CHAPTER V

BIOGRAPHY OF PATHURI NAGABHUSHANAM
Pathuri Nagabhushanam was born in Peda Palem of Tenali Taluq, Guntur District of Andhra Pradesh on 20th August 20th, 1907 and his father and mother, Dhrinamma and Sri Burraiah.

Pathuri completed of primary education at Sesaiah Pantulu's Private School at Kuchipudi and staying in the house of his paternal aunt, he studied from III from to SSLC at Edward High School, Ponnuru. Daily he would walk 3 Kms to go to school from Machavaram to Ponnuru. The First among three generations in the family to pass SSLC. Encouraged by his uncle Suryanarayana he studied his Intermediate during 1927-28 at Loyola College, Madras. When he was imprisoned he prepared for Hindi Madhyamika exam conducted by Dakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha. As soon as he was out of jail, he took the exam and passed in first class. In the summer of 1934, he attended the training sessions for librarians conducted by Andhra Desa Library Association. He took admission into D.L.I.Sc., (Diploma in Library Science) course. Conducted by the Andhra University, Visakhapatnam for the first time, during the summers of 1936-38.

Nagabhushanam studied for a Diploma in Library Science conducted by the Andhra University in 1938. It is interesting to note the impression he made in the mind of Prof. C.G. Viswanatham, his teacher when he went seeking admission to the school of librarianship. "There entered a fairly tall, slim, unassuming, rustic like person clad in brownish handspun dhoti, kurta and angavastram", remembers Prof.C.G.Viswanadham. The teacher could envisage the depth of his love for men and books and his
passionate desire to disseminate knowledge and information among his people.

Prof. Viswanadham says, 'None could imagine that Nagabhushanam would attain the heights he has reached in being a pioneer and doyen of library movement in Andhra Pradesh in the class of a Panizzi and Edwards of England, Herbert Patnam and William Waner Bhishiop of USA, Leibniz of Germany. With the conviction that one well-informed individual can change the fortunes of a State. Being an asset, he could programme a kind of Library Science which penetrated the heart and home, hamlet and cottage on the banks of the Godavari and Krishna.

The teacher disclaims that he was responsible for producing Nagabhushanam. On the other hand, he says “The germ of Library Science is inmate in him and this could sprout and get nourished by the scientific approach to Library Service. Shri Paturi made me a good teacher of Library Science as opposed to the popular belief that I made him a good student”.

He concludes his appreciation by saying “If Tamilnadu could be proud of an idealist in Library Science in late Dr. SR Ranganathan, Andhra Pradesh can equally be proud of a pragmatist in Library Science in Nagabhushanam. He will remain forever as an inspire and true saint of the community in the annals of Library History of India.

Nagabhushanam has always been a willing learner with a conviction that man in never old to learn. His friends and colleagues always found him engaged in studies and acquiring knowledge to the last breath of his life.
Library Movement

Spread of knowledge was the goal and the Library Movement and the Adult Education Movement are the agencies for actualizing the goal. Of many praiseworthy public movements in Andhra Pradesh, the Library movement is the most prestigious one dedicate to the cause of rural libraries, adult education and rural reconstruction. In Andhra, the Library Movement was meant chiefly for spreading literacy in villages and it did immense work in its chosen field. Till 1938, the Chief Organizer of Library Movement was Mr. Iyyanki Venkataramaiah, who had encouraged literary taste among the promising youth and entrusted and moulded them into powerful and constructive workers for the spread of literacy. After him came Nagabhushanam who was equally enthusiastic, efficient and steadfast in his divine mission of spreading literacy marking a golden era in Library movement.

Hardly is there a village or a hamlet not visited by Sri Nagabhushanam and hardly is there a home which he had not entered for seeking donation for founding village libraries and for organizing adult education classes. The Andhra Library movement and literary movement are fortunate in securing the selfless and dedicated services of such a noble person as Nagabhushanam said Prof. Ranga in paying fitting tributes to him on his 60th birthday.

Nagabhushanam is a brilliant product of the Gandhian age whose Chief glories have been the demonstration of the triumph of truth and nonviolence over falsehood and armed conflicts. Selfless and constructive service in the spread of literacy through Library movement and literacy
movement, the attainment of national independence, the creations of a separate Andhra State on linguistic basis, the contemporary rise of Prof. N.G. Ranga’s Peasant Movement on the basis of his world-embracing ideology of kisan Mazdoor Praja Raj- in all these movements he participated and excelled as a constructive worker and able administrator.

