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## Library Movement in Erstwhile Telangana - Role of Print Media

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### Abstract

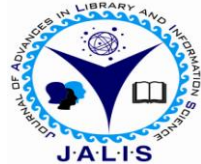
*Library movement played a vital role in awakening the masses of erstwhile Telangana in Hyderabad state. In this paper it is recorded how the print media stood solidly behind the library movement, and its leaders. Print media, made aware of what is happening in and outside of Nizam State; the tyranny of the rulers was chronicled. Ban on library conferences were condemned and public opinion was gathered in support of the movement. Libraries without the newspapers are unimaginable, the print media made people aware of their rights. Pioneers of the library movement are in the forefront in organizing meetings, to fight against the injustice done by landlords and Nizam as well. Activists of the library movement spread the light of knowledge on bonded labour, Mohatarfa pannu (handloom weaving tax), oppression of the ruling class, and other issues.*

### Keywords

Telangana, Hyderabad State; Library movement  
Press, Telugu Print media; Nilagiri, Tenugu Patrika;  
Golconda Patrika, Sujatha; Suravaram Prathapa  
Reddy, Madapati Hanumantha Rao

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## Introduction

The stalwarts like Suravaram Prathapa Reddy, Oddiraju Brothers, Shabnavis Venkata Rama Narasimha Rao, Vattikota Alwar Swamy, Nagulapalli Kodanda Rama Rao, Nampally Gowri Shankar Varma, Devulapally Ramanuja Rao, Madapati Hanumantha Rao, Bhagya Reddy Varma, Chidirematham Virabhadra Sharma, Kodati Narayana Rao, Gadiyaram Ramakrishna Sharma, Boyinepalli Venkata Rama Rao and host of others at one point of time or other worked as Journalists, and edited journals. All these luminaries were in the forefront of the library movement in Telangana, in erstwhile Hyderabad State, which include Nalgonda, Mahabubnagar, Medak, Adilabad, Nizamabad, Karimnagar, Warangal and Hyderabad. Warangal bifurcated and Khammam district was created on October 1, 1953.

Library movement started with the establishment of Sri Krishna Devaraya Andhra Bhasha Nilayam, in 1901 in Hyderabad. Prior to this there are some libraries established in the late 19th Century in Hyderabad city, like Asafia library, Bharatha Gunavardhaka library, Albert Reading Room, Mudigonda Shankararadhyula library and others. But this movement gained strength after the launching of Nizam Rashtra Andhra Jana Sangham in 1921. It was decided in the first meeting of Jana Sangham held at Hyderabad in 1922, that the libraries should be established to propagate the ideas of the Sangham, that is to promote Telugu language and culture.

Libraries are the mass meeting centres, used to discuss all the issues concerned to them. People congregate daily, in the evening hours, at the library premises. In these meetings the secretary of that particular library or an educated person, used to read loudly to the readers the newspaper of that day. With this the un-educated people also made it as a hobby to attend the meetings to know more about the world around them. In the meantime libraries started adult education camps, night schools to educate the rural masses. With this the people awakened. The awakened masses questioned the tyranny of the landlords, and stood against bonded labour, which was rampant in parts of Telangana. This has become possible only because of the Nizam Rashtra Jana Sangham, Andhra Maha Sabha activities, and its leaders' concerted efforts. The publications of the Sangham enlightened the educated activists and leaders alike. Almost all of these leaders started their public life with the library movement, and rose to the

highest level. Former Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, first Chief Minister of Hyderabad State Burugula Rama Krishna Rao, first Andhra Maha Sabha chairperson Suravaram Prathapa Reddy was the fine examples in this regard. P.V. Narasimha Rao took keen interest in running the Shabdhanu Shasana Andhra Bhasha Nilayam in Hanamkonda in late 1940s. He also assisted Pamulaparthi Sadashiva Rao in editing the literary journal '*Kakatiya*' from Warangal in 1946. This shows the bondage between print media and library movement. It is explained in detail about the role of press in the Telangana library movement.

