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## SOCIAL MOVEMENT

### VAVILALA GOPALAKRISHNAYYA

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Vavilala's entry into the public life either an agitation or movement has first started on August 1, 1920 when he was of fourteen years old. Then onwards he never turned back from his mission and giving up the elementary school career. On the call of Mahatma Gandhi joined freedom movement and suffered imprisonment for many times, both pre and post-Independence period. As a born fighter, he had always been in the forefront of every people's movement and in the background of all mass organizations. There is no movement in the State, without his involvement be it, the freedom fight, Andhra Movement, Library Movement, River Waters dispute, Nagarjunasagar Project, Steel Plant agitation, World Peace Movement, the autonomy of universities, Kisan Satyagraha against the additional land levy, the demand for more power to the States, the non-gazetted officers' strike for living wage cooperative movement, the adoption of Telugu as the official language, basic education committee and finally even in the recent anti-arrac movement.

#### **World Peace Movement**

As a President of the State Peace Council, Vavilala visited countries like Soviet Union, U.S.A., China, France, Austira, Switzerland, Germany, Finland, Sweden, Malaysia and Singapore and proclaimed the need of world peace and fight against Nuclear arms. He also acted as Vice-President of world peace council. In 1952, he attended the World Peace Conference as a sole representative from Andhra State. He attended World Disarmament Conference at Halensky which was held from July 10, to 15, 1965, in which 1461 delegates from 198 countries attended this conference which called upon the U.S.A to halt its capitalistic war against Vietnam. On July 31, he went to East Berlin to attend World Peace Assembly and to Stockholm to attend Vietnam Freedom Movement. He also represented in Soviet Youth Conference at Moscow. After his return to India he attended the Krishna-Godavari Tribunal along with Tenneti Viswanatham at Delhi. In July, 1993, he visited China on behalf of the Indo-China Friendship Society to spread over the peace message between Indian and Chinese people and was under strong hope that the friendship between the countries will help them to develop and inter-exchange of culture and technology.

His contribution to the world peace movement is significant not only outside the country but also within India as much he has been continuously striving for peace since the First State Peace Conference at Nellore in 1951. He presided over Andhra Peace Conference on October 3, 1965.



In May, 1985, he spread the message of peace under the leadership of Goodavalli Nageswara Rao, Krishna and P.V. Raghavayya and they together travelled nearly 10,000 kms, in the state. On September 28 and 29 of 1985, he participated in the 10<sup>th</sup> A.P. Peace Conference.

### **Cooperative Movement**

Cooperative Movement is a sure means of mutual co-existence and cooperation. Vavilala was inspired by this idea and his association with this movement was started when he was made Secretary of the Cooperative Spinners and Weavers' Society, also known as Khaddar Society near Papayapalem in 1921, in his fifteenth year. As a result of his arrest by the government in the freedom movement the Khaddar Society became passive. Subsequently, after his release he became the member of the Sattenapalli Taluk Cooperative Union during 1927-29. He acted as an arbitrator of the Agricultural Credit Society in Lakkarajugarlapadu. He was also elected as the Director of Andhra Pradesh Cooperative Union.

He himself organized a Cooperative Society for the upliftment of Lambadies. This society did a remarkable work. As a member of Guntur Revenue Division Bonded Labour Abolishment Committee, he fought against the bonded labour.

He held the posts of Vice-President of Andhra Cooperative Union for two years from 1945 and editor of 'Sahakaram' journal.

During the Second World War he had organized the Sattenapalli Cooperative Stores which under the presidentship of Dr. Chaturvedula Seetharama Sastry, did a lot of service for the downtrodden people. Vavilala had also initiated Cooperative Societies for leather, bamboo workers and brick-makers.

The relentless effort in the creation of Satavahana Cotton Manufacturers Cooperative Spinning Mill is his most notable contribution in the field of cooperative movement, which was registered in 1972, and started functioning from 1980. With Vavilala as its Vice-President, it started production from October 27, 1982. He experienced lot of problems in making this unit functional. He went to Bombay for getting sanction of loan from the Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI). After bringing this unit into successful operation he gave up his position as Vice-President. During this movement he attended the All India Cooperative Conference at Lucknow.

