THE ROLE OF TELUGU ASSOCIATION OF MALAYSIA TO PROMOTING IN TELUGU LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

M. SURENDRASH
DR.M.PADMAJA**

*Research Scholar, Anthropology (Centre for Southeast Asia & Pacific Studies), Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati, A.P., India
**Assistant Professor, Centre for Southeast Asia & Pacific Studies, Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati, A.P., India

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study to deal and discuss, the Telugu Association of Malaysia role to promoting the Telugu language and culture in multicultural society of Malaysia. The Telugus settled in Malaysia 200 years ago, it’s a long history of Telugus in Malaysia. They bring to Telugu traditions values, customs form mother land (Andhra Pradesh). The mostly settled in western parts of Malaysia state Penang. The Telugus came to only plantation workers, Visakhapatnam and other East Coast areas, is the emigrant port of Telugu peoples. In 1963 Telugu Associate of Malaysia (TAM) is rename from Malaysia Andhra Sangamu. TAM is a long standing service Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in Malaysia, particularly focus its attention on Malaysia Telugu community. The principal aim of TAM of Malaysia is to unite and merge the Telugus of the country under one roof in an effort to promote the language and culture of the community, in this process TAM is activated the Telugu people to develop the cultural and economic development of Telugus in Malaysia. The present article focuses its attention on Malaysia Telugu Association role to promote the Telugu language and culture in multicultural society of Malaysia.

KEYWORDS: Telugus Association, Role, Language, Culture, Malaysia, Multicultural Society

INTRODUCTION

Languages are the pedigree of nations (Jonson In Fromki, Rodman and Hyams, 2003) and are reflective of the identity factor of particular nation. Malaysia is known for her diversity of ethnic group residing together, particularly the three main ethnic communities: the Malays, Chinese and Indians. This current study is interested in the ethnic Indians who make up almost 10% of the total population 25.7 million (statistic department Malaysia 2009) and of this number there is further subdivision of language and culture particularly the Tamils Malayees, Telugus, Bengalies, Gujaratis and Sindhis, every community has to own association. My study is concerned on the Telugu association of Malaysia.
Telugu Culture History
Annamayya, Tyagaraja, Kuchipudi summarize the rich artistic traditions of Andhra Pradesh. Contributions of Annamacharya and Tyagaraja to the "grammar of sound" made Telugu language the preferred language of composition for Carnatic Music and made Andhra Pradesh the mother of all modern music. Their influence not only on Carnatic but global classical music and the organisation of sound as a medium of emotional resonance has no parallel in human history. Kuchipudi as a refinement of the ancient Tamil art of Bharathanatyam, and in the context of the unique religious and cultural traditions of Andhra Pradesh stands on par with all the great global traditions of Classical Dance.

Ancient Hindu traditions of Andhra Pradesh, Medieval Buddhist traditions, Modern Islamic-Hindu fusion traditions and the currently emerging Hindu-Christian fusion traditions. Dharanikota, Nagarjuna Konda monasteries and the associated literary contributions stand as a testaments to Andhra Pradesh's central role in the evolution of Ashokan Buddhism. Tirupati, the associated religious traditions of Lord Venkateswara as a personification of the merger of various Shivite andVaishavite Hindu traditions stands as a testament to the rich and progressive religious-philosophical schools of Andhra Pradesh. The contributions of Andhra Religious traditions to Bhakti Movement (Fusion movement for Islamic, Hindu and Buddhist Traditions) inspired numerous world renowned modern secular philosophers like Jiddu Krishnamurti to draw on this rich and progressive intellectual tradition of religion and philosophy. A living history of this rich tradition is daily visible in the lives of the people of this region and historic snap shots are frozen into stone at various times on the walls of these temples.

Telugu is an ancient language. Inscriptions containing Telugu words claimed to “date back to 400 BC” were discovered in Bhattiprolu in Guntur District The English translation of one inscription reads: “Gift of the slab by venerable Midikilayakha” Ashoka inscriptions of 3rd century BC with references to Andhras, use of Telugu words in spoken Prakrit from 200 BC to 6th century AD, and the Kothur inscription recovered recently in which a Telugu-Prakrit word “Thambhaya Dhaanam”, prove that Telugu has a rich history to be an ancient language. The discovery of this Brahmi label inscription engraved on the soap stone reliquary datable to 2nd Century BC, on paleographical ground reveals the ancient nature of the language and proves the fact that the Telugu language predates the known conception in Andhra Pradesh. Other primary sources are Prakrit/Sanskrit inscriptions found in the region, in which Telugu places and personal names are found. From this we know that the language
of the people was Telugu, while the rulers, who were of the Satavahana dynasty, spoke Prakrit. Telugu words appear in the Maharashtri Prakrit anthology of poems (the Gathasaptashathi) collected by the first century BC Satavahana King Hala. Telugu speakers were probably the oldest peoples inhabiting the land between the Krishna and Godavari rivers.

