A. N. Murthy Rao

Biographical Sketch

A. N. Murthy Rao was born to Subbarayru and Venkatalaxamma in Akki Hebbal, where they belonged, in the year 1900, but was brought up in Melkote and Nagamangala. His father was a Sub-overseer in the PWD, working at Melkote. Later he was transferred to Nagamangala. A. N. Murthy Rao enjoyed his stay in Melkote as a young boy. Melkote being a place of highly ritualistic and traditional people, A. N. Murthy Rao must have been exposed to all their traditional and religious practices there. These practices could have had certain effect on his young mind, and his disbelief in later life could have been a psychological reaction to the excessive rituals in Melkote. Later, when the family shifted to Nagamangala, his father suffered a serious injury when he fell down from the horse back. He was taken to Akki Hebbal by his cousins who lived there. As a result of extreme superstitions during those days, the ailing father was not given any medical treatment; instead they assumed that he was possessed and suitable relief measures for that were given and those involved very rough treatment. However no relief was found even after all the superstitious treatment. But A. N. Murthy Rao, a young boy was a witness to the complete activity. His young mind must have been strangely affected by these.
rituals performed on his father, and A. N. Murthy Rao as a young witness – saw the sufferings of his father, and at first even believed that those could do good to him inspite of all the rough treatment. This continued for about seven months and no relief was found at all.

Later, in his autobiography A. N. Murthy Rao analyses this part to discuss the superstitious elements present in the society then. However, at that age, he too believed in all those. Such incidents as these might have made him a non-believer later. Nothing anyway could really help his father and he had to retire from his service at an early age of 36 years. A. N. Murthy Rao was present throughout while his father was treated with the superstitious belief that he was possessed. Gradually A. N. Murthy Rao lost his faith in that kind of treatment though there was no definite disbelief. A. N. Murthy Rao had a lot of regard for his father and reflects on the fact that he was a magnanimous person who went out of the way to help others. Father's helpful nature, social concern - but the fate he had to suffer which was most illogical – seems to have affected A. N. Murthy Rao into being sceptical. He was also a witness to the vow his father had to fulfil at Nanjangud. He was 12 years old at that time. His father had to roll round the temple in wet clothes in the belief that it would cure him. Again, no relief was found. By then, the severity of the ailment had reduced, which would have happened any way. However, suffering still continued. This might have been one of the causes in his youth which sowed the seeds of disbelief and later as he grew up his exposure to English education, changing attitude, scientific probing, analytical and inquiring mind could have made him more and more of a non believer.

A. N. Murthy Rao had his first schooling at Akki Hebbal for one year. He learnt his alphabet by writing them on the sand as was the method
those days, particularly in rural schools. After that he was sent to Mysore for education and stayed with one of his relatives. Four years later his family shifted from Akki Hebbal to Mysore. Even after that A. N. Murthy Rao kept visiting Akki Hebbal now and then. He was very much attached and attracted to the rural atmosphere and the scenic beauty of the place. He was a poet at heart. He had had wonderful times there as a young boy; wandering in the fields; swimming in the river Hemavathi which flowed by Akki Hebbal and a carefree life. He remembers the happy days he spent in those spots. Any romantic outlook left in him, according to A. N. Murthy Rao was due to his association with the river Hemavathi and with which A. N. Murthy Rao had had the most pleasurable memories.

Another taste he picked up apart from the enjoyment in the rural pleasures was the love for classical music. In Akki Hebbal he didn't have much opportunity to listen to classical music. But the vedic chants and other religious hymes (Shlokas), in the temple at Akki Hebbal had a very pleasant effect on his mind. Those vibrations of vedic chanting generated certain quietitude and pleasantness in his mind. Later this quietitude and pleasantness was recognised in the classical music also by him.

A. N. Murthy Rao was again and again exposed to several different activities connected with religion and devotion. In Akki Hebbal there were three Marathi families which prayed to Ambabhavani in a strange and noisy way. Every once in two and half hours during the night, these people worshiped the deity, held the burning torches, turned them all around and hit themselves once in a while with them. This was rather too cruel to watch. A. N. Murthy Rao, a young boy then was curious and watched this all through the night. Though he never liked this, he was attracted by the music of bhajans in which he would join. This had a double effect on the
boy – one of involving himself in music – in the form of bhajans – second of distancing himself from the violent rituals. This in fact might have created an aversion in him towards mere rituals.

In Akki Hebbal, A. N. Murthy Rao had also been familiar with folk music. In that rural atmosphere, he knew friendly people from the working class who took him around, sometimes in the raft on the river, and these invariably would sing simple village songs. A. N. Murthy Rao enjoyed them and many times joined tunes with them. So his musical ears were enriched with this experience.

In 1913, when A. N. Murthy Rao was 13 years old, he came to Mysore. He was sent to the Wesleyan School and admitted to the second form of the middle school. In those days Christian missionaries were very active in Mysore, as they were in most places in India. In the Wesleyan School, A. N. Murthy Rao was exposed to another religion and culture – that of Christianity and Western culture. Even before he studied the Hindu scriptures, he learnt Bible. He took the Bible and scriptures exams and passed them very creditably. Before going to the class, the students were expected to sing the Christian prayer. A. N. Murthy Rao's understanding outlook about different religions and cultures started from here. Like the way he had appreciated the chanting of the Vedas and Upanishads, which he had heard in the temples of Akki Hebbal and Melkote, he liked the singing of the psalms. Secular attitude had all the opportunities to develop well here.

When he joined school at Mysore, Rangaiah, who was his relative and who became a close associate during those days, introduced him to the reading habit. This habit caught on him and A. N. Murthy Rao read anything and everything, all that came his way. There was no selection and choice.
During those days as he was in a Christian missionary school, he could more easily avail English books and also not many books in Kannada were available. Reading habit was not as popular then. Therefore his Kannada reading was much lesser compared to his English reading. Later on he was guided in his selection of books by his teacher in the school, D. N. Murthy. Because of his teachers in school, particularly the above mentioned, A. N. Murthy Rao could read, write and speak English language without any difficulty. Teachers like R. W. Boot, D. N. Murthy, Devaputra and V. S etc. shaped his youthful mind, before he entered the Maharaja's college, completing his entrance exam in the school.

One particular book which gave him pleasure in the beginning days of his reading was “The Arabian Nights”. Though, as A. N. Murthy Rao says, they are escapist in nature, still they motivated the reading habit because of their romantic, beautiful world of adventures. It caught upon his imagination and led him to read more and more books. This was the stage when A. N. Murthy Rao started recognising the short comings of his village. This had happened mainly because of the changed life in a city and the newly acquired reading habit. While Akki Hebbal gave him all the simple pleasures of a rural life, the books took him all the world over, it expanded his imagination and widened his experiences. No wonder the young boy slowly started losing interest in his village.

While he was in the entrance class, his doubts about God, belief etc., were shaken further. He was exposed to Christianity which said that Bible and Christ were the ultimate, A. N. Murthy Rao, still young then, had by then come across such dualities already – Hindus considering their religion a path to salvation and Christians doing the same. Similarly, he also had witnessed the sufferings of his pious father and also that of his grand mother.
A. N. Murthy Rao's paternal grandmother was a very pious lady and A. N. Murthy Rao had a great regard for her. Later, again and again he remembered her for her qualities and for those which were inculcated in him because of her. He considered her an incarnation of human culture.\footnote{Murthy Rao M. N., Sanjegannina Hinnota (రసాయనాన్ని హింష్టా), –p. 192} She stood by him many a time when he did not follow a ritual (like for example shaving at home.) and thus enraged his father. She was old, brought up in a more constrained atmosphere perhaps, but still she was open for a change and adjusted more easily – though perhaps did not welcome such a change – than A. N. Murthy Rao's parents. However, she too had to suffer the pains of seeing her son suffer for a long time in life and also witness his death. Her sorrow might have affected A. N. Murthy Rao and made him lose faith in God; for she, a good lady was made to suffer and thus God's justice was not meted out. His regard for ladies, which was rare in those days was perhaps due to the influence of his grand mother. Until the time he came to the entrance class, A. N. Murthy Rao did not question many religious rituals. He just abided by them like for example - taking the holy water, prasada (holy food offerings), Arati (waving of lamp) etc., after the puja (worship). He did stop in front of a temple while passing by, to salute. All this gradually disappeared. This transformation took place even before he entered the college.\footnote{Ibid, p. 144} He had entered a stage where he started questioning the existence of God. He had seen his father suffering at a young age; grandmother's sufferings for her son; he had seen the plight of young girls who became widows at a young age even before they realised that they had entered the wedlock and came out of it, he had also seen the family of a certain Mudde Bhattaru being wiped out totally as a result of Cholera,
though they were very good and orthodox people.\textsuperscript{1} All these appeared very illogical to him. A benevolent God, still making the good suffer - was meaningless. Such questions and incidents caused him to doubt the existence of a God. He only liked the artistic aspect of the rituals - such as decorations, flowers, lights and the beautiful arrangements etc. The rest of it did not concern him. His questioning became more pronounced after he came to Mysore, as he developed interest in reading western writings. Exposure to an urban life; reading habits, particularly the English; English education etc. started posing questions to him. The widened horizon perhaps suggested different possibilities. Thinking was activated and this was supported by books.

Just before he joined the college, he was married.\textsuperscript{2} By then he had lost all his faith in marriage rituals etc., but he went through all of them to please the others. The status of women in the Indian society, bride's people almost becoming slaves to the groom's side, carrying the entire burden of the marriage and such others, bothered him. In 1919, A. N. Murthy Rao joined the Maharaja's college. It was already three to four years since the university had started. People who started it wanted it to grow on the lines of Oxford. A. N. Murthy Rao was not a very studious and disciplined student. He played all the pranks of a youthful student - missing classes, finding excuses, not doing the assignments in time etc. He did while away his time in reading books which were not directly related to his studies in the college. His father again and again got irritated with him for not studying properly. Though while he missed in terms of being a good student

\begin{footnotes}
\item[1] Murthy Rao A. N., Sanjegannina Hinnota (తోడగుండి హిన్మెడు), p. 144
\item[2] Ibid, p. 157-158
\end{footnotes}
(studious), he had the advantage of reading a wide range of subjects.\(^1\) In

the college he had chosen subjects which were in no way concerned with

Indian history, culture or philosophy. His subjects were Ethics, Political

Science, French, English literature, Economics etc. He had chosen western

philosophy. At this point A. N. Murthy Rao felt that his real study of Vedas

started here. Because 'Veda' means knowledge and what ever subjects he

studied in the college would gain him the necessary knowledge. It shows

that A. N. Murthy Rao took his reading very seriously and thought deeply

about the matters discussed there. This habit of thinking seriously made

him different from others and made him a questioner. It is significant here

that he gave up subjects connected with the Indian culture and philosophy.

When he entered the college, he had entered a new atmosphere. He lost

touch with his high school friends, his reading widened along with the

knowledge he gained and with this also came a new outlook on life.

According to A. N. Murthy Rao, his real second birth - Dwijatwa -

occurred to him when he came out of the desire to live in Akki Hebbal,

slowly lost faith in religion, rituals, activities connected with it and ultimately

in God. Study of Vedas took place not in the usual sense of the term, but

through that of gaining knowledge from every where. Not just following

the past traditions; but analysing every thing against one's experience. To

do this, a reflective and investigative mentality is very necessary and A. N.

Murthy Rao was acquiring this - while the study of the Vedas was restricted

only to a group, not this knowledge. The knowledge he gained in the college

was open to all.\(^2\) This fact also perhaps soothed his mind because he did

not understand the discrimination in a society of common people. While

\(^1\) Murthy Rao A. N., Sanjegannina Hinnota (సంజేగండి హిన్నోతా), p. 168

\(^2\) Ibid, p. 150

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he refused the rituals and traditions, he chose subjects which were suited to
his mentality.

In fact by the time he entered the college, he had got rid of most of the
external features of a Brahmin. The only external aspect of tuft (Juttu)
remained and he had given up activities connected with a Brahmin such as
sandhya and rituals connected with meals, such others; he had had a cup
of tea in a Christian household (his teacher VS's ) and he even shaved at
home secretly, thus dispensing with the services of a barber.¹

In the Maharaja's college he had the good fortune of being a student of
great teachers like J. C. Rollo, B. M. Srikantiah, N. S. Subbarao, M. Hiriyanna
and others. Around the time when A. N. Murthy Rao was in the B. A.,
class, he had already lost faith in the existence of God, though most of his
teachers whom he revered were deep believers. During this time, he once
had a mock argument with one of his friends about the topic². Both of them
put forth arguments for and against the existence of God. This argument
only further confirmed his non-belief. With the study of Western philosophy
also came further questioning attitude. He started finding excuses for all
his omissions.³ (For example he cut off his tuft and the excuse was, no
one in the M. A. class had it. Therefore he too had to remove it; going to
foreign countries was banned, but A. N. Murthy Rao's thought was how
to avoid the taboo as going abroad would mean, expansion of one's
consciousness and mind ). Later at a point A. N. Murthy Rao did consider
his shortcomings at the earlier stage. Because he had not studied the Indian
philosophy or the scriptures; he had not studied the Indian writings of the

¹Murthy Rao A. N., Sanjegannina Hinnota (సంజేగాంని హింనొటా), p. 147
²Ibid, p. 203
³Ibid, p. 195
Indian masters and had arrived at the conclusions that all the Indian writings were about caste and religion. Two things draw our attentions here - one - to the fact that most superficial routine activities in Indian society concerned caste and religion- thus giving a reader an impression that all Indian philosophy was only this; and the second A. N. Murthy Rao, had decided to come out of it. His interests were not, this, but being more open, more free – which are closer to gaining true knowledge. He was influenced by the scientific method of wanting to know more and enquiring and going deeper into an aspect.

In the college A. N. Murthy Rao was influenced by many of his teachers. J. C. Rollo was his favourite; he liked the teaching methods of Dr. Radhakrishnan. In fact he had chosen that particular subject also with the idea of being S. Radhakrishnan's student. He did like B. M. Srikantaih though sometimes his lectures went away from the point and thus bored. B. M. Srikantiah used to be very serious in the class room.

When A. N. Murthy Rao was in the final B. A. class, just before his exams, his father passed away. Now the responsibility of a large family was on his shoulders. Since he got a scholarship, he was able to continue his education and joined the M. A. class with English literature as his subject. He also got the tutor's position and this helped him financially. He was in this position for five months. Soon after completing his M. A., he got a teachers position in the Maharaja's High School. He gained a few friends like Swamynathan, Rallapalli Ananthakrishna Sharma and others there. He worked there for two years and after that in 1927 A. N. Murthy Rao joined the Maharaja's College as a lecturer in English.

As a teacher he compares the old method of education with that of the new, British method. In the earlier, student would be forced to rote learning,
the original text would be learnt thoroughly by a student. But in the British schooling method sometimes, students tend not to pay attention to the original text as notes would suffice them to pass the examination. However they would pay attention to analysis. A. N. Murthy Rao felt that a blend of both the methods would be very useful. However modern learning is not just the study of texts; it also involves other aspects of knowledge.

