CHAPTER - VI

KAPU’S CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FIELDS
The distinguished men in the Kapu community are too numerous to be mentioned individually. Among them there are lawyers, jurists, educationists, poets and social reformers. In the administration side we have few people from this caste. Among the officials mention should be made about Ajay Naidu Chief Secretary of Andhra Pradesh and former Secretary in the Union Cabinet, noted for his honesty. I.J. Naidu acted as Chief Secretary to the State of Andhra Pradesh from Jan 1978 to July 1979. After that Mr. Gonela also acted as the special Chief Secretary. K.V. Rao, IAS, son of K.V. Reddi Swamy Naidu a freedom fighter from Rajahmundry, was secretary to the Industries Minister.

Like wise from Indian Police Service, P.V. Rangaiah Naidu from East Godavari district as D.I.G.¹ Ragala Ramakrishna Rao, popularly known as ‘Ragala’ retired as D.I.G. Another prominent person in the I.P.S. was M.V. Bhaskara Rao² Similar I.P.S. Officer was M.V. Krishna Rao, brother of M.V. Bhaskara Rao, of 1974 batch of I.P.S.

Justice A. Lakshmana Rao:

A. Lakshmana Rao was born at Tenali on January 14, 1934. He completed his High School Education in Taluk High School, Tenali, and College Education up to Graduation at Hindu College and A.C. College, Guntur and studied Law at Madras Law College. After completion of his law he enrolled as Advocate in the High Court of Andhra Pradesh in the year 1959. He was appointed as Government Pleader in the A.P. High Court in the year 1981 and handled Home, Industries and Civil Supplies Departments and was elevated as permanent Judge of Andhra Pradesh High Court on December 10, 1982. Lakshmana Rao was the first President of the Andhra Pradesh State Consumer Disputes Redressal commission constituted in 1989.

Under his stewardship, initiative has been taken in getting the District Consumer Forums Constituted all over the state. Great awareness had been aroused among the consumers in the State about their rights, thereby evoking widespread response from people of all walks of life. He was the Chairman of the Andhra Pradesh State Legal Aid Board. As Chairman of the Legal Aid Board, he organised innumerable Lok Adalats to

¹In 1991, he was taken voluntary retirement and contested in 1991 Lok Sabha Elections from Khammam on Congress Ticket and won. He was a Minister in-charge for Telecommunications in P.V. Narasimha Rao Cabinet from 1991-1996.

²He resigned from his post in 1997 and recently he joined in Congress Party.
solve the disputes pending in the various Courts all over the state, and achieved good results. The most important of such Lok Adalats was the Srisailam Lok Adalat which was the biggest Lok Adalat held so far in which disputes pending for over 20 years have been settled and more than one lakh claimants in the districts of Kurnool and Mahaboobnagar had been paid compensation of about Rs.100 crores.

Lakshmana Rao was the President of the Andhra Pradesh Judiciary Academy (1992-93). He took steps for starting Basic Training Courses for the newly appointed judicial officers in the state and refresher courses for the serving Judicial Officers so as to help them achieve perfection in Judicial and administrative matters. Strived hard in carving the Academy as one of the best of such Academies in the country.

Lakshmana Rao was the Acting Chief Justice of the Andhra Pradesh High Court during the period July 1992 to September 1994. As Acting Chief Justice he took keen interest in toning up the Judicial Administration including computerisation of Judicial and Administrative work in the High Court. He introduced the Computerised cause list and Court NIC facility.

As Acting Chief Justice he strived to improve the infrastructural facilities in the District Courts and the High Court including construction of residential quarters to Judicial officers and court buildings.

Lakshmana Rao became the Chief Justice of the High Court of Judicature of Allahabad (Uttar Pradesh). He has undertaken various reformative measures for restoration of pre-eminence of the largest premier High Court of our country. And retired in January, 1996.  

I.J. Naidu:

Naidu took his Master's Degree in First Class, both in Physics and History from the Presidency College, Madras University.

I.J. Naidu had experience in various Departments both at the State and Central level.

---

3 Interview with Lakshmana Rao on 26.1.1998 at Secunderabad.
He led a number of Indian delegations to several foreign countries. Naidu held several senior posts in the Government of India, where he worked as Joint Secretary (1962-67), Ministry of Agriculture and also was Ex-Officio Chairman of National Seeds Corporation when 7000 tonnes of Dwarf hybrid wheat seed was imported to initiate hybrid wheat revolution. He worked as Additional Secretary (1970-75) and Agricultural Census Commissioner in Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture and Secretary to Government, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Department of Rural Development (Jan. 1976 to Dec. 1977).

State Level:

In the composite Madras State he was acted as Sub-Collector, Karur, Tiruchirapally district in 1949, was under Secretary, Home Department, Madras (1950-52) was Deputy Secretary, Home Department, Madras from 1952 till Nov. 1953, (Rajaji was Chief Minister and Home Minister). When Andhra State was formed in Nov. 1953, he moved to Kurnool then a temporary Capital and continued as Deputy Secretary, Public Department, under the Chief Secretary. He took charge as Director of Agriculture in 1954, in Andhra State and continued as Director of Agriculture, A.P. State from Nov. 1956 till July 1958.

Further he held various posts in the State Government in Andhra State. After the formation of Andhra Pradesh (1956 Nov.) Naidu became the first Director of Agriculture. Served the State in various capacities as Collector, Visakhapatnam (1958-59 Dec.), Member Board of Revenue (Jan.68 to Dec. '70) having held the posts of Commissioner, Civil Supplies Commissioner, Panchayati Raj Commissioner, Ayacut Development etc. Also worked as Secretary, Agriculture (1959-61) and Industries (1961-62 Dec.) Departments in the State. Specialised in the fields of Agriculture, Rural Development, Animal Husbandry, Fisheries, Industries, Industrial Estates, Small, Medium and Large Scale Industries etc.,

As Agricultural Census Commissioner in the Government of India, Naidu was incharge of the Agricultural Census Operations which India undertook for the first time and submitted the report to the government of India and Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations, as part of the programme of World Agricultural Census in 1975. This report was very much appreciated both within the country and abroad.
Naidu widely travelled in foreign countries as a leader of several Indian delegations. In 1965, he led Government of India policy Team on Fertilisers to U.S.A., Japan and U.K. In 1972 he visited Rome as the Leader of the Indian Delegation to the 59th Session of Food and Agricultural Organisation. He also headed the Government of India Seed Review Team that visited, U.S.A., Europe Japan and Philippines to study the measures adopted in regard to production and distribution of improved seed in 1967. Again he led Indian Agricultural Experts Team to Libia in 1974 to advise that Government on Agricultural Development. Visited Iran as the leader of the Indian Delegation to review operation of fisheries agreements with Persian Gulf Fishing Company in 1974. Headed the Indian Delegation that visited Bankok in 1976 to establish a Regional Training Centre for Integrated Rural Development in India. Naidu was elected Chairman of the Technical Committee at the Session of the Thirteenth Regional Conference for Asia and the Far East of the Food and Agricultural Organisation held at Manila. In 1976, he was elected as Vice-Chairman of Inter-Governmental Meeting on Integrated Rural Development held in Tokyo in 1977.

Naidu has several publications on various subjects. Some of them are:

*Farmers of India* (Andhra Pradesh Farmers) was published by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research. *The Seed Review Team Report; An Introduction to the Agricultural Census Operations in India: All India Report on Agricultural Census* (on a complete enumeration basis). This has became a basic data for Policy schemes on Agriculture Development.

Naidu has also contributed articles on a variety of subjects like Agriculture and Rural Development to various newspapers in the country.

Retired as Chief Secretary, Government of Andhra Pradesh (Jan. '78 to July '79) on 1st July 1979. Was Advisor to Governor, Tamil Nadu (1980. Apl. to June), Was Chairman, Regional Recruitment Board State Bank of India, Hyderabad Circle 1981 to 1985, Was vice-President, Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, Hyderabad Kendra 1978 to 1983.4

---

1Interview with I.J. Naidu on 26.1.1998 at Secunderabad.
University Administrators:

In education field Raghupati Venkata Ratnam Naidu, Vice-Chancellor of Madras University (See Chapter-III for details) stands supreme and the next name was Sri Ram Govinda Rajula Naidu, Ex-Principal of Law College of Madras and an authority on Indian law. Up to 1956 he was the Director of Public Instruction in the Madras Presidency. He was the founder Vice-Chancellor of Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati.

K.V. Gopala Swamy M.A. Bar-at-Law, the son of Justice party leader and ex-Governor Madras, Sri K.V. Reddi Naidu was a permanent registrar of Andhra University. After his retirement he was served as principal of Law College until his death.

Among the Kapus apart from Sri Raghupati and Sri Govinda Rajula Naidu, Mangina Venkateswara Rao acted 2 terms as Vice-Chancellor for Agricultural University, Hyderabad, and retired in 1997. Among women, in the recent period we have Mrs. K. Rajyalakshmi who was appointed as founder Vice-Chancellor of Sri Padmavati Mahila University in 1986 which post she held till in 1990. She is the first women academician who became the Vice-Chancellor in Andhra Pradesh. V. Ramakrishnaiah was the Vice-Chancellor of Osmania University upto February, 1999. At present, Rokkam Radha Krishna was the Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University. Before he became the Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University, he was the Director of Centre for Economic and Social Studies (CESS) Hyderabad and also was the Member-Secretary Indian Council of Social Sciences Research, (ICSSR), New Delhi.

Mangina Venkateswara Rao:

Along with Nobel Laureate Dr. Norman E. Borlaug and Dr. Swaminathan there is another noted agriculture scientist from our own state who has played a key role in the Green Revolution, particularly wheat, which has made the Country self-sufficient in foodgrains. He later adroitly piloted the Technology Mission on Oilseed and increased its production. Seventy-one-year old Dr. Mangina Venkateswara Rao, the only farm scientist to have been honoured with the 'Padma Sri' by the Union Government in 1999 for his outstanding contribution towards the growth and modernisation of Indian Agriculture.5

Mangina Venkateswara Rao popularly known as M.V. Rao was born on June 21, 1928 in a Kapu farming family of Perupalem Village in East Godavari in Andhra Pradesh. Dr. M.V. Rao was a student of distinction and took his B.Sc. in 1948 from Andhra University with a first class and a University second rank. His M.Sc. degree in Botany in 1951 was from Agra University with a first class, University first rank and was also declared the best student in Agra College and was awarded the Lord Damodar Science Prize given to students who excelled in academics and sports - Dr. Rao was an avid sportsman and represented his school and college in football. He was awarded a Rockefeller Foundation scholarship in 1963 and obtained his Ph.D. degree in 1966 with joint majors in Plant breedings and Genetics and Plant Pathology from Purdue University, U.S.A.

