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**SOCIO-ECONOMIC, CULTURAL LIFE OF
KAKATIYAS – A STUDY**

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Abstract: *The Kakatiyas reached their height in the 12th century CE. From CE 1083 until 1323, the Kakatiya dynasty governed out of Warangal (Telangana). They were renowned for building a system of water storage tanks for drinking and irrigation, which greatly aided the region's general development. In the form of "Mission Kakatiya," Telangana has started a huge revitalization initiative that entails restoring irrigation tanks, lakes, and other minor irrigation sources that were created by the Kakatiya dynasty. Numerous Hindu temples have been constructed thanks to the support of Kakatiya kings like Ganapati Deva, Rudrama Devi, and Prataparudra. Like the Rudreshwara Swamy Temple in Telangana or the Thousand Pillar Temple. The Trikotalayam is a star-shaped triple shrine honoring Vishnu, Shiva, and Surya. Telangana's Ramappa Temple is in Warangal. The Kakatiya kings also built Hyderabad's (Telangana) Golconda Fort. The Qutb Shahi rulers, who ruled from CE 1518 to 1687, later made it their capital. The Western Chalukyas of Kalyana was initially feudatories of the monarchs of Kakatiya. Betaraja I established the Kakatiya dynasty, which was later expanded by other notable kings. When Alauddin Khilji conquered the Kakatiya region in 1303, the dynasty's hold weakened. The Kakatiya Dynasty's beginnings, ascent, and demise Any empire's rise is based on either another empire's demise or its frailty. The Kakatiya Dynasty is claimed to have started when conditions became dire following the passing of Chalukya monarch Ammaraja II. Because of this, Betaraja I was able to establish the Kakatiya Dynasty, which eventually prospered under Prataparudra I, the son of Prola II, the Kakatiya leader. The dynasty was proclaimed sovereign under his rule. Prataparudra I ruled the nation until 1195 while also assuming the title Kakatiya Rudradeva. During the 1230s, Ganapati Deva, who ruled the empire from 1198 to 1262, made great advancements. The Telugu-speaking lowland delta regions along the Godavari and Krishna rivers were brought*

under Kakatiya's authority by him. His successor was Rudrama Devi, a powerful leader who successfully rejected attempts by the Yadavas (Seuna) of Devagiri to invade Kakatiyan territory. This paper discussed the cultural, and socio-economic life of the Kakatiyas.

Keywords: *Cultural, Socio-economic lifestyle of Kakatiyas*

Introduction

The well-known Italian traveller Marco Polo also spoke highly of her rule and character. When Alauddin Khilji, the ruler of the Delhi Sultanate, conquered the Kakatiya region in 1303, the dynasty's hold on power weakened. Even though the Turks' invasion was a failure, they besieged Warangal in 1310 and made Prataparudra II pay a yearly tribute to Delhi. The Kakatiyan army put up a valiant fight against Ulugh Khan's second assault in 1323, but they were ultimately overcome.

The dynasty came to an end in uncertainty, and historians continue to disagree on the dates. Kakatiya Dynasty art and architecture the spectacular temples they built, including Ramappa Temple, Thousand Pillars Temple, Badhrakhali Temple, Swayambhu Temple, and Padmakshamma, are evidence of the Kakatiya Dynasty's love of art and architecture. Since Warangal served as the Kakatiya Dynasty's capital, most of the temples were constructed there and in the immediate vicinity. The Ramalingeswara Temple, popularly known as Ramappa Temple, is situated 77 kilometres from Warangal. Warangal is 4 km away from the Thousand Pillars Temple, also known as the Rudreshwara Swamy Temple, Badhrakhali is in Warangal, and Padmakshamma Temple is situated on a small hill in Hanamkonda, roughly 6.5 km away from Warangal.

The Kakatiyas with their conquering zeal and spirit of nationalism and patriotism united all the Telugu-speaking parts of the Deccan under their paramount power. It was for the first and the last time also (before the formation of Andhra Pradesh State) that the Telugu-speaking people were united under one government. Their spirit of nationalism and patriotism stood them in good stead in their offering gallant resistance to the Islamic invaders. This tradition and legacy of the Warangal kingdom were however continued by the Vijayanagara rulers. The Kakatiyas of Warangal occupied a place of paramount importance and interest in the history of South India in general and that of Deccan and Andhra in particular. They were the next to establish their sway over the entire Teluguspeaking area after the fall of the Satavahanas and before the rise of the Vijayanagara empire. They presided over the destinies of Telugu-speaking people from the tenth century A.D. to the first quarter of the fourteenth century A.D. The period can very well be styled in the medieval history of Andhra country as the "The Age of the Kakatiyas of Warangal."