Even while he was in elementary school, he established a library called 'Bala Saraswathi Bhandaram'. At high school he conducted Adult Education classes for two years at Machavaram, Bapatla. When he was at Loyola, Madras, he was volunteer for all India Congress Conference. He participated in Anti-Simon Commission agitation. On a call by Mahatma Gandhi he gave up his love for studies to become a full-fledged Gandhian.

Later he joined Divya Gnana College, Madanapalli for one year and passed Intermediate. With Gandhian-oriented spirit of freedom, he participated in movements for the upliftment of Harijans. In 1928, along with Mellacheruvu Venkateswarlu, Nagabhushanam established 'Sevashramam'. Under the aegis of this institution they had carried a National educational school, they preached the philosophy of Kahaddar and use of indigenous things, propagation of Hindi language, taught the advantages of naturopathy, encouraged animal husbandry, organized sevadalam, took up publication of books and ran a hand written journal.

He was responsible for the development of a forsaken Library at Pedapalem. He got a new building constructed, procured books in thousands, he himself donating a splendid gift of 1000 books. This magnificent work metamorphosed into a knowledge-sprading center for 40 villages around Pedapalem. By staking classes with the help of magic
lanterns and by his incessant propaganda, he inculcated in them a taste for book-reading.

"Where there a will, there is a way", goes the adage. Nagabhusham conceived a noble idea of organizing mobile libraries on the passenger boats when he saw an irrigational canal which was being used for transportation of passengers also. This he carried on for seven years earning him many accolades from every quarter enlorgising his innovative approach. In 1930 and 1932, he had heroically encountered rigorous imprisonment in the freedom movement under the table leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.

**Construction of Srvottama Bhavanam**

In June 1938, Nagabhushanam had been elected as the Secretary of the Andhra Desa Granthalaya Sangham. With a view to organizing this Association as model institution on fir famoundation. Nagabhushanam purchased a land near Patamata Lanka and raised a beautiful building in
1949 and christened it's a Sarvottama Bhavanam as mark of his respect to that patriot and great educationist Gadicherla Harisarvottama Rao. He constructed a second storey and named it Bapuji Mandiram.

While engaged in construction for the Bhavanam, he published books written by Harisarvottama Rao on 'Adult Education' and Sri Goteti Jogiraju Scientifically written books on Agriculture through Sarvodaya Press which he started in 1950. He started Granthalaya Pustakasala in 1944 for procuring rare books. He published three volumes of Veeresalingam works and Dr. C.R. Reddy's 'Musalamma Maranam'.

**Nagabhushanam Genius**

He was one out of the twelve candidates selected by Madras Govt. to be trained as a State-level Adult Education Teacher. The training was conducted at Vijayawada. He actively participated in the training session on 'Adult Education Modules' by the Indian Govt. in collaboration with the Ford Foundation in 1953.

On the occasion of the Centenary celebration of the birth of Gandhiji in 1969, Nagabhushanam translated 8 books, into Telugu Language from English and two books from Hindi, with the sale proceeds of which he decided to carry on the work of the center for Andhra Pradesh Gandhian Literature.

**Sense of Gratitude**

Nagabhushanam, an ornament of Andhra Pradesh. He is courteous to the fault and his sense of gratitude is proverbial. He gratefully acknowledged the help rendered to his in his long service packed and humility scented life. Himself being an abode of the finest qualities, he
moved towards galaxy of eminent personalities who have made a mark in their own field of work. Their mutual trust and apperception with stood the test of time.

On the occasion of the opening ceremony of Sarvottama Bhavanam, he honored Goteti Jogi Raju, an expert Agricultural Scientist, Yendla Sriramulu, a Veterinay Doctor and Kalipatnam Kondaiah, a man of letters. On the day of the opening of Bapuji Mandir, he felicitated Sri Unnava Lakshmi Narayana and Cherukuvada Venkata Narasimham. His sense of gratitude towards Gadicherla Hari Sarvottama Rao is evident from the fact that the building of the Andhra Desa Granthalaya Sangham being named Sarvottama Bhavanam.

