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The Role of Mahajanas In Society- During the Kakatiya Period

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Abstract

The Mahajanas to understand what made the Kakatiya kingdom strong. Men, community leaders, and government officials kept life going on the Deccan plateau from the 12th to the 14th century. The Mahajanas did a lot of things, like running the local government, farming, teaching, and providing social services. They weren't just religious leaders; they were also people who helped build communities and had a big, long-lasting effect on Kakatiya society. You can see how they made a difference in the temples they ran, the tanks they kept up, and the writing culture they helped keep going.

The Mahajanas lived in Agrahara, which was both a place to live and a school where people learned about the Vedas, the law, grammar, and literature. According to Dharmashastra, the Mahajanas led communities with wisdom, fairness, and accountability. People trusted them to settle land, water, and resource disputes, and they kept things in order and fair on the Deccan Plateau.

They were in charge of more than just the government. The Mahajanas were very important in keeping the Kakatiya period's amazing irrigation system running. It included a huge network of tanks that turned dry land into productive farmland. They also helped Telugu literature by helping poets, scholars, and keeping old manuscripts safe. This helped improve the region's literary culture outside of the royal courts.

The Mahajanas were in charge of Annadanam, a noble tradition of feeding the poor, pilgrims, and students, as well as temple endowments and community festivals. They lived in and around Warangal, the capital city. Through managing



temples, helping people in need, and supporting the arts, they made sure that the Kakatiya kingdom was more than just a political entity. It was also a thriving and humane civilization.

Keywords: Mahajanas, Kakatiya Kingdom, Agrahara, Deccan Plateau, Warangal, Irrigation, Dharmashastra, Telugu Literature, Temple Management, Annadanam

Introduction:

A Short History of the Kakatiya Kingdom:

The Kakatiyas were one of the important Indian rulers of the Middle Ages. They ruled the Deccan plateau from the century. Their capital was Orugallu, which's now Warangal in Telangana. The Kakatiyas built an culturally vibrant kingdom in South India. They were originally vassals of the Chalukyas of Kalyani. They became independent under Prola II. The Kakatiyas had a period of growth and development under Ganapati Deva, who ruled from 1199 to 1262 CE. His daughter Rudrama Devi was one of the women to rule a large Indian kingdom. The last king of the dynasty Prataparudra II ruled until 1323 CE.

The Kakatiyas left behind amazing things, including the Warangal Fort, the Thousand Pillar Temple and the Ramappa Temple. They also developed a system of large-scale irrigation that turned the -arid Deccan into rich farmland. The Mahajanas played a role in making this happen. During the Kakatiya period Telugu literature. The Mahajanas supported many poets and scholars.

Who Were the Mahajanas?

The word Mahajana means " person" or "noble individual".. The Mahajanas were more than that. They were a class of learned Brahmin scholars, respected village elders, temple trustees and landholding community leaders. The Mahajanas had power that was religious, legal, educational and economic. They earned their power by being knowledgeable well-respected and trustworthy. The Mahajanas were not just appointed by the king. They were chosen by the community. They were the ones who kept the community going.

1. A Role in Local Government:

The Mahajanas were part of the assembly. They made decisions that affected the community. They were not just figureheads. They were active participants in the decision-making process. The Mahajanas were knowledgeable about Dharmashastra,



the body of Hindu law and local customs. They could mediate between competing interests in a practical way. The Mahajanas were also witnesses to land transfers. They had to agree to the gift and their names were written on the record as proof.

The Mahajanas had a role in tax and revenue control. They had agraahas, which were tax- lands that they managed. The Mahajanas knew a lot about the quality of land, tax rates and agricultural output. They could advise the revenue officers on how to manage the land. The Mahajanas were also judges in community disputes. They could settle issues without going to the royal court. This decentralized system of justice was useful and necessary in a kingdom where the state could not settle every issue. The Mahajanas were the ones who kept the community together.

2. The Kakatiya Legacy of Water Management and Farming:

The Kakatiya dynasty was built on agriculture. The Mahajanas, who had grants were the ones who actually farmed. They hired tenant farmers, managed planting and harvesting cycles. Used their knowledge to improve farming on their estates. The Mahajanas also managed temple lands, which were used for activities, education and charity. They made sure that the shared resources were used properly. The irrigation system that the Kakatiya period left behind is still impressive today. Thousands of tanks turned land into productive fields. The Mahajanas played a role in maintaining this system.

The Mahajanas were approached to settle disputes over water distribution. They were impartial and trustworthy so people could rely on them to settle these issues. The Mahajanas also paid for repairs to tank bunds and sluices with their money. This showed their commitment to the communities farms, not their own. The Mahajanas shared their knowledge of agriculture with farming communities. They taught them about ways to grow crops, seed types and seasonal planning. The Mahajanas were the ones who brought knowledge to the fields.

