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GORA'S APPROACH TO SOCIALIZATION PROCESS IN MODERN ANDHRA

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SYNOPSIS (SUMMARY)

The process of socialization in modern Andhra (mid-19th century to early 20th century), for various reasons, proceeded on the caste lines and was conducted on sectarian basis. Delving deep into the dimensions of social change issues we come across six major trends dealing with the process of socialisation in the contemporary society. They were (except for Gora) more conversing with the internal needs and agendas rather than synergizing with the emerging needs and inclusive requirements. They are: i. the Hindu stream; ii. the Christian stream; iii. the colonial stream; iv. The Theosophical stream; v. the popular stream of Gora; vi. the Dalit (lower orders) stream.

Changes in society under the colonial dispensation during the 19th century provided a substantial backdrop to Gora when he began fluting ideas on positive atheism, social work, caste, and socialisation. Gora opened night schools in Dalit colonies of Krishna district with an eye on social liberation of the oppressed and their speedy socialisation. Perhaps, secularization of social action programmes vis-à-vis the Gandhian mode was a major shift achieved by Gora in the post-independent India. In other words, it was a serious effort in de-linking social reform efforts from the religious framework and traditional modes. It was all about *Equal Socialisation* and *Secular Socialisation* process (*Jai Insan*). The post-independent India presented a new canvas for the reformers to operate. Individuals or organisations committed to Gandhian ideals continued their constructive work. Gora symbolised a break with the traditional Gandhian perspective and had gone beyond the scope of this perspective. Social reform beyond religion and caste heralded a new era in the domain of social reform or social action programmes in South India that too in Andhra Pradesh region. Gora rejected religion. The orthodox religious sections despised him. Gora shunned caste. The traditional social sections shunted him out of caste affiliation. Gora propounded positive atheism. The contemporary society did not immediately support it. Gora promoted a new recipe for smooth socialisation (Equal and Secular). The takers were initially hesitant to adopt. Despite all these obstacles, limitations and hurdles, Gora's spirit of social innovation surged ahead.

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I

Social Reform and Sectarian Nature

The process of socialization in modern Andhra (mid 19th century to early 20th century), for various reasons, proceeded on the caste lines and was conducted on sectarian basis. The 19th century social reform endeavours within the contours of respective castes in Telugu society were fructified into caste associations by early 20th century. A critical analysis and reading of literature¹ throw light on four important reasons for this situation in the contemporary society.

- During the period of Kandukuri Veeresalingam, the reform efforts were confined to upper middle classes (mostly Brahmin households), thus excluding scope for a broad-based process of social mainstreaming. Unfortunately, the early 20th century reform endeavors within the non-Brahman castes too were confined to internal reforms. Overall, the two crucial periods in the history of modern Andhra stand witness to the defective socialization that had severe ramifications on society for a long time to come.
- The major limitation during the active period of social reform during late 19th century and early 20th century was the absence of a sense of convergence. The reform efforts had spread in a rapid way within the existing caste structures. There have been highly complementary contributions from various caste leaders in taking forward the agenda of social reform concerns. Caste was not put on the agenda of reform. It was a conscious omission.
- Depressed classes and lower orders of Hindu social structure were not allowed to play a role in the process. They were still excluded from the mainstream reform efforts and the non-Brahman movement too ignored their presence in the broad-spectrum of non-Brahman sections of society. This too was a conscious step contemplated.
- Christian Church too accepted caste². Activities of contemporary Christian missions in the then Andhra comprising Coromandel Coast, Rayalaseema and parts of Madras Presidency (including regions like Karnataka) had focused on expansion at the outset. Though they did concentrate on lower social orders, they encouraged upper social segments of Hindu society in the process of conversions and conveniently allowed the caste differences to continue in the Church.

