

## Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore literature influence on Telugu society during the Colonial period

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### **Abstract**

*Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore is an important personality in Telugu society and literature. Telugu region people proved an important literary genre in the early Andhra society during the colonial period. However, these rapid changes during the colonial period are having serious effects on society and literature has emerged that offers contradictory findings of new trends in literature to bring social change. The research to influence has tended to focus more on the social impact of Tagore literary than of the literature. This paper seeks to present Tagore literary impact by analyzing the Telugu literature on Society and paper first gives a brief overview of the relation between Bengal and Telugu people.*

**Key Words:** *literature, Journals, Society, Nationalism, Regionalism.*

### **Bengali Telugu relations**

Both the Bengal and Telugu regions had established literally and cultural bounding much earlier to the 'Trailanga Swam'<sup>ii</sup> is a legendary figure in Bengal during 19<sup>th</sup> century and even today, with stories of his yogic powers and longevity who was born in *Kumbilapuram* or *Kumiki* of *Puspatirega Taluk* at *Vizianagaram* District in Andhra Pradesh, with the name of *Shivarama*. And by 1804 the Bible had been printed in Translation in Telugu from 'Srirama Puram Press'<sup>iii</sup> of Bengal and in the year 1938 members of Andhra Association felt the need for a Telugu teaching Institution for the children of Telugu families in the city of Calcutta. Enthusiastic ladies of the Telugu community started to teach Telugu to a small group of children as the years went by; the initiative grew into a movement to establish a permanent and regular Telugu School<sup>iv</sup>. And even today Telugu was one of the subjects in some public schools of the West Bengal state.

Hero worship was one of the main factors for influence. Telugu society always gave much prayer to hero worship and his writings influenced much more before the Nobel prize<sup>v</sup>. Tagore *Gitanjali* was translated into Telugu as early as 1914. Nearly 400 translations about *Gitanjali* in Telugu, out of those, translations of Chalam, Singaracharya, Bellamkonda Rama Das, Adipudi Somanatha Rao and Janakiram are noteworthy. Tagore's stories and novels were so popular among the Telugu readers that many writers vied with each other in translating his works into Telugu. K. Vaikunta Rao's translation of Tagore's novel 'Home and Abroad' and Gopala Reddy's translation of Kalidasa and Smarana were trend-setters in this regard. Almost all the works of Tagore have been translated into Telugu. Poets of Andhra had been so much inspired by his writings and thoughts during those days that they used to go on a literary pilgrimage to Shantiniketan. Some of them were stayed back and pursued their

studies under his guidance. AkurathiChalamaiah, Rayaprolu, Abburi, Pattabhi, MallavarapuVisveswara Rao, Bezawada Gopala Reddy are some of them. It is also notable that Tagore had his life in Telugu people region, Tagore stayed from 25-02-1919 to 02-03-1919 with Margaret Cousins at Madanapalle and translated present National Anthem into English and was preserved in the premises of Besant Theosophical College, Madanapalle, Andhra Pradesh and also he visited Pithapuram Samsthana of East Godavari district for some days and spent with Thummurada Sangameswara Sastry, Great Musician of Veena and Sitara and also, Rabindranath visited Hyderabad in 1933 and stayed as guest of Prime Minister of Hyderabad State Kishan Prasad at Banjara Hills. Gurudev was so impressed with the place that he wished to settle down there and penned a beautiful poem on Banjara Hills which was also an abode of the rich in those days.