Having held several key positions including Special Director-General of the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) effectively being in charge of all crops, he knows the pluses and minuses of the farm sector like the back of his hand. Dr. Rao in his more than three decade career with the ICAR was associated with the National Seed Policy, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, National Pulses Development, Indian Coffee Board and many others. Dr. Rao worked in Wheat Research for 30 years between 1952 and 1981, in India in various capacities. He headed the All India Wheat Improvement Project of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) from 1971 till 1981, and was one of the key contributors in ushering in, and the successful spread of the Green Revolution in India, particularly in wheat. The significant role played by him helped the country in increasing wheat production from 6 million tonnes in 1952 to over 58 million tonnes in 1982, thereby, transforming India from being a net importer of foodgrains to a nation self-sufficient in meeting the food needs of a burgeoning population. “Imagine the plight of the country if the Green Revolution did not happen- could we have afforded to import enough to feed our people?” M.V. asks and adds: “If there is political stability in the country it is because of the availability of foodgrains”.

As Deputy Director General (Crop Science) of ICAR between 1981 and 1986, he gave a new thrust and impetus, at the national level, to all researches pertaining to food, commercial and horticultural crops and plant protection. He was instrumental in initiating, guiding and coordinating horticultural research to improve the quality of life

6Ibid.
and laid foundations to establish 11 National Research Centres. Another project in which
he takes immense pride is being the first Director of the Technology Mission on Oilseeds
under the Rajiv Gandhi Government. From 1986 till 1989, he served as the first Director
of the Prime Minister’s Technology Mission on Oilseeds in the rank of Special Secretary
to the Government of India and as Special Director General of ICAR. He provided
leadership and direction, helping in the doubling of oilseed production and facilitating the
country to move towards self-sufficiency and the reduction in the annual foreign
exchange bill of US $300 million. Between 1989 and 1990 Dr. Rao worked as an
Agricultural Expert with the World Bank, and later served for six consecutive years from
1991 till 1997, as Vice-Chancellor of the Andhra Pradesh Agricultural University,
Hyderabad- India’s largest agricultural university with 14 campuses, 68 research stations
and over 1500 scientists and a staff of over 5000 people. M.V.Rao chucked a World Bank
job to accept the Vice-Chancellorship of Acharya Dr.N.G. Ranga Agricultural
University and held it for two successive terms from 1991 to 1997. The stint was
“refreshingly different” from his ICAR job as he had to confront a varsity which had
problems galore.\(^7\)

In addition to publishing a number of scientific papers, Dr. Rao guided 25 M.Sc.,
and Ph.D. candidates in Plant Breeding and Genetics at the Indian Agricultural Research
Institute, Delhi. He participated in a number of International Conferences, Symposia and
meetings. Dr. Rao was the Organising Secretary of the 3rd Congress of the Society for
the Advancement of Breeding Researches in Asia and Oceania (SABARO) and the 5th
International Wheat Genetic Symposium. He was on the Wheat Advisory Committee of
the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations. Dr. Rao served as the
Trustee of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Philippines, for 6 years and
also as an External Panel Expert of the International Maize and Wheat Improvement
Centre (CIMMYT), Mexico. He lead Indian Agricultural delegations to France, USSR,
Canada and Bangladesh. He served as a consultant to the World Bank, in Uganda (1990)
and in Ethiopia (1997), to help agricultural research and higher education.

Besides serving as the Chairman of a number of committees of the Government
of India and ICAR, Dr. Rao was President and Secretary of numerous scientific bodies in

\(^7\)Ibid.
India. He was also Chairman of the Committee on the New National Seed Policy of the Government of India.

For his contributions to agricultural development in India, Dr. Rao was awarded the prestigious Norman Borlaug Award, (1992) Linker’s Award, Peddireddy Thimma Reddy Award and Dr. P. Siva Reddy Foundation Award. In November 1997, the Nutrition Society of India presented the Dr. Srikantia Memorial Award for his contribution to Indian Agriculture.  

The eminent scientist, who believes in the motto “Rest is Rust”, still keeps himself extremely busy with several ongoing projects like Overseeing the Andhra Pradesh-Netherlands Bio Technology Project, Andhra Pradesh Hunger Project, World Bank-Aided National Agricultural Technology Project for Coastal Eco-system etc. And is also reviewing the functioning of ICAR research centres.  

**Performing Arts:**

**Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu 1893-1964:**

Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu was born in 1893 at Vijayanagaram in a Telaga family. As a renowned violenist in the field of Karnataka Music, he had his initiation into music at the hands of his brother Krishnaiah Naidu. He became the principal of the Vizianagaram Music College in 1929 and shone as a unique soloist. Awarded the title ‘Sangita Kala Nidhi’ in 1941 by the Madras Music Academy and ‘Sangita Ratna Kara’ in 1946 by the Maharaja of Mysore. He received the National Award in 1953 and the title of Padma Sri in 1959.

Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu was not only a great violenist known, loved and respected for the impeccable virtuosity of his style but also a vital link with a great tradition. He had delighted thousands of listeners with his skill and scholarship. The greatness in him was that he could make any one sit cross-legged and listen for hours to the melodies that the violin in his hands poured forth. What was unique about Dwaram

---

8Interview with M.V. Rao at Secunderabad, 26.1.98.


was that he trained himself to be a soloist and not as an accompanist. He thus choose a difficult field of musical expression. He performed scores of such solo concerts and won the applause of one and all. His very technique was such as to bring out the ravishing possibilities of his instrument, and people admired such technique as the *Dwaram Vari Bani*. He could produce lovely notes on his instrument. There are many ragas and kirtanas to cite as his masterpieces. He could draw tears from his listeners in rendering a song like *Ksheera Sagara Sayana* in Deva Gandhari. Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu enthralled the audiences with his superb performance on violin and earned an All India fame. He was the recipient of 'Kala prapoorna' from the Andhra University. P. Shiv Shankar, Former Central Minister, is married to the niece of the late Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu of Machilipatnam.

The other famous violonists from Kapus are Dwaram Manga Tayaru and Dwaram Durga Prasada Rao.

**Yella Venkateswara Rao:**

Of the percussion instruments mridangam occupies a foremost place. It is otherwise known as Maddela (drum) in Telugu. Drum playing is a well accomplished art in India, and Andhra Pradesh is second to none.

Yella Venkateswara Rao was born in a Telaga family of Music to Sri Rama Murty (student of Dwaram) and Mahalaxmi. Started kacheris at the age of 7 and worked with great singers like Mangalampalli Bala Murali Krishna, Chilakalapudi Venkateswara Sarma, Appaya Setti etc. He inherited the Mridangam as a well deserved patrimony. He was adopted by his uncle Somanna. The adopted father Somanna was a humble artiste. Somanna believed that he was the disciple of the world, while Venkateswara Rao seem to believe that he is a disciple of Mridangam. That represents the difference in the outlook of the father and the son but that enabled Venkateswara Rao to concentrate all

---


his energy on the instrument. His father Somanna was a disciple of Kolanka Venkata Raju.

Venkateswara Rao is more an artistic than a mere professional. Dwaram Venkataswamy Naidu, the Vizard of violin once visited the Yella family when Venkateswara Rao was very young. Somanna and others were, naturally behaved with fear born out of great respect for the violin mestro. Venkateswara Rao suddenly brought a Mridangam from nowhere and requested Naidu to allow him accompany him and pay him for so accompanying. The elders were scared but Naidu met the challenge with a smile and played violin as Venkateswara Rao accompanied on the Mridangam. Dwaram Venkataswamy Naidu then gave him a small monetary present accompanying it with his blessing.

To Venkateswara Rao, Mridangam is an instrument of daily experimentation both to produce variagated patterns of Laya and Sruti. He handles a number of Mridangams simultaneously to give the effects of an assemble of his imagination. Sure one day he would have found out an unheard of harmony in his Mridangam’s and that he would prize more.  

He joined All India Radio with the help of Bala Guru Murthi. His greatness lies in bringing Mridangam as sole instrument in place of side instrument. He have his solo performances on Mridangam from All India Radio for the first time and continued to perform throughout the world. He stood first in All India Radio Music Competition in 1961 and received ‘Golden Lute’ from Sarvepalle Radha Krishnan, the then President of India.

Andhra Pradesh has produced one such veteran artist in Yella Venkateswara Rao also called Yella for short. He accompanied numerous musicians with his Mridangam. He played solo intermittantly. He proclaimed his creative genius by playing simultaneously on five, seven and nine Mridangas. He bagged the Hosha Banca award.


of the Asian Broad Casting Union at Jakarta for his innovative rhythmic extravaganza entitled *Siva Tandavam*.  

His latest musical feat, Mridanga Mahayajna, was held under the auspices of the Department of Cultural Affairs, Government of Andhra Pradesh on 16th and 17th August, 1981 at the Sringeri Sankara Math (Vidyanagar, Hyderabad). He played Mridangam non-stop for 36 hours starting from 6 am on 16th August 1981. The Yajna reached the climax when he played the much acclaimed Siva Tandavam at mid-night on the 17th August 1981. Musical luminaries such as Mangalampalli Bala Murali Krishna, Emani Sankara Sastry, Nookala China Satyanarayana and Sri Rangam Gopala Ratnam gave musical recitals to Yella's accompaniment in the Yagna. Brahmasri Gollapudi Kutumbavadhani, a vedic scholar, recited the vedas and read the benediction at the concluding session. Yella reproduced the shanti mantra on his own Mridangam.

Playing Mridangam non-stop for 36 hours is a trying, arduous, unique and remarkable feat requiring uncommon skill and endurance. He sat through the yajna as if in a trance, as his mind was filled with devotional spirit. The Mridangam Maha Yajna was witnessed by thousands of spectators with rapt attention. The Chief Minister, the Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh, the Minister for Cultural Affairs and several others showered on him profuse encomiums. Yella Venkateswara Rao could become a superb Mridanga player even though he is young and his feats made him a much sought after artist.

He was very close to N.T. Rama Rao the then Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh and persuaded N.T. Rama Rao to start courses in Fine Arts in Potti Sri Ramulu University (then known as Telugu University) and worked to formulate syllabus for those courses. He worked as Dean at the University for the School of Fine Arts. He persuaded, the then Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, and K.S. Sarma, Director, Navodaya Schools, to introduce Music Teacher posts in all the Navodaya Schools in the country.

---


Venkateswara Rao got more than 30 titles like ‘Mridanga Sarva Bhauma’, ‘Mridanga Samrat’, ‘Mridanga Shiromani’, etc. He worked as Asthana artist of Tirumala Tirupati Devastanam and Yadagirigutta temples. He is also working on relief to mentally handicapped through music.21

Achanta Venkata Ratnam Naidu

An artiste who gave the true values and contribution to Telugu social and mythological drama around India and abroad was Achanta Venkata Ratnam Naidu. Born in a small Telaga business family at Kondapally adjacent to river Krishna a place well known for handicrafts and natural beauty and a historical place well known in Andhra Pradesh in Krishna District on May 28th in 1935. His father Sri Achanta Venkateswarlu Naidu is very happy because he was blessed by his first son in his family and later two brothers followed the eldest. Achanta Venkata Ratnam Naidu has an excellent understanding in darma, music and song from his school days. Passed the examination of Secondary School in 1952 Hindu College High School at Guntur and in 1951 at the level of school drama competition he won the first prize as best actor ‘Jeevana Jwala’ playlet for his character ‘Tata’ and the play was written by late Sri Narla Venkateswara Rao, a well-known journalist and editor, Andhra Prabha daily. This seventeen years young boy’s life got a wonderful turn and he started to act in ‘Adadi’, ‘Anna Chellelu’ and ‘Natakam’ etc. the well-known Telugu social plays between 1950 and 1970. A stage drama ‘Aparadhi’ conducted by Andhra Nataka Kala Parishad, Hyderabad and he was instantly recognised by the artists and critics immensely and cordially.

