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Viresalingam and the Ideology of Social Change in Andhra

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We argue here that religious polemic sanctioning social change became part of regional ideology in coastal Andhra during the early twentieth century. The Telugu language and communication through the vernacular were powerful shapers of that message. In Andhra, Indian nationalism had an anti-priest, anti-orthodox, anti-ritual, and anti-authoritarian stance which was unusual. Nationalist ideology was modelled on Bengal's Brahmo Samaj in its commitment to religious and social reform and its neutrality to Christianity. One powerful personality, Viresalingam (1848–1919), shaped much of the thought and social reform activity of coastal Andhra as well as that region's cultural identity. Speakers of Telugu and Tamil, almost equal in number, were combined under British rule in the Madras Presidency, and both cultures flourished in the capital city of Madras. However, because of Viresalingam's work, the area's two vernacular cultures proved quite distinct.

The emphasis on regional cultural traditions, characteristic of nationalism in coastal Andhra, ultimately proved to be more significant on an all-India level than the stress on Sanskritic cultural traditions, which was part of social reform and then nationalism in Madras. The demands for recognition of Andhra's identity irritated the leaders of the Indian National Congress from 1913 to 1920 and the leaders of the Indian Union from 1946 to 1952, confronting the national leadership with what it considered to be a threat to the national integrity of India. The leaders eventually gave way in both cases and accepted the Andhra

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demands: in 1920, for the local Congress organizations based on linguistic boundaries and, in 1952, for the creation of an Andhra state. These concessions signified the recognition of a political pluralism which has since become accepted and extended throughout India.

The Coastal Andhra Region

The cultural center of coastal Andhra was the city of Rajahmundry located in the Northern Circars¹ that stretches along the Bay of Bengal to the northeast of Madras. This area formed by the deltas of the Krishna and Godavari rivers was the traditional center of Telugu culture. Rajahmundry was a religious center, the most auspicious one on the Godavari River. Traditionally, every Hindu pilgrim from coastal Andhra to Banares had to stop on his return trip at Rajahmundry. The Brahmans in the town were noted for their "great sense of devotion to sacrifices and rituals,"² and an important element of regional Hinduism in the Circars was the Sankaracharya, or religious authority, one of several spiritual heirs of Sankara, founder of the Smarta Brahman sect. The Sankaracharyas were influential public figures respected by most Hindus, although their legal jurisdiction was limited to Smartas. Coastal Andhra Smartas owed allegiance to the Sankaracharya whose *math* (center of learning and preaching) was at Virupaksha. He occasionally came on tour to Rajahmundry, which was famed for its learned as well as its religious Brahmans. Since the eleventh century, Rajahmundry had been the center of the Telugu literary world.³

In 1769, the British assumed direct administration of the Northern Circars. They made Rajahmundry the headquarters of Godavari District; although the Collector shifted to Kakinada in 1859, other government institutions were not transferred.⁴ In 1875, Rajahmundry had a District and Session Judge's Court, a Sub-Collector's office and a Tahsildar's office, a Provincial School and a Telegraph Office, the Superintendent of Police's office and two (central and district) jails.⁵ Government service became a major source of employment. Several *zamindars* abandoned their family estates to live in the town. Missionaries and local Hindu merchants began schools. Rajahmundry retained its reputation as a sacred center, and Brahmans continued to perform rituals and sacrifices, but the character of the town was irrevocably altered, not only by the addition of new institutions but by social and cultural changes which flowed from Madras, capital of the Presidency. Madras was a city of 406,000 in 1881, while Rajahmundry's population was 25,000.⁶

In Madras Presidency, as elsewhere in India, the educational system constructed by the British had a certain complementarity with the

indigenous system of education, especially at the lower levels. The government's first actions were concentrated at the collegiate level, and after their unquestioned success, provincial and then lower schools were added. Education up to the second form, or through the fourth class, was in the regional languages, and neighborhood schools performed this function. Christian missionaries established alternative schools, and these were more widespread, if less coordinated. In many towns, the missionary system was the only one, and Hindu parents sent their children despite fears of conversion, because of the incentives to acquire education. To provide what the government would not, and to avoid Christian religious instruction, Indians began to establish private schools in the various district towns. Most of these schools began as acts of charity by individuals, but then upper caste, Western-educated urban Hindus formed committees and established Hindu secondary schools.

The chief beneficiaries of English education throughout Madras Presidency were Brahmans, traditionally the literate group. By 1891, for every non-Brahman who knew English there were eight Brahmans who did, although Brahmans composed only 3 percent of the population.⁷ The first institutions of higher education were in Madras, so Tamil Brahmans dominated the Civil Service. Telugu Brahmans played a subsidiary role in the public life of most of the Madras Presidency,⁸ and until 1877 their closest college was in Madras. College classes for the first two years of the college curriculum began in Rajahmundry's Provincial School only in 1873, and in 1877 the Provincial School became the Rajahmundry Government High School and College. This was the only school in the Telugu-speaking area to offer a baccalaureate program, beginning some three decades after Madras. The Rajahmundry College did not entirely replace the Madras colleges for the northern districts, but by 1880-81 over thirteen times as many Godavari District students obtained a collegiate education in Rajahmundry as were enrolled in Madras colleges.⁹

Christianity was represented in Rajahmundry by the time Viresalingam was growing up, although less so than in other areas of South India. Government schools and private schools set up by Indians, many of them government approved and subsidized, dominated Western education in Rajahmundry. In 1881, mission education accounted for only 7 percent of the boys and 12 percent of the girls in Rajahmundry schools.¹⁰ The only missionaries in Rajahmundry were the American Lutherans, most of whose activities were conducted outside the town. Lutheran missionaries had started several schools in Rajahmundry, including a girls' school, which catered chiefly to Christian converts from the Mala, or untouchable, caste. The mission suffered from manpower and financial limitations and concentrated on evangelism, not

education.¹¹ Some of the missionaries who served in Rajahmundry were allies of Viresalingam and some were rivals, but they played relatively minor roles in social reform and politics. They did not set the context or shape the ideology of social and political reform in important ways in coastal Andhra.

The introduction of the printing press and the consequent modification of the South Indian scripts in the early nineteenth century radically altered the conditions of creation, transmission, and distribution of literature. This technological innovation was for a long time limited to Madras, which in 1875 had forty-eight presses and produced 616 books in English and the South Indian regional languages. Coastal Andhra in 1875 had only about eight presses and produced 31 books, and most of the presses in coastal Andhra were owned and operated by the British administration, European merchants, or missionaries. Godavari District had three presses but published only 2 books or pamphlets in 1875.¹² This imbalance was evident also in books printed in the regional languages: in 1876 Tamil books outnumbered Telugu books 2.5 to 1.¹³

Viresalingam and His Work

The social reform movement and the rise of regional consciousness in coastal Andhra began with the activities of Kandukuri Viresalingam, and his character was indelibly stamped upon it. The reforms which he initiated were continued by his followers, and his ideas were adopted by the next generation. His central place in the formation of Andhra's modern identity was recognized by those who followed:¹⁴

Mr. Viresalingam conveyed to his generation in a multitude of forms the consciousness of the power of these changing causes [from] contact with Western culture and Christianity. We are led to conclude that, if he was not the original centre and first cause of them all, he had, however, laid the foundation for many of them in a sound and secure manner. He was, as it were, the initial principle of change throughout the whole course of the Telugu advance in recent times.

Viresalingam, the central figure in Andhra social reform and nationalism, was a Telugu Niyogi, or secular, Brahman whose family had migrated from Kandukur in the Nellore District to the Godavari delta area. Born in 1848, he grew up in one of only two double-storied houses in the old section of Rajahmundry. This large house indicated the high status of Viresalingam's grandfather. *Diwān* to a local *zamindār*, his position had enabled him to support many relatives, donate land to learned scholars, and celebrate marriages with great pomp. Viresalingam's grandfather had spent rather than saved his

money, however, and since Viresalingam's father and uncle had not obtained the same high position,¹⁵ the house symbolized to the young Viresalingam the contrast between past and present achievements.

This sense of current decline was further enhanced by domestic troubles.¹⁶ His father had died when Viresalingam was four, and his uncle was the sole support of the joint family. Viresalingam's mother and his uncle's wife quarreled constantly, making a strong impression on Viresalingam that was reflected in his writing on the beneficial effects of education on women.¹⁷ Viresalingam was married at thirteen to a ten-year-old girl from a nearby village; he later educated her and drew her into his social reform activities. Continued quarrelling in the home led the uncle to partition the joint family, leaving a fifteen-year-old Viresalingam with his bride and widowed mother in the spacious Rajahmundry house.

Viresalingam's memories of his early religious training were not very strong. Aside from his initiation as a Brahman at age six, he recalled only the ardor of his religious devotion¹⁸ that persisted throughout his life, despite changes in his specific beliefs. His early education was typical of boys heading for government employment. He learned the rudiments of Telugu and even memorized some Sanskrit verses in *pyal*, or neighborhood schools. He learned to read and write classical Telugu and at age ten was apprenticed to a relative who worked as a clerk in a government office.¹⁹ Before he went to the office he was tutored in Sanskrit, and at night his uncle instructed in him in English and arithmetic. Viresalingam persuaded his mother to let him resume studying full time, and at eleven or twelve he entered the government school at Rajahmundry. His proficiency in Telugu won prizes that paid the school tuition.²⁰ Marked by his classmates as a scholar, he composed poems of exceptional virtuosity in 1868–69, one of which became a text for the Bachelor of Arts examination in Telugu. He also tutored the English principal of his school in Telugu and contributed articles to the Telugu journal that the principal established.²¹ Viresalingam completed his schooling in 1870.²²

Education in a Western-style school changed Viresalingam's ideas, those on religion first of all. Keshav Chandra Sen, the Bengali religious reformer and Brahma Samaj leader, visited Madras in 1864. Three years later Viresalingam's curiosity led him to read Sen's speeches. That same year, a new secondary school teacher, Atmuri Lakshminarasimham, encouraged students to meet and discuss Brahma Samaj doctrines opposing caste and idolatry and advocating education, particularly for women. The group of five or six met either at the teacher's home or at Viresalingam's,²³ and Viresalingam's earliest writings show the influence of Brahma Samaj tenets.²⁴

After his schooling, Viresalingam took teaching jobs, qualified for various government posts,²⁵ and, finally, chose a publishing career. Viresalingam began a monthly journal, *Vivēka Vardhani*, in 1874.²⁶ Depending upon the press for a living was precarious, but the government adopted several of his Telugu books as school texts, which earned him substantial sums. The independent life of a publisher and author attracted him.²⁷ But pressure from his family, friends, and relatives to take a regular job coincided with an offer from the Rajahmundry Provincial School, which he joined in 1876 as an assistant teacher of Telugu. He remained there for the next twenty-one years.²⁸ Viresalingam's autobiography gave his motives for returning to teaching: he wanted a job which would be independent and not compromise his strict moral values. Thus he ceased looking for government or legal positions, both of which required actions that he considered repugnant and demeaning.²⁹

Viresalingam's search for an independent profession rested upon his stubbornness and his inability to compromise in personal relations, which offended many and drove away all but the most devoted of his friends. He recalled an incident as he walked with a group of friends:

While I was the only one who favored the river path, the others preferred the market road. They all set off down that road, looking back to see if I would follow them. Then I started along the river bank and reached home. The same thing happened the next day. We disagreed about which way to go, and so I began to take the river path. Then they followed me, saying that whatever I think I follow it adamantly without caring for what others say.³⁰

Viresalingam's aggressive, independent ways had certain advantages, evident in his initial reform efforts in Rajahmundry, but those same ways repeatedly deprived him of close allies and drove him from Rajahmundry to Madras and then back again at the end of his life.³¹ Yet the impact of his activities and his ideas spread beyond Rajahmundry and decisively shaped the development of Telugu culture.

