



# We are young and willing to know India!

Didactic Guide for Secondary  
Students and Teachers





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# INTRODUCTION

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## About us

The Vicente Ferrer Foundation is an organization that provides long term solutions aiming to eradicate the extreme poverty in rural India by means of an integral program which fights against desertification, promotes agricultural production, and access to health, education and housing. It pays special attention to women and the handicapped. The foundation, established by Vicente and Ana Ferrer in 1969, has a commitment in favor of the most disadvantaged and excluded within the Hindu caste system: the *dalits* (in the past called «untouchables» in a pejorative way, tribal groups and the underprivileged “backward castes”).

## Where we work

The Foundation operates in the state of Andhra Pradesh, on the south of the country, a region with an economy based on agriculture and a high farming population. Andhra Pradesh is a very traditional region with a deeply-rooted system of castes. The lowermost castes register the greatest poverty rates.

## How we work

The Vicente Ferrer Foundation works to eradicate the extreme poverty suffered by the most needy communities. Each community itself participates actively in the task, defining the needs to meet for boosting the sustainable development of the area. These needs are materialized through projects financed by donations of individuals, companies and public entities.

The VFF integral development program includes projects such as the creation of complementary or backup schools, summer schools, scholarships for students of secondary education, support to the infrastructures of Government schools, to the health system of the rural communities, nutrition programs, hospitals, prevention and vaccination campaigns, reforestation programs, women and handicapped associations, house construction and many more actions.





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## THE STATE OF ANDRHA PRADESH

The Republic of India located in South Asia is the world's seventh-largest country by area. Due to its great size, 3.287.260 sq. km., it is considered as a subcontinent. With a population over 1.2 billion people it ranks as the second-most populous country of the planet, only behind China. India two official languages Hindi and English and 20 other regional recognized languages spoken in the 28 states of the country. Hinduism is the prevailing religion. Hinduism is the third religion in the world with more adherents after Christianity and Islam. 81% of India's population, over 900 million people (that is to say 19 times the Spanish population) is Hindu.

The Andhra Pradesh state is located on the south of the country. Its surface area is approximately half the size of Spain and it has a population of 75 million people. Telugu is its co-official language, the 15th most spoken language on the planet.

### **Climate of Andhra Pradesh**

The climate of Andhra Pradesh is semiarid with some variations depending on being to the north or south of the region. This means that it rains just a few months each year in sporadic and localized ways. Andhra Pradesh is the second-most arid state of India what entails droughts and desertification of the soil problems. This character bears upon agriculture which is the main activity of the people in the region.

In contrast to the Spanish climatology in Andhra Pradesh the year comprises two large periods, a dry season and a rain season. This last occurs mainly between June and September. During these months the Monsoon phenomenon takes place, then a strong wind brings torrential rains which frequently produces very large floods.





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### Economy and resources

The climate influences on the economy of the Andhra Pradesh population as approximately 70 per cent of the region families live from **agriculture** as first activity. Both droughts and floods have a negative bearing on the soil quality and harvests. **Peanuts**, the main staple, are very much used in gastronomy and in the daily life in India but its scant price prevents to make a living from just its farming. The Vicente Ferrer Foundation is boosting the diversification of crops with new species also adapted to the region climate. In recent years short, medium and long term crops such as tomatoes, bananas or mangoes are being introduced to avoid soil degradation and to increase crop production.

There are in the region besides agriculture other occupations and activities. To earn a living many of the farming families are also **merchants** who sell in the markets their farming products, livestock derivatives or crafts. Also a lot of people work in **construction** for private companies but above all in road and building construction within state projects.