The real mythological drama wave started in his young brain from 1956 onwards and his life got a turn in ‘Bala Nagamma’, ‘Rongoon Rowdi’, ‘Sati Sakkubai’, ‘Tula bharam’ and ‘Bobbili’, in which he plays very different roles but people started to think

21Ibid.
the young artist Venkata Ratnam Naidu. Mr. Naidu started ‘Nataraja Kala Mandali’ in 1957 at Guntur and Sri Hulakki Bhaskara Rao taught him how to render poems and this is a real turn in this artist’s life. His fast appreciation is ‘Duryodhana’ in Kurukshetram and for his excellence, he made a monument, unforgettable and remarkable. His action, movement, his dialogue rendering of verse with a rytham, style and the very particular pattern of laugh, all brought him a name and fame for playing He got thoroughly identified with Duryodhana. Not only this, he was ‘Gayudu’ in ‘Gayopakhyanam’, ‘Viswamitrudu’ in ‘Harischandra’ and he acted with all the stage stalwarts and ace artists. For example, Eela Pata Raghuramaiah, Muppavarapu Bhima Rao, Pelluri Seshagiri Rao, Addanki Sri Rama Murthy, P. Saibabu, Pulipati Venkateswarlu etc. He participated with very famous lady artists Smt. Purnima, Abburi Kamala and T. Kanakam etc. He participated with a number of stage artists and he politely remembers all of them with a high regard and gratitude. He is very popular as ‘Jarasandhu’ in ‘Sri Krishna-Jarasandha’.

All India Tour:

Sri Madasu Narasimha Rao, founder and producer of ‘Sri Shanmukha Natya Mandali’ at Tanuku started in 1970 and late P.V. Bhadram as the director of ‘Tulasi Jalandhara’, an immense success in Achanta life as ‘Jalandharudu’ and he reached great hights on mythological stage.

Natya Mandali gave their very dignified performances at various places in India, like Madras, Bellary, Bangalore, Jamshedpur, Kharagpur and even at Delhi. wherever he performed ‘Jalandharudu’ he got affections, garlands, cheers, felicitations.

In the Islands of Mauritius, he performed Duryodhana in 1990 December 10th to 13th in many places and the Telugu auditorium cheered him and one of the audience was Padma Sri Akkineni Nageswara Rao who hugged him and garlanded him, amidst thousands of Telugu audiences. What more is needed to an artist than this?

He acted in several cinemas, Boomikosam, Kolleti Kapuram, Brathuke Voka Panduga, Pandanti Jeevitham, Mohana Ragam, Natana and Sri Datta Darsanam. He performed very different roles with ease and dignity.

L.P. Record and Cassette Released: Duryodhana, Mayasabha and Tulasi jalandhara has been released by a very prestigious organisation AVM, from Madras.
He was felicitated by several organisations. On 20th Dec. 1976, Theatre artists convention, Hyderabad with Nataratna Title on 17th Aug. 1977, Kanakabhishekam conducted by Turlapati Kutumba Rao and Ex-Minister, Ch. Devananda Rao.

English Daily, The Hindu appreciated him as ‘Sri Achanta Venkataratnam who is now familiar to theatre audience throughout the state did the role of Jalandhra and performed with distinction’. On 31st May, 1981 again The Hindu: Appreciated him as ‘Mythological roles are the sheet anchor of Achanta Venkataratnam Naidu’s reputation first class Telugu Actor’. For his credits, he is invited U.S.A to give his greatest performance in 1992 commencing from July 3rd to July 12th. A familiar artist almost has acted as Duryodhana in countless places and he has given a very prestigious performances of various characters, he loves acting and he lives for acting. All this shows the drama, song, music and art are in his blood and let us pray lord Nataraja to give him strength, health, wealth and prosperity to enact the prestigious Telugu drama not only in India but all the central places of the world where Telugu people are living. Till 26.1.98 he received 11,000 felicitations from various spheres. 22

Eelapati Raghuramaiah:

Eelapati Raghuramaiah was born in 1900 in a Telaga family. A versatile artist who had acted male and female characters on the stage, first acting in ‘Prudhviputra’ in 1933. He had acted in about 100 films before his death in 1975. He was awarded Padma Sri by Central Government in 1975. He was known popularly as Eelapati Raghuramaiah. 23

Cinema can have varied influences on the society. Irrespective of class, caste and religion or social and political differences all people view cinemas. What is it that mesmerizes all and sundry in cinema? What are its roots? What are the historical processes that influenced the evolution of Telugu cinema? The contribution of different people particularly the Kapu caste people to the film industry in the then Madras presidency and particularly to the Andhra Pradesh at present are dealt with here. The

---


differential impact of cinema in the society and also the varied response of different social classes to it are the other interesting questions that are addressed in this.

**Raghupati Venkaiah 1869-1941:**

While Phalke is called as the father of Indian Cinema, Raghupati Venkaiah is called as the father of Telugu cinema. He was no other than the brother of the famous Brahma Samajist and social reformer Raghupati Venkata Ratnam Naidu. It is the best example of the relation between social reform and cultural field. In recognition of his efforts in establishing the entertainment industry, the cinema, with all its facades in our country, the Andhra Pradesh Government has instituted Raghupati Venkaiah Award in 1981 to be awarded every year to a person whose contribution is reckoned with the development of film industry.\(^\text{24}\)

The early film exhibitor based in South India was Raghupati Venkaiah Naidu, a native of Machilipatnam born in a Kapu family. Venkaiah moved to Madras in 1896 to work as a photographer. Within ten years he established himself as one of the city's leading photographers and along with his brothers, he ran a photograph studio on the prestigious North-East end of Mount Road, in the elite and European shopping district of Madras. To signify their standing and success, the letter head of the R. Venkaiah brothers boasted of patronage from 'the Governor and the leading Rajah of the Presidency'.\(^\text{25}\)

The father of Telugu cinema R. Venkaiah was a film personality even before Phalke. Venkaiah expanded his business from studio photography to moving pictures. He organised shows in tent in Esplanade in the heart of Madras city in 1909 and in a theatre Gaiety in 1914 in Madras.\(^\text{26}\)

Raghupati Venkaiah the first exhibitor of the South imported 'Crono-Megaphone', the first projector equipped to re-produce 'sound' by disk system and exhibited short


\(^\text{25}\) Judicial G.O. No.1297, 18 May, 1916. (Tamil Nadu Archives)

\(^\text{26}\) Bommakanti Subba Rao, "Illustrious History of Telugu Film Industry" in Amarajeevi Potti Sreeramulu 90th Jayanthi Souvenir, not dated, Madras, p.64., also see C.B. Devraj, *Indian Talkies Era, Silver Jubilee, 1957, Madras, p.11.*
reels at Esplanade grounds Madras during 1910. A gramophone record could be played as the film was screened. He travelled with it all over South India, Ceylon, Burma and other places. He returned to India in 1911 and constructed 'Gaiety Theatre', a permanent cinema hall in Madras in 1914. Immediately he constructed 'Star of the East film Studios' known as 'Glass Studio' and it was managed by his son, R. Prakash, a London trained film technician. Thus, R. Venkaiah was the first South Indian exhibitor and studio owner. He constructed 'Crown-Talkie' on Mount Road and also the 'Globe Theatre' now called 'Roxy' in Purasawalkam.

Early touring exhibitors in Madras offered within each film show a wide variety of appeals capable of accommodating a range of audiences interest and engagement. Both R. Venkaiah and Vincent another exhibitor from Madras, offered topical features which were of special interest for British audiences in the far flung corners of the empire. For example during the second half of 1910 Venkaiah organised his show around a series of films documenting the funeral of 'Edward-VII', the 'Accession proclamation procession' and the 'Coronation of George-V' only a few months after the events. In addition to targeting British audiences, these two exhibitors also used other marketing strategies which focussed on the distinct, yet overlapping social categories of christians, women, children and soldiers. By offering discount rates for certain groups, special film screenings and separate seating, exhibitors consciously reached out to certain audience segments so as to create a new market, for film shows. Another targeted audience segment was which figured prominently in the early Madras exhibitors marketing strategies was that of Indian women. By 1910 Venkaiah routinely advertised his cinema company as providing special accommodation for native ladies, which consisted of a screened off area with a separate entrance. The next year, he went further in offering a 'Ladies only' show at 6.00 pm under the patronage of the Indian Ladies Club of Madras, featuring, a programme of films especially selected for women audiences.

30 Special accommodation for Indian Women was a Theatre convention which pre-dated cinema and was a strategy used by film exhibitors in India from the outset, Ibid., p.171.
The early film exhibitors cultivated women audiences, in part, as a means to extend the market for their entertainment especially since Indian women film-goers either attended film shows in groups or were accompanied by men or brought along their families. In this way, the appeal to Indian women was, perhaps, part of a more general effort to encourage broader attendance from amongst the wealthy Indian classes.

The early touring film exhibitors also recognised British soldiers as an important market for their entertainment. During the period, most exhibitors offered half-price tickets to soldiers in uniform for all seating classes except the least expensive. This marketing ploy, however, would not have significantly cut into the exhibitors revenue since British soldiers in Madras were only a small percentage of the larger European Community for whom early cinema shows primarily catered.\(^{31}\)

This highclass orientation also informed the efforts made to accommodate Indians at the early touring film shows in Madras. Even though Europeans figured most prominently as preferred audiences, film exhibitors catered to select Indian audiences consisting mostly of those from the elite, english educated and the wealthy classes who were the most inclined toward 'Western culture'. The appeal to these Indian classes is reflected in the efforts to publicise film shows in the local press whose readership was confined to a small group of educated elite. In addition to English Newspapers of Madras, film exhibitors also placed advertisements in Tamil and Telugu News papers of the city from as early as 1911.

From the mid 1910’s the film exhibitors on Mount Road marketed high-class film adaptations of historical, literary and dramatic classics to their predominantly elite and educated audiences. In addition to their European clients, exhibitors targeted the Indian students from the nearby university and colleges.\(^{32}\) The two most important institutions of higher education in South India, Presidency College and the University of Madras, attracted thousands of Indian students from all over the presidency.

\(^{31}\) South Indian Studies, Ibid., p.172.

\(^{32}\) Ibid., p.193.
In Madras silent film serials were cited as the first film genre to inspire a regular cinema-going habit amongst Indian audiences. The Madras exhibitors considered the serials to be the film genre most suited for Indian audiences, especially lower class and illiterate Indians for whom multi-reel dramas and itenary adaptations were too difficult to follow. Since it was possible to follow silent film serials without having to read the inter-titles, exhibitors used serials more than any other film genre to cultivate new Indian audiences beyond the educated, elite classes. During the late 1910’s when Madras exhibitors extended cinema to include a majority of Indian audiences, silent film serials provided the first genre which could be specifically marketed to the widest possible Indian audiences.