The Cooperative are supposed to be voluntary organizations meant to help their members in question. But today they are controlled by the Registrar of Cooperatives who acts either on his own or on direction of politicians and bureaucrats. Thus, the cooperative spirit is conspicuous by its absence. The cooperative laws in the States should be changed to be followed both in letter and spirit. The model law was circulated by the Planning Commission a few years ago. Those State Government which have amended their law, have not been able to give up the extraordinary powers of the Registrar of Cooperatives, thereby making a mockery of the amendment. People are today so disillusioned with the cooperatives



that many are opting for the relevant provisions of the company law or registering under the Societies Registration Act. No amount of resource allocation can do any good in the real sense unless and until the State direction interference is checked, and make it voluntary in the true sense.

### **Harijan Movement**

Vavilala's significant contribution to the eradication of social evil of untochability has been a part of his ideal of 'Sarve Jana Sukheno Bhavantu'. He involved himself in the Harijan Movement of the Guntur District Harijan Service Society, along with Saranu Ramaswami Choudari, Prof. N.G. Ranga and Vadlamudi Mukteswara Rao.

Vavilala moved with the Harijans and helped them by encouraging their morale and self-confidence and this naturally had an impact in their minds. His untiring service in helping the people affected by cholera is remarkable. As a Gandhian he too fought for providing entrance for the Harijans into temples. Vavilala used to distribute the Bhagavad Gita in Telugu among Harijans in order to erase the stigma that they should not read scriptures. As the President of the Guntur District Harijan Society he had made significant efforts to bring them into the mainstream of the society. He strove for abolishing the Criminal Tribes Act which was discriminatory in nature. He organized many meetings in abolishing the bonded labour in Pedakurapadu, Bellamkonda and Sattenapalli. He fought for providing lands to Scheduled Tribes at Bhodan village in Guntur district. He has written a book by name 'Mana Manyam' in which he explained the problems of the hill tribes.

Vavilala led many agitations against the exploitation of the capitalists, contractors and money-lenders. He proposed the constitution of separate districts for these tribals, where they were in majority.

### **Contribution to Education Field**

Vavilala believes that education is essential for all which helps in building up humanity. His thirst for continuous learning has given birth for the concept of 'adult education'. Towards this direction in 1925 he started an education centre under the banner of 'Sarada Nilayam' which subsequently helped in developing and converting illiterates into literates. He acted as a member of the South Indian Adult Education Advisory Council which functioned under the leadership of Gadicherla Harisarvothama Rao in 1950. He was also the member of Guntur District Adult Educational Council. As a Vice-President of A.P. People's Library Association he strove for the spread of literacy and wrote extensively on adult education.

As a member of the 'Kuppuswamy Committee' in 1954 he studied the problem of primary schools in South India. In 1960, he examined the basic education system in 'Ekbote' Commission. As a member of 'Rajagopal Committee' he had contributed a lot to the comprehensive education. He contributed a lot in establishing Urdu Primary Schools in Sattenapalli, Vadalapalli, Gullapalli and the Government Junior College and Private Degree College in Sattenapalli.



He was elected to the Senate of Andhra University for five times where he proposed the Bill for making the Andhra University a township. He was also a Senate Member of Sri Venkateswara University and Nagarjuna University for two terms and one term for Osmania University. His proposals as a Senate Member of Andhra University in December, 1956 to start a P.G. Centre in Guntur and a Federal University at Hyderabad (1972) are worth-notable.

As started earlier, he strove for the autonomy of the universities. A committee was formed under the Chairmanship of Vavilala to study the reasons for student unrest which in later stages was published and circulated by the University Grants Commission to all Universities. He published a report in 1974 in which he reiterated his connection that education is the backbone for the development of the society. He was of the view that education must impart the values of patriotism, self-confidence and discipline in the citizens of the country.

### **Panchayati Raj Institutions**

Vavilala was greatly inspired by the Panchayati Raj institutions which are one of the great missions of Mahatma Gandhi. Panchayati Raj is the nodal point between village and districts. According to him, elections must take place at three levels at the village level, middle level and district level (Zilla Parishad Level). Individual as well as institutional responsibilities must be fixed in accounting for the financial management. The M.L.As and M.Ps should not have voting rights. There must be 'standing committees' at the middle and District level. The panchayats have to pool their resources, in addition to Government aid, and they must be properly utilized for which they are allotted, and justify the cause for which they are established.

