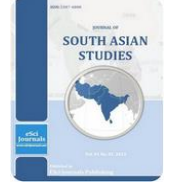




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## CONCEPT OF KUṆḌALINĪIN TELUGU YOGA AND VEDANTA TEXTS

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### ABSTRACT

The concepts relating to Kuṅḍalinī Yoga in Telugu literature on Yoga and Vedanta, are discussed in this article. Kuṅḍalinī yoga, as in other Indian languages, has been dealt rather consistently in a metaphorical manner in Telugu too. Here an attempt is made to understand the concept of Kuṅḍalinī as explained by the writers in Telugu, the classical Dravidian language of India. For the purpose of this study, numerous Telugu texts of Yoga and Vedanta were identified and collected. The period of the texts ranged from 11th Century to 19th Century. A thorough study of these texts was attempted. The direct references to Kuṅḍalinī concepts such as the cakras, nādis, and awakening methods were traced. Metaphorical references were also identified. It is interesting to note that while some of the standard symbols (for example: snake) have been consistently used by several of these authors to represent Kuṅḍalinī, a new coinage of metaphorical terms have also been noticed peculiar to the texts of this classical language. In several Telugu literary forms, Kuṅḍalinī yōga has been innovatively presented bringing out both the practical as well as the conceptual aspects of this mystical science. This study contributed to identifying the hitherto unknown aspects of Kuṅḍalinī. These findings throw fresh light on understanding this subtle subject of Kuṅḍalinī.

**Key Words:** Kundalini yoga, Yoga, Telugu Literature, Vedanta.

### RUNNING HEAD: CONCEPT OF KUNDALINI YOGA IN TELUGU LITERATURE

Kuṅḍalinī is one of the most popular concepts of Indian philosophy and life. Among the different topics in yoga, Kuṅḍalinī is one of the most extensively practiced, studied and researched. Several diligent efforts have been made to anecdotally and scientifically validate it, not only in India, but also in several other countries. Fortunately or unfortunately, Kuṅḍalinī had been a guarded secret until recently. Often this knowledge is shrouded in mystery and is expressed in metaphorical terms. The concept of Kuṅḍalinī has been referred to by the writers and poets sometimes directly and other times indirectly. Several authors have studied direct references to Kuṅḍalinī. But extracting the indirect references which are enmeshed in metaphorical terms is a challenging task. Apart from that, understanding the concepts of Kuṅḍalinī presented in other Indian languages will add on to the existing knowledge on this

mystical subject. This paper is an attempt in that direction.

In ancient India Sanskrit is the official language that was the medium for knowledge scientific, philosophical and literary. People used to write and be creative in the mother language, Sanskrit. This trend was found even among the Telugus. Gradually some patriotic Telugu Kings realized the importance of propagating their mother tongue, Telugu. Firstly, the Telugu kings started patronizing Telugu translation of the Classical Sanskrit works. It can be noticed that in these translations not always the original thought of the Sanskrit texts were presented per se, but several new creative ideas were introduced relevant to their times. So, many of the Telugu poets did not make a true translation of the Sanskrit works. They imbibed the spirit of the original text and depending on the circumstance and necessity, they enlarged certain portions, condensed some and a few were even deleted. They had adopted a free style of translation being creative and probably incorporating their own ideas reflecting their personal experiences or social influences on them. Later, the Telugu people

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gradually adopted Telugu as the medium of literacy. Several original works have been, over the years, written in this classical language. The concept of Kuṇḍalinī as discussed in Telugu literature is presented here, highlighting the unique contributions and innovative expressions of various writers.

### **KUṆḌALINĪ**

The root of the word Kuṇḍalinī is the verb kuṇḍ, which signifies "to burn". According to Arundale (1962), this is the vital meaning, for Kuṇḍalinī is 'fire' in its aspect of burning. But there is a further explanation of the word in the noun kuṇḍa, which means a hole or a bowl. Here an idea of the vessel in which the fire burns is given. There is also the noun kuṇḍala, which means a coil, a spiral, or an ear ring (Wilson, 1979). The word 'Kuṇḍalinī' has its Sanskrit etymological root in kunda, which means round hole in the ground that is meant for sacred fire. It is interesting to note that Kuṇḍalinī has etymological roots in other Dravidian languages like Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam (South Indian Languages). The Telugu word kuṇḍa means a pit or hole and gundi means anything round or spherical in shape representing the shape of Kuṇḍalinī (Burrow and Emeneau, 1984).

