



Herman Mogling- as a pioneer in Kannada Journalism

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Abstract

The Basel Mission is Christian missionary a society active was founded as the German Missionary Society in 1815. Herman Kogling who came along with this missionary organization was instrumental in several scholastic contributions in Kannada region. He is remembered as a pioneer in Kannada journalism .Even though he came here to spread the tenets of Christianity in these parts of coastal Karnataka region, but he could accommodate himself to become a path finder & a pioneer in making press as a device of religious stretch which later on became a strong medium of defending freedom during nationalist struggle. This paper examines the key role played by Herman Mogling in preserving, editing and publishing several volumes of Kannada classical works, besides bringing out the first Kannada newspaper which influenced the growth of kannada journalism.

Key words: Herman Mogling , scholastic contributions , journalism , progression in press. Socio religious writings

Introduction

There has been a great pioneering works in Kannada journalism since centuries. This was made possible through a humble beginning by a German Herman Mogling who championed the cause of press & journalism in Kannada regions of present Karnataka state . Being a missionary, his ultimate dictum was to spread the tenets of Christianity in these parts of coastal Karnataka region, but he could accommodate himself to become a path finder & a pioneer in making press as a device of religious stretch which later on

became a strong medium of defending freedom during nationalist struggle. German missionaries, with the knowledge of Bible and the life of Christ, entered India to propagate the religion.

Herman Mogling's early life:

Herman Mogling was born in 1811 in Brackenheim, Germany. He was a missionary associated with the Basel Mission⁵¹ who came to India with the primary objective of spreading Christianity. He is remembered as the pioneer of Kannada journalism. He studied theology in Eberhard Karls University of Tubingen and



subsequently joined the Basel Mission which brought him to Mangalore in 1836.

Mogling's initial Enterprises:

In those days of Mogling's career at Mangalore at there was no simple way of communicating news to general public because of non-existence of a medium like radio and of a newspaper in the native language. He determined to publish a Kannada newspaper with an intention of spreading information to the public. He decided to name it as "Mangalura Samachara" and its first issue was published on 1 July 1843⁵². This day is commemorated even today⁵³. The paper was printed using stone slabs⁵⁴. Some of the news items covered were

1. Local Mangalore-related news,
2. Indian population,
3. News related to British east India company and its laws and regulations.
4. Spiritual Compositions of Purandharadasa
5. Moral stories were also printed.
6. Other aspects of news included wars waged by the East India Company with native States, population in India, etc. The local Mangalore news was given

priority, while keeping the local populace informed about the new laws and regulations of the British Government.

Mogling & Karnataka Samachara newspaper:

There are conflicting reports on whether this newspaper was used by Mogling as a tool for prose writing for or not. The newspaper became popular and it was decided to shift its publication to the city of Bellary where it was renamed as "Karnataka Samachara". Karnataka Samachara was first released on 1st May 1844⁵⁵. Karnataka Samachara was the first Kannada newspaper to be printed using movable type machine⁵⁶. The newspaper had a humble genesis. It was a four-page fortnightly carrying a mixture of local news. The response was good, prompting Mogling to think along the lines of getting it printed by letter-press at Bellary

Mogling as a visionary of united Karnataka:

Mogling is credited to be one of the visionaries for a unified Karnataka. In his times, not much communication used to happen between the north and south regions of present-day Karnataka though the people in these two regions spoke the same language Kannada In the last



issue of Karnataka Samachara, he talks of a Samagra Karnataka or Unified Karnataka as essentially a union of different Kannada speaking regions.

Mogling as a Missionary:

Herman Mogling's main job as a missionary of Basel Mission was the spread of Christianity⁵⁷. One of his converts by name Anandaraya Kaundinya and his family have exchanged letters as "Mogling Twelve letters"⁵⁸. This was the first collection of letters ever published in Kannada language⁵⁹. Even during his stay Coorg Region he spent lot of his time on and he also published a book titled "Das Kurgland" in Germanic language which mainly dealt with his activities related to popularizing Christianity in this region.

Mogling as a Pioneer of Kannada Literature:

In 1848, Mogling started dealing with Kannada literature by publishing a list of more than 3000 Kannada proverbs. He also composed about 20 poems⁶⁰ in modern Kannada poetical form. This makes him a pioneer of modern Kannada poetry also.

