

Prof. N.G. Ranga (7 November 1900 - 9 June 1995). A profile.

Qurban Ali

Gogineni Ranga Nayukulu, better known as N. G. Ranga was an Indian freedom fighter, parliamentarian, and kisan (farmer) leader. He was an exponent of the peasant philosophy, and considered the father of the Indian Peasant Movement after Swami Sahajanand Saraswati.

Son of Shri Nagaiah Gogineni, Ranga was born on November 7, 1900 in Nidubrolu, a village in Guntur district. His parents Nagaiah, Atchamamba hail from a middle class agricultural family. The school education of Ranga was completed in his village and neighbor village Ponnur. He completed his matriculation and graduated from the Andhra-Christian College, Guntur from where he went straight to England for higher education. He did D.Litt. Diplomas in Political Science, Economics and Social Science from Oxford in 1926. On his return to India, he took up teaching as Professor of Economics at Pachaiyappa's College, Madras (Chennai).

During school days Ranga was exposed to the reformist literature of Kandukuri Veeresalingam, and Tripuraneni Ramaswami. The non -Brahmin movement was rampant and Ranga attended a couple of meetings and conferences of non Brahmin, and Kamma conventions. At that juncture Andhra was under Madras state. Justice party emerged against congress party and propagated for non Brahmin rule both in administration and temples.

Ranga developed a flair for writing and he attempted a small book on Rani Rudramadevi. He read out the script to villagers, which was applauded. By the time Ranga left for England the congress party was under the influence of Gandhi. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, another prominent leader in congress died and hence Gandhi was unopposed in congress party.

Ranga in Oxford:

N G Ranga traveled by ship and reached England in November 1920. He had to habituate himself for non vegetarian food. Since he was only a matriculate, he was asked to learn a second foreign language to qualify for admission in Oxford. Hence Ranga went to Germany and obtained a certificate after learning a few words and sentences! While studying in Oxford Ranga also had briefly visited Italy, France and Germany where he observed the agricultural conditions.

He acquainted himself with J J Malen, G D H Cole, Brails ford, Wilkinson, Rajni Palme Dutt, Clement Dutt and J A Thod. Ranga was impressed with socialist movements of England and Europe. He also studied Marxism. Later Ranga attempted a book titled 'Ranga and Marxism' but it was not traced. After returning from UK he married Bharati Devi. She was a matriculate and accompanied him in all his tours and political journeys. Ranga contributed articles in the magazine COMRADE which drew the attention of Gandhi. Ranga met Gandhi a couple of times during his tenure of employment in Madras and observed the conditions of agriculture, labour and hand looms.

By the time Ranga returned to India, Madras state was under the rule of Justice Party. Ranga joined Pachayappa College in Madras which was managed by Justice Party. Then Ranga was appointed as adviser of state government on economic affairs and was an officer. In that capacity Ranga studied the conditions of peasants in Nilgiri and other places. Though Congress party was fighting for freedom, Ranga remained as an observer until 1930.

He enrolled himself as a member of Congress party in 1930 after resigning to the posts of college lecturer and state advisor. He started wearing Khaddar and Gandhian cap. During Madras days Ranga got close to Gudavalli Ramabrahmam, the writer, cine producer and editor of Prajamitra journal. Ramabrahmam produced reformist movies like Rytubidda, Malapilla during late 1930. And Ranga was impressed by them. With that, the name of Ranga was popular among peasants in Andhra. Oxford education was added prestige in those days. Ranga also founded All India Adult Education Institution and became its vice chairman in 1926 to 30.

Ranga joined the freedom movement inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's clarion call in 1930. He led the ryot agitation in 1933. Three years later, he launched the Kisan Congress party. He held historic discussions with Gandhiji on the demand for a rythu-coolie state. He wrote a book, '**Bapu Blesses**' regarding his discussions with Gandhi.

For the first time Ranga was elected to the central legislature at Delhi in 1930. The vacancy arose due to the resignation of Tanguturi Prakasam. In those days the voters were limited and confined to tax payers whose number is much less. Once plunged into congress party, Ranga was very active and emerged as an all India figure. He came close to leaders of all parties. At home Ranga was helped by his elder brother Mr. Venkatappaiah who looked after agricultural lands and domestic affairs. His younger brother Mr. Lakshminarayana studied law but remained in politics to help Ranga in district and state level. Ranga had no children and he was relatively free from domestic affairs. During 1930s Unnava Lakshminarayana published the Telugu novel 'Malapalli' which is quite an eye opener. Similarly Ranga wrote 'Harijan Nayakudu' which elevates the untouchable community on par with upper caste people. The hero Lingaiah worked for the welfare of his community and at the same time fought against discrimination based on caste.