The Kakartiya rulers paid much attention to land management and the development of agriculture. They had excavated many canals and constructed tanks. Many of the tanks and lakes at present supplying water to some thousands of acres in

the Telangana region were originally the works of the Kakatiyas. They attempted to increase the extent of the cultivable land by clearing forests and bringing large tracts of fresh land under the plough. The land was surveyed and measured. Cultivable land was classified into two types namely wet and dry. The government took sufficient care for the proper upkeep of the tanks and canals. Annual repairs of the bunds, removal of silt deposits on the bed and repairs of the canals and sluices are the main items of maintenance they undertook. Thus, the Kakatiya age witnessed the development of agriculture and prosperity.

With Orugallu (Warangal) as the capital, the Kakatiyas ruled over the Telugu country from about A.D. 1150 to 1323 A.D. They occupied a place of paramount importance and interest in the history of South India in general and that of Deccan and Andhra in particular. They were the next to establish their sway over the entire Telugu-speaking area after the fall of the Satavahanas and before the rise of the Vijayanagara empire. The period of Kakatiya can very well be styled in the medieval history of Andhra country as "The Age of the Kakatiyas of Warangal". The Kakatiyas devoted much of their energies to promoting agriculture and safeguarding the land. It is an admitted fact that the population, in general, was not so dense in ancient and medieval times as at present. The feature is more predominant in the Deccan. Most of the villages in those days were primarily the settlements of peasants who under the benefaction of the concerned chiefs brought as much land as possible under the plough. The topography of the region provided innumerable streams, small and big, which were harnessed to fill the tanks for irrigation purposes.

Therefore, the kings and their dependents had necessarily a tough task before them, in clearing the jungle for cultivation with the cooperation of the people. The founding of new villages in the region at suitable places with water resources became more necessary during the Kakatiya period. Several villages in Andhra Desa named Ganapavaram, after Ganapatideva, Rudravaram after Rudradeva and Muppavaram after Muppamamba have come into being by reclamation of the waste and forest lands by the respective kings and queens of the Kakatiya family. To construct a village in those days was a pious deed. Similar was the sanctity attached to the digging of a tank.

Religion

The early Kakatiya rulers were adherents of Jainism of the Digambara sect. They are credited with the construction of the Padmakshi temple at Hanumakonda. Though there are strong references to the worship of Buddhism, it had lost its impetus and Buddha has been identified with Vishnu and Buddhism was absorbed into Brahmanical religion. Saivism was the most predominant faith in Kakatiya Andhra; Beta II and Prola II of this lineage are known to be the adherents of the Kalamukha school of Saivism. During the reign of Ganapati Deva, the Pasupata sect of Saivism had become very popular and Visveswara Sivacharya became the Rajaguru of Ganapati Deva.

The Malakapuram inscription of Rudramadevi helps us to know about the growth of the Pasupata sect and Golaki Matha activities in Andhra Desa. During this period another sect of Saivism, Aradhya Saivism also emerged and Mallikarjuna Pandita was a well-known pioneer of this sect. In the past three decades, western scholars like Herman Kulke and Burton Stein have stressed that religious patronage by royalty was a critical element of state formation. Further scholars like Spencer, Bracken bridge, and Appadurai also opine that by religious patronage, kings enhanced their royal authority.

There is a view that Brahmanical rituals legitimized and conferred royal power on the kings of the Sudra community. Cynthia Talbot observes; "Contrary to what one might expect from the secondary literature, we have seen that the religious patronage of the Kakatiyas was quite limited. Altogether, the five independent Kakatiya rulers left behind only 26 inscriptions documenting their religious gifts spanning over 150 years (Rudradevas – six grants; Mahadeva – one Ganapatideva independently – 14 and with Rudramadevi – one; Rudramadevi independently – 4 and Prataparudra – 4). Rudradeva, the first independent ruler constructed the Thousand-pillared temple at Hanumankonda and laid the foundation for a new capital at Warangal along with a temple to the tutelary deity of Svayambhudeva.

