



## A Study of Bhakti Literature During The Kakatiya Period

**Prof. T. Nagamma**

Dept. of History, Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati-517502,  
Andhra Pradesh, India-517502

**Mr. V. Krishna  
Mohan**

Research Scholar, Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati-517502  
Andhra Pradesh, India-517502

### ABSTRACT

*The changes and developments in brahmanical religion especially Saivism which took place in twelfth and thirteenth centuries in South India in general and Tamil and Telugu countries in Particular caused for the growth of literature by the poets and scholars of that period. Generally, Sanskrit occupied first place in contribution of literature during this period. The Telugu country contributed under the rulers of Kakatiyas during this period for the development of literature in different sphere of religions. Though they were ardent Saivas but had religious tolerances and encourage and extend their patronage to the poets, scholars, writers and authors in various fields to produce works. So, in the present paper, "A study of Bhakti literature during the Kakatiya period" is presented.*

**KEYWORDS :** Development of literature – Devotionalism- Religions

### About the Telugu Country

The historic period in Telugu country starts with the rule of the Mauryas. The rock edict of the emperor Asoka at Yerragudi, smiles from Guthi (Anantapur District) and Rajulamadagiri at Kurnool district evidenced the inclusion of that part of Telugu region in the Mauryan empire. After the decline of the Mauryan empire, the Satavanas (220 B.C – 225 A.D) the feudatories of the Mauryas in the Decca asserted independence and ruled the Deccan which included the Telugu region. Then the Saathavahana were succeeded by the Ikshvakus (r.225–300) then the Brihatpalayas, the Anandaagotras (r.300–325), the Salankayanas (r.300– 450) the Vishnukunalis (r.420–624).

### The Pallavas(r.575–893), the Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi (r.624–1076). The Chalukya – Chala (r.1070–1118).

The later Chalukyas of Kalyani (r.973-1190) and the Kakatiyas of Warangal (r.1000– 1023) the feudatories of the later Chalukyas asserted independence after the downfall of their master, were different dynasties that ruled Telugu Country. The Kakatiyas played a Major role in the political history of the Andhra Pradesh or Telugu country. The Kakatiyas, not only gave political verity to Telugu region but also furnished peace and order, stability and prosperity to the people and became the patrons of arts and literature. They became ardent followers of Saivism and had religious tolerance. So, their period marked new epoch to new faiths like Ardhya system of Saivism, Vira saivism in particular and Saivism in general and encouraged the scholars, authors, writers and poets. The donated davisly to them and end became the patrons of letters. Especially the beginning of the century noted the period of literature beginning of the century rated the period of literature referred to religion. A number of poets, scholars writer, authors raised in this time and produced works with the encouragement to the Kakatiya rulers. Most of the literature contributed for the propagation of religion. Hence, the purpose of the present paper is to focus on the Bakta literature that produced in the Kakatiya period is discussed.

### A brief history of the Kakatiya Kings:

The Kakatiyas served as feudatories under the chalukyas of Kalyani [973-1190 AD] and asserted their independence after the decline of their masters. They carved out a Kingdom between the Krishna and Godavari rivers and started to expand their kingdom to conquered the Yadavas of Devagiri, Cholas of Velanadu and Pandyas of madhura. They were the followers of Saivism and became ardent devotees God Siva and had religious tolerance. They under took temple building activity and built many temples for God Siva and made donations and liberal grants for them. They were nearly ten rulers of this dynasty to rule the kingdom and mode Hanumakonda as their capital city and later founded Orugallu (Warangal District) and made it their capital. They also endowed grants to existing temples, Brahmanas and Saiva Mathas to make religious progress. The rulers were Beta-I or betaraja (r.1000–1052). The first ruler of the dynasty and was a feudatory of