Since our films are largely based on traditions, folklore and epics, usually all is well at the end. Even in most modern films, since modernity has not become a way of life, forms of folklore hangover still persist. After all, our present day cinemas are culture brought forwards only. It is interesting to know what type of culture the early Telugu films reflected? What is the ideology propagated by them? What are the values depicted in the early Telugu Cinema? The early Telugu cinemas were the cultural representation of people. All the themes in epics, historical stories and social stories represent the culture of the world.

The 1920’s in the history of Andhra are called roaring twenties. This period witnessed a galaxy of political and cultural personalities. Unnava Lakshmi Narayana, Gudipati Venkatachalam, G.Jashuva, Tripuraneni Ramaswamy Choudhari, Sripada Subramanya Sastry, M. Krishna Murthy, Tapi Dharma Rao and a host of other romantic poets belonged to this period. The social reform activities were already wide spread in Andhra.

In 1921 R. Venkaiah established a touring cinema and started showing silent pictures all over the country. Inspired by this, people like Pottina Srinivasa Rao of Vijayawada, P.V. Das of Machilipatnam, G. K. Mangaraju of Vizag, C. Pullaiah of Kakinada, Sri Gopala Rao of Bellary, Nidamarthi Suraiah of Rajahmundry and others took it as a business and encouraged cinema as mass entertainment.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{33}Ibid., p.195.

\textsuperscript{34}Mikkilineni, Op.Cit., p.15.
In 1921, ‘Bhishma Pratigna’ (the Vow of Bhishma) was the first movie produced by Raghupati Venkaiah and his son Prakash in Madras. This was the first Telugu feature film. Prakash was hero and also director of it. Thus he was the first Andhra director hero and founder of a cini lab.

R. Prakash 1902-1956:

To develop the film industry, Raghupati Venkaiah sent his son R.S. Prakash to England for training. After he returned to India he constructed a studio ‘Star of East Films’ in Madras and produced silent films like ‘Bheeshma Pratigna’, ‘Matsyavataramu’, ‘Gagendra Moksham’, ‘Nandanar’ etc. The studio, which was located behind what is now ‘Roxy’ Theatre, was modern by the then prevailing standards. Beginning with ‘Bhishma Pratigna’ (1921), Prakash made a number of movies which were screened all over the country, with title cards in Telugu, Tamil, Hindi and Gujarati. Though the company lasted for not more than four years, it played a crucial role in the growth of cinema in this part of the country. Many pioneers of South Indian Cinema such as Y.V. Rao and C. Pullaiah were trained in this company.35

In 1925 Prakash founded the ‘Guaranteed Pictures Corporation’. He along with A. Narayana of Tamil films founded ‘The General Film Corporation’ and established a film laboratory called ‘Gostan and Company’ in 1930.36

After the emergence of talkies he not only produced many pictures in ‘Sound City Studio’, but also directed some people. The famous Telugu directors like C. Pullaiah and Y.V. Rao were trained by R. Prakash. He was the first Telugu man to wield megaphone in 1921, had to wait till 1940 to make his first talkie. He made ‘Chandrika’ a costume drama dealing with the story of an ambitious and schooling women’s attempts and success in capturing the throne. Kannamba was in the lead and this picture met with the expected success. Prakash followed this with two short features to be exhibited in a single showing. ‘Barristar Parvateesam’ was an insipid screen adaptation of a hilarious comic novel of the same name written by tasteful humorist Mokkapati Narasimha Sastry.

G. Varalakshmi a versatile artist of the later years was in the lead. Prakash's second short feature was ‘Bondampelli’ (Bondam's Wedding) a cheap slap stick.  

We learn that at least 73 films were made in Madras during the silent era. The Vishnu Leela (ways of Vishnu) which R. Prakash made in 1932, was the last silent film produced in Madras. Later he freelanced and made ‘Krishna Arjuna’(1935) in Calcutta. His film ‘Anandhai Penn’(1938) is remembered for the sequences containing nationalist propaganda. But most of his works were mythologicals and his favourite locale was Gingee Fort near Madras. His last completed film was Moonrupengal (Three Girls,1956) When he died in 1956, he was in the midst of directing a Telugu film the Deva Sundari (Celestical Beauty) which was released in 1960.

Prakash saw a bright future for cinema in this country. He made a number of short films. He also had plans to run a regular news reel service. To begin with, he covered some important happenings in the city and made shots like The Inauguration of the Royal Bath. He assisted in the film titled The Calechist of Killarney for T.G. Duffy, an Irish missionary, which was shot in a village near Tiruvannamalai. The film was exhibited widely in England, in India there were protests against its screening. He made a film for the Government on the prevention of Cholera.

In 1935, B.V. Ramanadhan, uncle of S.V. Ranga Rao, the famous character actor of 60's and 70s (both are Kapus) on the name of Bharat Lakshmi Films, made a ‘Sati Sakkubai’ with Dasari Koti Ratnam and T. Chalapati Rao in Calcutta.

During 1930's and 1940's major literary stalwarts worked for film industry. Gudipati Venkatachalam, Kosaraju Raghavaiah are famous in this regard. Among them the latter was a Kapu. 1935 saw two leading ladies of Telugu stage, Pasupuleti Kannamba and Dasari Koti Ratnam (Kapus) being introduced to the film world, while Kannamba had a longer innings, Koti Ratnam's career as a cine artist was brief albeit

---

bright and significant. She was the first female film producer who had acted and produced ‘Anasuya’ in Aurora studios, Calcutta, directed by Ahim Choudary in 1935. She had organised Dramatic troops and toured all over India and brought great name to the stage.

The Directors of the early period had their origins in such areas which are in line with social reform activity. For example Raghupati Venkaiah from Machilipatnam, C. Pullaiah from Kakinada, P. Pullaiah from Nellore and many others entered the film industry. Further all these were from upper castes, already in the mainstream of economic and educational development.

They believed in idealistic approach and they also believed that cinema can be a very great platform for culture. They were under the impression that cinema can enlighten people and it can be a great force in that direction. Social reform was the objective of the cinema and as such dialogues have the flavour of reformation zeal. Tapi Dharma Rao Naidu’s pen has shown a new taste and also lyrics. In 1939 Tapi Dharma Rao Naidu provided lyrics to Rytu Bidda (A peasant) cinema. Dialogues in ‘Malapilla’ are very scathing on social matters and critical concerning religion. Extreme devotion is expressed towards patriotism. Worship of Gandhiji is the underlying phenomenon in dialogues.

In 1941 Gudavalli Rama Brahman made a movie on ‘Apavadu’ (Slander). Story, dialogues and songs for this film were written by Tapi Dharma Rao Naidu. In the same year the Documentary Films Ltd., Madras made one documentary film on Mahatma Gandhi with the same title. For it, commentary was written by Andhra Visaradha Tapi Dharma Rao Naidu.

As a whole, the film makers up to 1950 were having ideological commitment. But later films are left with patriarchy and pseudo oppressive ideas. The audiences up to 1946

---

43Interview with C.S.Rao, Film Director and son of Veteran Director Late C. Pullaiah on 27th May, 1995, at Madras.
44Screen adaptation of ‘Mala Pilla’ cinema was done by Tapi Dharma Rao Naidu in 1938.
were mainly from middle classes. After 1946 and by 1950 working class people formed the bulk of audience.

**Tapi Chankya:**

Chankya was the son of Tapi Dharma Rao having been trained as wireless technician, he joined Sobhanachala Studios, Madras, as an Assistant in sound department. Being interested in dramatic art he directed a number of collegiate competitive dramas and won first place many a time. Later he shifted himself to film direction and joined as assistant to B.A. Subba Rao, one of the reputed directors. He had become a fulfledged director and directed a number of hit pictures in Telugu, Tamil and Hindi, ‘Rojulu Marayi’ was his super hit in 1955.45

The account of cinema enriched by the stalwarts belonging to Kapu community would be incomplete without a mention of the artists, like Dr. Govinda Rajulu Subba Rao, C.S.R. Anjaneyulu, Ch. Narayana Rao, Chittoor V. Nagaiah, S.V. Ranga Rao etc., who were great thespians. They enthralled the audiences for a long time with their skill of acting.46 Among the Kapus the character actors are S.V. Ranga Rao, R. Nageswara Rao, from Machilipatnam, Rajanala from Ongole, K. Satyanarayana from Machilipatnam, Janardhana Rao, Srihari etc. From comedians we have Allu Rama Lingaiah.

**S.V. Ranga Rao:**

His full name was Sringavaram Venkat Ranga Rao. He was born in Machilipatnam in Krishna district in a Kapu family. B. Venkata Rama Naidu a great nationalist leader from west Godavari district was the uncle and father-in-law of S.V. Ranga Rao. He was popularly known as S.V. Ranga Rao. He made his screen debut in the film ‘Varudhini’ in 1946. He dominated the field of character acting on the South Indian screen and enriched many of Tamil and Telugu films with his consummate historinic talent. Greater glory came to him when he won the Best Actor Award from the Afro-Asian Film Festival held in 1963 at Djakarta for his dynamic portrayal as ‘Keechaka’ in Telugu mythological Rajayam picture’s ‘Nartanasala’ which had earlier

---


won the silver medal from President of India. He acted in a number of pictures and particular mention should be made to ‘Shavukar’, ‘Patala Bhairavi’, ‘Missamma’, ‘Mayabazar’, ‘Bangaru Papa’, and ‘Pandanti Kapuram’ of Vijaya Productions and Vahini Pictures. S.V. Ranga Rao’s contribution to the film industry was no mean and he received accolades. S.V. Ranga Rao was not only an actor but also a producer and director. He directed a movie ‘Bandhavyalu’ on S.V.R. Films (both as producer and director) which was selected as a best film in 1968.

Under the dynamic leadership of Dr. K. Raja Rao, ‘Praja Natya Mandali’ (which was formed in 1943 by the communist party as its cultural wing) pioneered a revolutionary cultural movement to educate the masses. Personalities of the present day Telugu film industry like Tatineni Prakash Rao, V. Madhusudhan Rao, T. Chalapati Rao, Allu Rama Lingaiah, Mikkilineni, Vallam Narasimha Rao, Jamuna were closely connected with the activities of the Praja Natya Mandali.

Allu Rama Lingaiah was another notable film personality from Kapu caste. He started his film career in 1953 in ‘Puttillu’. From the beginning he was a congress sympathiser and he participated in 1942 Quit India Movement and went to jail. Later he became a Communist sympathiser and before 1952 he acted in the Praja Natya Mandali plays and also in their movies also. So far he was acted in more than 800 films. He was famous in his comedy roles. In most of his movies he has acted as villain with comedian character. At present his son Allu Aravind is famous producer and son-in-law, Chiranjeevi is a Megastar in the Telugu cine field.