In the renaissance of Telangana, library movement played a key role. The press however in small numbers, played an equally pivotal role. The literacy rate in Telangana at that time was not more than five percent. There is no freedom to express thoughts, and conduct meetings as per the order of "Gasti nishan 53". In these trying circumstances the newspapers were established and run. The sole aim of the Telugu press was to educate, inform and awaken people to fight for their rights. The motive behind the establishment of the newspapers was to serve the people better, in the absence of any political rights. The press played the role of the opposition party, used to bring the travails of the public to the notice of the government for the solutions. The press helped in great deal to the movements led by Madapati Hanumantha Rao, Suravaram Prathapa Reddy, Burugula Ramakrishna Rao, Raavi Narayana Reddy, Keshava Rao Koratker, Puvvada Venkatappaiah, Nagulapally Kodanda Rao, Jamalapuram Kehsava Rao, Madiraju Rama koteswara Rao, Mudigonda Siddi Raja Lingam, Kaloji Narayana Rao, Bachu Venkatesam Gupta, Bhagya reddy Varma, Arigay Ramaswamy, B.S. Venkata Rao, Krishna Swamy Mudiraj, Konda Venkata Ranga Reddy and others. The press has built public opinion against the atrocities committed by Razakars, and the restrictions imposed by Nizam rulers on the freedom of speech, publishing the books and establishing schools.

In this research it is explored to find out more than 140 periodicals and 20 written Journals. All the written journals were kept in the libraries to the use of readers. All the written journals were hand written by enthusiastic library organizers. Andhra Kesari which started as a written journal in 1935, converted into a print journal in 1939. The handwritten Andhra Kesari journal was kept at the Vemana Andhra Bhasha Nilayam, Sri Krishna Devaraya Andhra Bhasha Nilayam. Now the original copies of very few

journals were available, that too in pitiable condition in various libraries. The copies of these journals were not preserved unlike in Andhra libraries where all the Krishna patrika copies were available in good condition. But it has become difficult to find all the copies of the 'Golconda' paper, which was published almost 25 years after the Krishna patrika. Some of the journals were available with eminent scholars, but it is of no use, because they don't want to lose the privilege of owning it. In the libraries also these journals were not preserved properly. Previously scholars used to find rare journals like "*Teluguthalli*" at Vemana Andhra Bhasha Nilayam in Hyderabad, now this has become extinct because of white ants. The copies of historical "*Meezan*" Telugu daily were lying scattered in State Central library, Afzalgunj, the visitors to the library's store room were walking on these papers, causing irreparable damage. Despite of all these hardships, an attempt is made to collect more than hundred journals, which contributed immensely to the library movement.

The press played the key role in the renaissance of Telangana. Library movement, book publishing, and literature has been closely associated in modernizing these parts of the country. The library movement and journalism depended one on another. With the establishment of Sri Krishna Devaraya Andhra Bhasha Nilayam in 1901 at Hyderabad the movement gained momentum. As stated earlier, before the establishment of Bhasha Nilayam there were more than twenty libraries working in the Nizam state, and most of them situated in Hyderabad (Secunderabad) itself. The libraries like Somasundaram library (1872), Secunderabad, Mudigonda Shankaradhyula library (1872), Kavadiguda, Young men's improvement Society (1875), Secunderabad, Theosophical Society (library) (1880), Bharatha Gunavardhaka Samstha (1887), Hyderabad Reading Room and library (1898), Bolarum Reading Room are a few to name them.

With the establishment of Sri Krishna Devaraya Andhra Bhasha Nilayam by Komaraju Laxmana Rao, Ravichettu Ranga Rao, Raja Nayani Venkata Ranga Rao to awaken Telangana, a series of libraries followed. Like Raja Raja Narendra Andhra Bhasha Nilayam (1904), at Hanamkonda, Andhra Samvardhini library (1905), Secunderabad, Sri Mahabubia Andhra Bhasha Nilayam (1911), Errupalem (Khammam), Sri Siddha Malleshwara library (1913), Remidicherla (Khammam), Sanskrita Kalavardhini (1913), Secunderabad, Andhra Vignana Prakashini Grantha Nilayam, Suryapet, Shabdhanu

Shasana Andhra Bhasha Nilayam (1918), Warangal and host of other libraries launched to educate the readers.