Viresalingam's initial impact on regional and Hindu self-consciousness among Telugu intellectuals came through journalism. His venture with *Vivēka Vardhani* in 1874 was a continuation of the tradition of mixing literature, items of public interest, essays on religion, and social comment, but he also reported on the news. *Vivēka Vardhani*'s English section had a variety of editors and reported news prominently, while much of the commentary was in the Telugu section that Viresalingam edited. He consistently criticized the government and he made his journal the leading advocate of social reform in coastal Andhra. He did so partly by attacking the policies of the leading Telugu scholar at Presi-

dency College, Madras, Kokkonda Venkataratnam, and indulging in polemics with him on nearly every conceivable topic. These were polemics by scholars and for scholars, written in classical Telugu.³²

Viresalingam's early literary works conformed to scholarly traditions and were lauded for their virtuosity. He wrote poetry, and he specialized in *achcha* Telugu, or non-Sanskritic Telugu. This was a technical feat, since it restricted the writer's choice of vocabulary and made adhering to the rules for composition more difficult. In 1875, he received a silver trophy at a meeting of Telugu scholars in Madras for his literary achievements. Thus he came to know the elite among Telugu scholars, those who published books, held important positions, and presented their views to the government.³³ At twenty-seven Viresalingam was honored by this group for excelling at the traditional tasks of Telugu scholars: making translations and writing grammars. Through his journal, however, he would realize his true literary potential and be feted for quite different achievements: innovative literary forms and, through them, the expression of new social and religious reform ideas.

Religious reform via the Brahma Samaj had made an impression on the young Viresalingam. The Brahma movement was making an impact in Madras and coastal Andhra, although the nature of that impact differed substantially in the two places. The non-Brahman character of the Brahma Samaj in Madras was established early. Although a Telugu Brahman revived and led the group from 1878, its reputation as a center of anti-Brahman feeling grew.³⁴ The South India Brahma Samaj leadership and membership had little in common with the majority of the educated elite in Madras, the Tamil Brahmans, and the movement all but disappeared from Tamil Nadu's intellectual history.³⁵

In the Telugu-speaking region, however, Brahma Samaj ideas became part of Telugu literary and political culture. In Rajahmundry, Viresalingam and a few friends met together sporadically for prayer meetings based on the model of the Brahma Samaj of Calcutta, and in 1878 they formed the Rajahmundry Prarthana Samaj. This society was at first secret, and members sang hymns and heard lectures in Viresalingam's home. After a year, apprehensions eased. The association moved to the Maharajah of Vizianagaram's Girls' School and invited the public to join.³⁶ Of the eight active members, five were Niyogi Brahmans, two were Vaidiki Brahmans, and one was a non-Brahman Telaga. By occupation, five were teachers, one was a lawyer, and one a government clerk.³⁷ Since most of the reformers were teachers, they could recruit students and keep the association going. This was the first religious reform organization in coastal Andhra that lasted for any length of time, and it served as a base from which other associations were formed.

The 1870s in coastal Andhra saw little evidence of debate over social conditions and little social reform activity. Machilipatnam, the district headquarters of Krishna District, had an outstanding journal, *Purushārtha Pradāyini*, but no social reform activities; in 1879 local leaders were still trying to begin an association and reading room.³⁸ In Kakinada, the Cocanada Literary Association was founded in 1878 and was politically oriented from its beginnings, but the Kakinada journal was not effectively tied to the association and did not campaign for the issues it discussed.³⁹ Elsewhere in coastal Andhra there were sporadic meetings of students and local Brahman officials to debate changing specific customs but these discussions did not produce tangible results.⁴⁰ Even in Rajahmundry, early reform activities produced few results, but journalistic activity, public meetings, organized voluntary associations, and some leaders among the educated elite forged the conditions in which a social reform campaign could be waged.

Through his journal *Vivēka Vardhani*, Viresalingam was developing an ideology of social reform and actively seeking an issue for a reform campaign. In the journal, he introduced himself to the public with a poem:⁴¹

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.

In the first line, Viresalingam identified himself as a member of the educated elite, while in the third he implied that he was a scholar in Telugu. Then he went on to state his concern for writing prose, and writing it so that people could understand it—he wanted to write in spoken, not classical, Telugu. He linked the development of Telugu with that of the country. Elsewhere, he stated that his journal had two aims: the improvement of the Telugu language and the improvement of the country.⁴²

Viresalingam wanted to develop Telugu not only by modifying the language but also by using it to reform society. Language reform was to be carried out by simplifying Telugu to increase peoples' comprehension of it. He conceived of language as a means to combat the evil conditions in society and to propagate the moral standards essential

for the country's progress. These journalistic goals represented a conscious break with tradition in Telugu usage.

The documentation of his intellectual odyssey is somewhat limited, but Viresalingam distinguished three periods when discussing the evolution of his journal, *Vivēka Vardhani*.⁴³ The first two periods fell before the first widow marriage he performed in December 1881, and the last followed that crucial event. The first period was brief, from 1874 to 1876. He wrote about social conditions that affronted him—the corruption of officials, the role of prostitutes in public life, the degraded position of women, and the widespread ignorance of the masses. If there was a focus to his writings then, it was on the problem of cultural contact between India and the West and the reasons for the decline of ancient Indian civilization. Viresalingam idealized the past and contrasted it with the current degraded state of society. He was especially concerned with the role of the Brahmans, keepers of the texts and traditions.

Viresalingam's explanation for the decline of ancient India became more complex with time and touched directly on the Brahmans as preservers of India's civilizational values. How he explained this decline varied with the opposition that faced Viresalingam at any one time in his career. At first, he blamed the Muslims for the destruction of ancient India's greatness: they had shattered political unity and subjugated Indians. Loss of political independence removed morality from law and order; suspicion and mutual distrust became endemic. Brahmans were humiliated and had to take up professions like low-level civil service jobs, and some were even reduced to begging. The prevailing fact in political life was oppression, and the dominant emotion in social life was fear: Indian civilization had lost its confidence and power.⁴⁴ This attribution of the decline to external forces came as Viresalingam was just beginning to write about social reform and was still committed to the role of a scholar and teacher. Opposition to his ideas was slight and came chiefly from scholars; he had undertaken no significant reform activities.

Then came a transitional period. Scholars sharpened their attacks after Viresalingam defied orthodox burial customs and began to criticize Brahmans, and a perceptible shift occurred in his account of the decline of ancient India. Increasingly Viresalingam blamed scholars for the deterioration of knowledge and standards of morality.⁴⁵ However, this internal factor, evident in his speeches and lectures during 1875–76, still played only a subordinate role in Viresalingam's thinking.

As Viresalingam attacked current practices and beliefs, he began to attribute malpractices to scholars, pseudoscholars, or teachers, basing his argument on the place of knowledge in a country's civilization. At first arguing that Muslim rule had forced Brahmans to abandon their honorable professions of preserving knowledge and had encouraged

various corruptions,⁴⁶ Viresalingam began to trace the deterioration of knowledge to two new causes: one was the preference of scholars for revelation, rather than observation and inference, as a source of knowledge; the other was the scholars' concern for form rather than meaning, for Sanskrit and poetry rather than for the regional languages and prose.⁴⁷ He traced these two causes to ancient Indian civilization prior to the coming of the Muslims and saw them as precluding the rise of a scientific tradition in India. They were also the principal evils of the present day that needed to be rectified. Thus he focused on internal causes for India's decline—on scholars and their faults.⁴⁸

During these years Viresalingam used his journal to experiment with new literary forms, farcical one-act plays about social conditions, and stories illustrating moral principles specifically for women. These innovative forms set his journal off from its competitors and were significant in the development of Telugu literature. Their content was as notable as their form. Many of his one-act plays satirized Brahmins, highlighting the evils and absurdities of contemporary society. He developed social stereotypes of "the orthodox." Viresalingam used his farces to pillory his enemies; since his attempts at disguising the personalities he portrayed were ineffective, a target of his writing could easily find himself with a new nickname, that of a character in one of Viresalingam's plays. These farces were the first instance in modern times when the Telugu spoken dialect was employed for dramatic purposes. Viresalingam used the spoken dialect for *all* his characters, Brahmins and untouchables alike (the conventions in Sanskrit drama allowed only a few low-born characters to use spoken dialects).⁴⁹

As Viresalingam was increasingly criticized by his fellow scholars during 1875–76, his responses in his journal pointed to ancient scholars seduced by the lure of power and wealth, confused by the urge to acquire prestige, and misled into fabricating stories that the mass of illiterates believed. He began to question the later accretions to Hindu traditions, such as the *itihāsa* and the *purānās*; to note the purity of thought in *Sṛti* and the Vedas, including the Upanishads; and to claim inclusion of gross superstitions in *Smṛti*, the *dharmaśāstras*, the *itihāsa*, and the *purānas*. Since *Smṛti* was often used to confute him, it was natural that he should try to discredit it. He argued that contemporary Indians were merely continuing the prostitution of education and the adoption of debased jobs initiated by the ancient Indian scholars. Contemporary scholars seldom studied the Vedas or even the *dharmaśāstras*, so spurious customs based on later texts had crept in and lowered the standards of scholarship and morality.⁵⁰

Viresalingam based his ideas about progress on the cyclical ages of Hindu cosmology, postulating that since the literal descriptions of the

darkest of the four ages fit the present, contemporary society was in the last age and anything that succeeded it was bound to be better. Rejecting the inevitability of the destruction of the world, he argued that steady improvement would culminate in a future golden age, thus assimilating the Western idea of progress to traditional Hindu beliefs and making it part of his conception of societal development.⁵¹ To justify cultural borrowing from the West, he argued that the West had first borrowed from India—mathematics, via Greece—and thus India was responsible for achievements derived from mathematics.⁵² Furthermore, mutual cultural borrowing involved no subordination of one civilization to another. The leading ideas in Viresalingam's program of regeneration were in fact indigenous scholarly ones: the ameliorative power of knowledge and the intrinsic strength of a unified people. He believed that education would instill morality in the leaders of society and create a climate of opinion favorable to reform. This education would be both moral and practical, since knowledge concerning the sciences and humanities had to be tempered with a knowledge of moral principles.⁵³

Education was one remedy for India, and unity—of race, religion, and caste—was the other. In his speeches and writings, Viresalingam appealed to his audience to promote unity, not just at the philosophical level of Vedantic speculation, but at a social level. He advocated the formation of debating clubs, caste organizations, trade unions, almost any kind of organization which would bind men together. These associations would be like building blocks, in themselves small and useless, but together indispensable.⁵⁴ These essentially scholarly ideas reflected his initial activities, rectifying abuses that afflicted Brahmins and combating specific corrupt practices of officials in Rajahmundry.