Swami Satyananda Saraswati (1996) writes in the book Kuṇḍalinī Tantra that the "word Kuṇḍalinī actually comes from the word "kuṇḍa" meaning 'a deeper place, pit or cavity'. The fire used in the ceremony of initiation is kindled in a pit called kuṇḍa. Similarly, the place where a dead body is burned is kuṇḍa. If you dig a ditch or a hole it is called kuṇḍa. Kuṇḍa refers to the concave cavity in which the brain, resembling a coiled and sleeping serpent, nestles" (Saraswati, 1996). Ramana Maharshi mentioned that Kundalini is the natural energy of the Self, where Self is the universal consciousness (Paramatma) present in every being, and that the individual mind of thoughts cloaks this natural energy from unadulterated expression (Godman, 1985). The concept of Kuṇḍalinī has become popular even among the common people because of the fact that awakening the Kuṇḍalinī energy in the right manner will bring forth numerous benefits (Sri Krishna, 1996).

Yōga realizes that the spark of Divinity is present in every human being in the form of Kuṇḍalinī. According to Ghēraṇḍa Saṁhita (III.49), Kuṇḍalinī, the spiritual energy is in a dormant state, coiled three and a half times like a serpent, at the base of the spine called mūlādhāra cakra. This sleeping power has to be roused slowly and

diligently led upwards, piercing the six lotuses or cakrās, situated one above the other in the spinal column (Yoga, 2009). According to Monier-Williams (1999) Sanskrit English Dictionary, cakra means a wheel or circle. The New Encyclopedia Britannica (1993: 58) defines the cakrās as: "The cakrās are conceived of as focal points where psychic forces and bodily functions merge with and interact with each other". There are frequent references to the cakrās in the minor Upanishads, the Puraṇās, and especially in taṇtra literature. Ancient sages studied the human body thoroughly and revealed that life force or prāṇa śakti operates in gross body through the nerve system, whose central access is the spiral column. The practitioner has to rouse the Kuṇḍalinī from its dormant resting stage at the mūlādhāra cakra and rouse it higher up through various yogic techniques, till it reaches the thousand petal lotus, Sahasrāra in the pericarp of the head and merges with the Universal Consciousness (Eliade, 1970; Avalon, 1975). This is mukti or liberation in the Yōgic sense and the process has been described in detail in various esoteric works. Its practical aspect is alive till today, being handed over from generation to generation, from preceptor to disciple, in a hidden lineage spread throughout India underneath the bubbling superficial social and public life of the country. There are various such methods expounded by different Guruparaṁparās or hierarchies of teachers, to suit different levels of human development. In their attempts to attain liberation (jīvaṇmukti) whatever the path might be, Kuṇḍalinī is involved either directly or indirectly. Almost all the haṭha yōga texts and yogopani shads clearly enumerated the role of Kuṇḍalinī in attaining liberation.

### **KUṆḌALINĪ IN TELUGU LITERATURE**

Telugu is one of the Classical Dravidian languages (Krishnamurthi, 2003: 78-79) of India. We find the concept of Kuṇḍalinī in various forms of Telugu literature abundantly, starting from the first poet Nannayya (11th Century) to a recent poet Viswanadha Satyanarayana (19th Century). The concept of self-realization is mentioned sumptuously all through the literary works where possible making it an integral part of the culture and tradition of the Andhras. It is remarkable to note that Kuṇḍalinī is incorporated in all aspects of Telugu life. Starting from the lullaby songs for the infants to the intricately complex philosophical texts, the concept of Kuṇḍalinī is all pervading (Sri Krishna, 2006: 361-362). Each and every occasion of the Telugu

people is intertwined with Kuṇḍalinī. Songs/hymns/verses sung or chanted during the upanayana (initiation of the young student), marriage ceremony, household chores, festivals, etc., are interspersed with Kuṇḍalinī. At each stage and during each occasion in the Telugu culture there is a constant reminder of the ultimate goal of life-liberation. Kuṇḍalinī being the means to liberation is often referred to in these literary works either symbolically or by way of direct references.