### Role of press in Library movement

First independent Telugu monthly launched in 1913 from Mahabubnagar in the name of *Hithabodhini*, the monthly was edited by Badaru Srinivasa Rao, who is also interested in drama and ayurvedic medicine. Srinivasa Rao used to publish articles and news on women education, agriculture, and industrial issues. Sundari Bai, Roopkhanpeta Ratnamamba Desai, these two women writers published their essays, and poetry respectively in the monthly. The journal gave importance to women's education, this inspired first generation library organizers. After that in 1917 *Andhramata*, a journal published from Hyderabad gave priority to the Christian literature. However with the launching of Nizam Rashtra Andhra Jana Sangham, a number of journals started, and stood solidly on the side of the library movement and its organizers.

Jana Sangham launched in November 1921, but a full fledged body formed in 1922 and activities of the Sangham gained momentum with establishment of *Nilagiri*, and *Tenuu Patrika* at the advice of Andhra Pitamaha Madapati Hanumantha Rao. Shabnavis Venkata Rama Narasimha Rao, who established a library named 'Andhra Saraswati Nilayam' at Nalgonda on 18th March 1918. Before launching this library there was another library in existence under the name of VI Nizam 'Mahabubia Reading Room'. Shabnavis was a Muqtedar of a village called Mamillagudem nearby Nalgonda town. At an early age he came into public life by establishing a printing press called "Osmania printing press". He also started a book publishing house "Vireshalinga Kanthabharana Granthamala", he later started another granthamala named Samskarini Granthamala. Under Vireshalinga granthamala he published Dhupati Venkata Ramana Charyulu's Udayalaxmi, a biographical poetic book on Shabnavis's first wife Udayalaxmi. Balika vilapam (girl child's lamentation) was a short story written by Shabnavis, also published under this banner. Udayalaxmi generally called as Janaki Bai was the sister of Pulijala Venkata Ranga Rao, who chaired Devarakonda Andhra Maha Sabha conference.

Print media used to publish in detail the anniversary celebrations in the press, so that the activities get the publicity. Library organizers, generally used to work

as stringers and correspondents to the *Golconda patrika*, hence they wrote detailed reports on the celebration, which get published as it is. Shabnavis started a weekly *Nilagiri* at the advice of Madapati on 4th august, 1922. This *Nilagiri* used to publish anniversaries of libraries; special articles on library movement were also given prominence in the journal. It ran over five years, but only one year issues, that too without the masthead of the paper available. On the study of these issues we can come to a conclusion that the weekly proudly stood by the side of library organizers. Kodati Rama Krishna Rao of Repala in Suryapet district was very much active in the library movement; he was instrumental in organizing library conferences at the Andhra Jana Sangham meetings at Suryapet. Yama Aravaiah of Suryapet established the Andhra Vignana Prakashini library.

In support of the library movement "*Nilagiri*" published news of the library anniversaries regularly. In 19th august, 1926 issue Sri Krishna Devaraya Andhra Bhasha Nilayam silver jubilee celebrations were recorded. In the same issue Deshoddharaka Andhra Bhasha Nilayam, Kukkunur of Palvantha Samthaan inaugural news covered, it says that there are more than 1000 books available in the library apart from the subscription of 20 periodicals. Library is maintained by Kothapalli Venkata Rama Laxmi Narayana Sharma. In a news item published on 26th august, 1926 recorded that T.K. Bagaiah of Armur (Nizamabad dist) established a library in his native village with the help of Gonagopula Laxma Reddy, Raja Reddy, Chowtpally Hanmanth Reddy, Venkata Bhuma Reddy Desai (Armur), Malla Reddy Desai (Deshmukh, Mortad) and others. Maduri Bhasha Nilayam, Bhasha Kalpavalli, Pathanalayam libraries established in the beginning of 1920s was highlighted in an article in the *Nilagiri*. Launching of Rudrama Devi Bhasha Nilayam at Rapolu, Andhra Bhasha Nilayam, Kamalapur and Kavya Kanta Ganapati Muni Shastri's felicitation at Andhra Samvardhini Granthalayam were also recorded in the columns of *Nilagiri*. Noted critic of Telugu literature Kashibhatta Brahmayya Shastri gave an excellent lecture on Andhra language at Anjaneya Granthalayam on 18th December, 1926. The meeting was chaired by noted library activist Deshmukh of Kondagadapa in Nalgonda district, Akkinipally Janaki Rama Rao. All these library activities are chronicled regularly in the *Nilagiri* weekly. It gave priority to the conferences and meetings held at the premises of libraries. Generally scholars from Andhra used to visit these libraries and deliver lectures on Telugu literature and language, and they got felicitation and a rich purse