Viresalingam's first reform effects had been personal and idiosyncratic. He refused to call in Brahmins for rites connected with the removal of a beehive from a roof beam in his house, although it was customary to employ them to do so;⁵⁵ and he joined Basavarazu Gavarrazu, a friend, in defying Brahmin burial customs when Gavarrazu's son died. The two of them buried the corpse themselves, hoping to encourage secular Brahmins to participate in funeral processions and discourage ideas about pollution.⁵⁶ He wrote against Brahmin marriage customs such as bride-price, child marriage of girls, and marriages restricted by sect and kinship,⁵⁷ but he found it difficult to promote changes in these even among his friends. Girls' education was a popular reform—Viresalingam had founded a girls' school in 1874 when teaching in a nearby small town and, in 1881, he began another in Rajahmundry. Finally, in 1874, Viresalingam turned his attention to the controversial issue of widow marriage.

history of alienating even allies in the implementation of his ideas, Viresalingam was an ideological thinker and polemicist whose ideas decisively shaped the regional culture and nationalist ideology in Andhra. He criticized the existing structure of social and political authority and provided a vision of indigenously generated social change and national progress. He reconceived of both individuals and their collective identity in coastal Andhra, insisting that educated men confront the failure of priestly Brahmans and scholars to uphold Indian society, that they commit themselves to new goals and form new associations, that they assume responsibilities for the condition of women and the masses in Andhra society. Later leaders went far beyond Viresalingam in questioning British political authority in India. Nonetheless, his emphasis on regional cultural traditions had far-reaching political implications, and his widow marriage campaign gave future leaders a direct and overwhelmingly political experience in bringing about social change.

Bibliographic Essay

The reconstruction of the social reform movement in coastal Andhra during the period 1874–91 required a synthesis of two very different types of sources: biographies and autobiographies in Telugu, and English-language newspapers. Neither type of source was sufficient by itself because events in Andhra had few connections with events of an all-India importance. Not until 1907, when Bepin Chandra Pal toured South India protesting the partition of Bengal, did Andhras participate noticeably in events whose significance transcended the regional boundaries. This isolation meant that the history of coastal Andhra during this period of social reform was not fully understood in Madras. The English-language newspapers in Madras mentioned some of the highlights of the social reform movement and thus provided a rough chronology of events in the region, a chronology which could then be linked with major events in Madras and the rest of India. Yet this chronology was at best only an outline.

For a full understanding of social reform and its significance in Andhra, the Telugu sources were crucial. Most valuable were Kandukuri Viresalingam's autobiography and collected works. For the period preceding the widow marriage campaign his autobiography was indispensable. Newspaper reports were very brief at that time, and it would be virtually impossible to describe that early social reform activi-

ty without Viresalingam's account. Once the widow marriage campaign began, the two main sources were Viresalingam's 1885 report to the Association, "Rajahmendravara Stri Punar Vivaha Caritramu," which he included in his collected works, and an English account by Viresalingam's ex-student, D. V. Prakasa Row. Reminiscences of Viresalingam's students and followers, especially those of Rayasam Venkata Sivudu, Valluri Suryanarayana Rau, and Cilakamarti Lakshminarasimham, filled out the narrative. The opposition to social reform had to be glimpsed mainly through the eyes of the reformers themselves, for the only biography of an opposition leader, that of Vedamu Venkataraya Sastri, mentions a few relevant facts only briefly and omits any discussion of other opposition leaders or connections with them. The decline of the social reform movement in Rajahmundry coincided with the school careers of three future prominent Andhra political leaders, K. Venkatappayya, T. Prakasam, and A. Kaleswara Rao, and their autobiographies furnished revealing accounts of the social reformers' participation in reform activities.

During the decades of the 1870s and 1880s the English-language newspapers relied on correspondents in coastal Andhra for news of that region. The correspondents for the British-owned newspapers were probably Europeans, since most of their news concerned the activities of British officials and missionaries. Even Indian-owned newspapers like *The Hindu* did not pay much attention to events in coastal Andhra, for reports from there were irregular and brief even at the best of times.

Other types of sources, such as records of the Madras government or missionary reports, were of little use for this topic. The general policy of the Government of India was to refrain from undertaking social reform, and, except in individual instances, the Government of Madras did nothing to encourage social reform. This lack of interest was evident in those few cases (such as the circulation of Mr. Malabari's Notes) when the government was compelled to act. Also, British administration at the local level did not pay much attention to the social reformers or include information about them in the reports to higher levels of government, since the social reformers' actions did not impinge directly upon the administration.

The lack of missionary reports for this period was disappointing. Neither the missionary college at Rajahmundry nor its affiliate in Guntur had preserved records from the nineteenth century. The most valuable missionary sources for this study were the journals published in North America. Missionary records usually dealt with the business of managing the mission, whereas the letters of some missionaries to journals provided a few insights into social reform and Viresalingam's life.

Even the archives of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia has preserved only statements regarding itineraries and traveling expenses of missionaries and disputes within the mission. The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg has an extensive collection of records and manuscripts for the Lutheran mission in Guntur. The journals of women missionaries were valuable for descriptions of social reform activities and missionary attitudes towards these. The Canadian Baptists had their Telugu Mission headquarters in Kakinada; archives are in McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario. Although none of their records or journals illuminates any of Viresalingam's actions, there are a few letters in the *Canadian Missionary Link* dealing with Paida Ramakrishnayya. Another journal, *Among the Telugus*, first appeared in 1900 and is valuable for material on social conditions in Kakinada.

Sectarian histories of missionary activity in coastal Andhra, moreover, are uniform in their concentration on those activities which contributed to the growth of Christianity. Although the missionaries in coastal Andhra were pioneers in promoting education, and, interestingly enough, admired and utilized Viresalingam's writings on monotheism and the restrictive aspects of the caste system, they wrote little about Indian society except as it affected their work.

The diaries of Viresalingam, 1897-1916, are in the possession of Y. Venkat Rao, Rajahmundry, who picked them up one day when he noticed a pile of waste paper outside the Viresalingam Theistic High School. There were probably earlier diaries, but even so, their value is limited. Viresalingam recorded the events he considered important but did not comment on them. Most entries deal with the prices of food in the local market and would be valuable for an economic historian. Other financial entries were of value in tracing his supporters for his various projects.

The Widow Marriage Campaign

That Telugu-speaking reformers took the lead on the widow marriage issue in the Presidency seems indisputable. In Madras, the Hindu Widow Re-Marriage Association had been formed in 1874 but served only briefly as a forum for voicing the arguments for widow marriage before it languished. Its leaders were Brahmans but not Tamil Brahmans, and it used English, not a regional language, for its meetings. The Tamil Brahman establishment was more concerned in the 1870s with educational policy, questions of management (by government or private institutions), and the role of Indian languages (including Sanskrit). The fear that Western education would lead to secularism was strong. After Viresalingam formed the Rajahmundry Widow Marriage Association in 1879, the Madras Hindu Widow Re-Marriage Association became active again. The Rajahmundry and Madras reformers cooperated in limited ways over the next two decades.⁵⁸

When Viresalingam began to plan a widow marriage campaign in the Telugu-speaking Circars, he spent over a year meeting with various people and scholars to discuss the question of widow marriages.⁵⁹ Because of the scholars' reluctance to agree with his textual interpretations, Viresalingam became convinced of their unwillingness to cope with change, and he began to attack them as agents and even the sources of religious authority. In the spring of 1881, he challenged his religious superior, the Sankaracharya from Virupaksha, when he came to Rajahmundry. In his journal Viresalingam attacked the Sankaracharya, claiming that he was coercing donations from people by threatening excommunication. He also denigrated the Sankaracharya's personal disciple and presumptive heir. At a March meeting, Viresalingam presented a petition signed by thirty Niyogi Brahmans asking for the Sankaracharya's approval of widow marriages. Viresalingam spoke in favor of widow marriages and another *pandit* spoke for the opposition. Later in the meeting the audience was informed that the Sankaracharya would sanction widow marriage only if the majority of caste Hindus in Rajahmundry approved. This meant, of course, that local custom would prevail; it cut off the debate and silenced Viresalingam. Since the Sankaracharya left the meeting without commenting on the validity of Viresalingam's interpretation, Viresalingam believed he was still free to persuade other Hindus of the correctness of his argument.⁶⁰

This confrontation was the first of several clashes between Viresalingam and the Sankaracharya. Viresalingam continued to criticize or subvert religious authority in pursuit of his reform goals. Viresalingam was a Smarta and under the Sankaracharya's religious author-

ity, but Brahmans from different sects joined in the appeal for approval of widow marriages. Thus the confrontation illustrated the more general religious role of the Sankaracharya and also the interest in the widow marriage issue; it cut across sectarian boundaries and united reformers of different sectarian backgrounds.

Formed in 1879, the Rajahmundry Widow Marriage Association⁶¹ held its first widow marriage in 1881, when a secret executive committee and, in effect, a new association were formed. The Prarthana Samaj had been dominated by teachers; in this new association, there were as many officials as teachers on the executive committee.⁶² Many members were students from the Rajahmundry Government College. The teachers recruited students directly from their classes for social reform activities and also served as role models for their students, who were in many cases living away from home for the first time. Viresalingam in particular was admired, since he was recognized as the foremost Telugu scholar of his age, and students remembered that he advocated social reform in his classes. He concentrated especially on exposing and ridiculing the ideas and practices of orthodox Hindus, creating in the classroom the same social stereotypes that he wrote about in his journal.⁶³ As the widow marriage campaign aroused controversy, students formed bodyguards for Viresalingam and other leaders in danger of physical attack from their orthodox opponents.⁶⁴ After the first marriage in 1881, students went out to villages, found widows and arranged to bring them to Rajahmundry; some became bridegrooms themselves despite threats and beatings from their parents.⁶⁵ The intense excitement and enthusiasm of the 1881-84 widow marriage campaign, when ten marriages of widows were celebrated, deeply marked the young men who participated.⁶⁶ Some thirty more widow marriages had been celebrated in Andhra by 1919, making this the most intensive campaign in all of India.

From the time of Viresalingam's first speech on widow marriage in 1879 it took almost two years to find a widow who would remarry and a bridegroom for her. In December 1881, the first widow marriage was performed. It took the help of British officials to conduct it: to secure the bridegroom's leave from his job, depute a police detachment of Muslims and Christians from Madras, and threaten to arrest orthodox Hindu leaders if there were overt disturbances.⁶⁷ The orthodox had persuaded Brahman cooks, water carriers, and priests not to carry out their customary duties, but the reformers countered the threatened boycott by paying more for all the services.⁶⁸ Four days after the highly publicized wedding, another widow was brought by her mother to Rajahmundry and married; this event was even grander, since many British officials joined the procession and many more people came to watch it.⁶⁹

Both the reformers and their opponents organized themselves for these controversial events. The Widow Marriage Association left the publicity to Viresalingam, whose journal made him the most effective spokesman, but the other leaders secured support from officials in the district towns. In Kakinada, Godavari District headquarters, a local merchant, Paida Ramakrishnayya, offered to donate thousands of rupees once the marriages began, and he kept his promise.⁷⁰ The opponents organized too. Before the first widow marriage, the orthodox opposition was led by Vaidiki or priestly Brahman scholars;⁷¹ then an association against widow marriages was formed in Rajahmundry led by Western-educated men, indicating a shift in the leadership of the orthodox opposition. Although scholars still had an important place, Western-educated men holding government positions became the leaders. Similarly, their tactics shifted. Until this time, orthodox opponents would enforce traditional sanctions, withdraw essential domestic and religious services, and refuse to contract marriage relationships or fulfill kinship obligations. But now they asked the Sankaracharya to make the reformers outcasts. When the Sankaracharya complied, it was the Municipal Council President of Rajahmundry who convened a meeting to announce the expulsion of the reformers from their castes.⁷² Some thirty people who attended the wedding meals were expelled, their readmission to caste dependent upon formal, public acknowledgement of the Sankaracharya's authority and a ceremony of penance.⁷³ Among the reformers outcasted by the Sankaracharya were non-Smartas, indicating his more general authority among Hindus.