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Socialization: The major streams in modern Andhra

The modern socialization process too suffered from some internal contradictions in the Telugu society during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. There were, as hinted above, attempts at social reform during the study period. Delving deep into the dimensions of social change issues we come across six major trends dealing with the process of socialisation in the contemporary society. All of them had dealt with the social change from a different perspective. They were, however different not only in morphology, but also in operational dynamics. In a nut shell, these efforts or measures were more conversing (except for Gora) with the internal needs and agendas rather than synergizing with the emerging needs and inclusive requirements. They are: i. the Hindu stream; ii. the Christian stream; iii. the colonial stream; iv. The Theosophical stream; v. the popular stream of Gora; vi. the Dalit (lower orders) stream.

The Hindu stream has been the traditional one that retained its conservative status and character despite severe jolts it received from social reform trends over a period. Knowledge acquisition process remained the exclusive prerogative of a few influential sections in society and excluded many lower orders from the process. Till a time when the colonial government introduced English education in India, the hold of traditional patterns of learning was intact. Space for larger social interactions was consciously and conveniently minimized and reduced scope for broad-based socialisation process. Till mid 19th century the entry of suppressed social orders into mainstream learning spaces was highly restricted or avoided. A few contemporary enumerations dealing with the number of scholars drawn from each social order in the Rate Schools of Godavari delta region vouchsafe for our assertion in this regard³.

The Christian (Missionary) stream promoted social transformation among the suppressed sections of traditional Hindu society. The process of change has been the undisputed historical reality. From the perspective of 19th century, the missionary activity of various Christian missions as supported and backed by the Madras Presidency government was simultaneously bothered about numbers as well as retention. These two were the undeclared intentions of missionary activities in the Presidency region as elsewhere in the country. From the nature of approach and attitudes towards the native Hindu society, the missionary interventions had their eyes on conversion on large scale and retention of the new converts with the Church for lifetime. On one hand, they had indulged in mass conversions of socially suppressed Hindu sections during the times of natural calamities such as famines and droughts⁴. On the other, the ecclesiastical authorities had accepted the continuation of caste hierarchy within the institution of Church during 19th century⁵ and the trend continued further. Interactions, intermingling and social inclusion remained elusive under the patronage of the Church even after conversions⁶.

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The colonial stream has been a major player in the process. During the early 19th century, the approach of colonial state remained non-committal in matters of social importance. In one of the earliest reports on native education the Cuddapah Collector Ross suggested that Brahmins and other upper social orders of the society should be educated (proper education with emphasis on moral instruction) so as to contain the problem of corruption in the public departments⁷. It is not clear whether it was a historical coincidence or colonial state's conscious promotion, the reports on public instruction in the Madras Presidency throughout the course of 19th century return students of upper castes (majority being Brahmin) from various educational institutions in the Presidency. Numbers of students from the lower social orders are few. The colonial state extended its support to missionary educational institutions and religious conversions. Governors in Madras Presidency like Tweedale and Harris were open supporters of Christian missionaries⁸. On the other, they did not directly intervene in the activities of missionary societies and remained aloof from the concerns of socialisation of lower orders of the society. The colonial state's role was neither of negation nor of promotion. The resultant outcome was the confusion: the missionaries allowed caste hierarchy in the Church, yet promoted and helped the depressed sections of Hindu society and, on the other the colonial state was not directly concerned with the smooth progression of socialisation of these people. They were delinked from orthodox Hindu oppression and attached to a new religious morality where they were made to accept *Caste-in-Church*. Within the new and respective Christian congregations there was now no open and direct friction or confrontation with upper caste groups. It was an interesting and newly emerging historical reality in 19th century socialisation process of lower Hindu caste groups: *change* and *status quo*. Liberation from oppression imposed by Hindu Brahmanical orthodoxy reflected the change in the post-conversion period. On the other, the Churches' acceptance of layered social order of the extant Hindu society into the Church represented the *status quo*. The suppressed social orders, formerly of Hindu society during the process of religious conversion had completed one full revolution of the circle. At the end of the social revolution, and to their dismay found themselves at the bottom rung of the new Church-based social polity again, of course this time with more freedom to operate and express within the newly defined Church social order.