In 1934, a little after his sister's marriage, A. N. Murthy Rao decided to come out of his joint family to establish his own. In those days it was a highly unpardonable thing. Even when the family members were unhappy, because of living together, they struggled to live together. For persons to be in a joint family calls for a lot of understanding and patience; otherwise there would be only sufferings for all concerned. Breaking from a group and setting up a nuclear family would be a remedy and even the interpersonal relationships would improve there by. Such modern thoughts did not seem to have bothered many. It was blasphemy even to think on those lines. But A. N. Murthy Rao was bold enough to do that - not only think so, but also acted accordingly. Thus in 1934 A. N. Murthy Rao had his own family. Of course this perhaps would not have happened if his grandmother who was an image of the family unity were alive. By then she had passed away. In this context A. N. Murthy Rao analyses the Indian family situations. Generally in those days most were joint families and so intimate cordial relationship between parents and children was rather not possible. Children as a result did not come closer to parents (particularly the father); most of the times father being the head of the family, wanted to control the family and he felt that intimacy would come in the way of discipline. This had been experienced by A. N. Murthy Rao himself.
Here, he compares the Western society where children are given equal freedom, voice and are treated on par; they are closer to their parents and that is a matter of pleasure and A. N. Murthy Rao notes that such changes are taking place in our society too, slowly.

A. N. Murthy Rao was quite active in his writings by the time he set up a family of his own. He had translated a story of Mark Twain, Moliear's drama Tartuff was adapted into Kannada by him and this gained a large acclaim.

In June 1940, A. N. Murthy Rao was transferred to Shimoga as Assistant Professor.

He started the study of Sanskrit at Shimoga. Along with two of his friends, he studied the works of Kalidasa, Brahmasutras and later the plays of Bhasa and Bhavabhuti and others. Much later (1959-60), he also started studying the Mahabharata; Geeta, Upanishads etc. All these show the depth of knowledge that could be attained by a teacher. Studying was never superficial for him. Studying never stopped.

The Quit India Movement of 1942 took place while A. N. Murthy Rao was in Shimoga. On that particular day when the college students went on a strike as a part of the Quit India Movement, A. N. Murthy Rao was the incharge principal.

A. N. Murthy Rao did not participate directly, but two of his sons participated in this. In this context he indirectly supported the students, by expressing his respect for Gandhiji and also saying that he too wanted freedom for the country. In fact he and the other teachers were sort of ashamed of their own non-participation in the movement directly.
In the early 1943 he was posted as the Assistant Director of the All India Radio at Mysore. He stayed there for a little more that 4 years. His colleagues there were T. Chowdaiah's brother Lingappaji, T. S. Tatacharya, C. B. Jayarao, H. K. Ranganath and others. In the year 1947 he returned to the Maharaja's college. He did not stay long there. He was transferred to Chitradurga as the principal of the Intermediate College there. 1949 saw him in Mandya College as the principal and in the same year he went to Bangalore as a temporary professor. However, he had no need to step down from that position, thanks to the magnanimity of K. Hanumantaiah, who became the chief minister of the state. A. N. Murthy Rao completed his service in 1955.

During his service as a teacher, he had come across thousands of people of different mentalities, students, teachers, colleagues and friends. A. N. Murthy Rao had always developed a pleasant relationship with most of them. Because of his attitude to life, thoughts about the society around him and his critical views regarding the tradition and culture, beliefs and non beliefs, rituals and ceremonies he was a conspicuous person. But all those who came in contact with him seem to have liked him invariably - perhaps because of the humane touch in his personality and the sense of humour.

After retiring from his regular profession, A. N. Murthy Rao was invited to be the Director of literature and culture Department. He accepted this and remained in the department for 3 years. There too he did commendable work. A. N. Murthy Rao served as the secretary and later as the president of the Kannada Sahitya Parishat from 1953. He was also the convener and chairman of the Kannada Sahitya Academy. He continued to be there until 1962. He worked for the Kannada section there in preparing the bibliography of all the Kannada books published in the 20th century. This work was
done very successfully and the Academy had even appreciated his work through a letter. Since the time he had picked up the habit of reading, A. N. Murthy Rao never stopped his studies. Even while he was teaching he used to devote a lot of time for studying. He had gained a very deep knowledge in Sanskrit and Kannada. While in Shimoga, he had started a serious study of Sanskrit literature. This continued even after he left Shimoga. Almost all the classics in Sanskrit were studied by him. He even learnt the Brahmasutras and Upanishads, Bhagavatgita and Gita Govinda apart from Ramayana and Mahabharatha.

This shows the seriousness he had for learning, because learning a new language at that age and stage of life is not possible to many. We have any number of people who talk about our ancient lore with wrapper knowledge and superficial understanding, where as A. N. Murthy Rao took the trouble seriously learning Sanskrit from the scrap and reached the height of understanding such great works as Brahmasutras. We will have to remember that all the while he had been an agnostic which fact did not deter him from the study of our ancient scriptures.

A. N. Murthy Rao was a deep thinker, he had an inquiring mind and a questioning attitude, since his childhood and this shaped his personality and made him different from others. This nature goaded him to ask fundamental questions about life and to seek answers for them. Though he was not a believer, he did not come in the way of those who believed, in fact he says that if such beliefs could bring out good among human beings, it is a good thing. But his thoughts are always positive and he has faith if not in God, atleast in human goodness. He loved life and also would have loved to have a very sympathetic and understanding God – but he feels that there is no such.
In his autobiography A. N. Murthy Rao refers to a number of his close friends – who one way or the other came very close to him. All these people made him think deep about life, and widened his avenues. People like K Hanumantaraya, K. Anatharamaiah, R. L Narasimhaiah, Nittur Srinivas Rao, Dr. Gopalsway, D. V. G, Dr. Govindaswamy, Ti. Nam. Srikantaiah, and such. He had also earned a number of young friends in his later life. All these people, at one time or the other, exhibited “the milk of human kindness”. Their associations made him wiser and contributed greatly to his being.

A. N. Murthy Rao received a number of awards for his work, in the field of literature. In 1977 he got the Devaraj Bahadur award and D. Litt from the Mysore University. The same year also saw him getting the Rajya Sahitya Academy Award. In 1979 he received the Kendra Sahitya Academy Award for his work “Chitragalu-Patragalu”. In 1984 he presided over the 56th All India Kannada Sahitya Sammelana at Kaivar; he also received the Karnataka Rajyotsava Award. In 1992 he got the prestigious Pampa Award for his book ‘Devaru’ and in 1998 and 1999, he got the Goruru and Sam.Ba Awards respectively. In the year 2000 the Kannada University at Hampe awarded him the ‘Nadoja’ Award and the same year people of Karnataka honoured him by bringing out a felicitation volume for him.

A. N. Murthy Rao lived upto a ripe old age and passed away in his 103 year. As. L. S. Sheshagiri Rao says A. N. Murthy Rao is, “one of those very few men who have a wise head in youth and a young spirit in old age.”

Born on 16th June 1900, he grew with the century and was ahead of his times even at that age.

1. Sheshagiri Rao, L. S., Musings on Men and Matters, Introduction
A. N. Murthy Rao

Introduction to his times – Introduction to his works

A. N. Murthy Rao was born during a transition period. It was a time when the whole of India including the states princely were undergoing tremendous changes. The end of the 19th century and the early 20th century marked important events for Karnataka on the one hand freedom struggle was taking place; it was slowly getting momentum; people with social and political interests were busy motivating and trying to involve common men in these and the common man was getting introduced to education which did not follow the old traditional way of learning but started with western schooling system. People in greater numbers were going to school and the new method of learning – subjects as well as the form created curiosity, fear and desire at the same time. It was an age when of spiritual achievements were soaring high in people like – Ramakrishnaparamahamsa, Vivekananda, Aurobindo etc; researches were being conducted in different fields in which the learning English themselves were taking interest – like the works of dictionary by Kittle, researches by Fleet and Rice etc. These people motivated the local Kannada people to involve themselves in the same. These were the times when A. N. Murthy Rao was of the age of observation and absorption. All these made an indelible impression on the young mind.
A. N. Murthy Rao's early childhood days were spent in Melkote. He roamed around the hills and attended the celebrations in the temple. He would be awake throughout the night to watch the Vairamudi and Rajamudi celebrations and other celebrations in the temple created waves of imaginations in his mind. His life in Melkote created romantic experiences and feelings. Melkote being a very ritualistic place the young mind must have observed a number of superstitious and unexplainable observances which must have posed numerous questions in his mind.

When his father was transferred to Nagamanagala A. N. Murthy Rao was around 10 years old. Soon after, they shifted to Akki Hebbal as a result of the accident met by his father. Akki Hebbal was a small village on the banks of the river Hemavathi. It had a scenic beauty was much enjoyed by A. N. Murthy Rao. The soothing atmosphere of the river bank where A. N. Murthy Rao spent a lot his time must have created a reflective mood in blind beliefs which were overflowing in Akki Hebbal like in any other village in India.

Akki Hebbal and the life there had indelible marks on him. Most of his rebellious ideas started there. It was a quiet and a beautiful place. People there lived in harmony though the difference of the caste system existed, it did not harm any one, as it was quietly accepted. People were not rich therefore the differences between the rich and the poor could not bother them at all. There were no influences of cities and the industrialized world. In any activity the whole community took part. It was a corporate life. However, A. N. Murthy Rao feels that the people in the village, while accepting to lead a quiet life with out interfering with the existing systems, at the same time did not take the trouble to think. It was a certain mental inertia. They did not trouble themselves with questions concerning the
social setup, justice and injustice and so on. Instead, it seems to have been
easier for them to agree and accept the traditional way of life. There were
no external motivations either – such as modern education, reading habits
etc. While at Akki Hebbal, A. N. Murthy Rao did take part in several
religious activities, like the car festival of the temple there. Some times the
Hari Kathe (religious story telling) group and musicians visited the place
on important occasions. A. N. Murthy Rao used to take part as an audience
and enjoyed them. During the festivities in the temple, the priests would
chant the Vedas and Upanishads. Listening to this chanting spell gave a lot
of pleasure to A. N. Murthy Rao. This was his first exposure to music.

More than all this what affected A. N. Murthy Rao seriously was the
treatment given to his father for the fits. Because of the existing superstitions,
instead of giving suitable medical treatment for his father it was assured
that he was possessed. Therefore a priest who was well known to treat
such was brought home. He lived with them for seven months and treated
A. N. Murthy Rao’s father for about one hour every day. A. N. Murthy Rao
was around 10 years and he was a witness to his father’s sufferings and the
treatment given to him. Though this did not cure the father completely, the
frequency and the severity of fits reduced. This happened not because of
the treatment but this would have happened even otherwise in the natural
course. For a few days A. N. Murthy Rao believed (that the treatment would
cure his father) but gradually he lost interest though he did not at that time
lose faith. However this incident must have left a lasting effect on the young
mind of A. N. Murthy Rao. His non-belief in late life could have been a
strong result of his father’s illness. As a young boy he had also believed in
the (Mantra - Tantra) religious chantings and rituals etc. In fact, he was
tensed up with all the others at home when the priest who had to chant
Indrakshi Kavacha (a particular chanting) did not turn up in time. He got disinterested because he did not see anything happen. Thus failure of superstitions repeatedly and the fact that belief were negated again and again went on accumulating and the net result was non-belief. Again, when they went to Nanjangud to perform a vow in the temple, where his father in wet clothes, after a dip in the river had to roll around the temple, only created, even at that age, disgust in A. N. Murthy Rao. Such was the society then. Religious beliefs and superstitions were a part and parcel of the society. Many superstitions like observing proper time to do things (Rahukala, Gulikakala, Yamagandakala etc.), not shaving or performing auspicious ceremonies on Tuesdays, or newmoon days etc. Which were supposed to be inauspicious were rampant. Believing that the movement of the planets and stars affected human life (Ashlesha, Mula etc.) not leaving the place on particular days like Tuesdays etc., existed rampantly and people totally believed in them. These also made A. N. Murthy Rao think. His reflective and analytical mind again and again brought forth such meaningless rituals to question and cross question them. Very soon he also realised that nothing came either by observing or not observing certain things. Like for example at that young age, though the sacred thread ceremony had been performed to him, he stopped performing the sandhya, with interest; instead he would just dip the spoon in the cup once in a while to give the impression that he was doing the ritual but instead his mind would be wandering else where. Similarly during the worship of the family deity which was performed in all grandeur, every one at home had to stay without eating anything until the worship was completed. A. N. Murthy Rao on one such occasion wanted to see what would happen if he did not observe and therefore ate jaggery and pounded rice without anyone's knowledge. Though he was agitated and worried that he would be punished by the
deity, no such thing happened. This was an important stage because though A. N. Murthy Rao did not lose total faith at that time, still the fact that non-observance of certain rituals did no harm, was realised by him. So when A. N. Murthy Rao went to Mysore for education, joined the Weslian school and was exposed to books, started reading, his questioning mind was awakened. Each belief was questioned, his sensitive and enquiring spirit refuted to accept anything without analysing. Thus he broke many a ritual which is generally observed in a traditional, conservative Brahmin household. Like for example he slept on the bed when a birth or death took place among the relatives; shaved at home; cut off his tuft etc., which were all taboos.

After coming to Mysore he also reflected upon and recognised the shortcomings of his village life. Many negative impulses predominated there. 'No' was the answer or the rule for most of the things there. Like for example – do not travel towards south on Wednesdays, do not even wear the shirt when you enter the kitchen or do not eat anything on the ceremony days, do not eat with the people who are foreign returned etc. A. N. Murthy Rao started refusing to observe these. And these shortcomings also made him lose his interest in the village life. These did exist in the cities also. But perhaps they were not as prominent as in the villages. A. N. Murthy Rao's rebellious nature to these came forth when he started his English education. The courage to question and do things which were negated was a result of the English education and exposure to a different culture. The strong walls of negations built around themselves by people did not allow any progress in life. In fact, A. N. Murthy Rao feels that the lack of questioning attitude was impeding progress in the society1. When the family shifted to Mysore

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A. N. Murthy Rao was already in the Wesleyan school. It being a Christian Missionary school, he was exposed to a different religion and culture. This had a further effect upon A. N. Murthy Rao's thinking. The Bible said that Christ is the only saviour, whereas all the other religions also said the same about their own scriptures and Profets. These things started bothering him. He could not raise these questions in front of elders. These doubts remained in his mind.

His writings had enormous impact on the readers and if there was a change in Karnataka, a part of the credit goes to people like A. N. Murthy Rao. Those were also the times when the society was bound by a number of constraints which it had built around itself - one such major constraint was the caste system. A. N. Murthy Rao was a keen observer of this too. As a school-going boy, he being from an orthodox brahmin community was quite well aware of such discriminations in the society. But he did not bother about them. Even while in school he went to his Christian teacher VS's house and had had a cup of tea. Therefore later in life, when the reservations policy was implemented A. N. Murthy Rao felt that it was necessary at least for sometime in the society to give preferences to those who have not had it, so that all may be equal in the society and the differences of various types may be wiped out. Similarly in 1942 when he had the opportunity to visit a religious mutt he said religious mutts which represent various sections of people in society should also help in uplifting the society through building educational institutions, running hospitals etc. Whatever he thought then has come true now.

The study of Geography particularly enchanted him, because it took him to places unknown about which he had only heard through the story

1. Murthy Rao A. N., Sanjegannina Hinnota (విశ్వాసం), p. 140
books that he read. This exposure led him to know about the vastness of the world and this knowledge was lacking among Indians at that time.

Similarly the status of women in the Indian society made him think. Women were no way considered equal to man. They had no position in the society and they had to follow the rules made and implemented by men. Society did everything possible to deprive them of any rights while in Akki Hebbal, A. N. Murthy Rao had had the opportunity of seeing widowed women who had to abstain from all the small pleasures of life as much as even eating twice a day which all the others did and a widow could eat only once a day. When a woman lost her husband, she became almost as bad as an untouchable. She could not lead a normal life; she could not dress herself up, she was considered inauspicious; her marrying again was far from even thoughts. Such and similar aspects of the society made an impression on A. N. Murthy Rao.