This counterattack was very effective, and only Viresalingam and one friend, Basavarazu Gavarrazu, ultimately resisted submission to the Sankaracharya. Viresalingam had his own well; he and his wife had no children, and, as a Telugu Brahman *pandit*, he performed the marriages himself. The worst blow to the reformers was the loss of their chief patron, the Kakinada merchant, who performed penance and swore not to give any more money to the reformers.⁷⁴ Viresalingam was bitter about the failure of the educated elite to support the reform campaign and withstand social pressure. From this experience, he concluded that education had to be extended to women and the masses; once educated, they would not be intimidated by those opposed to social change. Enthusiasm for reform in Rajahmundry declined noticeably, and it was harder to find brides and bridegrooms. Violence used by both sides during the months after the first two widow marriages—college students fought with the young disciples of priests—resulted in the filing of lawsuits by both sides, although only the priests' disciples were convicted.⁷⁵

Another lawsuit filed as a consequence of the first widow marriages was far more significant. One of the non-Smartas outcasted by the Sankaracharya, Atmuri Lakshminarasimham, filed a court case against him. The initial decision, against the reformers, was appealed to the Madras High Court in August 1882, and this caused misgivings among orthodox and reformers alike. (The two most prominent social reformers in Madras denied any association with the appeal.)⁷⁶ Viresalingam's closest follower, Basavarazu Gavarrazu, filed the appeal, and its outcome was surprising. The Madras High Court upheld the lower court decision with respect to Sankaracharya's ecclesiastical powers—he could expell people from caste—but decided *against* Sankaracharya because of the way he had notified reformers of his action. He had sent them postcards through the mail, and this violated the laws against defamation! They fined him Rs. 200.⁷⁷

The real question here was whether or not the government had the legal power to pass judgement on a duly constituted source of Hindu religious authority. Advocates of reform in Rajahmundry supported the initial court case, although some were ambivalent about it, and they did not oppose the appeal. They were disappointed in the decision, fearing it would diminish support for social reform.⁷⁸ In Madras, the response was different. Just as they had opposed the appeal itself, without exception the Madras social reformers condemned the court's decision to fine Sankaracharya.⁷⁹ In Rajahmundry, widow marriages continued—four took place between the time of the appeal and the High Court decision seven months later, and four more took place before internal dissension led to the decline of the movement in 1884. By the time of the High Court decision, the reformers no longer needed police protection.⁸⁰

These ten widow marriages had an impact far beyond their numbers. Most of the child widows were from the Brahman castes,⁸¹ but the Rajahmundry widow marriages included two Komati (merchant) couples. There were more secular Brahmans than priestly ones among the eight Brahman couples, but every Brahman sect and branch was represented in these couples, and the tenth marriage was an inter-sect Brahman marriage. The Rajahmundry Widow Marriage Association sponsored all ten marriages and all save one were held in Rajahmundry; that one was held by Rajahmundry reformers in Madras.⁸² This small group displayed remarkable diversity and involved a wide range of the educated elite and their families in controversy over the reform.

After 1884 serious dissension among the reformers caused the movement to lose momentum, although thirty more widow marriages were performed before Viresalingam's death in 1919. What is significant here is that the dissension no longer concerned whether or not

widow marriages were religiously sanctioned or were a useful reform. The dissension was over how to support the married couples (many bridegrooms lost their jobs and the Widow Marriage Association provided them housing, allowances, and sometimes employment),⁸³ and, after 1886, over the provisions of the will of Paidā Ramakrishnāya. He had honored his pledge to the Sankaracharya not to give money directly to the Rajahmundry reformers, but he had channeled money to them through the social reform leaders in Madras, and upon his death he left a trust fund containing Rs. 10,000 for the widow marriage movement. This was to be administered by Atmuri Lakshminarasimham, the teacher who had first propounded Brahma Samaj doctrines to Viresalingam. He was now a judicial official and the filer of the court case against Sankaracharya. Viresalingam's unfortunate tendency to alienate his closest allies inspired him to attack Lakshminarasimham in a farce just at this time, so that disagreements among the reformers and bridegrooms produced factions within the association. Lakshminarasimham refused to use the trust fund for new couples, preferring to keep it for those already married.⁸⁴ There had already been rivalry among the leaders—before 1881, three of them, including Viresalingam and Lakshminarasimham, had founded competing girls' schools in Rajahmundry—but it did not interfere with the widow marriage campaign until the mid-1880s.

The widow marriage campaign in Andhra showed the impact of direct, positive action; its symbolic achievements were many. The direct challenge to religious authority, in this case that of the Sankaracharya, appealed to college students and helped keep Hindu revivalism out of the social reform movement in coastal Andhra. An antipathy to religious authority appeared in later reform movements initiated by Viresalingam's students.⁸⁵ The widow marriage movement had offered direct, positive action with tremendous potential for dramatization, maximum publicity, and controversy.

Despite the setback to the widow marriage campaign, reform activities proceeded. The dissension and the loss of old members through death (especially Basavarazu Gavarrazu in 1888) and dispute coincided with the initial experiments by the British in local government and with the emergence of nationalism throughout India. Thus the energies of the educated elite were drawn into new fields. There was, however, continuity in some areas. Religious reform remained an attractive alternative and was less threatening to orthodox Hindus; girls' education proceeded to grow and Telugu literary activities featured both innovations and controversy.

The vital relationships between social reform, religious reform, and literary activity were recognized by contemporary social reformers.

Attacks on orthodox customs and views were conducted through the widow marriage campaign, religious reform associations, and literary activity. The widow marriage campaign gave an impetus to innovations in Telugu literature; it continued under Viresalingam's leadership. In 1883, he began *Satī Hita Bāhini*, a journal written for women, and he used this genre to inculcate his ideas on social reform. This type of writing was developed by his former pupils to become almost a separate field of Telugu prose.⁸⁶

Literature as a means of reform became a cultural tradition in coastal Andhra, and literary activity became a suitable alternative field of endeavor for many social reformers. Telugu journalism was also pressed into the service of social reformers. Most significant, journal debate during the 1880s in coastal Andhra was carried on in Telugu and not in English—there was no English language newspaper for coastal Andhra until 1921, when the Congress leader T. Prakasam published one from Madras.⁸⁷ *The Hindu*, published in English from Madras from 1878, reported little on coastal Andhra, and this neglect was, in a sense, fortunate for Telugu journalism, for the important issues of the day were discussed and analyzed only through the Telugu journals. This strengthened Telugu journalism and forced the educated elite to use Telugu and solve the problems inherent in transforming the regional language. The negative aspects of this situation were that people in other parts of India were unaware of what was happening in coastal Andhra and that parochialism was encouraged among Telugu-speaking people. But by the 1890s, educated men and women in Andhra were committed to the use of Telugu as a serious medium of expression in journalism and literature, and they were engaged in transforming the regional language and its culture.⁸⁸

Social reform proved to be the chief determinant of the direction of cultural change in the Telugu language and literature. The modification of the Telugu script for printing, the initial efforts at prose composition, and the introduction of new literary forms had occurred by the mid-nineteenth century, developed by Telugu scholars who tried to control the changes. The transition to a new phase of culture occurred in the late 1870s, when Viresalingam began employing innovative literary forms in his social reform publicity. The cultural change wrought by the social reform campaign also led to a shift in the men and institutions associated with the development of Telugu literature.

Scholars in Telugu began to be superseded by the educated elite as effective communicators, and consequently the structure of the Telugu literary culture was altered. The main motivation for this modernization of Telugu was the hope that it would bridge the gulf which the educated elite felt between themselves and those who did not know

English. Viresalingam's concern with the masses developed after his disillusionment with the educated elite—he emphasized the moral benefits of education for women and the masses so that they would not hold back the educated elite and could themselves participate directly in reform efforts.⁸⁹ This modernization was also an attempt to bridge the gulf between urban and rural people, and, to some extent, between Brahman and non-Brahman.

If social reform activity accelerated cultural change, it also accelerated the process of political development in the area. Because social reform was the first organized activity initiated by the educated elite in coastal Andhra, it had a significance which transcended its success or failure in the performance of widow marriages. The educated elite started journals, organized associations, recruited supporters, and planned campaigns around the idea of social innovation. The leaders of social reform recruited members and attracted sympathizers. Reform activity was an experience for students and others that accustomed them to nontraditional groups and activities. Social reform was also an arena of political activity. The centrality of the Rajahmundry Government College in the educational life of the Circars and the central position of Viresalingam in both social reform and literary activities gave a strong initial base for the widow marriage campaign and heightened its impact. But Viresalingam's stubbornness and controversial personal relations ensured that other reformers split off from him and built associations and institutions of their own. Thus reform efforts did not proceed under the direction of just one man, but through the rivalry of several major figures and the allegiance to them of many others. These shifting alignments broadened the arena for reform ideas and activities. Viresalingam's associations and institutions may have depended upon personal and financial support which sometimes proved elusive, but his ideas decisively shaped social and political concepts in coastal Andhra.

Viresalingam's Thought

Viresalingam's responses to the questions posed by Westernization changed over the years. Before 1876, he had conceived of the problems largely as arising from a confrontation between India and the West. Attributing the rise of the West chiefly to unity and a scientific tradition he harnessed these achievements to his conception of progress for India. In that period Viresalingam had been unsure about which cultural tradition or group he should favor to bring about the changes he desired in society. The second period, from 1876 to 1881, when he was actively engaged in the widow marriage campaign, was a

transitional one for him in which he worked out tentative answers to these questions. From 1881 to 1888, when the first two marriages had been successfully performed, Viresalingam fully developed the ideas that he had begun to formulate during the transitional period, a period that coincided with the decline of the social reform movement and an increase of political activity at the local and national levels. Viresalingam's solutions were his ultimate intellectual response to problems that he had encountered in the early 1870s. His followers adopted many of his ideas, but faced with different tasks, they used his thought to meet the situations facing them in the late 1880s.

Viresalingam's social reform experience during the transitional period decisively shaped his intellectual development. His initiation of the widow marriage campaign in 1879 shifted his attention from assessing the reasons for India's decline to determining practical means of achieving its regeneration. Viresalingam's concerns about India's relationship to the West receded in importance as he was confronted with the immediate problems posed by Indian society. His narrowed view relegated the West to a category of "other countries"⁹⁰ where the issues of child marriage, bride price, and prohibition of widow marriage did not exist. Viresalingam invoked "other countries" in his arguments only to show that the situation in India was not a universal one. While stating that the elimination of undesirable social conditions was a universal goal, he was reluctant to point to the West as the specific model for India's future. He did not mind taking Western knowledge of natural science as a model for India, because he argued that Western science had originated with ideas borrowed from India.⁹¹ It would have been difficult, however, for him to apply this same argument of cultural borrowing in the areas of social structure and social relationships. Hence he tried not to associate desirable social conditions explicitly with contemporary Western society. The development of universal goals absorbed his attention from 1880 onwards.⁹²

Viresalingam's understanding of progress recurred throughout his writings in the phrase "the development of the country."⁹³ He used the word *development* to designate those activities that used rational means to improve Indian social conditions and, in the process, freed individuals from the control of traditional authorities to allow the realization of individual potential. By *country* he meant a local area, for he spoke of the many countries within the Madras Presidency. He did not intend it to stand for a nation or a geopolitical unit, either; he related progress to the improvement of social conditions and social classes. His "country" is best understood as synonymous with *society*.