On another occasion he honored Iyyanki Venkata Ramanaiah a shining star in Library Movement. But, the gratitude and rare sense of appreciation he showed for Prof. N.G. Ranga was in a different mould. He greatly appreciated the self less service rendered by Nagineni. Writing, Printing and publishing and spread of literacy and knowledge, as Thomas Carlyle said, are the sure and sustaining instruments of Democracy. Paturi in this sense is a great patriot, democrat, defender and sustainer of the motherland. Kalaprapurna Paturi Nagabhushanam published more than 100 books. He authored some books, translated some other and got many written by eminent writers. By dint of his diligence and perseverance, Nagabhushanam has become an expert in Library Science, written books on the subject, taught many to become able and willing librarians, who are the true torchbearers of gnana to the people of rural India. For Nagabhushanam work is worship. He believed that service to his fellow
beings is service to God. He breathed his last in 1987 among his most affectionate and intimate friends of his lifetime in a meeting conveyed by the Andhra Granthalaya Sangham. Nagabhushanam is a highly evolved soul and as such engaged himself in the satvic and noblest of Pursuits till his last, he has now moved into history. His legacy continues in the ages to come. His is indeed a life sublime and beautiful.

**HAPPY BLEND OF POLITICAL AGITATION AND CONSTRUCTIVE WORK**

Gandhi gave equal importance to the political struggle on the one side, and to the reconstruction of society on the other through his constructive programme. Being a great organizer, Gandhi enthused people to participate in the political struggle for Independence. If we look back, his political struggles were at the peak, once in a decade-1920s, 1930s and 1940s. How could he keep all the people in the fold of the freedom movement all these years? In the present day society, if the politicians lose one election, they are out of currency and struggle for their very survival.²

The ingenuity of the Mahatma lay in the fact that he could bring agitation and the reconstruction together. It is the constructive work, which kept the vast reservoir of human energy within the fold of the movement. His constructive programme, which started with three items, was enlarged into 13 items and finally evolved into 18 items. He said that his constructive programme was indicative and many more new items can be added as per the exigencies of the situation. He could convince the people that even if they follow the propagation of one constructive programme, they are part and parcel of the Gandhian movement for freedom struggle.
Paturi Nagabhushanam was one such veteran Gandhian Constructive worker who had not only participated in the freedom struggle, but also in the Constructive programme of educating people through library movement. Gadicherla Harisarvottamarao, the Lokamanya Tilak of South India, who was the very first political prisoner in South India, was his mentor and role model.

**INNOVATIVE CONCEPT OF BOAT LIBRARY**

The youthful Nagabhushanam was innovative in his thinking and approaches. Hence he started a boat library. Why? Because, for interior villages in Guntur District Canals was the means of transport. He realized that people have free time while they embark on a journey by boat. He clinched the opportunity and started the Boat library so that people can use their journey time in a productive way. People used to read the books and journals loud in the journey so that even the illiterate and ignorant will could acquire knowledge. It was the first known boat library in the country. It was in vogue for seven long years.

**EMBARKED ON A WIDER MISSION FROM VIJAYAWADA**

On the eve of Independence, Nagabhushanam felt that Vijayawada was the right place to pursue his life mission of library movement in a wider arena. Library is not a mere repository of books; it is the quintessence of the best thoughts and aims and aspirations, dreams and delusions of people, which were shattered by the vicissitudes of life. The portals of library mould many a life in the right direction as we interact with the best brains. Thus libraries are instruments of social change. The
progress of society is intertwined with dispelling superstitions, blind beliefs, outmoded customs and promotion of secular and liberal outlook.

CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH GADICHERLA HARISARVOTTAMARAO

His close association with Gadicherla Harisarvottama Rao, a doyen of library movement, further enhanced his dream for a larger movement. His constant interaction with Harisarvottama Rao lift an indelible impression on his work and ideas. As early as 1938 he became the secretary of Andhra Granthalaya Sangham and continued to be elected again and again to be at the helm of affairs of Library movement for decades.

NAGABHUSHANAM AND GORA

When Nagabhushanam came to Vijayawada, almost at the same time Gora, founder of Atheist Center at Mudunur village and a social revolutionary and freedom fighter, also shifted his Atheist Centre to Vijayawada. They continued to be in the close proximity. And in no time they were Neighbours Sarvottama Bhavan and Atheist Centre. All the
members of Gora family, including myself, had the opportunity to see and interact with Paturi Nagabhushanam for more than a half a century. Both Sarvottam Bhavan and Atheist Centre became hubs of activity right from 1948 in the adjacent campuses. As Gora was also actively involved in the library movement, adult education and for social change, the friendship grew further. Nagabhushanam’s two children-Sujatha and Sarada—studied at Vasavya Vidyalaya at Atheist Centre. We had close friendship with Nagabhushanam’s entire family—his devoted wife Chandramma, and their children-Suribabu, Sujatha and Sarada. The bond of friendship and affinity of ideas continue to be the same between the families, even in the second and third generation.