Ranga was one of the founders of Congress Socialist Party and was member of its National Executive and drafting Committee in 1934. After joining Congress party Ranga was very active politically both at centre and state level. He invited Gandhi in 1933 to inaugurate a political school for peasants, workers and artisans, the first school started in Nidubrolu, the native place of Ranga. Since then every year political educational schools were conducted at several places in Andhra. Distinguished politicians, economists and public workers addressed the schools. Syllabus was prepared by Ranga and few others covering vast scope of rural economics, agriculture, political movements and artisans. Peddireddi Timmareddi, P.Rajagopalanaidu, Kandula Obula Reddi, Chegireddi Balireddi, N.Vijayaraja Kumar, Sunkara Satyanarayana, Gorrepati Venkatasubbaiah, G. Lakshminarayana, Gouthu Latchanna, Muniratnam, and galaxy of others participated. These schools continued until 1953 annually spreading throughout Andhra, Rayalaseema areas. Mostly, they were held in summer so that peasants could attend and participate.

Even during prison days Ranga continued political classes to continue in the jail. Even communists like Makineni Basavapunnaiiah attended Ranga's political classes. But during those days communists were camouflaged within congress and they came out only later. Indulal Yagnik, Jayaprakash Narayan, Pattabhi Sitaramaiah, addressed political classes. Thus Ranga has become the pioneer in rural political training classes.

Political schools for peasants:

The first political school was inaugurated by Gandhi on 23 December 1933. It was named after Ramanaidu. Simultaneously a library also was opened. Training classes commenced on 12 April 1934 under the principalship of Ranga. His brother Lakshminarayana taught in the school. K. Santanam, editor of Indian Express, inaugurated and Konda Venkatappaiah, congress leader presided. It ran for 30 days. Students and peasants from 6 districts actively attended. Again on 17 April 1935 second year classes were held at the same place with 35 students. Third year classes started on 15 May 1936 which was inaugurated by Ayyadevara Kaleswararao, congress leader. 40 students attended.

Fourth year classes started on 1 May in 1937. Mr. Kandula Obul Reddi, leader from Rayalaseema and Sadasivan conducted the classes. 45 students participated. During 1939 Rayalaseema peasant training classes were held on 20 Dec. 1937 in Giddalur. Bharati Devi presided over and Kandula Obul Reddi was the principal. 60 students participated. In Madanapalli school was held under the presidency of Nyapati Narayana Murthy. 75 students attended from 1 May 1938 for 30 days.

In May 1939 school was conducted in Tunikipad of Krishna district for 30 days and students from Telengana also came. On 9 April 1940 school was conducted in Idupulapadu village of Bapatla taluq. Gouthu Latchanna inaugurated and Kandula Obul Reddi presided over. Drill classes were introduced. Political school was held at Chennur in 1941 with Ratakonda Narasimhareddi as principal. During 1945 May again a school was conducted in Nidubrolu and Ranga was present.

During summer of 1946 a school was held in Avanigadda of Krishna district. In 1947 a school was held in Sivagiri near Duguvamagam of Chittoor district. In 1947 training classes were conducted in Palasa of Srikakulam district with drill classes. In 1948 another school was held in Chilakaluripet, Khammam and Bezvada. During 1952 big political school was conducted in Challapalli of Krishna district. In 1953 another school was held in Tiruttani and in 1954 one more school was conducted in Nidubrolu. In all these classes Ranga was present or his syllabus was discussed. Malcolm Adiseshiaiah, J C Kumarappa, Ajay Kumar Ghosh, Unnava Lakshminarayana, Ferang Nagi, K T Shah, Dimitrov and others lectured.

Ranga participated in round table conference meetings and All India Congress annual meetings. He came close to Subhas Chandra Bose during the fight between Gandhi and Subhas. Ranga stood for Bose and thus paved the way for Gandhi to support his own people in Andhra Politics. That is how Pattabhi Sitaramaiah came closer to Gandhi. In the factional politics of Andhra there was always bitter fight between Ranga followers and Pattabhi followers. Though Ranga was away most of the time from Andhra, his followers dragged his name and the bitter fight went on.

The factional fights in Andhra commenced when Ranga sought election to central legislature. Bulusu Sambamurthi campaigned against Ranga exposing his connections with Justice Party and anti-Brahmin stance. Ranga underwent jail six times during freedom movement. First time in 1931 he, along with his wife Bharati Devi, was arrested in freedom fight. Ranga also started his own political journal Vahini in Telugu in 1937. Several persons edited it periodically commencing with Nyapathi Narayana Murthy. Ranga contributed several articles and pen portraits in the weekly. Ranga wrote pen portraits of 110 persons under the title Distinguished acquaintances. Several persons were described by Ranga in a hearty way. The Telugu translation of this book was published by Telugu Academy. During late 1960 the weekly was stopped. Ranga wrote pen portraits about many of his followers and admirers in the weekly.

