

CHAPTER- II

HISTORIOGRAPHY

The modern method of history writing has basically been formulated by the West. In this new method 'history' came to be defined within the framework of 'positivism' that had its genesis in the discourse of Enlightenment and the rise of nation states in Europe. Positivism has been defined as a philosophy that emphasized on a strict presentation of facts¹, which according to Ranke formed the 'supreme law of historical writing'.² The concern for facts in historical writing can further be gauged when E. H. Carr pertinently points out that history must necessarily consist of a 'corpus of ascertained facts'.³ The influence of Enlightenment on the Positivists had two significant effects. First, it took history closer to natural sciences by applying scientific analysis to the study of facts in the human sciences, just as it had come to be done in the natural sciences. This necessarily gave rise to a new scientific method of writing history primarily based on empiricism. Second, the process of salvaging the facts in a scientific way and presenting them in a sequential order with reference to linear time became the central issue in presenting the historical narrative. The popularity of the positivist method of writing history in Europe may be noticed significantly in the Indological discourse on Indian history.

The purpose for which history writing was taken up by the Indologists and Orientalist writers was to define the past of the colonized. They, however, in the process developed and defined the parameters within which the discipline of History came to be understood in the country ever since. An important implication of this was the colonial projection of Indians lacking in historical sense and this finds its acceptance in several of the historical writings of modern Indians as well. In this Chapter, however, we propose to survey the various historiographical trends as they emerged at the regional level with Deccan as the focus. In this regard, we have endeavored to delineate first, the writings that present a

composite history of the Deccan as a whole. This is then followed by the writings of those scholars who have written regional history within the framework of linguistic regions like Andhra and Karnataka, but not necessarily within the present-day linguistic divisions of these States, which were demarcated only after independence. We next look at post-Independent writings by narrowing down particularly, to those works that focused on the history of the Chajukyas, before probing into the writings of the social and Marxist historians on the region. Finally, we look at the most recent type of historical writings that have provided a conceptual shift in the way historians should look at the past especially, by highlighting the indigenous perceptions of history writing. Importantly, one has attempted here to investigate these various approaches to comprehend how scholars have dealt with genealogical traditions of ruling elites as explicated in the epigraphical and literary sources. This particular focus has been to understand the efforts made by historians hitherto, to capture how the ruling elites fabricated and maintained historical knowledge that had enabled them to establish identities. This last aspect constitutes the most vital issue we need to analyze in our research and therefore, forms a critical part of our review in this Chapter.

Initially, an interest to write about India and its past among the Europeans had generated from the need to understand the so-called 'native' laws, customs and traditions that were considered essential in carrying out an efficient administration of the subject colony. As a result many European scholars like William Jones, Charles Wilkins, H. T. Colebroke and H. H. Wilson explored into the classical literature of India and found significant philological similarities between Sanskrit and European languages. An important consequence of the strenuous research of these scholars primarily led to the exposition and publication⁴ of massive literary source material that spoke about the ancient Indian past. However, the interpretations of the Indian philosophical and literary texts by them aroused two schools of thought within the Oriental discourse. One was led by the cynical Utilitarians. The other was directed by the sympathetic Romanticists led by William Jones, Max Muller and others who advocated both critical as well as a sympathetic view of India's past.⁵

In the writings of the Romantics India came to be epitomized as a land of spirituality and idealism that distinguished it from the materialistic West. In this interpretation, a close affinity between Sanskrit and European languages provided them the ground for formulating the belief in the common origin theory of an 'Aryan race' from which the Europeans and Brahmins were said to have originated. Therefore, in this understanding of India of Sanskrit, the Brahmins and their texts were looked upon as arbiters in interpreting the Indian past. However, despite their sensitivity to Indian civilization, one significant contradiction that emerged in their understanding of the Indian past was that of essentializing and distancing India from what the essence of the West stood for. This was done by magnifying elements such as caste, religion and other such aspects that temporally disassociated India from Europe's present and this made it unchanging, passive and incapable of achieving "progress".⁶ Thus, it can be deduced that though the Romantics appear to be sympathetic by their genuine respect and love for India and its language, at the same time, they based their central arguments on the basis of India's opposition to Europe.

The second important school that emerged within the Oriental discourse was the Imperialist ideologically supported by the Utilitarians who appeared rather cynical about India and its past. The Imperialist and Administrator writers governed by the principles of Positivism and Universalism applied a stringent scientific method to judge the Indian past. This, they did within a certain theoretical framework based on Euro-centric ideas and images. A natural corollary of this was the representation of the spiritual and sensuous India as an opposite of the materialistic and rational West. Naturally, therefore, in this conception India came to be often portrayed as a land inferior to the West especially, in terms of their lacking a sense of history and therefore, of the linearity of progressions. Further, in their colonizing efforts they even tried to depict India as an uncivilized, barbaric and rude nation. In other words, this binary opposition of the "self and the "other" in the East-West construct was aimed at justifying the British conquest of India. The imperialist writers staunchly believed that a change or transformation of Indian society could be effected mainly through government legislation and secondly, through the process of "inventing" its history and

civilization in terms of founding essences invulnerable to historical change. In both efforts the aim was to exercise their power over the subject people.⁷

In the category of the many Imperialist historians, the prominent were James Mill and Vincent Smith. In his monumental hegemonic account on ***The History of British India*** (1817), Mill paints the picture of Indian society as caste-centric and dominated by Hindu religious ideology, which in his opinion, was unable to transcend the false knowledge and inferior practices of 'primitivism'¹. In this characterization, therefore, Indian society came to be represented as sort of retrograde that did not encourage any progress and remained 'static' and 'unchanging'. An obsession with explaining ills of the Indian society to caste in order to explain India's low political and economic 'development' became a theme of analysis adopted by subsequent scholarship on India. It was his firm opinion that due to cultural inferiority the Indians lacked a sense of history.⁸ It may be noted here that Mill's interpretations on the Indian past were largely based on the theoretical norms of Indian society as laid out in the *Dharmasastric* or ancient legal texts. Secondly, he tried to judge the Indian past by certain utilitarian standards with which he was familiar and therefore, when he failed to notice western values in Indian civilization, he condemned it severely. Lastly, and most importantly, Mill's hegemonic account was intended to prove the cultural superiority of the West over the Orient by representing the 'Other' (the Indian civilization) as radically different from the 'Self that is the West.'⁹

Despite all this, Mill's *History* became the standard work on India and remained so for decades. His assertions about the Indian past as a changeless and a stagnant society where despotic rulers dominated appeared as a standard model in various philosophies of history current in the nineteenth century Europe. For instance, the concept of *Oriental Despotism* and its characterization of the pre-modern Indian State and society as found in Marx's model of the Asiatic Mode of Production was indeed the product of the Imperialist interpretations of Indian history, State and society. In this model, Marx conceptualized pre-modern India as being constituted of an unchanging State that was dominated by self-sufficient village economies, communal ownership of land and internal exploitation of the

village communities. Such a characterization of the pre-modern Indian State, by Marx clearly reflects the strong prejudice held by the Occidentalists towards the Orient.¹⁰

Another important hegemonic account on early Indian history comes several decades after James Mill's seminal work, in the writings of another Administrator writer Vincent Smith, of the early twentieth century. By the time Smith wrote his hegemonic text, enormous source material in the form of inscriptions, archaeology, numismatics, and monuments had been made accessible. Smith understood the immense progress that had been made in this regard for connected systematic history of early India to be now written. With his great fascination towards classical Greek and Roman civilization, he took their achievements to be the yardstick to write about Indian history. Hence, he used such concepts like the '*age of heroes*' and the '*age of empires*' that became the subject matter of his history. Thus, in this interpretation of Indian history, it was the age of Asoka and Chandra Gupta II that became glorious periods for ancient India. The intervening periods that witnessed the rise of small kingdoms were considered by Smith as "dark ages" as these periods represented chaos and lawlessness and failed to produce emperors. Further, Smith's long narrative of Indian political history was largely organized around the trope of invasion and empire -- beginning with Alexander the Great and ending with the British. In such an account of history based on wars and battles, there was naturally an over-emphasis on political and administrative matters than on other aspects like social, cultural or economic history. From the present perspective, he viewed the genealogies of kings as given in the *prasastis* sections of inscription to merely fill up details on political history. Secondly, the political narrative thus constructed was largely north-centric with peninsular India, particularly the Deccan, being only marginally represented. Though much had been written on the theory of the State, kingship and administration, by this time due to the discovery of the *Arthashastra* in 1905, little analytical study was devoted to the actual structure of State during the ancient and early medieval period.¹¹