Dasari Narayana Rao:

He was born in June 1947 in a middle class Kapu family of Palakollu village in West Godavari district. He started his stage acting from his 9th year onwards. In the

---

50 N. Venkateswarlu, “Praja Natya Mandali Yesterday and Today”, in Dr. V. Krishna Rao (ed.) Communism in Andhra Pradesh (Rise and Decline), Hyderabad, 1989. p.120.
beginning he has acted in ‘Tappu Nade’ a small play. By his 11th year he not only wrote a play called ‘Nenu Naa School’ but also acted in this play as a school teacher and won the prizes. By his 14th year, he enlarged the above play for 40 minutes and won the district level prize for his best writer, best play and best actor awards. In 1959 he participated in the state level competitions and was selected for the best actor award and won the gold medal from the Governor of Andhra Pradesh.

From his childhood onwards Dasari has taken up his social service activities. During the 1962 China war he along with 50 other students, toured West Godavari district and collected donations and gave to the National Protection Council. For his services he received an award titled Praja Seva Vitharana from the West Godavari District Collector.

Due to financial problems, he discontinued his studies and joined in H.A.L, Hyderabad. But he continued his acting and won number of prizes for his best writer, best acting and his best direction.

In 1973 Dasari Narayana Rao, by then a writer and a stage director came out with his maiden film ‘Thata-Manavadu’ and drew the attention of the film world in as much as he had offered a low budget production with high box office returns. He entered the cine field without any god fathers and experimented successfully with new cast in movies like ‘Swargam-Narakam’ in 1975. Dasari has not looked back since then. Within a short span of 8 years he has completed over 60 films in more than one language. He has experimented in many ways. He brought new faces as well as very popular starts. He has taken credit for the story, screen play, dialogues and of late for lyrics too, apart from the direction. Recently he has taken to production also. He had acted in some of his own and other movies also. ‘Megha Sandesam’ has won an award at the National level.

Dasari Narayana Rao, like Satyajit Ray belongs to the Neo-type, unconventional and revolutionary class. In the midst of a cry for purposeful cinema, consensus cinema and entertainment cinema, he makes a combination of all these through a complete

---


deviation from all of them. His innovative approach is like that of Mrinal Sen, Paranjpaye, Adoori Gopala Krishna and Balachander whose names are to be reckoned within Indian Cinema. Some times he focuses on the central men the so-called hero, and very often on people around him. Flamboyant music, innovative linguistics not controlled by limitations and dialogues growing wings and unconventional endings with new vistas are his characteristics. While taking a Sanskrit film on Adisankara, the famous producer-director G.V.Iyer produced a film on a subject which people never read. In that film the central message is god is faith and religion is experience. The same thing can be said of Dasari’s films - he is to be believed to give an experience through films, which are only to be experienced to be believed. ‘Oka Voomi Katha’, ‘Premabhishekam’, ‘O Manishi Tirigichudu’, etc., represent new stirring in the Telugu cinema ocean.55

Dasari’s ‘O Manishi Tirigichudu’ which opposes bonded labour, ‘Manushulantha Okkate’, where he talk of farmers and their issues, ‘Bobbili Puli’, encouraging people to rise against atrocities, ‘Oreyi Rickshaw’, advocating freedom of the oppressed, and then ‘Oseyi Ramulamma’, which depicts the revolt of a suppressed and exploited dalit woman. For it’s success Deccan Chronicle makes a comment: “The film Oseyi Ramulamma is a super hit breaking all previous records in the Telugu film industry”.56

Dasari directed so far more than 131 films. Most of his assistants like Kodi Rama Krishna, Davala Satyam, R. Narayana Murthy, Mutyala Subbaiah, Relangi Narasimha Rao, Ravi Raja Pinsetti etc. are successful directors today.

Although Dasari is not an actor he has as many fans’ associations as the major heroes.57 Dasari’s fans associations were far ahead of others in that they began to perform a wide range of activities in addition to watching their star’s films on the first day.58 Dasari, Krishna and producer T. Subba Rami Reddy and Chiranjeevi championed their fans activities towards social service. These four people made their fans

---

57Estimated to be 1100.
associations perform activities such as poor feeding, distribution of clothes to the poor, providing assistance to the sick and the aged etc.\textsuperscript{59}

Known for his speed in work and ability in several fields of movie making like direction, action, script, production etc. Dasari was not only a film person, but also experimented in journalism, Udayam (daily), Sivaranjani (Cine Magazine) were run by him. At present he is running Bobbilipuli (Telugu weekly), and Megha Sandesam (Cine Magazine).

For his services he was given Kala Prapurna, Honorary Doctorate by Andhra University. Recently he was awarded the N.T Rama Rao Memorial Swarna Kankanam by Vamsi Arts Theatre International Association, Hyderabad.\textsuperscript{60} Recently he was given Nandi award for his best direction. He is the first Telugu Director to be included in the 'Guinness Book of World Records' for his direction of more than 100 films.\textsuperscript{61}

Chiranjeevi:

Among the cini actors who come from kapu community, the name of Chiranjeevi figures high. The most popular actor today is Chiranjeevi. His original name was Konidela Siva Shankar Vara Prasad. His rise to prominence corresponds roughly with the exit of N.T. Rama Rao\textsuperscript{62} from the film industry in 1982-83 (although N.T.R. continued to make films sporadically over the next decade) and the year also saw the release of 'Khaidi' (A Kodanda Ram Reddy, 1983) a turning point in Chiranjeevi’s career as the most popular star which also saw a vast increase in his fan following.

---

\textsuperscript{59}Ibid., p.3.

\textsuperscript{60}Andhra Prabha, 19 January, 1999, p.3.


\textsuperscript{62}Tamil film makers like C.N. Annadurai and M. Karunanidhi made use of Cinema as a vehicle for their political ideology and M.G.R. was projected as a people’s hero. These three eventually became Chief Minister’s of Tamil Nadu, while a section of the Tamil Cinema had been wedded to a particular political party. The Telugu Cinema was never a party oriented culture. However in 1982, came the changing tide. N.T.R. at the approach of his 60th birth day decided to plunge into politics and founded Telugu Desam Party (TDP). His calculated tour of the districts drawing multitude of crowds landed him as the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. Consequently, the Telugu cine industry, also got divided into two groups, one supporting N.T.R. and others are not, see for details K.N.T. Sastry, Op.Cit., p.36.
Chiranjeevi whose first film was ‘Pranam Kharedu’ (K.Vasu, 1978) has acted over 132 films including three in Hindi by June, 1999. His films have been dubbed into Hindi, Tamil, Russian and English. He has been reputedly the highest paid star in India.

On screen, Chiranjeevi introduced a new form of dance with quick vigorous, choreographed steps, which stood in stark contrast to the more leisurely style of his predecessors. He did his own stunts, often in a far more spectacular fashion than the norm in the early 80’s of Telugu films. In this regard we may quote K.N.T. Sastry, “Telugu cinema’s notable characteristic is fan clubs. Popular artists have their own fan clubs and rivalries between them is the order of the day. Even new comers like Chiranjeevi and Suman have their own fan clubs”.63 Fans often mention his portrayal of the wronged and angry fugitive fighting feudal oppression in ‘Khaidi’ as his most important early hit.64

Every major hero and heroine has Fans Associations, with numbers that roughly correspond to their popularity. 3000 Fans Associations with a membership varying between 10 to 500 members, spread across all the three regions that comprise A.P. are devoted to Chiranjeevi, the most popular Telugu movie star today.65 Undoubtedly, the most popular star after N.T.R., Chiranjeevi is the centre of what is perhaps the largest fan movement in the history of Telugu cinema. Most of his films are referred to as mass-films by film makers and critics, while it is against these (not just his but other stars as well) mass-films that the upper caste, middle class public has sought to mobilise public opinion for over a decade now. However, Chiranjeevi has also featured in some-class films which have been lauded by film critics.66

65 It has been argued that Fan’s Associations were created by film industry following their successful promotion of M.G. R. in Tamil Nadu. Motivated by profit the industry encouraged and founded Fans Associations of both N.T.R. and A.N.R. in the hope that fans would provide free publicity to the actors and their projects. The production companies and studios that actively manufactured the star system in the 1950s and 1960s, therefore created Fans’ Association as a logical extension of that activity. Ibid.67.
Chiranjeevi's fans associations spread across all the three regions of Andhra Pradesh. A majority of fans associations are situated in the urban areas of Coastal Andhra Pradesh.  

M.S.S. Pandian's 'The Image Trap’ correctly draws attention to the careful and systematic orchestration of images that, in turn, construct the figure of the real Hero, a generous M.G.R. who fights oppression and is a friend of the poor. Such orchestration is evident in the case of Chiranjeevi as well, although the image projected is somewhat different. It is perhaps indicated by the fact that Chiranjeevi remains untouched by scandal, by the striking similarities between the official life story and popular print biographics produced by fans, providing evidence for the success of the enterprise.

Perhaps, Chiranjeevi is the first star in India who have a magazine or Fanzine on his own name. Its name was *Megastar Chiranjeevi*, edited by, Vijaya Bapineedu, the famous producer and director who calls himself a fan of the star. The first issue was published in 1989. Of course, it was run only for 5 years, due to financial problem it was closed in 1994. The inaugural issue called for photographs of Fans Associations' along with details of the nature of social service rendered by each.

The establishment of this periodical constituted the first major effort to consciously harness fan energies to ensure that they performed controlled productive activities. The stress on social service is common and it is aimed at using the Fans Associations to earn the star some good will. Social service, is today one of their main functions.

---

67Chiranjeevi’s Fans Associations exist in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Orissa and even Gujarat. According to Chiranjeevi’s office staff at Hyderabad, some associations have been formed abroad as well. Chiranjeevi office has photograph’s of fans in Kuwait with banners reading *Megastar Chiranjeevi’s Fans, Kuwait*, Most fans outside the state are immigrant Telugus, *Ibid.*


The credit for transforming social service activities to the scale of a movement goes to Chiranjeevi who converted his birthday celebrations into a blood and eye donation camps. Recently Chiranjeevi has started Chiranjeevi Eye and Blood Bank: Research and Development Centre, a division of Chiranjeevi Charitable Trust in Hyderabad which was established in 1998 with the slogan Donate Eyes and Live Twice.\footnote{Interview with R. Swamy Naidu, Secretary, \textit{All India Chiranjeeve Fans Association}, 8th Oct, 1998.}

In the wake of N.T.R.’s political success, which has been attributed to his popularity as a film star, a number of other stars entered politics, although few have been able to build lasting political careers. Simultaneously, fans associations witnessed unprecedented growth in the cities. They began establishing links with political parties in several parts of the state, even as their importance for the industry grew with their numbers.