### Functional Impact in Telugu region

The influences brought changes in the Telugu society with GurajadaVenkata Appa Rao (1861-1915) who revolted against the traditional and classical language of earlier poetry and replaced it with the language and idioms of everyday life which brought literature to the doorstep of the common man and the common become a subject and inspiration for the new poetry where the society as influenced more and more by the European writings of John Locke, Rousseau and Hobs. He was the first writhed in Telugu who gave utterance to humanism in his widest sense in his poetry and it was continued with the foremost personalities amongst the Bengali writers who influenced the Telugu literature and society were by Rabindranath Tagore; his influence over Telugu writers could be traced far back to 1890s. His influence on the Romantic poets of Telugu modern literature was quite significant and with his dispels and students from Santhiniketan, during the past century much more translations, have become available on Tagore works in Telugu. Rayaprole Subbarao was the first Telugu student to Rabindranath Tagore, who has been widely influenced the Telugu society, Rayaprole inspired by the Tagore and Western literary movement and brought romanticism into Telugu literature by breaking away from the traditional translations of Sanskrit and he introduced the concept of '*Amalina Shringara Tatvamu*'<sup>vi</sup> into Telugu literature.

Later, the then Andhra Chief Minister Bezwada Gopal Reddy also studied at Santiniketan and other poets who followed his trend Devulapalli Krishna Shastry, Vedula Satyanarayana Shastry, Rayaprolu Subba Rao, Abburi Rama Krishna Rao, Achanta Janaki Ram, Bejawada Gopala Reddy, MallavarapuVisweswara Rao, Sri, T.N Ansuya Devi, B.V Singaracharya, Chalam, Jaggaiiah, Muthnuri Krishna Rao and Amarendra are some of the luminaries of the romantic movement in Telugu literature who have been influenced by Tagore and his works. It should be emphasized that the above modern young poets of Telugu literature adopted free verse form as a vehicle to convey their sentiments and feelings only after reading the classic Gitanjali. After reading Tagore, the young Telugu poets adopted lucid prose and style of diction in their literary pursuits. The Telugu's relation with Tagore is much better than any other south Indian language.

The literature played a vital role in the Andhra society and attempted to redefine the society and culture' under the mask of defending Indian traditions from the impact of westernized reformers, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century it has it counters form the counter-reformers of orthodox section, and the emergence and expansion of the western education and ideas which lead to accepting the change in writings and targeted orthodox social customs and

traditions, and as part of that the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century first generation of the reformers struggled lot to get acceptance from the contemporary society and the second generation of the 20<sup>th</sup> century reformers got better acceptance from poets, writers and the local press of the Andhra society, where it was not in a position to accept change within the same society but Telugu society almost always accepts the change from the outside influence through localizing the pattern in accordance with the circumstances to the contemporary society to continue with changing trends and identifying the social stratifications and to accommodate change to words continue and grab the social capital in society.

Slowly the change in the society brought through 'Reading Rooms' and increase in 'Reading Rooms' in Telugu people region, aimed at providing newspapers reading to the public and arranging debates and lectures, constrictive activities as their objective. These reading rooms provided a congenial atmosphere for the readers to develop reading habits, interact with one another and react to the political developments that were taking place in the country. Rabindranath Tagore became an inspirational symbol of evolved aesthetic, culture and excellence for the Telugu Middle Class in the early 20th century. Consequently, knowledge of Tagore's and other Bengali writers' works was considered a hallmark of good taste and refinement in Telugu society. 'Swami Vilasa' press in Anathapur and 'Victoria J press' in Chittor were some of the notable presses in the region and the newspapers covered economic and social issues of local and also the political and national issues affecting the whole of the nation<sup>vii</sup>. The reading rooms in Andhra Pradesh (two regions) registered 25 (twenty-five) and non-registered 64 (sixty four) reading rooms in Rayalaseema region and in Coastal Andhra region registered 74(seventy four) and non-registered 658 (six hundred and fifty eight)by 1922<sup>viii</sup>.