With regard to the periodization, we find that these scholars took into account the major shifts in the dynasties and religion as the criteria to demarcate Indian history. Thus, we find Mill's periodization of Indian history was categorized into Hindu, Muslim and British. However, in the 150 years since Mill's *History*, the definitive chronologies of India before the Muslim conquests have been constructed largely on the basis of the interpretation of stone and copper-plate inscriptions. Hence, we find in Smith's writings a periodization of Ancient, Medieval and Modern. However, even in his writings Ancient came to be equated with the Hindu period and Medieval with the Muslim period. The early medieval was regarded by him as a period of darkness, as there was an absence of empire based kingdoms during this period. Therefore, it only drew marginal attention.¹² In this schema of periodization dynasties ruling in south of India and the Deccan region and their chronological spans never defined the periodization of the country as a whole. An explanation for such gross negligence of the region has been explained by some scholars to the changing topography of South India, which provided a more complex structure permitting less political uniformity than the less complex structure of the northern plains.¹³

The beginnings of history writing in South India may be attributed to the interest taken by some of the Christian missionaries and some of the enthusiastic British administrators who were posted in the South with the onset of British rule in India. Initiative in this direction had been taken up by the missionaries who, unlike the Utilitarians, did not focus on the State, but carried on a crusade against the inherent backwardness of Indian society that according to them, was rooted in its religion.¹⁴ Through their writings, they attempted to expose the weakness of Indian religion. Further, the missionaries justified the British rule in India by considering it as divinely conceived that had come to rescue a condemned humanity through proselytization and education, which they thought, could bring a radical change in the nature and quality life of Hindustan. The most important writings of the missionaries in the Deccan and Madras Presidency were those of Abbe Dubois, Caldwell, among many others. Though there is controversy¹⁵ with regard to the authorship of Abbe Dubois work on ***Hindu Manners Customs and Ceremonies***, however, the work may be considered as one of the earliest

accounts on South India that attempts to give a vivid description of the various Hindu customs and ceremonies.¹⁶ Thus, the writings of missionaries evinced their inherent motive of spreading Christianity and in this process only produced distorted versions on the Indian past without actually attempting to make an analytical study of the indigenous society.

They (the missionaries) also studied languages and thus played an important role in the "construction" of both literary and inscripational sources of information. Hence, irrespective of their ideological commitments, the accounts of the missionaries came to be written within a certain perception of 'History'¹, which most Europeans were familiar with since the Enlightenment. They were encumbered by the concern of contrasting the civilized West with the backward and irrational India. They consistently projected that History as a discipline was absent in the traditional society's vision of its past. This then became a motivating factor for them to consciously create new images within a scientific paradigm, so that it became a justification and provided useful tools for the more contemporary interpretations of Indian society.¹⁷

An important contribution with regard to the South Indian history was made by administrators like Col. Mackenzie, C. P. Brown and others who worked in different parts of South India and the Deccan. It may be stated that the appointment of Mackenzie as the Surveyor General of South India in 1796, by the British Government, ushered in a new phase in the writing of the Deccan history. Mackenzie's strenuous endeavors aided by the local clerks, especially the Kavali brothers,¹⁸ resulted in the accumulation of vast source material in the form of stone and copper plate inscriptions, local records and Telugu classics. Another significant outcome of Mackenzie's efforts was that for the first time many young Indian scholars were trained in the scientific method of sifting "facts" and collecting source material. As a result, enormous data from the villages pertaining to details on peasants, revenue, rent, caste, customs, tribes, popular religious practices, family genealogies of various ruling families belonging to different *Samsthanas* and *Zamindaris* were systematically collected. These new sources acquired authenticity due to the fact that they have been generated under the

supervision of state power.¹⁹ A large majority of these collections have been preserved in the form of village *Kaifiyats* popularly known as the ***Mackenzie Manuscripts***. Since these sources were being identified, collected, edited and translated for the first time, not much analytical study could be done by them to understand the nature of the source material and its relevance in writing the history of the ancient Deccan.

The body or data of knowledge thus produced came to be the foundational knowledge base on which later histories were written. This has been significantly discussed in Inden's recent studies on the Indological discourse,²⁰ which according to him was either 'descriptive', 'commentative' or 'hegemonic'. The 'descriptive' accounts of the Indological discourse were described by him as simply describing the sources collected apparently letting them speak for themselves. Therefore, in these accounts the thoughts and acts of objects of study were presented as they were. In this category, we have *Mackenzie's Kaifiyats* that simply note the facts or describe them without any analysis. The second type of accounts are what Inden calls as 'commentative' in nature that provide comments on the thoughts and actions of the people being studied and therefore, consciously bring to the forefront a certain point of view or criticism and bias. The aim of both these types of accounts was quite simple, namely, to provide a true picture of India with certain rational explanations. Most of the writings of the Romanticists may be grouped under latter type. However, in Inden's view it was the 'hegemonic' accounts of the Indological discourse that provided the most critical view about India. According to him, these texts often depicted the thoughts and institutions of the Indians as distortions of normal and natural thoughts that were considered universal but, actually reflected only the Western values and ideas. Thus, these accounts aimed at hegemonizing the Indian thoughts, by putting the data within a consciously formulated theoretical framework, as can be noticed in the accounts of both Mill and Smith. These early explanations thus laid the ideological foundations for the later interpretations of Indian history.

Historical writings on South India and the Deccan received further impetus from 1837 onwards, when James Princep achieved a breakthrough in the

decipherment of the *Brahmi* script that was used for writing many of the early inscriptions. This provided a new scientific outlook for the study of history as a whole. In South India, the study of epigraphical sources began with the initiative taken by the Madras Government to publish inscriptions in journals like the *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy*, *Epigraphia Indica* and *South Indian Inscriptions* that were started solely for this purpose.²¹ Many eminent epigraphists like J. F. Fleet, Lewis Rice, E. Hultzsch, F. Keilhorn, H. Krishna Sastri, V. Venkayya and others endeavored hard to translate, edit and transcribe a good number of inscriptions and interpreted the data thus obtained to construct primarily a political history of South India. The inscriptions, by virtue of their recording specific events and dates came to be treated by most scholars as "hardcore" evidence²² as opposed to less reliable literary sources that provided authentic information and therefore, came to be used largely in constructing the political and dynastic histories of the region within the scientific method of writing history. In fact Fleet, one of the most prolific epigraphists, was so excited about this 'authentic' historical information found in the Indian inscriptions that he wrote: "for our knowledge of ancient political history we are indebted only to inscriptions and not to any history works bequeathed to us by the Hindus".²³

The intensive study of inscriptions on a region-wise basis not only yielded insights into the early political institutions and ideas, but it gave a new focus to the study of regional and local histories. In the present context of the study, eminent epigraphists like J. F. Fleet and E. Hultzsch and others unearthed a large number of inscriptions belonging to various Chalukyan families of the Deccan region. These scholars read and used the genealogies of the ruling elites to mainly address the problem of solving the chronological and succession of the kings belonging to different Chalukyan families that was done in a linear fashion. Indeed, this provided a new dimension to "dynasticize"²⁴ political history within a positivistic framework. As a result, the most crucial issues relating to the notions of time, memory, history embedded in genealogies and their uses in seeking specific identities have been evaded in their writings. Our study that focuses mainly on inscriptional sources aims at re-looking the genealogies of ruling elites and other dominant social groups in the early medieval Deccan to give fresh

insights into the study of social history by taking up the study of the above mentioned issues.