the later Chalukyas of Kalyani. He succeeded his son pralaraja or Prala – II (r.1052–1076) whose son was Betaraja II (r.1076–1108) also had a son known as pralaraja II or Prala II (r.1116–1157), the founder of the Warangal city. He, then succeeded by his son Rudradeva or Prataparudra-I r.(1158–1195) and he got a son by worshipping of the god Mallikarjuna at Sri Sailam and named his Gangapatideva. Rudradeva was succeeded by his brother Mahadeva (r.1196–1199) who ruled a short period. Lateron, Rudradeva's son Ganapati deva (r.1199–1262) succeeded the king of the Kakatiya dynasty and during his period, the Kingdom was strengthened and consolidated. His reign marked a memorable period in the religious history of Telugu region in general and Saivism in particular in the period of the Kakatiyas. Then, Ganapati deva was succeeded by his daughter Rudramadevi (r.1262–1289) who referred as Rudramba or Rudramma. She was a worshipper of the goddess Padmakshi and also the god Siddheswara at Warangal. She was succeeded by her grandson [daughter's son] Prataparudra deva II (r.1289–1323) because she had no legal heir. Thus these were strong kindom and established a well – organised administration in their period. Though they were busily engaged in wars with their contemporary dynasties to extent their Kingdom, they provided peace and order stability and security to the people. They were not only great builders but also great patrons of poets and scholars and encouraged arts and letters in their period. With their large number of literary works were produced by the poets in different spheres of the period. Besides this, the rulers also extend their Patronage to Pontiffs, Preceptors, teachers and saints of different sects of Saivism for their spiritual knowledge. Likewise, the fendatories of the Kakatiyas such as the chagis, Viriyala, Natavadi, Recerla, Malyala, Kota and Kayasta were also followed their Masters in their religions faith and became patrons of the poets and schalars. Though Saivism was a predominant faith and the sects of Saivism such as the Kalamukha, Kapalika, Pasupata, Aradhya system of Saivism and Virasaivism were flourished in this period and gained popularity and securing the favour of the common people as well as the kings. They poets and the scholars of these sects of Saivism wrote many works for the spread of these religious sects. Thus the period witnessed a number of devotional works or Bhakti literature which sheds light on the religion at this period.

### Religion in general in this period:

The period witnessed the Jainism and Buddhism in the early centuries [10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> cs] started to decline. These two religions were patronized by the rulers of Kakatiya dynasty and this is evidenced by their inscriptions. They made liberal grants and gifts to Jaina basudis and under took renovation works of the basadis. The Sanigaram inscription of Beta raja I (r.1000-1052) founded at Karimnagar District, the Banajipet Inscription of Medarasa I Warangal District, the Daksharama epigraph of Durgaraja, son of Pralaraja (r.1116-1157) and the Hanumakonda inscription of Gangadhara, the minister of Prataparudra II (r.1289-1323) records that the existence of the Jainism in this period. Likewise, only a few fendatory chiefs of the Kakatiyas became

the followers of Buddhism because they believed that Lord Vishnu was incarnated in the form of the Buddha to deceive the asuras (demons). The kota chiefs and the ministers made some donations to the monasteries (aramas) at Daksharama (East Godavari District), Ksherarama (Palakollu, West Godavari District) this is evidenced from the epigraphs founded at Aburu and Karimnagar besides this, the work Yasastilaka by Somadeva Adipurana related to first Tirtankara Vikramajurna vijaya known as Pampa Bharata by Pampa, the court poets of Chalukyas of Vemulavada (Karimnagar District), Prataparudriya by Vidyanaatha, the court poet of PratapaRudra Deva II (r.1289-1323) and also the work of Appararya named Jinendra – Kalyanabhyandaya was also composed in the poet of Pratapa Rudra Deva II, Thus these epigraphs and literary works proved that Jainism was also flourished in this period. A part from these faiths, the main religious such as Saivism and Vaishnavism and its different sects or schools were well prevalent in this period, The Saiva sects such as Karnataka, Kapalika, Pasupata, Aradhya – Saivism and Virasaivism prevailed in this period. Among these sects Kalamukha and Pasupata gained prominence in this period. The early kings Prata-I, Beta II and Prola II patronized the Kalamukha sect of Saivism. This is recorded from the epigraphs of Hanumakonda. Abhuru and Sanigaram Likewise, the later Kakatiya kings Ganapatideva, his daughter Rudramadevi, Prataparudra II Patronized Pasupata school of Saivism. The Malkapuram inscription of Rudramadevi mentions the details of the pasupata sect and its teachers and pontiffs who received the patronage of the Kakatiya kings. In addition to this, another sect of Saivism known as Ardhya – Saivism flourished and did not gained royal patronage. The other Saiva sect, Virasaivism was well flourished in this period, which was founded by Basava or Basavesvara in Karnataka and in roads in Andhra by Palkuriki Somanatha who advocated the teachings of Basava in Andhra region Though, the Kakatiyas were not, patrons of Vaishnavism, they fare the symbol of 'boar' on their scals and coins and also the installation of Hari in the Trikuta temples (Thousand Pillared temple at Hanumakonda) The Velama chiefs of the Kakatiyas Patronized Vaishnavism at the time of Prataparudra II. This is proved by the inscription of Kandikonda. Besides this, the Kalanupalli inscription (Mahaboobnagar District) and the Yelgedu epigraph (Karimnagar District) witnessed that theKakatiya kings made liberal grants and gifts to the Vishnu temples in their period. Thus the sectarian harmony in religion was existed in this period.