The Theosophical stream was a crucial element and a major factor that contributed to the liberation and extended socialisation of the lower orders of the Hindu traditional society. The aims and operations of the Theosophical Society were more reflective of the thinking of its founder, Annie Besant. It is known that objectives of theosophy in India were described pro-Hindu in terms of its value systems⁹. Though Theosophical Society had to face the flak of Hindu revivalism, it treated all social sections at par. It had a particular focus on the lowest rung social orders (Dalits) and

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established special schools for Dalit children in the Madras Presidency by late 19th century. Schools established in Madras metropolis served as shining examples for its social act and the Theosophical schools had implemented a separate curriculum for the children under instruction. Theosophy symbolized a change in matters of Dalit socialisation during the 19th century. But its over emphasis on Hindu religious traditions did not gel well with the overall dynamics of social change. The admirable attempt at Dalit socialisation undertaken by Theosophy was lost in Hindu religiosity of the institution offering no great respite for Dalits.

The popular stream has been, in the present context represented by the atheist leader Gora in Andhra region of Madras Presidency. Social work from humanist and atheist perspectives (areligious) was inaugurated in Andhra by Atheist Centre, Vijayawada. During 19th century social reform and social change movements were undertaken as part of religious framework and were partially supported by the British Colonial State in the country. But after independence the nature and content of social change efforts exhibited many differences. The legacy and spirit of social reforms had a logical continuation in the post-1947 period too. But the continuity had different facets of manifestation in terms of extent, content, coverage and support systems. The water divide in the entire process is the political freedom for the country in 1947. Freedom in political terms had its direct bearing on the perceptions of the people as well as the reformers who continued the tradition of reform movements. When Gora gave a clarion call, *Jai Insan*, it was considered another flashy and fashionable call by an emerging social leader and reformer. But its internal dynamics and depth are different. It was a call for a new socialization process hinted at and prescribed by Gora during his lifetime¹⁰. It all began with; of course, with less attendance at Mudunuru village in Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh a gradual process of socializing among the students during what was called community commensality without reference to religion and caste. By 1940s the process was better known by the name *cosmopolitan dinner*¹¹. This was not the only one dimension of Gora's attempt at smooth socialisation process in the society. There are other dimensions too which had a specific focus on Dalit socialisation undertaken by Gora in early 20th century. For Gora, Indian (Hindu) caste system held people apart in isolation and exclusion, and in grades of degradation ending in untouchability¹². Precisely for this reason, caste system as such is anti-social and anti-human in the world view entertained by Gora. He heralded a new era of social dynamism in the Telugu-speaking regions and experimented with a smooth socialisation programme that concerned itself with unreserved doses of social inclusion. This was attempted in a bifurcated manner and the two major components are: *Equal Socialisation* (without reference to caste at any cost) and *Secular Socialisation* (without any reference to religion and inherited tradition).

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There was the Dalit stream attempting to analyse new socialisation process under the impact of changed religious dimensions of Christian Church and missionaries. It also engaged in a critique of the internal contradictions of new social reality. The point of reference in the present context is to the very few first generation educated Dalits in Madras Presidency who could perceive the implications of organised religion and inherited traditions that shelved their aspirations for generations together. Writing her autobiography¹³ one of the earliest Dalit converts, Kaveri Bai spelt out the effects as also the defects in the process of new socialisation attempted by the Christian missionary societies across the region. Her main contentions are: a. that the Christianity liberated the suppressed population of Hindu society is an undisputed fact; b. the converts, for the first time realised that they too have human rights; c. that the new converts realised soon the dominant play of Christian missionaries also is a historical happening; d. when viewed from human rights perspective, the new converts felt the burden of Christianity too; e. generation of new social consciousness among the few educated Dalits made them critical of religious superiority in all its forms. Kaveri Bai states in her narration that *the workers complain of a new kind of slavery substituted for the old. If the missionary's torch helped the worker to see his own human rights, this knowledge makes him impatient of even the missionary's yoke*¹⁴. Her confession and revelation in the post-conversion social set-up are a definite submission on the incomplete nature of Dalit socialisation process in modern Telugu society.