It is pertinent at this juncture to underscore that the Indian response to history writing that emerged during the late 19th and early 20th centuries posed a significant challenge to the earlier interpretations of Indian history in Indological discourses.²⁵ The Indian scholars writing during this period came to be known as the Nationalist historians.²⁶ They vehemently opposed the Imperialist interpretations on Indian history by terming these as deliberate misrepresentations and distortions. Further, they contested the colonial hegemony, by taking up the writing of ancient history of India that was meant to provide in the first place, an opposition to the colonial version of ancient Indian history, and secondly, to revamp the image of India by providing an idyllic picture of ancient India society.²⁷ Another significant feature of the Nationalist writings was the prolific usage of concepts like the "Golden Ages" and the great "Imperial Ages" that have been used in denoting some powerful ruling classes of ancient India.²⁸ Despite their strong opposition to the Imperialist writings on ancient Indian history, they nonetheless, followed the Positivist method and approach advocated by the West. Naturally, therefore, in their interpretations, one can notice that the writing of history was done merely as a process of accumulating "facts" from different source material that was used to write history.

The writings of Nationalist historians nevertheless, had strong ramifications on the regional historians writing on specific regions. Thus, the study of regional histories during this period emerged as a valuable offshoot of nationalist school of historical writing.²⁹ A further fillip to regional history has been provided with the availability of the abundance of source material in the form of archaeological, epigraphic, historical literature, religious literature, archival records and family Papers at the regional level. Significantly, the emergence of regional histories averted major breaks in historical interpretation found in the writings of the nationalist historians. Firstly, generalizations about the sub- continent from the perspective of the Ganges-Valley has been avoided. Secondly, the supposed "dark ages" emphasized in the nationalist historiography could be eliminated by using

local source material.³⁰ Studies on regional histories of small geographical areas and States such as, the histories of Bengal, Maharashtra, Andhra, Karnataka and parts of the peninsula became common towards the mid-twentieth century. In the next few pages, we shall endeavor to survey the historical works pertaining to the Deccan, in particular.

In the conventional works on the Deccan written within the positivistic methodological framework, we primarily begin with those works that deal with the composite history of the Deccan as a whole without necessarily identifying separate historical trends for the Andhra or Karnataka regions. Some of the writings that fall in this category are those of R. G. Bhandarkar, G. J. Dubreuil and G. Yazdani. One finds that all these writings begin with a detailed description on the geography of the Deccan. This is so because, geographically, the peninsular region appeared as a more complex structure to be studied. With its diverse topographical variations, it emerged as a complicated phenomenon for the historians to define the land south of Vindhyas. Until almost the middle of the century, some historians identified the peninsula into two distinct units of study (1) the "Deccan" and (2) "South India". Bhandarkar and Yazdani among others have identified the Deccan with the upper unit of the peninsula. According to them, Deccan is a land lying between the Vindhyas and the Krishna-Tungabhadra deltas. On the other hand, South India was identified with the land south of the Krishna-Tungabhadra region and was broadly confined within the territorial boundaries of the present-day linguistic States of Tamilnadu and Kerala.³¹

Bhandarkar was the first Indian historian to write on the peninsular India with "Dekkan" as its title, in the late 19th century.³² In his study on ***Early History of the Dekkan (1895)***, he identified Deccan as a land mainly confined to the present day Maharashtra region. In his text, the definition of the early historical phase of the Deccan was concerned, prior to the coming of the Aryans. Since his book concentrated mainly on Maharashtra region, the development of historical phase in other parts of the Deccan was given a corner place of study. He was also the first among modern Indian historians to write on ancient Indian history using genealogies of different ruling families for constructing historical narratives on the

political and dynastic history of the Deccan, which was done within the positivist methodology. Thus, while using both the literary and inscriptional sources of his time, he emphasized on providing "congeries of facts' pertaining to the dates and genealogies of kings in sequential order.³³ In such works therefore, there is a clear reflection of the failure to understand how the ruling elites in the pre-modern times perceived and memorized their past especially, through genealogies that provided them with a sense of the past and identity.

Next important study on the "Deccan" emerged in the writings of G. J. Dubreuil. In his study on the ***Ancient History of the Deccan (1920)***, he has understood the definition of region as "a larger track of country which was bounded on the north by the Narbada and Mahanandi, on the east by the Bay of Bengal, on the west by the Arabian Sea, on the south by the Nilgiri Hills and the Southern Pennar". The reason for writing this book, he explains is to "rescue history before it is lost in obscurity". Hence, he used the hitherto, untapped sources in archaeology and epigraphy to write brief accounts of the political histories of the dynasties of the Deccan that ruled from the post-Satavahana times till the reign of Pulakesi II. Thus, one can note that he did not even attempt to give a full dynastic account of the Chajukyias of Badami. Further, his book remains largely a description of political events of the region without any major shift in the foci of historical analysis.³⁴

Several years later, there emerged another important work on the Deccan in the form of Yazdani's edited work entitled, ***Early History of the Deccan (1982)***.³⁵ In this book 'Deccan' was defined by the scholar keeping in view, its relatively specific and political boundaries that coincided with the erstwhile Nizam's dominions of Hyderabad State comprising major parts of the present-day States of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Thus, in this description historical Deccan came to be defined as "a land stretching from the Sahyadri •parvat and Mahendragiri ranges and the Mahanadi and the Godavari rivers in the South. Towards the West and East of the Deccan comprised the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal" respectively. However, being an edited work with contributions

of several well-known scholars, the individual perceptions on the historical identity of the Deccan often varied, with the scholars taking into cognizance the account the political boundaries of the various dynasties that ruled over the Deccan, as an important criteria to define the region. In this respect, therefore, the Chajukyan dynasties that ruled the Andhra-Karnataka region were also focussed. Being an edited work, there are several contributions of well-known scholars. In this book, the Chapters on the Badami Chalukyas, the Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi and the Western Chalukyas of Kalyani were contributed by scholars like K. A. N. Sastri and N. Venkataramanayya. However, in this endeavor, the Aryan presence had been perceived as an important catalyst, which according to the scholars of this volume had resulted in a cultural change. Thus in this work there is no attempt to understand the role of local elements in socio-cultural transformations. Though genealogies of kings were used, these were discussed mainly to comprehend the political and military history of the dynasties. As a result, there is little analytical study to comprehend the perceptions of the kings of the various Chajukyan families about their past revealed from their genealogies, which according to us is significant to understand the genealogical relationships between the various Chajukyan families, as this is crucial to establish an identity, as they move away from their parent branch.

On the other hand, we have scholars like Nilakanta Sastry, who while writing on South Indian history, considered the history of all regions south of the Vindhyas to be under its sphere and therefore, in these writings one may find Deccan as imprecisely considered a part of South India. He therefore, sees Deccan as one of those oldest inhabited regions of the world, which with its pre-historic archaeology and contacts with the neighboring lands, so far as they are traceable, constitute an important chapter in the history of world civilization.³⁶ However, it may be pointed out that though he wrote much after Bhandarkar's seminal work, but he too continued with the earlier stereotype of emphasizing the role of Aryan influence in colonizing and civilizing the South and the Deccan. Further his work on South Indian history though accommodated Deccan dynasties, however, focused more on the dynasties that ruled extreme South and thus remained

largely Tamil-centric. Undoubtedly, these definitions on the Deccan are determined either from the point of view of source material, or for ideological reasons of providing a vantage point to study the region as a whole. It has been observed by us that in the process, for the northern parts of South India, namely, the Deccan region, it is often ignored that it had its own historical personality which had undergone transformations in various periods of historical time.³⁷

From the survey on some of these works on the region of study, it is apparent to us that hitherto the historical transformations in the Deccan have been encapsulated primarily in terms of political history. Further, one also discovers that these have been partially treated as a segment of either, the history of India as a whole or, that of South India in particular. Thus, in our opinion, not only are rigid boundaries of historical definitions have been imposed on the region but its 'centrality' in these histories also came to be understood primarily in terms of the rise to political prominence of dynasties that ruled in these parts. Therefore, naturally we find importance being given to the Satavahanas as the first major dynasty followed by such early medieval dynasties as the Chajukyias of Badami, Rashtrakutas, Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi etc., as they were discerned to be nearest to have reached the 'empire' concept. The historical centrality of the Deccan was thus essentially conceptualized in terms of political monumentality.³⁸ Another important aspect noticeable in majority of the historical writings of this school was that the descriptions on the social, economic and cultural history have been simply added as important fringes to political and dynastic histories for understanding the totality of the historical past. Further, they also declined to look at the past as it was from those objects in use and those people in action, and what the people in the past believed, thought and said about the events and ideas current in those times. In their fascination to write such dynastic histories, they have invariably followed the model of the positivist method that was popular at that time and therefore, the aim of most of these historians was to clear the ground for having systematic political histories for the region in clear outline.

