CONCEPT OF KUḌALINIṆI IN TELUGU YOGA AND VEDANTA TEXTS

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Abstract

The concepts relating to Kuṇḍalini Yoga in Telugu literature on Yoga and Vedanta, are discussed in this article. Kuṇḍalini 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 Kuṇḍalini 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 Kuṇḍalini 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 Kuṇḍalini, a new coinage of metaphorical terms have also been noticed peculiar to the texts of this classical language. In several Telugu literary forms, Kuṇḍalini 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 Kuṇḍalini. These findings throw fresh light on understanding this subtle subject of Kuṇḍalini.

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

RUNNING HEAD: CONCEPT OF KUNDALINI YOGA IN TELUGU LITERATURE

Kuṇḍalini is one of the most popular concepts of Indian philosophy and life. Among the different topics in yoga, Kuṇḍalini 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, Kuṇḍalini had been a guarded secret until recently. Often this knowledge is shrouded in mystery and is expressed in metaphorical terms. The concept of Kuṇḍalini has been referred to by the writers and poets sometimes directly and other times indirectly. Several authors have studied direct references to Kuṇḍalini. But extracting the indirect references which are enmeshed in metaphorical terms is a challenging task. Apart from that, understanding the concepts of Kuṇḍalini 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
gradually adopted Telugu as the medium of literacy. Several original works have been, over the years, written in this classical language. The concept of Kuṇḍalini as discussed in Telugu literature is presented here, highlighting the unique contributions and innovative expressions of various writers.

**KUṆḌALINI**

The root of the word Kuṇḍalini is the verb kuṇḍ, which signifies "to burn". According to Arundale (1962), this is the vital meaning, for Kuṇḍalini 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 'Kuṇḍalini' has its Sanskrit etymological root in kūṇḍa, which means round hole in the ground that is meant for sacred fire. It is interesting to note that Kuṇḍalini 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 gundī means anything round or spherical in shape representing the shape of Kuṇḍalini (Burrow and Emeneau, 1984).

Swāmī Satyananda Saraswati (1996) writes in the book Kuṇḍalini Tantra that the "word Kuṇḍalini 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 Kuṇḍalini 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 Kuṇḍalini has become popular even among the common people because of the fact that awakening the Kuṇḍalini 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 Kuṇḍalini. According to Gheraṇḍa Saṁhita (III.49), Kuṇḍalini, 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 cakrā. 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 cakrā 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 Pūrāṇās, and especially in tāṇṭra 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 Kuṇḍalini from its dormant resting stage at the mūlādhāra cakrā and rouse it higher up through various yogic techniques, till it reaches the thousand petal lotus, Sahasrārā 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 under the bubbling superficial social and public life of the country. There are various such methods expounded by different Guruparaṇajārās or hierarchies of teachers, to suit different levels of human development. In their attempts to attain liberation (jīvanmukti) whatever the path might be, Kuṇḍalini is involved either directly or indirectly. Almost all the hātha yōga texts and yogopani shads clearly enumerated the role of Kuṇḍalini in attaining liberation.

**KUṆḌALINI IN TELUGU LITERATURE**

Telugu is one of the Classical Dravidian languages (Krishnamurthi, 2003: 78-79) of India. We find the concept of Kuṇḍalini 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 Kuṇḍalini 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 Kuṇḍalini is all pervading (Sri Krishna, 2006: 361-362). Each and every occasion of the Telugu
people is intertwined with Kuṇḍalini. Songs/hymns/verses sung or chanted during the upanayana (initiation of the young student), marriage ceremony, household chores, festivals, etc., are interspersed with Kuṇḍalini. At each stage and during each occasion in the Telugu culture there is a constant reminder of the ultimate goal of life-liberation. Kuṇḍalini being the means to liberation is often referred to in these literary works either symbolically or by way of direct references.