**SOCIAL REFORM AND CONSTRUCTIVE WORK**

Nagabhushanam’s focal point was the library movement. He devoted his life and energies for the same. But he was connected with many aspects of Gandhian constructive programme. He was a lifelong promoter of Khadi. It is a symbol of self respect and self reliance.

Eradication of untouchability and upliftment of weaker sections of society was very much needed in rural India. In order to promote social equality, Nagabhushanam advocated and participated in interdining programmes. A lot of change has come in the post Independent India. But in the pre-Independence period even to organize an inter-dining programme breaking the caste barriers was a difficult thing. In those days wherever Gora went to address a meeting or to inaugurate a library, or for any other programmes, Gora used to stay only in the so-called untouchable localities and organized inter dining programmes even in the
remote areas. In the Commemorative issue of "Granthalaya Sarvaswam", Kodati Narayanarao in his memoirs about Nagabhusanam, he elaborates about an Interdining programme which was organised in connection with the 20th Library Conference at Alampur in Telangana region, as Gora insisted that he would eat in the Harijan Basti. Nagabhusanam and Kodati Narayanarao and others participated in the Interlinking.

**WOMEN'S EDUCATION**

Nahabhushanam was an ardent champion of women's rights and women's education. In the villages he encouraged girls to go for higher studies. Girl's education is one of the means to improve the status of the girl child in society. He set an example before others by educating his own children up to the post-graduate level. It is heartening that Sarada obtained doctorate degree in the field of library Science. One cannot forget the encouragements and support given by her husband Sivaramakrishna, all these years. Sivaramakrishna is like a son to Nagabhusanam and right hand person in carrying forward his work.

**ADULT AND SOCIAL EDUCATION**

Nagabhusanam was concerned with the poverty and misery of the people in the rural areas. The agricultural workers and even the small and marginal farmers were victims of exploitation as they were illiterate and ignorant. Hence Nagabhusanam encouraged adult education programmes in the rural areas. The three R's were helpful in spreading awareness among these people. In pre-independence period there was no help from Government to adult or social education programmes. It was pure
voluntary work. He published Gora’s books on adult education as a means of empowerment of the illiterate masses.

**HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

He realized that library movement would get a fillip when it is a mission and also realized that there is constant need for up gradation of skills of the librarians. Commitment and skill should go together. It is a must in the ever-changing world. Hence he prevailed upon the Government to recognize and start courses in library science.

As a staunch believer in voluntary effort, he started the training and orientation programmes for librarians to impart scientific and technical skills. In order to create social awareness and to increase the commitment in the wider canvas, he invited experts from different social sciences to share their expertise and experiences with the librarians. Thus he envisaged that librarians must be experts with social commitment. Myself and many other members of Atheist Centre had the unique opportunity to interact with the budding librarians in the training programmes. Library movement is an instrument of social change. It must be ever receptive, innovative, and instructive and a means of ennobling people.

**ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS AND DIGNITY OF LABOUR**

With changing social and environmental dimensions, he realized that environmental protection and ecological balance is a must to have a healthy society. True to his Gandhian principles, he was down to the earth in his approach. He set an example before others by doing physical work every day. Age did not dampen his enthusiasm and commitment to do physical work and manual labour. In our society where the manual labour
is looked down and abhorred, and white caller jobs are preferred, Nagabhushnam did gardening even in the advanced age and nursed the beauty of the surroundings of building, Sarvottama bhavanam”.

**A LIFE-LONG CRUSADER**

He became “Kala Prapoorna”. But laurels did not deter him in pursuing the cherished path of service to society by ‘cultivating the minds’ for a prosperous India-rich in knowledge, education, innovation and independence.

It is befitting that we are celebrating the birth centenary of this ‘great educator of rural India’ in the Shashtipoorthi the Nation’s independence. I pay my humble tribute to this lifelong crusader against ignorance and illiteracy. His example is a source of inspiration for the younger generation.