Ganapati Deva also built a temple at Motupalli because by that time this area had become a second core area of the Kakatiyas. It may be suggested that the Kakatiyas regarded divine legitimation and the support of the institutionalized religion as important assets to royal authority, and not necessarily the foundation for their sustenance as effective rulers. The model of Dharmic kingship does not apply to the Kakatiya rule as the Kakatiyas understood that political interests differed from religious interests.

Culture

Andhra under the Kakatiyas witnessed considerable literary activity. Sanskrit occupied the place of pride and was the language of the educated few. Many epigraphs of this period are written in the Kavyastyle of Sanskrit. The noted poets who were the authors of the epigraphs of this age are Nandi, Acchitendra Antantasuri and Iswarasuri. The greatest Sanskrit poets of this age were Vidyanadha and Jayapasenani. Vidyanatha wrote Parataparudrayasobhushana. Jayapasenani was the author of Nrityaratnauli and Gitaratnavali.

Coming to Telugu literature, the most important are Tikkanna Somayaji who wrote Nirvachananottarammayatn, Mantri Bhaskara who wrote Bhaskara Ramayana, Gona Budda Reddi who wrote Ranganatha Ramayanam, Nanne Choda, the author of Kumara Sambhavama, Baddena the author of Sumati Satakam and Palkuriki Somanadha, the author of Basavapuramam, and Panditaradhyacharita. Of the above Ranganadha Ramayanam, occupies a unique place as a Dvipadakairy.

The Kakatiyas inherited the Chalukyan architecture but the distinctive feature of their architecture is the display of more indigenous art than that allowed by the texts.

The architects used locally available granite and sandstone in the main structure of the Vimana and used bricks and lime in constructing the superstructure. They used black granite for pillars, jambs, lintels, decorative motifs, and icons.

Their temple architecture reflects great sophistication and the 'Thousand-pillared temple' is a landmark in the evolution of the Kakatiyan architectural style. The great Rudresvara temple was built by Recharla Rudra, the commander in chief of Ganapati Deva; in the words of Y. Gopala Reddi, it marks the climax of the Kakatiyan style. The Gomateswara temple at Manthani, the Erakesvara and the Namesvara temples at Pillalamarri and the temple at Naguladu are the masterpieces of the Kakatiyan style of architecture.

About the Kakatiya sculptures, we have very little evidence to study them. Their main decoration was Kirtimukha or Krititorana. Nandis are a special feature of the Kakatiya sculpture. The Nandi images at Palampet, Thousand-pillared temple, Sambhuni Gudi, Ghanapur, and Kolanupalli are some of the best examples of profuse bell ornamentation. The sculptural presence of Hamsa or swan motifs, on the gateways and friezes, is to be noticed for their grace and beauty. Of the decorative sculptures, the motifs of dancers and Kolata are worth recording.

It is also suggested by scholars that, they represent the dance styles of Jayapasenani. The Narasimha temple at Parivela near Nalgonda consists of profusely carved lintels and jambs. The temples at Nandigonda contain richly furnished Mandapa pillars and ceilings.

The Kakatias also extended patronage to the art of painting. The traces of painting that are found on ceilings of the pillared halls of the temples at Ghanapur and Palampet bear testimony to the painting skill of that period. The defaced painting of the 'Churning of the Milk Ocean' found on the ceiling of the Sabha Mandapa of the Namevara temple at Pillalamarri is also a good example of their painting skill.

The Kakatiya rule in Andhra was a period of transition and ushered in the beginning of an era in the 13th century. The Kakatias by their support of art and their integrative polity improved agriculture, commerce and trade in the interior and construction of temples in Telangana, Rayalaseema and coastal Andhra.

Economy

The epigraphic evidence of Kakatias shows the development of the Telangana region economically by the steps taken by the rulers of the dynasty. The vision of the rulers in the promotion of agriculture and trade and commerce with special emphasis on trade with far-flung areas made the region economically prosperous in all spheres of the economy. It is rightly remarked by a prolific writer that the region became financially sound due to undertaking the activities like conversion of barren and uncultivable lands into agricultural lands; the development of irrigational sources

enhanced the crop productivity which in turn enhanced the overall rise in trade and commerce in which the temple as an institution was ultimately intertwined. The rulers made several efforts to make agriculturists to be self-sustaining in all aspects, despite adverse climate and rainfall in the region. Besides, they encouraged innovative techniques to improve agricultural production and productivity.

