system of education, “the school curriculum became totally dissociated from the Indian child’s everyday reality and milieu”.²⁷ There was no ‘recognition to people’s knowledge and to the modes of thought and action prized in the culture...the life of the local community found no reflection in the school’s curriculum or in its daily routine’.²⁸ He goes on to say that there was a ‘clear hiatus between curriculum and the learner’s social milieu’, and that the “contents of textbooks had no other meaning for the teacher and the student except as a material to be mastered which in the case of most subjects, meant ‘memorised’ for reproduction at the examination.”²⁹ He further says that the low salary and status was the last nail in the coffin, which made sure that the knowledge validated by the colonial state was faithfully transmitted without any alternative.

To conclude this historiographical essay, British India proved no different to the dictum of a ruling class seeking to perpetuate its power through the media of education. But instead of taking this to be a conclusive statement, it should rather be a starting point

²⁶ S. Bhattacharya, op. cit., p. 6.

²⁷ Krishna Kumar, *Political Agenda of Education: A Study of Colonialist and Nationalist Ideas*, New Delhi, 1991, p. 16.

²⁸ Krishan Kumar, op. cit., p. 16.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 68.

of a new enquiry. Resorting to such a conclusion might impede our understanding of the colonial experience of India, which, with its numerous regional specificities, was more complex than one can imagine. The oft-quoted exhortation from Macaulay's minutes- "we must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, a class of persons Indian in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and intellect"³⁰- has come to carry the burden of the nature and aim of colonial education. True or otherwise it is definitely not sufficient. Textbook teaching was the hallmark of Colonial education but there are very few studies of the textbooks of colonial India. This dissertation is a modest effort towards addressing an issue that has conspicuously been glossed over and constitutes an inadequacy in our understanding of the colonial experience.

II - THE BEGINNINGS OF TEXTBOOK PUBLISHING

Sir Thomas Munro, as the Governor of the Madras Presidency, took an active interest in the affairs of education. The Madras School Book Society was a result of his encouragement. The year of its foundation is still shrouded in the mist of history. Whereas B.S. Kesavan puts it in 1820,³¹ J.Mangamma, the pioneer researcher of this area, concedes that "I have not been able to ascertain when the Madras Society was founded, but it must have been in 1819, since it was founded in express imitation of the Calcutta Society and must therefore have been founded after 1818; while from the

³⁰ S.C Ghosh , 'English in Taste, in Opinion, in Words and Intellect: Indoctrinating the Indian through Text book, Curriculum and Education', in J. Mangan, ed., *The Imperial Curriculum: Racial Images and Education in the British Colonial Experience*, 1993, p. 185.

³¹ See. B.S Kesavan, *History of Printing and Publishing in India: A Story of Cultural Re awakening, Vol-II, Origins of Printing and Publishing in Karnataka, Andhra and Kerala*, New Delhi, 1988, p. 270.

records of the Vepery press, I learn that one of the Madras Society's earliest publications was printed in 1820"³². The Calcutta School Book Society was founded in 1818 and the rules of the same were adopted later by the Madras Society. The founding of these societies was an attempt by the Government not to leave all the educational work to the missionaries and to improve secular instruction.³³ The rules of the Calcutta Society were as follows:

1. That an association be formed to be denominated: the Calcutta School Book Society.
2. That the objects of this Society be the preparation, publication, and cheap or gratuitous supply of works useful in schools and seminaries of learning.
3. That it form no part of the design of this institution to furnish religious books-a restriction, however, very far from being meant to preclude the supply of moral tracts or books of a moral tendency, which, without interfering with the religious sentiments of any person, may be calculated to enlarge the understanding and improve the character.
4. That the attention of the society be directed, in the first instance, to the providing of suitable books of instruction for the use of the native schools, in the several languages (English as well as Asiatic) which are, or may be, taught in the provinces, subject to the Presidency of Fort William
5. That the business of the institution is conducted by a committee of managers, to be elected annually at a meeting to be held in the first week of July.
6. That the committee consist, inclusive of official members, of 24 persons, of whom 16 to be Europeans and 8 natives³⁴
7. That all persons, of whatever nation, subscribing any sum annually to the funds of the institution shall be considered members of the society, be entitled to vote at the annual election of managers, and be themselves eligible to the committee.

A few noted natives were made members of the society as they could help in translating and revising the books selected for printing. Initially it was run by private

³² See J. Mangamma, *Book Printing in India: With Special Reference to the Contribution of European Scholars to Telugu* (1746-1857), Nellore, 1975, p. 272.

³³ Kesavan, op. cit., p. 372.

³⁴ Mangamma, op. cit., p. 271.

patronage, from donations mostly from Europeans in government service. Later 700 rupees per month was granted which was to be spent as follows:

For interest of money employed in Building and for the salaries of teachers -----	Rs 500.
The expenses of the Press -----	Rs 200.
Total:	Rs 700.

It was, however, subsequently determined to allow this society “gratitude of 3000 rupees and an annual sum for 6000 rupees”.³⁵

In 1824 the society had set up its own press and started printing books. By 1827 it has already printed six books like: pleasing tales, a sketch of ancient history and The History of Hindustan from the first Mohamedan invasion, Introduction to Geography, RamaSami’s Arithmetic, Joyce’s Scientific Dialogues etc. The printing process was very long and it took a few years to publish a book, hence that was quite an achievement.

After the appointment of ‘The Director of Public Instruction’ for the first time in 1854, school books were given more importance, but till 1857 the printing activity went on at a snail’s pace. The real impetus came after 1859 when a number of Telugu works were put to print. After 1864 the Society started printing books for educated adults³⁶ but the fact that the number of printing presses went up in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, also played an important role. There were nearly 60 printing presses.³⁷ The main places of printing in the Andhra region were Vizagapatam (Visakhapatnam),

³⁵ Mangamma, op. cit., p. 269.
³⁶ See *Report of the Committee Appointed to Examine the Textbooks in use in Indian Schools*, Government Press, Calcutta, 1878, Appendix XIII, TNSA.
³⁷ Kesavan, op. cit., p. 374.

Masulipatam (Machilipatnam) and Cocanada (Kakinada). Madras led the race by a good margin.

In the early stages most of the textbooks in Telugu were translations from either Tamil or English. Specific people were entrusted with the responsibility, grants were given for initial expenditure and for getting the work printed and the government subscribed it to various schools. Following are the principles that were kept in view while writing the vernacular textbooks in Madras Presidency:³⁸

1. That all school books intended for use in India should be written for the purpose by persons who have resided in the country, and who, being well acquainted with the manners, customs, and habits of thought of the people, and with all local peculiarities, are able to make use of illustrations and examples taken from the daily occurrences of Hindu and Mahomedan life, and from objects with which the people are familiar. This, of course, applies to some subjects more than to others but more or less to all.
2. That all school books, except Primers, should be written in the first instance in English.
3. That one Vernacular should be adopted as the Vernacular basis, and that the books required, having been in the first instance prepared in English, should be translated into the Vernacular language selected, and from it afterwards into the cognate languages of the Presidency... If the basis be laid in English, the merits of the book can be judged of by those most qualified to form a judgement as regards the manner in which the subject is treated.

In course of time there were a few changes introduced but the core of the policy remained. The colonial officials believed that “to make everyone of the 200,000,000 of India as British citizens”,³⁹ the school was the only instrument. They intended to ‘create a nation’ with help of a school and for that they sought to implement the following:⁴⁰

³⁸ *Report of the Committee for the Revision of English, Telugu Tamil School Books in the Madras Presidency*, No XLIC, Selections from the Records of Government of Madras, 1875, p. 62, TNSA.

³⁹ Report of 1878, op. cit., p. 86.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

- a. An educational course of the widest character, adapted to native officials and non-officials;
- b. that this course be in the vernacular and that it be in the form of textbooks;
- c. that these text-books be written in a form that shall be thoroughly comprehensible to the native mind in all its variety in this country;
- d. that the first subjects taken up by this course be the principles of law, jurisprudence, evidence and other similar departments, by which, from a philosophical standpoint, the principles of morality, as universally accepted, must be understood.

While the above guidelines applied to the textbooks at every level, there were specific values which were to be instilled through primers. They are according to a government report⁴¹ as follows:

- a. Reverence for God, the parents, the teacher, the ruler and the aged, (parents now complain that the youths brought up under our system have lost the good manners and respect for authority so essentially a part of Oriental human nature);
- b. cleanliness of habits, politeness of speech, kindness of conduct to other human beings and the brute creation;
- c. the dignity and usefulness of agriculture, commerce, the various trades, professions and handicrafts. (One of the causes of the pauperization of India is that the youths brought up under our system consider it to be a disgrace, as a rule, to follow their father's occupation. They prefer being Government Munshis on Rs. 7 per mensem to being carpenters on Rs 40, or banyas on the chances of their trade. It is, however, also true that by time they leave school they are unfitted for the occupation of their parents, not having grown into knowing and loving it from early infancy);
- d. the importance of bodily exercise (now unfortunately dissociated by Orientals from learning as undignified). The consequence of the neglect of this lesson in early life which no gymnasia in high schools can ever thoroughly rectify, even if the masses went to high schools, is that the population which, as I have alluded above, we are pauperizing by alienation from their traditional occupation, is also, as for as it comes under our system, enfeebled in body, and thus promoted by us in its course of degeneracy;
- e. universally admitted precepts of morality and prudence;
- f. the state-feeling, as already referred to, and a simple sketch of duties of a good citizen.

⁴¹ Report of 1878, op. cit., p. 87.

In these early days the policy of the government towards the textbooks was that of non-interference but in reality it was different. One official remarks: "I also notice that practically some books are recommended although it has, I think quite erroneously, been laid down that we were neither to recommended nor to condemn any existing textbooks"⁴²

It has been observed in a report that "few are willing to incur the expense of sinking a considerable sum of money in preparing and publishing such books if they have to wait for a long time in preparing and publishing such books and they have to wait a long time to recover it by gradual sales, we want a set of publishers apart from the authors or some other way of meeting the pecuniary difficulty"⁴³

III. NATURE OF THE EARLIEST TEXTBOOKS

Before the Colonial initiative in education, the children were taught in 'Pial schools'. "They take their title from the fact of their being located on the Pial (or raised outer basement of the street or entrance passage wall) of the house...the curriculum of a Pial school may be roughly summed up as comprising almost all the translation into the pupil's vernacular of the great Sanskrit authors and a thorough 'grinding up in the first four simple and compound rules of arithmetic.'⁴⁴ The School Book Societies initially dealt with such works. For example, the Calcutta Society employed the following:⁴⁵

⁴² Report of 1878, op. cit., p. 141.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 78.

⁴⁴ See *Madras Mail*, Madras, April 11, Thursday Evening, 1878, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (Hereafter NMML).

⁴⁵ Mangamma, op. cit., p. 277.

(1) Letters for Bengalees (2) Zamindari accounts (3) forms of agreement and bonds (4) forms of letters of business (5) Jumabundi or settlement papers (6) papers for arrears of rent.

Mangamma observes that “Books of this character were constantly used both in Bengal and Madras until the rise of the idea now in fashion that none but western methods, should be employed in eastern schools”.⁴⁶

After the western methods started in education and the books printed accordingly, there were two classes of textbooks⁴⁷:

1. Those that are specially written or compiled for use in schools and
2. Those that are selected out of general literature.

Nature of the early textbooks can only be learnt from various government reports, due to the non-availability of the textbooks. The only report that is available, which reviews early vernacular textbooks, is the ‘Report of the Committee for the Revision of English, Telugu, Tamil schoolbooks in the Madras Presidency’ (1875). Mr. Garthwaite, an English official, remarks: “of the reading books in Tamil and Telugu I cannot speak highly. The first books begin with the alphabet, and till a child has learned all the combinations in Telugu, some half thousand, he cannot read the first half dozen lessons... In examining in the first part of this book for result grants, I have to question on the meaning, but it is difficult to find sentences on which questions can be asked. They are all either too trivial,

⁴⁶ Mangamma, op. cit., p. 277.

⁴⁷ Report of 1878, op. cit., Appendix XII.

or, like many of the proverbs and aphorisms, beyond the comprehension of young children”.⁴⁸

Apart from the textbooks selected out of general literature like ‘Nalacharitra’, there were general readers normally called ‘first book of lessons’, ‘second book of lessons’ etc. There were various lessons on numerous assorted topics. In one such book there were lessons on the following topics⁴⁹: Elements of Natural Science, Palestine, Moses, India, Crowning of Rama, Stories from Panchatantra, Seasons, God, Coins, Invisible beings etc.

Criticisms of Mr. Boyle published in his Report on the state of education for the year 1871-72 is as follows:

I doubt whether it is wise for us to require our reading to be done out of those nice little books compiled and arranged on highly philosophic principles, which put English thoughts into stiff and jerky Vernacular sentences. These books seem to me to be so intolerably dull, and their contents to be so extremely unlike what a Hindu would think or say, that they must appear to a young Hindu almost like a foreign language. The Ass is covered with a Lion’s skin, but he is an ass after all and his bray betrays him. We don’t teach our own children to read out of these ‘highly improving’ books. The first thing we learned to read was the plain narrative and the noble poetry of the Bible, relieved by tables and fables more or less nonsensical, but fitted to the childish fancy and not above a child’s mind.⁵⁰

The first book of lessons published in 1857 is reviewed in the following way: “The main characteristic of the book is the incongruous mixture of pedantry and childishness which pervades it. The following are the specimens of the infantine character of some of the teaching: It seems absurd to teach boys of seven or eight that they smell with their

⁴⁸ Report of 1875, op. cit., p. 51.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 53.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 54.

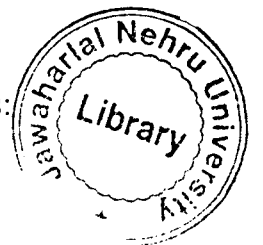
noses, that there are two nostrils the right and the left and two eyes, the right and the left".⁵¹

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Reviewing the 'the second book of lessons', it was written that it consists of 90 lessons on Physiology, Geography, Meteorology, Astronomy, Natural History, Moral pieces, Moral tales and miscellaneous lessons all mixed up together and the appendix containing some specimens of models for letter writing and some geometrical figures. Some knowledge of physiology is no doubt very desirable, but it seems doubtful whether this subject can be successfully taught in so elementary a class as the second. In reality, however, the greater part of what is given under this head is not physiology at all, but language. No new ideas are conveyed but difficult or uncommon words are substituted for those in common use...as if the main object were to teach the pupil the Sanskrit names of the different parts of the body. Of the puerile and almost ludicrous characters of the matter of which these lessons are composed...in which pupils are gravely told that the part which contains the mouth is called the face, that the hole under the nose is called the mouth, that the two lumps of flesh below the back are called buttocks, that persons who are unable to perceive form are called blind, that persons who are deprived of the faculty of sight are called blind, that those who are unable to hear are called deaf and that brutes can utter sounds, but cannot speak like men.⁵²

Referring to the lesson on Geography in the same book the reviewer says:

⁵¹ Report of 1875, op. cit., p. 55.

⁵² Ibid., p. 57.



We see no advantage in introducing little scraps of it into this reading book. The lesson on earth is full of useless matter, such as that the sea is salt, that sea water is not drinkable, that the water of rivers and tanks is drinkable, and that water is drawn from wells. When the writer says that the Earth is everywhere covered with grass and trees and beautiful to the eye, he must have forgotten the Arctic regions and the deserts of Africa, Arabia etc, which cover an area of five or six millions of square miles...the lesson on the sun, moon and stars are dull and these are such obvious truisms as that the time between sunrise and sunset is called day, and between sunset and Sun night, and that if it were not for the sun's light all would be dark!⁵³

Further talking about the book he says "the specimens of letters in the appendix are still, formal and unnatural. They are exactly the sort of the letters which boys should not be encouraged to write. At page 157 the elder brother desires his younger brother to read "*Vedadi Granthamulanu*". A little boy can scarcely be expected to read the Vedas in Sanskrit and no Telugu version of them exists".⁵⁴

In 'The Third book of lessons', the committee report says:

It is divided into five distinct sections: I. Natural History II. Geography and History III. Astronomy IV. Miscellaneous and V. stories selected from Hindu Books...false science is taught and vulgar errors are perpetuated when the bat is spoken of as neither beast nor a bird, and the whale and the crab are placed under the head of fishes. In the lesson it is stated that the white of the egg forms a bird's wings, and the yolk its body. At page 3 we are told that living beings are divided into seven classes. The first of these Angles, deities or spirits, which are not usually regarded as coming under the head of Natural History. The scientific classification of animals is not given at all and a good deal of what is called Natural History merely consists of fables. Thus the writer, after devoting five lines to the tiger, remarks that it is a crafty animal, which he illustrates by a fable of 43 lines from the Panchatantram in which an old tiger is represented as personating an ascetic...under the head of the swan there is not the slightest attempt to describe the bird and its habits. The writer devotes a line and a half to refuting a foolish Hindu nation about the Swan separating milk from water, and then relates a fable about a swan and a crane, which is only valuable on account of its moral...with regard to the second section, the lesson on Palestine, the history of Moses, and the history of the Jews will no doubt, be new to him, but scripture history is not intended to be a part of the curriculum of government

⁵³ Report of 1875, op. cit., p. 57.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 58.

school...coming to minor points we may refer to the offensively egotistical remark that the English are superior to all other islanders.⁵⁵

“Brief sketches of Europe” was another textbook published in Madras, in the year 1855 and was written by ‘a lady’, which was reviewed as follows:

first Telugu translation a good many passages attacking the tenets of the Roman Catholics were omitted or softened. In the fourth edition, published in 1872, there are numerous alterations in the historical parts. Each sketch gives some account of the geography and history of the country to which it relates, with remarks on the manners and customs of the inhabitants, their religion, the progress of education and civilization, the condition of literature and the fine arts, and various other particulars, sometimes jumbled together in a very confused manner...these sketches, in which the history of eighteen centuries is sometimes given in as many lines, must be very confusing to boys who have never heard of Crusades, the Reformation, and other similar events, and who know nothing of such institutions as the Inquisition, the Papacy, Parliaments and Republics”⁵⁶.

The report goes on to say that “the book is also necessarily of allusions to natural phenomenon, scenes and customs of which they have no conception, such as the Aurora Borealis, volcanoes, geysers, glaciers, fiords, sledges, and sliding on the ice, the dykes and dunes of Holland, windmills, life in German watering places, English country houses, the London season, and the bull fights of Spain”.⁵⁷

NalaCharitra is a textbook picked up from the existing literature. The report says “*NalaCharitra* is valuable as an illustration of the ancient manners of the Hindus. The heroine, instead of being married in her infancy, grows up in her father’s house and is allowed, when she attains a suitable age, to choose her husband. The language and descriptions are often truly poetical, and, compared with most Hindu poems of the same

⁵⁵ Report of 1875, op. cit., p. 60.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 63.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

class...”⁵⁸ The Report further says that only passages to which European taste can take exception are regarding the physical description of Damayanti.⁵⁹

The Report also gives a description of “Morris' History of India”. It says “the Telugu versions required, however, to be entirely rewritten. So difficult is the style that a glossary of 55 pages has actually been published by P. Venkataramanayya, of Masulipatam, explaining the uncommon words and phrases which occur in this book”.⁶⁰

‘Colenso’s Arithmetic’, the report says “has been specially adapted to this country by the introduction of examples bearing on the currency, weights and measures of this Presidency. Many years have elapsed since this work was first compiled and even the edition now in use is twelve years old.”⁶¹

There were many Telugu grammars as textbooks, which were very complex, strictly adhering to ancient Sanskrit models like the ‘*Bala Vyakaranam*’ by Chinnayya suri, head pandit of the Presidency College. There were also other grammar texts like ‘Seshaih’s Grammar’ which had “the merit of being much simpler than native grammars usually are, and it imitates the English method of presenting the declensions of nouns and conjugation of verbs...”⁶²

‘Selections from Vemana’ is a controversial textbook. Its controversy is on two accounts-its rustic style of language and the language which has satires on Hindu practices

⁵⁸ Report of 1875, op. cit., p. 64.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 69.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 71.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 73.

⁶² Report of 1875, op. cit., p. 70.

and doctrine. The committee observes that “As a poet Vemana does not rank high; his style being often almost rustic, and his metre occasionally faulty. His matter is sometimes weighty and full of pungent, though homely, remarks. To a European he seems far in advance of his age, not only in his views, but in the earnestness and honesty with which he enforces them. It can scarcely be expected that this vigorous reformer will be equally acceptable to the orthodox Hindu and it so happens that these selections contain some of Vemana’s bitterest attacks on Hinduism.”⁶³ Another objection was the difficulty which teachers find in explaining abstruse truths embodied in some of the stanzas. It was also accused that the book was originally adopted on the recommendation of the missionaries and Brahmins were completely opposed to the book. The report remarks that “it is to be remembered that at least four fifths of our teachers are Brahmins”.⁶⁴

A couple of specimens quoted from the selections are as follows: (1) “the books that are called the Vedas are like courtesans, deluding men, and wholly unintelligible, but the hidden knowledge of God is like an honorable wife”

(2) O ye asses! Why do you make balls of food and give them to the crows in the name of your ancestors! How can a dung eating crow be an ancestor of yours”⁶⁵

The case of Vemana’s poems is an example of complex contestation. At one level, contestation is taking place between the Christian missionaries who could wield some

⁶³ Report of 1875, op. cit., p. 52.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Report of 1875, op. cit., p. 67.

influence on the colonial officers and the native Hindu elite, at another level between a 'reformer' and the orthodoxy.

