

**CHAPTER - TWO**  
**ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF THE TELUGU PRESS**

A beginning in Telugu journalism appears to have been made as early as 1835. It is believed that the first Telugu journal was a monthly called Satyadoota. It was a missionary journal started around the year 1835 mainly for the propagation of Christianity by the Christian Association of Bellary. It was printed in Madras. But no conclusive evidence of its publication is available. There is a mention of a periodical called Truthful Messenger in the Tamil missionary records. The title, when translated into Telugu, becomes Satyadoota but no copies of it are traceable<sup>1</sup>.

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1. Arudra "Beginnings of the Telugu Journalism" in K.R. Seshagiri Rao (Ed) *Studies in the History of Telugu Journalism* (Delhi, 1968), P.17. Also Bangorey (Ed) *Letters from Brown History of Telugu Journalism 1832-1857* (Nellore, 1973), P. 298.

Madras was the seat of the bulk of Telugu journalistic activity for a long time. A good many of the Telugu journals in the nineteenth century were printed and published there. Influenced by the lead given by the Christian missionaries, newspapers in Telugu began to be published in the thirties of the nineteenth century. Vrittantini a monthly journal in Telugu was started in 1838 from Madras. Mandigala Venkataraya Sastri, a scholar, probably from Cuddapah was its editor. Unfortunately copies of this periodical are not preserved. However on the basis of the testimony of many subscribers the editor felt that the paper was publishing "articles of very excellent and pleasing calibre".<sup>2</sup> The paper ceased publication sometime after February 1841 for want of finance and patronage as well. When it was alive this journal is said to have influenced and entertained the natives and even attracted the attention of the Government of Madras of those days.<sup>3</sup>

Varthamanatharangini was another journal published from Madras in 1842 by Syed Rahmtullah. This paper though literary in outlook, exposed the civic lapse, social evils,

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2. Arudra 'Beginnings of the Telugu journalism' in K.R. Seshagiri Rao (Ed) Op. Cit., PP. 10-12.

3. Ibid.

high-handed behaviour of certain white men, the questionable practices of the missionaries in the propagation of their faith and other affairs which were matters of immediate concern of the time.<sup>4</sup> It adopted a popular style, it enjoyed considerable popularity and ran for more than a decade.

Hitavadi (1848) printed at Madras and published from Machilipatnam, was the illustrated monthly and a missionary periodical. This Journal is said to have used an "easy classical Telugu". Interestingly another Christian periodical, a weekly, Dinavarthamani (1861) which ran for a decade, gave news in "colloquial Telugu"<sup>5</sup>. In contrast, Sujanaranjani (1862-1867), which was a literary journal and in which some essays of the famous Grammarian Chinnaya Suri were published, made use of the Sanskritised literary language.<sup>6</sup>

Sriyakshini was a literary fortnightly printed and published in Bellary (an erstwhile Rayalaseema town and now

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4. J. Mangamma Book printing in India, contribution of European scholars to Telugu 1764-1857 (Nellore, 1975), P. 278.
  5. D.V. Siva Rao, "Telugu Journalism : past and present" in K.R. Seshagiri Rao (Ed), Op. Cit., P. 27.
  6. Akkiraju Ramapathi Rao, Veeresalingam Samagra Pari-seelana, Telugu (Secunderabad, 1972), P. 184.

a part of Karnataka), one of the very few towns to have private printing presses. It was sponsored probably in the early sixties by Venkataramana Kavi and Thyagaraja Mudaliar. Veeresalingam refers to this journal in his works and praised it for its style.<sup>7</sup>

To counteract the missionary propaganda, a few journals were started, the most notable among them being Tatvabodhini. It was started in 1864 by the Madras Vedesamajam. Its aim was the propagation of Brahmo principles and social reform. For the first time in the history of Telugu journalism a series of articles appeared in this paper with the title "Stri Punarvivaha Vishayakopanyasamulu" which are essays relating to widow marriage. These articles influenced Kandukuri Veeresalingam in his zeal for social reform. Tatvabodhini also published the Rigveda Samhita in Telugu characters, giving appropriate Telugu meanings and indicated the correct intonation of verses with suitable diacritical marks. It also came out with lively discussions of religion, ethics and other social problems.<sup>8</sup>

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7. Nidathavolu Venkata Rao, 'Literary Journalism' in K.R. Seshagiri Rao (Ed), Op. Cit., P. 58.

8. Akkiraju Ramapathi Rao, Op. Cit., P. 186.

Andhra Bhasha Sanjeevani a monthly journal was started in 1871 by Kokkanda Venkataratnam Pantulu, in Madras. It ran for 12 years till 1883 and it reappeared after a break of 9 years in 1892 and continued till 1900. Soon after its first number appeared, it was acclaimed by Telugu scholars and the enlightened public.<sup>9</sup> It was praised by no less a person than Veeresalingam in a letter to the editor. A portion of his Mahabharatam, Sabhaparvam, was published as serial in it.<sup>10</sup>

Some of the features which distinguished this journal and made it famous in those days were : (a) It bore in its name 'Andhra Bhasha', the name of the language of the people whom it addressed, and used classical literary language; (b) Telugu equivalents of English terms were freely and painstakingly coined, many of which were later on used by Veeresalingam (c) Articles on matters literary as well as social and political were given importance. When differences of opinion cropped up between Venkataratnam and

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9. B. Gopal Reddy "Nellore Mandala Patrikalu" in N. Chandrasekhar Reddy (Ed), Sri Vikrama Simhapuri Mandala Sarvasvamu, Telugu (Nellore, 1963), P. 856.