Lack of proper representation of the Deccan in these early interpretations on South India and the arbitrary administrative policies of the British Government ignited a feeling of regionalism among various States of the Deccan, during the early part of the 20th century. Thus for instance, the British Government's proposal in 1905 to merge the Telugu speaking Ganjam and Visakhapatnam areas with the proposed Oriya territory and separate the Kannada speaking territory from the then Bombay, Hyderabad and Madras provinces provoked the Andhra-Karnataka sentiments. As a result an attempt has been made by the elite in these two regions to resuscitate their identity by extricating histories of various local ruling families, in their respective regions.³⁹ Hence, for this period, we come across regional histories written by scholars within the framework of linguistic regions like Andhra and Karnataka. However, it may be pointed at the outset that these works were written not necessarily within the present linguistic boundaries of these States, as they were demarcated only after Independence. Some of the prominent writings that we have for this period are those of Chilukuri Virabhadra Rao, George M. Moraes and B. A. Saletore among others.

Chilukuri Virabhadra Rao's, ***Andhrula Charitramu (1912)***⁴⁰ in Telugu was the first comprehensive history on the Andhras. He used Mackenzie Manuscripts, Local Records and inscriptions for reconstructing the history and culture of the Andhra dynasties. He was the first historian among the Andhras to have realized the importance of writing the living history of the people as opposed to the mere accumulation of facts and dates. According to him, 'biographies of kings and nobles are no more than barest framework of history'. He therefore, emphasizes to focus on aspects like institutional progress and development of administration through the ages with people's achievement in time and space, as an evolutionary process to fill the skeleton of dynastic chronology. He used genealogies to understand the chronological and dynastic history of the ruling families in Andhra. A discussion on the caste of various ruling families of Andhra also finds place, as caste had become one of the major issues in writing social history during the early decades of the 20th century. In this context, he dared to describe the Kakatiyas as *Sudras*. Despite his strong inclinations towards writing a social history, Chilukuri could not extricate himself from the web of the positivistic method and therefore,

the narration of social aspects were provided within the framework of the political and dynastic history of the kings.

Chilukuri's work created great commotion among the Andhra elites. He was severely criticized for his audacity to describe the Kakatiyas as *Sudras* and the *Ksatriyas* or *Rachavaru* as belonging to a separate caste originated from the *baniza*, *khamma*, *velama* and *Reddi* castes.⁴¹ In contradiction to his views, Buddharaju Varahalaraju wrote the '*Sri Andhra Ksatriya Vamsa Ratnakaram*' in which he stated that the Andhra *Ksatriyas* were the descendants of Northern *ksatriyas* who were the original migrants to Andhra. It also states that the *Satavahanas*, the *Chojas*, the *Chajukyias*, the *Kotas*, the *Kakatiyas* and *Parichchedins* are *ksatriyas*.⁴² In 1935, Duvvuri Jagannada Sarma edited and published a small book-let entitled the '*Vasistha Gotra Kshatreeyulu*', written by *Mahamandaleswara* Rachiraju. Duvvuri also wrote *Sri Pusapati Vamsanucharitam*.⁴³ This was followed by a series of works written on the important families of Andhra *ksatriyas*. In this regard, we have *Reddikula Nirnaya Chandrika* by Seshagiri Ramana Kavulu, *Reddi Sanchika*, *Reddy Rani* (Magazines) edited by Vaddadi Appa Rao, Kasi Bhattla Brahmayya Sastry's *Andhra Kshatriyulu* and so on. The latter was a replication to the feelings among the *Sudras* that the Brahmins were the main cause for their low economic, academic and social status.⁴⁴

Thus, in these works one finds that there is a conscious attempt to resurrect caste-based histories by retrieving the memories of their glorious past from the epics, *Puranas* and inscriptions of the ancient ruling families of the region. Urgency for such claims was felt when their identity was questioned. Hence, in an urge to prove their superior social identity and economic status in the society, these scholars chose to write 'history' of castes, based on traditional narratives that explicated the migration of the *ksatriyas* of the north to Andhra. Besides they also asserted *ksatriya* status of the *Satavahanas*, the *Chajukyias*, the *Kakatiyas* and all other ruling families of ancient Andhra. There was a further increase in

writing caste-based histories when powerful caste movements were led in different parts of the region.

In Karnataka too caste and family based histories appeared around this time. In this regard, we have George M. Moraes's ***Kadamba Kula- A History of Ancient and Medieval Karnataka*** (1931), a voluminous book that dealt in detail with the history of the various Kadamba lineages that were proliferated in different parts of the Karnataka-Maharashtra regions. This may be considered as the first work in the modern times, which has been written with 'kula' (family) as a theme. Hence, one finds in this work a detailed study of genealogies of various ruling chiefs of the Kadamba families, but these were done to understand the political history of the families than to comprehend the social implication of genealogies. Further, Moraes attempt in this work appears merely to fill up the vacuum created in the political history of the Karnataka by presenting a comprehensive and complete history of the region. Hence, one finds that the administrative and social aspects under the Kadambas were dealt only in the penultimate Chapter of the book. Thus, like any other historical writings in modern period, this work too could not escape from the influence of positivist methodology in its treatment of the subject.

In a similar vein, B. A. Saletore attempts to write on the minor ruling families in Karnataka such as the Tuluvas, the Alupas, etc., based on inscriptional and literary sources as opposed to the study of major dynasties such as the Chalukyas of Badami, the Rashtrakutas, etc. In his ***Ancient Karnataka***, written around 1936, Saletore makes a valuable suggestion to consider mythical genealogies as part of the popular beliefs of indigenous people and hence appealed to the historians not to dismiss them as "fascinating fabrications of fertile Brahman brains".⁴⁵ His book thus, presents an interesting narrative of the mythical genealogies of local ruling families, which he corroborates with the literary sources like the epics and the *Puranas* to understand the local people's perceptions of their past. In this regard, he takes an example of the story of Parasurama and his association with the region to show how this legend becomes an important aspect of the mythical past of most of the ruling families that ruled

over Karnataka region.⁴⁷ Though the work deviates from the contemporary methods of history writing, particularly, in its treatment of the subject-matter, however, the genealogies were not fully exploited to understand the different notions of time that were intrinsically embedded in these sources. Further, apart from describing the corroborative evidences of the popular myths of the region, it fails to look at the impact of 'history' in establishing the social identity of ruling families in specific time and space. This leaves us enough scope to look at these aspects in detail.

Thus, from these works, one can deduce that the process of history writing during the early 20th century was confronted with a complex situation between choosing the indigenous notions of writing history based on memory and tradition with those of the modern methods that emphasized on looking at hard core sources to write political history in a linear fashion. In this process, therefore, the historians were found opening up a space for a certain negotiation between the western method of 'history writing' and vernacular, popular memory that found grounded in a strong sense of the past based on genealogies of individual families.