The nādha cult according to the historians flourished in Āṇḍhra Dēśa or Trilinga Dēśa (so named since this area is surrounded by three sacred shrines of Lord Śiva) during 9th and 10th Centuries (Dwivedee, 1950). The basic technique of nādha sām̐pradāya is arousal of Kuṇḍalinī from the mūlādhāra and union with Lord Śiva in the Sahasrāra. Influenced by this tradition, several poets of this region made several references to Kuṇḍalinī yōga and its concepts, in their literary works. The present work aims to identify and bring out the concepts and praxis of Kuṇḍalinī as dealt within the Telugu Literature. It is interesting to trace Kuṇḍalinī in the enormous Telugu literature starting from the first available literary work of 11th century poet Nannaya, to the 19th Century devotional poet Tyagaraja.

For the purpose of this study, numerous Telugu texts of Yoga and Vedanta were identified and collected. The period of the texts ranged from 11th Century to 19th Century. A thorough study of these texts was attempted. The direct references to Kuṇḍalinī concepts such as the cakras, nādis, and awakening methods were traced. Metaphorical references were also identified to the extent possible by the authors, who are themselves trained in Kuṇḍalinī yoga. Two eminent scholars proficient in the field of Yoga, Sanskrit, and Telugu subjected the data pertaining to indirect references to Kuṇḍalinī yoga identified by the authors, to re-analysis. They judged whether the data has indirect references to Kuṇḍalinī, and whether the authors' interpretation is meaningful.

**Nannayya (11th Century):** The first poet Nannayya made a brief and indirect reference to Kuṇḍalinī yōga. Nannayya mentioned the concept of Kuṇḍalinī in the guise of praise for nagās, the serpent power, in the story of Udaṅka, in Udaṅkōpākyaṅarāṅ of Āṇḍhra Mahābhārataṅ (Adiparva-I-104) (Nannayya, 1970). The ascent and descent of Kuṇḍalinī as discussed in taṅtra texts was compared to the fourteen lōkās (worlds) from

patāḷa to satyalōka. In this text Udaṅka travels from patāḷa to satyalōka and vice versa, just as Kuṇḍalinī travels from the lower cakrās to Sahasrāra and from Sahasrāra to the lower cakrās. Generally most yōga texts discuss about the ascent of Kuṇḍalinī to Sahasrāra but few mention about its descent back. That Nannayya had mentioned both the ascent and descent of Kuṇḍalinī in a symbolical fashion is worth noting.

**Palkuriki Somanadha and Nannechoda (12th Century):** Palkuriki Somanadha also brings forth in one of the most popular works of Telugu region, Basavapurāṅarāṅ (Rao, 1974a) the secrets pertaining to the descent and ascent of Kuṇḍalinī comparing this process with the entering of the individual (here Nandishvara-the vehicle of Lord Śiva) into the womb of the mother and its physio-psycho transformation from mūlādhāra to Sahasrāra.

Another Telugu poet, Nannechoda in his work Kumara Sambhavam (III-93: V-16) discusses in detail the process of purification in a unique manner when compared to yōga texts such a Ghēraṅḍa Saṅhita and others. He mentions about sōshana, dahana, plāvana and tarpaṅa that are in essence taṅtra purificatory/worship processes. He also highlights the importance of sabdha parabrahma wherein he gives intricate details about cakrās including the different syllables the sādhakā has to recite or meditate upon while practicing Kuṇḍalinī yoga (Nannechoda, 1949). Another interesting feature of Nannechoda's works is that he mentions about sadanja marga or the six fold path of yōga, viz., prāṅyāma, pratyāhāra, dhyāna, dhāraṅa, japa and samādhi. It is worth noting that he mentions dhyāna as the pre-step to dhāraṅa, a deviation from the concept of Patanjali Yōga Sūtrās just like another poet, Srinadha does. Japa as one of the sādhana steps is a unique addition when compared with other texts.