The fact that they are the sufferers in the society also might have made him have a soft corner for them. Thus in his works, thoughts and references to women and the picture of the Indian society is often vividly seen. These facts which were common place things to others in the society made him think deeply, probably because of his grandmother who had a lot of influence on him and the other women in the household whom he observed. His inquiring nature made him think about the status of women in a more logical way.

All these aspects took a definite shape in A. N. Murthy Rao's mind, when he was introduced to English learning and books. He could find answers to many of his questions. This was possible because of the renaissance which was taking place in India.
Questioning everything was nothing new to our tradition. But the general atmosphere at that time was not to question anything. This had become a way of life for the Indians. Scientific attitude and inquiring spirit were not, encouraged in our society. Therefore every body thought that religion and traditions were something to be followed blindly in practice and not questioned. The same attitude seems to have existed in Europe during the dark ages. In Europe too the dark ages gave way for renaissance. Similarly we may say that this questioning attitude slowly gave way for renaissance in India and Karnataka in turn and this happened only due to English Education and exposure to Western culture and thought.¹

English education also opened the flood gates of knowledge for A. N. Murthy Rao. It started with the Arabian Nights. He read stories based on history and also, in the school, studied more of European History than Indian. This was because not many books were available to teach children about Indian history. This shows the sad plight of the society which could not even impart the history of the land to its children. In fact at that time people considered Puranas as history, hence Macaulay had commented that “the history of India was nothing but the history of thirty feet people ruling over the land for thirty thousand years”.² Though A. N. Murthy Rao is enraged about his words, he agrees about the ignorance of our people then and also thanks Macaulay for introducing a different system of education, where all subjects necessary to this life are taught.

Then came the situation of Indian languages which were in a pitiable state. Starting from Rabindranath Tagore thousands had related about the

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2. Ibid, p.124
sad plight of Indian languages those days. Awareness about our own languages also came through the works done by the Westerners. In fact when English language and medium were introduced no one even questioned this. English on the other hand gained a very respectable position then. Because the rulers were English, learning their language and get jobs in their offices was a dignified thing. No one even thought of questioning why importance was given to English even in Kannada schools.

The way our people accepted the old traditions blindly, English was also accepted. English was considered the epitome of merit and one who learnt English was considered the most intelligent. To learn English was every ones aim. All facilities were given in schools to learn English. While English had the best position in schools, Kannada had the least importance. Almost all subjects were taught in English. A Kannada teacher was paid less than the other teachers. In most schools a Kannada teacher dressed very poorly; no body expected him to dress better. The students did not think that a Kannada teacher should be smart. A. N. Murthy Rao even refers to the noise that was made in the Kannada teachers class, no body would listen to him and the class could not be controlled by him. Even our own people did not encourage Kannada. The "Hadya Dasappa Prize" in memory of a student given in Weslian School was given to a student who excelled in English and not in Kannada.¹

These aspects only reflect the poor condition of Kannada language. It had no importance; even in the heart of the Karnataka state, where the Maharaja ruled, this was the condition. A. N. Murthy Rao studied under such circumstances and his sensitive mind was sharp enough to note the differences.

¹Murthy Rao A. N., Sanjegannina Hinnota (ಸಂಜೆಗಾಂಬ ಹಿಂನೋಟ), p. 130-131
It tells us how Kannada was neglected and only a creative few – A. N. Murthy Rao being one - could recognise this. This was the situation in general. All students faced the same situation; but only a few like A. N. Murthy Rao noted these and later reacted because they wanted to bring in changes in our society, not by forgetting our own language, but by enriching it and also by carrying it to the rest of the public. The times in which A. N. Murthy Rao lived and studied, motivated in him a desire to do something for our language. This did not happen all of a sudden in him too. But all the above mentioned aspects slowly started working in his mind.

Another sad plight of Kannada was not having enough books to be taught. If any one wanted to learn Kannada, most of the times they had to only go back to the old classics of Kannada. Modern Kannada had not developed and in fact a proper prose style in Kannada language was lacking. Kannada had not attained a stage where in everything including the sciences and treatises and the other subjects could be imparted in a smooth, understandable, spoken language. Unless this was achieved teaching in Kannada medium was not possible.¹

Starting from his school days these aspects slowly accumulated in the mind of A. N. Murthy Rao. As he grew and reflected upon these matters, he could think and analyse the situations, the plight of Kannada and therefore think of contributing too. He enriched Kannada, learning from English, mixing his knowledge with his own experiences and then serving the mother tongue, like the way his mentor B. M. Srikantiah had asked his students to do.

While the English education system developed independent thinking,

¹Murthy Rao A. N., Sanjegannina Hinnota (ಸಂಜೆಗಾಣದ ಹಿಂ್ಣುಟ), p. 134

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inquiring attitude and weighing and examining a thing, it also motivated the students into self-respect, to look around themselves, learn about their own language and culture and at the same time pick up all the good from the others and give up all that was negative in our own. These were the times when A. N. Murthy Rao started his learning. In his college days he recognised these aspects more. Clearly, though when he was studying he did not choose to study Kannada in the college, but slowly his attitude towards Kannada changed. That's when he started translating into Kannada from other foreign languages, and even introduced Kannada people to other's literatures (like for example Tartuff from French; an English story of Mark Twain and also translated the history of American literature) and even participated in the workshops held by Sri G. Hanumantarayaru (the Professor of Philosophy who later started the Prasaranga), who started the University of Teachers Association (UTA) and went to different places to impart lectures on various subjects for the common people.

In the 1930's A. N. Murthy Rao started reading a lot about the freedom movement. There were also subtle changes in the atmosphere of the college. The fever of the freedom movement was catching up.¹

While A. N. Murthy Rao was teaching in Shimoga, the Quit India movement (1942) took place. Though A. N. Murthy Rao did not participate directly in it, as he was the principle of the college at that time, he indirectly supported it. The students were given suitable advice and in fact two of his sons participated in the movement.²

In his essay - "Mysore in the thirties" (The Literary Scene), he gives a vivid picture of the state of Kannada at that time. "Everybody rendered lip

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¹Murthy Rao A. N., Sanjegannina Hinnota (ಸಂಜೆಗಣ್ಣೀ ಹಿಂನೊಟ), p. 305
²Ibid, p. 324-325
service to the mother tongue”. Kannada did not lead them anywhere; if one spoke Kannada that meant that one did not know enough English to speak. Kannada did not have the variety of writing that English had. That was when B. M. Srikantaiah started the movement for Kannada slowly, in his college and spread it all over. He inspired youngsters to create; the urge to create was not there. That is when A. N. Murthy Rao with others decided to regenerate Kannada.

So after study of all this we may arrive at the conclusion that the times in which A. N. Murthy Rao lived, there were tremendous influences of the western education, culture and history which were affecting people. The sensitive among them, took them seriously and reacted suitably. And these were the ones who caused changes in the society in Karnataka later; A. N. Murthy Rao being an important one here.

However A. N. Murthy Rao feels that independent thinking, enquiring attitude and weighing and examining spirit etc. Started among Indians only because of the changed system of education that is – English medium as well as introductions to geography, history and such other worldly subjects. In this context A. N. Murthy Rao, thanks Maculay and seems to have changed the fate Raja Rammohan Roy for deciding to give English education to Indians. This seems to have changed the fate of Indian future. Such were the times during which A. N. Murthy Rao lived and started his life. All these aspects of a changing society affected his being and thinking. His thinking reflected in his writings and affected at least that section of society in which he came into contact.
Introduction to A. N. Murthy Rao’s Works

A. N. Murthy Rao and others who were in the Maharaja's College, (along with B. M. Srikantiah, Thi. Nam. Sri., D L N., Kuvempu, Na. Kasturi, Shivarama Shastri, Dr. H. L. Hariappa, B. S. Keshavan, T. S. Venkannaiah and others) in the thirties were a witness to the sad plight of Kannada. Everyone preferred not to speak in Kannada. If any one spoke Kannada he was considered not having the fluency to speak English. Everyone knew Kannada to be their mother tongue and also were aware that they were not doing anything to serve Kannada. They were well aware of the fact that Kannada was in a sad state. But still they did not do anything. When this reached its height, B. M. Srikantiah had decided to jump into the arena and start fighting for Kannada. A. N. Murthy Rao and others too decided to do the same. They considered B. M. Srikantiah their leader and decided to do what was necessary to regenerate it. Most of those who took part in this campaign were all educated in English literature.

The lack of variety in Kannada literature and the fact that Kannada could offer only the old traditional writings of the language – far from the reach of a common man made it unapproachable. These English teachers

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1. Murthy Rao A. N., Musings on Men and Matters, p. 55
2. Ibid, p. 57
took up the task of changing the situation. The credit for having motivated those youngsterst to take up this task goes to B. M. Srikantaiah.

A. N. Murthy Rao started writing in Kannada after the 'renaissance had been switched on'¹ and this happened after the publication of B.M. Srikantaiah's 'English Geethegalu', in 1927. A. N. Murthy Rao has written in almost all prose forms. However, he is best known for the personal essays. Kannada literature did not have much variety those days. So much so, all of those who started writing in Kannada seriously tried to enrich it, by writing in as many forms of literature as possible. His first Kannada writing was the translation of a short story by Mark Twain; and this was published in the Maharaja's College Magazine. Ti. Nam. Sri. had appreciated it, without knowing that it was written by A. N. Murthy Rao had used the pen name "Vamana" there.

A. N. Murthy Rao has written a number of essays. They can be divided into two parts — Personal and critical essays. In the personal essays he deals with various aspects of life. There is always a humorous personal touch in these essays. They also include essays about places like Akki Hebbal, Bangalore etc. These give a very good picture of those places at those times. It recreates those days with all the beauty of the place. While in Akki Hebbal, it is the beauty of village life, in Bangalore it is the changing urban atmosphere which is touched upon. In many of his personal essays, we see a gentle family life; happy and humorous, almost like short stories, enchanting and lively. In these essays, Lalita is the heroine. The speaker describes several situations in the family life which make attractive narration. For example, the honeymoon of the couple undertaken after several years of

¹Murthy Rao A. N., Musings on Men and Matters, p. 61
married life, so as to be just by themselves and teaching English to the beloved Lalitha. Some essays have the personal touch, where his own experiences are narrated, with nostalgia. Like for example: common room of the Maharaja's College, My experiences as a writer, experiences of a teacher, Reading and Me etc. There are a number of essays which are written about people whom he came across; interesting aspects about them as he saw them. This has happened more vividly in his book, "Chitragalu - Patragalu" (Pictures and Letters) which received the Kendra Sahitya Academy award.

Chitragalu - Patragalu is a unique work of writing, in the first part of which A. N. Murthy Rao sketches a number of great personalities with whom he came across. Some of them were his teachers, some others colleagues and friends. Most of them influenced him in one way or the other way. Teachers like Rev. R. W. Boot, D. N. Murthy, and Deshikacharya etc., were the ones who shaped his life in the early days at school. The last mentioned induced patriotism through his excited talks. The major influence was that of D. N. Murthy. A. N. Murthy Rao, at that time had got into the habit of reading and this he did without any discretion. He used to read a lot of English books and it was his teacher D. N. Murthy who gave a direction to his reading habit. He remembers many tender moments of his younger days when he spent time with his teacher D. N. Murthy, who treated A. N. Murthy Rao almost as his equal when it came to reading and discussions. D. N. Murthy was the first to channelise his mind towards reading proper books. This introduction to English literature had a lasting effect on A. N. Murthy Rao. He took to it very easily; enjoyed it and in fact became inseparable, having chosen it as his career. However this in no way reduced his love for Kannada. Though he did not have the flare for Kannada in the
beginning, the atmosphere of the common room, his contact with the friends there, brought him very close to Kannada. He studied Kannada literature deeply.

This part of the book unwinds the history of Mysore with particular reference to the Maharaja’s College. In the bygone days Maharaja's College played a very important role in the matter of education and culture of the place. The cultural society of Mysore, rested on the teachers of the Maharaja’s College, who were the pillars of it. Mysore university was considered the Oxford of India. Therefore to know about those who belonged, grew up and worked here is to know a part of history. This work is well done in those sketches of A. N. Murthy Rao. He spent the best years of his life time there. All his teachers, friends and colleagues, whom he recollects here, were great men of scholarship. They left behind culturally a rich heritage.

S. Radhakrishnan was A. N. Murthy Rao's teacher in the Maharaja's college. A. N. Murthy Rao had chosen to study philosophy, only to become S. Radhakrishnan's student. In this sketch about S. Radhakrishnan, A. N. Murthy Rao tells us many instances with the great master. S. Radhakrishnan was responsible to a large extent to change the Westerners' opinion about Indians. He was so revered everywhere that after his lecture, even in the West, the audience would stand up to pay him a standing ovation.¹ Such was his mastery over the subject. Similarly speaking about N. S. Subbarayaru, the principal, A. N. Murthy Rao writes about his interest in the Kannada movement, though he did not participate in it directly. He was proud of the fact that B. M. Srikantiah, who belonged to his college (Maharaja's) was the leader of Kannada movement. The book also throws

¹ Murthy Rao A. N., Chitragalu-Patragalu (ಮೃತ್ಯು ರಾವ್‌ ಚಿತ್ರಗಳು-ಪತ್ರಗಳು), p.25

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light upon the personalities of teachers like J. C. Rollo, A. B. Mackintosh and B. M. Srikantiah. Among them J. C. Rollo had impressed him much as a teacher. Unfortunately, though there was no bitterness, still the fact that India was preparing for freedom through its agitations and the fact that J. C. Rollo was a British, made it impossible to compromise with him and to bid him a happy farewell. Of course A. N. Murthy Rao regretted it later. A. N. Murthy Rao refers to a number of incidents to establish his enthusiasm in teaching and love for his subject.

B. M. Srikantiah impressed him in many ways. In fact, A. N. Murthy Rao has a book written about his teacher, B. M. Srikantiah. However he analyses the personality of his teacher without any prejudices and hence he can even be critical about him. Inspite of all his greatness, A. N. Murthy Rao feels that B. M. Srikantiah must have suffered certain complex. For while he was a superb teacher in kannada literature, his imparting was not the same in English literature. Therefore many a time his English literature classes would become a boring marathon. This also perhaps was due to the fact that he would digress from the point beyond limits. Where as, his Kannada literature classes were attended by students who did not even belong there. According to A. N. Murthy Rao, this could be perhaps, due to the complex developed by B. M. Srikantiah because the general opinion in those days was that only a teacher who received education in England could teach English literature better. While B. M. Srikantiah was far superior to many an English man, still he was not given a senior professor's position. In this context, it would be proper to observe a point of contrast. A. N. Murthy Rao, was also not given a similar senior position as he well deserved, like B. M. Srikantiah. Still, there was no complex or craving in him. B. M. Srikantiah represents the earliest days of renaissance. Knowledge had to
be brought from outside then and to feel respected was necessary to boost oneself. But later, because of the same renaissance – as an after effect Indians – seem to have developed a stronger sense of self respect as represented in the personality of A. N. Murthy Rao.