However, the impact of nationalism and regionalism was so tremendous that the historians writing during this time unconsciously succumbed to the western method of writing history to glorify the 'history' of their respective regions. In order to do so, they borrowed the concepts like 'Golden Ages' from the Imperialist and Nationalist writers and applied them to the regional histories.⁴⁸ Consequently, we find the publication of several monographs and articles in journals on various individual dynasties such as the Satavahanas, the Chajukyas of Badami, the Eastern Chajukyas and so on. These were written within the positivistic methodological framework that emphasized on the chronological and dynastic histories of individual dynasties that ruled the region in different periods of time and space.⁴⁹ This trend continued in the post-Independent era, but now with more vigor. In fact, it is pertinent to state here that this period has set a stage for writing separate genres of history such as the political history, social history, economic history and so on. Consequently, one can notice the co-existence of both political history and social history.

An important shift has occurred in the writing of political history during the post-Independent era. Now a tendency to "dynasticize" the political history by compiling an in-depth history of individual dynasties has been noticed. However, the tools for doing so remained the same as set in pace by the 19th century historians. In the present context, we have discussed the works of those scholars who wrote on the history of the various Chajukyan families. In this respect, we have the works by scholars like N. Venkataramanayya⁵⁰, B. V. Krishna Rao⁵¹, N. Ramesan⁵², Krishna Murari⁵³, D. P. Dikshit⁵⁴, K. V. Ramesh⁵⁵, M. Krishna Kumari⁵⁶, K. Suryanarayana⁵⁷ and Birendra Kumar Singh.⁵⁸ In all these works positivism was still the guiding spirit in writing history. Hence, we find these scholars focusing on the political and dynastic history of the Chalukyas, by adhering to the routine aspects such as the origin, caste, home, chronology, genealogy, wars, and other such aspects that were reproduced in all these works in a monotonous way.

N. Venkataramanayya's, ***The Eastern Calukyas of Vengi***, (1950) was the earliest work to have been written on the history of the Eastern Chalukyas based on the information available from the inscriptions. This book has dealt largely with aspects such as the origin, chronology, genealogy, caste of this dynasty. Further, major emphasis was made on the political history and military conquests of the Eastern Chajukyan rulers. However, the author tries to create the general impression that the Eastern Chajukyan period is one of general peace and prosperity, which led to the development of vernacular literature, art and architecture. Being the earliest work on the dynastic history the author merely narrates political history of the dynasty, within the scientific method of positivism. Though, he was the first person to identify the three distinct stages of the Eastern Chajukyan *prasastis*, he does not explain the factors leading to the evolution of distinct stages in *prasastis*. He looked at genealogies as sources to construct political histories rather than using them to write social history. The *prasastis* are used to construct the history of wars fought by the rulers. He dismisses the veracity of the mythical genealogies as mere fabrications and does not give any importance to them in writing the history of the family.⁵⁹ Around the same time,

he also wrote ***The Chalukyas of L(V)emulavada (1953)***.⁵⁰ The work is based on the epigraphical and literary sources and like the above work it also deals with the origin, genealogy and chronology of the Vemulavada Chalukyas. The major part of the book was devoted in understanding the socio-political relationship between the Rashtrakutas and the Vemulavada Chalukyas. Almost 13 years later, B. V. Krishna Rao also wrote a more comprehensive account on the history of the Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi. But unlike the former, he gives more details since by this time many inscripational sources have come into light. In this work, the scholar mostly concentrated on the problem of solving chronology of the dynasty. Major part of the discussion of this work was dealt with the chronological succession of ruling elites with emphasis on their military conquests that was done in a narrative form. He also discussed aspects such as the geography of the region, the Eastern Chalukyan attempts to consolidate and expand their power, the growth of the minor Chalukyan families.⁶¹ Around this period, N. Ramesan also wrote on the ***Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi (1975)***,⁶² but this work appears to be a summary of the works of N. Venkataramanayya and B. V. Krishna Rao, without any new contributions.

Simultaneously, around this period appeared a work on ***The Chalukyas of Kalyani (1977)***, written by Krishna Murari's. This book like the above works begins with a customary description about the home of the Chalukyas, their origin, caste, and the various legends associated with their origin. Besides, it enumerates the political history of the Kalyani Chalukyas in a chronological order with an emphasis on the military conquests and marriage alliances. In the second part of the book, the focus shifts to an understanding of the administration and the nature of state. With regard to the social and economic aspects that are added as separate chapters, there was a discussion on the life and position of women, social practices like sati and self-immolation, issues related to agriculture and crops, trade and industry, the role of corporations and so on. Religion, art and architecture were other aspects that were emphasized upon, before concluding the book with the factors leading to the decline of the Kalyani Chalukyan family.⁶³ The

next important work on the Chajukyas is the ***Political History of the Chalukyas of Badami (1980)*** written by D. P. Dikshit. Like his predecessors, Dikshit also used inscriptions and literature to write the political narrative of the Badami Chalukyas. Hence, one finds no significant change in the descriptive pattern, as he too starts with the usual account on the origin, caste, home, legendary and bardic accounts followed by chronological and genealogical details of the kings enumerated along with their military exploits. The other aspects that have been taken up for scrutiny are administration, revenue system, army organization were included as an addendum.⁶⁴ K. V. Ramesh's ***Calukyas of Vatapi (1984)*** however, is an exception from the above works in the sense that unlike the others, Ramesh, though heavily relies on inscriptions, writes only the chronological and dynastic history of the family, without any discussion on the socio- economic and cultural aspects even in compartments.⁶⁵ The research on the Chajukyas of Badami continued into the early 1990's. In this regard, we have a book on the ***Early Chalukyas of Vatapi,***⁶⁶ (1991), written by Birendra Kumar Singh. Though by this time several trends in history writing with socio-economic orientation have emerged, however, one finds the predominance of positivistic methodology in this work, and hence genealogies have been used only to write political narratives. Similarly, even the social and economic aspects were reproduced from the earlier works written on the subject.

At the other level, we have works of M. Krishna Kumari and K. Suryanarayana that dealt with the micro level study of the minor Chalukyan families. Their works reflects the importance of the minor regional powers as the local potentates in exercising influence and power within their limited geographical boundaries. Krishna Kumari regards the rule of the Chajukya-Chojas in Andhradesa as a transition period between the Chalukyas of Vengi and the Kakatiyas of Warangal.⁶⁷ Similarly, K. Suryanarayana acclaims the role of the various minor Chalukyan families. It is postulated by these scholars that the stability of the Eastern Chalukyan kingdom was perpetuated with the great role of the feudatories and minor Chajukyan ruling families in various geographical

localities.⁶⁸ However, these scholars, in their obsession to write a detailed political history of the individual dynasties used genealogies extensively, primarily to understand and solve the chronological and genealogical problems of these various Chajukyan families. Further, they described military conquests **of the king** and his ancestors only to understand political relationships with other dynasties and to demarcate the political boundaries under each dynasty.

As the dominant area of investigation for these historians being political history, they naturally followed the positivist methodological framework. They further, attempted to reconstruct genealogical tables with the primary sources like epigraphy, numismatics and literature. Thus, there was a tendency to "dynasticize" regional history by mainly focusing on the political ascendancy of the various ruling elites that were powerful. In spite of this, these scholars did not completely ignore the socio-economic and cultural aspects, which were included as an addendum in one or two chapters at the end. There was however, no attempt to relate these socio-economic changes with the understanding of the concerns of ruling elites to establish new identities in different spaces. Hence, one finds major lacunae in these works with regard to the use of genealogies as a source to write on social history. In our opinion fabrication of genealogies and the changes that took place in them is important to study because they articulated a historical consciousness that the ruling elite wanted to define its identity in the present context of time and space. Hence, their use in writing the social history is very important.

For the same period when some of the above dynastic histories were being written, we also have historians who focused on the social and economic history as opposed to the political history, thus heralding a methodological shift. In this category we have works of Suravaram Pratapa Reddy⁶⁹, K. Sundaram⁷⁰, A. V. Krishna Murthy,⁷¹ B. N. Sastry,⁷² Jyotsna Kamat,⁷³ N. Krishna Reddy⁷⁴ and others. However, the basic method of historical analysis in these writings still remains 'conventional' in the sense that these scholars constructed the social history with political history as an essential background and aimed to accumulate empirical data on the subject rather than its analysis.

