

CHAPTER THREE**S.R. KANTHI AFTER INDEPENDENCE**

CHAPTER THREE**S.R. KANTHI AFTER INDEPENDENCE**

Sri. S.R. Kanthi: As a Speaker
(1956 to 1962)

In Karnataka several important personalities have occupied the post of the Speaker. Of all the Speakers the first Speaker of Mysore Legislative Assembly or Mysore Vidhansabha, the first Speaker Sri. S.R. Kanthi can be cited as the one who laid down the foundation of conventions and customs which are very important for the functioning of the democracy. In the Parliamentary system the Office of the Speaker assumes great importance. It is an office of dignity, honour and power. The office of Speaker enjoys a unique position in the functioning of Parliamentary democracy, as it has been rightly pointed out by Sir Barnet, who says, "The speaker is the mouthpiece of the House in its external affairs and is the guardian of its privileges."¹ He is the most significant officer of the House. He has to preside over the deliberations of the house and administer justice to the ruling and opposition parties. The Speaker is the flesh and bone of legislature, without which the legislature would be meaningless.

The Speaker's office is a gift of Great Britain to the world. This office is as old as the Parliament itself. The Speaker's office in England dates from 14th century. England is known as the mother of democratic institutions in the world;² and the emergence of the office of Speaker is by and large natural, and nobody has shaped it. It is a natural outcome of democratic functioning.

Sri. G.V. Mavalankar was conferred the unique honour

of Speakership of Lok Sabha after the general elections in 1952, and he held the position as the Speaker from 1956-57. Likewise in Mysore Sri. Kanthi was conferred the Speakership of Vidhansabha of Mysore after the General Elections of 1956. and he held the position upto 1962.³

Legislature is a pivot of a democratic system of Government and the Speaker is the pivot of the Legislative machinery or Parliamentary machinery. He is the principal officer of the House. This office assumes great significance to which Constitution provides an honourable position.

The Constitution of Indian Republic provides for Speakership both at the Centre and the State levels. Article 93 is related to Speaker of Lok Sabha and Article 178 provides for the Speaker of State Legislative Assembly. Each and every assembly of State Legislature shall, as soon as may choose two members of Assembly, to be respectively Speaker and Deputy Speaker. No legal qualifications are required for Speakership. The main thing is, he should have the support of the majority of the members of the respective House.

Total impartiality is the basic requirement of good Speakership. He must command authority with confidence. A good Speaker needs a patient soul, whose temper can survive the strain of long hours in the chair. To shoulder heavy responsibility he must have an outstanding ability, sound judgement, calibre and impartiality. He must be detached from any party affiliation. He must be impartial

and he must be of independent nature.⁴

The powers and functions of Speaker are - The speaker is the chief custodian of the powers and privileges of the state legislature. He has to represent the House, its powers, proceedings and dignity.

Usually the speaker derives his powers particularly from the rules of procedure. He is responsible for regulating the proceedings of the House. He works like a link between the House on the one hand and the Governor and Government on the other hand. He has to preside over the House. He has the power to adjourn the House, when there is no quorum. He has the power to permit a member's address in the House in his mothertongue. He has the power to exercise his vote in the case of any equality of votes. He has also the power to determine whether the Bill is a money bill or not.

Humour is also one of the important virtues of the Speaker. It enables him to mix-up with the other members.

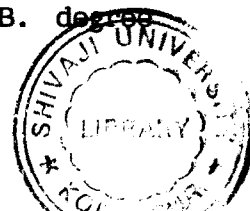
Sri. S.R. Kanthi, before Independence, had worked as a Deputy Speaker in Bombay Legislative Assembly from 1952 to 1956. Because of his previous experience he was elected as the first Speaker of Mysore Legislative Assembly, after the reorganization of the States in 1956. He worked in that capacity for 6 years, which was appreciated by all for his commendable job in that capacity. It is difficult to function as a Speaker now-a-days, which Sri. Kanthi

did thanks to his gentle, mild and patient nature. Now-a-days, the Assemblies have become battle-fields or fish-markets. Hooliganism has entered the legislatures and the Parliament. Today it has become difficult because all rules, procedures and decorum have been thrown to wind by the members. Very little decorum is practised in the Assembly and hence there are very few Speakers who have functioned as such for six years.