II

Early social reforms and limitations

Changes in society under the colonial dispensation during the 19th century had their direct effect on different domains. Individual social reformers argued in favour of social change and took up various issues that required their attention immediately. Samineni Muddunarasimha Naidu, Enugula Veeraswamaiah, Kandukuri Veeresalingam, Raghupati Venkataratnam Naidu, Chilakamarti Lakshminarasimham, Atmuri Lakshminarasimham, Tripuraneni Ramaswamy Choudari etc. focused on issues such as denunciation of blind beliefs, child marriages, idol worship; promotion of scientific temper, girls' education, and widow marriages. All these efforts provided a substantial backdrop to Gora when he began fluting ideas on positive atheism, social work, caste and socialisation. There are however four major differences between Gora and his predecessors:

- a. The earlier reform endeavours were primarily oriented within a religious framework. In other words, blind beliefs embedded in extant Hindu religious practices (like Sati) were opposed by social reformers. Gora not only opposed the religion-based reform approach, but shunned religion itself. He heralded an era of areligious *social reform* in Andhra.

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- b. Most of the earlier social reforms were confined to middle classes (of all denominations). For, they were the main prop of support for religious traditions and it was but natural that suffering on account of blind beliefs was rampant among them. From the time of Veeresalingam down to Tripuraneni Ramaswamy, the social manifestation of social reform was middle class in nature. In other words, social reform concerns were seen isolated on caste platforms and inter-caste collaboration was conspicuous by its absence. Sadly, even the non-Brahman movement did not address the issue¹⁵ and the lower social rungs within the non-Brahman community raised a hue and cry against the overbearing attitudes of upper non-Brahman castes. Gora deviated from the trodden path when he denounced religion and along with it the caste. Reform efforts trickled down further under the leadership of Gora.
- c. As stated earlier, the earlier social reforms remained isolated within respective caste groups. One important consequence was the spirit of social reform was always moving within the orbital of caste and never escaped from the orbit. All the castes in contemporary society (Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya, Reddy, Kamma, Telaga, Setti Balija, Viswabrahmin, Devanga etc) had undertaken social reform campaign within caste and rarely had promoted inter-caste coordination in this regard. Caste became the main platform for social reform. Gora did away with all traditional observances as far as social reform issues are concerned.
- d. Gora escaped the orbital velocity fixed by caste structure. When he did away with religion and caste, the social reform efforts became humanized. His positive atheism considered human free will as the basis for any proactive social action by individual human beings. He had an open declaration stating that both religion and caste are the matters to be considered for social reform¹⁶. This was the historical context when Gora issued the slogan *Jai Insan (Hail to Human Being)*. As stated above, this slogan was not like any other fashionable title, but it set the agenda for future course of social action by Gora. Precisely this was his approach (atheistic humanism) to socialisation process that he tried to promote in contemporary social milieu on a vigorous scale and in a rigorous mode. Succinctly put, Gora's attempt was about heralding an era of *applied social work* from the perspective of human free will. He successfully tested, of course inviting sufficient controversy his new social hypothesis in Dalit colonies of Krishna district during early 1940s when he founded the first-ever atheist centre at Mudunuru village. He communicated in detail in one of his letters to Gandhi that *the atheistic approach mainly consists in non-recognition of sectarian labels like Hindus, Muslims and Christians. We take man as man. Thus, by discarding the*

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*labels and mixing up people in the general stream of humanity, we hope to remove untouchability also*¹⁷. In the village Gora changed the nomenclature of local Dalit colonies since the habitations were named after respective castes: the Madiga Gudem on the east of village was renamed as *Turupu Palem* and the Mala Palem on the west was rechristened as *Dusari Palem* (inhabited by a greater number of families belonging to 'Dusari' surname). The changed names continue till date¹⁸. Perhaps, this was the first village in the state in the pre-independence days that did away with the derogatory names given to human habitations reflecting caste affiliations. The same village was returned as Godless village and most of the inhabitants entered their faith as atheism in the 1941 Census operation¹⁹.

