

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF Dr.M.E.NAIDU - A STUDY

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Abstract,

Biographies of great men divulge lesser - known aspects of their lives and inspire generations afterwards. Dr. M.E. Naidu was not a preceptor of ideas and ideals but he was a practical man. In almost all the socio-political movements of Travancore State, Dr. Naidu had an important place and he was in the forefront of the agitations. The pertinence, soundness and durability of the work and ideology of great men, for which they stood in their lifetime, can only be understood through their thoughts and actions. Meenakshi Naidu was a patriot as well as an advocate of Tamil language. With the effort of Meenakshi Naidu the 'Bande Mataram Bhajan Mutt' was established in Kuruntheru at Kottar in the year 1875. Though his mother tongue was Telugu, he had a keen interest in the language of Tamil also.

Keyword: M.E. Naidu, Nagercoil, movement Municipality, south Travancore, satyagraha.

Introduction

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Meenakshi Naidu was a patriot as well as an advocate of Tamil language. With the effort of Meenakshi Naidu the 'Bande Mataram Bhajan Mutt' was established in Kuruntheru at Kottar in the year 1875. Though his mother tongue was Telugu, he had a keen interest in the language of Tamil also. It was at that time, the Tamil language was about to face a destruction in view of the competitive growth of Malayalam. Meenakshi Naidu was also one of the staunch protestors who opposed to this trend. Dr. M.E. Naidu who was rightly born to the patriotic parents had the patriotic blood running in his body. He was called by another name, 'Abboy', which means in Telugu 'Son'. He was proficient and efficient in the profession as his father did. He also participated in the National Movement as well as the campaign for toddy agitations and other social activities like his father. Self-esteem, patriotism, investigative and journalism were the hallmarks of this singularly unassuming and unpretentious leader of the erstwhile South Travancore.⁵ Simplicity, creativity and sincerity were the other traits in the personality of Dr. M.E. Naidu and he was a mischievous boy in his younger days and well versed in Tamil, Telugu, English, Malayalam, Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu and Sourashtra. He had a special interest in the language of Sanskrit. He used to chant the mantras in Sanskrit by himself during the event of the marriage of his sons and daughters. He used to converse in the Sourashtra language with the Sourashtra people living in the neighboring areas. He learnt Hindi from Sri Vasudev during the night times. Dr. Naidu got his early education in Maharaja High School at Kottar.⁷ He had passed meritoriously in his Matriculation

examination and continued his further studies in Scott Christian College at Nagercoil. The formal education that Naidu had no relation to the acumen during his career as a student, can in no way be compared to the acumen of knowledge he possessed during later years of his life.

Dr. Naidu and the Medical Field

It was a time when there was a scarcity of Medical attendant and any of the eligible doctors, if they attempted for Government service they could have easily got the Government postings. Henry Theresar, a Medical saint dressed in white socks and chanting the name of the God, was the only medical professional in Nagercoil at the time. Dr. Naidu's return from England after having obtained higher education in the Medical field coincided the situation prevailing at that time. He had thought of entering in Government services, it could have been easily possible for him. Dr. Naidu, filled with a sense of patriotism, burning in his heart, and in persution of the partition of Bengal, and the agitations that followed thereafter, and the fury speech made by the prominent National Leaders like Dadabai Nauroji, Balgangadar Tilak, Bibin Chandrapal made him commit for the active participation in the national Movement. It was at this context that Dr. Naidu started a hospital of his own with a view to serve the public, besides participation in the National Movement.

Friendship with Great Leaders

Dr. Naidu was a person of amiable disposition and outspoken lad, who has earned a large number of friends It is a significant factor in the life of Dr. Naidu to enroll himself in the National Movement to fight for the freedom of the nation. Even before Dr. Naidu had taken active participation in politics, he had associated with the leaders like Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, T.S.S. Rajan, reputed Congress leaders. Then he established the branch of the Congress at Nagercoil, in South Travancore in the year 1920. Thereafter, in 1921 he met Gandhiji who had come to Tirunelveli in connection with the Non-Cooperation Movement and thus the friendship between the two blossomed. When Gandhiji had come to give thrust to the Vaikom Movement, Dr. Naidu arranged his own vehicle for taking Gandhiji to the spot of Satyagraha camp. After this, Dr. Naidu invited Gandhiji to his own house as the guest. Thus the intimacy between the two so developed that, whenever, Gandhiji visited Nagercoil, he never failed to visit the residence of Dr. Naidu at Kottar. Once when Gandhiji had visited Nagercoil in 1934, Dr. Naidu met him and introduced his wife to Gandhiji and both of them used to sit and talk for hours together about the political developments in Nanchil Nadu.