Palkuriki Somanadha in Panditaradhya Caritra (Somanadha, 1974) describes the qualities of a sādhakā practicing Kuṇḍalinī yōga, by narrating a story of a pilgrimage by several yogis to the famous shrine at Śrīsaila sikhara, symbolically representing the Sahasrāra in a unique poetic style. In this description he refers to cakrās, prāṅyāma, nādis, and mudrās. The pilgrimage is completed successfully when the sādhakā crosses all barriers and reaches Śrīsailam to unite with the Universal Consciousness.

**Tikkana and Yerrapragada (13th Century):** Tikkana in his translation of the epic Mahabharatam (Shanti

Parva-II) in Telugu, stresses the importance of astāṅga yōga and gives the prerequisites for the sādhanā; like the union of the senses, mind, intellect and soul by method of fire-worship, cleanliness, truthfulness and others (Sri Krishna, 2006: 361-362.). He mentions about a technique of arousing Kuṇḍalinī by the unification of prāṇa and apāna. Yerrapragada (Aranya Parva-V-101) also explains about the importance of astāṅgayōga. He gave details about prāṇāyāma techniques and elaborated on nāḍha tradition, by explaining in some detail the process of meditation, in his work Harivamsha. Here it is interesting to note that he mentions of shaṭ cakraś as shaṭ graṇḍhīs (Sri Krishna, 2006).

**Ganapatidemudu (14th Century):** In one of the standard Telugu texts on yōga, Śivayōgasaram, Kolani Ganapatidemudu is probably the first person who mentions that rāja yōga consists of tāraḱa, sāṅkhyā and amanaska yōgās (154-157). Both he and Vemana (another famous Telugu poet) mentions about the term 'kuṇḍa' (an etymological root of Kuṇḍalinī) in their works. Ganapatidemudu explains that by constant practice of kuṁbaka prāṇāyāma, the ambrosia within the brain can be retained within. Thus the amruta or ambrosia is not confined only to the devās at dēvalōka but is accessible to the ordinary mortal by practicing Kuṇḍalinī yoga (Sri Krishna, 2006: 361-362).

**Srinadha and Gowranna (15th Century):** Srinadha made several references to Kuṇḍalinī in his works. After describing about the four definitions of yōga, he mentions that shaḍāṅga yōga is preferable over astāṅgayōga, in which yamās and niyamās are excluded. He gave details about the precautions for practice with regard to diet, time, place, characteristics and so on, just like standard Sanskrit yōga texts. Srinadha also suggested various techniques of awakening Kuṇḍalinī such as rēcaka, kuṁbaka and pūraka. He mentions only five but different types of prāṇāyāma techniques, dahani, brāmani, staṁbini, samāni, and plāvani where as eight types of prāṇāyāma techniques are mentioned in other yōga texts. Similarly he mentions about five novel mudrās, udyāna mudra, mahāmudra, mūlabandha, gaganamudra and jālaṇḍharamudra. He suggests a technique to awaken Kuṇḍalinī wherein the sādhanā should take hold of the pranic airs at ūrdva Kuṇḍalinī which should be brought down to merge with apāna vāyu. Thus the sādhanā should practice the upward and downward movements of the pranic airs repeatedly. Gowranna (Gourana, 1937) in his work, Navanāḍha

Caritra, makes special reference to Kuṇḍalinī in terms of graṇḍhi trayī, ūrdva Kuṇḍalinī and dasa dvārās (inclusive of brahmarandra) unlike the nava dvārās (nine gates of opening in the human body) usually mentioned. He explains the indulgence of yōgis in alchemy and siddhīs.