**AN APPRECIATION PATURI NAGABHUSHANAM – A DOYEN OF MANY THINGS**

To assess the many splendored personality of a great and rare man like Paturi who has devoted all his life to a cause of his choice we have to assess the social milieu in which time he has taken birth. As per the opinion of experts the second half of 19th century and first half of 20th century India gave birth to innumerable stalwarts of world class. They just flung themselves into national movement and ready to sacrifice inspired by Mahatma. He had his education at Pedapalem, Kuchipudi, Nidubrolu, Madras, Madanapalli and at Andhra University. Elders of national spirit moulded his attitude. If we want to know a person we have to find his friends. In this connection, we have to know the elders of Paturi
Nagabhushnam of whom he has a high esteem. Ramaswamy chowdary, Mellacheruvu, Iyyanki, Hari Sarvothamarao, Kodati Narayana Rao, N.G. Ranga, N. Venkaiah, Goteti, Ramarao, and Jogi Raju they are all gems of pure rays. He is to do various duties-House holders, Printer, Publisher, Editor, Teacher, Organiser of meetings, Writer, Financial Manager, a perfect host. How is he able to do all these things. He has got dedication, devotion, duty mindedness, dexterity towards his goal of national regeneration through establishing libraries, adult education, constructive programmes, publishing important books and spotting and encouraging the right kind of workers to assist him. Some sort of integrative attitude also worked with him. It so happened he is attracted to work with personalities, like Iyynaki, Gadicherla, Goteti, Kodati, Suravarm persons from various parts of Andhra Pradesh.

In Indian parlance he is a Rushi, tapaswi, a Karma Yougi. He has got a spark of divinity in him. It is almost impossible to achieve so much without that assistance. It is a pity even after independence his work is not appreciated and encouraged. He is able to acquire a site, got buildings constructed for the smooth and perpetual running of the association.

One work needs special mention and that one work is enough to assess his worth and originality and that is the publication of Voluminous and encyclopedic publication of books on agriculture and allied subjects. In his early days he is instrumental in publishing too bulky volumes on British rule in India. Even well wishers of farmer interests are not able to assess the worth of his toil and sweat in publishing the books on agriculture in Telugu. He is able to convince his family members to
continue his work of library movement after his demise. The trio is shouldering the mantle of the movement at the head quarters Sarvottama Bhavanam. Smt. Sarada, Lakshminarayana, Siva Rama Krishna.

My entry into the portals of the organization is by the encouragement of Paturi. I am related to S. Rama Swamy Chowdary and my father is also a silent worked for the rural development in the village and also follower of library movement. I use to visit Vijayawada often due to work relating to Andhra Provincial Village Officers Association for which I worked as a President for 10 years from 1966-1977. I used to assist in his works in a small way so he advised me to enlist in the organization The Centenary Celebration and the deliberations will I hope lead to new direction and spirit for progressive enlargement of library movement in Andhra Pradesh.6

A LIFE SUBLIME AND BEAUTIFUL

Great geniuses have the short biographies said Emerson speaking about Plato, the Greek philosopher. They inspire their contemporaries and the generations to come with their exemplary character and the code of constructive ad self-less public service for the emancipation of the downtrodden and submerged masses. Belonging to that rare and unique class are Mahamohppadhyya N.G.Ranga, Kalaprapoorna Paturi Nagabhushanam and Rytujanodharaka Nagineni Venkaiah to mention a few.

Kalaprapurna Paturi Nagabhushanam in the classification of Acharya N.G. Ranga, distinguished dignitaries in his chosen field the world of books and he has carved a niche for himself in his public service in the cause of the Andhra Library movement. He devoted his entire life to the
best of human causes, the spread of literacy and the real treasure house of knowledge, the libraries, which he heralded single handedly. That he had diverted all his heritage and acquisition into this is laudable.7

His efforts at spreading literacy among rural people through Adult Education movement and Library movement won him national acclaim and the Andhra University conferred on him the title Kalaprapurna by declaring, “This unsolicited mark of distinction, conferred on so great a literacy character (a lifetime service in Library Movement) did much honour to the judgment and liberal spirit of the learned body”.

Rejecting the handsome property of his paternal uncle, he exhibited a rare desire to be a scholar rather than being a rich man. It was really extraordinary on the part of so young a boy to have made such decision to the enlightened and informed so young a boy to have made such decision to the enlightened and informed so that he could enlighten the ignorant and less fortunate.

Reference

3. Kodandaramaiah, T. ((2007), Souvenir National Conference on Orientation of Library Services in India; Kala Prapurana Pathuri

4. Ibid, 16-19