Where the *Bhavakavitvam*<sup>ix</sup> of Tagore's overriding influence is also seen in the evolution of characterising itself as a kind of reformist, socialist prose on one hand while being distinct from traditional, classical poetry on the other. where it questions the social order by Mangipudi Venkata Sarma as early as 1915 the validity of discrimination thus "is it social justice to drive away fellow human beings, saying that they are *Malas* or *Panchamas*, *Madigas*, *Seapachas*, *Chandalas* or the people whose name should not even be uttered?" and also Venkatesapatrika commented that it was anomalous to prohibit the Panchamas from climbing the Tirumala Hills while the Europeans and their dogs were allowed to do so. The paper remarked that if the *panchamas*, who are Hindus, are not allowed, "the people should object to the Europeans going to Tirumalai<sup>x</sup> and Krishan Patrika was filled with columns penned by Konda Venkatappayya espousing the cause of widow remarriages<sup>xi</sup>

## Literary Revolution in Andhra

On the other hand with the influence of the literary revolution in Telugu society, the extreme influence was observed. It attacked where it was the orthodox sections of the Andhra society fashioned modernity, formed organizations and found journals to speculate, articulate and put forward their argument against the reform and the reformers.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century on words, the literary reformation was started in Telugu reasons from 1835 on words, we have a source that *Satyaduutha* from Madaras under the Ballary Christian Association and particularly on literature and language from 1872 *Purushartha Pradhayini* from Machilipatnam by Uma Ranganayakulu under Daiva Samaja. the *Swadharna Prakashini* in 1872, *Lokaranjani* in 1874 by Kakarla Subbayya, *Sudhiranjani* in

1874 by Kanukurthi Bhudangarao, Mandara Manjari in 1879 by Ogirala Jagannadham from Kakinada, *Asalpajalpita Kalpavalli* from 1881 by Dasu Sriramulu from Bandaru

In Andhra some journals contributory for the development of print and literary culture, like the *Chintamani* from 1891 under Nyapathi Subbarao and Kandukuri Viresalingam from Rajahmundry published ancient texts and for the growth of Telugu language and literature for the first time it started literary competitions and inspired several writers to produce novels, poetry and drama. *Kalpalatha* from 1903 to 1905 published by Achanta Venkata Sankhyayana Sarma from Visakhapatnam which was started publishing short stories and short story '*Lalitha*' which was considered as first short in Telugu and the journal *Abhinavasarasvathi* publication was started from 1908 and served up to 1930 under Janapati Pattabhiramasastri from Janapadu. It played a vital role in contemporary society with literary discussion and arguments of famous literary figures Tirupati Venkata Kavulu, Ramakrishna kavalu, Kopparapu Kavalu. The Chilakamarti Lakshminarasimham journal named 'Manorama' and published from Rajahmundry during the period between 1906 and 1910 where he published a number of novels.

*Andhra Bharati* journal was started in 1910 by Ayyanki Venkata Ramanaya from Bandaru. It published popular *Mutyala Saramulu* and *Diddubatu* by Gurujada Apparao, this journal encouraged the modern writers to use spoken language in the poetry, it received financial aid from the Zamindars of Vizianagaram, Nidadavolu, Ganpalagudam, Pithapuram, Munagala, Kapileswarapuram and Challapalli. the Journal *Manavaseva* started in 1911 and served up to 1980 it was published by Nalam Krishnarao and Kandulu Srimannarayanamurthy from Rajahmundry published several hands written documents and historical research in Andhra, to run this Jayanti Ramayya Pantulu played a vital role.

Gidugu Ramamurthy Pantalu stated journal '*Telugu*' to persuade the orthodox scholars by advocating classical language did not know the nature of language and could not write a single sentence in that language without mistake, he laid bare the classical Telugu scholarship under the heading *Andhra Panditha Bishakkula Bhasha Bheshajam*.

To popularize the new ideas in literature and introduced several changes in Telugu literature by the Tallavajjula Sivasankara Sastri, Nora Narasimha Sastri, Chinta Dikshitulu Nanduri Subbarao, Nayani Subbarao with the journal *Sahiti* from 1919 from the place Tenali. *Sarada* journal was started form 1923 and served up t 1924 from the place Calcutta followed the tradition of Modern Review with the financial assistance by Nadimpalli Narasimha Rao and Silma Jagannatha Naidu. The Novel *Himabindu* written by Adavi Bapiraju was published as a series. *Barati* journal in 1924 served with the literary experts with the editorial board literature, History, language, Arts, Dance, Music, Politics, Economy, Physics, Chemistry and Journalism under the Kasinadhuni Nageswararao, Sivalenka Shambu Prasad and Radhakrishna.