In so far as the fans associations in Andhra Pradesh were concerned, paradoxically the question of caste loyalty did not arise so long as all or most of the super stars belonged to the Kamma caste. Youth from a wide cross section of castes joined the fans associations of different Kamma stars such as N.T.R., A.N.R., Krishna and Sobhanbabu. With the emergence of Chiranjeevi as the most popular non-kamma star ever, the question of pro-Kapu or anti-Kamma alliances arose.\footnote{See for details S.V. Srinivas \textit{Fans and Stars, Op Cit.}} The Telugu film industry is dominated by the Kamma Community. Whether one consider film actors, directors, distributors, producers or financiers, the majority belongs to the Kamma community.\footnote{The fact becomes evident even from a random selection of major film personalities. \textit{Source: Vijayawada Film Chamber of Commerce.}} This has been changed since the mid 1980’s when a group of castes began mobilising themselves as Kapus. At the same time Chiranjeevi, a Kapu rose to prominence in Telugu cinema and is currently rated the most popular actor. The Kapu-Kamma conflict thus is also reflected in the rivalries between fans associations.

The Kapus are there in the cine industry in various fields like music, photography, producers etc. Music director of 1960’s and 1970’s fame Master Venu the father of cine actor Banuchander also belongs to this caste. Famous singer of Yester years Pithapuram Nageswara Rao also belongs to this caste. The politician CH. Hari
Rama Jogaiah also made a movie on his own banner R.K.R. Production. The movie was *Nalaga Yendaro* in 1978 and still he continuing production of films.\(^{74}\)

Apart from Chiranjeevi, Pavan Kalyan his younger brother, Nagendra Babu, his elder brother (both actor and producer), others like Suresh, Bhanuchander (he was not only actor but also a music director like his father Master Venu) producer and director also are Kapus.

The famous producers from Kapu caste are T. Trivikram Rao (N.A.T. pictures), K. Nageswara Rao, (Rama Films), brother of character actor K. Satyanarayana, Allu Aravind, son of Allu Rama Lingaiah and brother in-law of Chiranjeevi, Thota Subba Rao from Tanuku and Eedida Nageswara Rao (Purnodaya art creations)

In the domain of Heroines, the Kapus are P. Kannamba of Pandilla Palli Village in Krishna district, S. Vara Laxmi from Guntur, Savitri from Vijayawada, Ramba and Ravali from Machilipatnam. P. Kannamba and Kanchanamala of the Yester years were the most versatile actresses. P. Kannamba in her heyday strode the scene like a colossus. Among the other actresses Savitri is of very high repute.\(^{75}\)

The late Pinisetti Sri Rama Murthy was well known to Andhra people as play writer and script writer. He also made movies on Adarsha banner. Now his son Ravi Raja Pinisetti is a famous director in the Telugu film industry. At the same time, the director Sri Ramulu Naidu, (who directed Aggi Ramudu with N.T.R. as Hero in 1954) also belongs to this caste.

Late R. Nageswara Rao, in the role of villian swayed the audience in 1960's V. Rajanala also dominated the scene upto 1990's.\(^{76}\) At present K. Satyanarayana and Srihari are villians in Telugu cine field from Kapu caste.


\(^{76}\)Ibid.
In the literary and journalism fields we have people like Tapi Dharma Rao, M. Chalapati Rau from this caste. And also there are writers, Novelists like Chandu Sombabu, Chiranjeevi, Erramsetti Sai, Harsha Vardhana, Pinisetti Sri Ram Murty, Anisetti Subba Rao, Mannem Saradha etc. from this caste.

**Journalism**

Many communist oriented writers like Tapi Dharma Rao and others not only spread the ideas of Marxism but also rendered considerable service to the growth of the Telugu literature.

**Tapi Dharma Rao Naidu:**

Tapi Dharma Rao Naidu was born at Barhampur in 1887. He was a student of Gidigu Rama Murthy at Parlakimidi Rajah College in B.A. He did his M.A. in Madras in Political Science. Started ‘Kondegadu’ magazine in 1912. Worked for ‘Samadarshini’ of Pingali Subramanyam setti for some time. It was the official organ of justice party (under Gudavalli Rama Brahmanam). He later edited ‘Janavani’ from 1936 when justice party has split and ‘people’s party’ came out. Through ‘Janavani’, he made several experiments and took language nearer to the public. When it was closed in 1939 he started ‘Kagada’ and ran it for two years. After some time he again revived ‘Janavani’. In 1941 he conducted the editors conference for the first time at Vijayawada.

Tapi Dharma Rao was a stalwart in Telugu Literature who threw his weight with the progressive writers movement. Many a number of the present artists in the cinema field were to some extent connected with the communist party in the past. He wrote screen play and dialogues for the movie ‘Rojulu Marayi (Times have changed) which focussed the urgent need of land reforms.

The universal character of Nationalism and how the Nation was meant to serve the interests of all the ‘people’ was popularised by young nationalists in their popular

---


songs. A good example is the poem “Nān Jaṇma Bhumi” (My Mother land) written for children by Tapi Dharma Rao in 1924. He also worked with G. Rama Brahman for movies like ‘Malapilla’ and ‘Rythu Bidda’. Literary critic, Journalist and poet excelled as screen play writer in ‘Bheeshama’ and ‘Patni’. He had to his credit most of Gundavalli Ram Brahman’s classics. The papers like ‘Prajamitra’, ‘Kagada’ etc., by Tapi Dharma Rao had played vital role in rousing the social conscience of the people against religious, social and economic injustice and exploitation. Thus caste and class conflict developed. He has two sons by name Tapi chankya a film director and Tapi Mohan Rao a noted novelist and a daughter who was married to Sohan Singh a homoeopathy doctor in Hyderabad.

M. Chalapati Rau

English journalism attracted the attention of Andhras and they did great service to it in the state and outside. Among them Mr. Chalapati Rau of National Herald was famous. Manikonda Chalapati Rau was born in Visakhapatnam in a Kapu family. He did his B.A. in History at Visakhapatnam. Later he finished his M.A. in English literature at Presidency College, Madras. He also took his B.L. Degree from Madras. For some time he was an advocate at Madras High Court.

Before joining the National Herald, M. Chalapati Rau, worked some time in Triveni. Writing about M. Chalapati Rau Iswara Dutt said.

“A voracious reader, his range of reading was vast, from ancient classics to Marxism. He was fond of saying that of his favourite authors none were alive and all were dead. But who could those be? Shakespeare, of course. Among the rest were Malony, Johnson, Browne, Butler, Swift, Landor Lamb, Shelly, Browning, Macaulay, Fraude, Newman and Ruskin. For all his vivacity in writing he preferred papers dignified and dull to those given to ‘monkeying’ in exuberance. As a journalist, in the same

---

89Ibid.
spirit, he preferred, Scott to Garwin, Spender to Gardiner, and Montague
to anyone else, and thought only of Manchester Guardian at its best as a
model. As a self-conscious craftsmen who is his own model, M. Chalapati
Rau has fought his way to the front, with a sense of inevitability*.

Some of the India’s greatest journalists have come from Andhra Pradesh which
has produced some outstanding journalists who have brought lustre and glory to the
profession both before and after independence. But they were all devoted to English
Journalism of which they were shining ornaments. Among them, M. Chalapati Rau was
one.

Among India’s great editors M. Chalapati Rau stands out as the champion of the
working journalists for whom he strove to secure basic rights as a worker and a decent
wage, and as the uncompromising fighter for a free and independent press. He fought
against pressures on the newspaper internally from the owner or externally from vested
interests. He had a sharp wit and a keen sense of the absurd and ridiculous and used his
powerful pen to deflate the egos of power crazy politicians and bureaucrats. The high
point in his career was the close rapport he established with Jawaharlal Nehru and the
vigour and clarity with which he expounded his ideals and philosophy. It was a
“concordat of minds”. It was a very special relationship between the man who founded
the ‘National Herald’ and the man who edited it during its great years.

The National Herald was started in 1938 under the stewardship of Pandit Nehru,
who acted as Chairman of its Board of Directors. In the words of M. Chalapati Rau, it “
..... was so closely identified with Gandhi and Nehru in the war years that it served as a
test case of the freedom of the press under the Defence of Rules, and in relations between
the Government and the All-India Newspaper editors conference”. M. Chalapati Rau
who started as number thirteen in “National Herald” became number two in two years
and by 1946, assumed its Editorship.

---

85 Ibid., p.86.
86 Rangaswami Partha Sarathy: Journalism in India: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day. Sterling
It was a phenomenal rise due to sheer merit, but the paper was closed down in 1942.\(^8^9\) He spent some time working in the ‘Hindustan Times’ and rejoined the ‘Herald’ when it was revived in 1945. He was appointed as editor in 1946 and held that post for 31 years from 1946 to 1977 which must be quite a record. His command of the language was the envy of his colleagues in the profession and according to one of them there were not then a dozen in India who had that mastery.\(^9^0\)

According to K. Rama Rao, who held the editorship of the National Herald before M. Chalapati Rau.

“M. Chalapati Rau started as number thirteen and became number two in two years in 1946. It was a phenomenal rise achieved by sheer merit. Mr. M. Chalapati Rau has a superb command of English; there are not a dozen in India who have that mastery. He wanted to do writing even as he started, but I insisted firmly that he should learn news work first and foremost. A present day editor, who does not know it, would cut a sorry figure; he would be at the mercy of his staff and would not command their respect. I am glad he has since appreciated the way I directed his feet correctly into the way of journalism. He worked for a time as news editor and then as assistant editor”.\(^9^1\)

When the second world war broke out, Rama Rao left it to him to do the Sunday Morning article on its progress, which he did with a distinction that brought the paper high praise. Those articles, coupled with others of connected interest, became columns of liquid gold in his hands. Like several others, he rejoined the paper when it was started again in 1945, at a salary lower than he had been getting elsewhere and became the editor when Rama Rao left in 1946.\(^9^2\)

In the words of one admirer:

“He wrote in a heavy, granite like style untouched by poetic feeling and imaginery. He wrote with vigour and precision when putting forth his view or rebutting on opposite one. He could be delightfully allusive drawing liberally from the wells of literature and history. He owed this to wide and purposeful reading all through his life. He did occasionally dip

---

\(^8^9\) According to M. Chalapati Rau, *The National Herald* had suspended publication in answer to Gandhiji’s call that it was better not to publish news papers than to publish them under the restrictions. See M. Chalapati Rau *The Press in India*, NBT 1974, p.153.


\(^9^1\) K. Rama Rao was a journalist during the freedom movement. He was the first editor of the National Herald. K. Rama Rao, *The Pen As My Sword: Memories of a Journalist*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1965, p.123.

his pen in vitriol to make sleeping statements and pass forth harsh judgements." He once wrote of Indian writers in English "The Indo-Anglican writer is typical of our intellectual wastefulness". 93

‘Our Fleet Street is a Street of Ink’, Chalapati Rau wrote, ‘a street of adventure but also street of Perils. Indian journalism has been one of many vigorous forms of the expressiveness of Indian Nationalism: To Kristodas Pal, Motilal Ghosh, Subramanya Ayer and Chintamani, Fleet Street was not their spiritual home, though the last one absorbed most of the traditions without being burdened by techniques. They were great journalists. They built up traditions which have made journalism what it is today or what it was till yesterday. Our society is still amorphous weighed down by the milestone of an English educated middle class and it seems difficult for journalism to recover its sociological functions. For one sad feature of our journalism is the lack of social vision which includes political vision. 94 According to one writer, ‘the editors of those days, drawn from the learned professions combined a fine acumen, a flexibility of outlook that was well above the reproach of opportunism, a determination to keep the flag flying in the face of repression and press laws and find best way of doing well by themselves as much as by the country. There can be no questioning the quality of service they rendered to the country, their skill in that kind of tight-rope walking or skating on their ice which was required to escape the attention of the new minister and at the same time adhere to the standards of courageous support of the national cause’. 95 Chalapati Rau must have had these editors in mind when he wrote about the Indian fleet street.