The nāḍha cult according to the historians flourished in Āndhra Deśa or Trilinga Deśa (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 nāḍha sāṁpradāya is arousal of Kuṇḍalini from the mūlādhāra and union with Lord Śiva in the Sahasrāra. Influenced by this tradition, several poets of this region made several references to Kuṇḍalini yōga and its concepts, in their literary works. The present work aims to identify and bring out the concepts and praxis of Kuṇḍalini as dealt within the Telugu Literature. It is interesting to trace Kuṇḍalini in the enormous Telugu literature starting from the first available literary work of 11th century poet Sannayya, 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 Kuṇḍalini concepts such as the cakras, nāḍis, and awakening methods were traced. Metaphorical references were also identified to the extent possible by the authors, who are themselves trained in Kuṇḍalini yoga. Two eminent scholars proficient in the field of Yoga, Sanskrit, and Telugu subjected the data pertaining to indirect references to Kuṇḍalini yoga identified by the authors, to re-analysis. They judged whether the data has indirect references to Kuṇḍalini, and whether the authors’ interpretation is meaningful.

Nannayya (11th Century): The first poet Nannayya made a brief and indirect reference to Kuṇḍalini yōga. Nannayya mentioned the concept of Kuṇḍalini in the guise of praise for nagās, the serpent power, in the story of Udaṅka, in Udaṅkōpāyānaṁ of Andhra Mahābhārataṁ (Adiparva–I-104) (Nannayya, 1970). The ascent and descent of Kuṇḍalini as discussed in tantra texts was compared to the fourteen lōkās (worlds) from patāla to satyalōka. In this text Udaṅka travels from patāla to satyalōka and vice versa, just as Kuṇḍalini travels from the lower cakrās to Sahasrāra and from Sahasrāra to the lower cakrās. Generally most yōga texts discuss about the ascent of Kuṇḍalini to Sahasrāra but few mention about its descent back. That Nannayya had mentioned both the ascent and descent of Kuṇḍalini 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, Basavapurāṇaṁ (Rao, 1974a) the secrets pertaining to the descent and ascent of Kuṇḍalini comparing this process with the entering of the individual (here Naṇḍishvara-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 Gheṇḍa Saṁhita and others. He mentions about sōṣhana, dahanā, plāvana and tarpāṇa that are in essence tantra 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 Kuṇḍalini yoga (Nannechoda, 1949). Another interesting feature of Nannechoda’s works is that he mentions about sādanā marga or the six fold path of yōga, viz., prāṇāyāma, pratyāhāra, dhyāna, dhārāna, japa and samādhi. It is worth noting that he mentions dhyāna as the pre-step to dhārāna, a deviation from the concept of Patañjali Yōga Sūtrās just like another poet, Srinadhā does. Japa as one of the sādhaṇa steps is a unique addition when compared with other texts.

Palkuriki Somanadha in Panditaradhyā Caritra (Somanadha, 1974) describes the qualities of a sādhakā practicing Kuṇḍalini yōga, by narrating a story of a pilgrimage by several yogis to the famous shrine at Śrīsaila śikhara, symbolically representing the Sahasrāra in a unique poetic style. In this description he refers to cakrās, prāṇāyāma, nāḍiś, 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 sādhasāk; 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 Kuṇḍalini by the unification of práṇā and apāṇā. Yerrapragada (Aranya Parva-V-101) also explains about the importance of astāṅga-yōga. 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 śaṭ cakrās as śat granḍhis (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 tāraka, sāṅkhya and amanaska yōgās (154-157). Both he and Vemana (another famous Telugu poet) mentions about the term ‘kuṇḍa’ (an etymological root of Kuṇḍalini) 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 dēvalākā but is accessible to the ordinary mortal by practicing Kuṇḍalini yōga (Sri Krishna, 2006: 361-362).

**Srinadh and Gowranna (15th Century):** Srinadh made several references to Kuṇḍalini in his works. After describing about the four definitions of yōga, he mentions that shaṭāṅga yōga is preferable over astāṅga-yōga, 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. Srinadh also suggested various techniques of awakening Kuṇḍalini such as rēcaka, kuṁbaka and pūraka. He mentions only five but different types of prāṇāyāma techniques, dahani, brāmāni, staṁbini, samāni, and plāvani where as eight types of prāṇāyāma techniques are mentioned in other yōga texts. Similarly he mentions about five novel mudrās, udāyāna mudra, mahāmudra, mūlabandha, gaganamudra and jālandharamudra. He suggests a technique to awaken Kuṇḍalini wherein the sādhasāk should take hold of the pranic airs at ārdva Kuṇḍalini which should be brought down to merge with apāṇā vāyu. Thus the sādhasāk should practice the upward and downward movements of the pranic airs repeatedly.

