

V KRISHNAN THAMPI'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE NURTURE OF SANSKRIT IN KERALA DR.SAPNA O P

Abstract :

The status of the Sanskrit in Indian society has changed over time. The unrequited efforts of linguists have played an important role in the preservation of this language. The establishment of the Thiruvananthapuram Sanskrit College was one of the major milestones in the study of the Sanskrit in Kerala. This article is about the intellectual life of V Krishnan Thampi who worked tirelessly to achieve the objectives of the Sanskrit College and how he transformed the Sanskrit College into a brilliant institution.

Key words : Sanskrit, V Krishnan Tampi, organizer, Sanskrit college

Objective :

1. To understand the role of V Krishnan Tampi in the upliftment of Sanskrit in Kerala.
2. To find out the importance of Sanskrit College, Thiruvananthapuram in the development of Sanskrit in Kerala.

Research Method : The method used here is historical and explanatory.

Introduction :

Before the formation of Kerala in 1956, the territory was made up of princely states such as Travancore, Mahodayapuram and Kozhikode. Travancore was a politically and culturally important state. Sanskrit and study were very important in Travancore. However, over time, as a result of the British dominance, it was depleted and Sanskrit studies became scarce. At the beginning of the twentieth century, many attempts were made to promote the study of the Sanskrit. Scholars such as Kaikulangara Ramavaryar and rulers such as Moolam thirunal were among those who sought to promote Sanskrit. V. Krishnan Thampi, one among them was a versatile genius who spent his time and brain to uplift Sanskrit. :

Krishnapilla, Born in Thiruvananthapuram in 1890, as the one and only son of Krishnan Nair and Lakshmi Pillai. After the marriage of their eldest daughter, Karthyayani Amma to the then King of Travancore, Srimoolam Thirunal, the family was adopted to

Vadassery 'Amma Veedu. Then Krishnapilla, the younger brother of Karthyayani Amma became known as Vadassery Krishnan Thampi. Thampi's discipleship from the famous Malayalam writer KC Kesavapillai during his school days aroused his literary interest. After completing his graduation, Thampi went to England for higher education with the permission of the King of Travancore in the early part of the twentieth century (1914), when crossing the sea was forbidden. A multilingual scholar, Thampi studied Latin, German, and French at Oxford. Thampi's Sanskrit skills earned him a prominent place in the academic community. It was during this time that Thampi was drawn to the Irish national movement. He dropped out of school in 1916 and became involved in the Irish struggle. For that he moved to Ireland. On his return to Travancore, Thampi spent most of his time in the cultural arena. Returning to Thiruvananthapuram, Thampi resumed his lessons in Sanskrit from the eminent scholar Samba Siva Shastri. He lived with the mind of a student all his life and acquired the Tamil language when he was the principal of Sanskrit college.

V. Krishnan Thampi and Sanskrit College

As the famous quoting योजकास्तत्र दुर्लभाः V Krishnan Thampi was an exceptionally skilled organizer. The relevance of the Sanskrit College was underscored by his intellectual and socially far-sighted work. Sreemoolam Thirunal Rama Varma founded Sanskrit College in 1888-89, aimed at reviving the interest in the classical language among the citizens of Travancore. Shastri, Upadhyaya and Mahopadhyaya courses were conducted in the college. The college, which originally housed the Valiya Koyikkal palace complex, was later relocated to West Street within the Fort complex. In 1918, Krishnan Thampi joined in the Sanskrit College. As soon as Thampi took charge, the college was shifted to Palkulangara outside the fort. The new building was a spacious building built in the classical colonial style as compared to the old narrow set-up inside the fort. Due to the relocation of the college from the fort, all students, irrespective of caste or creed, were given admission. Krishnan Thampi sought to bring about revolutionary changes not only in the administrative matters of the college but also in the academic matters. Thampi used this opportunity to popularize Sanskrit by implementing Keralapanini - AR Rajaraja Varma's proposal. In addition to Sanskrit, the syllabus has been revamped to include Western subjects such as English, Chemistry and History. Syllabus revision had two objectives of

attracting gifted students to Sanskrit learning and bringing Sanskrit students closer to the mainstream of society. He was in the Sanskrit college till the end of his busy life. While interacting with the children in Sanskrit College, the great man, the linguist, the cultural creator, the organizer, disappeared into the curtain of time.

When he was the Principal of the Sanskrit College, he saw it as a vow to write short Sanskrit plays for the annuals and bring them to the stage every year. His works include Draupadi Vijaya and Ajnathavasa based on the Mahabharata. Dhruvacharita based on mythology, Pratikriya, Vanajyotsna, Dharmasya sukshma Gati and Lalitha based on Mughal – rajaputra period, Petikasanyasi a satire. The poet translated Lalitha into English and Malayalam. The works were published in 1924 from Thiruvananthapuram. His other Sanskrit works are Sriramakrishnacharitha, Geyaprabandha and Padukapattabhineka. Sriramakrishnacharitha, is a book about Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and his philosophy. This work is a good example for his authentic knowledge of Sanskrit. Thampi successfully incorporated Indian and Western techniques in his plays. Nandi, prastavana, etc. are not found in these plays, performance enter directly into the story. His constant activities gave a new impetus to Sanskrit. He took the initiative to establish Sanskrit schools. This was a milestone in the process of popularizing Sanskrit.

Cultural Activities :

A multilingual scholar who has left his mark on the cultural scene of Travancore, is also famous as a poet, playwright, musician, grammarian and prose writer. Kathakali, Harikatha etc., were his other area of interest. He also founded Kathakali Club Kalavilasa and Sahridaya magazine.

Kalavilasa, the first club of Kathakali, was formed to reform the various art forms of Kerala. He was very active in the process of popularizing Kathakali. For the development of Kathakali Krishnan Thampi, what Vallathol did in the North was done in the South as well. He modified the Kathakali through the Kathakali Club so that it could be understood by the common people. For that, the time of Kathakali presentation was reduced. A lot of time and money was spent on it by him. For Thampi's tireless efforts to arouse interest in Kathakali among the city dwellers, Thampi wrote many Attakathas. His Tatakavadha Attakatha is commendable.

He inspired King Sree Moolam Tirunal to promote poets and other cultural personalities. Guru Gopinath, a world-renowned dancer, CV Raman Pillai, the famous literary personality in Kerala etc., were some among them.

Findings :

1. V Krishnan Tampi experienced some sought of privileges as a royal personality and he made beneficial use of it.
2. Tampi's foresight, enthusiasm and organizational power played an inevitable role in the successful establishment of Sanskrit College, Thiruvananthapuram.
3. He spent his time to nurture the cultural legacy like Kathakali.

Conclusion :

The study of Sanskrit has faced many ups and downs in Kerala as elsewhere in India. But the comforting fact is that in every age there have been great men to nurture the language. V Krishnan Thampi was one such great man who, with his ingenuity, planning and vision, innovated the Sanskrit. He made his best to make Sanskrit a relevant language over the time through the administrative and academic reforms of Sanskrit college.

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