for their yeoman services. After the launch of Nilagiri, within the gap of three days another weekly Tenugu started.

### **Tenugu Patrika**

Oddiraju brothers Sita Ramachandra Rao, Raghava Ranga Rao jointly launched "*Tenugu patrika*" on 27th august, 1922, at the advice of Madapati Hanumantha Rao. The weekly was published from a remote village in Warangal district called Inugurthy. Prior to the journal the brothers established a publishing house named Vignana Pracharini Granthamala, which published a number of books on different subjects in between 1918-1927. The multifaceted brothers knew carpentry, mason, photography, shoe making and many other works, they also wrote more than 100 books put together. They are masters in nine languages including Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Marathi, English, Urdu, Persian etc. The brothers have a huge collection of books in their possession, used to run a personal library at their native village. Unfortunately in the Telangana armed struggle period their library was torched by communists branding them as feudal.

In Tenugu patrika, 24th august 1924 issue it is recorded that Andhra Samvardhini Granthalayam situated at Secunderabad had a collection of more than 2000 books; there are more than 130 members in it. Apart from this Nizam Rashtra Kendra Sangham library at Madapati Hanumantha Rao's residence, Vishnuvardhanandhra Bhasha Nilayam, Burgumphad, Godavari Vachanalayam, Chennur, Bahramiya Granthalayam, Kolanpaka, Andhra Vijaya Granthalayam, Thummala gudem, Sri Nilakantha Nrusimhandhra library, Nematikonda, Andhra vani library at Makthal and other centers news published in the Tenugu. These acts boosted the morale of the library organizers to work hard to promote reading culture.

Through the library movement secular ideology promoted, Telugu libraries were named after Mahabubia, Osmania the VI and VII Nizams of Hyderabad state respectively. This culture was spread through the establishing libraries and organizing conferences. A meeting of Hindu - Mohammadiya library held at Dornakal in Warangal district in 1924, under the aegis of M. Ramkishan Rao. Meeting was held at Chanda Lingaiiah's residence, addressed by eminent Muslim scholar Moulana Mohammad Karim saheb. Telugu, urdu books, periodicals were made available to the readers in this library. This news is

covered in the 19th October, 1924 issue of Tenugu Patrika. In another incident a meeting of Andhra Vignana Prakashini library was held at Suryapet under the chairmanship of its secretary Yarma Rama Narasaih, and it was decided in the meeting to collect Diwali donations from Muslims and Hindus alike. A Muslim officer attended the meeting and promised to subscribe *Sahifa* journal for the library at his own cost.

### **Golconda Patrika**

Suravaram Prathapa Reddy a pioneer in the library movement in both the Telugu states. He was the founder editor of the Golconda patrikar, which started publishing on 10<sup>th</sup> May, 1926. He established a huge library at the Reddy hostel as early as in 1922. He was charged with sedition for keeping Vir Savarkar's banned book in the library. Later it was proved the allegation was baseless. Prathapa Reddy wrote a book titled Ganthalayam recording the genesis of library, and maintenance of library in the present context was discussed in it. It was the first of its kind book from Telangana. He used to travel all over the Telugu speaking land and promoted library movement through his speeches. Reddy is a versatile writer, speaker, he visited Pedapalem library in West Godavari district and delivered an excellent speech on the library movement, later it was printed in Golconda under the title My experiences of Pedapalem tour.