"In 1835 the Indian vernaculars did not possess the vocabulary necessary for the teaching of western knowledge..."⁶⁶ says Aparna Basu, and it was quite evident in the case of Telugu. While reviewing one geography lesson the Report says: "many of the trees, grains and products are quite unfamiliar to them and there are no vernacular equivalents for such names as oaks, elms, pines, rye, barley, herrings, Oliver, macaroni and bohemian Glass"⁶⁷ At another instance it is seen that centripetal force was written as '*bujabalamu*' which actually means muscular force. A native assistant master found the Telugu edition of Morris' History of India so tough that he published a small work to explain above 900 words and phrases in it so as to make them intelligible to the boys who have read the book.⁶⁸

Another instance where there is no Telugu equivalent for 'wilderness', the author has used '*vanamulu*', which normally means 'woods' or 'forest' and the meaning changed and it implied that "the children of Israel wandered for forty years among the woods".⁶⁹

The grammar posed a severe problem in writing the textbooks. The government wanted to make the rules of grammar lenient and language simple, but the orthodox sections weren't in favour of that. The state observed that the language taught in school

⁶⁶ Aparna Basu, *The Growth of Education and Political Development in India, 1898-1920*, Delhi, 1974, p. 74.

⁶⁷ Report of 1875, op. cit., p. 64.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 75.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 61.

and spoken at home are completely different. The report says, “surely real knowledge and ability are shown in simplifying difficult subjects down to the easiest language, not in dressing up simple matter in recondite verbiage...Grammar is the handmaid of language and not its mistress. It must follow, not lead.”⁷⁰ It further remarks that “language inevitably changes with time and grammar must submit to change too. Many important changes have already won their way practically into polite Telugu speaking and writing. Let them appear in books too, and then a modern grammar be prepared to classify them and give expression to the rules which are already regulating their usage. These authors again must not be guided by pandits in preparing these works...they will not tolerate the least surrender of the “grammatical style and their judgment is of no weight in dealing with the education of the young and humbler classes”.

The disadvantage of following the ‘Pundits Grammar’ is explained as follows: “the lesson book contains the line ‘he is kind’. A boy is ordered to paraphrase it, the Pundit will accept such a paraphrase as, ‘that person exists benevolent’ or ‘benevolently’ because these expressions do not violate any rule of Syntax”.⁷¹

The conclusion of the report says “there is, properly speaking, no prose literature in the language...and to an Englishman it seems hopeless to expect that any popular prose literature can ever be created in a dialect which no uneducated person understands. Language of school books requires to be simplified”.⁷²

⁷⁰ Report of 1875, op. cit., pp. 76-77.

⁷¹ Ibid p. 77.

⁷² Ibid p. 78.

The scripture history was not intended to be the part of the curriculum of a government school.⁷³ The reference to Moses in one book and to Ram in another book were taken notice of and opined to expunge them. The contemporary newspaper 'Madras Mail' remarked as follows regarding the subject:

the question is whether the natives of this land will be deprived of all sources of cultivating their morals apart from the missionary schools. Must they ever depend upon the accidental existence of the few foreigners here for any noble feature in their character? Suppose that the missionaries by some sudden change of things cease to come in such large number as they do now or that their schools undergo a diminution in their popularity among Hindu students or by an increased number of native schools will the country deteriorate in its moral features? In short will the religion of the country have no influence on coming generations?⁷⁴

IV - SHIMLA TEXTBOOK CONFERENCE (1877)

Prior to 1877 there was no centralised body which monitored and examined the school textbooks. The system for selecting and prescribing textbooks in schools and universities was not uniformly regularised for the entire country at a single moment of time. The 1877 Shimla textbook conference was the first attempt made by the Government to synchronise and regulate the production of school textbooks.⁷⁵ The most significant contribution of the Shimla committee was the formation of the standing committee which was to act as the machinery through which production of Vernacular and English textbooks used in each province could be controlled and regulated by the government. It was unanimously decided that a standing committee would be set up in

⁷³ Report of 1875, op. cit., p. 60.

⁷⁴ *Madras Mail*, October 23, Tuesday Evening, 1877, p. 1, NMML.

⁷⁵ See *Report of 1878*, op. cit.

each province to choose and if necessary prepare both Vernacular as well as English textbooks.

Selecting the member of the committee as well as its functioning was left for the local governments to decide and settle. The committee was supposed to be comprised of not less than ten members - partly European and partly Indian - in as early equal proportions as the circumstances of the provinces would admit.

The committee was bound to examine all textbooks submitted to them and in the case of all rejected books to give in writing reasons for their rejection. They had to publish quarterly, in the local Gazette, a list of books authorised to be used in govt. schools. All other books were strictly prohibited.⁷⁶

“In the case of many of the subjects however, there are so many excellent textbooks that it is very difficult to make a choice of one on any grounds that would justify the exclusion of the rest.. Some teachers will prefer one and some another and there seems to be no reason why they should be prevented from exerting this discretion. In schools situated in backward localities or attended by poorer classes the price of books would be a consideration of some importance.”⁷⁷ Publication details regarding textbooks of one subject in the local Gazette is as follows:⁷⁸

⁷⁶ See *G.O No 404, Education, Home Department, 2 July, 1901, TNSA.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* [Also see *Education, Home Department, G.O No. 405, Dated 20/07/1901, TNSA*]

⁷⁸ See *G.O. No 404, op. cit.*

Language	Subject	Name of book	Bookseller	Price
Telugu	Grammar	Madras school series Element of Telugu grammar	SPCK[society for Promotion of Christian Knowledge]	0-1-0
Telugu	Grammar	A manual of Telugu grammar by A. Nayudu	SPCK	0-4-0
Telugu	Grammar	First Telugu Grammar by Sadhuvu	SPCK	0-02-0

MADRAS TEXTBOOK COMMITTEE -1892

The first general meeting of Madras Text Book committee was held in May, 1892 when 14 sub-committees were formed to deal with books on many subjects.⁷⁹ The Decisions arrived at Shimla, 1877 were concretised with this. The committee as told above was to be comprised of both Europeans and Indians. Imbalance in this resulted in furore which is evident from the contemporary newspapers. Till the first decade of twentieth century we have evidence of European domination in the Education service of Madras Presidency. It had the “largest number of Europeans on the Textbook committee”,⁸⁰ in 1900. *The Hindu* in 1907 remarks: “In the Madras section of the so called Indian Educational Service there is not a single Indian in employment. That superior service with superior emoluments is kept as preserve for men of European descent. If considerations of race and colour have

⁷⁹ See *Report on Public Instruction, Madras Presidency, 1892- 93*, Madras Government Press, 1893, TNSA.

⁸⁰ Aparna Basu, op. cit., p. 38.

any important influence in any department at all of the British Service, it is the educational⁸¹. Another newspaper critical of the act of appointing non-Telugu speaking members in Telugu sub-committee says:

“As far as English, Tamil, Hindustani, Sanskrit, Latin etc are concerned there is every hope that the chairman and members who are all versed in the languages for which they are chairmen or members, will prescribe the textbooks they consider best, but the Telugu language is not similarly blessed .For this language Mr. Yates, the principal of the Kumbakanom College and Mr. Srinivasa Aiyangar, Principal of Vizagapatam college are the members. Telugu is not their mother tongue nor is it the language of the countries which they come from”.

Picking on the same issue ‘Desamata’, another newspaper says

“not only is there no Telugu pundit on the sub-committee but two of its members do neither belong to the Telugu country nor are versed in Telugu literature. One of them is a European and the other a Tamilian. Besides they contend that books should be written in colloquial Telugu and not in pure grammatical Telugu. Is there none among the two crores of the Telugu population competent to be a member of the committee?”⁸²

‘Krishna Patrika’ takes a more aggressive stance on the issue:

“we wish that protest meetings should be held all over the Telugu country to represent this matter to government. We emphatically state that those who are not Telugu

⁸¹ *Native NewsPaper Reports, 1907 (August-December)*, p. 645, NMML.

⁸² *Native Newspaper Reports, 1911, (March to May)*, p. 694, TNSA.

gentlemen has no business to sit on the Telugu sub committee and that it is wrong on the part of government to act in violation of it. The sooner it is set right, the better.”⁸³

CURZON’S POLICIES

Curzon’s Viceroyalty started in 1898 and Aparna Basu opines that “he was the originator of the new policy”⁸⁴ in education, which was continued by his successors till 1920. “Curzon’s policy was one of stringent rules and control and he wanted to ‘improve’ the education system rather than ‘expand’ it. He was “opposed to the doctrine of state withdrawal and held that in every branch of education, the government should maintain a few highly efficient institutions to set a standard and provide a mode for private enterprise”⁸⁵. He was “convinced that reappraisals of the school textbook policy was necessary”.⁸⁶ He thought many good books weren’t introduced in schools because textbook committees had a majority of ‘Babus’. Sir Stafford Northcote, wanted Curzon to quietly discourage the use of ‘very improper textbooks’ in schools and colleges⁸⁷. The sedition trial of The Tilak in 1897, where Tilak’s counsel for the defense mentioned three books being used in Bombay which contained passages similar to Tilak’s writing in *Kesari*⁸⁸, brought the issue of textbooks to prominence and there was pressure from London for careful selection which strengthened Curzon’s convictions to exercise more control. He called for information from the local government about how textbooks were selected and the replies showed that there was no system. In Madras Presidency “there

⁸³ *Native NewsPaper Reports*, 1911, May 12th, p. 776.

⁸⁴ Aparna Basu., op. cit., p. 2.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

were no textbooks absolutely prescribed for primary schools...Managers of such schools are allowed to select any of the books on the approved list”.⁸⁹

Curzon saw the slackness in the system and learnt that the Education Department exercised little control over textbook committees in the various provinces which was a ‘source of political danger’. All the previous committees and their resolutions were ineffective. In February 1900, therefore, the Government of India issued a resolution on textbooks. It clearly stated that, “the ultimate decision to prescribe books must rest with local governments and that function of the committees was strictly advisory and they had no right to prescribe books. The resolution further stated that the Director of Public Instruction must always be the chairman, that the committee should be limited to twenty members and a sub-committee to five...the interests of the government must be properly represented. In future only books authorised by the local government were to be used in schools receiving government grants.”⁹⁰

Curzon’s ‘illiberal policy’ was criticized by the press. Commenting on the resolution a newspaper says that “it appears from this resolution and the recent order of Government of India regarding schoolmasters and politics that government is afraid that a seditious spirit is created in boys in the schools...The Indians are thoroughly convinced of the benefits derived during the British rule on the whole and their loyalty has often been amply proved.”⁹¹ Objection was also taken to the government having the final say in

⁸⁹ *G.O. No, 405, Education Department, op. cit.*

⁹⁰ *Aparna Basu, op. cit., p. 39.*

⁹¹ *Madras Mail, February-March, 1900, p. 48, NMML.*

the selection of textbooks. Curzon's reforms couldn't be implemented effectively after his reign. In fact it became tough to control the schools due its sheer numbers etc.

The textbook publishing and its policies have gone through many changes under the aegis of colonial rule. The government adopted various policies with frequent changes. What remained for the most of the period till the lowering of the union jack in 1947 broadly followed the resolution of 1900.⁹² There was no uniform system and there were regional variations of the rules. The choice was limited for the government schools when compared to aided and unaided schools. The lists of books from which selection may be made are framed by the local governments on the advice of their textbook committees.

When a publisher desires a work to be adopted as a textbook, he sends copies of it to the director, who after a cursory examination intended to ascertain that the book is generally of the kind required, sends it to the textbook committee. The members of the committee receive copies and give their opinions, and with those opinions the director advises government, who, if the book seems suitable prescribe it as a textbook or recommend it to libraries.

These committees had lot of work to do as there were many competing publishers. It resulted in delays and dissatisfaction among the publishers. Mr. Hornell remarks regarding the figures of schools that "they represent an enormous market, far surpassing the reading public of the most popular novelist.", and goes on to say that, "to capture

⁹² See H.Sharp, *Progress of Education in India, 1912-1917 Seventh Quinquennial Review*, Vol-1. Superintendent Government Printing,, Calcutta, 1918, TNSA

such a market is no mean achievement; but to be given a monopoly is to have secured a fortune".⁹³ It would be fair to say that though the English education was quite popular with the people as the passport to white collar jobs. The Telugu schools too fairly attracted students.

⁹³ H.Sharp, *Progress of Education in India*, op. cit., p. 215.

II

Contents of the Textbooks

(1888-1947)



In this chapter, I have attempted to throw some light on the Telugu school textbooks in Colonial Andhra [1888-1947], and discuss various realms of thought on many issues that have been contents of these books published and widely read in Telugu speaking districts of Madras Presidency.

The textbooks were mostly 18 × 12 cms in size and rarely being 21 × 17 cms. The thickness varied from 30 to 200 pages. The cover page was mostly of single colour with black titles on it. The inner pages were black and white through out. The cover page invariably had English titles in bold font and vernacular titles below them. They were priced from 3 annas to 7 annas in early 1900s and 4 to 14 annas in late 1940s. The place of publication initially was that of various cities and predominantly Madras. The England based presses with their branches in India like 'Macmillan and co. Ltd' undertook the job from Madras, but later in 1920s the whole of presidency seems to have been involved.

These textbooks were written by various people mostly in the field of education. The Colonial officers in the education department like E. Marsden (Inspector of schools, Central Circle) authored or co-authored the books¹. Such works were translated into vernacular. Later, by 1920s the author base became

¹ The following are some of the few books written by Marsden.
Fifth Reader: Telugu, Macmillan & co., SPCK Press, Vepery, Madras, 1916.
Telugu Third Reader, Macmillan & co., Madras, 1989 and *Easy Lessons in Indian History for Primary School*, Macmillan & co., Madras, 1914.

wider and was taken over solely by educated Brahmins² who were mostly graduates or even more qualified. They were school teachers, head masters, school assistants, lecturers, professors from every nook and corner of the presidency. Since writing these textbooks was lucrative, there were instances where people holding high posts in judiciary and revenue departments also tried to undertake the writing of the textbooks. In one such case, Mutthukumaraswami, an Honorary Madras Presidency magistrate authored a text book called *Our Ideal Home* for 5th and 6th classes.³

In another instance a Revenue Inspector financed the publication of a textbook and the author rightly shows his gratitude in the preface as he says “I feel thankful to Sriman Raghavacharya Avergal, the revenue inspector, for kindly giving me the financial help for the printing”⁴. Since many people were eager to write, the competition naturally became high. The significant qualifications acquired by the writers and influential posts held by them were often prominently found mention in the titles of the textbooks. Competition and cooperation seems to be the order of the day. The *forewords* and *prefaces* were mostly written by other educationalists. The forewords as a rule ended up with words of hope that the book will be ‘accepted’ by teachers and students. Taking a cue from one textbook the foreword says “I hope that this reader gets the warmest reception in the hands

² The names with suffixes Sastri,, Rao, Acharyulu, Pantulu, Iyengar, Iyer suggest them to be Brahmins.

³ M. Muthukumaraswami, *Our Ideal Home-5th & 6th Classes, Text Book on the Management, Economy, Cultural Welfare of the Indian Household*, 1938, Madras.

⁴ M. Krishnamacharyulu, *Elementary Sociology*, Sree Krishna Publishing House, Tarlupad, 1930.

of the educationalists”.⁵ At another place the author says “I trust it will find a place in many of the rural libraries and secondary schools”.⁶ In yet another instance the writer is grateful for the kindly recognition which the first and second editions of this book received at the hands of the headmasters of the various schools and hopes the same for the third edition”.⁷

If the books were written by their counter parts in Tamil speaking districts by colonial officers, they would be translated by experts and it would be rightly mentioned in the titles.

By 1920 s the authors of these books were educated Indians, mostly constituting of Brahmins who were capable of speaking English. The contents and instructions for teachers were mostly in English followed by Telugu translations.

These books were written strictly according to the syllabus set by the Department of Public Instruction which was mentioned in the titles of each book and in the preface. It can be borne from such references as, ‘According to the latest departmental syllabus’, ‘According to the syllabus set by the Government of Madras in 1939’ etc. The syllabus was revised in regular intervals, and the last

⁵ A. Eswariah Chetty, *Nature Study and Civics Reader, Third Class*, Balasaraswathi Book Depot, Kurnool, 1938.

⁶ M. Muthukumaraswami, *Our Ideal Home, Fifth and Sixth Classes*, First edition, Madras, 1938.

⁷ P. Veeracharyulu, *Geography of the Vizagapatam District for Standard III*, Preface, SPCK Press, Vepery, Madras, 1914.

such revision occurred in the year 1939. The same syllabus continued to be in vogue till 1950 s.⁸

With the introduction of the textbook, the role of the teacher diminished. However, primacy of the teacher over the textbook was harped upon at various places in *prefaces* and *forewords* of the textbooks. The teacher had enough freedom to contextualise the knowledge for the pupils. Interestingly, the market forces seems to have given that freedom to the teacher as in one preface, the author confesses that “the teachers who would want to question the children according to their wish are not considering the books with the questions at the end of each lesson. Hence there are no questions attached to the lessons in the book”.⁹ Another *preface* clearly says: “[m]uch depends on the teacher. He must not use any textbook in the class. He must collect a large number of examples from daily life with reference to the locality in which he lives and present them to his pupils in an interesting manner”.¹⁰

Here the importance of the teacher over the textbook is repeatedly emphasized as the need was felt to contextualise the knowledge in the ethos of the pupils. This is why, in the early Geography textbooks the focus was on the details of regional geography. Early books written by the Colonial Officers also took

⁸ *Elementary School Syllabus of 1939*, Approved by Madras Government, Rowthu Book Depot, Rajamundry, 1951.

⁹ T.V Rangacharlu, *A Textbook of Geography for Class III*, T.V. Chellappasastry & Sons, Madras, 1937.

¹⁰ K. Sita Ramaiah, *Telugu Zoology Primer*, Madras, 1912.

cognizance of the fact that the topics chosen for the textbooks were ‘familiar to the native children’.¹¹

“It is well known”, says one textbook, “that the mother tongue is the best medium for imparting knowledge to the younger minds”¹², but there were problems in writing the textbooks in vernaculars in the initial years upto 1920’s. This was evident from the authors’ notes in *prefaces* and *forewords*. The following reference encapsulates the core of the problem: “Snow when rendered into vernacular is ‘*manchu*’. This does not at all convey the significance of the term”¹³. ‘*Manchu*’ actually is a word used for dew in Telugu. Since there is no concept of snow and snowfall in south, there is actually no equivalent of snow in simple Telugu.

Another such problem noted by the author of a Geography textbook, in its *preface* is that “the maps that are used in the books have English names and not vernacular ones as many of the wall maps of the continents used in schools are so and as many of the vernacular equivalents that are coined now have no common vocabulary”.¹⁴

This was a serious problem and one author suggests that, “A writer should not use vernacular words as he pleases, for this is sure to create confusion. It is

¹¹ *Longman’s New Telugu Reader, Third Standard*, Longmans Green and Co, Bombay, 1901.

¹² K. Sita Ramaiah, *op. cit.*, Preface, p. v.

¹³ B. Narayana Swami Iyer, *Elementary Geography, Book 1 for Form 1*, Translated by an Andhra Telugu Graduate, Ram Swami Publications, Mylapore, 1925.

¹⁴ B. Narayana Swami Iyer, *op. cit.*, Preface, p. vii.

advisable that he should use such words as have already been in use although they may not be scientifically appropriate. One should as far as possible take up the words used by previous writers. In case he has the occasion to use, for the first time, a vernacular word for a technical term he should take special care that it is simple, accurate and suggestive. It is confusing that several new vernacular terms for the same object should come into existence. Again if a technical term cannot be properly expressed in the vernacular a mere transliteration of the word may be used. It would not be advisable to coin some difficult vernacular word, which would be as strange as the English word and perhaps, require even more explanation to the beginner”.¹⁵

This problem was mentioned only till mid 1920\$ and after that many English words were used directly or new words were coined in simple vernacular.

Trying to steer clear of the earlier indigenous style, the mode of rote learning was discouraged. One author in his suggestions to the teacher says that, “the children should never be asked to memorise the lessons and get them by heart without understanding the concept. Once they understand the lesson then they can memorise only the important things”.¹⁶

The oral instruction was encouraged giving the teacher more freedom. One author remarks “No textbook however good can hope to supplant oral instruction.

¹⁵ K. Seeta Ramaiah, op. cit., Preface, p. v.

¹⁶ P. Veeracharyulu, *Geography of the Vizagapatam District*, op. cit., p. 6.

Children can tread the first steps in any subject with the help of the living voice of the teacher alone and the teacher is requested to keep the book in the background till after he had finished his oral instruction¹⁷. Such suggestions for the teachers regarding memorising and oral instruction were only seen till 1920 s.

Since there were too many people writing, the competition was tough. The authors strove hard to be upto date and in tune with the new syllabus. On the other hand few books continued to be published for a long time. For e.g. Veeresalingam, the pioneering social reformer of Andhra Pradesh has authored many textbooks¹⁸. They were published well into 1920 s, though he expired in 1919. There were instances where the writers would not get a financier or publisher's support for a long time. An author expressing his disappointment over the delay writes in the preface that, "it is highly regrettable that though the matter of the book was ready for the press for about three years ago, the book has seen the light of day just now"¹⁹. As the competition grew, the authors even mentioned the kind of sources they used in writing textbooks. These mainly comprised of Government reports compiled by the British officials or other books written by some English gentleman.

¹⁷ E. Marsden, *Geography of the Madras Presidency*, Revised edition, Macmillan & co Ltd, Madras, 1923, p. v.

¹⁸ Rao Bahadur Veerasalingam, *Telugu Third Standard Reader*, Christian Literature Society for India, Madras, 1926.

¹⁹ Vempati Purushotham, *Geography of West Godavari District*, Coomaraswamy Naidu and Sons, Madras, 1929, Preface, p. v.