10. D.V. Siva Rao "Telugu Journalism : past and present" in K.R. Seshagiri Rao (Ed), Op. Cit., P. 29.

Veerasingam on such important issues of the day as widow marriage, women's education and social reform, they debated and fought out their views sometimes bitterly in their respective journals and indirectly served the cause of journalism.<sup>11</sup>

The journal that deserves to be noticed next is Purushartha Pradayini (1872), a monthly journal published from Machilipatnam. This was the first of its kind, because first journal published from a purely Telugu district and edited by a Telugu writer and editor Umaranganayakulu Naidu.<sup>12</sup> Purushartha Pradayini was a forward-looking journal in more than one respect. Siva Rao has given a succinct account of its distinguishing features in more than one respect. "It deplored the fact that the precepts of the 'sastras' while being observed in their externals, were violated in their spirit in actual practice by the people. It published articles on the Hindu ideals of 'Dharma' 'Artha', 'Kama' and 'Moksha' adopting them to modern conditions. Besides publishing articles on religion, law and

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11. D.V. Siva Rao, "Telugu Journalism : past and present" in K.R. Seshagiri Rao (Ed), Op. Cit., P. 29.

12. D.V. Lakshmana Reddy, Telugu Journalism, Telugu (Vijayawada, 1985), P. 123.

social problems, it carried special articles on such controversial matters as ideology, caste system, women's education and widow marriage, and encouraged free and fearless discussion on such problems. The journal held very liberal views on political, social and religious questions and gave ample outlet for every point of view on matters of public interest."<sup>13</sup>

No social evil escaped its vigilant eye. The profession of dancing girls, bribery and corruption among public servants, the high handedness of the police, the vagaries of the bureaucrats and their racial arrogance unscrupulous conversion of Hindus into Christianity and many other evil things were courageously exposed. Administrative lapses too were brought to light. In reviewing the administration of the Local Fund Boards in August 1872, the journal came down heavily on the irregularities and wastage in the construction and maintenance of roads and public buildings. It criticised the government for its negligence of education. In particular mention must be made of its criticism of the prevailing system of education which was

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13. D.V.Siva Rao, "Telugu Journalism : past and present" in K.R. Seshagiri Rao (Ed), Op. Cit., PP. 29-30.



intended to inculcate in the Indians the idea of the superiority of European civilization, religion and culture and keep them servile. As a consequence Indians were made to look down upon their own culture and religion. Thus by its just and courageous criticism of the rulers, this periodical served the cause of nationalism.<sup>14</sup> Veeresalingam was a regular contributor to this journal. Two of his poetical works were first published in its columns. He adopted it as a model for his famous journal, *Vivekavardhini* which he started in 1874. *Purushartha Pradayini* and *Vivekavardhini* between them blazed the trail of Telugu journalism.<sup>15</sup>

Kandukuri Veeresalingam Pantulu, who was conferred the title 'Rao Bahadur' by the then governor for his varied activities and achievements became the father of the renaissance movement in Andhra and the founder of Modern Telugu Journalism. Telugu journalism and the social reform movement in Andhra gained new dimensions. He started *Vivekavardhini*, a monthly journal, in the beginning of 1874. During the forty years before its inception, dozens of

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14. D.V. Siva Rao, "Telugu Journalism : past and present" in K.R. Seshagiri Rao (Ed), Op. Cit., PP. 30-31.
15. K. Veeresalingam, Auto-biography Part I, Telugu (Rajahmundry, 1915), PP. 70-71.

periodicals in Telugu had appeared. "Some made their mark, some impressed with their style and a few championed the forces of reaction, but no journal had the singular distinction of Vivekavardhini, though it arrived somewhat late on the scene".<sup>16</sup> It had a well defined public spirit and social consciousness.

The trials, tribulations and the achievements of Vivekavardhini are well recorded by Veeresalingam himself in his autobiography. Its unique qualities of bold, radical and comprehensive writing has earned for Veeresalingam the deserving name "Founder of Modern Telugu Journalism."<sup>17</sup>

Absolute fearlessness was Veeresalingam's creed as editor. The popularity of the Vivekavardhini made it necessary to have its own printing press. So it was set up in 1875. With a press of its own, the journal rapidly advanced. First it was converted into a fortnightly in 1876 and later on into a weekly.<sup>18</sup> As a monthly supplement to it

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16. Arudra "Beginning of the Telugu Journalism" in K.R. Seshagiri Rao (Ed), Op. Cit., P. 20.