The genesis of social history of the people was in fact, laid in the rise of several caste movements during the 1930's and 1940's, when the socialistic ideas of Marx and its successful implementation in Russia had tremendously inspired the socialist minds in India, too. Though the impact of socialistic ideas were long felt in the Deccan also, however, the writing on social history with 'people' as the focus appeared only after Independence. Consequently, a new trend to look at national and regional histories from the socio-economic perspective had emerged. Social history has been defined by these scholars, as the one that dealt with "man's social, scientific, economic, political, religious and cultural aspects....of human society at large".⁷⁵ This definition thus, intends to focus on the living histories of people at large rather than understand the motivations behind the actions and thoughts of people.

In this regard, beginnings have been made by Suravaram Pratapa Reddy, whose ***Andhrula Sanghika Charitra*** (1949) written in Telugu, is considered as the earliest work on social history. Though, most of the ideas in this book were conceptualized as early as 1928, they got materialized only in 1949 when it was first published. Pratapa Reddy has strongly opposed in his writings, the earlier methods of writing political history, which according to him does not serve any purpose. By making a significant shift from political to social history, he therefore, emphasized on studying the way of life, beliefs systems, the amusements, etc., of the people in the past. For the purpose of writing this history, the author had collected information from the textual sources like literature, travelogues, traditions, local legends, folklore, etc., without making any use of inscriptions. Inscriptions, he argues are mainly to write political history, whereas social history could be handled only with the help of literary sources. Though the chapters are named against the dynastic history, yet the contents of them mainly dealt with different topics like literature, administration, crime and punishments, food, dress, ornaments, trade and commerce, agriculture etc., during each of these periods.⁷⁶

However, by the time the next work on social history appeared, the values of using epigraphic records for writing social history has been realized. Thus, B. N.

Sastry's ***Andhrula Sanghika Charitra*** (1975), was a follow up of Pratap Reddy's work, uses inscriptions besides literary sources to write the social history of Andhras from the Pre-Satavahana times to the Chajukya-Choja phase. However, there is not much deviation from the earlier work in its style and method of descriptions.⁷⁷ Jyotsna Kamat's, ***Social Life in Medieval Karnataka*** (1980), as the title suggests is focused on Karnataka, where the author describes different aspects of social life in Karnataka during the early medieval period. Thus, her main focus appears to describe the types of food and drinks, hairstyles and costumes of the people, vanity fair, leisure, pleasure and the status of women.⁷⁸ Another important work on social history that deals with our period of study is N. Krishna Reddy's ***Social History of Andhra Pradesh (Seventh to Thirteenth Century Based on Inscriptions and Literature)*** (1991).⁷⁹ Though written in more recent times when the method of writing social history has undergone significant changes, the author, however, adopts the above method to study social history. Thus in this book too, one finds the routine descriptive accounts on society, education, agriculture, games and amusements etc., To understand, these the author uses vast corpus of literary sources and hence we do not find reference to genealogies.

At the other level of social history, we have scholars focusing on the socio-economic aspects. In this regard, we have works of K. Sundaram, A. Vaidehi Krishna Murthy and others. Sundaram's work on ***Studies in Economic and Social Conditions of Medieval Andhra (AD 1000- 1600 AD)*** (1969) that dealt with the trading communities in the medieval period, stands above all the earliest works on social history, not because he was able to highlight various economic and social activities of the marginal groups such as the *vaisyas*, *balanjas* and *telikis* (oil -mongers), but primarily because, it makes its distinction by referring to the claims of these groups to seek new identities through concocting mythical origins of their castes. Conditions conducive for such fabrications, according to the author, have been laid during the 11th -12th centuries, when the ruling elites made large-scale donations and conferred honors on them that in turn, resulted in the rise of trading communities to socio- economic importance.⁸⁰ However, the author uses genealogies only to describe how the *vaiśya* community defined their past,

but no analytical study was made to understand the changes in genealogies of ruling elites and why such were made. On the other hand A. Vaidehi Krishnamurty's work on ***Social and Economic Conditions in Eastern Deccan (from A. D. 1000 to A. D. 1250)*** (1970), defines the significance of the period chosen for study because it saw the end of the independent rule of the Eastern Chajukyās who now became feudatories of the Chojas. According to her, 'this Choja ascendancy contributed a great deal to developments in the social and religious life of the people¹. This, the author considers is 'responsible for the cultural development of the people at a standard higher than the rest of Andhra'.⁸¹ Where as this book does not use a dynastic nomenclature in the title, it nonetheless understands the various aspects on caste system, position of women, occupations of various social groups, education, dress, ornaments, games, sports, religion and temples within the dynastic framework, thus giving an erroneous impression that social conditions were somehow static. However, in all these writings scholars considered the political history of the period as an essential background to their study. Hence, the approach and methodology of some of them was traditional. Though, they have not treated social, economic and religious aspects as separate compartments yet, they have failed to theoretically establish the linkages of these aspects, which played an important role in making specific identities by ruling elites as well as the other social groups during the early medieval Deccan. Thus, in all the above works dealing with both the political history and social history, the importance to write social history was marginalized.

The most common way in which majority of these social history books were written describe society in early medieval India within the mould of the *varnasrama* system as defined in the *Dharmasastra* literature and 'the social order organized on its basis was held to be primary duty of the ruler'.⁸² However, little analytical study was made to understand the terms *varna*, *jati*, *kula* and *gotra* that do occur in inscriptions to define the aspects of social history. Thus the question raised is to what extent a bibliocentric view of society on the basis of *varnasrama* system is sustainable with the help of inscriptional data. It is clear from our brief survey of inscriptions that the maximum mention is of the *brahmana varna* and

gotras of the royal families, but no mention of their *vanpa*. What emerge from this is that the *varna* system in the normative sense cannot be culled from the inscriptional sources.

In this regard, it would be pertinent to define our understanding of Social history, because the majority writings on South Indian Social History discussed above subscribe to a definition of it, which we would like to reject at the outset. This is the kind of social history that John Breuille calls 'Residual Social History'.⁸³ This is said to be composed of such 'trivialities' as a study of dress and ornaments, wedding, eating habits, leisure and so on. It goes without saying that this kind of history is only of marginal to our interest. Breuille has contrasted this type of social history with 'Societal History'.⁸⁴ In this type, the different dimensions of political, economic and ideological history in order to give a history of 'society as a whole' or a 'social formation' were brought together.⁸⁵ For South India as a whole, and the Deccan in particularly, the maximum work done in the area of Social History is under the rubric of the first type. However, the inroads of the second type of writing social history of the Deccan has been very limited, despite the fact that for India as a whole this approach has generated a serious debate classifying the nature of the particular social formations for early medieval times.⁸⁶ In our view 'Social history is not a particular kind of history, rather its is a dimension which should be present in every kind of history'.⁸⁷ It is in this context, that the study of genealogies is important because in our view they relate to the social history, and are crucial for establishing social identity. Hence, we attempt to re-look at them afresh to understand how the kings in ancient times perceived their past through constructing genealogies.

As an alternative to the imperialist, orientalist, nationalist and much of the regional history based on these methodological paradigms, there emerged in the post-independent, a new trend in the form of Marxist influenced historical writings. Influenced in some cases by vague socialist thinking and in other by the ideas of the materialist interpretation of history, and by giving a new 'socio-economic orientation' to the study of Indian history, the prominent writings of D. D. Kosambi, R. S. Sharma, B. N. S. Yadava and others began to emerge.