The write up about B. M. Srikantiah also traces the development of Kannada language, literature, movement for Kannada and also the Kannada state. It is also not just a sketch of B. M. Srikantiah as a person – but it is a critical analysis of the personality and the works of the person. Both the negative and the positive qualities are discussed. While with the positive there is love and regard expressed, the negative descriptions present a gentle but firm criticism of the man and his works. He says that today we need to be grateful to B. M. Srikantiah for all the services he rendered to Kannada people and the language. He infused people with energy and enthusiasm and charged them with the desire to work for Kannada.¹

B. M. Srikantiah induced creativity in slumbering people and whatever he did was the dire necessity of the times. The monotonous literature to which Kannada people were used to, was changed overnight by the works of B. M. Srikantiah. New breath was given to a neglected dying language. The pitiable picture of mother Kannada unveiled by B. M. Srikantiah, slapped the Kannadigas in the face. This resulted in the renaissance of Kannada language. This story of history has been traced by A. N. Murthy Rao in his writeups about B. M. Srikantiah.

While speaking about the contribution of B. M. Srikantiah to Kannada, A. N. Murthy Rao also reflects upon the lacuna in the character of

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¹ Murthy Rao A. N., Chitragalu-Patragalu (చిత్రలు-పత్రలు), p.82
B. M. Srikantiah — which was to gain recognition and honour. In a great personality like B. M. Srikantiah this was a definite short coming. B. M. Srikantiah was immensely pleased when he was given the title of ‘Rajaseva Prasakta’. He expressed it openly and in a few of his poems (odes especially), he also thanked the king of Mysore again and again which was out of place for a person of his stature.

A. N. Murthy Rao finds an explanation for this deplorable short coming in his favourite teacher. He says that reverence to Kingship and Kings was not unusual or uncommon those days. In fact people were taught to respect and honour the kings. At the same time while he worked for the language and the land, he was also conscious of the fact that if he could get the help of the ruling master, he would also be able to work better. Changes could be brought more easily when the king wished them. These and such thoughts might have prompted B. M. Srikantaih to eulogies the king in his poems and speeches. However the king whom he praised was also worthy of such words (Krishna Raja Wodeyar IV). Considering all this A. N. Murthy Rao feels that B. M. Srikantiah’s attitude towards king and kingship could be overlooked. Nevertheless through this attitude of B. M. Srikanthiah, was normal during those days, the freedom movement seems to have changed the attitude of the people gradually towards the kings. It was perhaps due to this fact that A. N. Murthy Rao and his friends found B. M. Srikantiah’s attitude rather odd.

A lot is told about K. Hanumanthaiah, the former Chief Minister of Karnataka and his works done to uplift Kannada and its development. The people of Karnataka had to be made aware of the richness of their language and this was done by K. Hanumanthaiah, through establishing the department of Literature and Culture. A. N. Murthy Rao also was made a
director to this department later. A. N. Murthy Rao devoted all his time and energy in serving the purpose of working for Kannada. At that stage Kannada needed to be nourished and taken care of. If not, Kannada probably would not have reached the position that it has reached today. All these aspects of the revival of a language are a part of history today and A. N. Murthy Rao is important not only as a creative writer but also as a person who has recorded all these. All the welfare works done for the good of Kannada then, not only made the language breathe with vitality but also created a new sensation of the people for their language and culture.

'Torvasurigalodane' is a small book of criticism by A. N. Murthy Rao which is small in size but great in content. In this, A. N. Murthy Rao analyses some of the incidents of old Sanskrit classic dramas such as the 'Abandonment of Sita', by Rama of the Epic Ramayana and the way the same topic is treated by some of the other dramatists such as Bhavabhuthi and Kalidasa. In another essay, Kalidasa's poetic skill is critically analysed by selecting only four stanzas. These successfully picture the greatness of a poet like Kalidasa. However what is important for us here, is the fact that such books as this were rare in Kannada literature. Literary criticism itself was a new field here. And criticism is not either a total condemning of a work nor is it blind appreciation. It is analysing a work without any prejudice and this is done very successfully by A. N. Murthy Rao.

Travelogue in Kannada literature started around the 20th century. Almost all Kannada writers who visited places have written about their experiences. A. N. Murthy Rao has also contributed to this form of literature. In his travelogue "Apara Vayaskana America Yatre", A. N. Murthy Rao analyses the Western culture, social set-up, people and their mentality, their nature, society as well as their economic conditions. Some of these, he does
as an insider as a result of the fact that he is able to get a closer insight into the Western life as a family member. This has been possible because his sons have married Western women. He analyses the social, economic and domestic background of his America relations and thus presents the rituals and traditions of two different cultures.

Travelogue is a very old form of literature. Travellers like Hiuen Tsang, Fahiyan and Abdur Razak who visited India have written a lot about India and the life of the people here. But Indians doing the same and particularly in kannada was very rare and almost nil., mainly because they were not allowed to go out of the country or cross the sea. It was a taboo and in modern times, when things changed, many not only went abroad but also wrote about what they saw and experienced in the other countries. These experiences widen the knowledge of the reader. A. N. Murthy Rao's travelogue is not just a travelogue, it is also a description of an experience. It has both the qualities of a travelogue and a diary.

A. N. Murthy Rao has enriched Kannada language through his translations. Translations of books from different languages is an important literary activity to enrich the literature of any given language. With this not only the quantity of works in a literature increases but it also creates a cosmopolitan view of life, with out confining one's knowledge to one's life and people. The view widens and new vistas are created for one's imagination. For this to happen translations are very necessary for a language.

A. N. Murthy Rao has translated the 'History of American literature' which gives a picture of a growing civilizations and reads like a story. Many thrilling aspects of the history are recreated. He has also translated some poems which exhibit the excellence of the translator.
The main material of the book, 'The Last Days of Socrates' is from J. F. Church's 'Introduction to the Trial and Death of Socrates'. The writer has followed the original in the sequence of presentations. The translations is extremely interesting and gives a wonderful picture of the philosopher. This book is not only a contribution to Kannada language but also to that of philosophy.

Another book of short stories called 'Yodhana Punaragamana' is another translation of short stories written by Constantine Trinyoph, Erich Hudgins, Nathamal Howthrone, Edger Allan Poe and Washington Irwing. All the stories here are lively and he book along with others has found its own place in Kannada literature. In 1948, A. N. Murthy Rao translated a few more stories called "Western shout stories". These stories which are written by great writers such as Charles Dickens, Washington Irwing, Guy De Mupassant, R. L. Stevenson, Alphans Dode, A. D. Belzac and Leo Tolstoy, have found a place in the literature of world stories. The translations had definitely enriched Kannada literature.

'India today and tomorrow' is a book of speeches by Jawaharlal Nehru. The translation not only reveals the eruditions of the writer but also that of the translator. Nehru had delivered, 'Azad Memorial Speeches' in 1959. The same was translated by A. N. Murthy Rao, without losing much time (January 1960). It gives a cultural history of India. A. N. Murthy Rao obviously wanted all the thoughts of Nehru to reach Kannadigas and full justice seems to have been done. Nehru had discussed the cultural background of India, the civilizations here, the different religious and their influence on people and such other aspects. Later he has also touched upon he political aspects such as the importance of democracy and its necessity to include the best of communism as well as capitalism. The book also tells
us about Gandhiji, his principles - mainly his principles of non-violence which is very relevant to the modern world, the position of India at the international level etc.. The book is thought provoking and such thought provoking subjects increase the quality of language. This contribution were made by A. N. Murthy Rao.

An adopted drama like 'Ashadabhuti' by A. N. Murthy Rao, does not remain just a translation in the hands of A. N. Murthy Rao. The original drama has been beautifully adopted to kannada language and literature to suit Indian circumstances. This the other French drama translated by A. N. Murthy Rao, have not only enriched Kannada language but also have paved way for drawing into Kannada from other languages other than English too.

The small book 'Ganavihara' tells us about A. N. Murthy Rao's love for classical music. He had an ear for classical music since his childhood; he was a keen listener. Mysore was a place exactly suited for that kind of taste. A. N. Murthy Rao had friends around him who had an excellent taste for music and people like Rallapalli Anantha Krishna Sharma, were also great musicians. Being in the AIR for some time was an added advantage for A. N. Murthy Rao. This book gives expression to the best use made by A. N. Murthy Rao of all these opportunities.

J. C. Rollo had introduced the subject 'literary criticism' in English literature classes. The task of preparing the syllabus was given to A. N. Murthy Rao for which sake A. N. Murthy Rao made all necessary preliminary preparations by studying a number of works on the subject like a studious student. He also gave a number of lectures on the subject. He was appointed a member of the syllabus framing committee (Board of Studies) and when
the discussions for the prepared syllabus come up, the syllabus and the bibliography framed by A. N. Murthy Rao was unanimously accepted without any alternations. This only shows the excellent work that was done the lore for the subjects as well as the honesty of the work.

A. N. Murthy Rao refuses to identify himself with any movement; therefore with renaissance too. But whatever he did for Kannada literature in itself was his contribution to its renaissance. For example in the early days he never wrote letters in Kannada; when he started doing it, it was so valuable that today we have the literary form of letter writing. He has coined several words in Kannada equivalent to English. When we look into the English language and its richness, we realise that it grew so vast because of its openness. English whenever possible imbibed words from other languages and made them its own. It did not oppose a foreign language; on the other hand, it heartily welcomed any word which could be adopted into English easily. English is rich today because of the large number of imported words from different languages and those have become a part and parcel of that language. They have been anglicised. This is a welcome quality for any language A. N. Murthy Rao has done this for Kannada through his Kannada words which are equivalent to those in English; thus he has through such words like – Vedanaantaka (amnethesia), Madumurivu (divorce), Shunya Shubraka (vaccum cleaner), Hullugattari (lawn mover), Kshanasidda Coffee (instant Coffee) etc. increased the effectiveness of the language.

His book 'Musings on Man and Matters' consists of the separate pieces of writings, written at different times. They exhibit A. N. Murthy Rao's ever active intellect. They echo his philosophy of life, love and beauty.
A. N. Murthy Rao studied English literature but remained a pure Kannadiga. He never gave emotional speeches to motivate people, but wrote a number of works which would be remembered and read with enthusiasm by people. He did not write for Kannada but by writing in that language he achieved the same. The horizon of Kannada language and literature expanded due to his works.

While B. M. Srikantiah worked for adult education A. N. Murthy Rao worked for children's education through his "Shishu Sahitya".

A. N. Murthy Rao may be compared to K. S. Narasimhaswamy in his attitude to life, mainly when it came to harmonious family life. His writings particularly the Autobiography and the Lalita Prabhandagalu, his lively and energetic language prompts one to accept life as it is without grumbling and in fact enjoy it devoid of complaints. Almost the same is seen in the poems of K. S. Narasimhaswamy. They present a beautiful picture of a happy married life and that life also reflects deep Indian culture. Therefore we may call A. N. Murthy Rao, an ambassador of our culture in the literary world. There is humour in both the writers and humor is not boisterous - it is subtle and vivid at the same time.

As a translator A. N. Murthy Rao is excellent. His translations of the dramas of Molier (Tartuff and Le bourgeois gentilhomme) stand out not as translations but almost as independent, original works. They have been adapted by A. N. Murthy Rao to Indian conditions and society. This has been done marvellously so that while the beauty of the original is retained, the subtlety of the Indian is clearly introduced; at the same time, it exhibits the fact that Indian or otherwise, human mentality is the same. The universal aspects in man is indirectly suggested. It is a parody on contemporary
Indian society. A. N. Murthy Rao was a critic of society and therefore he was prompted to translate the play and adapt it to Indian situations - qualities of Indian contemporary society. There by he exposed the contemporary urban society.

He may not have been aware of it but he was a critic alright unawares he is a critic.

The book Devaru” (God) by A. N. Murthy Rao, caused a sensation in the literary world of Kannada. The thought provoking book gives expression to A. N. Murthy Rao’s opinions about God, customs, rituals, traditions and Indian culture. A. N. Murthy Rao is not a believer but neither does he call himself an atheist. He doubts the existence of God. He feels there is no necessity of any external pressure for man to do good and think good. Because doing good in itself is godliness according to A. N. Murthy Rao. He looks at all the religious rituals and activities with a humorous out look. The number of Gods who exist in Indian theology gives ample chance for a person like A. N. Murthy Rao to have a good laugh, reflect and even think deeply about Indianness and philosophy of life. All the light hearted writings make even the reader smile, but yet think about the matter seriously. At the same time the Indian concept of God and the rituals connected with that are also artistic, says A. N. Murthy Rao. Because the religious festivals and celebrations call for a lot of artistic approach. This is liked by A. N. Murthy Rao.
A. N. Murthy Rao and Renaissance

A. N. Murthy Rao was born in a transition period. 1900 retained the traces of the 19th century, looking forward to a new century and new times. The new one was full of hopes, aspirations as well as troubles and turmoils. In India on the national level, Indian freedom movement was picking up and at the level of different provinces, each province was trying to shape itself into a cultural and lingual unity. In Kannada land, the language and literature were undergoing tremendous changes. It was into the process of renaissance. There were changes noticed in the fields of education, society and politics. Along with Kannada renaissance, and as an extension, unification movement also started. A. N. Murthy Rao was a witness to all this. Being educated in a mission school, having studied English and French, he was exposed to the western culture language, literature and culture. Inspite of being born and brought up in a conservative, Brahmin family, his exposure to the western culture had a very positive influence on him. He had a sensitive, a very positive and a sharp mind. Where being with both cultures, he could weigh both their positive and negative aspects. He was also bold enough to reject whatever was not good for the total welfare of a being or a society or those which did not come with in the field of inquisitiveness and reflections. From this point A. N. Murthy Rao's bold steps that he took in his personal life have made a impact on a society which
even today holds on to, or does not totally reject the blind beliefs and rituals. Therefore his reflections of our society, the exposure that he gave them through his decisions, criticism etc., appear very important for the well being of a healthy society.

He had come from a rural background to a place like Mysore for his schooling. Even before he entered the school, he had been wondering at the way of life in a remote village like Akki Hebbal.

He no doubt enjoyed there; his childhood, inspite of his father's illness had been a carefree one there. But several social bindings made him think or even before thinking, they prompted him to rebel. He was a born rebel. Social changes or tiny reactions to the present social set-up was seen in him very early. Like his eating beaten rice and jaggery on the festival day of the family deity; not performing the rituals of 'Sandhya' with conviction and such others. In all there as a young boy he was trying to defy the social systems. Later on coming to Mysore brought in many more of such changes.

The influence of English language and literature was very great when he started going to the Wesleyan Mission School. The first that attracted him there was the exposure to the books. The reading habit introduced by a companion, and the world of imaginations it created went a long way with A. N. Murthy Rao. The story of 'The Arabian Nights' made him crave for more and more books. This thirst was quenched by his school library, from where he could procure many English books. Fortunately or unfortunately, English books were the only ones easily available then, General, common and easy Kannada writing as it exists today, never existed then. So that A. N. Murthy Rao became close with English books and literature. This exposure to English books, English education and western
atmosphere, slowly started affecting his thinking. Many things of our culture appeared funny and meaning less. Though the beauty of the festivities etc., attracted him the observance itself lost meaning. D. N. Murthy, his English teacher in the school, not only channalised his reading habits, but also treated him almost as a friend. This friendship further encouraged his learning. Here again his rebellious attitude had an upper hand. He had a cup of tea in one of his teacher's house who was a Christian. Similarly at home he started shaving himself which was a taboo in those days – where auspicious days and times were allotted for a personal aspect like shaving. The touch of a barber called for a cleansing bath (after pollution) like shaving and again whenever there was a birth or a death among the blood relations in the family for a certain number of days several rituals were followed- not sleeping on the bed being one of them. A. N. Murthy Rao even in those days would just discreetly sleep on the bed, with out bothering about all that. Here was the rebel awake again. These things done by A. N. Murthy Rao, appear so natural now (a century past) that we may very well say that he was much ahead of his times.