Sri. S.R. Kanthi, it should be noted, presided over as Speaker, when the political climate was chaotic in the year 1956, "and the demands of Linguistic Reorganization of State was at climax. New Mysore emerged, when the different parts or areas of Bombay Presidency, Madras Presidency were brought under New Mysore State, in which 5 different parts were combined to declare a new Mysore State".⁵

Sri Kanthi had wide experience, because he had served as Deputy Speaker in Bombay Presidency. All these experiences contributed for his success in presiding over during the critical times of the Legislative Assembly.

In 1957 when General Elections were declared, Sri. Kanthi got re-elected from the Hungund constituency. Though the tradition of parliamentary democracy pleads for "The person who served as Speaker, should be elected unanimously. Nobody should contest against him", in India such good traditions had still to be established. As a sitting Speaker he contested from Hungund constituency. Sri. G.P. Nanjayanmath, a most educated Post-graduate and LL.B. degree



holder of Sulibhavi village (Hungund taluka) contested against Sri. Kanthi. As there was no strong opposition to Congress at that time, Sri. Kanthi was elected with a good margin of votes. He was much attracted towards the office of Speaker rather than any Ministry. Though he was a true disciple, sincere volunteer and member of the Congress, he was away from all the party fellys and bindings. When he was in the chair of Speaker, his way of conducting the business of the House was appreciated by both ruling and opposition party members.⁶ He saw that every member in the House was provided with opportunity of expression, and firmly believed that the essence of Parliamentary Democracy lies in the 'Debate', and 'Debate' influenced the standard of legislative Acts.

Today Speakers very often act as the agents of ruling party, but Sri. Kanthi always tried to stand over any political influences. So long as he acted as the Speaker he was impartial and non-partisan in the chair.

When he was chosen unanimously as the Speaker by the Chief Minister, many honourable members and even the leaders of opposition party congratulated him. They expressed their hopes that Sri. Kanthi would discharge his duties to everybody's satisfaction. As and when occasion arose for the Speaker to give his ruling it was in complete satisfaction of both the ruling party and the opposition parties. He enjoyed confidence of the members who belonged to all shades and colours.

Sri. Kanthi left an indelible impressions on his colleagues

in the Legislative Assembly. He was a dignified person and a fine parliamentarian. He successfully conducted the business of the House and maintained peace, order and discipline of the House. The proceedings of Legislative Assembly during Sri. Kanthi's period, even today stand as testimony of the way he functioned as 'Speaker'. He conducted the sessions of Assembly smoothly. He maintained and preserved the dignity and honour of the Assembly⁷ and there has been no record of any incident of indiscipline or untoward behaviour during his tenure of Speakership. He attended the proceedings of Assembly punctually and participated in every bit of discussion with never diminishing interest.

With his rich experience as Legislator over 10 years, with the vast fund of legal knowledge of Parliamentary set up and wisdom, he brought honour and lent enchantment to the Chair of Speaker, which he adorned for more than 6 years. Unlike majority of other members of the Houses, he did not try to become a 'titular' Speaker of the House. Sri. Kanthi proved his presence worth and his Speakership and membership, meaningful, by actively influencing the proceedings of the House. He was always very keen on the use of proper language when a 'Bill' was drafted.

He gave equal importance to both ruling and opposition parties, specially on debatable aspects. The decorum of the House was well maintained when he sat in the chair of Speaker of Legislative Assembly.⁸ He proved his abilities as a good parliamentarian, and

good parliamentarian is the basic quality which every Speaker should possess. Sri. Kanthi possessed these qualities, and the members of the House always eagerly awaited the opinion of the Speaker.