### Society

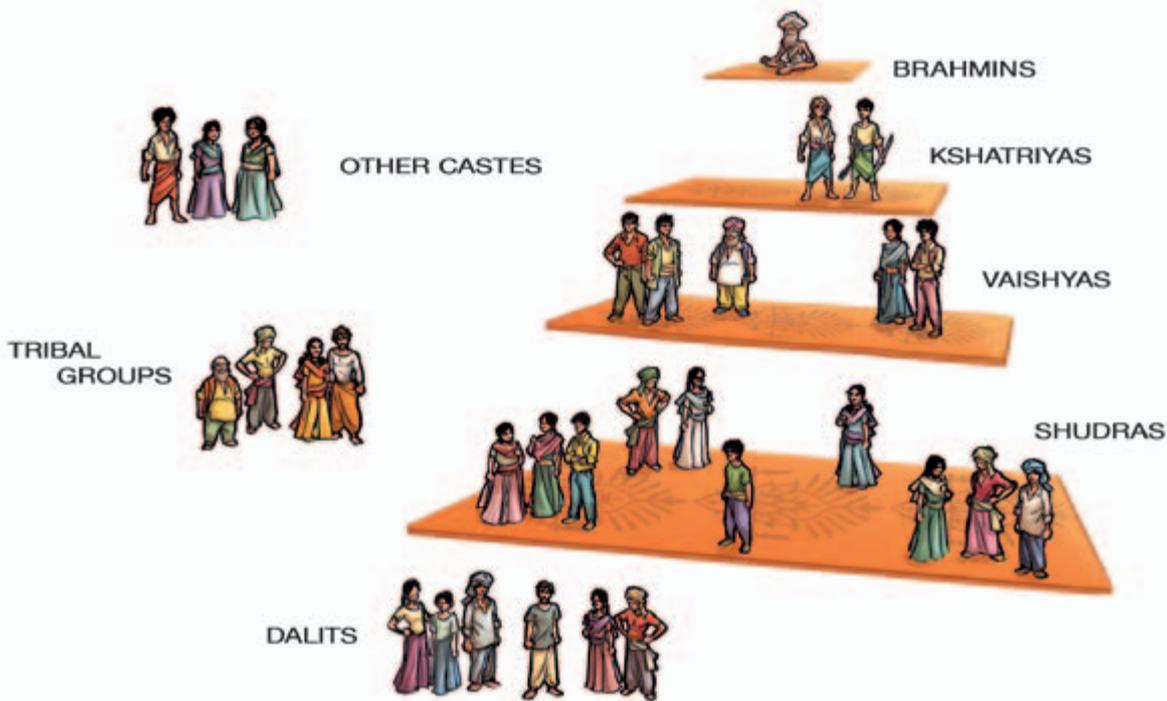
According to the hindu tradition every person belongs to the same caste of the family in which, he or she, was born. The caste system is a social division in which each member of a particular caste must follow specific rules of conduct, it has a determined function in the community and can only practice certain professions. The individuals belong to the same caste during all their lives and cannot marry members of other castes. The castes are grouped in *brahmins* (priests), *kshatriyas* (noblemen and military class), *vaishyas* (merchant-traders) and *shudras* (peasantry, artisans and laborers).



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The traditional system of castes is still deeply rooted In Andhra Pradesh and the most under-privileged castes and people outside the caste system frequently suffer discrimination and have difficulties to gain access to education and decent jobs.

The Vicente Ferrer Foundation works particularly with the *dalits* (before called *untouchables*, people out of the caste system who historically have been dedicated to the most marginal and servile jobs) and with the *backward castes* (underprivileged castes who irregularly labor as badly paid hire hands). Likewise the VFF works with the tribal groups, very modest people living in marginal poverty. In Andhra Pradesh the highest poverty indexes are registered by the *chenchu* tribes in the forested central hills of the state.





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# ACTIVITIES

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## ACTIVITY 1

### Objectives:

- To know the general facts of India and of the State of Andhra Pradesh in particular.
- Approach the students a cultural, political, economical and social, far-off reality.
- Complete the information on the region offered in the didactic guide.

### Introduction:

In the previous pages we have briefly reviewed the most relevant questions on the state of Andhra Pradesh, the region where the Vicente Ferrer Foundation operates, but this was just an approximation to a complex region full of remarks which cannot be summarized in a few sheets.

Hence we are going to complete the information on this southern region and to fill the missing empty spaces by means of group research to learn in detail the geography, climate, economy, education, communities, culture and traditions of this region of India.