17. Ibid., also K. Veeresalingam, Op. Cit., P. 71.

18. K. Veeresalingam, Op. Cit., PP. 86-87.

he added *Hasyasanjivani*, which with its biting satire exposed the follies and vices of his time even though it provided laughter and humour. Later on Veeresalingam started a periodical for women called *Satihitabodhini* and another *Satyasamvardhini* where in advocated the removal of such social evils as child marriages, the caste system, the institutionalisation of prostitution as an integral part of the caste system. He also persuasively advocated the introduction of widow marriage.<sup>19</sup>

In starting *Satihitabodhini* exclusively meant for women, Veeresalingam was being a pioneer. Having launched it in 1883 he ran it for a period of three years against several odds. The paper fought many legal battles successfully in defence of women's rights and status. Veeresalingam fervently advocated women's education at a time when there was a general hostility to it. He did quite a lot for educating them through his journal which he used as an instrument of women's education. It published much material useful for them such as biographies of eminent women, moral tales, didactic verse, notes on housekeeping

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19. Sarojini Regani, *Highlights of the Freedom Movement in Andhra Pradesh* (Hyderabad, 1972), P. 18 also Akkiraju Ramapathi Rao, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 198-207.

etc. It was Veeresalingam's firm belief that as long as women were debarred from education, all talk of enlightenment and progress would be useless.<sup>20</sup>

Zanana Patrika was the second journal intended for women. It was originally founded in 1893 by Malladi Venkataratnam. But soon afterwards he handed it over to Rayasam Venkatasivudu. Veeresalingam was also closely associated with it. Under their joint editorship it forged ahead, but Venkatasivudu could not rise to the exacting standards demanded by Veeresalingam and so their collaboration had to end. So Venkatasivudu ran the journal till 1900 independently.<sup>21</sup>

A striking feature of this period was that it saw the formation of several associations like the Madras Native Association (1852), by Gajula Lakshmi Narasu Chetty (1806-1869) who was also the founder of the English weekly the Crescent, the Madras Mahajana Sabha (1884) and the Kakinada Literary Association.<sup>22</sup>

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20. T. Ramachandra Rao, "Women's Journals" in K.R. Seshagiri Rao, (Ed) Op. Cit., PP. 124-125.

21. Akkiraju Ramapathi Rao, Op. Cit., PP. 207-208.

22. Sarojini Regani, Op. Cit., P. 19.

The two decades from 1885, the year of the founding of the Indian National Congress, witnessed the gradual consolidation of the forces of nationalism in India. The growth of the press in India as a force in the political, social and economic life during this period was in line with the traditions of the British press in England.

Although political issues figured in the Telugu periodicals of the day, they were not the focus of attention. The credit of being the first Telugu political news weekly goes to Andhra Prakasika, which was started in 1885 with A. Parthasarathy Naidu of Madras as its editor. Naidu was a staunch Congressman. Like Lokamanya Tilak, whom he followed, he was a fearless critic of the government. The paper "boldly criticised the policies of the government, pointed out the lapses in administration, exposed corruption in the police and other departments and brought to light the atrocities of the soldiers. It waged many legal battles for justice and fair play. It had a good circulation and served the people for 45 years unbroken".<sup>23</sup>

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23. G. Venkatasubbaiah, *Desoddharaka Charitra*, Telugu (Vijayawada, 1961), P. 54.

Gautami, the first Telugu daily paper of Rajahmundry started in 1908 by Sripada Krishnamurthy Sastri, criticised the British policies. Referring to an advertisement which wanted a Mussalman clerk for an acting post in the Chief Office of the Inspector General of Police, Madras, it comments that such an advertisement proceeding from such a high official of the government whose duty was to suppress all racial differences, would not only create prejudices between one race and another but also induce people to entertain doubts regarding the just administration of the country.<sup>24</sup>

Another journal Sasilekha, a weekly from Madras, was started in 1894 by G. Seshacharyulu. On the condition of the native industries this journal commented that when the Muslim invaders established their rule in India they chose to settle down and live in this country. As a result although their rule was rather cruel to the subjects, Indian money was retained in India. India was, therefore, not reduced to poverty. But when the English began to rule this country, they chose to be only exploiters of resourcers.

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24. ~~News Paper~~ Reports of Madras Presidency (N.P.R.), 1901, P. 359.

Indian money is being sent to England in various ways. The Europeans and Americans have been sending machinemade piece-goods and other articles to India in enormous quantities and are making huge profits. Native industries have thereby suffered enormous loss and India has been reduced to abject poverty. To improve this state of affairs, the paper exhorts the Indian public to give up buying Manchester made cotton goods and prefer cloth manufactured by the native weavers.<sup>25</sup> It also played a notable part in the early Andhra movement.

The close of the 19th century saw a spurt of Telugu newspapers from various districts, some advocating social reforms, while others vehemently pleading for popularising simple Telugu as a vehicle for conveying the new ideas and thoughts surging in the minds of men. The journals published during this period, such as Deshabhmani, (1896) and Andhrakesari (1904) served the cause of the Andhra movement creditably.<sup>26</sup>

The Desabhimani complains that the salt duty is the most unjust of all the taxes imposed upon the people of India by the British government. This tax is not levied in -----  
25. Sasilekha, September 15, 1905.