Ranga was the president of provisional Congress party in Andhra from 1946 to 51. The factionalism was rampant in the congress circles. Kalluri Chandra Mouli, Neelam Sanjiva reddy, Kala Venkatarao, Manthana Venkataraju, Alapati Venkataramaiah and several others were against Ranga group. Gouthu Latchanna from Srikakulam district was solid supporter of Ranga in all factional fights. Similarly Kandula Obul Reddy, P Rajagopala naidu, P.Thimmareddy, Chegireddy Balireddy, N V Naidu, Nirukonda Ramarao, Ravi Satyanarayana and others stood by Ranga. Of course Ranga's brother Mr.Lakshminarayana was the kingpin in all those factional fights. These things went on until first national elections in 1951.

Ranga continued his efforts in other fields since 1930 and participated in several international delegations, addressed conferences and meetings. He called President of USA, Mr. Truman, during 1948 in Washington DC on behalf of world peasants association. He toured extensively in Europe, Soviet Union and USA. Ranga continued to write both in English and Telugu, covering various topics.

Ranga was in Constituent assembly from 1946 and contributed his ideas. He proposed the name of Mr. B.R. Ambedkar to the chairmanship of Constituent assembly. Ranga continued in Congress party until 1951. During 1951, Ranga and Sanjiva Reddy fought for the president ship of Andhra congress. Ranga was defeated narrowly. Due to faction fights, one section of congress went to court and obtained injunction, stopping the participation of delegates from Guntur district. In that district the majority were supporters of Ranga. Then in the last moment some prominent kamma congress persons like Anjaiah Anne and Kakani Venkataratnam defected to the opposite group. That led to the defeat of Ranga. After defeat Ranga along with his large followers resigned to the congress party. Thus the first national elections were fought while Ranga went to opposition party. That was big turning point in his political career.

RANGA IN OPPOSITION:

The nation faced first general elections in 1951. By that time Ranga was defeated as president of Congress party of Andhra. Then Ranga resigned to the congress party blaming anti-peasant policies of Jawaharlal Nehru. By that time prominent leaders Jayaprakash narayan, Ajit Prasad Jain, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Tanguturi Prakasam, Kripalani, left congress. They all met in Patna of Bihar state and formed opposition party called Kisan Mazdoor party. Ranga joined initially but left soon when the party gave leadership to T.Prakasam. Ranga gave the pretext of not giving importance Kisans and came out. He then formed Krishikar Lok Party.

The first general elections gave a jolt to several opposition leaders including N. G. Ranga, T. Prakasam, B. R. Ambedkar etc. Nehru emerged as national leader with Congress party. But in Madras state communists gained substantial seats and claimed power. Prakasam joined hands with communists to form ministry. Ranga opposed communists. Rajagopalachari was brought into field to undo the strategy of communists.

With the support of N. G. Ranga, Congress formed ministry in 1952. Krishikar Lok party gained seats in Srikakulam, Vizag, Chittoor and East Godavari districts. But they did not join the ministry. He was Chairman All India Kisan Sangh also in 1952.

Agitation for Andhra continued. Potti Sriramulu demanded Madras city for Andhra and went on indefinite fast and lost his life after 58 days. Andhra formation was declared but Madras is not given. Then came the question of capital city of Andhra. Ranga opted for Tirupati-Chandragiri saying that the zamindar building can be utilized immediately. But finally Kurnool was decided as capital. The High court was set up at Guntur. Prakasam defected again, came out of communist fold and accepted to be the first chief minister of Andhra. Krishikar lok party also joined the ministry. Ranga once again saw that communists did not occupy power.

But the congress ministry lost confidence soon and by- elections came in Andhra. Once again communists fought vigorously to gain power. They described as Rangula Ranga means he changes colors often. Ranga joined hands with his rivals like Neelam Sanjiva Reddi, T Prakasam and socialists as joint congress front. The campaign of Ranga was virulent. Ranga toured in a whirlwind campaign along with his loyal followers like Veerachari, Sunkara Satyanarayana, N Vijayaraja Kumar and opposed communists tooth and nail. Communists lost the power by gaining only 15 seats. The credit goes to Ranga. The ministry was formed in Kurnool with Bezwada Gopala Reddi as chief minister and Krishikar Lok party joined in it. The fight for congress leadership once again took place between Ranga and Alluri Satyanarayana raju. Ranga lost. Once again Ranga was disillusioned and left congress.

Swatantra Party:

C.Rajagopalachari emerged as champion of peasants and anti Hindi policy. He vigorously campaigned against congress party and Jawaharlal. Then Ranga was invited to take up the president ship of Swatantra party. Ranga accepted and all his followers joined with him. In the state assembly of Andhra Pradesh Swatantra party emerged as main opposition party. Initially Dr Marri Chenna Reddi joined the party and supported Ranga but later he backed out and went to Congress party.