IN
HUMBLE APPRECIATION
OF
The Liberal Educational Policy
INAUGURATED
BY
Their Imperial Majesties
AT
The Memorable Delhi Durbar
OF
DECEMBER 1911

Since the competition was high and approval of the Department of Public Instruction was necessary, praising of the Queen or King and thanking the department officials in acknowledgements was quite common. In the second page of one Geography textbook it was printed that: “In humble appreciation of the liberal educational policy inaugurated by their imperial majesties at the memorable Delhi Durbar of December 1911”.²⁰

A keen analysis of the textbooks at our disposal will reveal a lot of changes in the curriculum over the period of our study. To begin with, the authorship of these texts came to be monopolized by the colonial officers with some native assistance. However, in the later stages the Indian authors came to the fore in the writing of the textbooks. The change in the authors’ profile was clearly manifested in the gradual change in the content and themes addressed in the textbooks during the later stages. For the sake of convenience the period under study has been divided into sub-periods.

1888-1920

Initially from 1888-1920, the textbooks were written for a few subjects like Telugu, History, Geography, Mathematics and Agriculture. The textbooks had the lessons which were simple and general in nature. The topics were varied and

²⁰ See the Picture on the left page

haphazard. The list of contents in a book²¹ looked like this: “Union is Strength, The Ostrich, Ice, The Crocodile, Exercise and Sleep, The Vulture, The Railway, The Whale, The Steam Engine, The Ant, The Bicycle, Hanuman Monkeys, The Catamaran, India Rubber, the Camel, Turpentine”. In Poetry they topics were as follows: Obedience, Pride, Truth, Flattery, Intemperance.

The contents in these early textbooks were mostly animal stories, moral stories, stories from puranas, agriculture, health and hygiene, modern inventions etc. As mentioned above, there was a conscious effort to include things which were familiar to the native children taken from their culture and surroundings. However, this did not preclude the description of some unfamiliar contents

The tone of the author was very detached and critical at times and the narration mostly came across as a second person account. For instance: “In *this* Madras Presidency three fourth of the people are directly or indirectly dependent on agriculture.”²² ... “the plough which is used in many places in *this country* is no different from the plough depicted on ancient pillars”²³ ... “The farmers are not buying the European plough which is available for Twenty five rupees. It’s better to think about the work it can do and not its price”.²⁴ ... “the way the people of *this country* eat rice, in Ireland the poor eat potatoes”..²⁵

²¹ E. Marsden B.A and K. Veerasalingam, *Fifth Reader*, op. cit., p. 54.

²² *An Agriculture Class Book for South Indian Schools*, SPCK Press, Madras, 1888, p. 2.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

²⁵ E. Marsden, K. Veerasalingam, op. cit., p. 56.

Agriculture was one of the major themes of these early text books. Several chapters, were devoted to Agriculture within the same textbook. In addition to that, some textbooks exclusively dealt with the issues related to Agriculture, its problems and prospects. In one textbook²⁶ various lessons on agricultural themes were as follows:

1. Ploughing the field: This lesson was a simple narration of a man ploughing the field and interestingly the cover page depicted the same.
2. How to plough the field: This lesson includes the details on the need to plough the field effectively. Different techniques of ploughing and their utility for increase in crop productivity are explained.
3. Trees, their food: This lesson explains the way the tree absorbs the essential minerals and nutrients from the earth. Various other advantages of trees are also elaborately given with the help of small pictures in the textbooks.

It is quite interesting to observe that a great amount of agricultural knowledge was being imparted through these general reader books. The books were generally very critical of the backwardness of the agriculture and the primitive tools and methods which were in use. A very scientific approach towards agriculture was recommended and the lessons included in these textbooks explained how to apply these methods in agricultural operations. Lessons on agriculture though figured prominently in the textbooks, had to contend with other

²⁶ E. Marsden, K. Veerasalingam, *Telugu Third Reader*, Macmillan & co, Madras, 1916, pp. 31-55.

issues gradually. By 1930's and 1940's their importance diminished considerably, irrespective of the portrayal of India as predominantly an agrarian society.

Another vital theme which became a major component of the early textbooks pertained to health, cleanliness, and hygiene. Like agriculture, this theme was also devoted considerable space in these textbooks. The lessons on this theme had a wide range of concerns as can be explained with the help of the following excerpt from a single textbook.²⁷

1. Health: this lesson explains the importance of health. Health is wealth being the core argument, the author urges the children to pay special attention to the lessons related to health and asks them to spread the knowledge among their friends.
2. Air: The importance of fresh air for health is explained. Moreover the functioning of the respiratory system is also elaborately dealt with.
3. How does air get polluted: The various ways in which air gets polluted with a focus on animals and animal activity.
4. How is air purified: The importance of trees in containing air contamination and recycling is explained. The subsidiary theme which occupied some space was portrayal of villages as healthier places because of more vegetation and less pollution.

²⁷ E. Marsden, M. Venkata Rathnam, *Third Reader*, op. cit., pp. 27-128.

5. Water: The importance of water as essential component for survival has been highlighted. The lesson also gives instruction to the children to use clean water as it was necessary for the proper functioning of body.

6. Food: This lesson explains the benefits of regularized dietary habits and avoidance of unhealthy food habits like excessive intake of sweets etc.

The lessons mentioned above are indicative of a general trend as far as the main issues are concerned. New subjects on the same themes were subsequently included but the overall trend did not change drastically and issues like the clean drinking water and proper ventilation for the houses remained important issues. The concern for hygiene on such issues is so explained:

“We should not let the cattle sleep with us in the same room. Even if the cattle are sleeping in the adjoining room, it should have proper ventilation and have big window. One should not sleep with fire in hearth with all doors shut”²⁸ ... “People should not wash their clothes near the wells. It is not advisable to plant trees near the wells as the leaves of that tree are likely to fall in the well and spoil the water. The dirty water should not be thrown into the well.”²⁹ Disposal of garbage and faecal matter were also discussed at length in every textbook: It is argued that “the dung and other faecal matter should be thrown in a

²⁸ E. Marsden, M. Venkata Ratnam, *Third Reader*, op. cit., p. 56.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 118.



ditch and covered with soil.”³⁰The issues concerning health and hygiene gradually assumed more importance. In the later phase books were solely devoted to the same issues with greater emphasis.

An issue which is very much symptomatic of colonial perception is that of the ‘Lazy native’. There are numerous references to the laziness of the natives especially to the rich sections of society. Kings are often depicted burly in the pictures.³¹ The accusation is selectively on the rich of the country which is evident from the following excerpt:

It’s true that a few people are working very hard. Such people are mostly working for daily bread but the rich of this country and their children don’t work at all. They sit idly inside the homes throughout the day and when they have to go out they travel in carts. Contrary to this in England, even the richest of the rich do some physical work for two to three hours in a day. Even if they have vehicles they would walk or run or ride horses. That’s how they keep themselves healthy. Even in this country the English exercise early in the morning.³²

To let the message of exercise and physical work seep into the minds of children certain interesting stories have been woven up. In one Telugu reader, the lesson titled ‘Physical Work’ has a story where an ill king is advised by the doctor to play cricket. Such stories were not uncommon in these books. This story has a

³⁰ E. Marsden, M. Venkata Ratnam, *Third Reader*, op. cit., p 56.

³¹ Picture on the left page taken from – *Longman’s Telugu Reader, Third Standard*, op. cit., p. 5.

³² E. Marsden, K. Veerasalingam, *Fifth Reader*, op cit., p. 12.



దానిలోపల ననేకమైన మూలికలనుంచి దానియొక్క రంధ్ర
 మగవడకుండునట్లు మూసెను. అతడంతట బంతినె గొట్టు
 కోలనొకటిని దీసికొని దానిలోపలకూడఁ దొలిచి బంతిలోవలె

picture³³ where the king is sitting worried and the doctor is giving him a cricket bat. Both the king and the doctor are dressed in costumes of ancient India.

In another lesson the writer tried to instill the fear of God to take up physical work saying that “its God’s will that we should work and earn our livelihood and that’s the reason why he gave us limbs”.³⁴ At times the writer would try to use logic and metaphors to explain the benefits of the physical work. In one lesson titled ‘Health Care’, the author writes: “Some amount of physical exercise is important for good health. Even the man made machines if not used for few days becomes rusty and useless. So one should do some physical work and not remain lazy and idle”.³⁵ This point of view gradually disappears by 1930’s apart from occasional criticism of the rich.

Another regular feature of these text books is the constant references and comparisons with England and other European countries. At times the comparisons of the metropolitan country with the colony is used to suggest the complete superiority of the former. Hence the necessity of the colony to follow the foot steps of its colonisers.

Since the Agriculture was devoted a lot of space, comparisons in that field were numerous. In one such comparison author says: “Land holdings in Belgium are also as small as Madras Presidency but they are adopting modern methods and

³³ Picture included from, E. Marsden, K. Veeresalingam, op cit., p. 13.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 31.

³⁵ *Telugu Third Standard Reader*, The Empress of India Press, Madras, 1893, p. 72.

it's no different with Ireland ... The plough used in this country is not good and effective. European plough is very effective. Unlike the farmers of this country they till it more deeply and use horses instead of oxen...In European countries they use bone powder as fertilizer for the crops".³⁶

Even in the case of health and hygiene this trend can be seen as evident from the following extract:

“Measles, the disease which is seen in India now troubled people in England long ago. It has been eradicated quite effectively there. The English have found ways to save themselves from that disease. If the people of this country can take up healthy habits of the English, Measles and other diseases can be easily prevented”.³⁷

The comparisons were numerous and included diverse aspects on flora, fauna, crop-patterns and dietary habits of the inhabitants of different continents. Few such examples are as follows:

1. African Elephants are bigger than Indian elephants and have bigger trunks. Unlike our country they don't domesticate the elephants but hunt and kill them for the tusks.
2. The skin of the cheetah is much sought after and in England it could easily fetch around 100 to 500 rupees.

³⁶ *An Agricultural Class Book for South Indian Schools*, op. cit., pp. 9-43.

³⁷ E. Marsden, M. Venkata Ratnam, op. cit., p. 29.

3. In England, America, Australia and almost all over the Europe, wheat serves as the staple diet of the people. The English particularly prefer eating bread.
4. Americans grind the maize, make corn flour and export them in sealed boxes.
5. In few places of Europe one type of good quality paper is manufactured from the maize plants.
6. Bear in cold countries are white in colour and eat fish.
7. In North America people make sugar from a huge tree and in Europe it is made of beets.
8. The Ostrich is seen in the desert lands of Africa.

Above are few references found in a single textbook.³⁸ This was common in other books of all subjects. At times the comparisons took the form of irrational criticism and shows ignorance of Indian ways and life style. It has been criticized in few instances that the farmers don't rear pigs and that the horses and zebras are not used for ploughing in agriculture. Given the fact that Zebras are not found in India and the Horse ploughing is not suited for light Indian soil renders such criticisms absolutely misplaced.

Since the authors of these textbooks till 1920's were mostly Colonial Officers, in all likelihood, their personal interests strongly influenced the selection

³⁸ E. Marsden, K. Veerasalingam, *Fifth Reader*, op. cit., pp. 15-72.



[2-5 - 1868 - 1870 - 1872 - 1874 - 1876 - 1878 - 1880 - 1882 - 1884 - 1886 - 1888 - 1890 - 1892 - 1894 - 1896 - 1898 - 1900 - 1902 - 1904 - 1906 - 1908 - 1910 - 1912 - 1914 - 1916 - 1918 - 1920 - 1922 - 1924 - 1926 - 1928 - 1930 - 1932 - 1934 - 1936 - 1938 - 1940 - 1942 - 1944 - 1946 - 1948 - 1950 - 1952 - 1954 - 1956 - 1958 - 1960 - 1962 - 1964 - 1966 - 1968 - 1970 - 1972 - 1974 - 1976 - 1978 - 1980 - 1982 - 1984 - 1986 - 1988 - 1990 - 1992 - 1994 - 1996 - 1998 - 2000 - 2002 - 2004 - 2006 - 2008 - 2010 - 2012 - 2014 - 2016 - 2018 - 2020 - 2022 - 2024 - 2026 - 2028 - 2030 - 2032 - 2034 - 2036 - 2038 - 2040 - 2042 - 2044 - 2046 - 2048 - 2050 - 2052 - 2054 - 2056 - 2058 - 2060 - 2062 - 2064 - 2066 - 2068 - 2070 - 2072 - 2074 - 2076 - 2078 - 2080 - 2082 - 2084 - 2086 - 2088 - 2090 - 2092 - 2094 - 2096 - 2098 - 2100 - 2102 - 2104 - 2106 - 2108 - 2110 - 2112 - 2114 - 2116 - 2118 - 2120 - 2122 - 2124 - 2126 - 2128 - 2130 - 2132 - 2134 - 2136 - 2138 - 2140 - 2142 - 2144 - 2146 - 2148 - 2150 - 2152 - 2154 - 2156 - 2158 - 2160 - 2162 - 2164 - 2166 - 2168 - 2170 - 2172 - 2174 - 2176 - 2178 - 2180 - 2182 - 2184 - 2186 - 2188 - 2190 - 2192 - 2194 - 2196 - 2198 - 2200 - 2202 - 2204 - 2206 - 2208 - 2210 - 2212 - 2214 - 2216 - 2218 - 2220 - 2222 - 2224 - 2226 - 2228 - 2230 - 2232 - 2234 - 2236 - 2238 - 2240 - 2242 - 2244 - 2246 - 2248 - 2250 - 2252 - 2254 - 2256 - 2258 - 2260 - 2262 - 2264 - 2266 - 2268 - 2270 - 2272 - 2274 - 2276 - 2278 - 2280 - 2282 - 2284 - 2286 - 2288 - 2290 - 2292 - 2294 - 2296 - 2298 - 2300 - 2302 - 2304 - 2306 - 2308 - 2310 - 2312 - 2314 - 2316 - 2318 - 2320 - 2322 - 2324 - 2326 - 2328 - 2330 - 2332 - 2334 - 2336 - 2338 - 2340 - 2342 - 2344 - 2346 - 2348 - 2350 - 2352 - 2354 - 2356 - 2358 - 2360 - 2362 - 2364 - 2366 - 2368 - 2370 - 2372 - 2374 - 2376 - 2378 - 2380 - 2382 - 2384 - 2386 - 2388 - 2390 - 2392 - 2394 - 2396 - 2398 - 2400 - 2402 - 2404 - 2406 - 2408 - 2410 - 2412 - 2414 - 2416 - 2418 - 2420 - 2422 - 2424 - 2426 - 2428 - 2430 - 2432 - 2434 - 2436 - 2438 - 2440 - 2442 - 2444 - 2446 - 2448 - 2450 - 2452 - 2454 - 2456 - 2458 - 2460 - 2462 - 2464 - 2466 - 2468 - 2470 - 2472 - 2474 - 2476 - 2478 - 2480 - 2482 - 2484 - 2486 - 2488 - 2490 - 2492 - 2494 - 2496 - 2498 - 2500 - 2502 - 2504 - 2506 - 2508 - 2510 - 2512 - 2514 - 2516 - 2518 - 2520 - 2522 - 2524 - 2526 - 2528 - 2530 - 2532 - 2534 - 2536 - 2538 - 2540 - 2542 - 2544 - 2546 - 2548 - 2550 - 2552 - 2554 - 2556 - 2558 - 2560 - 2562 - 2564 - 2566 - 2568 - 2570 - 2572 - 2574 - 2576 - 2578 - 2580 - 2582 - 2584 - 2586 - 2588 - 2590 - 2592 - 2594 - 2596 - 2598 - 2600 - 2602 - 2604 - 2606 - 2608 - 2610 - 2612 - 2614 - 2616 - 2618 - 2620 - 2622 - 2624 - 2626 - 2628 - 2630 - 2632 - 2634 - 2636 - 2638 - 2640 - 2642 - 2644 - 2646 - 2648 - 2650 - 2652 - 2654 - 2656 - 2658 - 2660 - 2662 - 2664 - 2666 - 2668 - 2670 - 2672 - 2674 - 2676 - 2678 - 2680 - 2682 - 2684 - 2686 - 2688 - 2690 - 2692 - 2694 - 2696 - 2698 - 2700 - 2702 - 2704 - 2706 - 2708 - 2710 - 2712 - 2714 - 2716 - 2718 - 2720 - 2722 - 2724 - 2726 - 2728 - 2730 - 2732 - 2734 - 2736 - 2738 - 2740 - 2742 - 2744 - 2746 - 2748 - 2750 - 2752 - 2754 - 2756 - 2758 - 2760 - 2762 - 2764 - 2766 - 2768 - 2770 - 2772 - 2774 - 2776 - 2778 - 2780 - 2782 - 2784 - 2786 - 2788 - 2790 - 2792 - 2794 - 2796 - 2798 - 2800 - 2802 - 2804 - 2806 - 2808 - 2810 - 2812 - 2814 - 2816 - 2818 - 2820 - 2822 - 2824 - 2826 - 2828 - 2830 - 2832 - 2834 - 2836 - 2838 - 2840 - 2842 - 2844 - 2846 - 2848 - 2850 - 2852 - 2854 - 2856 - 2858 - 2860 - 2862 - 2864 - 2866 - 2868 - 2870 - 2872 - 2874 - 2876 - 2878 - 2880 - 2882 - 2884 - 2886 - 2888 - 2890 - 2892 - 2894 - 2896 - 2898 - 2900 - 2902 - 2904 - 2906 - 2908 - 2910 - 2912 - 2914 - 2916 - 2918 - 2920 - 2922 - 2924 - 2926 - 2928 - 2930 - 2932 - 2934 - 2936 - 2938 - 2940 - 2942 - 2944 - 2946 - 2948 - 2950 - 2952 - 2954 - 2956 - 2958 - 2960 - 2962 - 2964 - 2966 - 2968 - 2970 - 2972 - 2974 - 2976 - 2978 - 2980 - 2982 - 2984 - 2986 - 2988 - 2990 - 2992 - 2994 - 2996 - 2998 - 3000 - 3002 - 3004 - 3006 - 3008 - 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and writing of the contents of the textbooks. This is clearly manifested in repeated references to hunting which was a favourite pastime of the officers. Since there were numerous legendary and real stories on hunting, it became a favourite theme in the textbooks. The instances are as follows:

When writing about the Ostrich the author says “It runs in circular motion and the hunters are aware of this. So they ride the horses across the circle and after eight to nine hours they trap and kill it”.³⁹In another text he says “sometimes the hunters cover themselves with the feathers of the ostrich and get close to the herd and even before the Ostrich realizes it , the hunters would attack it ”⁴⁰

In an exclusive lesson on ‘Tiger Hunting’, the writer, a colonial officer, confesses that hunting the *cheetahs* and tigers is his favourite pastime. He writes that “[t]he English are very fond of hunting tigers. They take upto fifty elephants along with hundreds of people to hunt them”⁴¹.

Railways is another recurring topic in the textbooks which continued to be of great significance throughout the period under study. The Railways is referred to as one of the greatest boons of the benevolent Raj. Explaining the benefits of introduction of the railways in India, one author says “to travel from the southern part of *Hindu desamu* to the northern part it would take months earlier. Now with

³⁹ E. Marsden, K. Veerasalingam, *Fifth Reader*, op. cit., p. 3. See the picture on the left page.

⁴⁰ *Longman's Telugu reader, Third Standard*, op. cit., p. 8.

⁴¹ E. Marsden, M. Venkata Ratnam, op. cit., p. 67.

railways it takes very little time. We can travel hundreds of miles in a day by spending approximately two rupees”.⁴²

These early Geography textbooks had to take up a responsibility of introducing and explaining the British ‘boons’ or modern inventions like Railways and Telegraph. One book says about Railways that “It is an amazing wonder of our age. With the help of this machine people, animals and things can easily be transported from one place to another. This amazing thing was invented before one hundred and twenty years only. England saw the first Railways...The train travels at a speed of thirty to forty miles per hour without the help of oxen or horses...The charges are also very minimal...”.⁴³

The Telegraph is explained as “a facility to send messages through wires...one end of the metal string is in one office and the other end in other office and transmits the message”.⁴⁴

The Geography textbooks had a special place among the early textbooks. The Geography of a district, taluqa, or sometimes Zamindari is studied in detail in these text books. The titles of these textbooks appear like ‘Nellore District Geography’, ‘Geography of Vizagapatam district for standard III’, ‘Geography of Gannavaram Taluqa’ etc. These books include brief explanation on the basic

⁴² P. Veeracharyulu, *Geography of the Vizagapatam District*, op. cit., p. 38.

⁴³ Ramanuja Mudaliar, *Geography of Nellore District for Third Standard*, Rama & Co. Ltd, Madras, 1913, p. 54.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

information on the Earth, the Sun, their relation and the number of continents etc. On the other hand, these texts narrowed down the focus to the minute geographical details of various districts or taluqas. Elaborate district maps were drafted and all the possible geographical details about the districts namely: the boundaries, area, flora and fauna, resources, exports and imports, people and their religions, population, places of government offices, topography, types of soils, rainfall, major and minor crops, occupations, climate, languages, roadways, railways, administration were neatly described. Another interesting detail mentioned in the textbooks is about 'health places' which were actually the hill stations where the Governor and other officials spent their summer. The author says about one such place in the following words: "To the north of Vizagapatam, after three kilometres there is a place at high altitude and Europeans live there for its healthy atmosphere".⁴⁵ In another such instance, the writer says "Udagamandalam, Wellington, Cunnor, Kodaikanal are cool places. During the summer the Governor goes to such places".⁴⁶

The Geography textbooks also included the details of the Colonial administrative machinery at different levels. It appears to be an act of propaganda by the state by emphasising on the 'good' governance.