26. Sarojini Regani, "The growth of the Telugu Press" in S.P. Sen (Ed), Indian Press (Calcutta, 1967), P. 95.

any other country under the British rule. John Stuart Mill himself pronounced it to be a most objectionable impost, as Salt is the most indispensable article of food for man. If there is any tax which the government has to abolish it is, the salt duty, the paper says.<sup>27</sup>

In this brief survey it is not possible nor is it necessary to go into a detailed history of various Telugu journals of the last century. But what needs to be said here is that the journals of the last century were pioneers in the field, that they laid solid foundations for the future growth of journalism in Telugu, despite their working against several odds. They also established sound traditions. The journalism they pursued was for neither profit nor pelf. They were inspired by some of the noblest ideals a man could cherish of which love of their land and nationalism was not the least. They were possessed by a noble zeal to serve their fellow men. Eager to reform their society they attacked many social evils, which were the bane of Indian society, fearlessly and with a rare missionary zeal and in the process braved the wrath of the British officials and also that of their own conservative Indian

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27. Desabhimani, September 24, 1901.



compatriots. They brought together scholarship and an enlightened outlook to bear upon their chosen mission. These traditions were further contained and consolidated in the journalistic activity of the present century and were very much in evidence during the years of the freedom struggle.

With the beginning of the 20th century, Telugu journalism made quick strids of progress. While on one hand the lively issue of Telugu style to be adopted for conveying thoughts to the general reader was still being discussed in journals like Vajrayudham of Sripada Krishnamurthy, Telugu of Gidugu Ramamoorthi, Andhra Sahitya Parishat Patrika and Sarada of Kauta Sriramasastri, the first decades of this century also saw the birth of leading Telugu National newspapers like Krishna Patrika (1902)), Andhra Patrika (1914)) and the Congress (1922). These papers identified themselves with the national movement carried on in the Andhra district of the country.<sup>28</sup>

A list of Telugu Journals published during the period of this study is given in Appendix I. Many of these journals had a very short span of life and copies of them are not

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28. Sarojini Regani, "The Growth of the Telugu Press" in S.P. Sen (Ed), Op. Cit., P. 95.

available. A brief discription of some of the Telugu journals that played an important role in Indian Freedom Movement is given in the following pages.

Krishna Patrika a most noteworthy weekly was started in the year 1902 by the Krishna District Association. It is regarded as "an epoch-maker in political journalism in Telugu."<sup>29</sup> Konda Venkatappayya, for his part in the nationalist movement, took up the main responsibility and ran the journal. He advocated the cause of ryots, exposed corruption and boldly criticised the policies of the government and the vagaries of the officials during the 'Vandemataram' movement. His powerful articles roused the patriotic fervour of the public to a higher pitch.

Mutnuri Krishna Rao succeeded Konda Venkatappayya as an editor of Krishna Patrika in 1907, and under his editorship it rose to be "one of the greatest language journals in India". Krishna Rao is "still remembered and considered as the doyn of Telugu journalism."<sup>30</sup> He was great as a scholar, literary critic and patriot. He threw himself, heart and soul, into the national struggle for freedom.

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29. A. Kaleswara Rao, Naa Jeevita Katha Navyandhramu, Telugu (Vijayawada, 1959), PP. 70-72.

30. Ibid., P. 72.

Commenting on the causes of Indian famines Krishna Patrika writes that the poverty of India is due to remittance of enormous sums of money from the country to England and other places. Though the British government has conferred certain benefits upon the country, yet these benefits are not in commensurate with the amount of revenue received by the government. The government, has no doubt, striven to promote education but the money spent on it is insignificant when compared with that it expended on wars and armies. The government has provided the country with many railways, but it is understood that the construction of railways benefits only the English, while it has been a source of great loss to the Indians. The railways have ruined agriculture and trade and deprived thousands of people of their means of subsistence. If, the government spends one-half of the money now spent on railways for irrigation purposes, famines will not be constantly recurring.<sup>31</sup>

During the non-co-operation movement, Krishna Patrika exhorted students to go to the villages and work and said :

"unless popular force unfolds itself, arbitrariness will

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31. Krishna Patrika, September 1, 1907.

not vanish. This force has to be awakened in the villages which form its foundations ..... the Andhra students should follow the footsteps of their Bengaly brethren who go from village to village to revively and develop village life.<sup>32</sup>

Desodharaka Kasinadhuni Nageswara Rao started Andhra Patrika on 9th August 1908 as a Telugu weekly from Bombay. He shifted it to Madras on 1 April 1914 and expanded his journalistic activities by converting it into a daily. The founding of Andhra Patrika viewed as a landmark in Telugu Journalism. Unfortunately it was recently closed down. During its days of influence it worked the Andhras politically, socially and culturally.<sup>33</sup>

Nageswara Rao brought out annual supplements with plenty of illustrations and special articles of political, cultural and literary interest. It was the only Telugu daily for a number of years, though it was not the very first daily in Telugu. The daily was edited by a number of talented people such as Gadicherla Harisarvothama Rao and Challa Seshagiri Rao. It was first and foremost a nationalist

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32. N.P.R., 1921, PP. 192-193.