Believing that education was the key development activity, Viresalingam expanded his ideas about who should be educated, though

he did not change his ideas about its content. His view of education was a very broad and complex one, for he approached it from a metaphysical point of view and linked it implicitly with his ideas on religion. Thus he equated education with the particular knowledge that allowed one to perceive truths about the nature of the world. The existence of divinity was one such truth.⁹⁴ This knowledge was to be derived from observation and critical reflection; Viresalingam applied these criteria to his proofs of the existence of divinity as well as to more mundane matters.⁹⁵ He placed a new emphasis on science, especially Western science based on an empirical tradition of observation and experimentation, which he grasped as being similar to his own ideas about knowledge. In the 1880s, he began to translate scientific treatises on subjects like biology, physics, and astronomy into Telugu. He valued science because it was a systematic method of investigating phenomena that gave a consistent, "true" picture of the nature of the world, unlike the accounts of creation that he read in the Hindu epic literature.⁹⁶ Science was a tool with which Viresalingam could expose superstition and ridicule the basis of existing customs. He hoped to use scientific explanations to refute the arguments of traditional scholars and win the allegiance of the educated elite for social reform.

Morality was the second major element in Viresalingam's ideas on education. He believed that science and morality were different aspects of the truth—each represented a way of perceiving divinity and each confirmed the existence and benevolence of divinity.⁹⁷ Viresalingam deprecated the contemporary equation of Western education with material advantages, because he connected education with religious training. It was chiefly the moral benefits of education that he wanted to confer on women and the masses.⁹⁸ He advocated moral teaching of a nondenominational nature that would stress the truths common to all religions: the existence of God, God's benevolence and kindness, and the individual's need to adopt appropriate moral behavior, based on reason, in order to please God.⁹⁹

At first Viresalingam believed the purpose of education was to create an elite group—emancipated from the inhibiting bonds of custom and tradition—to lead society to a higher level through social reform. This was his view before he tried to gain the support of the educated elite for the widow marriage campaign in 1881.¹⁰⁰ When he first encouraged the education of women, he was concerned only with upper-caste women, particularly those related to members of the educated elite. When this elite failed to support the widow marriage campaign and other reforms, Viresalingam understood that education for an elite group was not sufficient, because pressure from the rest of society could intimidate the few educated men and prevent them from

achieving reforms. Therefore, he considered the extension of educational opportunities to the lowest levels of society as a step necessary to emancipating the educated elite.¹⁰¹ He had already advocated teaching science (hygiene) and morality to high-caste women; these were now to be taught in a simplified form to the masses.¹⁰²

With the inclusion of the masses in Viresalingam's educational goals, his concept of the elite changed, although his belief in its potential to improve the country was always a consistent strand in his thought. Even before 1876, he had praised the educated, but his essays on their role in society had conveyed a quality of ambivalence, since at that time the educated elite in coastal Andhra was small in numbers and still adhered to the lifestyle of the political elite. In that early period, Viresalingam had looked to the traditional scholars as possible promoters of change, but, from 1879 to 1881, his belief in that group's capacity to accomplish this work waned rapidly, and he turned to the educated elite as more appropriate agents of change. His hopes for support from the educated reached a high point in October 1881, when he declared that only Western-educated men should continue to write books in the regional language, since the works of traditional scholars were of no benefit to society.¹⁰³ When many of them refused to participate in social reform activities, and some even showed a reluctance to promote education, Viresalingam began to be disillusioned with them.¹⁰⁴ By 1884, his disenchantment was complete, but Viresalingam still believed that if change was to come it must be led by the educated, and he continually urged their commitment to social reform while he criticized them for adopting political reform exclusively.¹⁰⁵

Viresalingam now envisaged a new mission for the Western-educated elite: constrained from participation in active social reform, they were to be the main instruments in the implementation of universal education. In an essay written in June 1883, he listed the tasks for the educated elite. Only one, the abolition of child marriage, was concerned with social reform; the other tasks focused on the development of education and its consequences for society.¹⁰⁶ After Viresalingam's redefinition of "progress" to include the improvement of the social conditions of the masses, he began to argue for universal education.¹⁰⁷ He argued, as he had before, that scientific and moral training should be adapted especially for women's education and would prepare them to accept changes in society.¹⁰⁸ Viresalingam went on to argue that the effect of education on the masses would be the same: it would drive out superstition, inculcate morality, and provide a receptive climate for social reforms. He did not expect all people to become educated, but he hoped a majority would eventually take advantage of educational opportunities and move from ignorance and poverty to a middle rank

in society, a social stratum then rather sparsely occupied by the educated elite.¹⁰⁹ In his view, the masses occupied the lowest level of society, not for economic reasons, but because of their lack of education.

Viresalingam set several tasks for Western-educated men. He anticipated that women and the masses would not take advantage of education initially unless they were under some social pressure to do so. Therefore, the first task for educated men was to send their daughters to school and educate their wives. Next, these literate men must work to dispel the current belief that the *dharmasāstras* prohibited the education of Sudras. When this was accomplished, Viresalingam wanted members of the elite to enter the villages and persuade rural people to become educated. Finally, his program for the elite included the writing of Telugu books on science and morality for the masses. The educated elite was still to be the active agent of change in society, though Viresalingam expected help from the government in providing educational facilities.¹¹⁰

Viresalingam had called on the government school system to implement his ideas,¹¹¹ but his expectations of government assistance were actually not very great. He had difficulty obtaining approval for his girls' school, and he knew that the municipalities and the Department of Public Instruction in Madras were reluctant to expand government-managed educational facilities. Furthermore, while science classes were relatively easy to introduce or strengthen in the government schools, morality instruction (in the form of nondenominational religious doctrines) was not so easily inserted into the curriculum. Viresalingam wrote repeatedly in his journal, *Vivēka Vardhani*, 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. In his assessment, the most effective alternative was to utilize Telugu literature.¹¹²

Viresalingam's identification of the regional language with a Telugu culture was shared but slightly by different segments of the population in 1882. By 1884, his belief in universal education and a Telugu medium of instruction implied linking together the different levels of culture among Telugu-speaking people. This new and broader goal became included in the meaning of his phrase "the development of the country."¹¹³ Thus Viresalingam's concept of Telugu as a tool in the service of the educated elite had changed drastically; he now saw it as a vehicle for the transformation of the masses. The interaction between his views on reform and his ideas concerning the people who should benefit from reform eventually led him to consider changes in the Telugu language and literature that he had not anticipated in 1874, innovations that led to the fuller development of the new cultural tradition

of literature as a means of reform and eventually to a new and broader culture itself.

From 1880 to 1888 there was a clear progression in Viresalingam's thinking about Indian society. Viresalingam's earlier use of metaphor, though frequent, lacked a consistent pattern. When he discussed the masses his metaphors invariably represented them as being at a low level of development—such as a child.¹¹⁴ Then, with the introduction of local self-government in 1884 and the organization of the Indian National Congress in 1885, Viresalingam's images of them emphasized their "youth." He envisioned society as an organism and saw its parts in anthropomorphic terms. He did not revert to the hierarchical ranking of *varnas* or castes and their approximation to parts of the body, an image featured in the Rig Veda, for he focused on the activities of society. He made his ideas explicit in the following way: social and political reform were both growths of society and, since society was organic in nature, the two had to develop evenly. Coordinated growth was healthy, while uneven growth was a sign of disease. He stated that, in political terms, Indian society was progressing from childhood to adolescence. The government of India was the mother who would grant measures of independence as soon as the adolescent proved capable of exercising it. Viresalingam disavowed his earlier reliance on the educated elite by concluding that one segment of society should not be allowed to forge ahead of other segments, such as women or the masses.¹¹⁵ This even development of all sections of society was another way in which Viresalingam expressed his idea that the unity of society was essential for progress.

Viresalingam's concept of society as an organic entity initially led him to distrust political reformers. He never quite lost this feeling, even though he came to laud the founding of the Indian National Congress. Local politicians attempted to argue that social reform was not a necessary accompaniment to progress and that contemporary customs were either admirable or impossible to change; Viresalingam reacted sharply to such assertions. He consistently criticized local political reformers for deserting social issues; yet, on another level, he praised the Indian National Congress for its work in promoting the unity of India.¹¹⁶

Ultimately, Viresalingam's thinking about the development of Indian society stemmed from two problems. The first was India's low position vis-à-vis the West; this led him to consider largely abstract ways to elevate a country's status. The second problem was the failure of the Western-educated elite to actively support social reform—social pressures exerted by the rest of Indian society meant that educated men were actually being used to enforce conformity to existing social prac-

tices. Thus leadership at an elite level obviously was not sufficient to change society; followers also had to be receptive to change, for all levels of the population had to progress together. Viresalingam's recognition of the power of uneducated people to subvert the implementation of socially desirable goals made him realize the magnitude of their power and the need to harness it for progress. This led him to campaign for mass education and the broadening need of the regional language and its literature. He began to equate the development of Telugu culture with the progress of the masses. Earlier he had identified the development of Telugu with progress of the country and its status; by this time he was concerned about the status of the masses as well as that of the country.¹¹⁷ Viresalingam never made the final, direct equation—the identification of the people with the country—because he still believed in the leadership of an elite, the inherent inertia of the masses, and the wisdom of the British administration in India.¹¹⁸ Yet his intellectual development, in retrospect, represents a far-reaching attempt to build nationalist consciousness on a cultural base.

One can trace in Viresalingam's intellectual odyssey the interaction of his perceptions and actual social reform experiences through time. Viresalingam began his intellectual inquiry into the origins of the decay of Indian society when he was a young teacher in a village school. His early concern for education made him stress teaching as the key to change, although he was uncertain about exactly what to change at that time. His position as a Telugu scholar inclined him toward that language as the medium of cultural change, and his position as a member of the educated elite and as a Brahman stressed the role of an elite in guiding the country's destiny. But his experience in the widow marriage campaign modified these early ideas and led him to consider mass education as a necessary prerequisite for the inauguration of social reform. Mass education could be conducted only through Telugu, and this made him consider the further expansion of Telugu as the opener for a cultural change much greater than the one he had conceived originally. Beginning as an imitator of the traditional Telugu scholars, he ended his career as a great popularizer and prophet of cultural change for the masses.¹¹⁹

Conclusion

The relationship of social reform, literary, and political activity to regional identity forged by Viresalingam decisively shaped the character of the Indian nationalist movement there and contrasted with the lack of such a relationship in Madras. From 1879 to 1913, the educated

elite established organizations at three levels—local, district, and regional—and social and religious reform associations stemming from Rajahmundry and Viresalingam's widow marriage campaign were fundamental to development of these groups all over coastal Andhra. Subsequent stages of political development focused on the creation of political contacts and consciousness at the district and regional levels. In 1892, the first conference at the district level was held in Krishna District,¹²⁰ and a few delegates came from other districts too.¹²¹ Within three years leaders initiated meetings in other districts, and social conferences were held in conjunction with these district meetings.¹²² In 1905, conferences drew attendees from all of coastal Andhra.¹²³ Some of these gatherings were explicitly political in nature and some, like the Andhra Theistic Conference, were not. From these supra-local conferences came the impetus to inaugurate a political movement in order to secure the recognition of Andhra's separate identity.¹²⁴

The continuing relevance of key social reform ideas to political activity in coastal Andhra, both on the regional level and eventually in the nationalist movement, was unusual, for social reform ideas became increasingly irrelevant in shaping the development of nationalism in other regions of India. But the nationalists in coastal Andhra retained the idea of attaining social modernity, social progress, with its emphasis on the educated elite as the catalyst and the Telugu language and cultural traditions as the means. Modernity was now conceived of as a series of regional political communities within the Indian nation, where law and an Indian government would be the instruments creating new social conditions. Viresalingam's rooting of the idea of progress in the regional culture and his sustained attack on Sanskritic traditions destroyed the intellectual basis for any type of Sanskritic revivalism in Andhra. Viresalingam's first attacks were on the priestly Brahmans, and then he included traditional scholars. For many years his newspaper, the leading one in Andhra, villified priests, scholars, and aspects of ancient Aryan civilization. Thus succeeding generations grew up with a declining status of priests and traditional scholars; consequently, they accepted the futility of using Sanskritic traditions to build a modern identity.