Gowranna (Gourana, 1937) in his work Navaṇādha Caritra, makes special reference to Kuṇḍalini in terms of granthi trayi, ārdva Kuṇḍalini and dasa dvārās (inclusive of brahmaṇdāra) unlike the nava dvārās (nine gates of opening in the human body) usually mentioned. He explains the indulgence of yōgis in alchemy and siddhis.

**Potana and Annamayya (15th Century):** Potana in his famous epic narrations mentioned Kuṇḍalini concepts sublimely (Potana, 1987). In Gajendra Mōksa episode of Āndhra Mahābhāgavata, he referred to the descent of Kuṇḍalini from Sahasrāra to mūlādhāra, as the descent of Lord Vīshṇu from Vaikuṇṭha to bhūlōka. In fact Gajendra is a synonym of nāga, the serpent Kuṇḍalini. He also mentions indirectly about the powers the sādhasāk shall attain while doing Kuṇḍalini sādhana in episodes like kṣirasāgaramadanaṁ and dakṣa yaṃgaṁ. On the other hand, Annamayya wrote innumerable kirtanās in which he interspersed devotional, philosophical and sublime truths with the concepts of Kuṇḍalini. In his kirtanās 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 kirtanās he mentions ‘gōrahkhe’ to denote to Gorakṣhānātha. This is evidence that nāḍha tradition has its influence even in vaishnava cult.

**Galapati Lakshmayya (16th Century):** The yāgaṇī padās composed by Galapati Lakshmayya contain many references to Kuṇḍalini including the description of haṭha yōga practices such as rēcaka, pūraka, kuṁbaka and nāḍi śodhana. He referred to Kuṇḍalini also as angaṇāmaṇi, muktikānta and nāṅgakanyā. He describes śaṭ cakrās in a unique manner as manifestations of mountains and compares āda and pingalá to the rivers Ganga and Yamuna just like many other Telugu poets such as Esvarma in her Yākṣaṇāṇa on Akkamahādevi. Lakshmayya’s tmmmada (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 ‘sammāpu diddīvāktā’ for sushumnā; ‘chinnelādi’ for Kuṇḍalini; ‘cichū’ to the fire of knowledge etc.

**Sri Krishna Devaraya and Pingala Suranna (16th Century):** In the āśvāsāntha peoms of Amuktamālayadā by the Great King Sri Krishna Devaraya, references can be found regarding Kuṇḍalini (Rao, 1974b). He made an uncommon comparison of the śaṭ cakrās with different kinds of lotuses such as sarat padma of anāhata cakra, aksa padma of ājñā cakra, nirūra padma of maṇipūra cakra. Further Kuṇḍalini was referred to as ‘bāla’,
ś   ā
ś
ā    ā
ī           ī
āňā ā         āň        ā
not mentioned elsewhere in any other popular texts. By
āňā ā         āň        ā
should be made to unite and brought under control by
poems at a stretch just like in a standard yoga treatise (Suranna, 2001). Suranna
explained the concept of Kuṇḍalinī in rather an
uncommon manner, starting from the foot to the cranial
pit with relation to pañcabhūtās (five elements).Accord-
ing 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 Vishnū. 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
(brahmaranda) the element ether exists and the
presiding deity is Śadāśiva. This is a rather unique
interpretation given by Suranna.