33. G. Venkatasubbaiah, Op. Cit., PP. 56-76.

journal. It did leoman service to the people of Andhra. During the days of non-co-operation, civil disobedience and the Quit India Movement, it published stirring editorials appealing to the people to join the struggle.

During the days of non-co-operation *Andhra Patrika*, however, differed from certain other papers in regard to the disposal of discarded foreign cloth and did not approve of making a bonfire of it, as it might be viewed as a token of hatred, a quality opposed to the time-honoured traditions of India which always held sacred the principle of non-violence. Referring to the communique of the government on the boycott of foreign cloth, it feared that the authorities were resorting to repression even in the case of the Swadeshi movement. It exhorted the people not to be deterred, and to persist in it with resolution and intense patriotism. However, it cautioned them to observe non-violence scrupulously in fulfilment of the Swadeshi vow.<sup>34</sup>

The great patriot and an eminent scholar Gadicherla Harisarvothama Rao started *Swaraj* from Bezawada in 1908. He had been rusticated as a student for participating in the

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34. N.P.R., 1902, PP. 192-193.

'Vandemataram' movement. He was one of the founders of the library movement' in Andhra. He was arrested in July 1908 for his articles in Swaraj and was convicted for sedition. On appeal his sentence was raised to three years by the High Court. After his release, he edited Andhra Patrika for sometime when it was started as a daily in 1914.<sup>35</sup>

The journals Manorama (1906-1910) a monthly and Desamata 1910-1913 a weekly, both were started by Chilakamarti Lakshminarasimham from Rajahmundry.<sup>36</sup> They were virtually one man periodicals. Lakshminarasimham tried his hand at popular journalism and journalism in a lower key, even as he highlighted the issues of the day.

Desamata of the 19th September, 1917 says that the Indian industries were formerly famous and enjoyed great eminence but are woefully looking at present because of foreign industries. Our country has become a market for the manufactures of the west. This is the abode of the goddess of prosperity. Our wealth is passing into the hands of

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35. M. Veerabhadra Rao, Sri Sarvothamajeevitham (Vijayawada, 1965), P. 25.

36. Chilakamarthi Lakshmi Narasimham, Sweeya Charitramu, Telugu (Visakhapatnam, 1957), PP. 415-455.

foreigners. Our daily life depends upon the mercy of the westerners. In order to develop their trade, the English impose heavy duties on the articles they import from India, with or no duties on their articles. Thus they sell their manufactures at cheap prices, with the result that our industries have declined. It is not possible to impose heavy duties on foreign imports without the sanction of the government. The government of India has no complete freedom. So, the paper says that the Swadeshi vow is the only means for the development of our industries.<sup>37</sup>

Andhra Bharati (1910-1915) was conducted by M. Krishna Rao on modern lines from Masulipatnam. It published literary articles of high value such as studies of different aspects of Mahabharatam by Madapati Hanumantha Rao and also Tirupati Venkata Kavulu. This journal also published in Telugu the constitutions of countries such as China, Japan and Turkey.<sup>38</sup>

In 1907, 1908 Chilakuri Veerabhadra Rao and Chillarige Srinivasa Rao started two journals Andhra Kesari and

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37. N.P.R., 1917, P. 2452.

38. N. Venkata Rao, "Literary Journalism" in K.R. Seshagiri Rao, (Ed), Op. Cit., P. 78.

Navayuga from Rajahmundry.<sup>39</sup> During the Vandemataram movement these papers made most inspiring appeals to the people to be patriotic. They supported the three movements namely Boycott, (foreign goods), Swadeshi and Swaraj.

In 1915 Vavilla Venkateswara Sastrulu started the weekly Trilinga which served the cause of Telugu for four decades. It was predominantly literary, though politics also figured on its pages.<sup>40</sup>

The non-co-operation movement of 1920-22 and the ideal of Swaraj inspired many to take to fearless and patriotic journalism. From Nellore Rebala Sundar Rami Reddy started Nellore Patrika on 14-2-1920 and it took the course of non-co-operation movement as it was chiefly in support of it. After the congress decided to withdraw non-co-operation, the paper was stopped.<sup>41</sup> Maddori Annapoornaiah was one of the most powerful and popular persons who along with a few friends brought out a weekly called Congress in Telugu about this time. First it was published from Rajahmundry and later

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39. M. Veerabhadra Rao, *Op. Cit.*, P. 122.

40. N. Venkata Rao, "Literary Journalism" in K.R.Seshagiri Rao (Ed), *Op. Cit.*, P. 83.

41. B. Gopal Reddy, "Nellore Mandala Patrikalu" in N. Chandrasekhara Reddy (Ed), *Op. Cit.*, P. 864.



on from Sitanagaram Ashram, on behalf of the Andhra Yuvajana Swarajya Sabha, a students organisation. From its inception in 1922 till its extinction in 1932, Congress carried on a relentless and fearless fight against the British Raj even though one or the other of its editors was harassed and arrested by the government. It played a prominent role in rousing national sentiments especially among the young. On its front page the slogan 'Swaraj is my birth right' was printed boldly.<sup>42</sup>

The paper contained many inspiring writings appealing to Indians to be United, patriotic and to be prepared to make any sacrifice for the country. In one of its issues dated 26th April 1923, the paper wrote : could you bear to see Mother India who gives life to you, to me and to the millions of India, a subject country ? Brother devote all your time at least now for bringing about a spirit of unity. Look upon the Mohammadans and all other races as your brothers and equals.<sup>43</sup>

Another weekly, Satyagrahi, was started in 1924 by A. Govindacharyulu from Eluru. The passing of the resolution of complete independence or 'Purna Swaraj' in the Andhra

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42. Government of Madras Public (Confidential), Government Order No. 404, dated June 5, 1924.