During his prime years several changes were witnessed in Kannada literature. When he began his studies, there were not many Kannada books available. Students had to be fed only with the old Kannada literature, which had become stagnant. If there was any change seen in any writings, they were very few and negligible. The language was not rich enough to be prescribed for higher studies. This position earlier was taken away by Sanskrit. But when B. M. Srikantaiah and his contemporaries came on the scene, the whole situation started changing. B. M. Srikantaiah was the forerunner of renaissance. The movement he started spread all over the Kannada land; Kannada achieved the status of the language of the state.
and the state also came into existence as a result of the existence of the language. Therefore today the state and the language are supportive of each other. Kannada language which witnessed the renaissance as a result of the influence of English, today has gone through many stages. His thoughts about these aspects had a great impact on the society in Karnataka.

A. N. Murthy Rao was a direct student of B. M. Srikantaiah; seen the works and activities of his teacher very closely. He had the sharpness to recognise the positive and the negative aspects in his teacher in some of his works – as a result of the teachers's personality. When it came to language and literature, he had no doubts about B. M. Srikantaiah's works and his intentions. A. N. Murthy Rao's only objection about B. M. Srikantaiah was his attitude towards the kingship and people in position. This apart, though A. N. Murthy Rao refuses to recognise himself as belonging to any movement, still we as readers can say that he belongs to the Navodaya (renaissance) literature but did not stop at that, in the sense his writings which started during the times of Kannada renaissance have continued almost until the end of the century. During this time many literary movements also continued in Kannada literature. A. N. Murthy Rao's writings very well reveal that he is much involved with life; any thing less idealistic than life itself does not attract him. In his creative works a reflections of life of the times that he lived are very vivid. Speaking about B. M. Srikantaiah, A. N. Murthy Rao had said that, "the talent of B. M. Srikantaiah would respond to the rhythm of a great creative work, but in itself cannot create. That was the quality of his creativity". This quality is called as 'responsive imagination' by A. N. Murthy Rao and what B. M.

1. Murthy Rao A. N., Chitragalu-Patragalu (ಚಿತ್ರಗಳು - ಪತ್ರಗಳು), p.81
Srikantaiah could not do according to A. N. Murthy Rao was called 'creative imagination'. But the creativity of A. N. Murthy Rao from this point of view was quite different. His responses to life, to the activity around him, his opinions and philosophy etc., are well expressed in his writings and we may very well place him among the renaissance writers, not just to categorise him but to lead to the fact that he enriched and influenced Kannada language and literature and through that the thoughts and actions of Kannadigas. In fact the aspects of renaissance and the modern outlook are well represented in his works at the same time. While his books like the, 'Lalitha Prabhandagalu', a book of essays, is an example of renaissance literature, the book, ‘Devaru’, God, in its essence represents modern, rationalistic thinking. Unlike V. K. Gokak, he is not too totally stuck with tradition and culture, nor is he a teacher like V. K. Gokak in his writings. His philosophy appears to leave everything for the reader's selection. He is open to changes and even welcomes them if they are necessary. For example in his letters to his American daughter-in-law, he writes about the times he spent when her parents and relatives. He is considered a part of their family by them and that is more because of the openness expressed by A. N. Murthy Rao. He becomes one with them, and tries to give them a true picture of India. A. N. Murthy Rao not only went abroad but also accepted the white daughters-in-law whole heartedly. This was directly due to the impact of renaissance. This influenced many others. We could perhaps say that A. N. Murthy Rao's outlook is more modern than that of V. K. Gokak.

The very work, (Chitragalu- Patragalu) 'Sketches and Letters' is a special one. While a part of it describes the people he came across and with whom he became close, the other part is a collection of letters written by A. N. Murthy Rao, mostly to his close friend, T. N. Srikantaiah and one or two to
his own family members. Publishing of letters was new to Kannada literature, as A. N. Murthy Rao himself says. Earlier Masti had published a similar collections, but those were letters written by others to him. In this case A. N. Murthy Rao was collecting his own letters to his friend. Therefore A. N. Murthy Rao himself feels that it would be the first of its kind in kannada literature.

In the letters a number of different aspects are dealt with. Some pertaining to his professional life, discussions about his teachers and associates and many social aspects. The first irrelevant here. But the second and third gives us some idea about society and people those days. The values they held, the ideals they had and the works they did. These pictures of people recreate a world totally lost for us. The atmosphere in the college was one of total devotion of the teachers. They did their best to educate themselves in this work and life, they seem to have held the highest ideal. People like S. Radhakrishnan, J. C. Rollo, Mackintosh and others enjoyed their work of teaching, were devoted to the profession and this is depicted by A. N. Murthy Rao. Such sketches not only recreate a lost world, but also tell us about the perceptions of the writer. To Kannada literature such sketches were new. D. V. Gundappa in some of his books like, 'Kelavaru Sarvajanikaru' (Some Public Personalities) for example, has created the picture of the society through the picture of the persons. The same is done by A. N. Murthy Rao. Study of personalities calls for an unbiased outlook. A. N. Murthy Rao exhibits this. For example in his opinion about J. C. Rollo, for whom he had a great regard, he analyses his western character and allegiance to the British rule, which made him disregard the cry for freedom for India. This attitude made A. N. Murthy Rao, so unhappy about his favourite teacher, that he did not even bid him farewell when J. C. Rollo
retired and went away to England. Similarly he is a harsh critic of B. M. Srikantaiah, who once again was his well-admired teacher. B. M. Srikantaiah's attitude of being too polite to kingship was a matter of fun for some of his colleagues and students. It did not suit his scholarship and A. N. Murthy Rao boldly condemns this, though he later analyses this attitude and finds justification for B. M. Srikantaiah being so. However such writings exhibit a change from the routine, outdated way of thinking. He has regard for his teachers, but he also wants to be fair in his judgement - here peeps in the changed way of thinking. In these sketches he also traces the development of Kannada and Kannada movement. The book is from that point a historical document. In his sketch about Ti. Nam. Srikantaiah, he speaks about the fact that no one among the teaching faculty in the Maharaja's college, though all of them were very good with Kannada language, ever tried writing in Kannada. They either did not have the confidence or there was no impetus for writing in Kannada. The only person who did it inspite of all odds was Sri Kuvempu. In fact D. L. Narasimhachar had once commented upon this and said, that they should all start writing in Kannada and if there was any worth in it, it would survive and otherwise perish. But the attempt had to be made. Such topics indicate the state Kannada language and literature were in. So much so any valuable writing in Kannada would be a contributions there. From this point of view, writing letters in Kannada is also a contribution to literature.

When we come to the second part of the book which includes a number of letters written by A. N. Murthy Rao to Ti. Nam. Srikantaiah, a world of the past is again recreated. It not only tells us about many a scholar who

1. Murthy Rao A. N., Chitragalu-Patragalu (遨舫 -, 遨舫), p.95
lived then, but also a lot about the style of Kannada language. The book itself was published in 1978. But the letters were written from around the year 1940. They spread up to the year 1961. These were written to his friend Ti. Nam. Srikantaiah, another great name in Kannada literature. A. N. Murthy Rao's language runs very smooth, simple, and constantly laced with humour. They also tell us a lot about education in Karnataka. In fact there are references to the increasing number of colleges in different places of Kannada land. Apart from this the language itself is very modern which was rather uncommon those days. In one of the letters A. N. Murthy Rao refers to the fact that he generally wrote in English, because he did not care for the old fashioned style of Kannada letter writing.

We may here remember the fact that several letters of great writers in English literature have been preserved and published - letters of Keats, Charles Lamb etc. They make their own contribution to the language and literature. Such development was seen in the letters of A. N. Murthy Rao. In the present day, while letter writing itself is perishing, these letters hold an important position in the development of the language. They also reflect the society. In one of his letters which A. N. Murthy Rao wrote in Kannada he refers to the fact that it was rarely that people wrote informal letters in Kannada in those days.¹

A. N. Murthy Rao also says that, that was the time when Kannada was changing its style - in writings it was undergoing a change in which English had a lot of influence. The informal writing in Kannada letters were adopted by people like A. N. Murthy Rao.² Their style was natural, not bookish and close to the spoken language. The changes brought into the language then,

¹ Murthy Rao A. N., Chitragalu-Patragalu (ಸೇಳ್ಯ ಪಟ್ಟಾಳು - ಸೇಳ್ಯ ಪಟ್ಟಾಳು), p.119
² Ibid, p. 120
did not spoil the language, instead they nourished the language; variety was introduced. Though these changes appeared unnatural then, gradually in a matter of four to six years they found a place and appeared very natural. Thus writing letters in Kannada language had a many fold help. It made Kannada popular as a written language because many people would write letters. Secondly, Kannada achieved a desired status of spoken language even while writing. This was easy to write because the elaborate writing of a formal letter was cut short. Similarly because of such writings, language attains a certain elasticity which increases the utility of the language. All these find an opening only when a leader does it. A. N. Murthy Rao and his friends were such leaders. Because of them today we have a lively language.

The book also tells us the fact that many of these people came together because of literature. They had get togethers, found occasions when they could sit and discuss about literature. Their great insight into life was a result of the depth of knowledge they attained, by these meetings. Those were the days when the yield of Kannada literature was not as good as it is today. Those who were interested, got new books, read them and discussed them during these occasions. Here was a service being rendered to one’s mother tongue. Many works of Kuvempu, Putina, B. M. Srikantaiah etc. came for discussions here. All these definitely increased the vastness of Kannada literature. Here we may also bring in the comparison of the discussions of Addison and Steel, in the “Coffee House” which rendered a great service to English literature.

1. Murthy Rao A. N., Chitragalu-Patragalu (ಸಿತ್ರ ಪಾಟ್ರೆಗಳು - ಪಾಟ್ರೆಗಳು), p.120
2. Ibid, p. 108
3. Ibid. p. 109
In one of his letters A. N. Murthy Rao refers to the dramas in Kannada. Drama in Kannada language never developed like it did in English or French. The drama that A. N. Murthy Rao witnessed in Mysore in 1952, was better than the dramas that used to be a little earlier - very stagey and artificial. This drama ("Sahukara" of the then famous Gubbi Veeranna Co.) was much better than the early dramas which were totally artificial, bombastic and outdated. A. N. Murthy Rao traces the development of drama in Kannada literature. In the early dramas the topics were taken from the epics such as Ramayana and Mahabharata etc., wherein the story would be familiar to the spectator and only the presentations would be the job of the actors. The drama itself would have a number of songs, gaudy sceneries which suited the old times and the spectators would also be quite aware of their own reactions at specific places. The dramas never depicted the present society and that, they were reflection of the society and therefore also called for changes in the society, never occurred either to the performers or the spectators. Dramas were full of music and the dress of one actor was not different from that of the other in anyway. However these dramas attracted the people. In the second decade of the century realistic dramas came up and these were influenced by the realistic dramas of the 20th century in England. It is important here to note that the inspiration behind the development or change in the drama was also a result of the influence of English drama. The new Kannada dramas appeared only after Kailasm started writing.

1 In this article A. N. Murthy Rao stresses the importance and the necessity in the present day, of the realistic dramas. The language

1. Murthy Rao A. N., Chitragalu-Patragalu (ಚಿತ್ರವು-ಪತ್ರವು), p.269
3. Ibid, p. 390
4. Ibid
and the rest of the aspects of the old dramas were not only outdated, they were also ill suited for the then modern times.

A. N. Murthy Rao himself has translated two dramas from French ('Tartuffe' by Moliere; 'Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme' by the same dramatist). They have been adapted into the Kannada language so well, that they have their own local flavour. They are metamorphosised to suit the Indian circumstances (particularly Kannada). One of them in fact became such a favourite that it was even made into a movie. This contributions from A. N. Murthy Rao to Kannada language was so rich that the Kannada society happily welcomed it. Both the dramas are rich in humour; The language is so near to the spoken language of Kannada and devoid of any textual language that it breathes freshness into the dramas of Kannada language. Through these dramas A. N. Murthy Rao has not only introduced western literature, but also created new point of view in picking topics from within the society itself. There is certain naturalness in A. N. Murthy Rao's dramas though they are translations. He uses chaste Kannada in his drama.

A. N. Murthy Rao's autobiography “Sanjegannina Hinnota” (Looking back in the evening of life) is a very rich fund of social, educational, philosophical and nostalgic thinking; it has also a hopeful out look of the future. A. N. Murthy Rao traces back the days he spent in his village, his movement from there to Mysore and later the career and family life. But each of these experiences of the writer opens up different stages of the development of the society too. His early life well describes the influence of English and western education. Again and again A. N. Murthy Rao refers to the fact that English education brought changes in the outlook of the people who were otherwise totally immersed in blind beliefs. The book is a historical document which truthfully pictures the village life in a remote
corner of a rural area. Such were the village lives in most parts of Karnataka and modern education had not entered those places. Those who wanted to study had to go to places far off like Mysore. Under such circumstances the influence of English and Western life was very common due to the lack of schools run by the local people. Children were forced to go to Christian mission schools, mostly run by the Western, particularly the missionaries. The influence of English these would be very natural. Though many students study, only few would be able to imbibe from that and then create out of that experience. A. N. Murthy Rao was one such. The experiences he underwent as a result of his exposure to English education has been narrated by A. N. Murthy Rao himself in his autobiography. It holds a mirror to several aspects of the society. The first mentions it makes of is the blind beliefs and superstitions among the people. A century ago, people lived in a different world altogether. Particularly the rural life was full of blind beliefs. A. N. Murthy Rao refers to some of these which he came across in his life there (for eg. the ideas of people connected with the comet, that the appearance of comet portends death and disaster, superstitions about the demon which lived in the pipal tree). Even as a boy, he did not totally believe them. Because during the celebrations of the family deity at home, he had the boldness to eat beaten rice and jaggery, when actually he was supposed to be starving.

After this A. N. Murthy Rao has a number of observations and comments to make about many a social aspects which affected the lives of people. One main aspect here was the status of women in the society then. A girl would be married off at a very young age, even before she could understand anything about life. By some misfortune, if a woman lost her husband, that would be almost the end of her life. Many times she would
be made to look ugly, by removing the hair from the head, making her wear a red saree, she would be permitted to eat only one meal a day. If she had no children, all her life would be spent in looking after the children of her siblings with whom she would be forced to stay for the rest of her life – for want of economic independence. She would be bound to somebody else’s family almost as a maid. Even when he was a young boy, A. N. Murthy Rao had felt disgusted with such practices\textsuperscript{1}. The life of a young widow would be the life in hell. A. N. Murthy Rao feels that only widow remarriage would solve the problem. Of course he also refers to the fact that he blessed his student in later days, who was going to marry a widow\textsuperscript{2} and he was also happy to see another lady student who had lost her husband but did not wear the symbols usual for a widow. All these aspects strikingly tell us that A. N. Murthy Rao was already thinking in a progressive manner for the society. His autobiography is not just a story of his life, but it is also a social comment. Therefore the writer shunts between the past and the present. While discussing the social status of women, A. N. Murthy Rao’s thoughts resemble those of Raja Rammohan Roy. The renaissance started in language and literature will not just stop with that. Literature is a reflection of the society, it not only reflects the life, but also comments and many times rectifies its errors. In this context A. N. Murthy Rao stresses the importance of testing everything – thinking about the pros and cons, good and bad of doings in a society.\textsuperscript{2} While narrating all this A. N. Murthy Rao juxtaposes the past with the present. Doing this not only gives a picture of the past but also reveals the changes that have been brought in the society as a result of the process of change (in the society) which is renaissance.