Society

The Kakatiyas of Warangal were the most powerful rulers of Andhra Desa i.e., the eastern Deccan who reigned from the 11th and 14th centuries. Warangal, variously known as Orugallu - Vorungallu, Varungallu, Ekotpala, Ekasilanagara- Akshalinagara-, Omtikonda, Andhranagari, and Urangai-General Cunningham called it Varankoi and identified it with Vorunkula of Ptolemy. The rule of the Kakatiyas commenced a new era in the history of the Telugu people in many respects, especially in evolving a unique identity for their language as culture, religion and arts developed the Kakatiya dynasty. The Kakatiya period, as it witnessed politico-administrative unity and the emergence of a distinct socio-cultural-religious formation. The Kakatiya polity was based on the 'Nayankara System' consisting of the non-Brahmin Sudra elites, presently known as Velamas and Reddies. Under Kakatiyas, they served as soldiers, and military chiefs and enjoyed local domination. The process of regional social formation in Telangana differed from the Indo-Gangetic Varna/Jati model. Unlike the Dwijas, it was the dominant social group of Chaturdakuljas, who played a significant role in the state-society interface. About the Kakatiya's social status, when the corpus of inscriptions in which Kakatiya genealogy is traced, is not particular about Varna connection but eventually when Varna affiliation is attributed to them, in the majority of instances it is that Kakatiyas are told to have been born in the fourth class. The origins of Varna society are attributed to the four-faced Brahma, having sprung from the centre of Vishnu's navel-lotus, creating the celestial beings. Then from his mouth, arms, thighs, and lotusfeet, he produced the Brahman, the king, the Vaisya, and the Sudra, respectively.

Social Institutions

The Family is the base unit of any society. The foreign travellers observed that in South India family ties were stronger among family members, relatives and friends. All these were considered as one family. During the Kakatiya period, extended families were frequently noticed through epigraphical and literary sources. For example, an inscription at Papayapalem and Inugurti, the donor is mentioned with all his blood relations. Almost all the inscriptions of the period testify to the emotional attachments, which existed among the members of a family. The society of the period was patriarchal. The idea was a father should be respected as the head of the family. He managed the family and all members of the family obeyed him in every respect. For example, an inscription dated AD. 1219 states that Ganapambika gave the village Mogulutal to a Brahmin with the permission of her father Ganapatideva. The Kridabhiramam refers

to the fact that the father was head of the family and he took all responsibilities for his family. The society of the Kakatiya period as known from epigraphical and literary sources indicates that they were familiar with the joint family system. An inscription at Duppalli in Ramannapettaluq of Nalgonda District, states that the donors shared the village in the ratio of 1:3 after the death of their father. The sons and brothers of a person shared the property in the society of the Kakatiya period, and several polygamous families were noticed. For example, an inscription of AD. 1280 states that the Karanam Rammayya had two wives, Mallasani and Ganga Sani.²⁴ The Pratapa Caritra, a late legendary account of the Kakatiya king Prataparudra refers twice to his chief queen Visalakshi. Another queen of this king, by name Lakshmidivi, is mentioned in an inscription found in the village, Yelagandu in Karimnagar District.

The Institution of Marriage The essential thing about marriage is that it is a stable relationship in which a man and a woman are socially permitted, without loss of standing in the community, to have children. The earlier Smritis as well as the contemporary texts mention the traditional eight forms of marriages namely, Brahma, Daiva, Arsal Prajapatya, Gandharva, Asura, Raksasa and Paisaca. Inter varna/castemarriages occurred only in the royal and noble families. For example, the Kakatiya princess, Ruyyama was married to Induluri Annaya Mantri who belonged to the Brahmin caste. The Kshatriya prince, Virabhadra married Kakatiya princess Rudrama. These were Anuloma marriages. However, among the common people, these inter-caste marriages were not allowed even by Samaya Sabhas or communal organizations, except in case of the settlement of a rape.

The Vaisays were very rigid on this social issue that they were ready to sacrifice life rather than accept an inter-caste marriage. The Smriti writers imposed certain other restrictions on marital relations. For instance, one could not marry a girl of the same Gotra, and these restrictions continued even to this day. The lawmakers have disapproved marriages amongst Sapindas or Sagotras unanimously. Alberuni also observed that Sapinda and Sagotra marriages were prohibited amongst the Hindus.