'Our king is Sri George V. Our country is under his rule. The rule is called the British rule. The Government has appointed a district collector for each

⁴⁵ P. Veeracharyulu, *Geography of the Vizagapatam District*, op. cit., p. 38.

⁴⁶ P. Hanumantha Rao, *Elementary Geography*, Manoranjani Press, Cocanada, 1912, p. 45.

district. There are assistant collectors below him. Tahsildars look after taluqas. These people not only collect taxes but also dispense justice and punish the guilty. They have powers for that. Taxes for few taluqas are being collected by Zamindars and proprietors. Money related legal issues are solved by District judge and Munsif. Police Superintendent and the Inspectors below him take care of the security of the people.⁴⁷

Geography texts included varied kinds of information, some of which comprised the content of textbooks on Civics. Upto 1900 the textbooks demonstrated the benevolent face of the Government by providing information on the hunting feats of British officials. '*Doras*' [white officers] are shown to be the rescuers of the people from the Crocodiles and man eating Tigers and also the Government is shown as giving rewards to those who performed such courageous acts. All these are only isolated instances and not regular references.

In Geography textbooks the Government is depicted as diligently performing certain responsibilities such as: (a) collecting taxes (b) dispensing justice (c) providing Law and order and security. These textbooks definitely changed the information regarding the Government and its functions. The State was given a better paternalistic face and image.

⁴⁷ P. Veera Charyulu, op. cit., pp. 41- 42.

The Arithmetic table's book⁴⁸ contained all the information about Money, weights, measure of capacity and time etc for both England and India. English currency was explained as follows:

4 farthings = one penny,

12 pence = one Shilling,

5 Shillings = one Crown

20 Shillings = One p^und or gold sovereign

21 Shillings = one Guinea

Another feature of the early textbooks published till 1920 s is the usage of pictures and diagrams in the textbooks which exhibits a clear influence from the west. The People are depicted in western outfits and appeared to have been completely alien to the native children. Such western idioms can be traced in the following depictions:

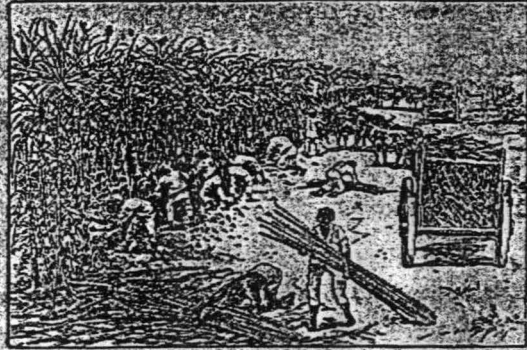
1. Men shearing wool from sheep are in western outfits,-trousers, shirts, shoes and a hat.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ P. Subramanya Sastri, *Arithmetic Tables in English and Telugu for Elementary Schools*, Ranganayaki Vilasam Press, Nellore, 1889, p. 2.

⁴⁹ Picture on the left taken from, E. Marsden, M. Venkata Ratnam, *Fourth reader*, op. cit., p. 24.



గిరుము



జంతువులు.

ఏనుగు సాధారణముగా మాట, కిరవిడి సంవత్సరములు
బ్రతుకును.



2. Men working in wheat fields are also dressed in the same way.⁵⁰

3. In a moral story, a boy sitting on a river bank is depicted in western attire.⁵¹

This incongruity has disappeared by mid 1920 s and all the pictures were completely Indian. It would have helped children to relate to them easily.

The underlying colonial economic and trading interests played heavily in the mind of the colonial officials who primarily wrote the textbooks. This is clear as lessons on coffee, tea, turpentine, rubber, cotton and other things that were of trading interest were included extensively even in the general readers. Lessons on tea, coffee, cotton, dates were found in a single text book. Few excerpts from the lessons on these commodities are given below:

1. Tea like coffee is consumed all over the world and especially in Europe. This is grown mainly in India and China...Tea is exported to Europe from China and India.⁵²

2. Arab traders introduced coffee to India. It is grown extensively in Nilgiri hills of our South India...The people who own coffee plantations can become very rich if they take care of the plants otherwise they can't see any profits.⁵³

3. Turpentine oil has a strange odour. It is very clear and light oil...⁵⁴

⁵⁰ *Longman's Third Reader*, op. cit., p. 4.

⁵¹ This picture in –a) E. Marsden, K. Veerasalingam, *Fifth Reader*, op. cit., p. 61.

⁵² E. Marsden, M. Venkata Ratnam, *Fourth Reader*, op. cit., p. 75.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

4. From the English word 'Rub' came the Rubber, its also called 'Indian rubber'...This is found in America, Burma, Malaysia and in Southern India.⁵⁵

Another interesting feature is the fair amount of recognition given to the Child's personality. Most of the stories included were that of the brave children. The lesson *The boy who saved the village tank*⁵⁶ is a popular story where the son of a barber tries to stop the leakage of water from the village tank with his bare hands, throughout the night. In another lesson titled. *A Brave Sailor Lad*.⁵⁷ The little boy dies standing at the same place in a boat as his father asks him not to move. The boy stands firmly despite the firing by the enemies and dies ultimately. Such popular stories from the west were indianised and included in these text books.

As far as Indian religious literature is concerned, the stories from Ramayana occupied the central place in the textbooks. These textbooks included many lessons on Ram. In one textbook⁵⁸ various lessons on Ram were explained under the following titles: (1) Rama's birth (2) Rama's Marriage (3) Rama's accession to the throne (4) Rama's hardships (5) Rama's Sons etc. A very striking feature of the treatment which was given to ramayana was the absence of any miracles. All the miracles were bypassed.

⁵⁴ E. Marsden, K. Veerasalingam, *Fifth Reader*, op. cit., p. 67.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 89.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 67.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 103.

⁵⁸ *Longmans Telugu Reader*, op. cit., pp. 19-67.

Introduction of Rama begins with the explanation of the caste hierarchy of Hindus. Rama is then placed in the category of Kshatriyas who claimed superior status in the society along with the Brahmins. He is shown as a king of one of the many small kingdoms of Northern India. However, there seems to be an ample recognition to his valour and righteous character. There is an attempt to write the story of Ramayana in a realistic and comprehensible manner. Therefore the story of the “Golden Deer” was omitted. The author refused to accept Rama’s army as comprising of monkeys. The author rather explained that these soldiers lived in forests and were short dark and ugly. Hence they are called as monkeys.⁵⁹ This attitude, however changed later as the Indian writers took charge of writing the textbooks.

These are broadly some features of the early text books from 1880 to 1920. Though no abrupt change in the themes and contents of these textbooks can be seen, a gradual and perceptible change was well under way. It’s probably because of the expanding profile of the authors and complete switch over of the writing job from the hands of colonial officers to native educated elite. The latter earlier were co-authors, editors, translators of the books and now came to take charge of the job completely.

⁵⁹ *Longmans Telugu Reader*, op. cit., p. 51.

1920s

There is a thread of continuity from the earlier phase but changes are also seen. The attention given to the earlier themes was more or less the same but was extended to other issues also. Another significant difference is in the nature of treatment which was given to the issues concerned. The critical, impersonal tone turns very personal and sympathetic. '*This country*' becomes *our 'hindu desamu'*. The criticism seen earlier smoothly transforms into passionate urges and requests.

Agriculture and health related information continued to dominate the pages of the textbooks. However, there emerged a qualitative difference in the treatment which was given to them. Agriculture lost its earlier prominence and now exclusive textbooks on the subject were not printed anymore. The health and hygiene became the sole theme of many a textbooks of 1920s.

The lessons in a health reader⁶⁰ would be like this: (1) Ways to become healthy (2) Essential nutrients for our food (3) How to cook food properly (4) our body and its parts (5) Cleaning and dumping of Garbage (6) Disposal of dead bodies (7) Good and bad things about carbonic/aerated drinks (8) Physical Exercise and its importance (9) De-worming oneself (10) Prevention of Skin diseases (11) How to protect our teeth? (12) The importance of sleep (13) How to prevent infectious diseases (14) Tips for good digestion etc.

⁶⁰ B. Narayana Swami Iyer, *Practical Lessons in Hygiene-2*, Translated and Published by Madras Premier Company, Madras, 1923, Contents.

The textbook referring to the ways of disposal of dead bodies says that, “people of few countries bury them and in other countries they throw them away in water. In our country we have both these traditions. It’s best to burn the dead bodies. The graveyards should be far away from the villages so that the polluted air would not affect the village...It is harmful to bury the corpse as the ground water might get polluted due to this. To do the burial in a harmless way one has to use coffins and take enough care to bury them far and no well should be dug around the place.”⁶¹

Another issue discussed is the side effects of the carbonic drinks or sodas. It is said that “one might fall ill if the water used for it, is not clean. The bottles used for this, the hands of the people preparing those, utensils etc should be clean. The Municipality is appointing officers to check and give licenses”.⁶²

For these lessons, the writer glorifies England’s development and its ability to successfully prevent and eradicate many lethal diseases. Therefore an example is put forth which was expected to be emulated by the natives. The people are exhorted to take up health issues seriously. It is said that “Before eighty years, fifty out of every hundred people used to die of many diseases in England, but

⁶¹ B. Narayana Swami Iyer, *Practical Lessons in Hygiene-2*, op. cit., p. 26.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 28.

now not even two out of hundred are dying.”⁶³ It is also proposed by few books that “those who pollute water, air etc. should be treated as criminals”.⁶⁴

These health readers came to view the maintenance of cleanliness, health and hygiene as the Government’s responsibility. This is a unique addition to the Government’s erstwhile political and economic responsibilities namely, collection of taxes, dispensing of justice and maintenance of law and order. This uniqueness lay in the humanistic orientation associated with the concerns on health and hygiene. These textbooks gave credit to the government for taking up such issues. It becomes quite evident from the following reference: “The *Civilized English* government is framing laws and appointing people to take care of the health needs and spending a lot of money on health sector”.⁶⁵

These health readers enhanced the benevolent image of the Raj, and at the same time established the dichotomy of the ‘civilized English’ trying to emancipate the Indians from ‘uncivilized’, unclean status.

Another important change is seen in case of Geography textbooks. There has been a concern to keep the books upto date and feedback was taken seriously. This is seen in case of geography textbooks which got thicker as the focus shifted from district and taluqa based geographies to a wider area. In addition to it, due to demand from the readers some more modifications were made. This is evident

⁶³ ⁶³ B. Narayana Swami Iyer, *Practical Lessons in Hygiene-2*, op. cit., p. 3.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 2.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 4.

from author's remarks in one preface: "Complaint is often brought and rightly too, that in the attempt to make the region, the unit for purposes of geographical teaching, political Geography is altogether neglected and that children are thoroughly ignorant of geographical features of other areas. This charge cannot be brought against this book".⁶⁶

Such shift of focus from one's own district to inclusion of other districts, the entire country and finally the whole of the world was now a process which was underway. Now as geography textbook says "the aim of learning geography is to increase the tolerance and cooperation towards the foreigners and people of other countries".⁶⁷

All of a sudden the scope of geography seems to have widened a lot. Earlier since it was only a district or a taluqa such a holistic approach couldn't have been an aim of Geography. Now these books are dealing with many areas and people. The following poem sums it all:

There are lots of countries as well as ours,
Where you never yet have been,
With different people, birds and flowers,
And a different King and Queen.
If you were to visit these foreign places,

⁶⁶ *Geography of the Madras Presidency in Telugu*, Macmillan and Co. Ltd., Madras, 1923, Preface.

⁶⁷ B. Narayana Swami Iyer, *Elementary Geography*, Ramaswami Iyer Publications, Mylapore, 1925, Preface.

It would surprise you quite
For some of the folk have yellow faces
And some are as black as night.
And in the lands we shall show you now,
They are white and brown like you,
And delightful, all of them anyhow
Make haste and look at them do⁶⁸

Though 'trade' was sufficiently discussed in earlier Geography textbooks, the emphasis now changed. The exports and imports were listed and discussed at length. At one level trade is seen as a very important activity for the development and prosperity of a country. It is argued that trade was the most important factor in Europe's march towards supremacy over other continents. At another level, it has been pointed out that manufacturing Industries should be developed in our country rather than importing them from outside. In one book it is observed that "Biscuits, peppermint, pens, pencils, liquor, mirror, ceramics, paper, books, weapons, iron rods, iron wheels, different medicines, match boxes, candles, wooden articles, woolens, gold and silver, children's toys are being imported from other countries and we are using them everyday. We have to start manufacturing such goods in our own *Andhra desamu*."⁶⁹

⁶⁸ V. Natarajan, *A Geography for Primary Schools*, OUP, Madras, 1922, p. 1.

⁶⁹ *Geography of the Madras Presidency*, op. cit., p. 39.

The awareness regarding the fact that England has been the major trade partner is shown in the lessons. The list of exports and imports shows that all the raw material is being exported and manufactured goods of the same are being imported, but there was no criticism regarding that issue. The hindrances due to which India is unable to produce machine made goods are enlisted as: “(1) lack of machinery/steam engines (2) lack of resources like coal (3) iron to make machines is also absent, etc.”⁷⁰ The hope that India should take up that work is strongly expressed.

The Geography textbooks looked at people of this country as many, mutually exclusive categories with caste and religious differences. One book says “there are many *jatis* in India. There are Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Christians, Sikhs etc. Since there are large numbers of Hindus, our country is called ‘*Hindu Desamu*’. Among these people there are many social, political and psychological differences. You will read more about it in the next class”.⁷¹ Such a view of the Indian society was earlier expressed by the Colonial writers and the native writers too seemed to have accepted that. This could be seen as a western misreading of the native reality but also could be seen as an endeavour by the writers to propagate the ideology of the interests of a Hindu majority. The native writers predominantly belonged to the elite, Hindu sections of the society.

⁷⁰ B. Narayana Swami Iyer, op. cit., p. 150.

⁷¹ Vempati Purushothham, op. cit., p. 28.

For the first time ‘the colonization’ as a phenomenon was brought up in these Geography textbooks and the factors for its emergence were discussed. According to a textbook, “Europe is densely populated and the food is scarce due to less crop productivity. So to procure food grains they depend upon foreign countries. They occupy the tropical countries and try to procure food. It is beneficial on two grounds. A few people can be sent away to another country and they can procure agricultural products from there. This is good for the occupied country as well. The people can find some work and they can also earn some money by exporting the raw material.”⁷²

Earlier only the fact that India remained under British rule was discussed and the ideal relations between the metropolitan country and the colony were also emphasized. However, there was no direct reference to the process of colonization. Hence this was a striking development.

The Geography textbooks during the course of discussion on districts, as has been mentioned before, would definitely refer to the ‘health places’. One such description points at the colonial perceptions in different ways.

“For the sake of good health and relaxation one should visit places like Kodaikanal. The Governor of our Presidency and few other officials stay there for

⁷² M. Seeta Ramaiya, *Regional Geography-Asia and Europe, India*, Government Printing Press, Madras, 1923, p. 128.

six months in an year”.⁷³ Such information can be seen as an attempt at portraying India as an unhealthy place. Repeated references to visits of hill stations by the Colonial officials for better environment also suggest their alienation from the masses.

The old textbooks continued to be published along with the new editions. In addition to the new textbooks, the old editions also continued to be published. The textbooks written by K.Veeresalingam were being published as late as 1926 though he expired in 1919. Likewise the district Geographies now are available along with the world Geographies. The success of a particular textbook lay in its popularity among the readers. Therefore, some old textbooks remained in vogue along with the new publications. However by 1930s they gradually disappeared.

1930s

With a wide range of issues being added to the contents of these textbooks, the nature of the Knowledge to be imparted surely changed. This change became more prominent in 1930s. While new themes filled up the pages of these primers, a whole new range of subjects were also introduced.. The textbooks which were earlier concerned with mainly the Knowledge of health, agriculture and other basic issues, now discussed complex issues which were of some social and political relevance. Entry of new textbooks namely *Elementary sociology, Nature and*

⁷³ *Geography of the Madras Presidency, 1923*, op. cit., pp. 88- 94.

Civics Reader, Textbook on Management of household, etc. have brought a sea change in the curriculum.

India's poverty was treated as a serious concern by all the textbooks. The earlier books had scanty references to this issue but now it is discussed in detail with considerable vigour. Since textbooks on Sociology and Civics were introduced for the first time, references to poverty became inevitable. Agriculture which has been the central theme all along came to be discussed in relation with poverty. A textbook made it very clear saying, "our country is very poor. Poverty can be removed by improving the state of agriculture, industries, trade and commerce. To improve all these sectors we need money. Since Agriculture is the major occupation, farmers are the backbone of our country. Farmers' prosperity is the key to country's prosperity".⁷⁴ In another textbook many reasons are given for India's poverty and according to it the reasons are, "(1) The primitive agricultural techniques (2) wastage of money (3) unhygienic living conditions (4) susceptibility to diseases (5) lack of education (6) Inferior status of women, etc."⁷⁵ Wastage of money, overspending, unnecessary indulgence and lack of thrift are also discussed in detail.

Earlier there were lessons on the need to spend little and save money but now overspending came to be criticized very aggressively. It was cited as a main reason for country's poverty and economic decadence. In one instance, the author

⁷⁴ A. Eswarajah Chetty, T. Venkoba Rao, op. cit., p. 51.

⁷⁵ D. Satya Narayana Murthi, *Elementary Sociology*, Venkatram and Co., Ellore, 1930, p. 164.

remarks that, “the money spent on marriages is exorbitantly high. It is same with the ceremonies of birth and death etc...Huge amount of money is being spent on buying ornaments which is not wise as they only lose value when they wear off.”⁷⁶ This being a prominent theme of 1930s every textbook discussed this issue and proposed various remedies. Wastage of money in buying ornaments is attributed to the lack of literacy among women. One such opinion says that, “the amount of money spent on ornaments in South India is appalling. If we use that money for investment in business, our country will prosper. Educated women do not have any obsession for ornaments. Hence all the women should be educated”.⁷⁷

Related to the criticism of Indian extravagance was a concern to educate people to inculcate the ethics of thrift and frugality. Lessons on savings in banks, post office schemes, insurance companies, saving schemes, cooperative credit societies etc. clearly reflect this concern. In fact the functions and advantages of these institutions have been discussed in some detail. An excerpt says that, “a few employees earn hundreds of money and spend everything on luxuries as long as they live. They spend whatever they have earned immediately and don’t even save a penny. When they die there is no money left even for their funeral. To prevent such situations insurance companies have been established.”⁷⁸

⁷⁶ A. Eswariah Chetty, T. Venkoba Rao, *V Standard*, op. cit., p. 63.

⁷⁷ M. Muthu Kumaraswami, *Our Ideal home, Fifth and Sixth Classes - A TextBook on the Management, Economy and Cultural Welfare of the Indian Household*, Madras, 1938, p. 12.

⁷⁸ M. Krishnamacharyulu, op. cit., p. 57.

Like other issues trade also was linked to India's poverty. Discussion on trade had various facets. It was seen as an important activity for a healthy economy. In the context of looking for the reasons for the poverty of the country, this discussion on importance of trade was put forward. It is remarked that, "all the countries are developing because of trade. Facilities are improving for trade everyday. There are steamers for overseas trade, there are railways and road ways for Inland trade...the economy of any country which does not have a good trading activity will fail to prosper. So everybody should try to improve trade".⁷⁹

Trade was more keenly discussed than ever by many textbooks of Geography. In one instance it is argued that since the coastline is not very regular and there is paucity of good natural ports, there is no spirit of navigation in the country. Since the arrival of British, the trade with other countries has picked up.

Another very significant issue linked with this is the decline of handicrafts and handloom industry. This decline of handlooms is also linked to the poverty of the country. It was observed that, "earlier handlooms was a very vital industry and many people depended on it for their survival. Now with the arrival of machine made goods, it is declining fast. All the people involved directly or indirectly with this industry are being rendered jobless".⁸⁰ Another textbook says, "Now a days, thirty three crores of people of India are getting the clothes manufactured in the mills of a small place called Lancashire. We don't have the requisite machinery. It

⁷⁹ A. Eswariah Chetty, op. cit., p. 52.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 51.

will be good for our country if we develop them.”⁸¹ The decline of handicrafts has been discussed at length but the magnitude of it is not made clear. Interestingly enough the Geography textbooks discussed the people who were still dependent on handloom industry and were exporting the handloom goods even in late 1930s. A textbook published in 1937 while referring to a particular district observes that, “silk cloth weaving is still a major occupation in Peddapuram. Some work is done with the help of machines but mostly it is done at homes. Approximately, the goods worth six lakhs of rupees is exported from here. But the coming of Japanese colours and silk-thread is posing a threat to the popularity of this Industry.”⁸²

Textbooks have expressed indignation over the fact that people are not patronising the handlooms properly. On one occasion, the writer says, “We have raw material in abundance to manufacture goods but we are exporting them and buying the processed goods at higher rates. If we manufacture them in our country, we will save a lot of money and it will stay in our country. Earlier everybody had work to do. Now with the introduction of machines, the people are losing their jobs. If we buy the hand woven clothes, the weaver will get a livelihood. What will the weaver do if we buy the mill cloth?”⁸³ At another place the writer invokes “love for motherland” for the first time regarding the issue of protection to the handlooms. He writes: “Machine made goods is being sold at a

⁸¹ *Geography of Madras Presidency*, op. cit., p. 110.

⁸² B.Lakshmi Narayana Sastry, *Geography of the East Godavari District*, Venkatrama & Co., 1937, p. 25.