Vemana (17th Century): In Telugu śatakaṁ literature
too one can trace several references to Kuṇḍalinī yōga.
Yōgi Vemana (Brown, 1967), the renunciate, in a
symbolical manner exhorts the sādhakā in one of his
poems; to first kill Brahma, then Vishnū and finally Śiva.
This means that the sādhakā should pierce through the
three granthis by the help of Kuṇḍalinī. Such asādhaṁ, 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 Kuṇḍalinī
practices and refers to the six cakrās 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 Āndhra Dēśa too
mentioned Kuṇḍalinī yōga concepts in several of his
literary works. He used the following names to refer to
Kuṇḍalinī: Īśvari, Kuṇḍalinī, Kāṇṭa, Ādiśēhu, Agni-lepi,
Pāmu, Mukthi Kāṇṭa, Śringa, Kūḍali Sanga, Anibā, Angana
and Kuṇḍa. The poet mentions different lōkās-pātāla,
bhū, bhuvar and suvar lōkas. According to tanṭra text
Bīṇḍuyōgāpanishad, it can be interpreted that under the
feet region there is pātāla lōka; bhūlōka at the region of
mūlādhāra cakra; at the tip of the penis, bhuvarlōka 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 Kuṇḍalinī. 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 prānāyāma) the sādhakā should pierce his
mental ignorance or the darkness and should open the
third eye. Here Virabrahmendra Yōgi suggests starting
śādhanā beginning at ajāṅa cakra. Śādhanā can be started
either at ajāṅa cakra or anāhata cakra or mūlādhāra cakra
to rouse the Kuṇḍalinī upto Sahasrāra depending on
the guidance of the guru (Dasu, 1895).

Similarly Virabrahmendra also presents details of
Kuṇḍalinī yōga by bringing the parallelism with the
popular Āndhra originated game, Kabadi. In the tattwa
“ceḍuṇḍadēnu brahma” the sādhakā plays the same
game, Ceḍuṇḍu (kabadi), on the mental plane with
continuous utterance of “sōhāṇi sōhāṇi sōhāṇi” or “haṁsa
haṁsa haṁsa”. Keeping this as constant yell, finally he
wins over all the six opponents namely arishad vargās i.e.
kāma, krūḍha, 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 Kuṇḍalinī yōga in the second chapter of Vivēka
Čintāmaṇi. The poet describes aspects of Kuṇḍalinī 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, brahmaranda, sikha and
paścima. The brahmaranda cakra is located in māsthaka,
that is, top of the head (can be correlated with Sahasrāra
cakra).

The sikha is located at sikha (a place below the
māsthaka, that is, at the back of the head) and paścima
cakra is at the sikhāṁthaṁ, 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 cakras are jñātirvāra (color of fire), mahājñātirvāra (color of fierce fire) and apradarsanāvāra (unexhibited color—which cannot be seen). Similarly the corresponding sounds for these three cakrās, brahmārāṇḍra, sikhā and pācima, 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, sulinatha 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 shaṃmukhi and end with shaṃmbavi. He further mentions about higher states of consciousness, viz., unmani, maṇḍōmani and sahaļāvastha. Another poet Sanari Viswanadha in his work Sanari Viśvesvvara Sāṅvādāṇ (Viswanadha, 1907) mentions two additional cakrās, karṇika and bhṛmaraṇḍra. Karṇika is behind Sahasrāra where the letters ‘a’ ‘u’ ‘m’, produce the sound of ‘ōm’. Bhṛmaraṇḍra is also present behind the Sahasrāra. It is to be noted that Sanari Viswanadha states that the maṇiṇīra cakra has only eight syllables instead of the traditionally stated, ten.

Dudhekula Siddaya (17th Century): Caṇḍamāna (the moon) is symbolically used by the poet Dudhekula Siddaya, 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 sādhakā adopting the processes of Kuṃbhaka should try to arouse the Serpent through āda and pingalā nādiṣ which are symbolically mentioned as the two snake charmers’ flutes that produce nāgēśvara 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 Sītārāmāṇjanēyyā Saṅvādaṇ written by Parasurama Panthulu Lingamurti, has several symbolical references to Kuṇḍalinī yōga. After the description of different types of yōgas (1-87) the poet gives detailed description of Yamās and Niyamās, Yōga āsanās (Virā, Svastika, Padma, Brahma Padma, Yōga, Kūrma, Uttaṇa Kūrma, Bhadra, Siddha and variations, Siṁha, Kukkta, Gōmukha, Dhanura, Mayūra, Kapila, Mukta, Tittaba, Paschimottāna, Purvottāna, Arbha, Kamadahan) different concepts of Prāṇāyāma and explained the concepts of rēcaka, pūraka and kuṃbhaka and three baṇḍhās, samādhi, pratyāhāra, dhyāna, dārāṇa and eight super natural powers etc (Subbrahmanyam, 1992).