Objectives of the study:
The main objects of the study are to bring out the historical migration of Telugu community, and formation background of Telugu Association of Malaysia, and the association role to promoting Telugu language and cultural at dominant society of Malaysian.

Methodology:
The research data is based on primary and secondary data the primary data is used to Anthropological methods like observation, participation and discussion with Malaysia Telugu peoples and Association numbers. And the secondary data is based on books, journals and internet sources

Scope of the study:
The Telugu community who from about 3 lakes to 5 lakes of the total Malaysian population are predominately concentrated in the west coast of west Malaysia. Although Telugu Association have been established in the west Malaysia states. As such, the scope of this paper is limited to the discussion of TAM’s activities. Primary aim of this study is on the education and cultural activities of TAM at national level. Basically, the scope of the paper is to distinguish the major language problems of the Telugu community and then look into how TAM ‘reacts’ to the problems. It should be noted that it is not the intention of the writers to undertake and exhaustive and comprehensive analysis of the problems.

Limitation of the Study:
It is necessary to point out a major constraint in writing this paper is the general lack of published up-to-data and information on may Educational and Cultural aspects of the Telugu community. An important data collected by the field work at Malaysia.
Results and discussions:
TAM has playing a prominent role to protect and promoting the Telugu Language and Culture in Malaysia. When the implementation of New Education Policy, the Telugu Schools are completely absent in Malaysia. At that time TAM has took the solder responsibility to protect and promote the Telugu Language and Culture at multicultural society of Malaysia. So TAM has regularly conducting the POL classes and organizing the cultural programs. The association has maintaining the broad national and international network. The organization has following the ‘Unity and Diversity” formula, to protect and promote of Telugu language for their Malaysia nation.

Historic Migration of Telugus in Malaysia

The migration of Telugus to this country first took place during the period of the Sri Vijaya empire in the 15 the century. This period saw the coming in the Telugus from east cost of Andhra namely from kalingapatnam as traders. Historical factors indicate some of them would have settled around Kedh and Malacca.

The second and perhaps the largest migration took place from 1895 to 1950 with the opening of plantation by the British in Malaya and their need for work –force to develop their plantation. The British targeted India for their workforce as it was administratively easier to get the require manpower from a British territory. The poor economic condition at home also acted as push factor of Telugus from the port town of Visakapatnam, to seek for greener pastures. Most of the Telugus were from village surrounding Visakapatnam, Anankapalli, Srilakulam, and Vijayangaram. It is also interesting to note that some of the Telugus who decided to migrate wo note that some of the Telugus who decided to migrate to Malaysia were those who had working experience in their south Africa of Burma. Most migration of this Telugus took place under the ‘ Kangany or the Thandelu (mastri) system’ where compensated. It is evident that the Kanganies found it easier to convince their own relatives of people of their own-cast or village to travel thousands of miles, beyond wide seas for their livelihood. They had to travel from Vizag port by ship for 7 days to reach the west coast of peninsular Malaysia. Most of the Telugu population settled in estates around Kadah, Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Johor.
Formation of Telugu Association of Malaysia:

Since the first and second generation of Telugu immigrants to Malaya (now Malaysia) being mostly illiterate people and can here for the sole purpose of seeking out a living, they did not pay much need gore the promotion and development of Telugu education. Nevertheless, Telugu schools were opened up by the colonial rulers wherever there was a heavy concentration of Telugu.

Later the third generation of Telugus, consistent to the needs and aspirations of the Telugu community, formed and organization known as the Andhra association of Malaya in 1955, and later changed the name to Telugu Association of Malaysia to keep abreast with the changes in Malaysia. The achievement of Telugu association of Malaysia were, among others, the establishment of 27 branches so for throughout the country, and attempts are still being made to open up more branches where appropriate to serve the needs of Telugus. The principal objectives of Telugu Association of Malaysia is to until and merge the Telugus of the country under one roof in effort to promote the language and culture of the community, their interests and general well being and to faster goodwill and racial harmony among the communities of Malaysia (Batha Sree Ramulu Semenchalam2010). Among the endeavors of TAM is Samskruthik Nilam(TSN), a culture for Telugus situated in Serendah Hulu Senangor while is purely depending on well-wishers and donors. To name of few other ownerships, TAM has one Sir Venkaeswara Temple at Sungai Sumun, Perak a five story building (Telugu Bhavanam) in a strategic Location in Kuala Lumpur, a three storey building in Kulim, an office space in Kuala Lumpur, Rawang, Ipop, Klang, Johor and Bagan Dato are among some of the asset in its possession specially, TAM has become a reality in the making and we are confident that other will play an effective role in making this project a success (Ibid.p.31-32)