\textsuperscript{1}Murthy Rao A. N., Sanjegannina Hinnota (సంజేగాన్ని హింనొటా), p. 49
\textsuperscript{2}Ibid, p. 54
Similarly he also speaks about the class system which caused loss to all the members of the society. A. N. Murthy Rao says how while the cities were still immersed in the darkness of superstitions nothing could be said about the villages. The path of progress according to A. N. Murthy Rao should lead to peace and that peace would lead to further peace. This is the right path of progress according to A. N. Murthy Rao. Our society was moving towards this albeit slowly and strutting.

Here we see the effects of renaissance on our society. The changes started in Bengal after the beginning of the English education. The starting of English education affected all spheres of life there. People like Raja Rammohan Roy suddenly realised the futility in our society and no change could come overnight; it had to be induced by people who were awake and sensitive. A. N. Murthy Rao was not only awake, he was extremely sensitive. He had recognised problems in our society which people like Raja Rammohan Roy had recognised in places like Bengal. Because of such recognitions, changes could take place. So it is not just the contribution to literature that matters but also the contribution to thinking, thinking about one's society and thinking about progress and changes.

Language is the medium through which any change in life and in society has to be brought in. A provincial language only can help any change in a province therefore in Kannada land the development of Kannada language was not only important; but also inevitable. For A. N. Murthy Rao, this change and the desire for a change occurred so to speak after his coming to Mysore. Change from rural to urban was a change in India during renaissance. There such changes were brought about only by people who

1.Murthy Rao A. N., Sanjegannina Hinnota (ಸಂಜೇಗಂನ ಹಿನ್ನೊಟ), p. 43
lived in the urban areas and who were exposed to a wider life. A. N. Murthy Rao was losing interest in village life, as he got more and more involved in the urban activities such as schooling, reading etc. Though he enjoyed the old life, he was still aspiring for new things. The day he read the ‘Arabian Nights’, a change started occurring in him. It set in him the desire for new life and the desire for higher aspirations. This perhaps was common to all youth during that time in India. The desire for Independence and the opening of new life and literature through English education had started shaping many an aspiration.

A. N. Murthy Rao had a very sensitive, thinking and rebellious mind. As he was stepping into youth, his mind was bogged by several questions, confusions and suspicions such as East and West, belief and non belief, traditions and doubts etc. Fundamental questions attacked him after coming to Mysore. The desire for new experiences which was a result of urban life, exposure to a different kind of education and the habit of reading anything and everything took place in his mind. When the desire for new experiences were negated, he grew impatient and even became a rebel. He wanted something new, something different, but was unable to know what this was. This, must have been the freedom - freedom to read, to think, to act and to lead one's life oneself; without any bondages which were undesirable. This did not mean shirking one's responsibilities, but it meant accepting them openly, not just as a part of one's duty, but as a desired life. All these aspects refer to the qualities of renaissance. A. N. Murthy Rao's spirit suggests that it loved freedom. In this writings again and again he refers to the fact that he has neither any qualms or hesitations in openly

1.Murthy Rao A. N., Sanjegannina Hinnota (සංඝගන්නා විහින්නා), p. 137
2.Ibid, p. 135
speaking out his opinions. These are not opinions to hurt people or pass judgements over them but opinions of a clear and a sensitive mind which wants to take a stand and be still received in a society. And at the same looks forward for changes in the society. This attitude of objectivity was a result of English education. Throughout we see in A. N. Murthy Rao's writings an indirect suggestions for freedom - Women were not free in a society, people could not live freely in a society, children could not be free in a family etc., and many a time A. N. Murthy Rao broke shackles either through his thinking or through his actions. He analyses the status of women very often in his writings. Similarly 'untouchability' - a bane in our society is discussed. There would be gaps in societies because of such social problems as untouchability, such social problems are common to all countries and to every society in one way or the other\(^1\). Though people belonging to different castes and classes coexisted without any problem, it was not a healthy one, because, lack of knowledge and being caught in the clutches of traditions held the society so. It did fall apart when knowledge interfered. Therefore it is unnatural to have such differences in a society. It would be natural to have a free society. Regarding this A. N. Murthy Rao says that, the caste system, however useful it may been in the past - in terms of having a systematic society based on profession - today, it is a curse on the society. “This system is already a corpse here which should have been disposed off long ago. Due to this it is polluting the society”\(^2\) A. N. Murthy Rao stresses the importance of education. Because education motivates thinking and sound thinking in turn begets progress. In his own case, he feels that the day he decided to give up the idea of setting down in

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2.Ibid, p. 320
Akki Hebbal, was the day when he started thinking progressively. By rejecting to settle in Akki Hebbal, he was rejecting religious faith, faith in the caste and faith in God. Later he analyses the meaning of Veda - which is knowledge and according to A. N. Murthy Rao, real knowledge is not just blindly following the traditional doings, but to analyse the experienced and exercise one's own judgement on all the past beliefs and opinions.

When it comes to beliefs A. N. Murthy Rao believes that to discharge one's duties faithfully, not to hurt others and help humanity as much as possible are his beliefs. These qualities reflect the characteristics of humanism, which was a result of renaissance in the west. This new awareness in our land is also a result of renaissance here. A.N . Murthy Rao does not belong to any caste or religion in his thoughts and ideas. He led his life with similar views. He never believed in rituals, traditions and ceremonies though he only liked the artistic part of them. From this point, his religion is humanism. Leading a good life, being a good man are the main features of that religion. Only the freedom to choose his beliefs would broaden the outlook of a person.

In his life time A. N. Murthy Rao had been rebellious about many things in the society. He was agnostic – neither a believer nor a non-believer in the existence of God, he had tried to defy the rituals (by not retaining a tuft, shaving at home, sleeping on the bed during the forbidden days, not performing Sandhya or the puja etc.), he had definite views of his own about caste and creed. He had come out of them - he had had a cup of tea in his Christian teacher's house and when he was in his thirties he also broke his

1.Murthy Rao A. N., Sanjegannina Hinnota (సంజేగంనా హింనొటా), p. 149
2.Ibid, p. 150
3.Ibid, p. 322

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joint family and came out of it to establish his own. In those days it was not taken kindly. While everyone appreciated a joint family life, A. N. Murthy Rao inspite of such advantages, recognised the negative aspects of it too. A joint family does not give the necessary freedom to the children. He had himself experienced it as a young boy. Though he had love and regard for his father, he could not express it and he is very sure that his father could not do so either, because it was considered not desirable. While being exposed to the Western culture, A. N. Murthy Rao had seen the positive impact of expression of love by the parents to the children. A child goes more easily to a parent when it loved and given the freedom to approach the father. That very freedom is denied in our society. A. N. Murthy Rao rebelled against this, in the form of setting up his own family and this in no way harmed anybody. In fact A. N. Murthy Rao says that this not only improved the relationships of the family but also others appreciated it later in their case. Considering those time it was a bold step to take and A. N. Murthy Rao did not hesitate to do so. From this point he was a trend setter in a society which had always stuck to the traditions and had been a closed thing to new flow of life. The idea of letting everyone live in harmony with out any qualms was a novel one for an Indian society those days, while those changes took place in the early years of the 20th century. Later on A. N. Murthy Rao had one more opportunity to prove himself when one of his son's married an American lady. A. N. Murthy Rao, who had given up the traditional practices and observances consciously, as a result of the inquiring attitude which had developed in him due to English education, revealed the broadens of view in his personality by welcoming an outsider belonging to different religion and culture into his family. It speaks a lot.

about A. N. Murthy Rao as a person and his personality was a result of his questioning mind and the education he received. He could look at things unbiased and analyse himself whenever necessary. He not only believed that children should be given freedom but also let them have it.

Self analysis i.e., is seen very clearly in A. N. Murthy Rao's writings. Discussing about the attitude of the Indians, in saying that they are superior to the West spiritually, he says that the politics slavery induced inferiority complex and to overcome that complex, we often said that the Indian quality is in the spiritual and not in the temporal. The ancient India was appreciated while the present was a slave to the British. Of course there were exceptions in persons like Bhandarkar and Bajendranath Seal etc., who tried to analyse the Indianness without any prejudices.¹ The idea of the great Ancient India was necessary to let us tolerate the political slavery; similarly it was also necessary to tolerate own poverty. This idea - of a grand past - would only mar the progress of a country. Unless the present is taken seriously, and rectifying measures are thought out, progress cannot occur. Therefore it is important to think of the impact of such ideals which are not good for a progressive life². These ideals of A. N. Murthy Rao came as a result of his wide reading and thinking and they are a result of renaissance which started at the beginning of the century. The 15th to 17th centuries were the times of renaissance in Europe. During that time the attentions of people turned towards man. In India the 19th century witnessed the same situation. That was the time when the attention of Indians was turned towards man and aspects around him, rather than about the other world. Here we see a similar effect of renaissance in both the cases. This aspect is also very well expressed

¹Murthy Rao A. N., Sanjegannina Hinnota (సమ్మతి నార్థాన్న), p. 121-122
²Ibid, p. 116
in A. N. Murthy Rao. His attention centered around man, his life and the pleasures of it. Ultimately the happiness of man and peace for all is what A. N. Murthy Rao expects. When English was introduced, Indians were exposed to a different world of knowledge which they had not known until then. Even if they had known, such knowledge did not belong to the modern times. With English education only the rudiments of such knowledge were introduced and this was made available only in the English books. Learning English was considered the ultimate of education. One who could speak English well was respected the most in the society. However no one according to A. N. Murthy Rao, ever thought of questioning that attitude - the attitude of giving a higher position to a foreign language, while neglecting our own. People had accepted to honour English language the way they had accepted to follow the rituals and traditions of the past. This happened not just in English schools, but also in schools which were meant for students from the Kannada land. English was encouraged in schools. Even small things like having competition in schools surrounded the English language. Like for example no elocution competitions in Kannada or Sanskrit were conducted. They were only done in English. A. N. Murthy Rao records an interesting matter here - wherein the Weslyian Mission school, where he studied, a prize was instituted by Kannada family to be given to the student who got the highest marks in English and not in Kannada. All these well establish the second position given to Kannada. In fact, second or otherwise no one bothered; Kannada was not a language or a subject for one to bother about. Kannada held the least importance position. In this context A. N. Murthy Rao also has recorded the condition of the Kannada

1. Murthy Rao A. N., Sanjegannina Hinnota (ಸಾಂಜೆಗಾನ್ನ ಹಿಂದೂಟ), p. 129
2. Ibid, p. 130
teacher in his school, who was totally unable to control the student in the class because they did not regard Kannada either as a subject of study or to be taken seriously. A. N. Murthy Rao gives a physical description of the Kannada teacher who was a traditional person, who was not smart and this was not even expected by the students; after all he was a kannada teacher! When such was the case in the school it is but obvious that people would never respect the language. The status of that Kannada teacher, well reflected the status in Kannada during that time. A. N. Murthy Rao does not even remember the name of his Kannada teacher, while he remembers almost all the others. These aspects recorded by A. N. Murthy Rao, tells us the sad plight of Kannada. So it is but natural that some one like B. M. Srikantaiah, had to come forward to uplift Kannada. While he did so, the others like him followed, A. N. Murthy Rao was one such. These times therefore are called as the times of renaissance, which started the relearning of Kannada and more than that bringing over the necessary dignity for the language by letting it breathe the fresh air and grow freely.

The sad point here was the fact that people did not consider Kannada their language and did not show the respect due to it. It only shows the callousness of a people who totally forgot their mother tongue. Therefore they are called, "people who appeared dead" by B. M. Srikantaiah. Fortunately for Kannada, people like B. M. Srikantaiah appeared on the scene and took the reins in their hands and their words like lashes awakened the people. This is the situation pictured by A. N. Murthy Rao. And people like A. N. Murthy Rao, who belonged to the English faculty were slowly attracted to Kannada by persons like B. M. Srikantaiah and T. S. Venkannaiah. This was the dawn of Kannada language and literature. Because, these people like A. N. Murthy Rao, who were awakened, slated their work in Kannada.
A. N. Murthy Rao has no doubt that the qualities of independent thinking, inquiring mind and evaluating attitude were a result of English education.\(^1\) Though the opinion of Macaulay about Indians and their literature are to be condemned, still it was his decision to import English education to Indians. Therefore we have to be grateful to him and to people like Raja Rammohan Roy who supported Macaulay's decision.\(^2\) This was the core of the change during Indian renaissance. While stating this, A. N. Murthy Rao is depicting the history of India, the times when Indians needed to be educated; where all of them would be involved. Because earlier to Western education system, the Indian system hardly involved all the people into the field of education. This definitely was a serious drawback.

Coming to education Kannada, hardly anything other than the old Kannada literature could be taught. The language was not good enough for anything better with English and Western education came the study of different branches of Knowledge, such as economics, Sociology, Humanities, Sciences such as Physics, Chemistry etc. There were no books, obviously in Kannada which could teach these subjects. The first generation of learners had to study all these in English. For this purpose they had to learn English language. They had to study, the different above said subjects and then provide the same in Kannada to Kannada people. Learning a new subjects involves not just collecting the data of the subject but also collecting and expressing ideas which come along with that. Ideas bring nuances and English language was already set for such nuances. Therefore English medium was the best then. This was the responsibility shouldered on the

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1. Murthy Rao A. N., Sanjegannina Hinnota (_written in Kannada_), p. 123
2. Ibid.
1st generation of learners to whom B. M. Srikantaiah, V. K. Gokak, A. N. Murthy Rao etc., belonged. This objective of writing books on various subjects in Kannada was done very creditably by the Mysore University, and under the projects of writing various subjects in Kannada, a number of books in various subjects were produced in Kannada language. This major task was taken up during Kuvempu's period as the Vice Chancellor and under the same project A. N. Murthy Rao also wrote his work 'Shakespere' in Kannada.

At the same time Kannada language had not developed a proper prose form of writing, it could not impart ideas easily, without obstacles. Kannada language was too bookish and had not achieved the easy, refined, agile and elastic form which it has today. Long winding sentences which came to an end only after ten to twelve lines made understanding difficult and cumbersome. While observing these aspects A. N. Murthy Rao, not only pictures the history of the condition of Kannada language at that time but also traces its growth. He says that Kannada could become a language of medium when ideas are provoked (motivated) in Kannada. A language grows indept when people thinking in that language. Here A. N. Murthy Rao like B. M. Srikantiah enriched Kannada language through his thought provoking writings. The way B. M. Srikantaiah, through his 'English Geetegalu' brought a newness in Kannada poetry, A. N. Murthy Rao brought a certain cheer to Kannada prose. His language like Masti's has an easy, elastic flow which is deep in thoughts and enchanting in nature. This was his contributions to Kannada renaissance.

While B. M. Srikantaiah translated poems and drama from English, A. N. Murthy Rao translated drama, short stories, and even the history of American literature. He even translated a complex novel like "Return to Soil" (Marali Mannige) by Shivaram Karant into English. This he followed the traditions of his guru (preceptor), B. M. Srikantaiah. In all these, the intentions of B. M. Srikantaiah must have been completely fulfilled. Because B. M. Srikantiah did not write much - but he built an army of writers. He wanted English students to take from English and enrich Kannada. This was done. Good thoughts, like he said from all directions were taken into the granary of Kannada literature. While B. M. Srikantaiah set the ball rolling, by translating from English, A. N. Murthy Rao not only took from English, but also from French. He has translated two dramas by Moliere into Kannada very successfully. Apart from this he also translated many stories which belonged to different countries, which have been considered the best in the world of short stories. His translations of the Kannada novel exhibits not only the capacity of the translator to contribute to a foreign language but also the growth of Kannada which can enrich another language.