### Development:

At the beginning of the activity the students will be divided in groups. What is proposed is a classic research activity, whereby each group will use all the resources at its disposal to elaborate one of the proposed topics: bibliography, libraries, internet resources, etc.

Each group will be allowed a time determined by the teacher to complete the research.

At the end of the research each group will present publicly the research results to the rest of the students. For that purpose transparencies, Power Point presentations, audiovisual material, support texts, etc. will be used. The whole of the researched material will make up a complete guide of Andhra Pradesh to be shared by all the class.

### Research topics:

The students will develop the whole or a part of one of the following topics:

#### Natural medium

- *The climate of India:* Climate variations in the regions of India. The climate in Andhra Pradesh. The monsoon phenomenon. Droughts and floods.
- *Flora and Fauna:* Vegetation of Andhra Pradesh. Fauna and livestock farming. Reforestation.
- *Physical Geography:* Main geographical features of India. Physical geography of Andhra Pradesh.

#### Politics and history

- *The Indian Political System:* Territorial division of India. Political systems of India and Andhra Pradesh.
- *Recent History:* The independence of India. Fathers of the Indian nation. Gandhi. Politics in India since Independence.
- *History:* Origin of India. Civilizations through Indian history. The British colonization.



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**Economy**

- *Economy:* India’s economic system. Imports and exports. Service sector. Production and economy in Andhra Pradesh. Industry. Agriculture.

**Society**

- *Religion:* Hinduism. Main hindu divinities. Andhra Pradesh deities. Hindu ceremonies. Other religions in India.
- *Castes:* Castes system. Social division. Rights and duties of each caste. Tribal groups. Dalits. Backward castes or underprivileged castes.
- *Traditions:* Civil celebrations. Religious celebrations. Arranged marriages. Hindu marriage ceremony.
- *Culture:* Literature. Art. Bollywood’s cinema. Sports and and typical Indian games (cricket, hockey, kho kho...)

Any topic suggested by the teaching staff or by the students which would furnish information on India and Andhra Pradesh might be developed.

**ACTIVITY 2**

**Objectives:**

- To make the students familiar with the human rights situation of some sectors of the population in India and particularly in Andhra Pradesh.
- To know which are the people’s human rights and the international protection mechanisms.
- To learn further in the Indian legislation and in the international agreements that protect human rights.

**Introduction:**

The Indian Constitution and laws recognize the equality of rights for all persons, the right of education of boys and girls below the age of 14, the right to housing, the special protection to people with disabilities and the equality between men and women. However the reality sometimes may be different as in traditional rural areas like Andhra Pradesh these rights are constantly infringed and many a people suffer inequalities and discrimination for their social, physical or sex conditions.

**Exposition:**

In this activity the students will become members of the High Commissioner of the United Nations, designated to investigate the fulfillment of human and civil rights. To that end cases of persons that suffer some kind of discrimination in Andhra Pradesh will be presented and the students divided in groups will study those cases, investigating the current national and international legislation which refers to the people rights and from that deliver a report on the rights being infringed and also the laws that should be applied to correct these transgressions.



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**Material:**

The teaching staff shall consult the information on India international agreements and legislation aimed to protect and promote human rights in particular in the sectors: women, education, infancy, health, housing and people with disabilities.

**Cards:**

**Card 1: Dilsha**

- Female, 15 year old. Lives in Yallapalli, small village in Andhra Pradesh.
- Peasant 's daughter, her parents have arranged her marriage to a 19 year old cousin who works as a carpenter in a neighboring village. She will quit school.
- Her parents have arranged her marriage in exchange for a gold bracelet as dowry and for paying the wedding expenses.
- She says: «They are afraid of leaving me alone at home. They want to marry me at 15 because they fear the village men».

