



Personality sketch of Tirumale Tatacharya Sharma: A journalist with a Cause

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Abstract

During the pre-independence era, innumerable young men and women from the present Karnataka region dedicated their lives to the country's freedom struggle & its associated movements. Freedom struggle had a different facet in Karnataka region because this region was not a unified Kannada speaking region. Tirumale tatacharya was one of them. T.T.Sharma was a freedom fighter, researcher, journalist, public campaigner and an institutional builder, all combined in one. He led an ideal life. This paper examines the scholastic contributions of TT Sharma & spotlights his endeavors in creating a national awareness among people through vernacular journalism.

Key words: Vernacular journalism, national consciousness, powerful writing, social responsibilities

Introduction

During the pre-independence era, innumerable young men and women from the present Karnataka region dedicated their lives to the country's freedom struggle & its associated movements. Freedom struggle had a different facet in Karnataka region because this region was not a unified Kannada speaking region. Many stalwarts have sacrificed their entire life for the development of the Kannada Press.

Prominent leaders: Prominent among them include- M. Venkatakrishnaiah, Yajaman

Veerabasappa, Dr.D.V. Gundappa, T.T. Sharma, P.R. Ramayya, B.N. Gupta, Moharay HanumathaRao, R.R. Diwakar, N.S.Hardikar,B. Puttaswamaiah, T.S. Ramachandra Rao and a galaxy of other media personalities are remembered for their role in promoting press.

Emergence of Vernacular Journalism

The emergence of vernacular journalism in all the Indian languages is an important development in the history of Indian journalism. It is evident that newspapers encouraged almost simultaneously due to



British influence in all the Indian languages. The numerical dominance, growth and influence of language journalism in India would testify the emergence of press in the languages including Kannada press. Kannada journalism was largely influenced by the active interest and the participation of many distinguished editors who were also eminent writers in Kannada language. The influence of English press and vernacular journalism was tremendous. One such couple was T.T.Sharma and his wife Rajamma.

Early Life

Tirumale Tatacharya Sharma was born in Chikkaballapura in the present district of Kolar on 27th April 1895. His parents were Srinivasa Tatacharya and Janaki. He began his career as an epigraphist. Hosakote Krishna shastry who was working as an epigraphist in Madras was his mentor & guide. He was known popularly as T.T.Sharma .

Political Career

As he grew to be a young boy he was attracted towards political developments. In 1920 T.T.Sharma attended a public meeting at Madras where Mahatma Gandhiji gave a call to young men and women to participate in the country's

freedom movement. Heeding to his call, T.T.Sharma resigned from his job in 1923 and devoted fully in the freedom struggle movement. In this decision he was fully backed by his wife Rajamma. He started translating mahatma Gandhiji's speeches in to Kannada. His translations were very popular & authentic & he was very much in demand for translations of that type.

T. T. Sharma as a congress tenets Campaigner: The Congress party in Mysore was founded in 1920 with S. S. Setlur as president and this organization was involved in constructive activities like

1. propagation of use of swadeshi goods
2. propagation of use of khadi,
3. Teaching Hindi language
4. Campaigning against use of intoxicants & liquors,
5. Promoting Hindu-Muslim unity
6. Propagation of women education
7. Providing information to all classes of people about social equality
8. Upholding social equality through temple entry programs



9. Promotion of Swadeshi in rural areas
10. propagation of use of handmade clothes
11. social inclusion programs of untouchables

T. T. Sharma as a nationalist leader: He was not only interested in these social activities but he was a great nationalist leader who channeled himself into multi-dimensional socio cultural activities. As an alternative to Government schools, many patriotic people had started National schools and in one such school founded by K. Sampathgiri Rao at Bangalore, T.T.Sharma and his wife worked as teachers.

His wife Rajamma (known popularly as bharathi) was an accomplished singer, writer and she played Veena She participated in Congress sessions of Ahmedabad (1921) and played veena and sang. Gandhiji knew her well and while in Bangalore, wanted to listen to her performance. He was very fond of "Vaishnava Janato" and wanted Rajamma to sing it. Rajamma sang the translated version Gangadhar Rao Deshpande, ably assisted by Mahadeva Desai, Gandhiji's Secretary. Rajamma sang "Vaishnava Janato" and "Vande Mataram" to accompaniment of her Veena.