Significantly, the historical interpretations of the Marxists differed from those of the traditional writings for they tried to move away from those stereotype constructs of political and dynastic history from positivist method to provided new interpretation to history writing from the point of view of dialectical materialism.⁸⁸ Therefore, in most of their writings, we find the focal theme of history to be based on the development in the means and relations of production. Though in this respect, they derived most of their inspiration from Marxist theory, however, they did not accept the AMIP model of Marx and exploded his myth of "Unchangeableness" of Indian State and society, by highlighting heterogeneity, change and resistance. As an alternative to the AMIP model, some of the aforementioned scholars evolved the concept of Indian Feudalism that in fact came to be used in characterizing the early medieval period. The "Indian Feudalism Model" emphasized on the economic changes that took place, during the early centuries of the Christian era. These changes, according to them, had corroded the strong edifice of central bureaucracy through the processes of decentralization and fragmentation of political power. Thus, these scholars have developed the idea of interrelationship of variety of social and economic forces and its subsequent effect on historical events. This has been stressed in the work of Kosambi, where he tried to analyze the ancient Indian history on the basis of means of production, which he considers, was the key to historical events. For him, the dynastic history has no meaning, since the information based on it is uncertain in nature. On the other hand, he explicated the importance of investigating and re-interpreting the source material from the socio-economic point of view of establishing causal relationships as this provides, according to him with historical totality.⁸⁹ Thus, he repeatedly underlined the urgency of studying living traditions that need to go beyond written records, which constituted staple source-material of both colonial and nationalist historians. However, by suggesting this method, Kosambi was not invoking the pre-colonial indigenous modes of historical thinking and history writing but was only drawing upon the methodologies and concerns of social science disciplines with which he had familiarized himself.⁹⁰

Influenced by Kosambi's analysis of ancient Indian history, R. S. Sharma and B. N. S. Yadava have attempted to explain the development of feudalism in

terms of major economic changes that occurred during the early historical period. For instance, R. S. Sharma attributed external factors to the emergence of feudalism, such as the decline in inter-regional and international trade and commerce, paucity in metallic currency and the subsequent decline in urban centres that necessitated the ruling elite during this period to evolve a new mechanism of exploitation for surplus generation and tax-collection. It is in this context that the emergence of large-scale donations of land to *brahmanas* and religious institutions and later to the government officials can be explained, according to him. This process has been explained by Sharma, as the prelude to the development of feudalism in terms of decentralization and fragmentation of political power. This ultimately led to the rise of new ruling elites during the early medieval period.⁹¹ On the other hand B. N. S. Yadava had explained the emergence of feudalism through emphasizing on the breakdown of the *Chaturvarna* system, as was explicitly stated in the Kali age texts. For him, the term *Samanta*, which is identified with 'vassal' or 'tributary chief, became the key word of Indian feudalism. He sees the emergence of the *samantas* to political prominence mainly through their economic and military power.⁹²

However, the Indian Marxist historians did recognize regional variations in the development of feudalism in different parts of the country. In this context, we have studies of scholars like R. N. Nandi and K. Satyanarayana who have attempted to study the development of feudalism in different regions of South India. Nandi applied the major props of Sharma's theory, to study the process of the development of feudalism in the Karnataka region. He argues that the decentralization of political power at the central level led to the emergence of local landed intermediaries who subsequently came to wield political power. To stabilize their power, these new ruling elite in turn had evolved various mechanisms, which are seen as developmental processes for the resurgence of urban economy.⁹³ On the other hand, K. Satyanarayana, adopting Kosambi's method and approach regarded the history of the Andhras as a process of change and progression in terms of changes perceived in social production. The Eastern Chajukyan rule in Andhra is seen as a crucial period "since the traces of feudalism were taking

permanent shape during this period according to him. Feudalism, during this period was explained by this scholar in terms of the large-scale donations made to *brshmana* and secular officials, which saw the emergence of a new class of land owners in the villages. They acted as intermediaries between the state and the peasantry.⁹⁴ Thus, it is evident from the Marxists interpretations on Indian history and those on the region that these scholars basically perused the economic aspects to describe social change as gleaned from the inscriptional and literary sources. In this process, they discussed the various factors for the growth of feudalism and emphasized on the breakdown of the centralized state structures that led to the emergence of new ruling elites. Further, with regard to periodization, they began to accept the socio-economic changes as criteria for marking periods, thus rejecting the earlier chronological labels set up by the conventional historiography to demarcate periodization in Indian history. The early medieval period was seen in the context of the development of feudalistic tendencies from 600 AD onwards, which is said to have given an impetus for the emergence of new ruling elites at the regional level. However, with their main focus on land grant economy they identified change in class/ caste relationships of the new ruling elites. Though genealogies were not extensively used in these works, nonetheless, their analysis on the broader economic and social aspects as could be gleaned from inscriptions were effectively used to characterize the social formation of the times. Hence, these studies are important for us, as they provide an essential background for the present study to analyze the inter-relationship between various social and economic forces and its subsequent effect on the nature of genealogies that in fact manifested several changes and continuities in different spatial and temporal contexts.

As opposed to all these writings discussed above, we have scholars writing on social history following an inter-disciplinary approach. One basic preoccupation of the social historians of this trend was to explore into the precise nature of social relationships in the structure of early Indian society thus, underpinning the importance of sociological studies in history writing. Attempts have been made by some of these scholars, to re-examine the texts in the light of our contemporary understandings of theoretical model of the caste system, *varna*. Further, in these

writings an emphasis has been made to understand the role and nature of particular social groups and the interrelationships of these groups in a particular period. In this respect, the genealogies of various ruling families of ancient India came to be effectively used as source material by these scholars, to explain and understand the social relations and structures. This has been emphatically brought out in the writings of Romila Thapar on her studies on ancient history of North India. The socio-economic importance of maintaining genealogies has been underlined by Thapar, when she pertinently makes her point by saying that "the maintenance of genealogies in perpetuating human relations becomes significant especially, in tribal and lineage based societies, when they are moving towards state formation".⁹⁵ In our opinion, this is also true of small kingdoms becoming larger states and empires. Further, from her study on genealogies as found in the Puranic sources Thapar analyzes the importance of maintaining genealogies for the regulation of marriage alliances between various kin groups, for enhancing and legitimizing the socio-political status of social groups. From the spatial context, she tries to explain their importance, particularly when social groups migrate and disseminate their lineages in different geographical areas. Most crucially, genealogies are also important as claims to represent past through reckoning of time, and therefore she suggests to consider them as perspectives "on the past" rather than looking at them as "reflections of the actual past". Thus, the ideological aspect of genealogies for legitimization of the power of the new ruling elites has been emphasized.⁹⁶ However, most of her conclusions are confined to the study of genealogies of the ruling elites from North India. Moreover, she relied largely on literary sources rather than inscriptions in constructing the social history based on the contents of genealogies in ancient India. Nonetheless, her study is useful for us as it provides some valuable insights that shall be used by us as criteria to define genealogies as they occur in our sources.

In South India, deriving insights from Thapar's study, a similar attempt was made Kesavan Veluthat.⁹⁷ Looking closely at the inscriptions of the of the South Indian dynasties of the Pandya, Pallava and Chola kings, Veluthat scrutinized the mythical and historical genealogies of these families and understood the changes

in them as mechanisms for legitimizing the political power of the kings. Since all these studies are concentrated either in north India or the extreme south, not much research has been made so far to understand the nature of genealogies given in inscriptions of the ruling elites of the Deccan, for the early medieval period.