⁸³ T. Rangacharlu, *A Textbook of Geography for V, VI Standards*, T.V..Sastry and Sons, Madras, 1937, p 62.

cheaper price here and the people prefer it over indigenous handicrafts. Even for the sake of love for motherland they do not support our handloom industry. How can our industry develop with such an attitude?”⁸⁴

Another theme which figured prominently was the idealised village life against the tough and hard life in city squalor. It is said that, “in cities we don’t have peace of mind. Houses are congested. It is densely populated and there’s no fresh air. The city dwellers are not united. We can meet accidents even while walking. One might become a victim of overspending. In villages the beauty of the nature is at its best. It has green trees, pastures, beautiful flowers, chirping birds, fresh air and unity among people. Guests are treated like gods. There are no proper transport facilities. Nevertheless village life is more comfortable.”⁸⁵

Reflecting the contemporary ethos and attitude towards landed property one textbook, argues that the “city dwellers possess very less property. City is full of people who came in search of livelihood. All the factories are owned by the rich. They swallow all the profits and pay meagre amounts as salaries. Hence there is perpetual clash of interests between the workers and the management. The daily earnings in cities are relatively more than villages but the expenses are equally high and only a few people can save money in the cities.”⁸⁶

⁸⁴ T. Rangacharlu, *A Textbook of Geography for V, VI Standards.*, p. 28.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 31.

This theme was very recurrent and can also be seen in general readers. The village is romanticized so much so that even the caste system is seen as necessary and jajmani system is justified. The lesson in a textbook titled “village life and villagers”, it is said that, “there are various people specializing in various jobs. The instruments needed by villages are made by the blacksmith, the clothes are washed by the washer man, there are barbers to cut the hair, there are traders to buy and sell things needed by the village, there are untouchable castes called ‘*Adi Andhras*’ to assist the farmers in cultivation and they live outside the village. All these people are divided into various castes. They Cooperate with each other and live together harmoniously, just like a family.”⁸⁷

Another interesting issue is that of diversification of occupations. Overcrowding of people in the same field is seen as one of the reasons for India’s backwardness. In this context, a textbook remarks, “Since many people are in the same occupation, no one is benefiting from it. People are not taking up diversified means of livelihood. Initially lots of people left agriculture and got themselves enrolled in schools and colleges and got good jobs. They got good salaries and enjoyed great prestige. Taking inspiration from this, thousands of people got attracted to modern education and sought government jobs. But they were disappointed because the government jobs grew scarce with the rising competition

⁸⁷ T. V. Rangacharlu, op. cit., p. 21.

among the newly educated middle classes. Since they are educated they are not able to do any other job. There are too many lawyers and traders”⁸⁸.

A very striking feature of 1930s is the publishing of textbooks exclusively on management and welfare of the household. It had various lessons on all aspects of family life from the household budget to the medication and first aid. We see that there are many references to women and their role in these lessons. There are chapters in the textbook on cooking, preparing snacks and on pregnancy. The lesson on pregnancy was a very radical inclusion for the times and included very useful information on the medical care of the mother and the infant. The author says in the lesson on pregnancy that “every woman gives birth to a child. Giving birth to a child is almost like a rebirth to the mother. So it is very necessary for every girl to know the intricacies of the pregnancy and safe medical practices to be followed. Inclusion of such knowledge will make it very useful and practical”.⁸⁹

The lessons on cooking say that all the girls should learn to cook from the elders of the family. This would help her in the life after marriage. It is said that rich girls are ignorant of cooking. Another criticism was regarding the women’s obsession for ornaments.

Apart from these books on household management, the Civics and Sociology books espouse the cause of women’s education. In a lesson titled “our

⁸⁸ D. Satyanarayanamurthy, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

⁸⁹ M. Muthukumaraswami, *op. cit.*, Madras, 1938, p. 110.

country's position" it is said that "women in our country are illiterate. In other countries even women are literate. They work and handle huge machinery. We should also educate our women".⁹⁰

The exhortation for the cause of women's education appears to be a very enlightened attitude towards gender issues. However women's obsession with ornaments has been repeatedly condemned and surprisingly the education is believed to be an instrument to liberate women from such mundane desires. The objectives of the modern education for women, therefore, were grossly trivialized. However a beginning was made.

The textbook on household management gave the English medicine a place of prime importance. English medicines are recommended for curing many diseases. At one instance while indigenous methods are recommended for curing dysentery, it is argued that "if any of the above mentioned medicines/methods do not show results Emetic injection prescribed according to English Medicine system should be used to successfully cure it."⁹¹

Another noticeable feature of the textbooks of this period is the radical change in the treatment given to the stories of *Ramayana*. The textbooks till 1920s which were written by colonial officers had no mention of miracles. Rama was identified with a particular caste and a small kingdom. This didn't undergo any

⁹⁰ A. Eswariah Chetty, op. cit., p. 62.

⁹¹ M. Muthu kumaraswami, op. cit., p. 68.

major change in the 1920s as most of the general textbooks were new editions of the old prints. In 1930s, we witness a major change in the description of *Ramayana* stories in the textbooks. The legendary aspects of the epic now assumed more currency. Now the stories of 'golden deer' etc were included. Rama was exalted to the status of a divine.

Another interesting feature of the period under study is the emergence of Telugu regionalism. This reflected the early signs of demand for separate Telugu *state*. The trend began in the 1920s and gained momentum in the 1930s. The *Telugu Reader* came to be titled as *Andhra vachakamu* which literally means *Andhra reader*. Lessons in various books referred to Telugu speaking districts as a separate territory. This trend earlier witnessed became conspicuous now. The lessons in history were called '*Andhra kings*', and '*Arava kings*' (*Arava* is the Telugu word for Tamils)⁹². Under Tamil kings, the three dynasties of Sangam period- Chera, Chola and Pandya were included, whereas only Sri Krishnadeva Raya was categorized under '*Andhra kings*'. Another textbook also included Satavahanas and the lesson named '*Andhra desamu*' began with a rationalistic fervour: "Children! The language we speak is called Telugu. It is also called '*Andhra bhasha*', the area we live is called '*Andhra desamu*. This has been in existence since the times of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*".⁹³

⁹² *Child's Stories from Indian History, Class IV*, Coomara Swami Naidu and Sons, 1931, pp. 22-28.

⁹³ B. Seshacharyulu, *Children's Stories from Indian History, Class VI*, Venkataram & Co., Ellore, 1938, p. 13.

In one case, the preface of the textbook particularly glorified the author's contribution to Telugu language. In the same book it is written in the preface that, "this book has been written by Sri A.V. Narasimham Pantulu who headed the department of Telugu board of studies and who argued that Telugu is mother of all the Dravidian languages"⁹⁴. The poetic compositions in these textbooks also indicate an increasing trend towards extolling Telugu language, culture and Telugu motherland.⁹⁵. Another such lesson is on 'Tirupati', the Hindu sacred place at the borders of Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh which was to become a bone of contention during the Andhra state formation. In this context the author says that "this place was seen as their boundary by ancient Tamils. But people of Tirupati speak only Telugu and therefore it is an integral part of Andhra country now."⁹⁶

Another change worth mentioning in the textbooks is regarding the perception of the authority of Government. Earlier a macro view of the government was given and the other levels of subordinate administration were given brief references towards the end of the geography textbooks. Now, the Collector of the district is depicted as the representative of the government in these textbooks. This was seen in Civics readers and also in geography textbooks. The Collector is described in the following way: "To collect the taxes, to resolve disputes, to maintain revenue accounts, to inform the higher officials about all

⁹⁴ A. V. Narasimham Pantulu, *New Andhara Vachakamu*, Standard IV, Venkateswara and Brothers Ltd, 1933, Preface.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 24.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 30.

matters the government has appointed one person and he is the Collector...He has the job to inform the government regarding the problems of the people living in a district.”⁹⁷ A few textbooks also give more details like “the collectors get the job after clearing the I.C.S. exam in England. They get a salary of 1500 to 3000 rupees” etc.⁹⁸

We have already discussed the contents in the textbooks on Government and its duties. Now another addition is seen with the emphasis on the people’s responsibilities and cooperation to the government to make it more efficient. It is said that, “no Government in the world can efficiently carry out the administration without the cooperation of the people. So it’s a responsibility of every citizen to help government in every possible manner. It is expected from a citizen to (1) help police to catch the criminals, (2) join scout movement to maintain order in the fairs, processions etc (3) help reduce corruption (4) prevent illegal production of liquor etc... All the citizens should help the state in peace and be loyal to it during the wars that threaten the country.”⁹⁹ It is said that, “earlier people were afraid of the government it is because of their ignorance about it. We know about the Government. Government is nothing but ‘we’...The three duties enjoined by the

⁹⁷ A. Eswaraiiah Chetty, T. Venkoba Rao, op. cit., p. 59.

⁹⁸ B. Lakshmi Narayan Sastry, *Geography of the East Godavary District*, op. cit., p. 37.

⁹⁹ D. Satyanarayana Murthy, op. cit., pp. 135-137.

Government are: (1) protecting everyone's rights (2) protecting everyone like a father (3) improving the social standard of life."¹⁰⁰

These are the important changes which were included in the textbooks published during 1930s. This period saw many changes in every aspect of the knowledge which was to be imparted through these textbooks. The foundation laid in these was carried forward by the books that followed.

1940s

The textbooks of 1940s also witnessed the changes in the contents and the treatment to various issues. New issues were coming up which were smoothly juxtaposed with the contents of earlier textbooks. The ongoing debates in the public arena regarding the need for suitable political institutions created a milieu which invariably influenced the writers of these textbooks. Resultantly the space given to Government and political institutions expanded greatly in the textbooks of the period. In conjunction with the issues of Government's duties and citizens' responsibilities, the political institutions like the parliament were given special treatment. Such a change can be clearly demonstrated in the following titles of different textbooks on the Government and political institutions: (1) Government; its duties (2) Government: our duties (3) The Parliament and its duties (4) Ministers (5) vote and people representatives"¹⁰¹ etc.

¹⁰⁰ D. Satyanarayana Murthy, op. cit., pp 185-186.

¹⁰¹ V. Kota subramanya Sastri, *Civics Reader, V Standard*, The Orient Publishing Co, 1940, Contents.

In these lessons the functioning of the Government is explained. Elaborate descriptions are made as to how the democratic bodies of legislative assembly and council of state are elected and what are the duties they are expected to perform etc. It is explained that “Government’s performance in carrying out the state administration is discussed in the parliament. If any act of the Government is considered as unfair it is critically discussed there. All the funds used by various ministries of the Government is minutely assessed and finally approved by the parliament...In the last election, the Congress party got the majority in the parliament elections, so the leaders of that party formed the ministries...Many people in the parliament belong to villages and this was possible due to the democratic nature of the institution of parliament. It is believed that the representatives from the villages can understand and deal the rural problems more effectively. And it is necessary for a country like India which is predominantly rural.”¹⁰²

Since 1940s saw the outbreak of the Second World War there were naturally many lessons devoted to the different aspects of a war. Being a subject nation to the British India naturally got involved in the war. The British Government through these textbooks conveyed the methods to meet the war situations during an enemy attack. The topics on such lessons were often discussed following aspects: (1) how does the enemy attack from the planes? (2) How to

¹⁰² M. Venkata Sastry, *Civics Reader, V Standard*, Orient Publishing Co, Tenali, 1940, p. 60.

know that enemy is going to attack? (3) Emergency measures (4) Why restrictions on lights? (5) How to defuse bombs? (6) How to prevent fire accidents? (7) Facilities provided by the government”¹⁰³ etc. The lesson would explain: “In the ongoing World War, ultra modern weapons are being used which is unprecedented. Air raids by planes are most disastrous...If we can be trained by Air Raid Precaution [ARP] department we can withstand any number of attacks. The people of England learnt them and welcome the enemy...if the siren is not blown by A.R.P department uniformly, it means the enemy planes are coming and when it is blown uniformly that means the planes are gone... We have to switch off the lights so that the enemy can not spot us... All the inflammable material should be cleared from the houses...one should complain to the A.R.P. Department in case of any damage to the water pipes...If there is a power crisis, it should be immediately reported and it would be repaired.”¹⁰⁴

The idealized village life, decline of the handloom industry, women’s education etc. were the issues which continued to be a part of the contents in the textbooks of 1940s. Initially there were almost no references on the ‘National Movement’. In mid 1940s this theme becomes a general topic, specifically of history textbooks. In one lesson the struggle for women’s emancipation is linked with the larger objectives of the Indian National Movement. The excerpt from a play titled. ‘Wife and Husband’ is as follows:

¹⁰³ V.K.S. Sastry, *Sahitya Ratnavali*, Rowthu Book Depot, Rajamundry, 1944, pp. 117-120.

¹⁰⁴ K. Subramanya Sastri, K.V. Desikachari; *Sahitya Ratnavali*, Rowthu Book Depot, Rajamundry, 1944, pp. 112-115.

“[As a retort to earlier remark wife asks husband “so you have decided to join us women?”].

Husband - Not a bad idea, then I will go to the jail like Sarada devi.

Wife- What?

Husband - She has participated in demonstrations asking the cloth merchants not to buy or sell foreign cloth, so she is sent to jail for three months.

Wife - Oh what a pity! Isn't she a mother of small children?

Husband - Yes many of them.

Wife - Then did her husband approve of her acts?

Husband - You are so ignorant, it's been three months since he has gone to jail for distribution of prohibited literature. He went first and she followed. This is also a kind of an ideal marriage.

Wife - Then what did she do about her children?

Husband - There are old people at home isn't it? She gave the responsibility of the kids to her in laws and shouted 'Gandhi ki jai'.

Wife - Oh great, one has to be so brave. In fact women have always been brave but this act is unbelievable.

Husband - You have been hearing and seeing such things regularly then why are you so surprised? Now ideals of love for country and its freedom are growing among our people. That's why all the people are making

efforts in a way which is acceptable to the whole civilized world. Women are not like the peeping field rats who would get scared. As Venkata Kavi (Poet) says that they have become 'sharp swords'.

Wife - But still how can this be possible for every one?

Husband – If it is possible for a mother of five children, it can be possible for everyone.

Wife – It's easier said than done.

Husband - Oh don't say like that, wear a 'Khaddar' [cotton] sari and go to a family function, you would have bagged some credit by then.

Wife - Don't tease me like that. Stop it and come for lunch...¹⁰⁵

This excerpt shows an appreciation to the people fighting for freedom. It also points at an attempt to empower and emancipate women from their traditional boundaries. Another reference from the same play shows that the concerns for women's emancipation remained within the traditional patriarchal set up. The excerpt is as follows:

Husband- In Kaliyuga each home will have a 'Shakti'. If that 'Shakti' is worshipped, it becomes 'Gruha Lakshmi' (Ideal wife) otherwise it will become 'Yama Devata' (Goddess of death).

Wife- Oh! Why are you saying like that? Aren't there enough ideal wives in the world?

¹⁰⁵ K. Subramanya Sastri, op. cit., p. 49-50.

Husband- Yes very few...you are one among them...you have helped me to pay my fee for my exams by selling your ornaments.

Wife- Oh come on....Am I not, your property?"¹⁰⁶

The notions of 'ideal house wife' and 'wife as husband's property' only shows that the emancipation was attempted well within patriarchal parameters.

'The National Movement' was not treated with a great fervour. However, different aspects of Gandhi's personality were described extensively in the history textbooks and he was often depicted on the cover pages of many textbooks. In a textbook, following references are made about Gandhi's entry into the Indian National Movement.: "In 1914 Gandhi came to India and became the sole leader after Tilak's death. He has launched a campaign to win freedom for India and his ideas are spreading far and wide in the country. He has taught many things to the people...he has asked people not to wear foreign clothes...he observed satyagraha to convince the Government about his demands."¹⁰⁷

In most of these textbooks there are hardly any references on the 'depressed castes'. In one such rare reference to this section they are described as follows: "apart from the four main castes of Hinduism namely *Brahamana*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya* and *Sudra*, there is fifth caste called *panchama*. These *panchamas* exist beyond the pale of caste hierarchy and are considered as

¹⁰⁶ K. Subramanya Sastri, op. cit., p. 62.

¹⁰⁷ C.H Satyanrayana Rao , *Bharata Desamu, V Standard*, Venkatrama & Co, Ellore, 1946, p.88.

untouchables by the members of other four castes. Among the *panchamas* there are two sub-castes called *malas* and *madigas* which are extremely poor. They are ignorant of education, health and hygiene and lead uncivilized life.”¹⁰⁸ However in 1940s under the probable influence of Gandhian rhetoric, we see that first sympathetic reference regarding pitiable conditions of the ‘untouchables’ was made in the textbook of this period and it is as follows:

“It is our duty to see that everybody in the village gets drinking water. Normally, the rich and the upper castes do not face any problems of drinking water. Every rich household has a well. But the depressed caste people, who stay outside the village do not have a well and they face severe water problems. So every person should strive to see that the depressed castes are not denied access to drinking water facilities.”¹⁰⁹ Such appeals were very rarely seen.

HISTORY TEXT BOOKS:

The political history formed the main contents of the history textbooks of the period under study. Mostly, the lessons were devoted to the rulers, kings and their military achievements. In the context of British colonialism, the political history revolves around the administration under different viceroys and Governor Generals. Moreover, the textbooks also discussed the political and social changes which occurred due to the ‘enlightened’ and ‘benevolent’ policies of the British

¹⁰⁸ Kutumba Rao , *Abhinava Andhra Vachakamu, Fifth Standard*, Masulipatam, 1930, p.51.

¹⁰⁹ *Elementary Sociology*, op. cit., p. 112.

officials. In other words the writing of history textbooks followed the ‘great man school of history’. The history curriculum till fourth standard was kept very simple and history was taught in the form of easy stories. But from the next stage onwards it was taught according to ‘periodisation’. Change in the nature of the contents in history textbooks occurred at two junctures of period under study. The first change appears when the textbook writing is taken over by the Indian elite in 1920s and second major change is witnessed in 1940s when Gandhi and the ‘India’s struggle for independence’ become common themes of history textbooks. For instance, the books published in 1946 included the details up till the formation of ‘interim government’ headed by Jawaharlal Nehru in the same year unlike the history textbooks of today which end way back in time.

The initial history written by colonial officers have clearly shown an attempt to justify the British rule in India. These initial history textbooks began with the stories from Ramayana, Mahabharata and ended with the glorification of Queen Victoria’s rule over India. In this backdrop it is not surprising that numerous lessons were devoted to ‘Black hole tragedy’. One such lesson says:

“After Sirajuddaula went to sleep, his soldiers imprisoned the captured English men in a small lock-up. The small room had no light or ventilation. It was intolerably suffocating and hence called “Black hole”. The 146 English men were

forced to spend a night there. One after another they died and only 23 of them managed to survive in the morning.¹¹⁰

The treatment given to the revolt of 1857 also shows the colonial propaganda to maintain British hegemony. The resistance of 1857 was referred to as a '*Sepoy* mutiny' and the other aspects of the revolt were simply ignored. In a lesson titled the '*famous Sepoy Mutiny*', The author says:

The British are on a civilizing mission in India. But there are many ill conceived notions and misconceptions among the people regarding the nature of the British rule ... some people think that the British are trying to tie up the whole earth with the iron material that was used for constructing railways and telegraph lines. The people are scared to see the trains which run without any help from horses or oxen.... We know that all these are stupid notions but few rebellious and disloyal people in Bengal and Ayodhya convinced the *sepoys* with such stories and Nana Sahib, a king gave leadership to them. The other *sardars* lost their power and could not loot the neighbouring villages due to law and order maintained by the British. So they wanted to chase away the English from the country...At such point of time English committed a mistake of using cow and pig fat in the cartridges which infuriated *sepoys* who thought that English are trying to convert them to Christianity... *Sepoys* revolted and killed their superiors and went to Delhi. They went on a rampage killing all the English men, men women and their infants.¹¹¹

In order to highlight the 'blessings' of the British rule, the previous history of India was roundly criticized in the early textbooks. They seemed to have understood that, 'for the present to look better, it helps if the past looks worse'. The medieval age was described as barbaric and ancient traditions and customs of India were condemned. This approach can also be demonstrated in

¹¹⁰ E. Marsden, *Easy Lessons in Indian History for Primary Schools*, Macmillan and Co Ltd, Madras, 1914, p. 48.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

the lessons on William Bentinck and his achievements in abolishing the practice of *sati* and making traveling safe by suppressing *thuggee*. The ‘enlightened’ rule of Queen Victoria was an oft-repeated theme in many early history textbooks which clearly aimed at legitimation of British rule in India.

With Indian writers coming to the fore by 1920s, the issues like ‘black hole tragedy’ didn’t get much space in the textbooks. The hyperbolic tone which was used to characterize the barbarism of the 1857 rebels and killing of English men, women and children during the 1857 mutiny was given a backseat in the textbooks.

In the textbooks¹¹² up to the IV Standard the stories included, were taken from all the ‘periods’ of Indian history. From the Ancient history, Personalities like Rama, Alexander, Ashoka, Chandragupta, Vikramaditya, Harshavardhana, Buddha, etc were given prime importance. The persons from the medieval history included Prophet Mohammad, Mahmud of Ghazani, Babar, Akbar, Shahjahan, Aurangzeb, Rana Pratap, and Shivaji etc. In the modern history textbooks, Robert Clive figured in all the books as the founder of English empire in India. Queen Victoria, Tipu Sultan, Haider Ali, King George V, Ishwarachandra Vidyasagar etc also figured prominently in these books. The local kings who were supposed to have ruled the Telugu country like Krishnadeva Raya, Raja Raja Narendra, and other Satavahana rulers etc were given special treatment.

¹¹² B. Seshacharyulu, *Stories from Indian History, Class IV*, 1939, Ellore, and Coomaraswami Naidu, op. cit., and S. Venkateswarlu, *Ideal stories from Indian history, Class IV*, Guntur, 1940 etc.