3. The Agraahara as a Living University for Education:

The agraahara system was a way to combine living, working and learning. The Mahajanas upheld a tradition of education that included the Vedas, Upanishads, legal writings, grammar, logic, astronomy and literary theory. The Gurukula institution taught students from the community including men, from non-Brahmin families. The Mahajanas were the ones who supported taught and managed this system. They set up poetry gatherings, paid for manuscript copying and gave scholarships to students. The Mahajanas supported Telugu and Sanskrit writing. They helped to spread literary culture beyond the royal courts. They kept texts alive by copying and storing manuscripts. The Mahajanas took their job seriously and they made sure that



knowledge was preserved for future generations. The Mahajanas were the guardians of knowledge.

4. Life in Religion and Culture:

Taking care of the temples is a job. Building temples was a part of the Kakatiya civilization. Rulers like Ganapati Deva and Prataparudra II built temples like the Ramappa Temple in Palampet and the Thousand Pillar Temple in Hanamkonda.. Building a temple is just the start. The Mahajanas did the work of keeping the temples clean running ceremonies and managing the money.

The Mahajanas were in charge of the temples income from donations kept track of the priests and staff and made sure the daily, monthly and yearly ceremonies went well. They turned the temples into centers of community activity.

Festivals as Events for the Community:

festivals in medieval Deccan civilization were not just about religion. They were times for people to get together trade goods and share their culture. The Mahajanas were very important to the success of these events.

They had to solve problems like getting resources organizing musicians and performers and keeping order in crowded places. The Mahajanas helped bring people which made their influence stronger.

Supporting the Arts:

The amazing sculptures from the Kakatiya period show that many people supported the arts. Kings paid for the temples while the Mahajanas paid for smaller shrines and statues. The Mahajanas were ardent patrons of the arts. They helped shape the style of Kakatiya temple art. The Mahajanas were a part of the community and their support for the arts was important.

5. Caring for the Community through Social Welfare:

Giving Food to the Hungry:

The Mahajanas organized annadanam. Giving food to people who needed it. They fed pilgrims, ascetics, students and poor people. The scale was occasionally very large with hundreds of people fed every day. The Mahajanas. Practiced the principle of annadanam, which was a physical representation of their ideal. They believed that those who had been given education and wealth had a responsibility to help those who had not.

Safeguarding the Weak:

The Mahajanas were role models whose behavior set the bar for others. They helped settle arguments, plan festivals and manage resources. They also defended



members of their community such as widows orphans and low-caste farmers. The Mahajanans protected people based on Dharmashastra ideals. They had a social justice aspect to their work.

Animal Welfare and Medicine:

Some communities had doctors and herbalists among their members. The Mahajanans with training gave basic health care to community members. They also contributed to establishments providing care for injured cattle. This was in line with the belief that all living creatures should be cared for. The Mahajanans believed in taking care of all living things.

6. Contributions to Literature and Ideas:

Making Telugu literature better:

The Kakatiya dynasty's time is often called a time of literary achievement in Telugu. The Mahajanans were authors, scholars and keepers of the traditions. They wrote poetry, puranic stories in Telugu and grammar books. The Mahajanans made sacred stories available in the language instead of retaining them in Sanskrit.

Knowledge of the law and how to run a business:

Some Mahajanans were specialists in Dharmashastra who contributed to the development of legal codes. They helped monarchs settle disputes and deal with conflicts between local law and Sanskrit traditions. The Mahajanans made sure that government was based on academic knowledge instead of just following the rules.

7. Important Mahajanans from the Kakatiya Period:

The Mahajanans are often represented in inscriptions not as named people. As a collective entity. This shows how they saw themselves: as a group defined by their jobs and the trust of their society. Some inscriptions do keep the names of individuals, such as Brahmin scholars from the Warangal area. The people in charge of managing Kakatiya religious endowments were the temple trust administrators.

The leaders of the Agrahara society were very important. They maintained the irrigation tanks. Set up farming schedules. Just because the Mahajanans are not well-known in history does not mean they were not important. Their impact was integrated into systems that will survive including temples, irrigation systems and texts.

8. What the Inscriptions Say:

The main things we use to learn about the Mahajanans are stone and copper inscriptions. The Andhra Pradesh State Archaeology and Museums Department has compiled a list of hundreds of Kakatiya-period inscriptions. Many of these shows how



the Mahajanas were involved in land allocations running the government and managing temples. The Ramappa Temple complex and the Thousand Pillar Temple have collections.

Literary materials enhance the record. The Prataparudra Charitra and Prataparudra Yasobhushana tell stories about life at the Kakatiya court. They show how Brahmin academics and community leaders played roles.

Conclusion:

The Mahajanas of the Kakatiya period should be seen for what they were: active community builders. They ran communities, farming kept schools going ran temples, planned festivals, offered social services and improved the arts and philosophy.

Their power came not from being appointed by the monarch but also, from their knowledge, piety, wealth and the trust of the people. The Kakatiya period, exemplified by the Mahajanas illustrates the influence of educated, accountable and authentically community-focused leadership. The Mahajanas were not the monarchs who built the temples or the generals who pushed the borders. They were the ones who made sure that everything worked. In Telangana their legacy lives on in the schools they established and the people they helped.

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