**Potana and Annamayya (15th Century):** Potana in his famous epic narrations mentioned Kuṇḍalinī concepts sublimely (Potana, 1987). In Gajēndra Mōkṣha episode of Āṇḍhra Mahābhāgavataṁ, he referred to the descent of Kuṇḍalinī from Sahasrāra to mūlādhāra, as the descent of Lord Vishṇu from Vaikuṇṭa to bhūlōka. In fact Gajēndra is a synonym of nāga, the serpent Kuṇḍalinī. He also mentions indirectly about the powers the sādhanā shall attain while doing Kuṇḍalinī sādhanā in episodes like kṣhīrasāgaramadanaṁ and dakṣha yagñāṁ. On the other hand, Annamayya wrote innumerable kīrtanās in which he interspersed devotional, philosophical and sublime truths with the concepts of Kuṇḍalinī. In his kīrtanās he discussed the methods of awakening like meditation, prāṇāyāma, mudrās and others. He also discussed about the technique of samyama as given by Patanjali in his Yōga Sūtras. In one of his kīrtanās he mentions 'gōrakhure' to denote to Gorakṣnāḍha. This is evidence that nāḍha tradition has its influence even in vaishṇava cult.

**Galapati Lakshmayya (16th Century):** The yāgaṇṭi padās composed by Galapati Lakshmayya contain many references to Kuṇḍalinī including the description of haṭha yōga practices such as rēcaka, pūraka, kuṁbaka and nāḍi śōdhana. He referred to Kuṇḍalinī also as aṅgañāmaṇi, muktikāṇṭā and nāgakaṇyā. He describes shaṭ cakraś in a unique manner as manifestations of mountains and compares iḍa and piṅgaḷa to the rivers Gaṅga and Yamuna just like many other Telugu poets such as Esvamma in her Yakṣhaḡāna on Akkamahādevi. Lakshmayya's tummeda (bee) and yēla songs are filled with sublime thoughts couched in mystical poetry. It is difficult to interpret the meaning word-to-word. He uses terms like 'sannapu diddivākiṭa' for sushrūma; 'chinnelāḍi' for Kuṇḍalinī; 'cichu' to the fire of knowledge etc.

**Sri Krishna Devaraya and Pingala Suranna (16th Century):** In the āśvāsāṇṭha poems of Amuktamālyadā by the Great King Sri Krishna Devaraya, references can be found regarding Kuṇḍalinī (Rao, 1974b). He made an uncommon comparison of the shaṭ cakraś with different kinds of lotuses such as sarat padma of anāhata cakra, akṣha padma of ājñā cakra, nirāruha padma of maṇipūra cakra. Further Kuṇḍalinī was referred to as 'bāla',

'bhōga vanitā, vishṅu śakti, kṣhētarjña śakti and as śubhāśraya. After that he suggests that the sādhakā should practice sabīja and nirbīja prāñyāma, which are not mentioned elsewhere in any other popular texts. By these prāñyāma the prāṅa and apāna of the pranic airs should be made to unite and brought under control by practicing rēcaka, pūraka and kuṁbhaka.

Pingala Suranna in his Kalāpūrnōdhayaṁ elaborately describes haṭha yōga with particular reference to Kuṅḍalinī discussing shaṭ kriyās, nāḍīs, kaṇḍa, cakrās and astāṅga yōga in about forty poems at a stretch just like in a standard yoga treatise (Suranna, 2001). Suranna explained the concept of Kuṅḍalinī in rather an uncommon manner, starting from the foot to the cranial pit with relation to pañcabhūtās (five elements). According to him the earth element exists between foot and knees with the presiding deity, Brahma. From there to anus the element water exists and the deity is Vishṅu. From the anus to heart is the fire element with Rudra as the deity. Above heart to the eyebrow centre the element air exists with Isha as the deity. From the eyebrow centre to the cranial pit (brahmaraṇḍra) the element ether exists and the presiding deity is Sadāśiva. This is a rather unique interpretation given by Suranna.

**Vemana (17th Century):** In Telugu śaṭakaṁ literature too one can trace several references to Kuṅḍalinī yōga. Yōgi Vemana (Brown, 1967), the renunciate, in a symbolical manner exhorts the sādhakā in one of his poems; to first kill Brahma, then Vishṅu and finally Śiva. This means that the sādhakā should pierce through the three graṅthīs by the help of Kuṅḍalinī. Such asādhakā, according to him shall become a Śiva Yōgi. Vemana also explains about the secrets of nāḍī cakra, otherwise known as kaṇḍa, which is believed to be the place where all the nāḍīs originate. Like many other Telugu poets, Vemana too mentions about the details of Kuṅḍalinī practices and refers to the six cakras as six padmās in several of his poems (Subhramanya, 1994).

