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"Administration, Social Transformations under East India Company Rule in the Andhra Sarkar and Ceded Region"

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Abstract:

This research delves into the nuanced impact of East India Company rule on the Andhra and Rayalaseema regions (Ceded), offering a comprehensive exploration of the intricate relationships between governance, societal dynamics, educational reforms, and religious influences. Drawing from historical records and scholarly analyses, the study uncovers the administrative structures implemented by the East India Company, highlighting the resulting socio-political changes and challenges. Furthermore, it investigates the transformative effects of Western education introduction on the social fabric, particularly in relation to caste dynamics and educational accessibility. Additionally, the study examines the evolving religious landscape, emphasizing the role of Christian missionary activities in societal progress and education. Through this comprehensive analysis, the study aims to provide insights into the complex historical developments and their enduring impact on the Andhra and Rayalaseema regions during the East India Company's rule.

Keywords: East India Company, Andhra, Administration, Society, Education, Religion.

Introduction: The Andhra region in India was a significant part of the Madras Presidency during the British colonial era. The British administration introduced various administrative and legal systems, leading to substantial transformations, such as the establishment of English education, the introduction of railways, and the development of stable administrative networks. This period marked the beginning of modern history in the Andhra region, initiating crucial changes in the socio-economic and political spheres, paving the way for modernization.

However, these changes also instigated social and economic disruptions, giving rise to resistance among the local population. Concurrently, the British brought in Western ideologies, culture, and education, providing opportunities for new cultural developments and social reforms. Colonial rule in the Andhra region left an enduring imprint on its evolution, culminating in its integration into modern India.

The British period in Andhra was characterized by both economic growth and political turmoil, as the region grappled with reconciling the benefits of British development with the social and economic costs of colonial governance. The era witnessed successive droughts resulting from a combination of mismanagement and natural disasters. The Andhra region's cottage industries, impacted by the industrial revolution, experienced a decline in influence and productivity. While some East India Company officers exhibited efficiency in their roles and dedication to the region's development, the period also saw the emergence of civil society and a gradual governmental response to the region's challenges.

1. Administrative Structure: During the British colonial rule, significant efforts were directed toward establishing a systematic administrative framework in the territories under their control. These endeavors involved consistent modifications and enhancements to the administrative setup with the aim of achieving effective governance [1].

Before assuming control of the state in the northern sarkar districts, the East India Company established factories and warehouses in Machilipatnam and Visakhapatnam, along with a Board of Revenue to oversee these operations. However, this Board of Revenue was abolished in 1794. Subsequently, the areas under their jurisdiction were divided into districts, and the administration of these districts was entrusted to district collectors. The introduction of district collectors in the administrative system dates back to 1794. These collectors, alongside the Superintendent of Police and District Judge, served as the three key pillars of district administration under the Company Government, with the Collector assuming the primary role in the district's governance. The primary responsibilities of the collectors included the collection of land taxes, maintenance of law and order, and acting as the Chief Magistrate of the district. In 1816, the East India Company's Government withdrew judicial powers from the collectors, leading to the appointment of special officers for the administration of justice.

In 1766, the British gained control over the Sarkar regions. Chikakol was a constituent of the Ganjam district, with non-tribal populations inhabiting the plains and tribal communities residing in the hilly regions, known as agency areas. These two areas were administratively treated as distinct entities. As per the 1839 Act, the Collector of Ganjam served as the Governor's representative, exerting control over the agency areas and overseeing administrative affairs. The government implemented three systems for tax collection and financial resources: Ryotwari, Zamindari, and Inamdari [2, 3].

Initially, the government areas were divided into five districts: Ganjam, Visakhapatnam, Godavari, Krishna, and Nellore. Similarly, the entire territory of the Ceded (Rayalaseema) districts was amalgamated into a single district, with Anantapur serving as the district headquarters. In 1808, the Ceded districts were reorganized into Bellary and Kadapa districts [4]. Subsequently, Kurnool District (1858) [5] and Anantapur District (1882) were established for a specific period. Chittoor district was later instituted in 1911 [6].

The agency areas also extended across Visakhapatnam and Godavari districts. In 1766, the East India Company assumed control over the Godavari district. Rajahmundry and two Collectorates in Kakinada were merged under its administration, forming the Rajahmundry district. Following the transfer of authority from the East India Company to the Queen, the districts of Rajahmundry, Machilipatnam, and Krishna were reorganized into the Godavari and Krishna districts. Additionally, in 1874, the Bhadrachalam Taluk from the Central Provinces was transferred and integrated into the Godavari district.