43. Ibid.

provincial congress of 1925, was applauded by journals like Satyagrahi. Satyagrahi writing on that conference, declared that the conference had articulated the 'natural and unobjectionable desire for independence by passing the resolution for complete independence".<sup>44</sup>

The history of Telugu journalism in Rayalaseema in the twentieth century begins with Gadicherla Harisarvothama Rao, Kaipa Subramanya Sarma, Pappuri Ramacharyulu and Kalluri Subba Rao. Harisarvothama Rao who as noted already was connected with Andhra Patrika for sometime, started Mathru Seva in 1922 in Tadipatri in the Anantapur district. The paper was one of the several Telugu journals that did signal service to the cause of freedom as also to the growth of a literary tradition. Harisarvothama Rao later joined Kaipa Subrahmanya Sarma to continue his efforts in this field.<sup>45</sup>

Pappuri Ramacharyulu, a veteran patriot, joined Kalachavudu Venkataramanacharlu in his student days to publish the Hasyamansjoosha from Anantapur. In the 1930's Pappuri started Srisadhana patrika and ran since then with breaks only when he was imprisoned for his participation in the freedom struggle.<sup>46</sup>

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44. Satyagrahi, November 2, 1925.

45. M. Veerabhadra Rao, Op. Cit., P. 125.

46. B.S.R. Krishna, "Telugu Journalism in Rayalaseema" in K.R. Seshagiri Rao (Ed), Op. Cit., PP. 46-47.

Pappuri and Kaipa Subrahmanya Sarma jointly sponsored the journal Pinakini a weekly from Anantapur in 1922. But it did not survive for a long time. Subrahmanya Sarma later published Koumodaki from Nandyala in the Kurnool district.<sup>47</sup>

Kalluri Subba Rao, who published a journal in the 1920 is one of the pioneers of political journalism in Telugu. Vanam Sankara Sarma's Indravathi (1927) was a terror in those days. It was published from Pattikonda, in the Kurnool district. A fearless journalist, Sankara Sarma used to write scathing criticism on many issues particularly the local problems of the day. He later started the Hitavadhi.<sup>48</sup>

Mula Narayana Swamy's Vijayavani was another popular journal in which people like the poet-journalist Gottipati Subbarayalu worked. Periodicals like Divya Jeevanam and Snehalatha were started at Madanapalli. Neelam Sanjiva Reddy was one of a group of young men who published a secret political journal called Akasavani in the 1940's.<sup>49</sup>

During the non-co-operation movement all these newspapers in Telugu made staunch appeals to the people to use the spinning wheel and to wear Khaddar. They encouraged

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47. M. Veerabhadra Rao, Op. Cit., P. 125.

48. B.S.R. Krishna, "Telugu Journalism in Rayalaseema" in K.R. Seshagiri Rao, (Ed), Op. Cit., PP. 46-47.

49. Ibid.

the people to adhere to the ideals and methods of the non-co-operation movement and boycott elections, surrender titles and honorary offices, boycott educational institutions, law courts, extend non-co-operation to municipalities, defy forest rules, encourage Swadeshi and boycott foreign cloth. The press repeatedly made fervent appeals to the people to implement the programme of prohibition of all intoxicating drinks.

This period also saw the growth of many newspapers like Gandivamu, Devadattamu, Janmabhoomi etc., which also played a prominent role in the national struggle for freedom. In this period a few caste newspapers emerged which catered to the needs of particular castes and communities. Some representative samples of such periodicals are Reddi Prabha, Reddi Rani, Setty Baliya, Adivelama, Deccanvysya and Samadarshini from Madras edited by Pingala Subramanya Setty which identified itself with the non-brahmin cause, was published during this period.<sup>50</sup>

Two of the periodicals, Satihitabodhini and Zanana Patrika intended for women and published towards the end of the last century and the beginning of the present century have been already noted. A few more of such journals

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50. Maganti Bapineedu, Andhra Sarvaswamu, (1943), P. 384.

published in the first three decades of this century may be noted now. Some of them are of special interest because they were founded and edited by women.