**Potuluri Veerabrahmendra (17th Century):** Another Yōgi, Potuluri Veerabrahmendra, who is considered to be a realized soul by the people of Āṅḍhra Dēśa too mentioned Kuṅḍalinī yōga concepts in several of his literary works. He used the following names to refer to Kuṅḍalinī: Īśvarī, Kuṅḍalinī, Kāṅṭa, Ādisēshu, Agnilēpi, Pāmu, Mukthi Kāṅṭa, Sṛiṅga, Kūḍali Saṅga, Aṁbā, Aṅṅana and Kuṅḍa. The poet mentions different lōkās-pātāḷa, bhū, bhuvan and suvar lōkas. According to taṅtra text

Biṅduyōgōpanishad, it can be interpreted that under the feet region there is pātāḷa lōka; bhūlōka at the region of mūlādhāra cakra; at the tip of the penis, bhuvanlōka and at the centre of the penis, suvarlōka (Lingaswami, 1984). It is interesting to see that Virabrahmendra uses his professional (a blacksmith) symbolism to explain the complex subject matter of Kuṅḍalinī. He says that in the human body also there are leather bellows (blacksmiths generally use these leather air bellows to push out the air for heating the furnace), which are compared to two nostrils through which inhalation, and exhalation occurs. Above these nostrils there is unmani. In between these two nostrils and above the eyes there is one place filled with darkness. With the help of these two nostrils (by practicing prāñyāma) the sādhakā should pierce his mental ignorance or the darkness and should open the third eye. Here Virabrahmendra Yogi suggests starting sādhana beginning at ajñā cakra. Sādhana can be started either at ajñā cakra or anāhata cakra or mūlādhāra cakra to rouse the Kuṅḍalinī upto Sahasrāra depending on the guidance of the guru (Dasu, 1895).

Similarly Virabrahmendra also presents details of Kuṅḍalinī yōga by bringing the parallelism with the popular Andhra originated game, Kabadi. In the tattwa “ceḍuguḍāḍenu brahma” the sādhakā plays the same game, Ceḍuguḍu (kabadi), on the mental plane with continuous utterance of “sōhaṁ sōhaṁ sōhaṁ” or “haṁsa haṁsa haṁsa”. Keeping this as constant yell, finally he wins over all the six opponents namely arishaḍ vargās i.e. kāma, krōḍha, lōbha, mōha, madha, and mātsarya.

**Paramananda Yati and Sanari Viswanadha (18th Century):** Among the Telugu writers on Yōga, Paramananda Yati's contribution is remarkable. It is interesting to note that Paramananda Yati gives several details of Kuṅḍalinī yōga in the second chapter of Vivēka Ciṅtāmaṅi. The poet describes aspects of Kuṅḍalinī like the six cakrās, their places, symbols, elements, colors, lotuses, sacred (seed) letters, and the presiding deities. Unlike other poets Paramananda Yati describes about three additional cakrās namely, brahmaraṇḍra, sikha and paścima. The brahmaraṇḍra cakra is located in masthaka, that is, top of the head (can be correlated with Sahasrāra cakra).

The sikha is located at sikha (a place below the masthaka, that is, at the back of the head) and paścima cakra is at the sikhāṅṭhaṁ, that is at the end of sikha or lower back of the head. The poet also describes about the corresponding lotuses of these three cakrās,

thousand petals, three petals and one petal respectively. The colors of these three cakra are jyōtirvarṇa (color of fire), mahājyōtirvarṇa (color of fierce fire) and apradarshaṇavarṇa (unexhibited color-which cannot be seen). Similarly the corresponding sounds for these three cakrās, brahmarāṇḍra, sikha and paścima, are sounds of letters, sound of non-letters and sound of silence. The three deities of these three cakrās are Inner Self, Self and Absolute Self. Paramananda Yati mentions four modifications of the mind, vikṣipta, gathāyatha, sunistha, sulīnatha that aid in the concentration process in order to attain higher states of consciousness. It is to be noted that the last three modifications of the mind that are mentioned in this text are unique and not commonly mentioned in other yōga texts.