In Madras, Christians and non-Brahmans attacked Brahmans; in coastal Andhra, Western-educated Brahmans, led by Viresalingam, attacked "the orthodox." Discrediting the image of the orthodox Brahman was central to the evolving ideology of social change and national progress. The "new Brahman" conscience in Andhra questioned traditional religious authority as the social reformers sought to transform their regional culture through the modification of Telugu, the expansion of education, and social and religious reform activities. Despite his

in the Panjab, North-Western Provinces and Oudh, 1889, p. 284.

64. Babu Ratnachand, *Hindī Urdū kā Nāṭak* (A Play about Hindi and Urdu) (Allahabad: Hindu Press, 1890), pp. 1-3.

65. Christopher R. King, "Hindu Nationalism in the 19th Century U. P. and the Dramas of Bharatendu Harishchandra," in Dharendra Vajpeyi, ed., *Boerings and Bullock Carts* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989).

66. King, "The Nagari Pracharini Sabha," pp. 290-92.

67. For example, the Nagari Pracharini Sabha (Society for the Promotion of Nagari) of Banaras, the leading Hindi organization of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, received close to Rs. 40,000 from various Hindu princes during its first thirty years, approximately 12 percent of its total income for the period.

68. King, "The Nagari Pracharini Society," pp. 457-59.

69. Marshall Singer, *Intercultural Communication: A Perceptual Approach* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1987), p. 9; emphasis mine.

Chapter 7

1. The other two are Rayalaseema, a slightly less populated dry area north-west of Madras (most of the present Nellore District), and Telangana, separately administered as part of the Nizam's Dominions until 1948 and of Hyderabad State until 1956.

2. Cilukurvi Virabhadra Rau, *Rajamendra Pura Caritra* (Rajahmundry: 1915), pp. 33-34; F. R. Hemingway, *Godavari* (Madras: Madras District Gazetteer, 1915), 1, p. 247; Digavalli Venkata Siva Rau, ed., *Kasi Yātra Caritra*, 3d ed. (Bezwada, 1941), pp. 344-45.

3. K. A. Nilakanta Sastry, *A History of South India*, 3d ed. (Madras: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 406.

4. Henry Morris, *A Descriptive and Historical Account of the Godavary District in the Presidency of Madras* (London: Madras District Manual, 1878), pp. 244, 303-4.

5. Morris, *Godavary District*, p. 22.

6. For comparisons between Rajahmundry and Madras, see John G. Leonard, "Urban Government Under the Raj," *Modern Asian Studies* 7, no. 2 (April 1973), pp. 227-51 and Susan J. Lewandowski, "Urban Growth and Municipal Development in the Colonial City of Madras, 1860-1900," *Journal of Asian Studies* 34, no. 2 (February 1975), pp. 341-60.

7. Government of India, *Census of India, 1891-92* (Madras, 1893), vol. 13, p. 181.

8. This was a precipitating cause of the Andhra movement—only in the Circars region did Telugus outnumber Tamils in government positions. See John G. Leonard, "Politics and Social Change in South India: A Study of the Andhra Movement," *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies* 5, no. 1 (March 1967), pp. 60–77.

9. Government of India, Indian Education Commission, *Report of the Madras Provincial Committee* (Calcutta, 1884), p. 38; Government of Madras, *Report on Public Instruction in the Madras Presidency for 1880–1881* (Madras, 1881), pp. 65–67.

10. Government of Madras, *Madras Financial Proceedings*, no. 58 (10 January 1884), India Office Library.

11. Morris, *Godavary District*, p. 24; Martin Luther Dolbeer, Jr., *A History of Lutheranism in the Andhra Desh, 1842–1920* (New York: Board of the Foreign Missions of the United Lutheran Church in America, 1959), p. 14; Martin Luther Dolbeer, Sr., *The Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church: A Brief History* (Rajahmundry: Department of Religious Education, Andhra Evangelical Church, 1951), pp. 27–30.

12. Government of Madras, *Report on Public Instruction in the Madras Presidency for 1876–77* (Madras, 1877), p. 135.

13. Government of Madras, *Report on Public Instruction for 1876–77*, p. 136. This ratio is best understood with the help of data drawn from later sources: it seems to approximate the proportion of Tamils to Telugus in Madras City, which was 2.7 to 1; see Government of India, *Census of India, 1891–2* (Madras, 1893), vol. 14, pp. 137, 139. The ratio of Tamils to Telugus in Madras Presidency was 1.1 to 1; see Government of India, *Census of India, 1911*, vol. 12, pt. 2 (Madras, 1912), p. 140 for details.

14. J. Gurunatham, *Viresalingam, the Founder of Telugu Public Life* (Rajahmundry: S. Gunneswarao Bros., 1911), pp. 165–66.

15. Tanguturi Prakasam, *Nā Jivita Yātra* (Rajahmundry: Kalahastri Tamma Rao and Sons, 1957), p. 48; Kandukuri Viresalingam, *Svīya Caritramu* (Rajahmundry: Hitakarini Samaj, 1954), vol. 1, pp. 1–2, 8–9, 17; A. Ramapati Rao, "Jivitamunandali Konni Mukhya Ghattamulu," in *Yuga Purusudu Virēśalingam* (Hyderabad, n.d.), p. 223. Viresalingam's father and uncle were revenue officials for the Government of Madras.

16. The following information about family life comes from Viresalingam's recollections in *Caritramu*, vol. 1, p. 18 *passim*, pp. 30–34, and about his wife, pp. 10–11 (but he gives no details of their early years together).

17. Kandukuri Viresalingam, "Stri Vidya," *Vivēka Vardhani* (hereafter abbreviated *VV*), February 1875 in *Kandukuri Virēśalingam Kavikṛta Granthamulu* (hereafter abbreviated *KVKG*), 8 (Rajahmundry, 1951–52), pp. 330–32.

18. Smarta Brahmans are followers of Sankara (c. 788–820), believers in

monistic or Advaita Vedanta who are supposed to conform to Smṛti traditions. Viresalingam expressed devotion by repeating the Gayatri from one hundred to one thousand times each day and visiting the river Godavari and the various Saivite and Vaishnavite temples for prayer. His only recollections of specific practices were of fasting on Shivaratri (fast day of the God Shiva) and of putting the three horizontal stripes of Shiva on his chest, upper arms, and face while he was praying: Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 19, 56.

19. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 15, 17. For *pyal* schools, see *The Foreign Missionary* (Philadelphia), 10, no. 2 (February 1889), p. 11, and "South Indian Pyal Schools," *Christian Mission Intelligencer* 10, n.s. (September 1874): pp. 287–88.

20. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 2, p. 138.

21. A. Ramapati Rau, "Pantulu Gari Grantha Racana Mudranamula Vivaramulu (A Bibliography of Viresalingam's Writings), in *Yuga Purusudu Virēśalingam* p. 206; Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 2, p. 146.

22. Viresalingam first stated that he passed the Matriculation examination in 1871 but later gave 1870 as the date: Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, p. 66 and vol. 2, p. 146. Although his claim was accepted by his biographers (*The Hindu*, January 19, 1893; Gurunatham, *Viresalingam*, pp. 26–27; V. R. Narla, *Viresalingam* [New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1968], p. 18), examination of several contemporary sources does not show his name in the lists of students who passed the Matriculation; see Government of Madras, *Godavary District Gazette, 1869–1871*; Government of Madras, *Fort St. George Gazette, 1869–1871*; *Madras Times, 1870*.

23. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, p. 60. At this time Keshav Chandra Sen had broken with the older Brahma Samaj members led by Devendranath Tagore and had organized his own association; in contrast to Tagore's stress on the gradual changing of Hinduism, Sen emphasized the necessity of more drastic uprooting of old customs. S. Natarajan, *A Century of Social Reform in India* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1959), pp. 48–49; The Brahma Samaj, "Jesus Christ: Europe and Asia" (a lecture given on May 5, 1877), *Keshub Chunder Sen's Lectures in India*, 3d ed. (Calcutta, 1899), pp. 30–31.

24. Kandukuri Viresalingam, "Satyamu," *VV*, November 1874, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, pp. 313–20.

25. He began in 1871 as an assistant teacher in the Rajahmundry Provincial School, then passed a government examination qualifying him to practice in the lower courts. In 1872 he accepted a job as headmaster of a village school. That same year he passed a translator's examination in English and Telugu, but he continued to teach and in 1874 became headmaster of a school in Dowleshwaram, a large village near his Rajahmundry home. He lived in the village but walked to town frequently to participate in the activities of the Provincial School Club. In 1875 he passed an English precis writing examina-

tion that qualified him for a sub-magistrate's position. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 66-77.

26. He first had his journal published in Madras and then persuaded six men to finance the purchase of a press which was set up in his Rajahmundry home. After a quarrel with the Dowleshwaram school management, he left there in 1875 and began a printing business in Rajahmundry. A rupture with his partners followed and he bought them out, using funds from his books. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 88, 92-95, 99.

27. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 88, 94.

28. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, p. 99.

29. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 77, 92. Viresalingam refused a government job when one was offered to him: Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, p. 137. He attacked government service as the "meanest" of jobs: Kandukuri Viresalingam, "Aikamatyam," *VV*, July 1875 in *KVKG* vol. 8, p. 366.

30. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, p. 59.

31. For details of Viresalingam's life and career, especially his later career, which cannot be covered here in outline, see John G. Leonard, "Kandukuri Viresalingam, 1848-1919: A Biography of an Indian Social Reformer" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1970).

32. Members of the educated elite in the 1870s had difficulty following some of these essays: Nidudavolu Venkata Rau, *Āndhra Vacana Vāṅmayamu* (Madras, 1954), p. 147; G. V. Sitapati, "Telugu," in Nagendra, ed., *Indian Literature* (Agra: Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, 1959), pp. 53-55, 63-65; Rayasam Venkata Sivudu, *Srī Vīrēśalinga Samsmṛti* (Guntur: R. V. Sirudu, 1931); Konda Venkatappayya, *Svīya Caritra*, vol. 1 (Vijayawada: Andhra Rastra Hindi Pracara Sangham, 1952-55), I, p. 60. Classical Telugu, or the poetic dialect, differed from spoken Telugu and had a highly Sanskritized vocabulary and syntax. Poetry was the only approved form of literary creation until the last part of the nineteenth century, with grammar and rhetoric recognized as subsections 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, it was also confined to particular subject matter, much of it erotic in nature. This posed a problem to scholars looking for texts for classroom use in the new educational systems. The initial formulation of a solution to this problem for educators in Telugu had come from one of Viresalingam's scholarly predecessors, Cinnaya Suri (1809-62). This non-Brahman became head of the Department of Telugu at Madras Presidency College and standardized many of the rules for classical Telugu as applied to prose.

33. A. Ramapati Rau, "Viresalingamu Pantulu Savimarsa Parisilanamu," (Ph.D. diss., Osmania University, 1964), pp. 37-38; A. Ramapati Rau, "Mukhya Ghattamulu," in *Yuga Purusudu*, p. 223.