Sri. S.R. Kanthi, although looked shy, timid and soft, in conducting the business of the House he was strict, diplomatic, and would see that the members abided by all the rules of proceedings of the House which were on the tip of his tongue. On 14 April 1961, the session began at 1 o'clock. Sri. J.B. Mallaradhya of Nanjangoodu, G. Shivappa of Chitradurga and C.J. Mukkanneppa of Guddi, raised objections regarding the Speaker's act of adjournment of the previous day's session. They argued that the Speaker yesterday was pleased to adjourn the House, and when the House was adjourned, the Speaker did not declare the date and place of the meeting of the adjourned meeting. The Speaker did not specify or say either the day or part of the day, which was wrong. To this objection Sri. Kanthi's shrewd answer was that he did say yesterday that the House was adjourned and when it is said like that, it must be taken for granted that the House is adjourned for the remaining part of the day, and it must not be understood that the House was adjourned Sine die. So far as my experience and knowledge go, when the Speaker says that the House was adjourned, it must be taken as being adjourned for the remaining part of the day. If this interpretation of mine is un-acceptable to Honourable members, it can only mean that the House is adjourned Sine die.⁹ He did not accept that he was wrong. Under Rule 15, the Speaker has a right to

call Assembly at any time to likes by the order of the day. The House has been called today and meeting has been fixed at 1 O'clock this day. Until a member put forth his argument and sits, Sri. Kanthi never allowed the others. During the discussions in the House he never sat like a dumb, to hear the members speaking. He actively participated in the proceedings of the House. It is told that as a Speaker he used to speak more than the other members of the House, but doing so he never became a hindrance to others' freedom of expression.

Sri Kanthi toured Europe for about 2 months, and on his return he was felicitated in many places. Once on an occasion at Bagalkot he said that, generally in India people assume that the Speaker is not allowed to talk more, but in England the Speaker talks more than the members do and that is why, he said, he is also talking more in the Assembly¹¹ and in doing so he tried to establish a convention, that Speaker should influence the proceedings by his knowledge, experience and wisdom; otherwise it is meaningless to be in the Speaker's chair.

Once as a Speaker Sri. Kanthi did not attend the assembly. The business of the House was conducted by Deputy Speaker. Sri. Kanthi attended the Assembly in the afternoon. At that time Mr M.G. Narasinhagowda spoke in a manner which lowered the dignity of the chair. Shri Kanthi advised the member to honour the Chair and use Parliamentary language only. Any person belonging to the panel of Speaker must be honoured as a Speaker, when the person conducts

the business of the House. He had advised the member to speak sensibly and to avoid the words which could hurt the feelings of others. He emphasized the need to take the things in the proper spirit and drew home to the members that even if any controversy arose, it should be solved by debates and discussions.¹²

Whenever some disturbances took place, Sri Kanthi did not tolerate them. He once seriously told in the House - "I have been much distressed on account of certain incidents that are happening in the House. I am also very much distressed to find that there is a lot of deterioration so far as the debates of this House are concerned. I am not blaming anybody; but I am only pointing out to the members that it not fair that they should behave like this. They cannot have a dig at the chair. They cannot impute motives to the Chair. It has been my policy, so far as possible, to point out the incorrectness of it, instead of taking action in the matter. If the members have not learnt inspite of the fact that they have put in 4 years of office in the House, I am extremely sorry and I must say that such members will never thrive in life. I am very sorry to say that".¹³ This Sri. Kanthi could do because of his impartial, elderly, experienced behaviour. It is very important to have experienced people to function as Speaker.

A memorable national level conference was organized in the year at Bangalore, while Sri. Kanthi was the Speaker of Mysore Vidhansabha. The important fact about the conference was not merely that it was attended by nearly 300 delegates from different states, but it was presided over by Sri. Anant Shayanam Ayyangar, one

of the most distinguished Speakers of Loksabha. He praised the painstaking efforts of Mysore Government in general, and Sri. Kanthi in particular, in organizing such a conference. It was in this Conference that a crucial point as to how the dignity and decorum of the House should be maintained by the Speakers without giving scope for any prejudices and party politics, was discussed. The point that, the proceedings of the House should be strictly conducted in the true spirit of democracy, was also discussed in the said Conference.¹⁴