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

The poet Lingamurtti, while describing the ten types of prāṇava nāda gave in a beautiful poetic style, the fifth prāṇava nāda as viṇa nāda. He explains about various chitkālās, which can be seen in akāśapāntaka (five types of space) including the rise of sun and moon representing knowledge which results in removal of ignorance and finally union with muktikāntā (woman of liberation). He mentioned about existence of 72,000 nāḍīs 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 nāḍīs on the spine, which was compared with viṇa (Doraswamaiah, 1934). Here the word “haṁsa” is explained as under. The word “HA” stands for citta, pūrṇaṁdru 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, prakṛti, Pārvati or Śīta. The pūrṇaṁdru of the aṅtā kuṃbhaka is the representation of the union of prakṛti and Purusha, Śīva and Pārvati.
known as ardanārīśvara, Sītā and Rāma.

**Narayana Yatindrulu and Tyagaraja (19th Century):**
Narayana Yatindrulu in his work Tāraka Brahmānaṇḍa Dvayakaṇḍa Satakam described khechari and shanmukhi mudra for arousing Kuṇḍalini. He mentioned about sushūnha by reflecting as sunnapuddi and nāḍīnalamu and Sahasrāra as brhamāṇḍapūra. He describes sushūnha as an nāḍī lying in between Mūlādhāra cakra and sahasrāra. It is as narrow as a hair and inside this hair Kuṇḍalini, described as 'haṁsa' moves. He mentions that vakrāra are ārukondalu. In these poems he mentioned Kuṇḍalini in a subtle way. He refers to a fort in the sky (sahasrāra) that is being ruled by three kings (Brahma, Viṣṇu, Rudra granḍhis). This fort can be climbed by means of 'sāṁbhavi mudra' and piercing the granḍhis. At the base (mūlādhāra) there are three prakāra on which the mountain of liberation (sahasrāra) is there. On climbing this, one finds the sushūnha between Gaṅga and Yamuna i.e. ida and pingala. Tyagaraja (Ayyar, 1955: 108) the great composer of devotional music has most of his works in Telugu. In some instances he made references to Kuṇḍalini concepts. For example, in his famous svarāra sahāra kūrta he says that the sādhaṅka should realize the nāḍā that is generated in the mūlādhāra cakra which leads to mōksa.

**CONCLUSION**
This paper dealt with the concepts of Kuṇḍalini in Telugu literature. Down the ages Kuṇḍalini has seeped into the mundane life of the common folk of this holy land of Bhārat to such an extent that Kuṇḍalini 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 Kuṇḍalini 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, Kuṇḍalini yoga 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 Kuṇḍalini 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 Kuṇḍalini. This paper highlighted several innovative contributions of Telugu authors of Yoga and Vedanta texts, like that of Nannechoda who put forth the sadanagamarga 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 Kuṇḍalini terminology, Yerrapragada mentioned of shāṭ cakra as shāṭ granḍhis and Sri Krishna Devaraya made an uncommon comparison of the shāṭ cakraś with different kinds of lotuses. Paramananda Yati described three additional cakrās namely, brahmāṇḍa, sīkha and paṣcima. Galapati Lakshmimayya described shāṭ cakraś in a unique manner as manifestations of mountains and compares āḍa and pīṇāla to the rivers Gaṅga and Yamuna. Srinadh explained about five different types of prāṇāyāma techniques, in addition to developing five new mudras, whereas eight types of prāṇāyāma techniques are mentioned in other yoga texts. Similar study of literature written in other Indian languages too shall further enrich the concepts of Kuṇḍalini yōga.

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