At the other level, we have the works of scholars like Hermann Kulke, B. D. Chattopadhyaya and Nandini Sinha. Following an inter-disciplinary approach and method in their writings, these scholars have reverted back to the study of political history. However, this was done not by following traditional approach, but by focusing primarily on the various processes of change that effected state formation in early medieval Orissa and Rajasthan. In this view, state has been no longer envisaged as a centralized or decentralized structure, but was seen as an integrative polity. The various events such as political conquests, donating land grants, networking marriage alliances, fabricating lengthy mythical genealogies, patronizing and acculturating various religious symbols and tribal cults, have all been considered by these scholars, as important integrative mechanisms of political, economic, social and ideological that have been adopted by the ruling elites during the early medieval period. These have been effectively discussed in the context of Orissa, Rajasthan and Mewar. In the context of the early medieval Orissa, Hermann Kulke, looks at all these processes as aides in consolidating the power of the ruling elites and the formation of states in Orissa.⁹⁸ Similarly, B. D. Chattopadhyaya studied the process of state formation with reference to the emergence of various Rajput clans to political prominence in the present-day State of Rajasthan. He observed that various political, economic, socio- ideological processes of the ruling elite, which are explained in terms of the fortification of rural settlements, assignment of land grants, maintaining horizontal marriage networks and finally legitimization of their rule by establishing genealogical linkages with the *ksatriya* line of the mythical past have helped the ruling elite in Rajasthan to consolidate their power in the early medieval period." All these mechanisms have been understood by the scholar as important through which new state structures emerged and consolidated their power in the early medieval

period.¹⁰⁰ These major processes of integrative polity were also found operational in the context of Mewar as it was brought out in the research of Nandini Sinha.¹⁰¹

Thus, these scholars who adopted a new trend in history writing based on new social history approach have perceived political changes through the process of centralization and integration rather than fragmentation and decentralization as postulated by the Marxists scholars. Significantly, in both writings of Marxist historians and the historians belonging to the non-aligned school we may notice that the early medieval period has been envisaged as one of transition, between the early historic and the medieval period.¹⁰² It is perceived that the political, economic and social changes during this period underwent a process of metamorphosis, which ultimately led to the formation of new ruling elites along with the emergence of new States in almost all parts of the country. These processes of change saw the emergence of large number of ruling elites such as the various Rajput clans in northern India, the Pallavas, the Cholas in Tamilnadu, the various families of the Chajkyas in the Deccan, the Palas and Senas in Bengal and many other ruling elites. It has been further noticed that there was a constant attempt by the ruling elites to assume new *varna* identity. In the context of Rajasthan and Mewar, Chattopadhyaya¹⁰³ and Nandini Sinha¹⁰⁴ have shown how the *brahma-ksatra* identity of ruling elites has become a "transitional" category to later assume pure ksatriya-hood. Similar cases were noted in the context of Pallavas adopting *brahma-kssatra* identity¹⁰⁵ and other north India rulers claiming the status of the *Rajputras*, which is explained as a process of Rajputization.¹⁰⁶ This process it has been regarded by the scholars helped the ruling elites, who emerged cutting across *varna* identity, to legitimize their role as rulers in the newly emerging regional kings that were being established all over the country. But apart from legitimization and political validation of power, we argue that such claims for superior *varna* status are rooted in the notion of an idealized "past"¹⁰⁷ that being always selective provided an identity to the rulers in the present.

Another type of historical writing that has in most recent times provided a conceptual a shift in the way historian's should address the question of time embedded in indigenous sources and traditions of narrative have been done by scholars like Hermann Kulke, Daud Ali and the authors of *Textures of Time*, namely, Velcheru Narayana Rao, Sanjay Subrahmanyam and David Shulman. They have raised the question of method in history writing afresh so that for the pre-colonial Indian context the source material available could be interrogated in different ways. Therefore, one can find in these writings, scholars juxtaposing the modern notions of history writing with the pre-modern ones. The motivating factor for these studies has been to question the view that Indians lacked a consciousness of how to write about their past as opposed to a mature sense of history writing in China and the West. In this context, several fundamental questions have been raised in the studies Herman Kulke, Daud Ali and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, particularly, in looking at the issues of how the past has been represented in pre-modern societies. The basic focus has been on finding out how historical consciousness was expressed in India before the British initiated the writing of history on the sub-continent in the closing decades of the eighteenth century. These endeavors refute the earlier notion that Indians lacked a sense of their past and that "history" as an academic discipline itself had its origins in modernity. These scholars have systematically identified a variety of sources to put forth how they were memorized, articulated and re-presented in different contexts of time and space. Their studies, interestingly point to the existence of indigenous methods of history writing in the pre-colonial India that did not follow any particular model as was defined by the West but that it had evolved its own methods of writing history in different periods, thus signifying the existence of multiple forms of historical traditions in pre- modern times. For instance, Hermann Kulke's study on the writing of regional history in Orissa has interestingly revealed the existence of a continuous process of history writing in Orissa that may have developed, in his opinion, in three distinct chronological periods. This process of writing history, he observes, had developed with the purpose of safeguarding or even securing landed property of a temple. Sometimes the interests of a new dynasty seeking legitimation of royal authority may have also played a decisive role in the evolution of historiographical tradition in Orissa.¹⁰⁸ Thus, Kulke has

tried to connect the process of history writing to the legitimation of royal authority and to the process of state formation.

Daud Ali proposes a completely new dialogical approach in reading the inscriptions. He suggests viewing these as representational practices that have an active relationship with the world. The pertinent question raised by him in this regard, is the issue of how the eulogies in *prasastis* related themselves to the Puranic discourses by using it as a model. He further advises to look at the genealogical lists in the *Prasastis*, as conscious means of organizing the polities and their histories along the lines of the larger universal histories that are available in the *Puranas*.¹⁰⁹ Unlike other scholars, rather than calling the inscriptional narratives as either non-historic or as 'myth' and 'legend', we agree with Daud Ali that the *prasastis* were influenced by all the literary genres of the time like the *Puranas* and *Kavyas* but were not identical with them. These influences tell us about a fundamentally different notion of how the past was perceived by the ruling elites, one, which cannot be considered as identical to modern way of writing about the past. In the words of Daud Ali therefore, "these should be read as texts that formed part of an integrated discursive practice within the larger ideological framework of the society that produced them". Thus, from the above discussion it is clearly evident that neither the *prasasti* nor the narratives that influenced them should be studied as autonomous subjects. His approach has shown us a valuable method to re-look at the rich genealogical narratives that formed an important component of *prasastis*, but were in fact harbinger of social history. Their evolution over a period of time and the links with other historical traditions on the sub-continent have to be looked at in a totality so that a history beyond merely the political can be recovered from them.

The recently published ***Textures of Time (2001)*** by the combined efforts of Velcheru Narayana Rao, David Shulman and Sanjay Subrahmanyam is yet another venture that has attempted to explore the various historiographical traditions that have existed in different regional settings of South India during the late eighteenth century. To argue their point, these scholars have selected the

literary narratives of the post-Vijayanagara-Nayaka periods that were hitherto, being aborted as a-historical to and therefore, not acceptable to write history of the period. Though for a period outside the scope defined for the present study, their study has brought into focus, how a rich corpus of literature adhering to different genres can effectively be used to write history in modes that were webbed into complex textures of time that posit decidedly different traditions of history writing in the pre-modern times. The authors have noted that some of these narratives were usually presented in bardic epic mode that exemplified the importance of the tradition of memory which necessarily had to be continually remembered, refashioned and systematically re-narrated as a predominant mode of expressing the historical process of change.¹¹⁰ Hence, the authors' suggest that one should look for the presence of historical moment in these narratives as they open up to a trans-temporal temporality that introduces a dimension of repetition and the 'mythic' representation and for display of a strong notion of 'fact' as crucial elements to the narration of events.

Another important work written along the above lines is Cynthia Talbot's, ***Pre-colonial India in Practice- Society, Region and Identity in Medieval Andhra, (2001)***. Here, the author effectively analyzes the historical processes that led to the multiple identity formations during the Kakatiyan period in medieval Andhra through a detailed examination of religious donations that were made to the *brahmanas* and temples. In inscriptions these are referred to through the mention of genealogies, titles, occupations and secondly, by means of the patronage of temples that enhanced the social prestige of various social groups. We agree with her argument that social identities often fluctuated according to individual action and effort. In order to prove her point, she even looks at the records of the post-Kakatiyan period to understand, how the people of this period appropriated the memories of Kakatiyan kings and re-presented them from a new perspective in the light of the changing circumstances of their respective contemporary times.¹¹¹ The study becomes important for our comprehension, primarily because, chronologically this period immediately follows the period of the present study. Secondly, her study has shown us a way to look at genealogies of

ruling elites to understand and analyze how structure and construction of memory changes in different periods of time in order to provided new identity for the concerned group.

Most of the above studies pertain to the medieval and late medieval times but nonetheless, they become motive for us to take up the study of genealogies of ruling families for two reasons. One they raise the fundamental question of how 'time' and 'narrative' were embedded in pre-modern sources and two the way the past was remembered and written about in them also reflects on the process of social and political identity formation of these elites.

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