Telugu Education History of Malaysia:

During the British period 1920 to 1957, 50 Telugu schools in estates, after the independence number is continuously decrease. Presently there is no Telugu school in Malaysia. The below table shows the Telugu school in Malaysia. The below table shows the Telugu schools in estates
Status of Telugu schools in Malaysia during period of 1920 to 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No of Telugu Schools</th>
<th>No. of Students</th>
<th>No of Trained Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Telugu Association of Malaysia

The very conventional attitude of the parents and the discouragement received from the estate staff, resulted in his dropout. Most of them did not complete even four years of education thus not attaining much functional literacy. All those who did not finish their primary education joined the labour force. It is written nothing that the females were not sent to schools at all. They were deprived of education just to look after their babies at home. The every few children the primary education successfully. Most of them become teachers in other parts of Malaya and some of them Kangany in estate. They stopped with their primary Telugu education as they had no further opportunity to further their education due to lack of secondary schools for Telugu in Malaya. One could have sent his child to English schools, where as brighter future was assured. Unfortunately the English School was a dream to the poor estates Andhras as it was too expensive from them. The Telugu Education was more of the one room one teacher type, where a teacher type, where a teacher had to teach six standards. This must have been too hectic for anyone. None of the teachers were trained band them their method of teaching was much disorganized. Except from the teachers the students did not receive much expressive support from their parents and relatives. Even if the student was interested to do some extra reading at home, the conditions were hot conduction for studies as most of the estates them had no proper power supply. With all these conditions, it was inevitable for the products of the Telugu schools to be of low quality. The first generation literacy rate was nil but the second generation did attain about 10% literacy (Appanna Naidu, 2003). The third and fourth generation Telugus excelled in education and was well endowed with better living and education conditions. This is a proud generation for Telugus in Malaysia. It is very common to see at least one tertiary educated Telugu in each family. There are a number of families where every child has obtained tertiary education.
The fifth generation Telugus are currently school going children and the responsibility lies with the parents to ensure that they do well in their education so that they will have a bright future (Adari Appanna Naidu, 2010, p.197).

**TAM role to Promotion of the Telugu Language and Culture in Malaysia:**

After independence in 1957 the Malaysia education policy introduced and the government standardized the education in all primary school irrespective of the medium of induction. Malay, Chinese and Tamil medium school were recognized by the government and supported their development. However no efforts were made to protect and promote Telugu medium schools at same time there was no closure of these schools. This was the greatest setback for development of Telugu medium schools in Malaysia (Butha Sree Ramulu Semenchalam, 2010). The core mission of TAM is to serve the growing needs of thousands of people of Telugu origin living in Malaysia. Membership is open to people of Telugu origin living across Malaysia. An estimated five lakes Telugu people are living in the Malaysia, by the living purpose Telugus are speaking Tamil language fluently, and practicing Tamil culture, this was more influence to generation to generation, still know today number of Telugus are totally converted to Tamilians. And majorities of Telugus are professionals such as doctors, biomedical scientists, businessmen, engineers, information technologists, entrepreneurs, pharmacists, professors, teachers, real estate developers and highly skilled workers. TAM strives to serve them with cultural and social activities here in the Malaysia. Since 1993 no examinations were held for Telugu language. As a result, there was no incentive or motivation for the students to pursue the subject. Being already overburdened with exam oriented subjects, the students and even parents friend it a burden for their children to attend the Telugu classes being a non- exam subject. Hence, the number of pupils attending Telugu class/pupils own language (POL) had much dropped. But when ever case Telugu is still been taught at about 25 government schools.

TAM is encouraging POL class by conducting voluntary classes in all 26 TAM branches nationwide, holding educational and cultural seminars / workshops and various other activities.

But our efforts seem futile at times, especially among the younger generation. We only ask our mother-tongue which was here prior to independence and after independence till 1992 to be reinstated in PMR examination so that Telugu language and culture will not be decimated.

Telugus have contributed significantly, to the rich cultural heritage of our nation. Loss of
Telugu language and culture will be a dent to the rich culture heritage of Malaysia. So, by including Telugu language in PMR / SPM it will facilitate our efforts immensely and it will spur as further in the promotion of Telugu language and the students too will be motivated to take the subject.

TAM’s mission of serving the Telugu community is achieved by organizing regional activities, meetings, and biannual conventions to celebrate Telugu culture and traditions. TAM has identified several key activities such as exchange programs for students, scientists, artists and professionals, and advancing the Telugu heritage, sponsoring events that enrich end enlighten society, and extending support back home for educational, business and overall development of Telugu communities across the Malaysia.