He also describes the awakening methods for these cakrās. The three focusing points for these cakrās are 'internal', 'middle' and 'external'. The different mudrās to be practiced are those that start with shaṇmukhi and end with shāmbhavi. He further mentions about higher states of consciousness, viz., unmani, manōnmani and sahaṇvāstha. Another poet Sanari Viswanadha in his work Sanāri Viśvēshvara Saṁvādaṁ (Viswanadha, 1907) mentions two additional cakrās, karṇika and bhrahmarāṇḍra. Karṇika is behind Sahasrāra where the letters 'a' 'u' 'm', produce the sound of 'ōm'. Brahmarāṇḍra is also present behind the Sahasrāra. It is to be noted that Sanari Viswanadha states that the maṇipūra cakra has only eight syllables instead of the traditionally stated, ten.

**Dudhekula Siddayya (17th Century):** Caṇḍamāma (the moon) is symbolically used by the poet Dudhekula Siddayya, a disciple of Virabrahmendra Yogi, who speaks of Kuṇḍalinī. The concept of Kuṇḍalinī and its arousal are symbolically depicted by him in such a manner that the grand philosophical truths are accessible to the common rural folk. He compared the body with that of an anthill, wherein the Serpent Kuṇḍalinī power resides in a mysterious way. The sādhaḱā adopting the processes of Kuṁbhaka should try to arouse the Serpent through iḍa and piṅgaḷa nāḍis which are symbolically mentioned as the two snake charmers' flutes that produce nāḡēsvara like forces of the body. By playing on the flute the Kuṇḍalinī must be aroused. Then with a flash the Kuṇḍalinī will raise just like the serpent that raises up when it is beaten on its tail (Vidyaranya, 1999).

**Parasurama Panthulu Lingamurti (18th Century):** An excellent treatise on yōga in Telugu that is Śrī

Sītarāmāṇjanēya Saṁvādaṁ written by Parasurama Panthulu Lingamurti, has several symbolical references to Kuṇḍalinī yōga. After the description of different types of yōgas (I-87) the poet gives detailed description of Yamās and Niyamās, Yōga āsanās (Vīra, Svastika, Padma, Baddha Padma, Yōga, Kūrma, Uttāna Kūrma, Bhadra, Siddha and variations, Sīmha, Kukta, Gōmukha, Dhanura, Mayūra, Kapila, Mukta, Tittaba, Paschimōttāna, Purvōttāna, Arbhaka, Kamadahan) different concepts of Prānāyāma and explained the concepts of rēcaka, pūraka and kuṁbhaka and three baṇdhās, samādhi, pratyāhāra, dhyāna, dāraṇa and eight super natural powers etc (Subrahmanyam, 1992).

The poet narrated various rules and regulations that are to be adhered by yōga sādhaḱā. The diet regulation of sādhaḱās, and the necessity of having the proper abode for Yōga Sādhanā were discussed. The poet next mentioned about the five types of mudrās namely khēcari, bhūcari, madhyama, shaṇmukhi and śāmbhavi of tāra. It is interesting to note that the five mudrās described here are entirely different from 25 mudrās mentioned in Hatha yōga treatises (Doraswamaiah, 1934). The names khēcari and śāmbhavi are also found in hatha yōga literature but these are very different.

The poet Lingamurti, while describing the ten types of prāṇava nāda gave in a beautiful poetic style, the fifth prāṇava nāda as vīna nāda. He explains about various chitkalās, which can be seen in akāśapaṇcaka (five types of space) including the rise of sun and moon representing knowledge which results in removal of ignorance and finally union with muktikāṇṭā (woman of liberation). He mentioned about existence of 72,000 nāḍis in the physical body, the place of mūlādhāra cakra in a triangular shape between two inches above the anus and two inches below the reproductive organ, and places of other cakrās and nāḍis on the spine, which was compared with vīna (Doraswamaiah, 1934). Here the word "haṁsa" is explained as under. The word "HA" stands for citta, pūrṇabiṇḍu stands for mind. "SA" stands for buddhi and visarga stands for ahaṅkāra. And the four petals of mūlādhāra cakra were comprised of namely the manas, the buddhi, the citta and the ahaṅkāra. Similarly, another explanation was also given to the word 'haṁsa' the poet said "ha" represents pūraka, purusha, Śiva or Rāma, "sa" represents rēcaka, prakṛiti, Pārvati or Sīta. The pūrṇabiṇḍu of the aṇṭaḷ kuṁbhaka is the representation of the union of prakṛiti and Purusha, Śiva and Pārvati,

known as ardanārīśvara, Śīta and Rāma.