34. Following the visit of the famous Bengali Brahmo Samaj leader, Keshav Chandra Sen, a Brahman in Madras started a Veda Samaj in 1864; many members were non-Brahmans, however. The founder was Rajagopalacharu; his friend, Subbarayalu Chetty, a non-Brahman, seems to have been the principal leader. The Veda Samaj limited its activities to preaching, although it started a Tamil journal, *Tattvabodhini*, to propagate the view of the association's leaders. Sridharulu Naidu, a non-Brahman in charge of the association from 1867 until 1874, changed the name to the Southern India Brahmo Samaj and framed regulations more in keeping with Brahmo traditions in Calcutta: Sivanatha Sastri, *History of the Brahmo Samaj*, vol. 2 (Calcutta: R. Chatterjee, 1912), pp. 456-65. After Naidu's death in 1874 the association was dormant until 1878 when a Telugu Brahman, Mannava Buccayya, teacher at a girls' school in Madras, revived it and associated it with the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj in Calcutta. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 93-94. For its anti-Brahman character, see Sivudu, *Samsmṛti*, p. 38; *The Madras Mail*, November 24, 1881, p. 3.

35. According to R. Srinivasan, the Brahmo movement "has been wholly forgotten by the Tamils." He was unable to find books or pamphlets on it in Madras libraries, Brahmo characters in Tamil novels, or more than one Tamil Brahman in the Madras chapter of the Southern Indian Brahmo Samaj. In contrast, he noted the prominence of Telugus in it and the involvement of Telugu zamindars in funding it and of Telugu school teachers in popularizing Brahmo and reformist ideals in Andhra. Citing a 1912 source, he listed six samajs in the Tamil region and twenty in the Telugu-speaking region. (The Madras Presidency had 17,038,000 Tamil speakers and 15,782,000 Telugu speakers in 1911 [*Census of India*, 1911, vol. 12, pt. 2 (Madras, 1912), p. 140].) Finally, he remarked on the appearance of missionaries in Tamil novels in the proselytizing roles given to Brahmans in Bengali literature (and, we add, Telugu literature) of that period: R. Srinivasan, "The Brahmo Samaj in Tamilnadu," *Journal of the University of Bombay*, arts nos., 44-45 (1975-76), pp. 80-81, 213-25.

36. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 138-139; Sastri, *Brahmo Samaj*, Vol. 2, pp. 494-95. Despite its name, this association was not derived from the Prarthana Samaj movement in western India.

37. One's occupation was unknown. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 135, 159.

38. *The Madras Mail*, October 27, 1880, p. 2.

39. *The Hindu* (Madras), November 19, 1885, and December 1, 1884, p. 5.

40. *The Madras Standard*, November 17, 1879, p. 3, and June 13, 1881, p. 3.

41. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, p. 79.

42. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 79-80.

43. Viresalingam contributed several early articles to journals in Masulipatnam and Madras, but his earliest surviving writings are from *VV*, the articles

which he reprinted in the volumes of his collected works: Viresalingam, *KVKG*, vol. 8, pp. 313-447.

44. Viresalingam, *VV*, February 1875, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 335.
45. Although Viresalingam attacked contemporary "false" scholars as early as January 1875, he began criticizing ancient Indian scholars in April 1875, and he accentuated this criticism in October 1875, and July 1876. See the following articles by him: *VV*, January 1875, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, pp. 325-29; *VV*, April 1875, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, pp. 347-48; "Brahmanavicaramu," *VV*, October 1875, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, pp. 400-1; "Brahmanulunu, vari vrttulunu," *VV*, July 1876, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 431.
46. Viresalingam, *VV*, January 1875, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 326; Viresalingam, *VV*, July 1875, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, pp. 363-68; Viresalingam, "Pramanavicaramu," *VV*, October 1875, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, pp. 392-404.
47. Viresalingam, *VV*, April 1875, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, pp. 348-49.
48. Viresalingam, *VV*, July 1876 in *KVKG*, vol. 8, pp. 428-38.
49. The one-act farce "Brahma Vivahamu" he published in his journal's supplement, *Hāsyā Sanjivani*, in July 1876 and he republished this in 1878 as a separate piece. It ridiculed the logic used to justify Brahman marriage customs: Ramapati Rau, "Pantulu Gari Grantha Racana," in *Yuga Purusudu*, p. 207; Viresalingam, "Brahma Vivahamu," in *KVKG*, vol. 2, pp. 1-67. He developed the farces to attack social evils: Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, p. 140. His use of colloquial speech offended critics: letter of G. V. Appa Rao, June 2, 1912, as quoted in Vedamu Venkataraya Sastri, *Vēdamu Venkatarāya Sastrulavāri Jvita Caritra Sangra* (Madras, 1949), p. 121. In Madras, however, attacks on Brahmins were deprecated by social reformers: *Athenaeum and Daily News*, June 3, 1874.
50. Viresalingam, *VV*, July 1876, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, pp. 428-38.
51. Viresalingam, *VV*, January 1875, in *KVKG*, vol. 7, p. 329; Viresalingam, *VV*, April 1875, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, pp. 347-49; Viresalingam, *VV*, July 1875, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 364; Viresalingam, "Aikamatyamu," in *KVKG*, vol. 7, pp. 8, 9.
52. Viresalingam, *VV*, July 1876, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, pp. 431-39.
53. Viresalingam, *VV*, April 1875, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, pp. 343-49.
54. Viresalingam, *VV*, July 1875, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, pp. 363-71; Viresalingam, "Aikamatyamu," in *KVKG*, vol. 8, pp. 4-13.
55. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, p. 69.
56. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 143-45. Burial rather than cremation prevailed among Telugu Brahman Virashaivites of the Aradhya sect.
57. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 140-43.

58. A detailed comparison of the Andhra and Madras social reform movements is in John G. Leonard, "Viresalingam and the Making of Modern Andhra: Social Reform in Rajahmundry and Madras, 1874-1891." (MS, 1968) A summary appears in Karen I. Leonard and John G. Leonard, "Social Reform and Women's Participation in Political Culture: Andhra and Madras," in Gail Minault, ed., *The Extended Family: Women and Political Participation in India and Pakistan* (Columbia, Mo.: South Asia Books, 1981), pp. 19-45.

59. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 152-58, 277. Kandukuri Viresalingam, "Rajahamahendravara Stri Punar Vivaha Caritramu," in *KVKG*, vol. 7, pp. 6-8. The latter was an unofficial report presented to the Rajahmundry Widow Marriage Association by Viresalingam on June 9, 1885. It contained a description of the widow marriage campaign and Viresalingam included it in his collected works. Hereafter it will be cited as "Vivaha Caritramu." For an example of an orthodox Hindu argument, see Vedamu Venkataraya Sastri, *Stri Punar Vivāha Durvāda Nirvāpanamu*, 2d ed. (Madras, 1924).

60. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 163-66; *Indian Law Review* 6 (Madras Ser.): pp. 382-83.

61. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, p. 159; Viresalingam, "Vivaha Caritramu," in *KVKG*, vol. 7, pp. 11-12.

62. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 159, 161-62. D. V. Prakasa Row, "The Widow Marriage Movement in Madras," *Kāyastha Samāchar* (Allahabad) vol. 7, no. 6 (1903): p. 540.

63. Sivudu, *Samsmrti*, pp. 2-4, 135-43; Subba Rao, *Memories*, pp. 19-25; *Sundara Rao*, pp. 3-13; C. Cilakamarti Laksminarasimham, *Sūrya Caritramu* (Vishakapatnam, 1957), p. 51; Valluri Suryanarayana Rau, *Sūryanārāyanīyamu*, (Kowwuru, 1936), p. 165.

64. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 166-68, 170, 252-54; Venkatapayya, *Caritra*, vol. 1, p. 36.

65. Suryanarayana Rau, *Sūryanārāyanīyamu*, pp. 166-67; Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 158-62, 171; Viresalingam, "Vivaha Caritramu," in *KVKG*, vol. 7, p. 11; Prakasa Row, "Widow Marriage," p. 540.

66. Suryanarayana Rau, *Sūryanārāyanīyamu*, pp. 166-67.

67. A Deputy Tahsildar found a mother willing to have her widowed daughter remarried and Viresalingam sent a college student to go to the village and bring the girl in the night to his home. Then Viresalingam found a bridegroom, a young man who had been educated for many years in his house, was enthused about widow marriages, and was of the right sect. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 158-59, 181-84, 188; Viresalingam, "Vivaha Caritramu," in *KVKG*, vol. 7, p. 17; Prakasa Row, "Widow Marriage," p. 542.

68. Intimidation from the orthodox Hindu side resulted in Viresalingam's cook and family priest ceasing their services, and many reformers did not

attend the wedding because of such threats: Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 189, 191; Viresalingam, "Vivaha Caritramu," in *KVKG*, vol. 7, pp. 20–22.

69. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 190, 196; Viresalingam, "Vivaha Caritramu," in *KVKG*, vol. 7, p. 23. Prakasa Row, *Kāyastha Samāchar* 7, no. 4 (1903): pp. 294–96.

70. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 160–61; Viresalingam, "Vivaha Caritramu," in *KVKG*, vol. 7, p. 11; Prakasa Row, *Kāyastha Samāchar* 8, no. 5 (1903): p. 413.

71. Venkataraya Sastri, *Vēdamu Venkatarāya Sāstrulavāri Jivita Caritra Sangrahamu*, pp. 36–37; Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 152–58.

72. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 172, 184–85, 187, 197–99; Viresalingam, "Vivaha Caritramu," in *KVKG*, vol. 7, p. 12; Prakasa Row, "Widow Marriage," p. 542; Venkatappayya, *Caritra*, vol. 1, p. 61.

73. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 197–99, 281–82; Viresalingam, "Vivaha Caritramu," in *KVKG*, vol. 7, pp. 18–20, 23–24, 25; Prakasa Row, *Kāyastha Samāchar* 8, no. 4 (1903): pp. 296–97.

74. Prakasa Row, *Kāyastha Samāchar* 8, no. 4 (1903): pp. 298–301, 294; Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 204–09.

75. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 215–19, 230, 242, 246; Viresalingam, "Vivaha Caritramu," in *KVKG*, vol. 7, p. 31; Prakasa Row, *Yatra*, p. 89; Venkatappayya, *Caritra*, vol. 1, p. 36; Prakasa Row, *Kāyastha Samāchar* 8, no. 4 (1903): pp. 299–301.

76. *The Madras Mail*, September 12, 1882, p. 3.

77. *Indian Law Review* 6 (Madras Ser.): pp. 381–96; Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, p. 235; Prakasa Row, *Kāyastha Samāchar* 8, no. 4 (1903): p. 298.

78. *Hindu Dēsābhimāni* in *Madras Native Newspaper Reports*, October 1882; *Vizag Observer*, no. 20, and *Purushārthapradāyini*, nos. 4, 5, and 6, in *Madras Native Newspaper Reports*, July 1883.

79. *The Madras Standard*, April 27, 1883, p. 3; *The Madras Mail*, April 25, 1883, p. 2, and April 26, 1883, p. 3.

80. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 196–266; Prakasa Row, *Kāyastha Samāchar* 8, no. 5 (1903): p. 414.

81. Five percent of Hindu girls in Madras Presidency, but 11 percent of Brahman girls, married before the age of ten; and 3.3 percent of Brahman girls ten to fourteen were widowed, compared to less than 1 percent of all girls ten to fourteen. The marriage percentages before the age of ten are from 1881: *Imperial Census of 1881* (Presidency of Madras) (Madras: Government of India, 1883), vol. 1, pp. 70–73, and the widow percentages from 1891: *Census of India, 1891* (Presidency of Madras) (Madras: Government of India, 1893), XIII, pp. 146–47.

