

ROLE OF NEELAM SANEEVA REDDY IN FREEDOM MOVEMENT

***NASREEN SHAHEDI**

**Research Scholar, Department of History, Rayalaseema University, Ananthapuramu.*

ABSTRACT

Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy was born in present-day Ananthapuramu district, Andhra Pradesh. Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy completed his schooling at Adayar and joined the Government Arts College at Ananthapuramu. He quit to become an Indian Independence activist and was jailed for participating in the Quit India Movement. He was elected to the Madras Legislative Assembly in 1946 as a Congress Party representative. Reddy became the deputy chief minister of Andhra State in 1953 and the first Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh in 1956. He first took part in the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1931. Within a few short years he came to national prominence as an influential peasant leader. He participated in various struggles against the British and was imprisoned several times. Sanjeeva Reddy took an active part in the Quit India Movement. In 1946 Sanjeeva Reddy was elected to the Madras Legislative Assembly and later on he became the Secretary of the Congress Legislature Party in Madras.

INTRODUCTION

Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy was born on 18th May, 1913 in a farmer's family at Illuru, a small village located on the banks of Pennar River in Ananthapuramu district. His father Chinnapa Reddy is a village headman and his mother Subbamma is a house wife. Since his childhood, he is active in curricular as well as co-curricular activities.

In 1922 Mahatma Gandhi came to Tadipatri town of Ananthapuramu district as part of his campaign on prohibition. To this meeting Mr. Chinnapa Reddy, father of Sanjeeva Reddy along with his friends and colleagues went to Tadipatri town on bullock cart to listen to Mahatma Gandhi's speech. Inspired by the speech

of Mahatma Gandhi Mr. Chinnapa Reddy called upon the taddy contractor and paid money to him from his pocket for the closure of taddy shops in his village. For acting favourably to the call given by Mahatma Gandhi, the then British Indian Government arrested Ramacharyulu, teacher of Sanjeeva Reddy. Besides, the British Indian Government issued arrest warrant against Mr. Chinnapa Reddy for giving call for “Kisan March” for the closure of wine and taddy shops. At that time Snjeeva Reddy is 7 years old and he was annoyed by the arrest of his master and his father. This incident sowed the seeds of nationalism and understood the importance sacrifice for the nation.

At the time of First World War (1914-1918), Sanjeeva Reddy is a small boy. The national movement has not taken the shape of people’s movement. The power and prominence of Britishers has reached its culmination. Here and there agitations were going on against the British Indian government. Under these circumstances Bala Gangadhar Tilak actively participated against the mis-rule of British Indian Government. The revolutionary ideas of Bala Gangadhar Tilak inspired the Sanjeeva Reddy. Under the influence of Tilak’s ideas, Sanjeeva Reddy in his class room shown the photo of Bala Gangadhar Tilak and explained the motive behind his agitations and patriotism in Tilak. The school management treated the action of Sanjeeva Reddy as disloyal to British Indian Government and under this pretext Sanjeeva Reddy was suspended from the school. This action instigated the revolutionary attitude in Mr. Reddy’s mind. This paved the way for the development of revolutionary patriotism in the mind of Sanjeeva Reddy.

During his primary school education he was also influenced by the ideas of his master and close associate of his father Mr. Ramacharyulu. The teachings of Mr. Ramacharyulu also influenced the thinking of Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy in a revolutionary way. His teachings also include patriotism, sacrifice for the sake of mother land, need for the development of nation etc. To inculcate these ideas Mr. Ramacharyulu used to cite the life examples great personalities of the nation. These ideas, citations and stories of great persons left ever impressive impact on the life of Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy.

While he was studying at Arts College, Ananthapuramu he was impressed by the ‘Swaraj movement’ of Mahatma Gandhi and to actively participate in it Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy left the college education and became an ardent supporter of Mahatama Gandhi. It is sign of sacrifice in the heart and blood of Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy for the sake of mother land. He felt no sorry for giving up his graduation for the sake of the country. Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy once declared that “I am not a college graduate but I am a graduate in life, that is what my colleagues in the movement said”.

Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy's father and uncle were inspired by Mutnuri KrishnaRao (Editor of KrishnaPatrika) and Kalluri SubbaRao (Anantapur district congress leader) and propagated the national movement among the masses. Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy followed the path of his father, teacher and uncle and actively took part in different phases of national movement since his childhood. He lost his father in 1931 and it led Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy to shoulder the entire responsibility of the family. Besides looking after his agricultural lands, he discharged the responsibilities of Illuru village Munsiff. In spite of his engagement with agriculture and government servant duties, he never kept aloof from the national movement and local politics. The independent thinking and patriotism of Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy will made it difficult for him to get adjusted with the policies of British Officials as a village Munsiff. So, he submitted his resignation letter to the post of village Munisiff. Mr.Subba Reddy, the maternal uncle of Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy despaired and disillusioned with leftist activities of his son Mr. T. Nagi Reddy. So Mr. Subba Reddy showered his blessings on his nephew Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy. He became friend and philosopher to Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy in all his political endeavours in the pre-independent era. Mr. Sanjiva Reddy married Smt.Nagarathnamma who was daughter of Tarimela Subba Reddy on June 08-1935.