### Bhakti Literature

Saiva literature in Sanskrit: Among the languages, sanskrit occupied first place because of the patronisation of the kings. Many literary works were composed which some were secular in nature besides a few non-secular works in this period. The only work related to Saivism was produced by Gangadhara bhatta, a court poet of Prataparudra II, who was an officer known as brahmanandhi Karin (The officer to look after the brahmanas). He wrote a commentary on the Advaita work 'kandana – Khanda – Khadya of Sriharsha.

### In Telugu:

Besides Sanskrit works, many poets wrote in Telugu language and contributed for the spread of Bhakti or devotionism in this period. Marana, a disciple of Tikkana Somayaji wrote 'Markandeya Puranam' which deals with the story of the sage Markandeya, the son of the sage Mrukandu and Marudvati. Another poet Nannechoda composed "Kumara Sambhavam' who lived in the early Kakatiya period. The work Narrates the birth of Ganesha, Daksha's sacrificed and his daughter Sati and her self innovation of Sati, her rebirth as Parvati and her marriage with Siva, birth of Kuymara and the destruction of Tarakasura are the main episodes in the Kavya. In addition to this, the famous poet Palkuriki Somanatha, a contemporary of the king Prataparudra II, dominated the field of Saiva literature in Telugu in this period. He was a native of Polakurti in Jangaon Taluk of Warangal district and wrote two works known as Panditaradyacharitra and Basavapuramu. The work Panditaradyacharitra deals with the biography of Mallikarjuna Panditaradhya, a preacher of Aradhya Savism in Andhra and the latter work heralds the life-history of Basava, the profounder of Virasaivism, He also wrote Basavodaharana besides the two works. Another poet named Ravipati Tripurataka composed Triupurantakadaharana. Thus these produced in Telugu to spread

Saivism in this period.

### Vaishnava Literature in Sanskrit:

Like wise, the Saiva literary works in Telugu and Sanskrit some of the poets also produced works deals with Vaishnava gods to propagate Vaishnavism. The poet named Agastya lived in the period of Prataparudra II credited with seventy four literary works, but only three were remained such as Balabharata, Nalakirti Kanmudi and Krishna Charitra a prase work. Another scholar – poet named Sakalya Malla wrote two works namely Udatta Raghava – Kavya and Niroshthya – Ramayana.

### In Telugu :

Besides the Vaishnava literature in sanskrit, the poet Tikkana Somayaji (1220-1300) was a Niyogi Brahmana, Flourished as the court poet of Manumasiddhi II, The Telugu choda Chief of Nellore who was a feudatory to Kakatiya Ganapatideva, wrote Niravacharottara – Ramayana a Part of the Uttarakanda of Valmiki Ramayana. Another poet Bhaskara composed Ramayana known as Bhaskara Ramayana. He was a minister to Prataparudra-II. Another work of this period is known as Ranganatha Ramayana, a dvipada work by Buddharaja, a chief belonged to Gona family in the reign of Prataparudra-II. In addition, Yerrapragada, a snigoyi brahmana of Gudlur village of Vellore district was a great devotee of god Siva and also bore a title Sambhu-dasa and was a contemporary to this period, translated Harivamsa, the last part of the Mahabharata of Vyasa. It deals the events that took place after the war of Kurukshetra in the Mahabharata. His other works are Ramayana and Lakshmi Narasimhapurana also known as Adila Mahatyam. Though, he was a Savite, he composed Vaishnava works which shows the tolerance of other faith. He also aimed to propagate that both Siva and Vishnu are one and spread the Hariharatava or oneness of Siva and Vishnu to void the religious fervour among the Saivites and the Vaishnavites in this period.

To sum up, the period of Kakatiyas was the golden age of literature especially the poets and scholars. It also marked the epoch of Saivism particularly the school of Virasaivism and its spread in the society. Though the Kakatiya kings were staunch devotees of Saivism, they had religious tolerance and became the patrons of letters. In respect of caste and creed they extend their patronage to poets, scholars and writers of different faiths who were responsible for the production of various literary works, especially the devotional (bhakti) literature in this period to contribute the spread of devotionism.

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