The scenario after 1950

The post-independent India presented a new canvas for the reformers to operate. The enlightened landed elite of the colonial era was co-opted into democratized political set-up after independence. This trend started by late 19th century when the local ruling families were nominated to the legislative councils²⁰ by the British and, of course, the role of local Zamindars in the councils was anything than satisfactory. In the post-independence period people with social reform zeal were kept wondering whether the Indian democratic state would step into the shoes or relinquish the legacy of social reform while retaining the social welfare modes of public action programmes. The reformers at the individual level found a void in terms of support for the movements.

At this juncture individuals and organisations committed to Gandhian ideals continued their constructive work through Gandhian perspective. This perspective, as is known, has been a mixture of religious morals embedded into social action programmes. Gora symbolised a break with the traditional Gandhian perspective (as given during the heyday of freedom struggle by Gandhi himself) by going beyond the scope of this perspective. Social reform without any reference to religion and caste heralded a new era in the domain of social action programmes in South India, that too in Andhra Pradesh region²¹. Gora was responsible for a major shift in social action programmes and played a crucial role in inaugurating an era of secular social work in Indian society. Though he was schooled in the Gandhian modes, his operations in the field naturally exhibited a reformed scenario in content and mode of action.

The early 20th century politicisation of caste groups got further hastened in the post-independent democratic polity. With it, the interests and aspirations of various other social groups had become more pronounced. This process had its own bearing on the social growth process in the Indian society. Amidst these developments it was difficult either for continuation of the earlier trends of reform or the rise of the new. The ideological gamut within which the social movements operated in the post-independent

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India changed considerably. In the southern parts of the country, particularly in the Andhra region, the change was explicitly manifest by Gora under the umbrella of the Atheist Centre.

Atheist and Humanist Perspectives

Gora was a great admirer of Gandhi and enjoyed close association with him for a long time. Gora also had entertained a Gandhian perspective in his social programmes (for example - convictions, peaceful conflict resolution and humanised approach to social problems). However, Gora's philosophy of social action was operative almost in a tangential direction to that of Gandhian mode. Analysing the prevailing post-independent social situations and realizing the inbuilt limitations in the state-sponsored social action policies, Gora decided to open a new front. He did this by opening night schools in Dalit colonies of Krishna district vis-à-vis the Gandhian mode of temple entry programme- both with an eye of social liberation of the oppressed populace and speedy socialisation of these groups. Perhaps, near total secularization of social action programmes was a major shift achieved by Gora in the post-independent India. In other words, it was a serious effort in de-linking social reform efforts from the religious framework and traditional modes. For him, the social change should denote liberation of human being from the clutches of religious superstition and caste oppression. He believed that right kind of education would romp home the results he was eagerly awaiting. He devised a plan with a bifurcated advantage at Mudunuru village.

Equal Socialisation: During 1942 Gora founded a primary and secondary school at the village guided by an open-ended admission policy admitting students from all social callings, primarily including Dalits (untouchables of the locality)²². Telugu language was the medium of instruction and Hindi and English languages too were taught. A couple of hundreds joined the institution floated by Gora and many of them were boarders for whom a few thatched huts were raised along with dining facilities. Gora and his family performed teaching as well as janitorial tasks in the management of the school. Gora's first son-in-law, a Dalit (Arjuna Rao, an untouchable then) joined the facility as a helper in cooking. Interestingly another young Dalit graduate, Dasu Ramaswamy joined Gora out of personal choice and rejecting the offer given by Mahatma Gandhi. He was engaged to teach other subjects like math and science²³. The new, different, and of course defiant educational episode though sent jitters in the contemporary society succeeded without any glitch for the time being. The experiment was shunned within a year not out of fear or uncertainty, but out of a contextual necessity to take up national liberation issues in the face of surging freedom struggle in the country. A conscious and willingly designed concept of equal socialisation and its introduction through the institutionalized learning process was a novel idea in the contemporary society. This has later become a routine

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under the democratic governance and polity in India in the post independence period (especially 1960s onwards). Gora's visionary approach needs to be credited here, though his atheistic stance in public life was discredited by many contemporaries.