Sri. S.R. Kanthi also had a deep concern for the social problems and important political happenings of the country as well as the State. He never failed in expressing his opinions in solving burning problems of the people. The best example to illustrate this is that (before he became the Education Minister), while addressing the function held in Bangalore, he appealed to the rich people to donate generously so that the hands of Government will be strengthened to establish and build schools and colleges, which Sri. Kanthi very rightly considered as 'modern temples'.¹⁵ Sri. Kanthi always emphasized on the urgent need of the spread of education in building a new India of the dreams of Gandhiji and Nehruji.¹⁶

On the eve of making the primary education free and compulsory, he appealed to the people, especially to the parents of the children below the age of 14, to extend their full co-operation to the Government in making the compulsory education scheme a great success. He felt that the success of democracy in India depends upon proper

education to the people. At the same time he also reminded the people and authorities to see that the teachers serving in these primary schools would serve the cause of education satisfactorily.¹⁷

Matters like education, social welfare programmes, etc. though had political motivations, he expressed himself over them even as a Speaker. As a Speaker he also expressed his religious feelings, because of which he was known as 'Sharan Politician'. He strongly justified the prohibition act. He considered that act as a bold step and a milestone achievement in removing one of the social evils of our country.¹⁸

Sri. Kanthi was the lover of his native land. He did not forget his home constituency in rendering the human service in getting long-standing water supply problem of Ilkal solved to a great extent. Thus, Sri. Kanthi during his regime as the Speaker of Karnataka Legislative Assembly, did not cease to work for the onward progress of the Constituency of which he was an M.L.A. too. He had well acquainted with the problems of his people, the pains and pleasures of the people and he rightly represented them in the Vidhansabha, even as a Speaker.

In 1959, the entire Bijapur District suffered miserably on account of drought, the natural calamity, which has been a permanent feature of this district. In the capacity of the Speaker he made a good efforts to solve the problems. After having visited and studied almost all the parts of the drought affected district, he prepared and submitted the Report to the Government requesting the concerned

authorities to start immediately the relief programmes. The main among them he suggested to the Government was to release crop loans to the poor farmers by the Revenue Department and start construction of roads, bunds and tanks, so that the poor agricultural labourers would be able to earn their daily bread at least.¹⁹

As Speaker Sri. Kanthi was able to draw the attention of the Government towards the needs of the public. He wanted to adopt practical approach for the upliftment of the downtrodden of Bijapur, which is one of the backward districts of Karnataka State. He asked the Government to introduce some reform programmes specially designed for the old people and women folk. The starting of Ambar Charakha training centres was one such programme he suggested. Sri. Kanthi did his best to convince the Government while he was the Speaker. He used to say that Bijapur was a district which was called 'Baragalad Tavarooru' (Home of droughts).²⁰

When he stepped down from the responsibility of the Speakership, he told the members of the House that he was a very happy man. He expressed his sense of thankfulness for the co-operation of the members of the Assembly, extended to him while discharging his duties as the Speaker. Of course, he did discharge his duties successfully and effectively. On that occasion, he rightly referred to some of the outstanding achievements, accomplishments and important acts that were passed, despite a few unwanted incidents that hurt his feelings. However, Sri B.D. Jatti, the then Chief Minister presenting the vote of thanks, said that "S.R. Kanthi's service as the Speaker

was quite admirable and ideal to the others, who loved and believed in democracy".²¹

The effective, skillful and balanced handling of the proceedings of the Assembly Sessions was not only appreciated by members of the ruling Congress party, but by those of opposition parties also. Sri. Kanthi not only maintained the dignity of the House during his period, but also immensely enhanced it by setting a good many democratic traditions.²²

The New Mysore State Assembly was fortunate enough to have such an eminent Speaker, who had already gained experience in Bombay Assembly.

One has to confess that in the recent years the members have been turning the Assembly Hall into a wrestling ground, making it a pandemonium. The values of democracy which were zealously guarded by leaders like S.R. Kanthi, are now-a-days awefully being thrown away in the air. In those days when Sri. Kanthi was the Speaker, one could hardly trace out any session of Assembly that became quite unwieldy and beyond the democratic decency. For all this, the credit goes to Sri. Kanthi, the extra-ordinary Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. The excellent services that Sri. Kanthi rendered have gone a long way in influencing the functioning of the Karnataka Assembly.