Chalapati Rau’s knowledge of foreign politics would suffice half a dozen chancelleries. He has that inestimable virtue of a diplomat - he can be as silent and as enigmatic as the sphinx. Tickle him, he will not laugh; prick him, he will not bleed. His reserves are more intriguing than his revelations. He does not believe in going out to meet humanity at large; he is like a famous editor who said that humanity might as well meet him by appointment. He has a soft and warm heart which he hides effectively behind an austere and aloof pose. 96

94 Ibid, p.269.
95 Ibid, p.269.
In 1942 that journalists in Lucknow headed by Mr. K. Rama Rao and Mr. M. Chalapati Rau, convened the Uttara Pradesh Journalists Conference with Mr. S.A. Brelvi, editor of the Bombay Chronicle, in the Chair. They pleaded for the security and amelioration of the working journalists and encouraged them to organise themselves.\(^97\)

Working journalists of India had their 'October Revolution' in 1950 when they met in Delhi and decided to form a nation wide organisation to protect their rights as a group and their fundamental rights, and those rights which indirectly issue from the Directive Principles of the constitution such as the right to a decent wage.

It was a red letter day in the annals of Indian journalism when the working journalists movement came under the leadership of M. Chalapati Rau, who, by his, journalistic eminence, intellectual incandescence and moral earnestness and fervour, brought to it a strength and prestige which had ensured its victory at the very outset.\(^98\) Thus he founded the Federation of Working Journalists in 1950 and was its President for three terms. He nurtured it and made it strong to fight for the rights of working journalists and for a living wage for them. As a member of the first Press Commission appointed in 1952, he was largely instrumental in the Commission recommending the appointment of a Wage Board for working journalists.\(^99\) He commanded the respect and affection of his colleagues and peers in the profession. According to Chalapati Rau, "Journalism is not a matter of wages and benefits. It is a matter of craft and craftsmanship and journalists are expected to possess not only professional skill but professional pride. It is a free and equal profession. The competition is open. Anyone can rise by enterprise. There is a sense of fellowship between the editor and machineman, between the sub-editor and the proof reader. The newspaper is one entity. Every member of the staff should stand or fall by it."\(^100\) Thus Mr. M. Chalapati Rau, was the moving spirit behind the working journalists movement which took strong roots under his able guidance and stewardship.

\(^{97}\)Ibid., p.181.


\(^{99}\)Ibid., pp.297-298.

Mr. M. Chalapati Rau, was the president of the convention. He occupied a unique position in Journalism as the editor of the ‘National Herald’ - the one editor who can call his soul his own. Commanding a high intellectual ability, possessing a character that would be an asset to any people’s organisation and gifted with tact, wisdom and resource fulness, he has led it from strength to strength and put it on a secure foundation during the time he held office.\textsuperscript{101}

Working journalists will remember Chalapati Rau for the dedication with which he worked to gain them recognition and a decent wage. As a member of the first press commission he was greatly instrumental in focussing attention on the conditions of the working journalists and to suggest measures to bring cheer and hope into their lives. He was undoubtedly the builder of the working journalists movement in the country. Under his constant care and guidance, this movement has grown into a pivotal organisation in the world of the Indian press. Chalapati Rau looked upon the working journalists movement not merely as a platform to protect the working conditions of the Indian journalists but as an organ to defend the freedom of the Indian press from pollution by proprietorial and other vested interests as also from executive pressures and blandishments.

M. Chalapati Rau’s grateness lay in his magnetising capacity to attract readers. It was as paragraphist that he shone punctually in its columns, and whether he surveyed foreign affairs or wrote a column of literary notes, there was the authentic M. Chalapati Rau’s touch. That on the emergence of National Herald he should have gravitated to it was a matter of course, for, by his association with the weekend, he ceased to be a stranger to the reading public in uttara pradesh.\textsuperscript{102}

D. Anjaneyulu, a journalist, writing in Triveni (April 1953) on literary profiles mused thus:

‘This only highlights the positions, by contrast, of conscientious craftsmen of the ‘profile’ art like K. Iswara Dutt, Khasa Subba Rau, Frank Moraes and M. Chalapati Rau,

\textsuperscript{101}Ibid., p.265.

\textsuperscript{102}K. Iswara Dutt, Op.Cit., p.93.
who are all unlike one another, and at the same time for above the common run of 'Sketch-writers'\textsuperscript{103}

Chalapati Rau spent almost his entire career as a journalist in one newspaper the 'National Herald' which although did not have a big circulation, was a powerful voice of the National Movement, the voice of its most enlightened section, under the stewardship of Chalapati Rau. His dedication to the paper was overwhelming. Of the National Herald’s contribution he said: “In the process of constitution-making, the integration of country-in free India’s contribution - the National Herald has written stout-heartedly and freely as a critic and as a friend with the ideal service for which it was started kept constantly in view”. The National Herald wrote without fear and without malice.\textsuperscript{104}

The philosophy which guided him and to which he was deeply committed was the philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru. According to Rangaswamy Parthasarathi, M. Chalapati Rau was the best and the most lucid exponent of Nehruism apart from Nehru himself. At the same time, it was the freedom that Nehru always insisted that a journalist should be assumed that enabled Chalapati Rau to rise to great heights as a distinguished editor whose views commanded wide respect. The relationship between the two stands out indeed as a model of how a political leader and a journalist of integrity should interact in a democracy where the masses have to be informed so that they are equipped adequately to elect those who are to wield power. Not only did Chalapati Rau understand the significance of this relationship but this understanding became the basis of his monumental endeavour to popularise Jawaharlal Nehru as the architect of Indian democracy”.\textsuperscript{105}

Indira Gandhi once described Chalapati Rau, “as the conscience keeper of my father”. It was said of him that reading his editorials in those days one felt that virtually every word in them had been tested and weighed against the quality of understanding and judgement that informed jawaharlal Nehru’s own approach to men and matters and policies.\textsuperscript{106}

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., pp.176-177.


\textsuperscript{105} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid.
The contemporary scene however, much enveloped in spiritual darkness, has some rays of light, if no beacons, to leave us some what hopeful of the future of journalism. Our own 'Fourth Estate' has not lost the bread of noble bloods'. The presence of our ranks of such distinguished men as Mr. M. Chalapati Rau (others are Mr. Raghunath Iyer, Mr. Khasa subba Rau, Mr. Pothan Joseph, Mr. J. Natarajan, Mr. Frank Moraes,) is a gurantee of the survival of great tradition in journalism.\textsuperscript{107}

Writing about M. Chalapati Rau, of the equally 'Sea-green incorruptible', Iswara Dutt said: "at a time when there were too many assaults on editorial integrity and independence, he stood up like a man who has since his school-days mused on the fate of Danton at the guillotine. He is many things rolled into one (writer of prose and verse, satirist, columnist, leader-writer) - and particularly two things; he is both a craftsman and a crusader. I would rather leave it at that as I feel that in his case the best is yet to be, for I know that what he has so far revealed of himself is less than what he has concealed".\textsuperscript{108}

Chalapati Rau's greatest service to the Federation in the initial stages was that he gathered together devoted talent, put it together, and made the best use of it, a rather difficult task in an anarchical profession like ours. His addresses were dignified, scintillating with Jewelled words, glittering with phrases, packed with thought and resolve. He showed consummate ability in handling delicate situations and negotiating difficult problems and was equal to every situation that arose.\textsuperscript{109}

To the last he was uncompromising in his integrity and in his principles. An admirer wrote "Himself living a life of an ascetic, he commanded a moral stature which acted as a living indictment of all those in the press who would for personal gains make peace with inequality and injustice. He never forgave those in the journalist profession who would sacrifice their integrity for a comfortable life-style. Chalapati Rau could


\textsuperscript{108} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.252-253.

\textsuperscript{109} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.265-266
never suffer and hypocrisy in the community of pressmen as he stood for a cleaner public life”.\textsuperscript{110}

M. Chalapati Rau was a distinguished member of the First Press Commission (1952-54), the UNESCO Press Experts Committee 1950, and the Initiating Committee of the International Press Institute and also Vice-Chairman of the UNESCO Conference on Journalism Training, a member of the Organising Committee of the International Conference of Journalists held at Helsinki. He was also leader of the Indian Press Delegation which accompanied Nehru to the Soviet Union, Poland and Yugoslavia in 1955 and he was country’s delegate to UNESCO General Conference and its representative in the U.N. General Assembly.

Besides his association with several organisations and his participation in National and International conferences, he was a member and Vice-Chairman of the Nehru Memorial Trust Fund and Chairman of the Executive Council of the Nehru memorial Museum and Library and Jawaharlal Nehru University. He was also a member of the Jury for the Nehru Award for International Understanding.


He was killed in a road accident in 1983 and his body was found on the road side. In a tribute to him, one of his admirers wrote “Chalapati Rau as a personality of outstanding calibre stood out in the national life of India. Behind this massive figure was a person of shy and gentle nature. With his abundance of wit and irrepressible humour, was not attracted by the glamour of social life, by temperament he was lonely-almost a lone wolf. But he was by no means unapproachable. Particularly to those younger to him, he had always something to impart out of his vast erudition and professional experience. He was a teacher par-excellence but only to those who could break through the outercrust of his strange aloofness. Even when he was irritated he bore no rancour.

And he left this world as unobtrusively as he lived. All those who knew him could sense that a giant had departed, the like of whom is not to be found in the intellectual world of the India of today”.

K. Rama Rao:

Kathiresetti Rama Rao was born in a Telaga family on 11th Sept, 1934 and did his B.Sc., from Andhra Christian College, Guntur and Engineering studies from Madras and College of Aeronautics Garifield U.K. He joined Defence, R&D Organisation in 1959 as Head of the Structure and Materials Division and retired as Director, 1 DRDL, Hyderabad in 1994 and continues as Advisor D.R.D.L.

Rama Rao made a significant contribution to India’s Missile programme and to re-entry technology for AGNI missile in particular. He developed special structures and materials for the Guided Missile Programme for which he received several awards. He received *Sir, M. Visweswaraiah Award* from the Institution of Engineers as the Best Engineer of the Year in 1990. *Best Invention Award from Govt. of India in 1991* and the highest D.R.D.O. Award from Ministry of Defence in 1993. He has one son who is computer software engineer and a daughter presently in states.

Sports:

Like literature, in general people belonging to Kapu caste there were quite a few who belonged to Sports as well.