TAM has celebrated the Telugu festival in grand style specially Udadi, Sri Ramanavami, Sankranthi festivals. So the association invited the delegates from national and international. TAM has trying to all the Telugus has sitting in the one ruff at this festival section. Thousands of peoples are attending the Ugadi, Sri Ramanavami, Sankrati festivals celebration.TAM has regularly conducting the annual festival of Sree Venkateswara Devastanamu at Lower Perak branch in Sungai Sumun particularly in Dasara season. And it has conducts many cultural activities and events every year aimed at not only celebrating our language, traditions, art and heritage but also championing the diversity of India. These events showcase the talents of our cultural groups while strengthening the bond of community through friendship and unity. The Association care about the Telugu culture, it has inject aware of knowledge about Telugu cultural history, and traditions particularly at present young generation. And the association actively organized the Telugu family get together programmes and makes arrange the leadership courses the back ground aim of the programs to promote the Telugu culture and trained leadership qualities at gable competition.

TAM has officially launched (TAM) National Youth in 2004 and in the same year establish the (TAM) Mahila wing. The main objective of this wing was to promote TAM objectives among the Telugu youths to create awareness and solidarity to serve the community. whereas Mahila wing was solely established to fill the void of awareness among the womenfolk in the Telugu Community’s astounding leading ladies. Though in the past, not may women came forward to step to step in as leaders, these handful of ladies took charge to pave the path for the future generation. It was Madam Kasturi Bhai KV Samy who first took this responsibility. She was elected as the first Mahila chief in 1963 while Madam Ramulammah Sommunaidu was elected as the secretary and another 6 as committee
members. In countless ways Mahila strive to increase the participation of Telugu women in TAM directly. Besides that, Mahila in the recent years has played a pragmatic role in generating awareness among the Telugu women. They have single-handedly taken the role of educators in enlightening Telugu women’s rights and responsibilities as Malaysians, and their importance in playing a major role in our Telugu community.

TAM has great success in broadcasting the Telugu movies and Telugu programs through Nadasuara in TV2 and Austro channels. TAM wishes to express its gratitude to Barisan Government for giving permission of Telugu program broadcasting. The Association has written memorandum to respective Ministers for the increase of Telugu movies to equitable level. However, our efforts have failed thus far. Members and Branches are also urged to write to RTM to provide us with a minimum of 4 movies a year and to provide increased timing for Telugu programmers through Radio 6. Radio Malaysia has been broadcasting Telugu songs for about 5 hours a week. This accounts to about 4% of the total time allocated to Indian programmers. We reckon the time allotted is inequitable and we have repeatedly requested relevant authorities for increased time. Thus far we have not been successful. However, with the increase of Radio time to 24 hours in the near future it is our fervent hope RTM will consider increasing Telugu Programmers to at least 2 hours a day. Presently All India Radio is broadcasting half an hour Telugu Programmers from 8.15 am to 8.45 pm. This programme can be heard via short wave2 19.17 meter bands. The programmes include songs, short stories, News etc. And thus far has been well received by Malaysian viewers. TAM has requested AIR to increase the air time for Telugu programmes to 1 hour per day and the request is under consideration. Members wishing to communicate with AIR can write to Director.

The Association to send Newsletters (Sanga Charyalu) regularly to members, however due to unforeseen circumstances the distribution stopped after the first issue. However TAM submit news to Branches. Some of the Branches have been successful in informing the members of our activities via their own news bulletins. And the association news has been published via dailies such as New Straits Times, Star, Malay Mail, Tamil Nesan and Malaysian Nanban. The Association wishes to express its thanks to all these dailies for their contribution.
CONCLUSION

Telugu Language and Culture is great history in Andhra Pradesh. Telugus are heterogeneous community in Malaysia. Push (Andhra) and pull (Malaya) factors are main reason of the Telugu community migration in Malaysia. When the origin the TAM, the association has playing a prominent role to promote, preserve and safeguard social, economic, cultural, spiritual, linguistic and educational interest of the Telugu community. And to maintain the language, cultural identity at multicultural society of Malaysia. It recognizes that attention is needed to revive, promote and expand culture activities throughout the country. The association took the great responsibility after the end to Telugu schools. So it was encouraging POL classes by conducting voluntary class in all 26 TAM branches nationwide, holding educational and cultural seminars/workshops and various other activities. In spite of the best efforts of the Association, it is doubt whether Telugu language and culture will survive the vicissitudes in the era of globalization. Therefore, it is the duty of Telugus in Andhra Pradesh to give a helping hand in surviving the Telugu language and culture according to the craving aspirations of Telugu People in Malaysia.

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