2. Society and Education: Over an extended period, the society in the Andhra region had stagnated, marked by negative characteristics due to a lack of effective governance. Discriminatory policies were enforced against lower-caste individuals and women. However, the rule of the East India Company ushered in transformative changes in the region. These changes triggered significant social transformations in Andhra, including the introduction of a new education system by the English administration, which nurtured a more dynamic social milieu characterized by new values. Agricultural castes such as Reddy, Vaishya, Kapu, Kamma, and Velama began to vie with the Brahmin community for employment, educational opportunities, and representation in local institutions. Previously, Brahmins had held the majority of positions, from the highest to the lowest, in the administration of the Company's government [7].

The introduction of English education in the Seemandhra region made a substantial contribution to the rise in literacy rates, fostering the development of a new educated middle class [8]. Consequently, individuals began pursuing careers in fields such as law, teaching, and journalism. Recognizing the need for active participation in society, Clarke (1948) emphasized the importance of full and creative engagement within one's societal context [9].

The stable governance system in the Andhra region, improved law and order, and the increasing literacy rates laid the foundation for the emergence of an aware civil society. The formation of the Madras Literary Society in Madras in 1812 [10, 11] marked a significant step, with seven members hailing from the Telugu region of Machilipatnam. Since 1821, people have been submitting petitions to the Governor of Madras, highlighting governance shortcomings and advocating for necessary societal changes. Visionaries like Gazulu Lakshminarasu Chetty in 1852 [12] established the Madras Native Association, pioneering the region's progress. In 1851, a public discussion forum was established in Machilipatnam, while the Kakinada Literary Association was founded in Kakinada town in 1877. Besides, the increase of reading clubs, libraries, and widely circulated magazines played a crucial role in shaping the social framework of the Andhra region.

Before the East India Company's administration, the educational system in the Andhra region followed a traditional structure where only Brahmin boys had access to higher education. This traditional framework revolved around professional communities, with elders training caste members for specific occupations. However, lower-caste individuals and women were excluded from educational opportunities within this system. In contrast,

the Mohammedans provided education to students in madrasas, focusing on Arabic language teachings based on their religious beliefs [13].

In 1813, as the East India Company assumed responsibility for administering India, it recognized the necessity to oversee the country's educational management and allocated resources accordingly. During Thomas Munro's tenure as Governor of the Madras State in 1822, District Collectors were tasked with providing an official report to assess the state of the indigenous education system in the region. In his report, Bellary Collector Camp Bell highlighted the impact of poverty on the education system, revealing that only seven out of every 1000 students were enrolled, and although they could recite verses, they struggled with interpretation [14].

Governor Thomas Munro spearheaded the establishment of 300 Tahsildari Schools and 40 Collectorate Schools in the Madras Presidency, funding them with resources from the Court of Directors. However, a government report issued in 1839 indicated that these schools had failed to achieve their intended objectives [12].

The progress of education in the Andhra region primarily stemmed from Christian missionary schools, government institutions, and schools established through the generosity of donors. For example, the London Missionary Society founded a school in Visakhapatnam in 1806 and subsequently initiated another school in the Bellary district two years later. The society also set up a girls' school in Visakhapatnam, underscoring their dedication to educational development in the region [15].

In 1813, Robert Noble initiated the Church Missionary Society School in Machilipatnam, followed by the Native School in Machilipatnam in 1845, the George Noble Tyler School in Narsapuram, the Maharaja School in Vizianagaram in 1857, the District School in Rajahmundry in 1853, and the Middle School in Kakinada in 1853. PR College was established in Machilipatnam in 1856, and the Hindu Anglo Vernacular School in 1842. The Lutheran Multipurpose (L.M.P.) School, established by The Pennsylvania Synod Society, established vidyalayas in Guntur, Pattipadu, and Nallapadu in 1841. The Madras Collegiate Institution was also founded in 1841. Christian missionaries played a crucial role in establishing several educational institutions that received government grants, primarily with the intention of promoting Christianity.