Cricket:

Cothari Kanaka Naidu, (1895-1967) popularly known as C.K. Naidu came from a illustrious Kapu family of Barristers and men of letters was born in 1895. He was called cricket king, greatest batsman of the world. His brother C.S. Naidu also was a cricketer, well known as international cricketer.

According to K. Rama Rao, the famous journalist:

“The most pleasant recollection I have of those days in the classic innings of C.K. Naidu for the Hindus of Bombay against Gilligan’s team in 1926.

---


112 Interview with K. Rama Rao on 26.1.1998 at Secunderabad.
I stole a few hours from office work to watch the match and I saw every stroke of his great game, as well as that of Earle for the visitors. Naidu was at the top of his form - eleven sixers and sixteen fours hit in a blaze of glory, a memory to cherish for ever.113

Consider the piece on C.K. Naidu by Chalapati Rao (Magnus)

"C.K. Naidu was too alive for long to have become entirely a legend. It is difficult to bury him, as other great cricketers are buried, under a mound of metaphors, though the language of cricket is rich in them. He combined spartan physical strength with an artistic grace. To think of him mainly in terms of his sixes is poor appreciation, like his Padma Bhushan which was poor recognition. His sixes were only the sparks of his scientific hitting. Nor is it adequate to recall Neville Cardus with his poetic phrases borrowed from the language of music, because Cardus had only a glimpse of Naidu’s greatness”. 114

Nayudu could be said to be the father of modern Indian cricket, the man who stamped the age with his strength of character. He is often compared to Jessop, to Trumper, to Macartney or to Woolley; with similar grace and freedom from care, woolley was probably the closest to him. In Indian terms, Naidu’s place was by the side of Ranji, Duleep and Pataudi. Ranjji was remote to the modern generation. Dulip with his tulip’s delicacy gave of his best in England’s green fields. Pataudi was not the success he had been at Oxford when transplanted. Nayudu was wholly indigenous, almost self-taught and self-schooled. Like others, he had to suffer from the imposition of princes in the privilege ridden days of cricket. Nayudu was a commoner, but a commoner who was king.115

He would be ceremonial piety to say that his death is a loss to cricket. He lived a life of achievement, more than that, of fulfilment and his death is a loss in the sense that a magnificent personality, a magnificent presence, has been withdrawn from a greying landscape. His qualities as a cricketer have been discribed by many, from Hobbs to Miller and by variety of writers using a rich vocabulary. But for those who saw him at his best, no mere tribute to his technique is even adequate. He was a Greek or a Roman


115Ibid.
at the cricket, every stroke spoke of power and thinking, the merest gesture was an expression of a powerful personality.

Statistics tell nothing and it was ill luck that he was passing his prime when India entered test cricket, and even then he showed without doubt what he could have done in the age of statistics.\textsuperscript{116}

Even [wisden] speaks of his promise, not of fulfilment. He had stature and grace; if strength is added to grace, it results in grandeur. He was an all-rounder who did not cease to be a front rank batsman. As a bowler, he could be as wily as odysseus. To see him field was to see a panther at work. But it was as captain that he was at his best and his character was fully expressed. It was as a captain of India and as a captain of Holkar that his personality found full play and cricket politics, which prevented him from presenting fully his wisdom to the generations which grew under his shadow, withered in his presence. As leader, he was a maker of men, some of them princes among men, like Mushtaq Ali.\textsuperscript{117}

Chandra Naidu:

She was a daughter of famous cricketer C.K. Naidu. She was born and brought up at Indore and retired as professor in English.

Her father was the captain of Indian Team in 1932 and she was the first women commentator not only in India but also in the entire world. She first gave her commentary at Indore in 1977 for the match between Melbourne Cricket Club and Ranji Champions. In 1980 she gave commentary for the match between M.C.C and Hyderabad teams at Hyderabad and she interviewed by the BBC. Later BBC telecasted her interview.

In 1982 she was invited to Mecca of Cricket, Lords of England, on the eve of Golden Jubilee Celebrations of Indo-England Test Matches.\textsuperscript{118}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{116}Ibid., pp.167-168.
  \item \textsuperscript{117}Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{118}K. Sarath Babu, 'On Chandra Naidu' Andhra Prabha. (Nagara Prabha) 15 June, 1997, p.7.
\end{itemize}
Tennis:

C. Ramaswamy (M.A. Cambridge) Deputy Director of Agriculture in India called ‘Cambridge Blew”. He was the first Indian to participate in Davis Cup and won the cup.

Nallam Reddi Krishna Swamy was Tennis Champion in Madras. He was also ranked player in Tennis. He had won championship in Doubles in association with Cambridge blew C. Ramaswamy.

Foot Ball:

Mamidipalli Appa Rao from Kakinada in East Godavari District was called star of India in foot ball. He was one of the champions in India.

D. Ravinder, Sportsman:

D. Ravinder was born on 9.2.1963 at Machilipatnam in a Telaga family and settled in Hyderabad. He did his S.S.C. at Mahboob College, Secunderabad.

He played carromboard from the school days, participated in the following championship state played since 1990. He participated and represented for Ist World Cup Carrom Championship held at Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, New Delhi in the year 1991 and qualified for All India Quarter Finals. In April 1990 he has participated as a ‘Referee’ for All India Carrom Federation in the 18th Junior National Inter-state Carrom Championship held at Thane, Maharashtra, between March 31 and April 3rd 1990. He was participated as a qualifying player in the XXI Senior National and Inter-state Carrom Championship, organised by Faridabad District Carrom Association under the auspicious of Haryana Carrom Association and All India Carrom Federation.

Dr. Ravinder was Umpire for the 25th Senior National and Inter-State Carrom Championship held at Hyderabad, Feb.5-10, 1996. At present, he is member of AP Carrom Association and also giving coaching for State Carrom Association.

Further there are some Kapus who represent various fields. Persons like Harikatha Pithamahudu Adibhatla Narayana Dasu from Kuchinapudi village from Guntur district, Vinnakota Ramaswamy Naidu from Machilipatnam (He was the first
person who printed Kalamkari in Andhra Pradesh) The famous Body Builder or Wristler Kodi Ramamurthy Naidu, etc. Kodi Ramamurthy, the Indian Hercules bore the weight of a couple of elephants on his chest and fought Gama in wrestling. Dramtist Suri Babu also belonged to this caste.

Edida Gopala Rao:

Telugu News Reader in All India Radio. He got diploma and Theatre Arts in 1963-64. Established a cultural organisation at Delhi by name ‘Sarasa Navarasa’ in 1978 and conducted several cultural programmes. He is interested in Theatre and felt that drama should be kept alive through competitions, drama courses in Universities, by encouraging audiences to see dramas by buying tickets etc. His book Uttararadilo Dakshanadi Pramukhulu was very famous.¹¹⁹ He was not only a news reader, but also a writer, actor. He wrote a book by name ‘Gopala Tarangalu’.¹²⁰

Thota Tharani:

After obtaining his initial training in painting in India, Thota Tharani studies under Stanley William Hayter at his Atelier in France in Print making. Having participated in the graphic workshop at the Royal College of Art in London. He obtained specialised training in graphic art too. A renowned artist, he has participated in several exhibitions in India and France. He won the first prize in wild life painting competition during three consecutive years in 1968, 1969 and 1970. Presently working as a freelance painter, he has his collections at numerous centres in India and abroad.¹²¹

The great Saint Swami Omkar Maharaj, the founder of Shanti Ashram in Totapalli, Waltair and Kotagiri and various branches throught the world was a Telaga. His name was Marisetty Venkata Rao, the nephew of Rednam family of Pittapuram. He was born in 1895 and died in 1982. He did Penance for 14 years in thick forests of Shankavaram and had a vision of God like Buddha. He became a great Jain and continued to spread the message throughout the world.¹²²


¹²⁰Andhra Prabha, Ibid.,


There was a Saint Naga Setty Ayodhya Ramaiah, a rich land lord who donated his extensive lands for poor people to build houses. It has now came to be known as Ayodhya Ramapuram at Samalkota. Mention should be made about Kota Laxmaiah Naidu, a great philanthropist, was a donar of Annadana Samaj in Kakinada. Next as a donar Maharaja Samaj of Pithapuram and Ashramas in Guntur and Tenali. Now they have settled in Vetapalem.\(^{123}\)

From historical point of view Dewan Bahadur Kommi Reddy Suryanarayana Murthy Naidu was the founder of Saraswati Ganasabha in Kakinada around 1900. He was the first president of All India Music Academy, and also he was the first president of the Andhra Chamber of Commerce. This family donated a Hospital in Kakinada for public use. He was the Chairman of Kakinada Municipality for some time.

Thus there are people from Kapu caste who contributed to the society in their respective fields. They are from administrative side we have Ajay Naidu and I.J. Naidu. Like wise, P.V. Rangaiah Naidu, Ragala, M.V. Bhaskara Rao from IPS. From legal side we have Justice A. Lakshmana Rao and P. Shiv Shankar and Rajya Lakshmi in High Court. In the academics we have from Kapus. The most important personalities was Raghupati Venkata Ratnam Naidu, others are Sri Ram Govinda Rajulu Naidu, M.V.Rao, Ramakrishnaiah, R. Radhakrishna. Dr. K. Rajyalakshmi being the first woman academician who became the Vice-Chancellor of a university. All belonging to Kapu caste.

In the performing arts like Music, Theatre, Painting etc., we have several people from Kapu caste and their contribution to the society is worthy to be mentioned. They are Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu, Yella Venkateswara Rao, Achanta Venkata Ratnam Naidu, Eelapati Raghuramaiah. In the Theatre side, particularly, in cinema Kapus stands supreme in certain fields. First photographer, first studio owner, hero, heroine, and director belongs to this caste only. They are R. Venkaiah R. Prakash, Kannamba, etc. In the recent period also we have S.V. Ranga Rao, Dasari Narayana Rao, and Chiranjeevi were excelled in their fields as the tops in the cine industry. There are other persons like

\(^{123}\text{Ibid.}\)
P. Nageswara Rao, Master Venu, Eedida Gopala Rao, Thota Tharani who excelled in their fields.

Particularly in the literature and journalism we have prominent persons from Kapu caste who not only famous in Andhra Pradesh but also in the country probably in the world also. In the first place we have Tapi Dharma Rao Naidu who excelled in both the fields. But in journalism, we have M. Chalapathi Rao who achieved a world recognition for his journalistic contribution. He achieved a distinction of being spent almost his entire carrier as a journalist in one news paper.

Like wise in science and technology, M.V. Rao and K. Rama Rao excelled in their respective fields. In sports, the Kapus contribution was very high not only in state and national level but also in the international level. Not only that we have a lady cricket comentator from this caste in national level. In cricket we have world famous cricketers from this caste like C.K. Naidu and his brother C.S. Naidu. Like cricket in Tennis, Football, Carroms also Kapus played a prominent role.

Other prominent Kapus were Adibhatla Narayana Das, Kodi Ramamurthy and dramtist Suribabu who excelled in their respective fields.