The seed for the political life of Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy began by the formation of Ryots Association at Singanamala. It is the organization which paved the way for the development mass leadership qualities in Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy. Later Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy formed the District Youth Association. The youth association inspired several masses in rural areas to actively involve themselves in the peaceful fight against the British Raj. Through this league Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy opened 70 study circles and a summer school at Hindupur. The youth leaders from different regions of Madras State joined this summer school to get training in political, economic and industrial fields. Thus he had his apprenticeship in organizational work and displayed his qualities for leadership which in later political life proved so advantages and helpful to him .His active participation in national movement and his understanding of national problems naturally led him to the level of a collective leader and became an inspiration of the youth of the day.

Another factor which helped Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy to mould his character and to become a respected leader of the people was his humble beginning as a rightist in the congress organization. Though the Justice party was not in majority, the rich people in Rayalaseema were in support of it who practically dominated the entire political scene of the region.

Pattabhi Sitaramaih (rightist leader) was popularly known as Pattabhi, wanted to suppress the leftist movement in Rayalaseema. While touring Rayalaseema he searched for an young leader from a noted politically conscious family to neutralize and encounter the Justisparty13. As leader of the youth league, Mr. Sanjeeva

Reddy accompanied Pattabhi and addressed the gatherings at different places of Rayalaseema. Pattabhi soon realized Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy's whole hearted patriotism and keen interest in public and political affairs and blessed him for his success. Thus he became a strong follower of Pattabhi. Later he was unanimously elected as APCC joint secretary. From then onwards Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy remained as a rightist in the congress organization.

The ideological differences and factionalism in congress as right and left Reddy and ex secretary of the CPI party) and Nagi Reddy were all brought up together under one roof. But they joined different groups. According to C.V. Bhargava, Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy is the least emotional of them all. He is almost placid, rarely perturbed of positive purposes and not given to the ways of agitation. If he wanted to, he too, could have acquired the knack of mouthing Marxist slogans. His I.Q. is none the worse for being a congress man from the start.

At the end of the Second World War, caste and party politics slowly crept into the congress organization, and thereby polluted its purity considerably. Inside, a personal rivalry raged between two prominent Telugu Brahmin politicians, Pattabhi and Prakasam (leftist leader) 1S. Though Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy was a strong follower of Pattabhi he never opposed Prakasam. He had his own regard for Prakasam. Regarding his relationship with Prakasam he once said, "Towards him I always maintained a certain reverential aloofness" and that "in his massive presence one felt like a child". During 1946 and 1953 they were in opposite camps. Though he was distant from him politically, Reddy always respected the 'Andrakesari'. Thus he followed both Prakasam and Pattabhi and considered them as political gurus. Following the Ramagharh AICC resolution, the APCC met on 19th October, 1940 at Ananthapuramu. It discussed and checked out an intensive programme towards Satyagraha movement. It was in this conference, Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy favored individual satyagraha and himself decided to participate as wings polarized into different groups. Similar changes had occurred even in the family of Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy. Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy, Rajasekar Reddy (brother of Sanjiva "satyagraha"). At that time, it was fortunate too for the nation that Gandhi was allowed to remain free, to control, direct and organize the movement. Gandhiji after careful scrutiny of the lists submitted by the district committees made certain drastic changes by taking into account the personal life of certain members. There were very few whom Gandhiji permitted to offer individual satyagraha, but among the few was Sanjiva Reddy, the youngest political soldier to participate in this campaign.

On December 21, 1940 at 6 p.m. the District congress members and nearly five thousand neighbours gathered at Chennakesava temple at Illuru to see Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy, as "satyagrahi". The superintendent of police who was on the spot immediately arrested Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy and handed him to the Deputy collector of

Ananthapuramu who sentenced him for six months rigorous imprisonment and with a fine of Rs.500/- or in default to undergo further imprisonment for six months¹⁷. He was detained in the Vellore and Tiruchinapalli jails. Whatever might be his experience in jails, he had an opportunity to have an “Association with aged”¹⁸. After his release he was immediately arrested under the Defense of India’s rules and kept in detention again in the Vellore jail from 31st June 1941 to 18th March 1942. In this connection, Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy had a painful recollection “I was literally released and rearrested at the same time. It was a painful experience not because I was immediately rearrested but because I could not greet my wife and two little children who had come all the way to welcome me but who had to run away even without having a word with me. Re-arrest was a rare phenomenon. The British rearrested Sanjiva Reddy because of his prominence in the congress organization.

After his release from jail, Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy attended the AICC meeting at Bombay in his capacity as joint secretary of the body. While he was returning with determination of making Quit India movement a grand success he was arrested in the train itself he was travelling in somewhere near Bombay and was taken to jail and kept detained till January, 1945, in the Vellore and Amravati jails. During his long stay in the jails he had the unique opportunity to interact with the top ranking leaders of the freedom movement. He utilized his time in reading and in understanding the organizational and governmental problems and thus cultivated national outlook. In jails he had been silently studying personalities, the things and the interests on the political stage. In short, he learned infinitude of things during this period of political apprenticeship.

Later Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy turned his attention to implement constructive programmes in the villages. He opened camps in several places to train volunteers to go round the villages and formed special committees to look after the problems dealing with Ryots, laborers and Harijans. These activities endeared Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy to the masses and provided a firm base for future political rise.

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