Swatantra party attracted business community, upper classes and traders. It remained in that position for a decade. Gradually Ranga drifted. Rajagopalachari called him as Bolshevik and M R Masani emerged as strong leader in Swatantra party. Ranga became the Founder-President of the Swatantra Party and held that post for a decade 1959-71.

In the general elections held in 1962, the Swatantra party won 25 seats and emerged as a strong Opposition. During 1971 elections, Ranga contested against congress but lost. Then he decided to leave Swatantra party and join Congress. By that time Indira Gandhi was a powerful leader in Congress.

Several followers of Ranga refused to join him but Ranga joined hands with Indira Gandhi. He went to the extent of supporting blindly, the dictatorial policies of Indira Gandhi including her suspending constitutional rights of freedom and liberty. She declared emergency and Ranga supported it.

The admirers and followers of Ranga collected money and bought a house in Hyderabad and donated that to Ranga as a token of their appreciation for his services. It was registered under public trust for activities. Gradually the kith and kin of Ranga converted Ranga Bhavan as private trust and misused that. Ranga approved the conversion of public trust into private trust by applying to the chief minister N.T. Ramarao and obtained legal permission. Afterwards, Ranga remained in Parliament until 1991 when he was defeated by Telugu Desam for Lok Sabha. The Agricultural University at Hyderabad was named after N. G. Ranga as a token of his services to agricultural community.

International tours

Ranga toured extensively in the international field throughout his political career. 1948 - Participated in International conference of labour in San Francisco, USA. In 1949- Ranga met President Truman of USA in Washington DC on behalf of international agriculture community. In 1957 Ranga addressed agricultural conference in Bulgaria.

Political career:

N G Ranga was a great parliamentarian. He was Member, Central Legislative Assembly, 1930 and 1935-45, Constituent Assembly, 1946-50 and Provisional Parliament, 1947-51. Later on from 1952 till 1991 Ranga was either in Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha. He was in Guinness book as parliamentarian with long innings. Though defeated to Lok Sabha a couple of times, immediately he could go to Rajya Sabha. He was member Lok Sabha, 1957- 62, 1962-67, 1967-70. Ranga was elected to Rajya Sabha twice, 3-4-1952 to 16-3-1957 and 18-7-1977 to 8-1-1980.

He was Chairman of Public Accounts Committee, of Parliament from 1958-59.

Ranga was one of the founders of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers. He represented India at the Food and Agriculture Organization (Copenhagen) in 1946, the International Labour Organization (San Francisco) in 1948, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (Ottawa) in 1952, the International Peasant Union (New York) in 1954 and the Asian Congress for World Government (Tokyo) in 1955.

Professor N G Ranga during his long political life gained innumerable admirers, followers, disciples whose number is very long. It is not easy to name all of them. Ranga himself wrote pen portraits of some of them in Vahini weekly and published a book. These distinguished portraits were published in English and Telugu too. Here is a partial list.

WHAT RANGA STANDS FOR?

Throughout his political career Professor Ranga stood for peasants, their self respect, right of their property and economic freedom. Before removing peasants from their agricultural lands, alternative employment source should be provided so that they can sustain and live with dignity. All agrarian reforms should be conducive to the agriculturists. Distribution of national wealth and income should be rationalized in such a way that the agriculturists are not exploited with unequal distribution. There should be parity in the evaluation of the services rendered by farmers and other sectors. Co-operative farming and collective cultivation under state supervision will lead to dictatorship.

Ranga opposed such coercive reforms which curb the freedom and dignity of peasants. Agriculturist is at the center of Ranga's political, economic philosophy. He calls it Peasant (Kisan) worker (coolie) artisan (kalakar) kingdom (rajya). The N.G. Ranga Farmer Award for Diversified Agriculture was instituted by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research in 2001 in his memory and Agricultural University of Andhra Pradesh is named in his honour and memory as Acharya N. G. Ranga Agricultural University.

His name found a place in the Guinness Book of World Records also as a Parliamentarian with fifty years of service.

N. G. Ranga was awarded Padma Vibhushan by the President of India in 1991.

A commemorative postage stamp was released by Government of India in 2001.

N. G. Ranga was passed away on 9th June 1995.

He was author of a large number of books in English and Telugu.

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N. G. Ranga, BY Lambert M Surhone, Mariam T Tennoe, Susan F Henssonow. VDM Verlag Dr. Mueller AG & Co. Kg, 2010-70 pages. High Quality Content by WIKIPEDIA articles! Gogineni Ranganayukulu, better known as N. G. Ranga (7 November 1900-9 June 1995).