Secular Socialisation: By shunning the caste in the admission policy of his new educational experiment, Gora by default rejected religion. He was however conscious that rejection of religion would not immediately result in acceptance of human oneness. Theistic society always thrived on internal social differences and dissensions. It is only atheistic social order that would stand in stark contrast to the theistic social order and reject all those inherited systems that divide humans²⁴. Gora's focus was now diverted to this crucial aspect and his quest for alternatives suggested him two measures. First, caste-intermingling through what has been called cosmopolitan dinners when people of all social callings are expected to partake in a community dinner. This was introduced by Gora as a matter of social solidarity where participation was optional, but chargeable. Each participant would contribute some coppers to take part. It was not, however for a sumptuous meal, but to drive home a sufficient statement about social parity. Gora would later accept and agree to lecture only when the hosts would necessarily arrange his stay in a local Dalit colony. He was bent upon striking a chord between precept and practice. Soon common commensality became a regular feature under his guidance and leadership. Gora was clear about the possible extent to which these community dining habits would go. To take the spirit further, he came out with a new proposal that can best be described as inter-caste kinship model²⁵. In other words, he proposed inter-caste marriages on a large scale. B R Ambedkar too had a categorical declaration that fusion of blood alone would create the feeling of being kith and kin and, it was only then the feeling of being aliens in the same society created by caste would vanish. Gora began experimenting with self. His eldest daughter was offered in marriage to the first Dalit volunteer who joined Gora and his wife at Mudunuru as a helper in cooking (Arjuna Rao). For Gora, inter-caste marriages would establish on a permanent basis a society replete with secular and equal credentials for all people. Being an atheist, his conception of marriage was neither flashy nor Hindu in nature. He instead used vegetable garlands (symbolizing the power of manual labour). In the year 1941 he performed the first ever inter-caste marriage and the function was presided over by the rationalist leader, Tripuraneni Ramaswamy Choudari. Truly, Gora has been credited for a kind of secular socialisation in modern Andhra on two counts: programmatic approach to common commensality and secular approach to marriages. Inter-caste marriages, though resisted with all the vehemence it required initially later were accepted by society. The revolutionary aspect in Gora's concept of socialisation is striking. Unlike the Gandhian charity-mode approach (sympathizing with cause of Harijans or untouchables) which was more treated as a concession than obligation, Gora's approach was wielded through human rights perspective. This

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approach was appreciated and congratulated by Gandhi himself during his lifetime. Gora never remained an experimenter. He became the first and staunch follower of his own experimentation. This made all the difference in the contemporary society of modern Andhra. Interestingly, all these experiments were an essential part of applied atheism (what Gora calls *Positive Atheism* or *Atheistic Humanism*). While the orthodox society vehemently opposed his atheism, it silently internalized the best of applied atheism.

III

Gora, as stated in one of the contemporary newspaper editorials published after his death had more admirers than followers. And there were more critics than admirers. The logical culmination of his atheistic efforts was a legacy left behind him in terms of equal socialisation and secular socialisation. While the spirit of his social programming and the zeal behind his social work were appreciated, his person was discredited. There was an unfounded fear of erosion of traditional and established value systems in contemporary society. Gora too suffered the lack of support, material and intellectual. Social base for his propaganda was always limited and confined. Reasons are not far to seek. Rationalist intellectuals and leaders like Tripuraneni Ramaswamy Choudari who extended their support to Gora later became embroiled in non-Brahman politics (Justice Party in Madras Presidency). By virtue of engagements in contemporary political life they distanced themselves from Gora's activism. Gora's position on *partyless democracy* served as a potential cause for social distancing of people who entertained party-based political views.