The qualities of renaissance involve higher aspirations in life and widening of knowledge. Both these qualities are provided by literature. These words are said by A. N. Murthy Rao himself, this can well be applied to his own personality and knowledge. A. N. Murthy Rao, when he was in school was guided by his teacher D. N. Murthy who channalised A. N. Murthy Rao's intellect in this direction of widening of knowledge. A. N. Murthy Rao's depth of knowledge, so was a result of constant learning through studies was a result of the times of renaissance. Infact his teacher in the Maharaja's college, J. C. Rollo had told him to write for his people. This pressure to write, which comes from within for any creative writer,
was also present in A. N. Murthy Rao and his English professor channalised that by suggesting to A. N. Murthy Rao that he should ‘write for his people’ meaning to write in his mother tongue – Kannada.1 Regarding this creative urge A. N. Murthy Rao says, that around the year 1932, when he was sitting on the banks of Kukkarahalli lake, he heard a sound like thing which prompted the urge in him to write.

According to A. N. Murthy Rao thinking and analysing capacity should be the most important quality in all people.2 Anything shouldn't be accepted without questioning. Because no human being has realised the total truth. Therefore each generation should confirm everything through questions. Such thoughts of A. N. Murthy Rao represent the thoughts of the Indian youth of renascent India.

A. N. Murthy Rao was a confluance of the east and the west. Kannada and English literature and culture have formed the personality of A. N. Murthy Rao. While the study of English literature formed his critical outlook and led him to the depths of knowledge, the culture aspect is expressed, in him – being a social critic. His views of a society are expressed in essays like “Literature and Society” (Sahitya Mattu Samaja). He discusses several different societies where differences among people existed. The questions of “teaching and delighting” done by literature is discussed by him and he arrives at the conclusions that if literature is only “art for arts sake” then we would rather have nothing to do with it. He explicitly stress the fact that today we need to fight against all kinds of exploitation, be it a nation ruling over the other; the system of slavery; exploitations of the poor by the rich;

1. As told by A. N. Murthy Rao in the interview
2. Murthy Rao A. N., Sanjegannina Hinnota (ಸಂಜೇಗಾಣಿ ಹಿಂನೊಟೆ), p. 204
caste differences or women or exploitations of women etc. In all this, A. N. Murthy Rao says that literature has taken an active part in bringing changes for the better.¹ This also should be the work of literature, if not, the perceptions of life in literature becomes incomplete. From this view, a litterateur should serve to bring about progress of a society. Political and economic conditions aid this. All these views of A. N. Murthy Rao reveal the fact that English education and exposure to that culture alone could have provoked such thoughts in him. A. N. Murthy Rao was born in a transitions period. While on the one side, the Indian freedom struggle was going on, on the other, renaissance of Kannada language and literature were taking place. This was followed by the unification movement. During his active literary years. Navodaya (Renaissance), Modern (Navya), Rebellious (Bandaya), Dowen trodden (Dalita), etc movements in Kannada literature took place. A. N. Murthy Rao did not identify himself with any of these. However we may classify his works as belonging to the renaissance, by many of the features which have been discussed earlier. The very changed out look and new style speak of the fact that it is renaissance literature. He was the father of the Personal Essays. The literary form of essays gained their best feature because of the writings of A. N. Murthy Rao. A. N. Murthy Rao himself stresses importance of the thought provoking aspect in literature. Because art and thought are part and parcel of literature. Only such writings deserve the name of literature.²

In his speech about T. N. Srikantiah, A. N. Murthy Rao agrees with the fact that our literature had attained its perfection a century ago (now two

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2. Ibid, p. 348

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centuries ago) and 'perfection' is a term which has a semblence of opposite qualities at the same time. because, when one is perfect there is no need for growth and when there is no growth there is no perfection.\textsuperscript{1} In literature both are very important. Perfection in it made our literature stagnant water. There had to be a friction with another culture to change and lead towards growth. This growth came as a result of Western education. Because of the Western education we started revival of our culture carefully. In the above words by A. N. Murthy Rao, we can clearly see not only the explanation of the term renaissance but also the effect of Western and English education on our society as well as on A. N. Murthy Rao. A. N. Murthy Rao's contributions have been a result of this friction and therefore clearly, a part of renaissance.\textsuperscript{2} The awareness which was a result of the friction with the Western literature and culture brought a shocking awareness that if we did not wake up to realise our condition, we would be slaves even culturally, as we already were politically. These thoughts led to the revival of the studies of our past culture. This also gave us a broadness of mind to see, to learn and to adopt from others. The result of such learning was people like Bhandakar, S. K. Chattergee and Hiriyanna etc.\textsuperscript{3} While saying all this, A. N. Murthy Rao is not only going expression to the features of renaissance and the way it was brought into India, but also representing the changed Indian outlook. All these definitely place him among the writers of renaissance even if he did not identify himself with any of the movements and because of these ideas, which are a result of renaissance, A. N. Murthy Rao becomes an important aspect of study. According to him after the

\textsuperscript{1} Murthy Rao A. N., Samagra Lalitha Prabhandagalugu - Ti. Nam. Sri Bhashana (Sri Lanka, o€3 tijixx$ri& At. rfo. bjt osprfocto j^ra)p. 339
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid
\textsuperscript{3} Ibid, p.340
British came and ruled us, renaissance came to India. Intellectually and spiritually - it was fortunate. Though British contact politically was bad, it brought many other good things to us.¹ Other Indian languages such as Hindi, Bengali (Rabindranath Tagore etc.) were influenced by Renaissance.

In this context we may refer to A. N. Murthy Rao’s ‘Sanjegannina Hinnota’ where in A. N. Murthy Rao pictures himself as an intelligent but transforming Indian youth - who did not have the patience or taste to study the Indian philosophy or Kannada as a subject of study during his scholastic life. Perhaps he was much attached by the Western civilization and culture. This could be because of the fact that the western is concerned more with life; it is not averse to life, where as India is more concerned with that which is not here; not belonging to this world. Western is more rationalistic, more realistic and firm on the ground. A. N. Murthy Rao preferred to be a part of this world. Nothing away from this world seems to have attached him.

Speaking about Kannada, A. N. Murthy Rao feels sorry about the Kannada the fact that we, Kannadigas were neglecting our own language and did not even realise that we were tarnishing our own faces in doing so. It was reducing the status of a mother to that of a poor relative and made an outsider the head of the family (household).² When the English came to rule us, their language too came along and got all the prominence. Some of our people must have thought that it would do good. People perhaps had a pragmatic view which made them accept English as their language. Apart from this people were English educated got good government jobs and better monetary benefits. But the greatest advantage was that all, everybody

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1. As told by A. N. Murthy Rao in an interview.
belonging to any caste, creed or class could get it. Whereas people who studied Indian languages had formal Indian education or learning Upanishads and Vedas etc., were fit only to be priests. Thus English education, English medium opened the outside world for Indians.

The two main aspects of revived learning, were looking at new things and learning the old which a new perspective. This quality is seen in A. N. Murthy Rao's books, "the problem of evil in Mahabharata". A. N. Murthy Rao, in this small book analyses the working of evil in Mahabaratha. No man is perfect. Man is a mixture of good and bad. When one of those qualities increases in a person, he is considered good or bad accordingly. This argument continues to reflect the fact that the proportions of 'bad' or on the higher level in Mahabharata. In this process of analysis, A. N. Murthy Rao makes a reader also think and this activity of questioning and looking at the epics with a critical scrutiny was new during those days.

According to A. N. Murthy Rao, the questioning spirit evident in Indian literature of this century has generally been taken to be the result of our contact with the literature and philosophy of the west.1 Earlier to renaissance, "the Indian sought to shine in the realm of the stars with his own un borrowed radiance; he shook his fist in the face of the Gods and said, "I shall create another Indra". But that was in the distant past. For ages we seem to have been satisfied with a lifeless simulation of that spirit. But the spirit was deep down within us waiting for release. A change came with the renaissance in the third decade of this century. True, a literature of disillusionments and frustration was to come again. But it was preceded by an out burst of joy and prevailing sensitiveness to the beauty of nature and all

1.Murthy Rao A. N., Musings on Men and Matters, p. 34-35
life” – This was the foreward to renaissance. Though the spirit of rebellion ‘against the accepted traditions’ was there, as seen the ‘creation of another Indra’, it had mellowed down and almost disappearing. None the less, it is true that while we were aware that rebellion is also part of our tradition, that awareness was accentuated and made dynamic by contact with recent Western thought.¹

While speaking about the contributions of B. M. Srikantaiah to Kannada and Kannada renaissance, A. N. Murthy Rao says that “Discontent”, according to B. M. Srikantaiah, “was the way to salvation” and we had it (discontent) in full measure, pressed down and running over. Some were seeking expressions through a foreign medium.² Here A. N. Murthy Rao refers to Kuvempu, who started writing poetry in English and he also says that, “the malady we were suffering from was contradiction in terms – an inert longing for the leap forward” and this leap forward was thrust by people like B. M. Srikantaiah. He says that during those days B. M. Srikantaiah’s heart was occupied with aspects which were necessary for the upliftment of Kannada people ad Kannada culture. That became the motive force in him. We need to be grateful to B. M. Srikantaiah, for this. For him being in force. B. M. Srikantaiah also influenced the Kannada people with his poems and lectures. This calls for gratitude from us. He awakened Kannada people to a literature which was not just the ‘Raya Kelenda’ (listen oh, King!) with which people were satisfied. He voiced and gave a voice to the Kannada people who did not even know how to ask for being united.³ A. N. Murthy Rao has walked in the footsteps of B. M. Srikantaiah by

¹Murthy Rao A. N., Musings on Men and Matters, p. 58  
²Ibid  
³Murthy Rao A. N., Chitragalu-Patragalu (тхтгптпд - тхтгптпд), p.82
contributing his traditions of imbibing from English and enriching Kannada. Here it may not be out of context to refer to many English words to which A. N. Murthy Rao has found suitable equivalents in Kannada such as divorce (madumurivu), anaesthetic (vedanantaka), high brow (unnatha bhru), vaccum cleaner (shunya shubraka), instant coffee (kshna sidda coffee) etc.,

A. N. Murthy Rao is considered one of the best prose writers that Kannada has seen. His essays compare well with writers like Charles Lamb, William Hazlitt, J. B. S. Haldane and others. He is considered the father of personal essays. His essays exhibit a gentleness in them, written with insight, blended with humour and understanding humane nature. An essay like, 'Spick and Span Sitting Room' (Diwana Khaneya Anda Chenda) well expresses the above qualities, like many other essays. While discussing about a well arranged sitting room done in good taste, A. N. Murthy Rao indirectly suggests the Indian culture of welcoming a guest without any formalities or necessary preparations. A guest should feel at home and not feel uncomfortable in a too well arranged household. Indian temperament does not allow too much of formalities or distance created between the guest and the host. Particularly so with close friends. A too well arranged sitting room is not for those friends who barge in unannounced and take all liberties with a friend. A well arranged sitting room is almost like a temple where you feel awed and not free. These writings reminds one immediately of Charles Lambs “Dream Children”. Again, “Name of the Beloved” is not only humorous but also is a reflection of a traditional Indian household. A husband lacks the freedom to talk to or even call his wife by name. He feels that in English language one could call the wife with several endearing words and that is totally lacking in Kannada. He complains that he cannot compromise with Mother Kannada for not providing a proper word to call one's wife, for this, one has to depend on English language again.
Essays like, ‘A small cottage live in’; ‘Telephone’, Car-repair-Do it Yourself, ‘Beauty of a living Room’, ‘Hotels’ etc., through their style make even a very common subjects extremely interesting. Sometimes there is poetry in them – for example parts of the essay “Beauty of a living Room” well expresses the feelings the writers got when there living room was made sophisticated with extra decorations. He says that he lost the interest to sit there and many things there associated with many other connotations, lost their significance when they were beautified. The language used here is as good as poetry. Similarly some of the essays that considered and included as essays, one almost short stories – for example “Song of the Tiger”, “Honeymoon”, “Blind man”, etc. Most of A. N. Murthy Rao’s writings are analytical in nature and there is always self - analysis. Criticisms are never harsh and hurting for eg. in an essay called “Rubber neck” he analyses his own personality which would have liked being aloof; but with a person like T. S. Venkannaiah, if he had been so, he would have missed an opportunity of a grate association.¹ Similarly he says that perhaps a couple of decades ago, he would not have liked anybody being curious and interfering in his affairs. But now he does not find it all that bad. The quality of interfering is common to human nature and therefore it should be accepted, according to A. N. Murthy Rao. Such analytical writings were new and therefore characteristic of renaissance.

T. N. Srikantaiah called personal essays on “Lyrics in Prose”. An essayist impressions of the writer. His thoughts, ideas, waves of he mind take shapes in the form of an essay. An essayist is also a social thinker, critic and a commentator.² He takes the liberty to comment upon anything and

¹ Murthy Rao A. N., Samagra Lalitha Prabhandagalu (శాస్త్రీయ లలిత ప్రభాణాలు), p.276
² Mitra A. R., Sankirna Lalitha Prabhandagalu, p. XVI
everything. There is no particular field from which he should choose. He sieve through his ideas and presents the best in the form of an essay. This new way of creative writing came to Kannada only after the renaissance in Kannada language and literature. A. N. Murthy Rao enriched this field of literature by his variety of essays. His style among many other essayists, many also be compared to Goldsmith. A. N. Murthy Rao's work in the field of essays in Kannada compared to the work of Kuvempu in epic, Bendre in poetry, Kailasam in drama and Masti in short stories.¹ A. N. Murthy Rao's artistry, his thinking, his writings all reflect the fact that he loved literature and not any particular language and love for Kannada came to him as part of life. Because it was his mother tongue.

While speaking about the influence of English A. N. Murthy Rao says that, 'undoubtedly it was the influence of English literature that, which weaned us away from our preoccupations with epic themes and epic heroes; it awakened us to a wondrous new world of the beauty of the sights and sounds of nature; led to experiments with lyric measures and above all roused interest in the life of the ordinary man. But after a few years the influence of the west waned some what. The spirit of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata reoccupied, with a sea-change; and the mysticism of the Upanishads, of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Arabindo, has had its impact on the out look of our great poets.²

These words of A. N. Murthy Rao, well reflect the times during which English influence was necessary on Kannada. It did the needful - that of awakening the Kannada people and Kannada language - and after that it

¹ Lingappa M. N., Pustaka Prapancha (ಸುಂದ್ರ ಪ್ರಾಂಧಾ), p.77
² Murthy Rao A. N. Musings on Men and Matters, p. 71-72
was pushed behind. This is as it should be. We could not be in the shadowed
of the West, particularly English forever. It had to only awaken the Kannada
people for a changed new world outside; the changed sensations and
approaches brought nemesis in life as well as literature. After that our life
was our own. Our own culture and literature would lead us further. The
new perspective posed its own challenges and all the old ones revoked.
Therefore the reappearance of the epics, Upanishads etc. The way of looking
at them now was changed; they are now accepted after suitable scrutiny.