82. Gurunatham, *Viresalingam*, p. 101; Viresalingam, "Vivaha Caritramu," in *KVKG*, vol. 8, pp. 41–42.

83. Viresalingam had given many of the bridegrooms allowances in their college days to permit them to continue their educations, and the marriages themselves usually cost more than they ordinarily would have for boys of that status—thus expectations were raised but the benefits after marriage were not very great. Viresalingam mentioned only a few bridegrooms who were dissatisfied but the situation was obviously more serious. The old reform association was dissolved, and a new one was constituted specifically to exclude some bridegrooms and to counter the demands of the married couples. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 278–79; Gurunatham, *Viresalingam*, pp. 116–17.

84. Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 326–75; Gurunatham, *Viresalingam*, pp. 104–12; Prakasa Row, *Kāyastha Samāchar* (Allahabad) 8, no. 5 (1903): pp. 416–17. For the satire Viresalingam published, see Kandukuri Viresalingam, "Dambhacarya Vilasanamu," *VV*, March 13, 1886, and Ramapati Rau, "Gnantha Racana," in *Yuga Purusudu*, p. 211. Lakshminarasimham's initial reaction was to burn *Viveka Vardhani* at a public demonstration, although he later apologized for this outburst; see Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 1, pp. 347–54.

85. *The Indian Social Reformer* 16 (1905): pp. 548, 560.

86. Gurunatham, *Viresalingam*, pp. 180–81. In the 1880s, journals were still the main outlet for Telugu authors, and Viresalingam published scholarly works on Telugu poetry in his journal until he was forced to discontinue it in 1890 because of competing journals and government pressure. Then he and his friend Nyapati Subha Rao started a monthly journal which Viresalingam edited, *Cintamani*. From 1891 on this journal featured novels published serially, and although a few novels had been published just prior to this time (including one by Viresalingam), Telugu novels really originated with this journal's encouragement (Venkata Rau, *Andhra Vacana*, pp. 139–41). Telugu journals founded in 1885 in Madras competed with *Viveka Vardhani* in its last years: *Andhra Prakasika* was closely allied with the Madras Mahajana Sabha, a political association formed in 1884, and the Brahmo Samaj leader in Madras, Mannava Buccayya, began *Hindu Jana Samskaram*, which represented the interests of social reform in Madras. Other specialized journals began in 1885 and 1891. The type of men who edited these journals changed for most Telugu journals from 1885 to 1891, a change coinciding with the decline of social reform. The new editors were not Western-educated Telugu scholars but members of the educated elite who practiced journalism as a profession. Educated as lawyers or teachers, these men were more attuned to the new currents in politics than the older editors. The Madras Mahajana Sabha got publicity for its efforts from the English language *The Hindu*, but *Andhra Prakasika* (Telugu) and *Swadesamitra* (Tamil) became regional language journals allied with the Sabha: *The Hindu*, January 21, 1885, p. 5; *The Madras Mail*, September 18, 1885, p. 4. *Andhra Prakasika* soon outstripped *Viveka Vardhani* and the *Andhra Bhasha Sajivani* in circulation, but it concentrated solely on political issues. Buccayya was a friend of Viresalingam, and his *Hindu Jana Samskaram* combined political and social

comment and equalled *Viveka Vardhani's* circulation: *Madras Native Newspaper Reports*, January to December 1885 (Madras Record Office). The literary journal *Armrta Granthamali* of Nellore began in 1885 and the Rajahmundry Prarthana Samaj journal *Satya Samvardhani* began in 1891: *Amudrta Grandha Cintamani* (Nellore), no. 9 (1887); Sivudu, *Samsmrti*, p. 31. For the new editors, *The Hindu*, April 8, 1895, p. 4; Sivudu, *Samsmrti*, p. 31.

87. Prakasam, *Yatra*, p. 252.

88. Much later, in the beginning of the twentieth century, this process stimulated an interest in a political guarantee—an Andhra state—for the continuation of the Telugu cultural revival. See John G. Leonard, "Andhra Movement" *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies* 5, no. 1 (March 1967), pp. 60–77.

89. Viresalingam, *VV*, July 1880, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 485; Kandukuri Viresalingam, "Desabhimanamamu," *VV*, July 1881, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 555; Kandukuri Viresalingam, "Sangha Duracara Nivaranamunaku Stri Vidya Yavasyakamu," *VV*, March 1885, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, pp. 639–40.

90. Kandukuri Viresalingam, "Stri Punar Vivaha Visayakopanyasamu," in *KVKG*, vol. 7, pp. 13, 48.

91. Viresalingam, "Stri Punar...", in *KVKG*, vol. 7, pp. 5, 48, 56.

92. Kandukuri Viresalingam, "Desabhimanamamu," *VV*, July 1880, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, pp. 482–83.

93. Viresalingam, "Desabhimanamamu," *VV*, July 1880, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 482.

94. Viresalingam, "Stri Punar...", in *KVKG*, vol. 7, pp. 6–16.

95. Kandukuri Viresalingam, "Hindu Matamulu," in *KVKG*, vol. 7, p. 3.

96. Kandukuri Viresalingam, "Kalamu Yokka Viluva," *VV*, March 1880, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 460; Kandukuri Viresalingam, "Vaidyulu," *VV*, February 1881, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 510; Viresalingam, *VV*, October 1881, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 562.

97. Kandukuri Viresalingam, "Isvara Datta Pustakamulu," in *KVKG*, vol. 7, p. 22; Viresalingam, "Stri Punar...", in *KVKG*, vol. 7, pp. 6, 11.

98. Viresalingam used the phrase "common folk" or "ordinary people" (*samanya janulu*) which has a vulgar connotation in Telugu. Our use of "the masses" expresses the social distance which Viresalingam felt separated him from the masses of illiterate people.

99. Kandukuri Viresalingam, "Rajakiya Pathasalalu," *VV*, March 1881, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 526; Kandukuri Viresalingam, "Kulina Brahmana Vivahamulu," *VV*, August 1885, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 647; Viresalingam, *VV*, July 1880, in *KVKG*, p. 489.

100. Viresalingam, *VV*, July 1880, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 485; Kandukuri Viresalingam, "Desabhimanamamu," *VV*, July 1881, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 555.

101. Kandukuri Viresalingam, "Sangha Duracara Nivaranamunaku Stri Vidya Yavasyakamu," *VV*, March 1885, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, pp. 639–40.

102. Viresalingam, "Isvara Datta Pustakamulu," in *KVKG*, vol. 7, p. 22.

103. Kandukuri Viresalingam, "Desa Bhasalu," *VV*, October 1881, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, pp. 556–66.

104. Kandukuri Viresalingam, "Desabhivrdhi," *VV*, January 1883, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 597.

105. Kandukuri Viresalingam, "Patupaduta," *VV*, November 1884, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 633.

106. Kandukuri Viresalingam, "Vidyadhikula Yokka Krtyamulu," *VV*, June 1883, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 607.

107. Viresalingam, *VV*, October 1881, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 566.

108. Kandukuri Viresalingam, "Vidyadhikula Yokka Krtyamulu," *VV*, March 1882, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, pp. 577–78; Kandukuri Viresalingam, "Andhra Bhasabhivrdhi," *VV*, June 1882, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, pp. 580–81.

109. Viresalingam, *VV*, November 1886, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 667; *The Hindu*, January 12, 1885, p. 6.

110. Viresalingam, *VV*, March 1882, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, pp. 577–78; Kandukuri Viresalingam, "Desa Bhasa," *VV*, November 1886, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 670.

111. Viresalingam, *VV*, June 1882, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, pp. 580–81; Viresalingam, "Vidyadhikula Yokka Krtyamulu," *VV*, March 1882, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, pp. 577–78; Viresalingam, *VV*, January 1883, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 600.

112. Kandukuri Viresalingam, "Stri Vidyabhyasamu," *VV*, February 1884, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 624; Viresalingam, *VV*, November 1886, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 667.

113. Viresalingam, *VV*, June 1882, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 667.

114. Viresalingam, *VV*, November 1884, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 633; Viresalingam, *VV*, November 1886, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 667.

115. Viresalingam, *VV*, July 1881, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 554; Kandukuri Viresalingam, "Janmantaramu," in *KVKG*, vol. 7, pp. 9–10.

116. Viresalingam, *VV*, March 1882, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 577; *The Hindu*, January 12, 1885, p. 6; Kandukuri Viresalingam, "Desiya Mahasabhalu, Dani Yuddesamulunuu," in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 1–6.

117. Viresalingam, *VV*, November 1884, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 633; Kandukuri Viresalingam, "Kulacara, Matacara Samskaranamu," *VV*, April 1887, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, pp. 674–77; Viresalingam, "Desiya Mahasabha...", in *KVKG*, vol. 8, pp. 21–46.

118. Viresalingam, *VV*, November 1886, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 667.
119. Viresalingam, "Desiya Mahasabha...", in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 8-17.
120. Viresalingam, *VV*, November 1886, in *KVKG*, vol. 8, p. 667.
121. *The Hindu*, July 15, 1893, p. 3; Government of Madras, *General Index to Proceedings, Government of Madras, 1894* (Madras, 1895), p. 339.
122. Cilakamarti Laksminarasimham gives an amusing description of the educated elite travelling from one district conference to another: *Caritramu*, pp. 127, 165-75.
123. *The Hindu*, July 3, 1895, p. 6; *The Madras Times*, June 10, 1895, p. 4; for a description of how social reform issues were treated in the different conferences, see Viresalingam, *Caritramu*, vol. 2, pp. 86-88.
124. *The Hindu Weekly Edition*, April 11, 1907, pp. 9-10; *The Indian Social Reformer*, 15 (1905): pp. 436-37.

Chapter 8

1. The term "vernacular" is used here in the sense of a modern Indian language, as opposed to classical or ritual languages such as Sanskrit, Arabic, or Persian, or a modern foreign language such as English. Some have objected to the term as a pejorative, implying a spoken dialect rather than a literary language. That is not the implication here. The Indian languages discussed in this volume are literary languages of considerable range and subtlety that also have the advantage of being spoken in their respective regions. With the advent of the printing press, these languages became the media of communication between those who were literate and those who had access to the printed word through various forms of community readings or public performances. For a discussion of this phenomenon in rural Bengal, see Rafiuddin Ahmed, *The Bengal Muslims, 1871-1906: A Quest for Identity* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 72-105; for a parallel in early modern Europe, see Natalie Zemon Davis, "Printing and the People," in her *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), pp. 189-226.

2. There is no biography of Mumtaz 'Ali. The following account is pieced together from: Sayyid Mumtaz 'Ali, "Tahzib un-Niswan," *Tahzib un-Niswan* (hereafter *TN*) 21, Jubilee no. (July 6, 1918): pp. 424-33; Abul Athar Hafiz Jalandhari, "Maulvi Sayyid Mumtaz 'Ali," *TN*, 38 (6 July 1935): pp. 607-17 (originally published in *Makhzan* in 1927, this article was reprinted in *Tahzib un-Niswan* as an obituary); MS biography in Urdu of Muhammadi Begam, Mumtaz 'Ali's second wife, by her sister, Ahmadi Begam (Begam S. Wahid 'Ali), kindly lent to me by Naim and Yasmin Tahir of Lahore; Interviews in Lahore in 1977 with Naim and Yasmin Tahir (S. Mumtaz 'Ali's granddaughter) and Hijab Imtiyaz 'Ali (daughter-in-law of S. Mumtaz 'Ali). I would like to