Gora opted for voluntary poverty as a part of his social philosophy. When he detested accumulation of material wealth, his social movement did not attract large scale material support. Personal and institutional requirements are always different. In case of Gora, both appeared one and the same. The differentiating line was always thin and the ardent supporters of his immediate activities were often his wife and children. Individual austerity received immense appreciation while social aspects of his life drew lukewarm response and support. Though closely associated, Gora did not take a cue from Gandhi in this regard. In the absence of material support, his social movements decelerated when they were expected to accelerate further.

Gora's revolutionary concept of *Socialisation* (Equal Socialisation and Secular Socialisation) was a success during the contemporary times when he was actively promoting the tenets of his new social postulate. As the time progressed, Gora faced resistance from orthodox sections and the pace of his new social programmes became sluggish. By mid 20th century all the caste associations, on one hand promoted social reform within the respective castes and on the other became politicized. Politicisation of caste resulted in compartmentation of social segments and, caste groups began siding

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with different political parties. In the process reform spirit evaporated and caste spirit was fructified. Caste-based politics in the state reduced scope for inter-caste coordination.

Gora rejected religion. The orthodox religious sections despised him. Gora shunned caste. The traditional social sections shunted him out of caste affiliation. Gora propounded positive atheism. The contemporary society did not immediately subscribe. Gora promoted a new recipe for smooth socialisation (Equal and Secular). The takers were initially hesitant to adopt. Despite all these obstacles, limitations and hurdles, Gora's spirit of social innovation surged ahead. Release of commemorative stamp on Gora in his birth centenary year (2002) by Government of India is the true recognition for the social spirit of his programmes and lifelong commitment to the ideals of reform and change.

References

¹ Works by scholars and researchers focussing on modern Andhra and the social reform movements have hinted at the shortcomings in the process and conduct of social reforms. Their arguments invariably bring out that socialisation was defective and the social base was restricted. There was no interplay between castes. In the process the norms of socialisation too were restricted, confined, sectarian and caste-based. Broad-based and inter-caste social reform measures were conspicuously absent. For a detailed reading vide, Ramakrishna, V. (1983). *Social Reform in Andhra*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House; Singareddy Innareddy. (2019). *Social Reform Movements in Andhra Pradesh, 1920-1947* (Telugu). Vijayawada: Prajasakti Book House; Sundar, K.H.S.S. (2001). 'Place and Progress of Dalits in the Process of Socialisation' in *Nadustunna Charitra* (Telugu Monthly), May 2001, pp. 47-50.

² For a discussion on the ways and means adopted by Christian missionaries and Churches in incorporating suppressed social orders and other upper castes of Hindu society, vide Chandra, Mallampalli. (2015). 'Christian Missionaries, 1724-1857' in Satyanarayana, Adapa (Ed). *Comprehensive History and Culture of Andhra Pradesh, Vol. VI: Early Modern Andhra, Hyderabad and Company Rule, AD 1724-1857*. Hyderabad: EMESCO. pp.251-264.

³ Kompalli H.S.S. Sundar (2015): *In Pursuit of Self-Respect: Colonial India in 19th Century- Dynamics of Social and Political Life in Andhra and Rayalaseema*. Manak Publications, New Delhi. pp. 78-80.

⁴ Chandra, Mallampalli, *op.cit.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Kompalli H. S. S. Sundar, *Place and Progress of Dalits...*, *op.cit.*

⁷ Frykenberg, R.E. (1986). 'Education as an Instrument of Imperial Integration during the Company's Raj in south India' in *Indo-British Review*, vol. XII, No.2, June 1986. pp.62-63.

⁸ Tweedale expressed his open support in this regard. He officially documented his view in the form a Minute. For details, see *Public Consultations, No.36, dt. 15.08.1851*. Tamilnadu Archives, Chennai.