Women Status

The early and medieval Telangana society was a male-dominated one, women appear to have enjoyed a position of respect and reverence. Many inscriptions of this period make it clear that women had considerable freedom to make liberal gifts to religious institutions like temples for the merit of not only their husbands but also of their parents. However, many were adept in fine arts quite a few inscriptions make it clear that some of the women particularly of royal families were great diplomats and even brave warriors. Many inscriptions from various temples attest to the important part played by women in different capacities. The women of the Kakatiya period actively shared their responsibility in social activities along with their husbands. Rare examples are found in the history of Medieval Telangana where the female lineage was selected for the throne. Firstly, it was in the case of Rudramadevi, the daughter of

Ganapatideva, who had been chosen as Pattodhrti in AD. 1259 and enthroned in A.D. 1262 by Ganapatideva, though he had two sons, namely Hariharadeva and Murarideva by another wife. Ganapatideva was known for his liberal policies in administrative, socio-religious, and legal matters and was wise enough to choose Rudrama, who was the first among his children and could administer the entire kingdom. He trained her in warfare, polity and diplomacy and declared her as his heir to the throne. Secondly, when Rudrama was blessed only with three daughters, she had chosen the son of her first daughter, Pratapa Rudra, as her heir, on the advice of Ganapatideva and during his lifetime. Though valiant, her abilities were underestimated as she was a woman and she had to fight against external enemies and struggle to suppress the internal revolts. She could successfully beat back the enemies and protect the kingdom, which was given to her by Ganapatideva, till her death at the age of 86. The forgoing instances discard the prescriptions of Dharmasastras about the father lineage inheritance. Besides, some prominent women administrators as feudatories and ministers surfaced. Nayakuruvalu Nagamma, according to Palnati Viracaritra, was a minister under Nalagamaraju and led to the battle of Palnad. Some female persons are found to be able administrators in the Kakatiya dynasty. Ganapamba, the younger sister of Rudrama and wife of Kota Betaraja, Changi chieftain Muppaladevi, Nagasani of Viriyala lineage, Kota chieftain Bayyaladevi, had exercised political power by assuming the official royal titles and family Prasastis. Besides these, we have many references to the construction of tanks and temples by the wives of chiefs belonging to the Kakatiya period. Mailama, the sister of Ganapatideva constructed the Bayyaram tank in the name of her mother Bayyaladevi. His sister Kundamamba constructed a village called Kundasamudram in the Adilabad district.

Throughout Rudrama's twenty-seven years of her reign, she took an active part in the Government of the kingdom. She ruled the kingdom as Rudradeva Maharaja engaging herself in incessant wars to protect and expansion of the kingdom till her last breath. Her successful rule from Warangal indicates the society of medieval Telangana in which women were accepted as equal partners in social life each having the opportunity to rise to any level depending on Chalukya Virabhadra, son of Indusekhara and Udaya Mahadevi of Nidadavolu and got three daughters namely Mammadamma, Rudrama and Ruyyama. Pratapa Rudra succeeded the throne after Rudramamba who was the son of her daughter, Mammadamma. These included from dominant castes of Andhra and Telangana, consisting of Reddys, Kammas, and Velamas all trace their origins to 'Kakatiya Nayakas' who later became much more prominent in the region during the late 13th and early 14th century. As a clear social organization was not visible as established, it is evident there was social mobility and multiple social identities and fluidity in social status in that period.

Conclusion

To encourage more people to undertake the digging of tanks, wells and canals, tank construction was made. Besides the provision of irrigation facilities to improve

agriculture, attempts were made to increase the extent of cultivable land by cutting down forests, particularly in the Rayalasima area during the reign of Prataparudra II. New settlements were encouraged in the forest clearings. The tax on agriculture and the charges levied on industry and trade was collected by regular officials. The land was, for purposes of assessment, divided into dry, wet and garden varieties. The tax was payable either in kind or in cash. Little is known about the incidence of taxation. Salt was a monopoly of the state. Apart from agriculture, industry and commerce were also promoted. Marco Polo, Amir Khusrau and Wassaf paid glowing tributes to the prosperous condition of Andhradesa during this period. The rule of Kakatiyas in Telangana is an era of transition accompanied by the starting of an epoch in the 13th century. The Kakatiyas by their support of art and their integrative polity improved agriculture, commerce and trade in the interior and construction of temples in Telangana, Rayalaseema and coastal Andhra.

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