Bibliotheca Carnataca:

Bibliotheca Carnataca as a collection of Kannada classics was edited and published by him

between the periods 1848-1853⁶¹. With an exchange of letters, the two discussed on ways to collect Kannada manuscripts, select the important ones among them for publishing and identifying skilled people who would be needed to complete this activity. Casamajor agreed to bear all the expenses required for this venture and was very particular that his name should not be mentioned in any of the publications. A total of eight titles were brought out, the first one being the Ravana digvijaya - Yakshagana Prasanga⁶². The largest published title was basava purana⁶³ and the smallest one was Haribhaktasara of Kanakadaasa. Other titles published as a part of Bibliotheca Carnataca were Dasara Padagalu⁶⁴ and poet Jaimini Bharata of Lakshmisha⁶⁵. The Bibliotheca Carnataca created a rebounding impression in Germany. R Roth - a reputed Indologist in Germany recommended to the University of Tuebingen (Mogling's Alma Mater) that he be awarded an honorary doctorate, specially mentioning therein the above publication series⁶⁶.

Travels In Kodagu Region:

During his stay in kodagu in Mogling published the book Das



Kurg land and also a Kannada book titled Raajendra naame at the behest of the kodagu king, Senior Virarajendra. The whole book Raajendra name was printed using a simpler orthographic form invented by Mōgling himself. The Kannada language, which Mōgling felt was difficult for children to learn easily and also to print⁶⁷.

Mogling devised a scheme of accommodating the double consonant in the same single line by breaking the double consonant into a half consonant wherever possible. After getting an approval for his scheme from Madras from Province's Education Department, Mogling published this entire book in his devised orthography⁶⁸. He also published a book called Coorg⁶⁹. On his return his a native land, he translated 24 songs of kanaka dasa to German language⁷⁰. In 1870, he also translated the first two chapters⁷¹ of Bibliotheca Carnataca's Jaimini Bharata into German language & was published jointly in Kannada by Mogling and Weigle in 1848⁷². Mogling's publication Coorg Memoirs (1855) is unique in several ways. First, it is written on modern historical principles. And it happens to be the second history book on Karnataka (The earlier one is by Wilks). He claims he has not accepted any event without

verifying the same. He has also described the social life of Kodavas, including the marriage ceremony and some festivities in great details

Mogling & Kannada Language

Mogling interacted with the people of Karnataka and learnt the native Kannada language⁷³. Mogling said: "I find the Kanarese language both easy and difficult. I do not find it difficult to understand the written words, but the pronunciation will give me some hard time yet. I realize now that I have difficulties with speaking foreign languages. I have never noticed that before. What a demanding task to give up a guttural R so late in life and instead learn the R spoken here, which is produced by a fluttering of the tongue. Let the brothers of Tubingen also know that knowledge of Sanskrit is an important preparation for the study of all these languages"⁷⁴. He did learn Sanskrit prior to learning Kannada.

Sanskrit Language

He learnt the ancient Indian language while in his stay at Basel itself. It all happened after he came in touch with A. N. Grooves of England who had come there to take a few youngsters for the Calcutta mission⁷⁵. Later, Mogling came in contact with more



missionaries from India⁷⁶. The Karnataka connection can be traced to the arrival of .H. Young, a judge who had come from Dharwad to place a need for missionaries in the South Maratha region before the Basel Mission committee. Mogling was chosen by the Committee along with two others. Among the areas visited by Mogling in Karnataka are Madikeri, Dharwad and Belgaum, to where he shifted the publication of 'Mangalore Samachaara' and renamed it as 'Karnataka Samachaara' in 1844. One can feel Mogling's impact at the Basel Mission Press and the campus of the Karnataka Theological College at Balmatta.⁷⁷

Kannada-English Dictionary Publication

: One of Mogling's last scholastic contributions to Kannada was the publication of a Kannada-English dictionary⁷⁸. He motivated the British in this endeavor and suggested the name of Rev Ferdinand Kittle as the ideal person to head the project. Mogling died in 1881 and his memorial remains in Esslingen, Germany.⁷⁹

Conclusion: Although he came from Germany as a missionary to spread the message of the Gospel, he devoted himself zealously to the

study of Kannada language, literature and culture. Interestingly, it is believed that he was even told by the Basel Mission to take the assigned job seriously. The key role played by Rev. Mogling in preserving, editing and publishing several volumes of Kannada classical works, besides bringing out the first Kannada newspaper is praiseworthy & invaluable.

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