⁹ Meetings of the Theosophical Lodges in Andhra have on their agenda subjects like revival of Hinduism, teachings of Hindu sages etc. Vide, for example *General Report of*

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the Thirteenth Convention and Anniversary of the Theosophical Society, Madras, 27-29 December, 1888.

¹⁰ Gora's tryst with new social realities and process of socialisation are vividly captured in Mark Lindley. (2009). *The Life and Times of Gora*. Bombay: Popular Prakashan. pp.15-18.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Shet, Sunanda. (2002). *Gora: A Social Revolutionary*. Vijayawada: Atheist Centre. pp.90-91.

¹³ Bai, Kaveri H. (1937). *Meenakshi's Memoirs*. Madras. The name, Meenakshi is the assumed one by the other. She, drawn from *Madiga* (Chuckler) caste of the Dalit social order was one of the earliest graduates from her social calling, of course converted to Christianity and later retired as a teacher from Berhampore.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.14-15.

¹⁵ Singareddy Innareddy, *op.cit.*, pp.140-141.

¹⁶ Sundar, K.H.S.S. (2001). 'Revolutionary Definition for Social Change is Gora' in *Nadustunna Charitra* (Telugu Monthly), November 2001, pp. 30-31.

¹⁷ Gora. (1951). *An Atheist With Gandhi*. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House. pp.26-27.

¹⁸ Saraswati, Gora. (1992). *Gorato Naa Jeevitham* (Autobiography in Telugu). Vijayawada: Atheist Centre. pp. 130-131.

¹⁹ Gora. (1990). *We Become Atheists*. Vijayawada: Atheist Centre. p.45.

²⁰ The presence of local Zamindars in the Governor's Legislative Council in Madras Presidency and their lukewarm attitude towards people's issues was subject to public scrutiny and criticism. These nominated unresponsive Zamindar legislators were equated with Egyptian mummies. For example vide, *Hindujanasamskarini* (Telugu Monthly), January 1889, p.64.

²¹ Efforts of Gora have been carefully nurtured by Lavanam and Hemalata Lavanam from 1975 onwards. As stated already, the early social reform movements were largely confined to middle classes among the traditional and agrarian families. Most of the social reform engagements were seen operative within the religious fold of the Hindu belief system. Religious orientation to social reform issues was no more a common feature of the post-independent endeavours of Gora and his followers. Their singular contribution has been to put the socially secluded and abandoned sections on the agenda of social reforms. For example, *jogini* women of Telangana (*later re-named as Jogini Sisters*) who earlier were conveniently ignored both by government and mainstream society were made an integral part of the reform movement after 1950. This represents a major historical shift to the extent of bringing the hitherto ignored social groups into social reform framework. For details vide, Vakulabharanam, Ramakrishna and Sundar, K. H. S. S. (2006). *Legacy and Continuity: Social Reforms in Andhra Pradesh, 1850-2000*. Vijayawada: Samskar (Atheist Centre). pp. 180-182.

²² Mark Lindley, *op.cit.*, p.18-19.

²³ *Ibid.*, p.20. Dasu Ramaswamy was a university topper bagging gold in B Sc (Chemistry) from the Madras University. He was encouraged for higher studies by Gora suggesting him to go to North India. On the way, he was advised to see Mahatma Gandhi

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at Sevagram. Gandhi was to know more about Gora through Ramaswamy who later declared to Gandhi that he would prefer Gora to Gandhi in social work. For, Gandhi's approach to untouchability was couched in religiosity (the basis for untouchability in Hindu society) whereas atheist Gora's denial of religion invariably would do away with the evil of caste. Gandhi agreed and encouraged Ramaswamy to follow his will. See for details, Lavanam. (2016). *Naa Smriti Padhamlo* (Autobiography in Telugu). Vijayawada: Prajasakti Book House. p.30.

²⁴ Lavanam. (1985). 'Our march towards post-religious society' in *Atheism and Social Change: A Souvenir*. Vijayawada: Atheist Centre.

²⁵ Mark Lindley, *op.cit.*, pp.26-27.