The Muslim rule was not always criticised and the treatment was neutral and objective. There were attempts to rationalize the acts, such as idol breaking and destruction of temples. There was an attempt to show the religious syncretism and harmonious co-existence of Hinduism and Islam and the humanitarian side of the rulers.

One very popular story which is given in many history textbooks was that of 'Babar and Humayun.'¹¹³ According to this story, once Humayun fell severely ill. Babar asked his doctors and Ulema as to how could his son be cured. On their suggestions he gave diamonds and jewels in alms but to no avail. Exasperated, Babar prayed to God and offered his life for his son's health. Soon after, Humayun started recovering while Babar's health began to worsen. And he ultimately died. It is interesting to note that such stories were considered to be deeply rooted in the Indian soil and alien nature of the Mughals was not emphasised. Indeed, hostile treatment to Muslim rulers was not common.

Likewise, while defining the nature of the state of Delhi Sultanate the history textbooks had a remarkably neutral attitude. It was argued that the sultanate was not a theocratic state. It was also mentioned that the *Ulema* did not exercise any powerful control in the court politics. This is clear from the following statement. "Delhi sultans were despotic rulers. Though it is important for the

¹¹³ *Child's Stories from Indian History*, op. cit., C. Naidu & Sons, p. 58., and T. Sreenivas Iyengar, *Hindudesa Charitra*, McMillan & Co., Madras, 1928, p. 154 etc.

Sultans to obey *Ulema*'s advice, the powerful kings never obeyed them and ruled according to their wish.¹¹⁴

There were other references which gave us the impression that Muslim rule 'did not damage the earlier traditions in polity and religion'. It is said that the Sultans did not destroy the Gram panchayats which looked after the administration of the villages...with coming of the sultans the Islam spread in India but the Turks did not get assimilated like Shakas and Kushanas. So there was friction between the two religious communities initially but now they exist harmoniously. The Muslims and Hindus living in the same neighbourhood cultivated tolerance and lived harmoniously. The Hindu women who embraced Islam after getting married to Muslim rulers also helped in the process of interaction between the two communities. The Sufi traditions started by Muslim mystics preached the gospels of love and equality of all religions.¹¹⁵

It is also argued that "though the invaders from the North West established their rule, local political institutions did not undergo any change. The local handicrafts and trade continued to flourish at usual pace. Though the new rulers collected taxes, the frequent change of rulers at the top level left the villagers in relative peace. There were no grass root changes though the Hindu rule was supplanted by Muslim rule. Even in the law courts Hindu laws continued for

¹¹⁴ Nayani Subba Rao, *A New History of India, VI and VII Standard*, The Orient Publishing Co. Ltd., Guntur, 1938, p. 132.

¹¹⁵ T. Sreenivas, Iyengar, op. cit., pp. 127-129.

Hindus and Islamic laws for Muslims. Hindus could get highest posts in the administration..¹¹⁶

In one textbook Aurangzeb was not criticized for his religious intolerance on the basis that “he didn’t treat Hindus and Shia Muslims properly. Unlike the other countries where the rulers would persecute the people for not embracing their religions, he let Hindus and Shias adhere to their faiths”.¹¹⁷ He was portrayed as a man of high principles. It is said that “he never consumed intoxicating drinks. Since all the collected revenue is spent for people’s welfare, he would stitch caps to earn his livelihood. He would eat food which was consumed by commoners. He would wear ornaments only when he sits on the throne. He didn’t forget to pray even in the times of war”.¹¹⁸

This was treatment given to the Muslims rulers in the textbooks. Though they were called ‘invaders’, ‘foreigners’ and ‘followers of Islam’, the brighter aspects of their personality was not overlooked. An attempt for unbiased writing of history is seen in these textbooks. ‘Muslim period’ is not treated as a ‘Dark age’ and its influence on Colonial institutions is acknowledged.

Coming to the ‘British period’, till mid 1940s the textbooks invariably discussed the government policies of Governor Generals and Viceroys. The title of

¹¹⁶ Nayani Subba Rao, op. cit., p. 34.

¹¹⁷ T. Sreenivas Iyengar, op. cit., pp. 203- 204.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 204.

one such lesson was “The differences between the development brought about by Europeans, British and the earlier rulers”.¹¹⁹

In many instances the acts of the Governor Generals were critically analysed but some of the unfair deeds were also justified which is evident from this reference: “In spite of many defects Warren Hastings can be called as an efficient administrator. He brought back order in Bengal which was in chaos due to Dual Government. He maintained hold on the areas won by Robert Clive. His involvement in the Rohila war, Chait Singh and Begum of Awadh affairs and the way he dealt with them seems to be unfair but considering the conditions of the *Hindu desamu* at that time it can not be considered as a crime.”¹²⁰ These books also highlight the achievements of the British rule in bringing back an efficient law and order situation which had gone haywire following the disintegration of the Mughal Empire.

In the context of Indian National Movement, the events that brought about the change in the Government leading to self-rule were discussed. The congress and Gandhi were given enough space but their activities were never discussed or called as ‘national movement’. This was recognised so, only after 1945. During this time, the contents of the book were titled as “Indian National Movement part

¹¹⁹ T. Sreenivas Iyengar, op. cit., Contents, p. v.

¹²⁰ Nayani Subba Rao, op. cit., p. 237.

I”¹²¹ etc. and the lesson starts from the ‘Quit India movement of 1942’. It begins by saying “During the war people grew restless. There was a political deadlock. Ministers resigned and Gandhi *Mahatmudu* gave a clarion call of ‘Quit India’. That slogan slowly became a movement”.¹²²

The Pakistan movement was also discussed in detail. The explanation of this movement was done very neutrally and objectively. All the Muslim leaders were described as very efficient and talented.

One very interesting aspect of history textbooks of the period is that they even dealt with the latest events of the period. For example, the textbook published immediately after the independence, carefully recorded all the events which culminated into the freedom of India act of 1947.

Not all textbooks dealt the issues in the same way. Even after 1947 when history of the ‘national movement’ was written and important landmarks in that were pointed to, they didn’t show any resemblance to the present day ‘nationalist historiography’. A book published, with the title ‘*Method of Teaching History*’ for teachers in 1952 identifies the important dates that should be made to remember by the Students as following:

¹²¹ Ch. Satyanarayana, *Bharata Desamu, VIII Standard*, B. Seshacharyulu, *History of India*, Rama and Co. Publishers, Ellore, 1946, Contents, p. vi.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 86.

- (1) 2000 BC - Vedic period
- (2) 326 BC - Alexander's invasion
- (3) 321 BC - Chandra Gupta Maurya's rule begins
- (4) 320 A.D- Guptas' rule begins
- (5) 1000 AD- Muslim Invasions
- (6) 1565 AD- Battle of Tallikota
- (7) 1526 AD- Mughal rule foundation
- (8) 1526-1707- Mughal rule
- (9) 1600 - Foundation of East India company
- (10) 1674- Shivaji's accession to the throne
- (11) 1757- Battle of Plassey
- (12) 1858- Queen Victoria's rule begins
- (13) 1885- Foundation of Indian national congress
- (14) 1905- Partition of Bengal
- (15) 1914-18- I world war
- (16) 1935- Government of India act
- (17) 1939-45- II world war
- (18) 1947- Independence to India and Pakistan
- (19) 1950- Establishment of Democracy"¹²³

¹²³ M. Satyanaraya Murthi, *Method of Teaching History*, Warangal, 1952, p. 84.

CONCLUSIONS:

Though these textbooks were strictly supervised and approved by the colonial Government and probably allowed only a particular type of knowledge to be imparted. However, there was ample space for the writers, especially in the later phase, to put forward their own perceptions which reflected their own understanding of the nature of things. The writers could successfully maneuver the mode of learning within the parameters set by their 'Masters'. For example, the contents on De- industrialization and unfavorable trade were not in the interest of the state, yet these aspects were included in the textbooks of the period.

Various perceptions of India like that of 'lazy native' which emanated from colonial hegemonic discourse were not directed blatantly. For instance not all the Indians were looked upon as 'Lazy', it was only the rich as they could see that the poor were very hard working.

These textbooks give us an impression of a benevolent colonial state striving hard to improve the condition of people of India and when we see any kind of 'nationalist' overtones they came as a bolt from the blue.

These textbooks also became instruments to propagate a particular ideology as it is amply evident regarding Telugu chauvinism and demand for separate Andhra State.

As we saw there was no 'nationalist resolution of woman's question' as both the gender issues and national movement almost went hand in hand till independence

. The textbook publishing was a lucrative profession and the government officials were also involved in writing and financing it.

The syllabus was revised regularly but change in the nature of contents came gradually. Change in the authorship profile influenced the treatment to different issues significantly.

The syllabus of 1939 was still in use in 1951.¹²⁴ The Government did not feel the need to change or revise the syllabus. The contents and issues remained the same and no efforts were made to update it.

We also witness contradictions in the themes of the textbooks. The village which is portrayed as dirty, unclean and susceptible to diseases is otherwise idealized when compared with the city. Similarly, the caste system is criticized when it served a particular purpose but ignored on certain occasions. All the

¹²⁴ *Elementary School Syllabus – 1939*, Rowthu Book Depot, Rajamundry, 1951.

themes were serving the sole purpose of proving that the colonial mediation was not just a necessary instrument of change but actually had a wider vision for the masses.

III

Veerasingam and his Textbooks:
A Case Study



“(Any) literary work has two poles...The artistic and the Aesthetic. The artistic pole is the author’s text and the aesthetic is the realization accomplished by the reader...Central to the reading of every literary work is the interaction between its structure and its recipient”,¹ observes Wolfgang Iser. The structure of the work is result of author’s own relativity and subjectivity. To understand why an author wrote, what he wrote it would be helpful to look at the influences and his ideology.² The preceding chapter dealt with the contents of the textbooks and did not deal with this aspect. Hence the focus of this chapter would be on the Author but in due course many details regarding the textbooks would also be discussed simultaneously.

The Author related for this exercise is Kandukuri Veeresalingam (1848-1919), the pioneering social reformer of Andhra. He was selected because his era marks the beginning of the printing textbooks in the modern sense of the term i.e. not just a book used in schools, rather it is a book that has been consciously designed and organized to serve the ends of schooling”,³ and more importantly he has played a crucial role in the evolution of the textbook writing.

¹ Wolfgang Iser, ‘Interaction between Text and Reader’ in David Finkelstein, Alistair McCleery, eds., *The Book History Reader*, Routledge, London, 2002, p. 291.

² Ideology used here as a system of beliefs by which we make sense of the world.

³ See David Hamilton, What is a Text Book? *Paradigm*, No.3, (July, 1990), Online Version accessed at <http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/faculty/westbury/Paradigm>.

Though the Madras Vernacular School Book Society was established in 1820, there were very few books published in Telugu, which could be adopted as textbooks and most of them were scriptures, grammars and dictionaries even till 1857.⁴ Even such works were published due to the efforts of European scholars like C.P. Brown⁵. The 1870s heralds a new era in Telugu Textbook history due to a host of factors. Apart from the lack of printing presses, the problem was that the “Classical Telugu or the poetic dialect, differed from spoken Telugu and had a highly sanskritized vocabulary. Poetry was the only approved form of literary creation until the last part of the nineteenth century, with grammar and rhetoric recognized as subscriptions of poetry. Prose was used for business or Government purposes in the spoken dialect and was considered ‘village’ or ‘crude Telugu’. Not only did poetry have a particular structure and dialect, but it was also confined to particular subject matter, much of it erotic in nature. This posed a problem to the scholars looking for texts for ‘classroom use’.⁶ Hence the Government has come up with new proposals and textbook reforms. The missionaries, who played a crucial role in all education related matters, as J. Mangamma has shown,⁷ wanted to purge the entire literature of its erotic elements which makes them ineligible for using as textbooks. The other colonial officials though did not completely agree with them, felt

⁴ B.S. Kesavan, *History of Printing and Publishing in India; A Story of Cultural Re-awakening, Volume II: Origins of Printing in Karnataka, Andhra and Kerala*, National Book Trust (hereafter NBT), New Delhi, 1988, p. 412.

⁵ See J. Mangamma, *Book Printing in India: With Special Reference to the Contribution of European Scholars to Telugu (1746-1857)*, Bangorey books, Nellore, 1975.

⁶ John Leonard, Karen Leonard, ‘Viresalingam and the Ideology of Social Change in Andhra’ in Kenneth, W. Jones, ed., *Religious Controversy in British India” Dialogues in South Asian Languages*, p. 2.

⁷ Mangamma, op. cit., p. 276.

necessary that the “writing in regional languages should be simplified”⁸, so as to become a better media for wider dissemination of modern ideas. The dissemination of ideas through vernacular was earlier proposed by Sir Charles wood in his ‘Despatch of 1854’.

There was a considerable pressure for change in the regional languages from the Government. The Government was also prepared to encourage authors who confirmed to their views by adopting their books as required textbooks, which was a passport to good money.

While the Government was trying to bring about such a change in the language, Veeresalingam has already taken up the task of breaking all the old traditions of the language. As early as 1872, while he was posted at a small town called Corangee, in an anglo-vernacular School, he wrote a grammar book in easy style as he realized that there was such a need for a book. In his autobiography he wrote: “then there was no easy Grammar book for school children. I have written it following English style. This was not liked by the orthodox minded people.”⁹ This book, according to him, was selected by Bradshaw, the Inspector of Schools as a textbook. He also wrote *Vigrahatanramu*, poetry in easy style in 1874 which was also selected as a textbook.¹⁰

The Realisation that the textbooks are meant to be easily understood and written in spoken language was first expressed by the Government and it seemed to have been taken up by the progressive sections of the society. It is evident from the following excerpt

⁸ John. G. Leonard, *Kandukuri Viresalingam (1848-1919): A Biography of an Indian Social Reformer*, Telugu University publications, Hyderabad, 1991, p. 56.

⁹ Kandukuri Veeresalingam, *Sweeya Charitwamu (Autobiography)*, Vol. II, Edited by A. Ramapati Rao, Hyderabad, 1981, p. 111. (hereafter ‘*Sweeya Charitramu II*’)

¹⁰ Kadukuri Veeresalingam, *Sweeya Charitwamu II*, op. cit., pp. 111-112.

from a newspaper published in Veeresalingam's autobiography, which says: "we have no hesitation in pronouncing it good...the style is easy and flowing and at the same time idiomatic and grammatical. The book may be made a textbook".¹¹ This book was in fact adopted as textbook later by many schools according to Veeresalingam. In such a way Veeresalingam started his initial efforts at language reforms.

While introducing himself to the public in his journal, *Vivekavardhini* which was established in 1874, in a poem he says:

I am a Brahman who learned a foreign language and passed an examination in that language.

I have an interest in the Telugu language and I want to aid the development of the country.

I have some talent for writing poetry.

I write particularly about moral questions which are universal, in an easy style without using difficult compounds, so that everyone may understand.

I also use foreign words.¹²

It is evident that he wanted to write in easy, spoken language and in fact stated that the aims of his journal are improvement of Telugu and improvement of the country.¹³

Kokkonda Venkata Ratnam argued that, "not only the books but also the journals should

¹¹ Kadukuri Veeresalingam, *Sweeya Charitwamu II*, op. cit., p. 112.

¹² Reproduced from Leonard, *Viresalingam and Social Change*, op. cit., p. 158.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

be written in classical Telugu”.¹⁴ He argued that, “veeresalingam’s prose style was idiosyncratic and followed no precise rules, unlike the classical style”.¹⁵

Veerasingam wanted to develop Telugu not only by modifying the language but also by using it to reform the society. Language reform was to be carried out by simplifying Telugu to increase people’s comprehension of it. He marked a conscious break with tradition in the usage of Telugu language. In his autobiography he wrote: “what is the use of the language? So that people can convey their thoughts to others with the help of a language. What is the use of books in a language? so that we can convey our ideas to those who are far away and also to our future generations. Such thing is not possible with books like ‘*Vigrahantram*’ (written in easy style but was still not comprehensible for commoners) as one has to take the help of dictionaries and pandits to understand that. Books should be easy to understand. I have decided to write books, which are easy from then onwards and announced it through newspapers. Pandits decried me and said that the language will lose its respect and the readers will not be interested in such a tasteless effort.”¹⁶ He said this in the context of the novel he wrote, titled ‘*Rajasekhara Charitram*’.

His views were similar to that of Government discourse, which was aiming at simplifying the regional languages. In his journal *Vivekavardhini*, he wrote: “The books giving us knowledge should be written in prose style which should be as easy as possible.

¹⁴ Arudra, *Comprehensive Telugu Literature (Samagra Andhra Sahityamu)*, Telugu Academy, Hyderabad 2004, p. 55.

¹⁵ Leonard, *Biography*, op. cit., p. 272.

¹⁶ Veeresalingam, *Sweeya Charitram II*, op. cit., p. 132.

The people who read the books should not have any doubts and understand everything or the education will fail and the interest will deteriorate gradually. It is better to write in the regional languages than in Sanskrit. Useful books should be written in prose".¹⁷ J. Leonard observes that Veeresalingam adopted the views of the Madras textbook committee on that occasion.¹⁸

The vital link between social reform and literary culture is more conspicuous than ever in this case. Social reform became an important factor influencing the direction of change in Telugu language and literature. The modification of Telugu language and efforts at prose composition was taken up by social reformers like Veeresalingam and the state encouraged it so as to initiate writings which could be used as textbooks. The textbooks became sites of experimentation which were used to create other innovative forms like novels, satires etc. The pressure created by the state in terms of incentives and its criticism of the vernacular literature also played a major role.

At various points in his autobiography, Veeresalingam mentions the money he has earned out of writing the textbooks. The field of textbook writing was both lucrative and prestigious. Veeresalingam confesses that the textbook writing was a temptation. He wrote that, "All the schools have selected this book (*Vigrahatantram*) as a textbook. I have earned thousand rupees due to that. At the sight of such a huge sum of money, I

¹⁷ A. Rmapati Rao, ed., *Veerasalingam Vani*, International Telugu Institute, Hyderabad, 1981, pp. 50-55.

¹⁸ Leonard, *Biography*, op. cit., p. 60.

have realized that book writing is more profitable than the job (of a teacher) and the desire to leave the job and lead an independent life came to my mind.”¹⁹

While he tells us his preference of writing over ‘teaching’, in another instance he finds the ‘writing’ as a better option over journalism. He remarks: “I have never believed that journalism would fetch me enough money to lead an independent life. Since my books were appreciated by journalists and adopted as textbooks in many schools, I felt that I could lead an independent life as an author”.²⁰

At yet another instance Veeresalingam says “Apart from the above mentioned books, I have written a Second Standard Reader for the Government when colonel MacDonald was the Inspector of Schools and earned one hundred and fifty rupees for that. Upon the request of Marsden *Dora* (Sahib), i have written the textbooks for fourth, fifth and sixth standards while I was in Madras. They gave me thousand rupees for writing those three books.”²¹

Though there has been an effort to be humble, Veeresalingam never missed out on an opportunity to show himself in bright light. All these references regarding the earnings should be understood in that context. Adoption of the books as textbooks was quite prestigious during those times as it is evident from this excerpt from a contemporary autobiography of Konda Venkatappayya (1866-1948): “Rentala Venkata Subba Rao was appointed in place of Rev. Paul. We heard in the grapevine that he was highly capable

¹⁹ Veeresalingam, *Sweeya Charitramu II*, p. 113.

²⁰ Veeresalingam, *Sweeya Charitra Sangrahamu*, ed., A. Ramapathi Rao, Hyderabad, 1981, p. 24. (hereafter *Sangrahamu*)

²¹ *Sweeya Charitramu II*, op. cit., p. 182.

and agreed for the job on salary of one hundred fifty or two hundred rupees. We were told that he would work in our school only for one or two years. This Subba Rao has written physics, chemistry textbooks, which are very popular, in an easy to understand style and became famous in the country. He has also published English grammar in 'Made Easy Series'. All the students felt happy to see such a person as our headmaster".²²

This shows that textbook writers were popular, well paid and sought after. The general impression seemed to be that it was an honorable recognition to adapt one's book as a textbook which is evident from the following excerpt reproduced in Veeresalingam *Sweeyacharithramu* from the news paper *Hindu Deshabhimani*: "He (Veeresalingam) is the author of the scores of books of prose and poetry and it is the duty of the public and the educational authorities to give him every encouragement".²³

The approval of the book as the textbook was a major consideration for the writers of the period. According to Arudra, Veeresalingam advised contemporary poet Chilakamarti Lakshmi Narasimhamu not to translate '*Kadambari*' into Telugu as "people would not read such tough poetry and universities would not approve them as textbooks."²⁴ Arudra went on to say that "*Pantulugaru* (Veeresalingam) had definite views regarding books. Those not useful for common people are considered a waste".²⁵

The colonial state, with its authority made the writing of books and textbooks in modern Telugu look like an act of patriotism. 'Monetary incentives were thus added to

²² Konda Venkatappayya, *Sweeya Charitra-I, 1866-1949*, Vijayawada, 1952, p. 29.

²³ *Sweeya Charitramu II*, op. cit., p. 154.

²⁴ Arudra, op. cit., p. 69.

²⁵ Ibid.

the natural patriotism of Telugu authors who wanted to improve their native tongue.²⁶ The western criticism of the Vernacular literature posed the need for such reforms. The criticism in the words of a newspaper, '*The Hindu*' is like this: "[T]he complaint has been that the vernacular literature is barren of good and useful books and the few that it contains are unintelligible to the general reader, their style being too highly artificial and difficult to be of any interest to students of ordinary attainments. This defect especially in the Telugu literature of sacrificing ideas at the shrine of gangling words is somewhat being remedied by the useful publications of the school book society".²⁷

It is evident from this that the School Book Society has become the stage to perform for the writers of the age. It is seen that those books easy to understand are the only works of literary value and all such works are being duly recognized by the 'school book society'. Patriotism and development of the language too could be exhibited by writing the textbooks in simple Telugu as opposed to 'classical Telugu'.