In Andhra particularly in the '20s of the 1900s, we can find a number of journals are started in the Telugu language and Literature. *Sarasvathi Sarvasvamu* monthly from 1923 by Elurupati Ramabhadrachayanulu from Tanaku, *Andhrasarvsvamu* monthly from 1924 by Edida Venkatarao from Rajahmundry, *Vajrayudhamu* monthly from 1925 by Sripada Krishnamurty from Rajahmundry, *Pushkarani* from 1925 by Vadrangi Ramarao from Bezawada, *Bharatiparijatamu* from 1925 by Peddinti Venkatasastri from Kakinada, *Madhurabharati* from 1925 by Goteti Seshacharyulu from Tenali, *Sumanollasini* from 1925 by Susarla Kumaraswamy Sastri from Peakallepalli of Krishan district, *Andhrabharati* from 1926 by V.Rangarao from Madras, *Teluguvangamaya patrika* from 1926 by Akkiraju

Umakantham from Madras, *Desabandhu* from 1926 by Bellamkonda Ramanujacharyalu from Vaddepalli, *Brahmabharati* from 1926 by Somaraju Ramanujarao from Rangoon, *lalitha* from 1926 by Paluri Sitapathirao, from Vizianagaram, *Subhasi* from 1927 by Pandiri Mallikarjunarao from Rajahmundry, *Abhyudaya* from 1927 by Jonnalagadda Radhakrishnayya from Rajahmundry, *Andhraherald* from 1927 by *Andhra Vidhyardhi Sanghamu* from Madras, *Kalpavalli* from 1927 by Pattipati Ramakrishnayya from Narasapuram, *Kavita* from 1927 by Vedula Kamasastri from Alamuru, *Pushpamala* from 1927 by Sri Hanumantharao from Bandaru, *Bharatakathanidhi* from 1927 by P. Narasimhasatry from Prodduturu, *Sujatha* from 1927 to 1940 by Balakrishnareddy from Hyderabad, *Suprabhatamu* from 1927 by G.Ramanujacharya from Ponnuru, *Andhrajyothi* from 1929 by Vinnakota Venkataratha Sarma from Kakinada, *Anandhabharati* from 1929 by S.G. Acharya from Madras, *Deshabandhu* from 1929 by Bellamkonda Narasimhacharyulu from Veddepalli, *Vidyarthi* from 1929 by Vavilala Gopalakrishnayya from Settenapalli,

In the 1930 's journal *Pushpanjali* from 1930 by Jonnalagadda Radhakrishnayya from Madras, *Sudha* from 1930 by V.Kutumbarao and S.G.Acharya from Madras. *Kalyani* was started in 1931 and served up to 1938 which was started by Ganti Suryanarayana Sastry from Madras, *Navabharathi* from 1934 by Kodali Satyanarayana from Eluru, *Udayalakshmi* from 1931 by Mocharla Hanumantharao from Kakinada, *Chandrika* from 1935 by Bulusu Venkataramanaiah from Madras, *Jayalakshmi* from 1935 by Somayya from Bapatla. *Vina* from 1936 by Patibanda Madhavasarma and Gudipati Rajagopal from Telaprolu, Telugu Talli from 1938 by Rachamalla Satyavathidevi from Secendrabad, *Andhra* from 1939 by Madhunapanthula Satyanarayana Sastry from Pallipalem, *Vibhuti* from 1939 and served up to 1945 by Pandita Chidiri Mathamu Virabhadra Sarma from Secundrabad, *Mahathi* from 1938 by Vasireddi Venkatasubbayya from Tenali, *Vishwakala* by Kundurthi Narasimharao from Guntur, *Abhyudaya* from 1946 by Chadalavada Pitchayya from Bezawada, *Navodaya* from 1946 Nilamraju Venkateseshayya from Madam.