### **Struggle for Telugu as Official Language**

Vavilala is of the opinion that Telugu as a medium of education and language of administration will highly sub serve for the unification of feelings of Telangana and Andhra. This opinion exactly matches with that of Desabhakta Konda Venkatappayya Pantulu, who declared that education and administration when carried on in one's own language would be as sound as a child bread-fed by its mother, but when done in an alien tongue they would turn imbecile like a child fed on condensed milk.

The Andhra Legislative Assembly adopted a resolution on September 19, 1955 moved by Vavilala, recommending to the Government to introduce Telugu as official language as early as possible. The Government of Andhra Pradesh appointed a Special Officer in 1959, and in pursuance of his recommendations it issued orders directing the use of Telugu in specified departments at Taluk level. A Private Bill of Sri Vavilala on official language was rejected by the government on many occasions. But he made a relentless effort and proposed the bill for this purpose as many as nine times. So, finally his Bill was referred to the public opinion and then to the Select Committee, with P.V. Narasimha Rao as the Education Minister and K. Brahmananda



Reddy as the Chief Minister. The Bill received the assent of the governor on May 14, 1966, and Telugu was made the official language of the State. The Government also issued orders to introduce Telugu at taluk level and below in 23 departments.

A Review Committee under the chairmanship of P.V. Narasimha Rao was appointed by the Government to review the implementation of official language, and the committee toured different parts of the State and made recommendations to the government. All these developments denotes the untiring efforts of Vavilala, in this regard. As a Chairman of the Official Language Commission, neither he drew salary nor enjoyed the privileges. He resigned the Chairmanship of Official Language Commission moral grounds. Even after that he continued his efforts in enlightening the people about the advantages of native language and this led to the formation of All India States Official Language Conference headed by Charan Singh. He left no place in explaining the advantage of Telugu language and the role of English language in one's life. He used to cite various example from the history to explain as to how people have kept themselves in dark under the shade of the British language.

He, however, understood the difficulties and hurdles in adopting Telugu as official language. It was a strong wish of Vavilala to make Telugu as second National language after Hindi as it is the most widely spoken language in India and also to make it as the medium of instruction at Telugu language is the driving spirit in making it as the official language – the dream of Vavilala.

### **Prohibition**

The concept of prohibition is not new to the nation or state. The first prohibition seeding has taken place in 1937 during the regime of Rajaji's government, which came forward to implement in phasewise. But incidentally because of Second World War and resignation of some of the Congress Ministers the British Government had lifted the ban on prohibition.

Again in 1944, the Prohibition Movement was restarted under the leadership of Prakasam Pantulu. But in 1952, when he became the Chief Minister of Andhra State had diluted the prohibition revolution by appointing Rama Moorthy Committee which recommended to sell arract through permits. The Government has accepted the recommendations.

In 1956, Andhra Pradesh was formed. The prohibition had been implemented in Andhra districts.

Coming to the present again in 1992, the concept of prohibition as a movement. It was a small beginning in Dubagunta village which later on spread over the entire state like a wild fire. Women from all walks of life have dedicatedly took part in this movement. Vavilala, at his age of 86 years has extended his moral support and leadership to this revolution. He led a mass procession of nearly 40 thousand people who protested against liquor auction in Nellore town on September 11, 1992. The result is the Government of Andhra Pradesh finally came down and announced



the prohibition in April, 1993, which subsequently implemented from October 2. A state level committee on prohibitor was formed with Vavilala and Bhattam Srirama Murthy as its President and Convenor respectively on April 18, 1993 to ensure and recommend the implementation of the Act.

Though it was formally announced by the then government prohibition was not implemented fully. As a result, Vavilala resigned for his Chairmanship of the Committee on prohibition. The succeeding government has enacted the total prohibition from January 16, 1995. Vavilala this time was Advisor of the State Committee on Prohibition. He, however, resigned against the government vacillation in continuing with the total prohibition on August 8, 1996. Thus the saga of prohibition movement of Vavilala is also his determination to prop up the prohibition in the State.

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