Higher education in the Andhra region originates in 1857 with the establishment of Madras University, which began instructing education in 1864 [16]. During the Queen's administration, the Nobel College in Bandar was established in 1864, followed by the Andhra Christian College in Guntur in 1866. A junior college was inaugurated in Rajahmundry in 1873, eventually altering into the Government Arts College (Degree College) in 1877. Similarly, in 1878, the Hindu College in Visakhapatnam and the Kallikota College in 1879 were established. New colleges were also set up in Parlakimidi, Kakinada, and Vijayanagara.

The founding of these colleges in the area facilitated the introduction of fresh ideas and perspectives from Western culture to the youth, encouraging a critical examination of

traditional customs and beliefs. As a result, many young individuals were inspired by these novel viewpoints and emerged as leaders of social and political reform movements.

The rise of employment prospects stemming from the new education system has displaced traditional education and professions, leading to an increasing preference for English education due to its potential for securing employment. Consequently, the populace of Andhra has started acknowledging education as a crucial tool for social progress. While primary education establishments are chiefly set up in villages, higher education institutions are clustered in towns. Social structures, such as the family, significantly influence children's education [17]. The expansion of education was primarily noticeable among the upper and middle classes, with Brahmins dominating in higher education.

In 1852, George Noble Taylor, the Sub-Collector of Rajahmundry Division, initiated an experimental donation drive from the locals, resulting in the establishment of rate schools in Narsapur, Palakollu, and other regions, effectively drawing residents from neighboring villages [18]. These English rate schools in the Godavari district are renowned for their tailor-made education system. A significant transformation took place in the Godavari region through these rate schools in the sphere of school education. People willingly contributed and played a crucial role in propelling the new trend of rate schools in the Godavari region. Non-Brahmin castes such as Reddy, Naidu, and other agricultural communities wholeheartedly supported these rate schools, expressing their aspirations for the academic and social progress of boys and girls from their respective castes.

3. Religion: During the reign of the second Venkatapati Raya, Jesuit Christian missionaries were known to have a presence in his court. One such Christian preacher, Robert de Nobili, propagated Christianity in South India around 1626 under the name Tattva Bhodananda Swami [19]. Protestant sects of Christianity were established in Punganur of Chittoor district and Firangipuram in Guntur district as prominent centers. In 1719, a German Christian missionary named Benjamin Schultze authored a Telugu grammar, and in 1727, he translated the Christian scriptures into the Telugu language [20].

Christian missionary efforts commenced in Andhra Pradesh in the 1800s, with the London Christian Mission initiating its activities in Visakhapatnam in 1805 [21]. From 1822, the mission extended its operations to the Kadapa region. The Church Missionary Society also began its work in Machilipatnam under the leadership of Reverend Noble. Concurrently, the American Mission in Guntur expanded its activities [21]. Following the repeal of the ban on the propagation of Christianity in India by the

Charter Act of 1813, missionary activities gained momentum. The Lutheran Mission emerged as a central hub in Guntur [22], while the Canadian Baptist Mission served as the primary center in Ongole, and the Church Mission Society operated as the main center in Hyderabad.

The American Baptist Missionary initiated its operations in the Guntur district and subsequently expanded to encompass the entire Guntur region. The Free Church Mission

extended its activities to the Nellore district. By 1840, the North German Missionary Society had expanded its work along the Godavari coastline, with Rajahmundry serving as its primary hub. Christian missionaries extended invitations to the lower castes, especially the untouchables, who faced discrimination within the Hindu religion. By converting to Christianity, they aimed to improve their social status. It is vital to recognize and commend the role of Christian Missionary Societies in promoting education in the Telugu regions. These institutions offered educational opportunities to lower castes, historically marginalized within Hinduism. Consequently, many individuals from these castes secured employment and attained respected positions.

Conclusion: In conclusion, the East India Company's rule in the Andhra Sarkar and Ceded regions brought about significant administrative, educational, and social transformations. The systematic administrative setup introduced by the Company laid the groundwork for governance structures that continue to influence the region today. The establishment of educational institutions, both by the Company and Christian missionaries, heralded a new era of learning, leading to the emergence of a socially aware and educated middle class. These changes facilitated the questioning of traditional norms and practices, fostering the growth of a dynamic society receptive to new ideas and perspectives. Additionally, the propagation of Christianity by various missionary societies brought about a religious transformation, leaving an enduring impact on the cultural and religious fabric of the region. Overall, the East India Company's rule in the Andhra Sarkar and Ceded regions played a crucial role in shaping the region's trajectory, setting the stage for its integration into the broader colonial framework and eventual modernization.

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