**Card 2: Satnam**

- Male, 41 years old. He lives in a small hamlet of the Anantapur district. Farmer. He is a dalit, untouchable, outside the caste system.
- He labors for a rich man for a pittance to be able to pay him back a loan that he asked him for his daughter wedding.
- His youngest child, 11 years old is in the last course of primary. Next year he would have to start secondary but Satnam does not know if he will be able to pay his studies.
- He says: «I live from agriculture and I do not earn always enough money. I think it would be better that my son would start working next year and would help the household instead of sending him to school».

**Card 3: Kavita**

- Female, 16 year old. Lives in a hamlet near Nandiala. Daughter of farmers and small merchants.
- Deaf, she does not go to school and hardly is out of home. She is illiterate. She looks after the house and after her younger brothers.
- Her father says: «She is a very good daughter and kind to her brothers, I don 't know what we would do without her. But with her deficiency she cannot do anything outside and it would be but impossible getting her married».

**Card 4: Anil**

- Male, five years old. His parents died from VIH a little while after he was born. He lives with an old aunt as nobody else of his family wanted to look after him.
- His aunt says: «It is very hard to take him to the hospital and look after him because really I have very few means to survive because I am a widow. . .»



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### ACTIVITY 3

#### Objectives:

- Present in an orderly fashion the knowledge and comprehension of the learned reality of Andhra Pradesh. Present a global image of Andhra Pradesh, with its problems, its positive aspect and cultural diversity.

#### Introduction:

Now we are ready to put in order everything learned to present a complete global vision of the reality in rural India. For that purpose we are going to review all the aspects related with the way of living in Andhra Pradesh and to build a final essay among all the class students which would serve as conclusion to all the work that we have done.

#### Method:

A journalistic supplement will be composed among all the class students. A supplement is a booklet with extra contents included in some newspapers where all the aspects of a specific theme i. e. health, computing, sport competitions, cultural events, etc., are dealt with. In this activity it is proposed the elaboration of a supplement on rural India and on the Vicente Ferrer Foundation.

The students will be divided in groups and each of them will tackle some of the aspects on this topic:

- *Natural resources*
- *Social inequalities*
- *Economy*
- *Religion*
- *Vicente Ferrer Foundation projects*
- *Culture and traditions*
- *Etc.*

A journalistic supplement almost always consists of the following sections:

- *Editorial:* Presentation of the supplement where it is justified why this journalist work has been chosen, what can be found in it and what line the contents is going to follow.
- *Feature:* Three to five pages for the in depth explanation of a theme, its historical antecedents and its present status will be needed. Some examples of reports are: crops (soil poverty and reforestation); the water problem and droughts; the VFF complementary schools; women in rural India; religious celebrations, etc.
- *Profile:* One or two pages dedicated to describe and analyze the figure of an important personality or a community representative. Some examples are a politician, a responsible of a social area, a member of a tribal community, a dalit, a priest...
- *News:* Three or four news of one page describing a specific fact which recently occurred in the area of research. It must have a headline, a subheading, and finally the explanation or body of the news. Examples: «Dam construction is finished», «Pongal Festival begins», «The new Vicente Ferrer Foundation professional school inaugurated», etc.



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- *Op-eds*: One or two texts of one page in which one or several authors express opinion on a specific subject. The columns are always signed. Some examples on which opinion can be written: the dowry tradition; the caste system; the dalits situation, etc.
- *Report*: A survey or statistics data are analyzed in two pages. Data are interpreted and conclusions reached. Some examples of topics to arrive at conclusions may be: comparison of men versus women salaries; number of non schooled boys and girls; matrimony average ages, etc.
- *Photographic report*: Photo collection on a theme with a small explanatory text as a caption of each of them. Some examples: religious festivities; the scenery of Andhra Pradesh; the primary schools; a typical kitchen, etc.
- *Other*: The supplements frequently have other sections as cartoons and graphic frames, film reviews or sport commentaries, music or texts reviews, etc.

The students shall use the acquired knowledge and consult in the Internet, newspaper and virtual libraries, with support of the material provided by the teachers. At the end of the task the supplement will be laid out by the students that have taken up the Director role.

As a suggestion, if so is agreed by the teaching staff and the students, a digital supplement or an audiovisual version like a documentary can be produced.



**Production:**

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