One of them was called *Hindusundari*. Its place of publication was Kakinada and the editor was Mosalikanti Ramabayamma. This journal made its first appearance in 1908 and continued till 1920. It was the first periodical founded and edited by a woman for women.<sup>51</sup>

Another women's journal called *Anasuya* also appeared in Kakinada. It was started in 1914 by Vinjamuri Venkataratnamma. Kakinada was at the time one of the major centres of social and religious reforms in Andhra Pradesh. It is therefore, not surprising that a third women's journal called *Savitri* also came up in that town. It was founded and edited by Pulugunta Lakshminarasamamba. It did good work between 1910 and 1918.<sup>52</sup>

The best of the periodicals for women of those days was *Grihalakshmi* (1928) which continued till 1960 when it was closed down. Attractively got up *Grihalakshmi* carried good articles useful for women. It gave every encouragement to

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51. T. Ramachandra Rao, "Women's Journals" in K.R. Seshagiri Rao (Ed), *Op. Cit.*, pp. 125-126.

52. *Ibid.*

women to write for its columns and for the best writing done by a woman it used to offer a gold bracelet every year.<sup>53</sup>

The women's journals argued and pleaded that women should take as much interest in national matters as men do. They also pointed out that the nationalism in India should start at home, where all education began.

In 1928 N. Venkatrama Naidu started a weekly called Zamindari Ryot from Nellore. It continues to flourish even now with its name Zamin Ryot. It is one of the notable district papers. The paper is wellknown for its vehement advocacy of the ryots cause especially in the Estates. It has been a Congress paper. As a paper belonging to the period of "Salt Satyagraha". it wrote excitedly on the success of Salt Satyagraha in the Nellore district. The paper recorded that in Nellore, Srimati Ponaka Kanakamma and her associates numbering over forty prepared salt near the sea defying the ban imposed by the government for this she was arrested and convicted on 26th May, 1930 to 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> years rigorous imprisonment and she was transferred to Vellore jail.<sup>54</sup>

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53. T. Ramachandra Rao, "Women's Journals" in K.R. Seshagiri Rao (Ed), Op. Cit., PP. 125-126.

54. Zameen Ryot, April, 1930.

The newspapers during the period of 'Salt Satyagraha' gave wide publicity to it, made critical comments and published photos of the Satyagrahies. They highlighted Gandhiji's determination to carry on the movement till the attainment of independence and appealed to the people to make the realisation of Gandhi's ideal possible, by giving their support to the movement.

When Ramnath Goenka started Andhra Prabha at Madras in 1938, Khasa Subba Rao the editor of the Swarajya took additional charge of the editorship of this Telugu daily. But after a few months Nyapati Narayana Murthy took over as its editor and continued till about June 1942. It was under the editorship of V.R. Narla that Andhra Prabha quickly grew to be a premier Telugu daily. Phenomenal indeed was its growth in terms of circulation and popularity. Narla adopted spoken Telugu instead of the literary style of other papers and saw to it that a uniform and easily understood style maintained in his paper. He was especially noted for his vigorous fighting editorials and it was these perhaps more than anything else, that were responsible in making the Andhra Prabha so widely read.<sup>55</sup>

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55. Maddukuri Chandrasekhara Rao, "Jateeya Vimukti Udyamam Communist Patrikala Patra" Telugu, article published in Visalandhra, June 23, 1963, P. 139.

The papers mentioned so far devoted their energies mainly to the promotion of the national struggle in Andhra against the British. Realising the necessity of focussing the attention of the general public on economic and labour problems, persons with a socialistic bent of mind started journals like Navasakti (December 15, 1937) which was edited by Madduri Annapoornaiah but which was proscribed by the government in 1939.<sup>56</sup> Then a Communist weekly called Prajasakti was started in 1941 which was converted into a daily in 1945, by Madduri Chandrasekhar Rao, but it was also proscribed in 1948 by the Democratic Government. The same paper was revived in 1951 and converted into a bi-weekly in 1952. Now this being published under the title Visalandhra as a daily from Vijayawada. The starting of Prajasakti could be treated as the beginning of a new era in the History of Telugu Journalism.<sup>57</sup> In 1939-42 the Communist party started a paper Swatantra Bharat under the editorship of Maddukuri Chendram. Janavani a paper was started by Pithapuram Maha Rajah in 1936.

These journals spread communist, socialistic and nationalistic ideas to build up public opinion and purged

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56. Y.V. Krishna Rao, T. Venkatramalah, A. Balaramamurthy, P. Pattabhi Rama Rao, Andhra Pradesh Lo Communist Udyama Charitra, 1936-1942. Part II, Telugu (Hyderabad, 1988), P. 248.

57. Ibid.



bad blood from the British Raj. During the Second World War these papers strengthened the peasants in their antifeudal struggle and propagated views against British imperialism. Prajasakti, Swatantra Bharat, Rahasyam, Renadu stimulated the inhabitants to make collective efforts to make the British quit from India.

Thus Journalism in Telugu which had a humble beginning in 1835 had developed into a powerful instrument during the National Movement in India and played a vital role in India's Freedom Movement. As narrated about some of the Telugu Journals were started with the specific intention of propagating the spirit of nationalism among its readers. While some of the editors and proprietors used their journal for the propagation of nationalist spirit, some of the leaders in the nationalist movement became the founders and editors of new journals to propagate nationalist message.