Our scriptures also place enough emphasis on the sweetness of life.
"But this was lost later. We could hear in later Indian literature not enough
of the sheer joy of life, nor enough of the Ulysses spirit of soaring ambition
and the insatiable thrust for new and ever new experience. Perhaps we
looked away from this world too often to a world beyond. There was time
when the Indian sought to shine in the realm of the stars. But that was in
the distant past. For ages we seem to have been satisfied with a lifeless
simulations of that spirit" 1 - in these words A. N. Murthy Rao with a deep
insight pictures the condition of India before it was exposed to the English
influence. That was the age of darkness for India. No growth was seen and
nothing new and fresh in the field of knowledge, heard.

However, A. N. Murthy Rao continues, that, “the spirit was there deep
down with in us writing for release. A change came with the renaissance in
the third decade of this century. True, a literature of disillusions and
frustration was to come again. But it was preceded by an outburst of joy
and a quivering sensitiveness to the beauty of nature and all life”2. In these

1. Murthy Rao A. N., Musings on Men and Matters , p.33-34
2. Ibid
words again, A. N. Murthy Rao clearly pictures the coming of renaissance into Indian literature. All these qualities are seen in his own writings. The revival of Sanskrit classics is seen in his studies. Though he started with English and a bit of French he reverted to Kannada and Sanskrit. This is the quality and features of renaissance and this is very clearly seen in the works of A. N. Murthy Rao himself. He stands as an example for his own words regarding renaissance. Speaking about the "questioning spirit", of not accepting everything without scrutiny A. N. Murthy Rao says, that, "the questioning spirit evident in Indian literature of this century has generally been taken to be the result of a contact with the literature and philosophy of the west. It is true that while we were aware that rebellion is also a part of our tradition, that awareness was accentuated and made dynamic by contact with recent Western thought".¹ Here in again A. N. Murthy Rao mentions the influence of the Western literature and thought which brought in renaissance into our literature and thoughts.

The unhappy situations that Kannada was in, is well expressed in these words, "owing loyalty to the mother tongue was admitted only in principle. But in fact Kannada was little more than a part of the school and college curriculum". "They talked English, read English, wrote letters in English, conversation was a mixture of Kannada and English. People rendered only lip service to the mother tongue. Kannada led them nowhere and similarly, English was a heady concoction - the thing called English literature was laced with ingredients borrowed from Greek and Latin. Kannada had nothing to offer - no novels, short stories, lyrics, personal essays etc., and loyalty to the mother tongue came in the form of speaking Kannada

¹ Murthy Rao A. N., Musings on Men and Matters, p.33-34
at home and learning it as a second language in schools and colleges\textsuperscript{1}. The attitude towards Kannada was Olympian indifference not amounting to contempt."

This attitude towards Kannada and the status of Kannada was changed by a person like B. M. Srikantiah. While he had the torch and lead the way, his students like S. V. Ranganna and A. N. Murthy Rao etc., followed. B. M. Srikantaiah in his writings said what had to be done, and his students did that. The above words of A. N. Murthy Rao written in English recreate the sad plight of Kannada and its treatment by the common man. However, A. N. Murthy Rao's Kannada writings reflect the fact that he did all that was necessary to uplift Kannada, to enrich the language and contribute to its renaissance.

Again, "Kannada was too pedantic and artificially elitist to be an effective vehicle for what we had to say", and this pedantic language took a totally different turn in the hands of A. N. Murthy Rao. His translation of the dramas, particularly the language used, is easy going, very casual and still rich in presentation. It is at the same time vivid and articulate. These definitely were conscious efforts by A. N. Murthy Rao for Kannada and its developments. A new life in language, rich in form as well as colours, was suggested by English and it was used and made a reality by the Kannada writers of the renaissance.

A. N. Murthy Rao refers to the fact that, "English literature had wormed its way into their hearts. (Note the expression - English did not enter majestically – "like a worm"); they had looked at life direct, discarding the

\textsuperscript{1} Murthy Rao A. N., Musings on Men and Matters, p.56
smoked glasses of neo-epic poets and they had heard a new captivating music - the majesty of blank verse, the crisp decisive snap of the end-stopped couplet, the leap, pause etc". While their hearts were goaded by the English worm, the question raised was whether such variety was possible in Kannada.\(^1\) “Yes, came the reply from B. M. Srikantaiah, in the form of ‘English Geethegalu’”.

A. N. Murthy Rao vividly describes the story of renaissance. His descriptions which is part of history now reads and impresses like an engaging story. Speaking about renaissance, he refers to the fact that ‘No new movement starts on a particular day’\(^2\). Many days of speculations, dissatisfaction and unhappiness over year accumulates and busts because of a certain impact and this causes a movement which would change the things to come. The same happened with Kannada renaissance after the publication of ‘English Geethegalu’. “It was published in 1926 and was read all over Karnataka and almost overnight everybody started singing – not about epic heroes but about what they (the young poets) themselves had seen and heard and felt”\(^3\). What was lacking earlier was the depiction of experience. Everything was borrowed and depicted on a grand style, but now suddenly a common man’s experiences became important. “Karna made way for the curds-seller and the humble way side flower got priority over to sougandhika of legend. Within a few years the literary solitudes were peopled. The lyric, short, story, essay, mock-epic - etc; there was a sudden upsurge of creative activity all over Karnataka”\(^4\).

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2. Ibid, p. 61
3. Ibid, 59-60
4. Ibid.
So much so all of them, 'woke up one fine morning and found that the renaissance had been switched on!'

As A. N. Murthy Rao remembers those times and gets back to that nostalgia, he says that 'those who were young in those days relive that time with a contemplative satisfaction. It was a glorious dawn. The healthiest thing about renaissance was that it had the seeds of rebellion within it. The seeds sprouted. The progressive Navya, and the Dalit etc., each one of them have tried to put the earlier group on the shelf; and the earlier group aforesaid refuses to be so put on'.

In these words, A. N. Murthy-Rao, not only traces the later developments of renaissance, which were the outcome of it, but also the fact, that the power of renaissance was so strong, that it has not completely disappeared. Again and again in different writers, its spirit seems to appear. A. N. Murthy Rao himself in this aspect stands as an example, because A. N. Murthy Rao wrote during the early renaissance. His working continued through the years to come and until recently, when he passed away at a ripe age of 103 years, he still retained the spirit of renaissance as seen in his autobiography or travelogue etc. These were written much later. But even in these the early spirit of renaissance continues. The same enthusiasm and cheer of the early writer is still seen in A. N. Murthy Rao's later writings too.

In his writings such as his autobiography, travelogue, sketches and letters and Musings on Men and Matters etc., A. N. Murthy Rao is documenting history. B. M. Srikantaiah started the movement for Kannada and the credit for recording it goes to A. N. Murthy Rao. His writings are important like those of the history writers or like those who do documentation

1. Murthy Rao A. N., Musings on Men and Matters, p.61-62
2. Ibid

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of an event and a process. For A. N. Murthy Rao's writings recreate a past
world - a world of Kannada which was changing, transforming. A few
people start a movement. Sensation is created; thousands follow and a
change takes place. No one know how this happened. Very few observe
the change keenly. Everybody is involved, but no one documents. Here,
we are fortunate to have a writer like A. N. Murthy Rao, who has
documented the events, particularly with reference to Mysore. In this context
A. N. Murthy Rao's work has been that of a historian. A historian has to
find the bits and pieces of facts to join them together; make a whole or what
could be whole, interpret it and that's how history is recreated. But this
work is made easy by A. N. Murthy Rao. It is almost a century since a
change came over in Kannada literature. Unless people like A. N. Murthy
Rao documented it, it would be lost. What A. N. Murthy Rao created in the
form of creative writing (work) is also the recorded history of Kannada
renaissance as it took place in Mysore and these parts of Kannada land.
This very aspect makes A. N. Murthy Rao's contribution to literary history
very significant.
A. N. Murthy Rao and Unification

As we have already noted A. N. Murthy Rao was born during a transition period. It was the time when India was awakening. People were getting restless. Freedom movement was picking up. Several agitations were taking place. 1900-1905, Terrorist movement for aggressive nationalism; 1905 - Partition of Bengal; Tilak's slogans – virulent movement for freedom. In Karnataka too there were people who were awakening to the greatness of their land; and suddenly they realised that Kannada language was losing its ground and Kannada land as such, did not exist at all. These aspects added to the fact that many a Kannadiga had to suffer under different rulers and this caused bitterness among people. As an after effect of English education and Western thoughts, Kannada renaissance started. Renaissance brought awareness and this awareness in turn asked for unification therefore we may say that unification was a part of, or the appendix of renaissance. When renaissance started, unification followed. This was the time during which A. N. Murthy Rao appeared on the scene.

During his school days he was influenced like many a student then, by English language and literature. But he had teachers who influenced him and made him take atleast a look at Kannada. When he entered the college, as a student, though he studied English and French, he was exposed to Kannada language and literature. However it was evident that something
had to be done to let it grow luxuriant. He was aware of the work being done by his teachers like B. M. Srikanataiah. As a teacher himself he became more closer with people who worked for Kannada like Thi. Nam. Srikantiah, D. L. Narasimhachar, S. V. Ranganna, T. S. Venkannaiah and others. He was no doubt influenced by these. Though he refused to identify himself as belonging to any of these movement, still his writings reveal the fact that he was not only a part of Kannada renaissance, through his creative contributions, but also a part of the unification movement. Infact he says that though they did not, like B. M. Srikantaiah, take part and go to places, influence people, call for agitation, still they wanted unification heart of hearts\(^1\). They took unification for granted. There was no question of asking and taking it; it was there and theirs. This confidence could motivate others. He says that while in Maharaja college, he was waiting to belong to the group of Kannada department; he wanted to be called in\(^2\). He charged in when it was done. His interest in Kannada by then had reached to great heights. Kannada got its freedom only after the Kannada movement started according to A. N. Murthy Rao.\(^3\) Before that though many teachers had the talent to work and write in Kannada they never did so perhaps due to the lack of confidence. All these people not only contributed creatively to Kannada but also indirectly helped the bringing together of Kannada people.

B. M. Srikantaiah, who had laid the foundation for the growth of Kannada wrote a number of poems in praise of Kannada and mother Kannada. These songs were sung in schools. Politicians may have worked in an external sphere; but it was due to people like B. M. Srikantaiah and

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1. As told by A.N. Murthy Rao in an interview in
3. Ibid, p. 95
mainly B. M. Srikantaiah, that emotional integration of Kannada people took place. In the north of Karnataka people such as Alur Venkata Rao, Bendre and Shatnakavi were working for it. All these people brought an emotional oneness among the Kannada people. It is not just the political boundary that matters but the emotional oneness, the feelings of fraternity are the most important in changing the people and in bringing them together. This was done by these mainly and in turn by people like A. N. Murthy Rao and others who must have spoken about such things among themselves and to the students.

It was in April 1919 that the Jalianwala Bagh incident took place in Amritsar and this caused a great shock to people all over India. This also was the incident which had a great impact on A. N. Murthy Rao. That's when he looked around himself to several other aspects in the society. Almost until then, he was in a world of his own, his books, studies, library, friends and home occupied his mind. But Jalianwala Bagh incident jolted him from his cuckoon. In fact he says that even the world war had escaped his attention.¹ His patriotism and hatred for the English had appeared only after the above incident. He attended many a politically motivating meetings, wherein the British government was condemned. Nevertheless these speeches were not strong enough to involve people into thinking.

The speeches enraged the people momentarily. Most of the public meetings consisted of emotional outbursts.² Between 1927 and 1940, A. N. Murthy Rao had realised the evil mentality of the British towards India. Their boastfulness about the vast empire, where the sun never sets etc.,

2. Ibid
only initiated A. N. Murthy Rao and his friends and they used to be ashamed of the fact that the British were let into the country by the Indians.¹

All these aspects of national movement also turned the attention of A. N. Murthy Rao towards the state and people of Kannada land.

Though he does not specifically mention much about unification, that spirit moves in all his writings and speeches. This definitely motivated the people whom he came across and most certainly his students and the people of Kannada speaking areas in general.

¹Murthy Rao A. N., Sanjegannina Hinnota (సంజేగాంణి హిన్నొటా), p. 303
A. N. Murthy Rao – Conclusion

The above study of A. N. Murthy Rao's life, thoughts and works leads us to certain conclusions.

Firstly, A. N. Murthy Rao was born into a rural society, which was still slumbering in the middle ages. The river by the side of his village developed a pensive mood in the boy and his father's fall and treatment developed a spirit of inquiry in the boy and weaned him away from superstitions.

Secondly, the seeds of disbelief took him away from the religion in to which he was born and the exposure to Christianity in the Wesleyan School where he studied widened the gap.

Thirdly, the spirit of inquiry made him a rebel and he did so many things which he was not supposed to do according the normal customs. Thus, A. N. Murthy Rao developed into a rebel.

Fourthly, he had regard for ladies which was due to his grandmother and he was not happy with the way in which young widows were treated in the society.

Fifthly, thinking was activated in him and he overcame his carelessness towards ancient lore which he had developed in his boyhood. He therefore took to the study of Vedas and developed the habit of thinking seriously about Hinduism and Indianism and thus he was a real twice born.
Sixthly, he had agnostic feelings. He was a very good teacher which was due to the influence of his own teachers like J. C. Rollo and S. Radhakrishnan.

Seventhly, A. N. Murthy Rao, without any hesitation, did certain things which were unthinkable in his society in those days, because he thought that what he was doing was sensible, such as breaking away from the joint family, shaving at home, having Western daughters-in-law etc.

Eighthly, in those days when the number of students in a high school was usually a single digit, here was a man who studied not only upto M.A. but also took to the study of French which was extremely rare.

Ninthly, N. Murthy Rao knowledge of English and French and the influence of his master B. M. Srikantiah, made him writer of a new kind which was not known in Kannada literature in those days. He wrote letters in Kannada without the pedantic style, wrote personal essays which was unthinkable in those days and showed his extremely modern thoughts in his critical essays on various topics.

Tenthly, his ideas about God as expressed in his work “Devarau” shows clear impact of renaissance in Kannada literature.

Eleventhly, though a professor of English and holder of many covetable positions such as the Director of All India Radio etc., his love for Kannada was remarkable and made him the president of the Kannada Sahitya Parishat.

Twelfthly, he was famous as a man who criticised the Indian society and bold to reject wrong things. His thoughts were the result of renaissance and they brought about renaissance in Kannada which changed the way of
thinking among people. He translated not only from English to Kannada which would be usual, but also translated from Kannada English which was rare in those days.

Thirteenthly, A. N. Murthy Rao was a patriot and had interest in the national movement and many other movements which were taking place in those days. This is well displayed in the fact that he did not go to bid good bye to his favourite teacher J. C. Rollo when he retired and went back to England, just because J. C. Rollo was an English man who supported the English and that the English were exploiting India. As a man responsible and educated, he did react.

Fourteenthly, A. N. Murthy Rao was born in a transitional time when several movements were taking place in India and he was a part of them. Kannada renaissance begot the unification in the Kannada speaking area and A. N. Murthy Rao was a part of it.

B. M. Srikantiah sowed the seed of unification movement which grew into a tree by the time A. N. Murthy Rao held high positions and so he concentrated more on the language aspect of the renaissance movement than on the unification movement which had picked up momentum.

The Jalianwala Bagh movement enraged A. N. Murthy Rao and he wrote and talked spiritedly about national movement after that incident. His conversation with friends and many of his activities strengthened the unification movement in the Kannada speaking areas.

On the whole we may say that A. N. Murthy Rao, broke the shackles of religion, superstitions, decadent social set up and sowed seed of discontent which was the way to salvation. Here was, "a man, who had a wise head in youth and young spirit in old age."