The nationalist press was ready to laud such efforts, which were seen as replies to the western criticism. The newspapers like *The Hindu* appreciating Veeresalingam effort at writing what was then believed to be the 'first Telugu novel', *Rajasekhara Charitramu* observed: "we picture to ourselves a period in the history of Telugu literature when the country will look back with pride to the man who in the midst of an ignorant multitude and indifferent public and during times when the study of English is at a premium and Vernacular at discount, stood alone from the English learning propensities of his

²⁶ J. Leonard, *Biography*, op. cit., p. 56.

²⁷ *Sweeya Charitramu II*, op. cit., p. 117.

countrymen, laid the foundation stone of modern literature and led the way in developing the latest powers of the language into harmony and perfection".²⁸

The Era of Veeresalingam marks the beginning of prose style in literature and hence there were many problems with the usage of the language. In his own words, "when I have started (writing) there were no books as they exist today. We can almost say that there was nothing in prose format. Everything had to be invented. Hence the writers then faced lot of problems. Advantages were very few".²⁹ The problem was quite acute in the case of technical subjects and terms. This did not stop Veeresalingam from publishing books on 'Physiology' and 'Astrology' with a hope for approval as textbooks.

'*Hindu Deshbhimani*' a contemporary newspaper observed, while reviewing his book on 'Physiology', that "it is true that some of the technical words and phrases which he has been obliged to use in the translation are not colloquial and household terms and consequently, rather difficult to easily understand by commoners, yet had he not used those terms, he would have made a mess of the translation. And to avoid this difficulty he has added an appendix in the terminus of the book giving the English equivalent of those technicalities for the guidance of the reader".³⁰ Even for his astrology book he added an appendix. According to him lots of pictures were included with great effort and spent a lot of money for that - which was an achievement.³¹

²⁸ *Sweeya Charitramu II*, op. cit., p. 118.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 153-157.

Another important contribution of Veeresalingam is his effort at indianising the story, plot and the characters in his works and thereby keeping up the interest of the common readers. This realization came to him even before he wrote his first novel '*Rajasekhara Charitramu*'.

As he confesses in his autobiography, when he was first encouraged to write a Telugu novel, he thought that he would first translate any small English novel and then come up with a novel of his own. With that thought he started translating Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* and finished a couple of chapters, only to quit abruptly. The reason, to quote in his own words, is that "I thought that the foreign story and its translation might not appeal to our people; so I started writing *Rajasekhara Charitramu*. There is hardly any similarity between the two."³² This was attested to by newspapers like *The Hindu*, which lauds his effort: "Though he professes to follow the *Vicar of Wakefield* as his model, he does not like many of the aspiring Telugu writers who blindly think that there is an intrinsic virtue in retaining English names and words. On the other hand the author takes up the materials around him and works them up into harmony and shape".³³

This process of emulating the 'foreign' novel and its contents is also seen in the textbooks that would be touched upon in this chapter. This was a very crucial trend, which was set in the conditions where there was a colonial authority and the superiority of English literature was well-nigh a foregone conclusion. This, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, is the hallmark of the textbooks produced under colonial authority.

³² *Sweeya Charitramu II*, op. cit., p. 113.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

CONTENTS

It will now be attempted to study the textbooks published by Macmillan and Co., written by Veeresalingam ‘on the request of’ Marsden, the Inspector of Schools, which were earlier mentioned along with the other textbooks written for Christian Literature Society for India. These are unlike the grammar books adopted as textbooks but exclusively designed and written for schools.

Before touching upon the contents, it is necessary to discuss a few facts regarding Veeresalingam’s textbooks. John Leonard who has written the most well researched and comprehensive biography of Veeresalingam,³⁴ is the only one who discusses about his textbooks and textbook writing, although he does not delve into their contents. Since he has constructed the details from official reports and Veeresalingam’s autobiography and other works, he got some facts wrong and missed out on a few others. Leonard’s main drawback is that he did not consult the textbooks themselves.

As Leonard rightly observes, Veeresalingam was appointed to the Board of Examiners, which placed him also on the Madras School Textbook Committee in 1902. This was important for two reasons as he got the opportunity ‘to meet’ officials like J.A Yates and E. Marsden and the opportunity to put his own books forward for consideration as textbooks. Leonard further argues that prior to his (Veeresalingam] appointment to the

³⁴ Leonard, *Biography*, op. cit., p. 201.

Madras School Textbook Committee, Veeresalingam's works, save for his books on grammar, were recommended only for the use of school libraries.³⁵

We have evidence to prove that Veeresalingam had met Marsden before 1902. In fact, as early as 1899, Veeresalingam collaborated with Marsden to write a textbook, which was published by Macmillan and Co. and adopted as the school textbook.³⁶ Veeresalingam was then the Telugu Professor in Madras Presidency College. Though this is the oldest available textbook written by Veeresalingam, one cannot discount the possibility of his having authored textbooks earlier. This also disproves the contention of Leonard that his 'appointment' helped him get his book selected.

Veeresalingam who was given credit for changing the Telugu literary culture and as a person who marked the beginning of prosaic style of Telugu writing,³⁷ also spearheaded the beginning of children's literature. Devaki attributes the beginning of the modern age in children's literature to Veeresalingam. She further says "*Pantulugaru* (Veeresalingam) introduced reforms regarding textbooks. He has coordinated the folklore and scientific knowledge and written books for school children. The Macmillan Company published them. They are not available now".³⁸

Since Veeresalingam idealised the past and felt the current state of society as degraded, he believed that education would instill morality in the leaders of the society and create a climate of opinion favourable for reform. He was a great advocate of 'moral

³⁵ Leonard, *Biography*, op cit. p. 202.

³⁶ E. Marsden and K. Veerasalingam, *Fifth Reader, Telugu*, Macmillan and Co., Madras, 1899.

³⁷ See Arudra, op. cit., p. 46.

³⁸ M. Devaki, *Telugu Children Literature (Telugu Bala Geya Sahityam)*, Ellore, 1983, p. 28.

instruction' but he found to his indignation that it was not "easily inserted into the curriculum", and he "wrote repeatedly in his journal, *Vivekavardhini* on this theme of introducing moral training into the school curriculum, but the opposition was great, so he considered other ways to inculcate morality in students".³⁹

The textbooks written by him had many moral lessons on various themes such as unity, respect towards elders, speaking the truth, hard work, devotion towards god etc. The preface of one of his textbooks says, "All these readers can be called as story readers because all the lessons are stories. These readers also can be called moral readers as each lesson has a moral".⁴⁰ Some of the lessons are titled as follows: (1) Union is strength (2) Duty towards our parents (3) We are all brothers (4) Speaking bad words (5) Truthful king (6) Vow of Truth (7) Morals for student etc. Barring the lesson on animals, almost all the lessons had morals. Moral stories with animal characters were also there.

As we have already seen that he successfully adapted the 'foreign' books and contents to suit the Indians, he used the same style in these textbooks. Many of the Aesop's fables were indianised and included as lessons in these textbooks. For example, 'The boy who saved a village tank', was also mentioned in the first chapter.

His textbooks were a good amalgamation of things from the 'East and West'. One preface says: "Many well-known stories were written by a man called Aesop, many were taken from the *Panchatantram*, and some from the Mahabharata. Stories from the history

³⁹ J. Leonard and Karan Leonard, op. cit., p. 172.

⁴⁰ K. Veerasalingam and M. SubbaRayudu, *Fourth Story Reader*, Macmillan and Co., Madras, 1926, Preface.

of England and India, along with stories from the lives of prominent Hindu and Muslim personalities were incorporated. Apart from them, stories from the lives of world- famous persons have also been included”.⁴¹

On very expected lines, textbooks written by a social reformer like Veerasalingam contained lessons on education of girls and marriage customs etc. In the lesson “Girls’ school” he writes, “Like boys, girls too should be educated. Since both are equal they should learn to differentiate between the good and bad. Wise mothers can learn how to teach their children. No bird can fly with one wing and no country can progress if its women are not educated”.⁴²

The lesson on ‘Marriage customs’ had sub-titles like (a) Child marriage (b) Marriages of convenience (c) Overspending (d) Sorrows of a widow.⁴³ On child marriages, he wrote: “Because of the child marriages both husband and wife suffer a lot. They cannot have a friendly relationship. Girls became mothers at a very early age and became very weak later on.”⁴⁴ “Marriages of convenience,” he says, “consider issues of caste and horoscope, which is foolish”, and “such people give birth to weak children.”⁴⁵ He also discourages needless ostentation in marriages. He says, “Marriage is for permanent happiness and not a temporary entertainment. So rather than spending too

⁴¹ K. Veerasalingam and M. SubbaRayudu, *Fourth Story Reader*, op. cit., p. 45.

⁴² K. Veerasalingam, M. Venkata Ratnam, *Telugu Third Standard Reader*, Christian Literature Society Press, (hereafter CLS Press) Madras, 1924, pp. 45-46.

⁴³ *Third Form Reader, Second Edition*, CLS Press Madras, 1907, pp. 110-114.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

much during marriage it should be given to the couple”.⁴⁶ He goes on to say that “The English government approved widow marriages in 1856 but the people are still ignorant. Widows are suffering due to such attitude.”⁴⁷

The lessons with agendas of social reform were mostly part of the textbooks published by the ‘Christian Literature Society for India’, which were written by Veeresalingam. They were not found in the books written for Macmillan and Co. All these books had to be “approved by the Director of Public Instruction”. The approval of such themes was striking, as they were radical for the times, and the general opinion of textbooks as “surveys of ideas, mere compendiums of existing knowledge arranged and served up for learner’s consumption”,⁴⁸ and as a “teaching vehicle legitimized in the business of education by the assumption of political neutrality”,⁴⁹ doesn’t hold good.

In the textbooks written for the ‘Christian Literature Society’, he wrote lessons on Jesus and other Christian beliefs using their tenets of discourse. He had attacked Brahmins through essays published in his journal *Vivekavardhini*⁵⁰. The attacking of Brahmins by Christian missionaries was a regular feature.⁵¹ In this, they found a common ground. Veeresalingam, though, criticized Brahmins in a very mild manner in the textbook. In a lesson titled ‘Dvijas’, he wrote: “After the Upanayana (wearing of sacred thread) ceremony, Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vysyas are called Dvijas. Mere ceremony

⁴⁶ *Third Form Reader, Second Edition*, CLS Press, Madras, 1907, pp. 110-114.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

⁴⁸ John Issit, ‘Reflections on the Study of Textbook’, *History of Education*, November 2004, vol. 33, no. 6, p. 687.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 688.

⁵⁰ Leonard, *Biography*, op. cit., pp. 64-83.

⁵¹ Leonard and Leonard, *Social Change*, op. cit., p. 173.

wouldn't make them Dvijjas if they were wicked by nature. The real way to attain Dvija status is to make one's soul pure and sacred... God promises the devotee that he will make his soul pure. This is the true path to become a Dvija”.

Since Veeresalingam believed in the benevolence of the colonial state, lessons like 'Queen Victoria' were not uncommon. The lesson titled 'The most accomplished Queen Victoria' has a brief biographical sketch of her childhood and her Coronation. Then the writer goes on to say that "Queen Victoria is not only the Queen of England, but also the Empress of India. Since India is far away from England, and she has many responsibilities, she couldn't visit India at all; but she has sent Edward, her eldest son and the Prince of Wales, to India. He has given all the information to her when he went back. Though she couldn't come to India in person, she knows everything about the people of this country. To learn the language of the country, she has employed a teacher from India. She has read many books, and keeps herself informed about India through the newspapers. She spoke to the people of India and listened to them. She also learnt about their lifestyle. She was kind to the visitors who came to see her from India. She would send help in times of need. She has sent money in times of famine to save the lives of the poor. She ordered the rulers of India to give them work and food. When she passed away, the people of India were in severe grief, as they looked up to her as a mother figure.”⁵²

Most of the themes for these textbooks were largely taken from the several books Veeresalingam had already published on varied topics. For example, the lessons on

⁵² Veeresalingam, *Fourth Reader*, op. cit., pp. 81-82.

‘Hanuman Monkeys’ and ‘Dogs’, found in all his textbooks, were part of his book written on ‘Animal behavior’.⁵³

Conclusions

The case study of Veeresalingam’s textbooks, which marks a new era in the history of Telugu textbooks, tells us another story underlining the ‘complicity between power and knowledge’, how the colonial state has initiated and brought about a change in a literary culture to meet its requirements of producing suitable textbooks, and how the enlightened subjects have used the opportunity not only to drive home their ideology of reforming the society but, in the process, also left the literary culture reformed.

A.D. Campbell, as early as 1823, recognised that the works used in the schools had a language “different from that in popular use”.⁵⁴ But the real impetus for change came in the 1870s. The monetary incentives involved, and the rhetoric of improving the language led to the change of the literary style, which was successfully employed by Veeresalingam for his social reform propaganda. The textbooks triggered the change and they were the first sites of experimentation with the literary style. The modern prose Telugu helped disseminate ideas to a wider section of people. The colonial state as well as reformers like Veeresalingam realised their aims.

It is also seen how the ideology of the writer enters his textbooks. Veeresalingam’s textbooks were replete with his avowed aims of women’s education and other gender issues. As Pat Pinsent succinctly puts it, “In children’s books, the ideology is often

⁵³ *Sweeya Charitramu II*, op. cit., p. 159.

⁵⁴ B.S Kesavan , op. cit., p. 398.

explicit, where the writer is consciously trying to bring over a point of view which he or she feels should be held by the child".⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Pat Pinsent, Race and Ideology in Textbooks, *Paradigm*, No. 22, May 1997.

IV

Textbooks for Tribals in a Princely State



The foreword to the *Gondibarathi* (first reader, 2004) postulates five important benefits of imparting education to tribals in their own languages. They are:

- (1) Keeping up the interest of the tribal students in education and to reduce the number of school dropouts.
- (2) Preventing the tribal students from studying in the same class for two or three years.
- (3) Increasing the adult literacy percentage.
- (4) Preserving the tribal language and culture.
- (5) If the language spoken at home and the language taught in school are the same, it would remove some of the difficulties regarding the learning of the language at the primary level”.¹

It also says, “according to the National Education policy of 1986, tribal language textbooks are being prepared...Readers for the first class have been prepared keeping in mind the tribal culture, their natural habitat and the aspects which are of interest to them, so that the education will be imparted in an enjoyable and congenial atmosphere. Attempts on these lines were made before but in vain. Since the Education Department has taken up the job, we are hopeful that it will be successful.”²

This chapter would deal with ‘Readers’ composed for tribal Gonds under “the first major educational experiment launched among ^{any tribal} community in Andhra Pradesh,” by the Nizam’s Government. The latest being the one discussed above, launched in 2004 by

¹ V.N.V.K Sastri, ed., R.Vedaraju (Compiled by); *Gondi Barathi-First Class Reader*, Tribal Cultural Research & Training Institute (here after TCR&TI) Publication, Hyderabad, 2004, Foreword.

² Ibid., p. 11.

the Tribal Cultural Research and Training Institute (TCR&TI) in collaboration with the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP).

Among the tribal population of India, the Gonds stand out by their numbers and due to vast expanse of their habitat, and their historical importance. Grierson remarks that “The Gonds have given their name to the tract of Gondwana...gondi has no well defined linguistic boundaries, the speakers being almost everywhere scattered among people employing various other languages.”³Tiwari remarks that “Gondwana was for the first time used by Mughals in *Ain-i-Akbari*.”⁴The majority of Gonds are found today in the state of Madhya Pradesh. Their main concentrations are the Satpura plateau, where the western type of Gondi is spoken, and the district of Mandla, where they have adopted the local dialect of Hindi. The former Princely state of Bastar, now included in Madhya Pradesh, is the home of three important Gond groups. The states of Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh also contain substantial Gond populations, and a majority of these have been described as Raj Gonds, though in their own language, they call themselves *Koitur*. Haimendorf observes that the term ‘Raj Gonds’ which in the 1940s was still widely used, has now become almost obsolete, probably because of the political eclipse of the Gond Rajas. At the time of 1961 census 3,992,905 persons were returned as Gonds and in 1971, 1,548,070 Gondi speakers were recorded.

The preceding two chapters dealt with the textbooks written in Telugu, a ‘mainstream’ regional language for Telugu-speaking children. As a contrast, this chapter

³ See G.A Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. 4, *Munda and Dravidian Languages*, Office of the Superintendent of Printing, Government of India, Calcutta, 1906, pp. 472-473.

⁴ S.K Tiwari, *The Raj Gonds*, New Delhi, 1993, p. 29.

would focus on textbooks written in a tribal language i.e. Gondi for the use of Gond children and adults. The main sources for this chapter are two readers, composed under the Gond Education Scheme of 1943.⁵

THE CONTEXT

The Gond education scheme of 1943 was an outcome of the individual efforts of an anthropologist during his unplanned visit and stay among tribals of Hyderabad state. The individual was none other than Christoph von Furer Haimendorf, the famous Austrian anthropologist. He along with his wife were planning to go to Assam to study the Nagas and were scheduled for a very brief stay in Hyderabad, which got extended due to the outbreak of World War II. After Hitler's occupation of Austria Haimendorf became a German citizen by default. His wife Betty's English nationality helped them stay in the Princely state of Hyderabad. The forced stay allowed him to conduct research among the tribals of the Hyderabad state.⁶

As he began his research among the Raj Gonds in Adilabad, the northernmost district of Hyderabad state, he learnt about their pitiful plight due to the alienation of tribal land and their ruthless exploitation by the outsiders. He observed "the vulnerability of tribal populations to exploitation by minor government officials as well as moneylenders, landlords and other agents of vested interests can largely be traced to their illiteracy. Unable to read even the receipt given by an official and obliged to put their

⁵ These two Readers have been translated and used for this chapter.

⁶ See Christoph Vonfurer Haimendorf, *Life among Indian Tribes: the Autobiography of an Anthropologist*, OUP, New Delhi, 1990, pp. 21-23.

thumb impressions on documents which they cannot understand, they are easy victims of any fraud or misrepresentation which more educated exploiters are likely to devise".⁷

Hence, Haimendorf realized the importance of 'medium of literacy' to alleviate their problems, but was confronted with the problem of how to educate these Gonds as most of them could only speak Gondi!

THE CONCEPT

Gonds are one of the very few tribes who speak their own tongue and have not adopted Telugu or any other language. Gondi is a Dravidian tongue closer to Kannada than Telugu. Educating these tribals was beset with difficulties as it had to be combined with learning of a new language other than the mother tongue. It was tough to find teachers for the job. Haimendorf found a band of semi-literate Gonds who knew rudimentary Marathi and gave them training to be teachers at a village called Marlavai. The medium of instruction in the first three classes in these schools was to be Gondi. For the teaching material Haimendorf and Santosh B. Jogalkar, the headmaster of Marlavai training centre, composed Gondi readers in the Devanagari script.⁸ The idea was that once the children had learnt to read and write Gondi in this script, they could easily be taught Marathi, the script being the same. From the fourth standard onwards Urdu, the official language was to be added.

⁷ Christoph Vonfurer Haimendorf, *Tribes of India: The Struggle for Survival*, OUP, New Delhi, 1982, p. 126.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 128. These readers are available in Tribal Cultural Research and Training Institute, Hyderabad.

This plan was approved by the Nizam's Government with the support of revenue minister, W.V. Grigson. The government was also eager to placate the Gonds after the Bhebi-jeri rebellion under Kumaram Bhim in which ten Gonds were killed in 1940.⁹ The approval of the Gond Education Scheme in 1943 indicates a new concern by Government for the welfare of the tribesmen. A Government report thus observed: "Marlavai, a tribal village in the heart of the forest, was selected in 1943 for establishing a school and training centre for the Gonds. Simultaneously with the educational work began a revision of the land and forest policy and in 1944 a special officer was appointed with the directive to safeguard the interests of the Adilabad aboriginals. While the allotment of land to landless aboriginals had so far been the main task of the Special Tribal Officer, his responsibilities now also included the appointment of aboriginal village officers, the supervision of Gond Education scheme and the general protection of the aboriginals against oppression and exploitation".¹⁰

The Gond Education Scheme made good progress. By 1946, thirty primary Gond Schools were functioning.¹¹ This experiment of imparting education to Gond children in the mother tongue and at the same time familiarising with the regional languages came to an abrupt end, when the Telangana districts of Hyderabad were incorporated into Andhra

⁹ Haimendorf, *Tribes of India: The Struggle for Survival*, op. cit., pp. 91-92.

¹⁰ *Report on the Administration of Hyderabad State, September 1948-March 1950*, Government Central Press, Hyderabad, 1951, p. 112. Andhra Pradesh State Archives (here after A.P.S.A.)

¹¹ *Report on Social Service among the Tribal and Backward Classes in Hyderabad*, Government Central Press, Hyderabad, 1948, p. 20, A.P.S.A.

Pradesh. The government decided to abandon the use of Gondi and books in Gondi were not supplied to the schools.¹²

THE CONTENT:

The contents of the Readers,¹³ written by Jogalkar,¹⁴ and edited by Haimendorf, were taken mostly from the former's research among Gonds between 1939 and 1943. As he felt that "the very basis of their social order rests on an elaborate mythology",¹⁵ most of the content in these readers was overwhelmingly from Gond culture, customs and everyday life. The readers were written in Gondi language using the Devanagari script. The Readers for children and adults were designed differently to suit their age and bent of mind.