#### CIRCULATION

The Indian language newspapers had altogether a much larger circulation than English newspapers and the number of their readers was increasing. As Roper Lethbridge pointed out, "if a single copy reaches a village or even a large

collection of villages, its contents will soon become known to nearly every man residing in the neighbourhood."<sup>58</sup>

Among the Telugu journals nationalist pro-congress journals had higher circulation than pro-British papers. There was fluctuation in the circulation of newspapers depending on the nationalist political activity in the country. During the great political movements their circulation increased and with the withdrawal of the movements there was considerable decrease in the circulation of the nationalist newspapers. (The circulation figures of some important Telugu journals are given in Appendix II.

Until the starting of the Vande Mataram and Swadeshi movements even important Telugu journals had a meagre circulation ranging between 300-700. But when the papers began to spread the message of the new nationalist movement in a vigorous manner, the circulation of nationalist Telugu journals increased remarkably. The Andhra Kesari had a circulation of 1650 and the Krishna Patrika reached the figure of 1600 in 1907.<sup>59</sup>

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58. Tarachand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. II, (New Delhi, 1974), P. 457, quoted in T.B. McCully *English education and origin of Indian Nationalism*, P. 325.

59. Government of Madras, Public (Confid.), Lr. No. 704, dated September 2, 1908.

By 1913 Krishna Patrika was able to attain the first position among the Telugu papers with a circulation of 2400.<sup>60</sup> The Andhra Patrika which became a daily in 1914 had a circulation of 7000 in that year.<sup>61</sup> This paper continued to improve its circulation and reached the figure of 8700 in 1917.<sup>62</sup> However after the First World War there was slight decrease in its circulation and reached the figure of 7200 by 1920.

During the non-cooperation movement there was once again increase in the circulation of nationalist journals. Andhra Patrika had improved its circulation by 1,000 and reached the figure of 8,200 in 1921. Krishna Patrika which had a circulation of 2,000 in 1920 increased it to 3,000 in 1921. The circulation of Praranbha Vidhya increased from 9,750 in 1920 to 10,200 in 1921. Deenabandhu, Ryot Patrika improved their circulation from 850 and 500 to 1,200 and 1,500 respectively. Increase in the circulation of Hitakarini of Eluru was very high when compared to other papers. Its circulation increased from 6,300 to 15,400

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60. Government of Madras, Judicial (Confid.), G.O. No. 461, dated July 1, 1914.

61. Government of Madras, Judicial (Confid.), G.O. No. 1285, dated July 10, 1915.

62. Government of Madras, Public (Confid.), G.O. No. 582, dated July 8, 1918.

during the the period of non-cooperation.<sup>63</sup> The circulation figures of some important Telugu journals are given in Appendix II for the years for which the information is available.

With the suspension of non-cooperation movement in February 1922 there was a lull in the nationalist political activity. This was reflected in the circulation of nationalist journals. For example Hitakarini which had a phenominal increase from 6,300 to 15,400 during the non-cooperation days fell steeply to 350. Same is the case with most of the nationalist Telugu journals.<sup>64</sup>

The same trend was witnessed once again during the days of Salt Sathyagraha in 1930-1931. Andhra Patrika reached the figure of 10,000. Janmabhoomi started in 1931, whose price was only one paice, was able to have a circualtion figure of 10,000 in the starting year itself. This was mainly due to the intensive political activity and other factor being its price.<sup>65</sup>

The first issue of the Communist paper Navasakthi appeared on December 15, 1937. It started its publication

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63. Government of Madras, Public (Confid.) G.O. No. 803-4 dated October 7, 1922.

64. Ibid.

65. Government of Madras, Public (Confid.) G.O. No. 1021-22 dated July 26, 1932.

from Rajahmundry. The circulation of this paper ranged between 2,000 and 2,500.<sup>66</sup> Another Communist paper Prajasakthi, a Weekly, was started on June 17, 1942 with an initial circulation of 2,000. By the end of the year its circulation reached the figure of 8,000.<sup>67</sup>

The message of the vernacular newspapers reached large number of people than their circulation figures, which were obtained on the basis of number of subscribers, suggests. This is because the paper was read not only by the person who purchased but by several others who had an approach to him. In villages particularly if a paper had even one subscriber, it reached almost all the educated and also uneducated in the village.<sup>68</sup> The literates used to read out the important news to all the villagers that gathers at a common meeting place everyday. This practice is continued even to-day in the rural areas of Andhra Pradesh. The Simon Commission has stated that the effective sale of vernacular newspapers was far greater than the actual sales as the contents of these papers were read out to the illiterate villagers by their literate brethren in the villages and towns.<sup>69</sup> Coatman,

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66. Y.V. Krishna Rao et al., Op. Cit., Vol. II, P. 250.

67. Ibid., P. 288.

68. K. Subramanyam, *Press and the National Movement in South India : Andhra, 1905-1932* (Madras, 1984), P. 23.

69. Ibid.

Director of Public Information, Government of India, in his secret note prepared in 1929 states that "the number of copies of vernacular newspapers sold are no sufficient index to the number of people whom their contents reach".<sup>70</sup>

Thus the message of the vernacular newspapers in India reached for greater number of people than the circulation figures of these newspapers suggests. Hence the impact of these newspapers on the people was also much greater than the English newspapers.

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70. K. Subramanyam, *Op. Cit.*, PP. 23-24.