Gandhiji liked singing very much and invited her again to sing next day during prayer-meeting. The couple took it as a mission & contributed to the creation of awareness of education in local schools. The couple also participated in the Congress session held at Belgaum in 1924 and on the occasion T.T.Sharma wrote A Hand Book of Karnataka both in Kannada and English languages with a view to showcase the rich history and culture of the Kannada region to the delegates who had come from all over India.

T. T. Sharma as a journalist: Working as assistant to K.Ranga Iyengar, the editor of English weekly, Mysore Chronicle. In 1924 T.T.Sharma took over this paper and converted it into a Kannada weekly named it as Vishwa Karnataka in 1925. He fearlessly wrote on the lapses in the administration and vowed not to write editorials till the harsh press law clamped on the Mysore press were completely repealed and honestly he kept up his word. In 1932 Vishwa Karnataka became a daily paper. The police raided the premises of the paper several times and confiscated the paper. Government advertisement though meager was stopped between 1937 and 1940 this was again a stooped in 1944.



T. T. Sharma as a columnist of Vishwa Karnataka: The idea of nationalism, responsible government, and other issues like Swadeshi, movement against untouchability were taken by T.T.Sharma in his writings in Vishwa Karnataka.

1. The need for Responsible Government
2. The importance of Swadeshi in colonial context
3. The significance of removing social taboos such as social Untouchability ,illiteracy etc
4. The prominence of promoting education
5. Arousing patriotic sentiments among the masses
6. Creating social awareness
7. Creating national political awareness

When Mahatma Gandhiji started his campaign to eradicate untouchability and temple entry programme, this cause was taken up in Bangalore by the Congress led by T.T.Sharma and the Basavanagudi temple was opened to Harijans. Apart from arousing patriotic sentiments among the masses, the need to have a united Karnataka state was also propagated through the columns of Vishwa Karnataka. During the Quit India movement, T.T.Sharma

was arrested. During the Mysore Chalo movement he was active in movement with his write-ups about importance of having a responsible government in Mysore context.

T. T. Sharma as an Epigraphist:

As we know T.T.Sharma was working as an epigraphist before he became a full time freedom fighter. As an epigraphist T.T.Sharma toured all over south India and transcribed, deciphered and edited scores of inscriptions useful for the reconstruction of Karnataka history. His research brought to light many unknown poets of Kannada. His work as an epigraphist made him acquire knowledge about Indian history and art of Karnataka.

T. T. Sharma as a Kannada language Scholar: T.T.Sharma was a prolific writer in Kannada.

1. His writing includes Premaphala, a novel,
2. Hooballi, a collection of short stories, and
3. plays like Julius Caesar and Swargaarohana. He contributed articles on various subjects to newsmagazines⁸⁰.
4. He actively participated in the cultural activities of Kannada



Sahitya Parishad and presided over the 31st Kannada Sahitya Parishad conference held at Kasargod in 1948.

5. He wrote a series of articles in Pauravani with messages of good governance & responsible government .
6. In 1933 he wrote a monograph entitled Shilashasanagallali kanda kelavu Kannada kavigalu.
7. later he wrote many scholarly books like Karnataka Bhavya Dharshana about History of Freedom Movement in Karnataka, Vikranta Bharatha on revolutionary freedom fighters of India and biographies of Sir. M. Visveswariah and Subash Chandra Bose⁸¹.

T. T. Sharma as a champion of Karnataka unification:

T.T.Sharma was a staunch champion of Karnataka's unification and wanted mother tongue to be the medium to impart education. He used to translate the public speeches of national leaders like Gandhiji, Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhai Patel into Kannada

whenever they visited Bangalore. Through the columns of Vishwa Karnataka, he used to showcase the glorious history and culture of Kannadigas.

T. T. Sharma as a Promoter of Social Consciousness:

T.T.Sharma was closely associated with various public bodies like the Mythic Society⁸² Rashthrothana Parishad, Harijan Sevak Sangha, Journalist Association, Gandhi Sahitya Sangha, etc. He was also the member of Bangalore Municipal Council where he strove to bring about certain civic reforms.

Conclusion:

A staunch Gandhian, T.T.Sharma supported the cause of freedom with vigor. T.T.Sharma was a freedom fighter, researcher, journalist, public campaigner and an institutional builder, all combined in one. He led an ideal life, devoid of extreme publicity , demand for lucrative positions , craving for false appreciation or yearning for glossy awards. He passed away on 20-11-1973. His life was one of a great writer a scholar & a great patriot.