The children's Reader contained lessons where predominantly the main character was a child. It included moral stories, mythical tales and general knowledge about months, money, directions etc. Riddles which were part and parcel of the Gondi daily life were also included after every lesson.

The lessons and new concepts were moulded to be comprehensible for the children. The introductory lesson was a flag prayer titled 'Flag God' (*jhenda pen*). The flag is given a god-like status. The lesson is as follows: "Everybody come here. Let's pray to the flag god. The teacher says to the flag, 'We are offering a goat to you. Please

¹² Haimendorf, *Tribes of India*, op. cit., p. 129.

¹³ Two Readers (a) S.B Jogalkar, *First Reader for Children*, edited by Haimendorf, Government Central press, Hyderabad, 1943.

(b) Haimendorf, *First Reader for Adults; Containing Stories, Songs and Riddles*, Hyderabad, 1944. Tribal Cultural Research and Training Institute, Hyderabad. (here after TCR&TI)

¹⁴ The name learnt from the cover page of the First Reader.

¹⁵ See Haimendorf, *Tribes of India*, op. cit., p. 128. See also *Autobiography*, op. cit., p. 82.

accept it.’ The goat shook off the water on its body and it’s a good omen. All the twelve months-first six and second six- people should be in good health and the crops shall come good. Prosperity shall prevail everywhere. All the school children shall study well and make a name for themselves”.¹⁶It is interesting to note that the flag was that of the Government of Hyderabad under the Nizam. This actually reflects the fact that there was an attempt at co-option.

There was a lesson titled ‘My School’. This lesson is in a narrative style. A child narrates the facts about the school in their village. It goes thus: “This is our school. I go to school daily. All the slates, pencils, books are given free of cost. My school was built by the people of our village- one got pillars, one got bamboo and one got leaves. Then they built the school. Then we erected the flag God. Our village priest brought the goat and offered the sacrifice. The space between the flag and school was used for ‘*Dandari* dance’ during the Diwali festival. Our school has two gardens. We grow lady’s finger, ginger, brinjal, tomato, beans and some leafy vegetables. In winter we grow only leafy vegetables. The second garden has flower plants. We water the plants everyday and eat the vegetables”¹⁷

The lessons included in this reader can be classified under diverse topics. There were lessons on domestic animals like cow, dog and cattle. There were lessons on their mythological stories and festivals. The lessons to improve general knowledge also

¹⁶ *First Reader for Children*, op. cit., p. 1.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

included that of Gond months, directions, money etc. All these lessons were contextualised beautifully in the Gond culture and life.

The lesson on cattle explains to the children the importance of various domestic animals: “All animals are useful for us. We should not harm them. Calf comes from cow and ox. Ox is useful for ploughing and other purposes. Cows and buffaloes gives us milk. A goat gives birth to one child every six months. We can also sell them for money. Goat’s milk is good for children. Sheep is domesticated for its wool. The hen lays eggs which are good for health. Its meat is consumed as food. Horse is used for transport. So it should be kept in clean surroundings. It should be given fodder and water on time. So there are many uses for domesticating the cattle”.¹⁸

The lesson on cow (Mura) is explained in the same manner. The cultural significance of the cow is also highlighted. The cow’s role during the funeral ceremony and its importance is given.

The lesson on dog says, “Few people domesticate dogs for hunting. The shepherds rear dogs which helps them when they travel. The dogs can accompany them when they take cattle for grazing in the forests. It can swim in the rivers and can come back home even if it is left in the forest”¹⁹.

Even while describing the animals, their role in the life of Gonds was given importance. The lessons imparting general knowledge dealt with various things. They

¹⁸ *First Reader for Children*, op. cit., pp. 2-3.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

were mostly in the interactive style. The one who gives the knowledge is invariably the teacher or the father.

The lesson on money (Paisang) is a very interesting one. It goes as follows:

Lingu: Today is Wednesday father. There is a fair in our village.

(Father gives one paisa to Lingu)

Lingu: Father I need six paise. I need to buy many things

(Father gives him one more coin)

Lingu: I asked for six paise but you gave me just one more, that too a white one.

Father: Six paise means one anna and I gave you one anna.

Lingu: Father I am confused about the money

(Father takes out all the money to explain him)

Father: Two annas are equal to one chavla

Two chavlas are equal to one pavla

Two pavlas are equal to one adheli

Two adhelis are equal to one rupee

Lingu: If I go to a shop and have to give one rupee and if I have only change what do I do?

Father: You can give him 8 chavlas or 4 pavlas or 2 Adhelis.

Lingu: Oh! Now I am very clear about money I will come with you to the fair, but I will give the money.²⁰

The lesson teaching the directions (Moolang) too was in the conversational mode but with a short introduction:

Raju came home from school. He goes to the field to kill the birds with his sling. He feels hungry when the sun is right on his hood. He goes home to have food. Raju came back to the fields in the evening to hit the birds. Meanwhile, the sun went beyond the hills and the whole sky became dark after sunset- so he goes home. The next morning he goes to school.

Teacher :Raju, tell me, which side does the sunrise?

Raju: It rises from those hills and goes down this side.

Teacher: Is that right?

Students: Yes sir.

Teacher: I will teach you directions today. Everybody come outside and stand facing the sun. The sun rises in the East and our back is towards the West.²¹

Thus goes the lesson on directions. There is a lesson on Gondi months. This lesson, gives the names of all the twelve months and their rituals and cultural importance in their lives. For example, “In the seventh month called Divadi, we harvest the paddy. Diwali is celebrated in this month. Dusserah is also celebrated during this month. The clan God is

²⁰ *First Reader for Children*, op. cit., pp. 41-42.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 25-27.

revered during this month. The Lakshmi , in which there are rites performed around the cow, also falls in this month. During this [], people from other villages come to dance. *Kolabuddi Dance* is performed on the last day”.²²

The lesson on ‘*Madhuca Longifolia*’, locally called ‘*Ippa*’ tree- which is very significant in most Gond rituals and everyday life- also found a place in the Reader. The lesson relates:” There is a forest near our village. There are many varieties of trees and we recognize all of them. Most important is the ‘*Ippa*’ tree. God Bhima resides under this tree. Bhima’s marriage is preformed under this tree. The wood of the tree is carved out into Bhima and his wife. Then they are married. The flowers of this tree start falling in the month of Dhuradi (Holi), the ‘*ippa*’ flowers are dried and *rotis* are made out of it. The fruits of this tree are crushed and oil is extracted. All the wild animals come under this tree in the night. Then people hunt them easily”.²³

In the lesson on ‘*Blacksmith*’,²⁴ the father explains to the son how the iron is melted and moulded. This lesson is also a dialogue. The child is the main character in most of the lessons. Mostly the child is a school-going kid. In the lesson called “*How do we get food?*” the child asks his father about the process of getting food. The lesson goes like this:

“The child comes back from the school.

²² *First Reader for Children*, op. cit., pp. 12-14.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

Mother: You don't do any work. All the work is done by your father; so there is no *roti* for you.

Son- How do we get food by work?

(Father comes home in the meantime)

Father- Let's eat first. Then I will explain it to you.

(Father takes him to *jowar* fields)

Son - I feel like eating them. How do we grow them?

Father - The field is cleared in the summer. We sow the seeds after the first rains. Then comes the crop. The weeds are taken out. The crop should be protected. When the *jowar* is ripe it is harvested and dried. We do threshing to get the grain. The grains when grounded we get flour, for *roti*. Fodder is given to the cattle.

Son - I will come with you to work from tomorrow after school, you are working very hard".²⁵

In the lesson on '*Fair*' a fascinating account of travel to the 'fair' and shopping is given. A school kid and his father, Jangu, go to the fair. The child is the main character in this lesson:

"Jangu is very excited to go to the fair as he has never seen one...Jangu's father bought him a new dress and a cap. Jangu felt very happy wearing the cap and started roaming around...Jangu wore the new dress and cap and came to the school".²⁶

²⁵ *First Reader for Children*, op. cit., pp. 37-39.

The lesson on morals was also taken from the mythological stories of Gonds. For example, the lesson “Don’t Lie” has a story where *Yavadan guru*, the Gond god breaks the upper jaw of the cow for telling lies in favour of Lord Brahma who was sent on an assignment²⁷. Apart from these, there were many lessons on the Gond gods, rituals, and festivals. One such lesson is on the birth story of the supreme priest of the Gond gods called ‘*Pahandi kuppar lingal*’. The lesson titled after the name of the priest says: “In Bijlipura there was a man called *Ilakdev* and his wife *Hiradevi*. She gave birth to a son who was very ugly with warts all over his body. The mother decided to leave him in the forest *Kuruvadveep*. The child started crying and *sonkhas Jar Guru* came and embraced the child. He gave him sugar water and named him *Kuppar lingal*. He became the priest of all Gond gods”.²⁸

The lesson *Dhuradi* (Holi) has details of the rituals and rites to be performed in that month: “Ten days after sighting the moon, the month of ‘holi’ begins. Everybody collects rice and other cereals from all homes to celebrate this festival”.²⁹

Another such lesson is on “*Diwali Dandari*’, a dance performed during Diwali. The lesson says: “Five days after sighting the moon the ‘*Aakadi Pooja*’ is performed and after pooja in the evening all the people of the village come together to dance which is called ‘*Dandari Dance*’. The dancers wear peacock feathers and deer skin and rub ash

²⁶ *First Reader for Children*, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-11.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

powder all over the body....”³⁰ Likewise there are many lessons on the festivals and rituals.

The riddles which are part of a Gond’s life were also part of these Readers. For example,

1. Which is the biggest of all the seas? The sea of pigeons.³¹
2. It sleeps all the day and wakes all night-The buffalo belt.³²
3. Fully clothed when young. But naked when grown up-Bamboo tree.³³

The Reader for adults was different in a few aspects; there were no agents who were school-going children in the lessons. This Reader consisted of songs, riddles and mythological and moral stories. The stories explaining basic details about money, months, directions etc are absent. Mythological stories are a major component. There were few moral stories and also few riddles.

The story of ‘*Shiva’s Pooja*’ is as follows: “Shiva decided to do a pooja to all gods and invite them for a feast. He uses different cereals and pulses for Gond gods and different ones for Telugu and Marathi gods. He asked all the gods to take bath in the river. The gods took bath and came back. The food was ready and he served the food for all the gods. Gond gods whispered among themselves saying it would be nice if there was some liquor. Shiva overheard that and created some liquor for them. Again Gond gods whisper among themselves saying ‘it would be nice if there was some non-vegetarian

³⁰ *First Reader for Children*, op. cit., p. 29.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.[Many pigeons sitting together is referred to as ‘the sea of pigeons’]

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

food', Siva listens again and creates a squirrel to test them. The Gond gods ran after the squirrel- leaving all the food- in the hot sun. Shiva cursed them to be in the sun always. Hence all the Gond gods are on the top of trees in the sun unlike Telugu and Marathi gods".³⁴

Likewise there are many mythological stories in this Reader for adults. There are many riddles too. For example: (1) The small bird can spread its wings covering the entire house- A lamp³⁵ (2) No turban when it goes, but has a turban when it comes- Maize³⁶ (3) What hits its own body- Eyelid³⁷ (4) It roams all over the forest in the day but rests in a corner in the night- The shepherd's stick.³⁸

Such is the nature of the contents of the Reader composed in Gondi for Gond children under the Gond Education scheme of 1943 which was the pilot scheme. It showed the way to a few such efforts by latter-day governments, the latest being the scheme in 2004. The Tribal Cultural Research and Training Institute in collaboration with District Primary Education Programme have been making efforts to compose readers in Gondi. The Reader for Class One is published in 2004.

The Haimendorf experiment remains the pioneering educational experiment in tribal education of Andhra Pradesh. This experiment is quite remarkable as the Gond children's cultural symbols were present in the primer through which they were taught.

³⁴ *First Reader for Adults*, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

Krishna Kumar in his '*Social Character of Learning*'³⁹ has shown how learning can become 'learning to be backward' in his study of tribal students' response to a textbook which doesn't have any symbols from his milieu and is grossly misrepresented. This education scheme prevents such problems of Gond students. The other side of the coin suggests that this might be an act of co-opting the tribals slowly into the mainstream. Familiarisation of the Devanagari or Telugu script by using it to impart education in the Gondi language, rendered the task of initiating them into learning Urdu, Telugu, or Marathi much less complicated.

³⁹ Krishna Kumar, *Social Character of Learning*, New Delhi, pp. 59-77.

V

Conclusion



The discussion in the foregoing chapters throws some light on the unfolding of the story of the colonial Telugu school textbooks and its evolution. The period for which the textbooks could be consulted [1888-1947] has revealed to us the details of the vernacular textbooks which have been usually neglected in the traditional historiography. The contents of these textbooks show the way in which the state sought to socialize the colonial child. From this study logically tenable conclusions can be made regarding the magnitude of the impact of these textbooks, which were often looked upon as ideological tools. John Mackenzie rightly remarks that “censorship and propaganda are Siamese twins”¹ hence It should be noted that the restrictions regarding the writing has allowed only a certain kind of information to be part of the textbooks

Initially the textbooks- history, geography, Telugu readers, agricultural class books, etc- were written by the colonial officials and the natives assisted them. This happened till the 1920s after which the native writers have taken over the job of textbook writing. These books conveyed the imperialist bent of mind and the numerous lessons on hunting are a good example of this. The tone of these books was very critical and detached but nonetheless we could see that there was an effort to include the themes which were ‘familiar to the native children’...The geography textbooks focused on the regional geography. The central themes included agriculture, cleanliness, health and hygiene. This

1. John M. Mackenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960*, Manchester, 1984 , p. 3.

could be seen as resultant of ecological determinism which dominated the British imperialist discourse.

This nature of the textbooks changed, when there was a change in the profile of the authors. The educated natives took up the job and didn't accept the imperialist discourse unilaterally.

Till 1920s there was a constant change in the nature of the themes and the way they were dealt. The decade of 1920s saw the introduction of health readers, and the widening of the scope of the geography textbooks.

In the 1930s there was a conspicuous change as serious issues like poverty of the country were discussed. This was inevitable due to the introduction of sociology and civics textbooks. These books propagated the view that Indians are responsible for the poverty of their country with habits like overspending during ceremonies and lack of thrift habits etc. Along with these, the textbooks on home management gave special attention to women but the discourse was well within the patriarchal paradigm.

The 1940s was significant as the central theme of the textbooks was the political institutions. The civics and other textbooks had various lessons on the duties of the governments and responsibilities of the citizens. There were lessons on War precautions during the world war times. The Indian National Movement was also included in the contents of the history textbooks of this decade. Gandhi figured prominently in the textbooks. This shows weakening of imperial control over the curriculum

The syllabus was revised regularly and the last revision took place in 1939. This was in vogue till 1950s.

The study of the telugu textbooks showed how the state tried to impose hegemony with the help of the textbooks. The attempt for educating the tribals by the Government of Nizam also was an exercise in hegemony but not in a blatant way. The Gond education Scheme of 1943 was an attempt to alleviate the problems of the tribals. The goal of this education scheme could be seen as co option of the tribals into mainstream culture. To put it succinctly, the education is never a neutral process.

II

The School Textbook is a junction where many lines of interest meet. Its author, often a teacher of mere local repute, nevertheless expresses a wider range of prejudices and assumptions than just his own. The influences which inform the textbook are more easily visible than those which the textbook sets in motion. This dissertation endeavours to lay bare various facets of the textbooks under scrutiny. A few of them are encapsulated as follows:

- a) **Textbooks as a site for literary experimentation:** Poetry being the dominant, if not the only literary genre in pre-colonial and early colonial times posed many problems in the preparation of easily comprehensible textbooks. The Colonial state induced and encouraged the change in the idiom of regional literature, and this was implemented first in the writing of textbooks as we have seen in the second chapter.

- b) Textbooks as sources of fame and income:** After the initial chaos many private enterprises entered the fray. Textbook writing was a more profitable enterprise than the job of a teacher. It brought in its wake the possibility of instant fame too.
- c) Textbooks as a site of contestation:** This was quite evident in the case of ‘selections from Vemana’ where the Christian missionaries pushed for it to be adopted as the textbook, and the elite Hindus resolutely opposed it, as the stanzas constituted some of the fiercest criticism of Hinduism. It also shows contending visions among the natives themselves.
- d) Textbooks as the elite’s handmaiden:** Most of the textbook writers came from the elite sections of society. Their vision was thoroughly represented at the expense of the vision of other marginalized sections. For example, reference to ‘depressed castes’ and Muslims were conspicuously rare, and even when represented, they were looked upon as the ‘others’.
- e) Textbooks as mirrors of Imperial life and vision:** Apart from the imperialist ideology, textbooks give us interesting details about the imperialist life and vision. The numerous lessons on cleanliness, health and hygiene reflected colonial concern and physical experience. As Thomas Metcalfe indicated, “Hot climates brought with them not just discomfort and disease, but in British thinking, an enduring degeneration of mind and body...India’s disease and dirt thus became markers of its enduring ‘difference’.”² Collingham too remarked that “India

² Thomas R. Metcalfe, *Ideologies of the Raj*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, p. 173.

proved a torment to the British body.”³ The references to the hill stations as ‘health places’ in most geography textbooks only vindicates Metcalf’s claim that “the British made of the hills not only a sanctuary from India but an idyllic England defined as India’s exact opposite.”⁴

The textbooks till the 1920s carried numerous lessons on hunting as mentioned above. It was also symptomatic of the Imperial lifestyle. James Ryan says that “The colonial hunter was one of the most striking figures of the Victorian and Edwardian Imperial landscape...the hunter is to the present day eyes the archetypal colonial figure...hunting men were also inspired by the proliferation of popular literature and images of hunting which frequently pictured the hunter as a manly adventurer and hero of empire.”⁵ As a matter of fact, “Hunting remained one of the most favourite pastimes and the principal diversion of the Englishmen throughout the Raj. It was also considered essential exercise to enhance the Imperial image.”⁶ Hence it was only natural for hunting to enter the textbooks written by the imperial officers as lessons.

f) Textbooks as a means and symbol of bureaucratic control: Metaphors of colonial beneficence abound in the textbooks. Colonial ideology is transmitted through them. Since the examinations were strictly based on the textbooks, they also became symbols of state authority in the educational institutions, a not particularly healthy trend.

³ E.M.Collingham, *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Experience of the Raj, c.1800-1947*, CUP, Cambridge, 2001, p. 1.

⁴ Metcalfe, op. cit., p. 171.

⁵ James R. Ryan, *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire*, Chicago, 1997, p. 99.

⁶ Pran Nevile, *Rare Glimpses of the Raj*, Somaiya Publications, Delhi, 1998, p.108.

Having pointed out the major aspects of the textbooks, a few observations are in place. Contrary to what Krishna Kumar argues about the disjunct between the syllabi and its intended students, it can be said that the contents of the curriculum were not always alien to the students. Initially when the textbook publishing and its writing was in its infancy we have seen that there were 'improper' textbooks but as the time progressed they got better. The gap between the curriculum and the cultural milieu of the student was not so acute. The private enterprise in the publishing helped the curriculum be in touch with the indigenous information. It would not have served the purpose of the colonial state to have allowed such distortion between the text and its readers.

Lest their ideology not be instilled successfully in the minds of young children. Having known the problem of rote learning back home, they were always conscious to circumvent the process, which is evident from many official reports and the textbooks themselves. But the pressure of examinations saw all their efforts coming unstuck. Hence, teachers closely adhered to the syllabus. Chomsky observation, in a different context, rings true: "It is quite possible that a carefully designed curriculum, no matter how excellent, may even hamper learning if the teacher is too overawed by it, too bound to it."⁷

Though there was socializing of the colonial child in colonial and worldview, its never complete and nationalist agitations are definitely a proof of its limitations. It is because the "popular consciousness frequently contested the imperial image(s)".⁸

⁷ C.P.Otero, ed., *Chomsky on Democracy and Education*, Routledge Farmer, New York, 2003, p. 341.

⁸ Indivar Kamtekar, 'The Shiver of 1942', *Studies in History*, vol. 18, no. 1, n.s, 2002, p. 98.

Nigel Crook's remarkable argument is that, "more often than not, most transmission [of knowledge] has taken place outside the institutionalised learning foci".⁹ The contestation of the popular consciousness and imperial images happened due to the culture of 'orality' as Peter Vander Veer in another context rightly observes that, "Indian society is obviously not a 'society without writing' but a large segment of the population has always been illiterate to the present day. Orality thus plays a significant role in Indian culture... Oral traditions are often the site of struggle for domination between groups and individuals."¹⁰

The textbooks are not read in a vacuum but along with the other books and the presence of other ideas. The textual knowledge has to contend with the ideas in popular culture. Hence it might be held that the propaganda through textbooks has its own limitations as it was learnt by many Colonial States.

⁹ Nigel Crook, op. cit., p. 9.

¹⁰ Peter Vander Veer, *Imperial Encounters; Religion and Modernity in India and Britain*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2001, p. 129.

Appendix

281

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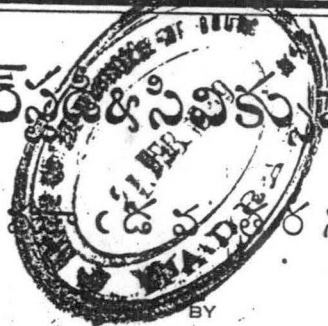
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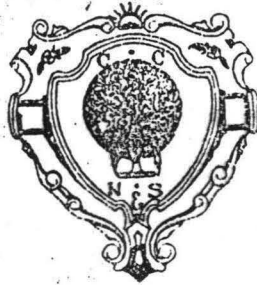
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