The weekly journals *Saraswathi* from 1933 by Vempati Satyanarayana from Visakhapatnam, *Divyavani* from 1937 by Chivukula Appayya Sastry from Secendrabad, *Bharatiya Vaishya* by Annavarapu Subbarao from Bezawada, *Reddipatrika* by M.Appalaswami Reddy from Visakhapatnam

Fortnight journals *Jayanthi* from 1927 by Viswanatha Satyanarayana from Bandru, *Matriseva* from 1938 by Pasumarthi Virabhadraswami from Vizianagaram, *Udayini* from 1935 by Kompella Janardhana Rao from Madras, *Vani* from 1941 by Mudda Vishwanatham from Madras.

### Literature and Nationalism

Nationalism was imparted strongly in the 20<sup>th</sup> century than the 19<sup>th</sup> century because of the literary revolution in the Andhra we cannot say all the journals are started because of Tagore literary revolution but we cannot deny the Tagore influence on Andhra like the journal *Prabuddhandhara* was started by association called *Kalabhivardhani parishattu* under the Sripada Subrahmanya Sastry carried out rigorous struggle against campaign for the spread of Hindi to bring ling in Telugu society and the *Matribhasha* journal by Kasi Krishnacharyulu in 1921 from Guntur played a role in nationalism. The journals form the field of literature, it contributed a lot to History, Culture, Ethics, Vedanta, Women, politics and social reformation. Hear one of the peculiar aspects in Telugu region from 1913 onwards, the regionalism issue was strengthened on the name of the Andhra Mahasabha for a separate

province for the Telugu speaking people and at the same, they imparted the nationalism and played a vital role in the freedom struggle and by maintaining neutrality between regionalism and nationalism in the society.

## Conclusion

In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century beginning the Tagore writings influenced the society in the fields of literature and patriotism, which influenced the Andhra society and brought the literary revolution and also caused for the growth of various journals and new writings in the society. The social consciousness was towards literature, nationalism and the role of the literature in the society was influenced directly by the Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore in Telugu region. The major influence was changed the traditional view of thought of writing and language towards common language to whole society and also brought literary revolution in Andhra and caused for the birth of many journals and novels and also particularly we cannot deny his Telugu students who brought tremendous change in the Telugu language, literature and society. His influence was not only confined to Telugu society, his works influenced the Indian nation.

## References

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- <sup>i</sup>Assistant Professor of History, Central University of Tamilnadu Thiruvavur, Tamilnadu.
- <sup>ii</sup>Trailanga Swami Trailanga Swami also called as Tailang Swami or Telang Swami was a great Hindu yogi lived in the Varanasi. He was famous for his divine powers and regarded as a renowned stature of the Bengal. There are many stories behind him about his spiritual and yogic powers. He lived a long life around 300 years and resided in Varanasi approximately 150 years. It is believed that Trailanga Swami was incarnation of the Lord Shiva and referred as the 'The walking Lord Shiva of Varanasi'.
- <sup>iii</sup>The Serampore Mission Press was established in Serampore on January 10, 1800 by William Carey, William Ward, and other British Baptist missionaries as an auxiliary of the Serampore Mission.
- <sup>iv</sup><http://andhraassociationhighschool.com/main.html>
- <sup>v</sup>Budati Venkateswarlu, "Telugu Sahityam Ravindrani Prabhavam" Keynote address in National Seminar on Telugu Sahityam- Viswakavi Ravindrani Prabhavam, PP-4.
- <sup>vi</sup>The concept of platonic love and asserts that love is the life-force society
- <sup>vii</sup>P. Yanadi Raju, Rayalaseema During Colonial Times: A Study in Indian Nationalism, PP-115
- <sup>viii</sup>RPIMPS Source 1922-23, appendix 'c' and 'd' Vol-II, Madras, 1923, PP.123.
- <sup>ix</sup>The Bhava Kavivam is a certain freedom in the choice of the subject in the mode of expression
- <sup>x</sup>P. Yanadi Raju, op.cit. P-115
- <sup>xi</sup>Krishan Patrika, December 15, 1904.