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Dr. Naidu and his Medical Services

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Dr. Naidu became the first and foremost devotee of the nation in the southern tip of the land and it was for serving the nation his medical profession was of much help. Thus, Dr. Naidu started a hospital of his own in his home town, Kottar in 1914 and was popularly known as 'Naidu Hospital'. To start with, it was a small hospital with ten beds and in due course it was developed as a full-fledged hospital very soon. Dr. Naidu became a prominent doctor for delivery in the whole of south Travancore. He popularized the modern medicine as against the indigenous medical system prevailing in our country for a very long time. It would not be an exaggeration to state that he was called the 'King of Medicine' in south Travancore. At first sight, he never appeared to be a physician to strangers, because of his simplicity but he won a great name as a gynecologist in the region. In those days there was no conveyance facilities to the villages scattered far and wide. So, Dr. Naidu used to go by his own bi-cycle to village by village and provided treatment. In course of time, he purchased a motorbike and then a car and made it convenient to meet the people in the interior villages, off and on to give medical aid to the dwellers. He made it a customary practice to go through the medical journals published then and there, so as to widen and update his medical knowledge. He was habituated to study the journals related to 'maternity' compulsorily at least for an hour every day. The Tamil poet laureate, Kavimoni had said, "*There should be no poor in the world*". Dr. Naidu translated his verses into practice by serving the poor with free medical aid, whenever occasions came to him. Not only that he gone to that extent of providing with food stuff even to meet the future requirements. Such was the compassion of Dr. Naidu. It is in place to mention that Dr. Naidu's hospital at Kottar his hospital was closely associated with maternity treatment. He attended even the complicated cases with his sharp intelligence and tactfulness. Of the ladies admitted in his hospital for delivery, most of the deliveries were normal. He was considered to be so lucky in his profession to that extent. He had miraculously caused the delivery of many women with his wonderful handling of the cases.

Admirable Characters

Dr. Naidu was a strong disciplinarian with certain exceptional qualities. He was a man of pleasing manners. He wanted to keep others in good amusement. He was a man of compassion and moved in to pity at sight of the poor and the disabled. He used to rise up early in the morning at 3 a.m. and did his routine exercise. He took water and sprinkled it to the plants in the garden which he had maintained in his residence. As face is the index of mind, the short stature and the lean and thin body spoke volume of his outstanding character. He had a buff and curly hair with a hair dressing style of apportioning of his hair on either side. He had a broad forehead with a sharp eye of compassion. He had put a *tilak* mark in the shape of half moon on his forehead. Clad in Khadi dresses used to put on half-slack and had worn the spectacle of golden frame. He had an abnormal length of hands touching his knees, as can be seen in the case of Gandhiji and Kamaraj. His extra ordinary talent in politics and medical service earned him a name and fame in the southern most part of India.

Patron of Tamil Language

Thought his mother land was the present Andhra and his mother tongue was Telugu, Dr. Naidu was very much attracted towards Tamil and had a special affinity towards this language. Though their ancestors mobilized from Andhra, they mingled with the culture and civilization of Tamilians and led their life as a Tamilian. So it was natural that Dr. Naidu's father also possessed a deep knowledge in Tamil. During the dominance of Malayalam in the

erstwhile south Travancore, it was his ancestors who raised their voice in support of Tamil and Tamilians. Dr. Naidu who hailed from such a noble family virtually inherited the affinity toward Tamil. He was a fearless man, as may be seen from the incident in which the Congress Committee functioning in this district came to be brought under the control of the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee. He showed potentiality of his protest, by way of agitation single handed. Because of his affinity towards the language of Tamil, he opted to separate from the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee, dominated the Malayalam speaking persons. The Nagpur Congress accepted the separation of the States on Linguistic basis. Accordingly, so many States were separated. Pursuance of this, the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee formed United Kerala, consolidating Travancore, Cochin, Malabar and Canara in 1938. In continuation of this, a meeting was held in the municipal ground where a proposal was mooted as to the formation of a United Tamil Nadu as in the fashion of the United Kerala, Dr.Naidu presided over the meeting. Sheik Tampi Pavalar, Kavimoni and S.V. Muthukaruppa Pillai also participated in this meeting.

M.E.Naidu and Non-Co-operation Movement

The Non-Co-operation movement marked a definite experience in India's struggle for freedom. It infused the people with a new confidence in their power to fight for freedom. Gandhiji's belief in the efficiency of the soul force and the power of passive resistance made him to adopt the non-violent and Non-Co-operation movement as a powerful weapon to punish the British. The Non-Co-operation programme also aimed at the attainment of responsible government through disobedience to unjust laws, refusal to pay taxes, resignation of offices and relinquishing titles and boycott of Legislature, Courts and schools. This was the first weapon which was used against the British rule in India. There was a widespread boycott of foreign goods, Courts of law and educational institutions.

CONCLUSION

The satyagraha movement which started in 1924, at vaikkam temple occupied a very great historical importance. The historicity of the movement lies not in the way of the struggle fought, but for the instension of gaining social justice for the low-caste people in Travancore. In time, it was a political movement bought for the civil rights for the untouchables.

Temples have a unique place in the history of Kerala. They have exercised a profound influence on the religious, social, economic, political and cultural life of Kerala. At Vaikkam, so called Avarnas were banned from approach into the public roads adjacent to the famous Vaikkam Temple. The conservation section of the people argued that if the avarnas were allowed to walk along the approach roads of the temple the priests as well as the brahmins inside the temple would be polluted and defiled. But the social reformers and political leaders were not ready to accept the out dated arguments. They restored to satyagraha against this social injustice. It was T.K. Madhavan who took the leadership for the upliftment of the low-caste Hindus by declaring that "Temple entry is my birth right".

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