**Narayana Yatindrulu and Tyagaraja (19th Century):**

Narayana Yatindrulu in his work Tāraka Brahmāṇḍa Dvayakaṇḍa Śatakaṁ described khechari and shanmukhi mudra for arousing Kuṇḍalinī. He mentioned about sushūmna by reflecting as sunnapudiddi and nāḍinalamu and Sahasrāra as brhamaṇḍapura. He describes sushūmna as an nāḍi lying in between Mūlādhāra cakra and sahasrāra. It is as narrow as a hair and inside this hair Kuṇḍalinī, described as 'haṁsa' moves. He mentions shat cakrās are ārukondalu. In these poems he mentioned Kuṇḍalinī in a subtle way. He refers to a fort in the sky (sahasrāra) that is being ruled by three kings (Brahma, Vishṇu, Rudra graṇḍhīs). This fort can be climbed by means of 'śāmbhavi mudra' and piercing the graṇḍhīs. At the base (mūlādhāra) there are three pokes on which the mountain of liberation (sahasrāra) is there. On climbing this, one finds the sushūmna between Gaṅga and Yamuna i.e. ḍa and piṅgaḷa. Tyagaraja (Ayyar, 1955: 108) the great composer of devotional music has most of his works in Telugu. In some instances he made references to Kuṇḍalinī concepts. For example, in his famous 'svararāga sudhārasa kīrtana' he says that the sādhakā should realize the nāḍa that is generated in the mūlādhāra cakra which leads to mōkṣha.

**CONCLUSION**

This paper dealt with the concepts of Kuṇḍalinī in Telugu literature. Down the ages Kuṇḍalinī has seeped into the mundane life of the common folk of this holy land of Bhārat to such an extent that Kuṇḍalinī concepts are sung as lullabies for the babies! But all through it is enmeshed in mysterious terms and symbols that needed deciphering. The concept of Kuṇḍalinī has been presented in a most sophisticated and scholarly manner metaphorically by the authors of Yoga and Vedanta literature, not only in several Sanskrit texts but also those in other Classical languages of India. In several Telugu literary forms, Kuṇḍalinī yōga has been innovatively presented bringing out both the practical as well as the conceptual aspects of this mystical science. This study contributed to identifying the hitherto unknown aspects of Kuṇḍalinī by attempting a systematic study of the Telugu Literature on Yoga and Vedanta spanning over eight decades.

It is interesting to note that many Telugu poets such as Kolani Ganapati Deva, Vemana, Virabrahmendra Yogi, Narayana Yatindriyulu have made references to 'kuṇḍa',

the etymological root in their works while referring to Kuṇḍalinī. This paper highlighted several innovative contributions of Telugu authors of Yoga and Vedanta texts, like that of Nannechoda who put forth the sadanja marga or the six-fold path of yoga contrasted to the famous eightfold path of Patanjali. Japa as one of the sādhana steps is a unique addition. Coming to Kuṇḍalinī terminology, Yerrapragada mentioned of shaṭ cakrās as shaṭ graṇḍhīs and Sri Krishna Devaraya made an uncommon comparison of the shaṭ cakrās with different kinds of lotuses. Paramananda Yati described three additional cakrās namely, brahmaraṇḍra, sikha and paścima. Galapati Lakshmayya described shaṭ cakrās in a unique manner as manifestations of mountains and compares ḍa and piṅgaḷa to the rivers Gaṅga and Yamuna. Srinadha explained about five different types of prāñyāma techniques, in addition to developing five new mudras, whereas eight types of prāñyāma techniques are mentioned in other yōga texts. Similar study of literature written in other Indian languages too shall further enrich the concepts of Kuṇḍalinī yōga.

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