*Golconda patrika* used to publish books too. Golakonda Kavula Sanchika is one among them. Annual special issues of Golconda were brought out in every May on the annual day. Collection of rare Telugu manuscripts and preparing it for publication was done at the Golconda office itself. Library conferences, manuscript collections were given priority in *Golconda*.

In the year 1930 Mr. Prathapa Reddy elected as the president of "Andhra Mahasabha", the meeting was held at Jogipet in Medak district. Almost all the Andhra Mahasabha meetings were held at one or other library premises. The first meeting at Jogipet was also held in the premises of a library only. The library movement and Andhra Mahasabha activities were run hand in hand. The print media has played a key role in organizing the people and in encouraging their activities. Library movement and journalism depended one on another for survival. At this time 'Golconda' took a lead role in the library movement. Between 1920 and 1930 there were more than three

hundred libraries established in these parts of the country. The libraries became the meeting points, and centre of political and literary activities. Many libraries used to publish written magazines and annual reports.

Besides these pioneering works, Mandumula brothers Narasinga Rao, Ramachandra Rao is closely associated with the libraries in Hyderabad. Narasinga Rao used to edit the Urdu daily Rayyat. Bhagya Reddy Varma Dalit leader who lead the movement from front established a library named Raja Ram Mohan Roy library at his Adi Hindu Bhavan located in Chaderghat, Hyderabad. He also edited Bhagyanagar and Adi Hindu, which gave prominence to library movement. Vattikota Alwar Swamy edited for some time Telugutalli monthly for Progressive writers association in 1945, he also edited Gumasta a bimonthly. Gadiyaram Ramakrishna Sharma who is instrumental in organizing the library conference at Kyathu in Mahabubnagar along with Suravaram edited a monthly called Sujatha. Hence we can come to a conclusion that almost all the journalists in erstwhile Telangana used to be associated with one or other library.

For all the movements the Nalgonda, Warangal, Mahabubnagar district people stood in the forefront. And the leaders from these districts took active participation in various movements. From Warangal the persons like Oddiraju brothers, Dasaradhi brothers, Vanamamalai brothers, Madiraju Ramakoteswara Rao, Bhagaya Reddy Varma, Kaloji Narayana Rao, Komaragiri Narayana Rao, Devulapally Ramanuja Rao, Thumu Varada Raju, were led the literary and library movements from the front. From Mahabubnagar district leaders like the Mandumula brothers, Burugula Ramakrishna Rao, Suravaram Prathapa Reddy played key roles in awakening people. In Nalgonda district Pillalamarri brothers, Gavva brothers, Pulijala Ranga Rao, Shabnavees Venkatarama Narasimha Rao, Devulapally Venkateswara Rao, Kodati Narayana Rao, Kodati Ramakrishna Rao, Puvvada Venkatappaiah, Vattikota Alwar Swamy, Chidirematam Veerabhadra Sharma, Raavi Narayana Reddy, Anutla Ramachandra reddy and others led renaissance movement in Telangana, and become source of inspiration to future generation.

## Conclusion

The library movement gained strength with the unstinted support of the print media. Pioneers in the

field of journalism used to chair the library conferences held at different parts of the people. It is interesting to note that the library activists are unpaid correspondents to the *Golconda*, *Meezan*, *Tenugu*, *Nilagiri* and other periodicals and dailies. The reports of the meetings held at the premises of the libraries were dispatched to these periodicals at the regular intervals. *Saraswatha Jyothi* edited by library enthusiast Boyinepalli Venkata Rama Rao from Karimnagar in 1953 published articles on library movement. All the journals published prior to 1956 used to give priority to the library movement. The library movement is the mother of all political movements in Telangana. Nizam Rashtra Andhra Jana Sangham, Andhra Maha Sabha, Congress, Arya Samaj, Communist party, Socialist party, scheduled caste federation all have its genesis in library movement. If we deeply study many facts about these issues come to fore.

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