Sri. S.R. Kanthi's Foreign Tour:

Sri. S.R. Kanthi had an opportunity to visit foreign countries like England, Ireland, and other European countries. When he was the Speaker of Mysore Legislative Assembly, he was deputed to take part in the Parliamentary Course conducted by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in London. Sri. Kanthi, Smt. Sipahimalani (Deputy Chairman, Bombay Legislative Council) and Narendra Singh (M.L.A.) from Uttarpradesh were selected as deputees to attend the course. This course or tour was of 2 months' duration. They went on 9 April 1959 and returned on 16 June 1959. On his return to India he tried his best to implement what he had seen there and what excellent things he thought suitable in the Indian conditions. He wrote "Notes on the Parliamentary course conducted by Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, London". In these notes he gave a brief account of what he saw, what he heard and learnt during his tour in the United Kingdom and other countries. While in Europe, he used his every minute for the cause of study and it becomes evident if we read his article: "Parliamentary Course". He visited the European countries for the second time in 1960, when he was Speaker. He went to West Germany on the request of German Government.²³

He visited the European countries as the leader of the delegation to study the working of the Parliamentary method in England and in other countries. The study was sponsored by Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. He stayed for 20 days in England, 4 days in Paris, 2 days at Bonn, 4 days in Geneva, 6 days in Rome and 2 days

in Cairo. Their course commenced on 13 April 1959. Apart from Indian delegates, there were delegates from West Indies, Nigeria, Aden, Tonga, Barbados, North Borneo, Kenya etc. Their course was conducted from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. every day.

Sir Edward Fellowes gave a "lecture on parliamentary Govt.", Sir Howard D'Egville spoke on "Commonwealth Parliamentary Association", Mr D.W.S. Lidderdale spoke on "The agenda of Parliament and its officers". Sri. Kanthi had an opportunity to hear the lectures on (a) How the House carries its functions, (b) Lectures on Question Hour and Adjournment motions, (c) Lecture on Committee system, (d) Lecture on financial functions of the Legislature, (e) Speech on Parliament, ministers and civil servants, (f) Speech on election to parliament, (g) Speech on House of Lords, (h) Speech on party system and whips etc.²⁴

Sri. Kanthi, on return from these countries developed very good insight in the functioning of democracy. He gained the required knowledge and tried to understand things in comparative perspectives. He expressed all these things in private discussions, lectures, functions etc. Some of the aspects on which he expressed his opinion, are summed up as follows:

Party System and Whips

In democracy, party system and the system of whips plays an important role. It is inconceivable to think of a democracy without

parties. Even it is highly impossible to think of an orderly functioning of the party without the whips. Whips are the eyes and ears of the party. They are responsible for the discipline of the party. We cannot think of the party functioning well, without the whips of the party. The party whip in India is more rigid than in the United Kingdom. This he expressed after his return on 16.6.1959, when a big welcome ceremony was organized on 17.6.1959. He was felicitated in many places on his return. In his addresses Mr Kanthi had told the people about what he had seen, heard and read in those countries.²⁵

Sri. Kanthi expressed his view and ideas of parliamentary democracy as follows, after his foreign tour to various countries:

- (i) Democracy is the best form of Government and it has no equal.
- (ii) Bi-party system is very essential for the best working of democracy.
- (iii) The common people, the electorate, have a great role to play. They should watch their elected representatives. The elected should have the fear of the electorate. J.S. Mill said that "Alertness or Eternal vigilance is the value of the democracy and the freedom".
- (iv) The Britishers are very much careful about the democratic conventions. For Indians there is much to learn from them.

(v) The party leaders in England press for value-based politics. Then only it will be easy for any party to rule, if it returned to power without any drawbacks. In England the politicians attach importance to discipline.

(vi) Democracy cannot exist and continue without Press. The relations between Parliament and Press are mutually cordial and co-operative. No democracy will survive without the Press criticism. There is no compulsory censorship in the United Kingdom. Even during the war there was no compulsory censorship.

The press supports Parliament as Parliament only. They feel that parliament is a sacred institution and must be defended at all costs,²⁶ and should not be subjected to unwanted yellow journalistic criticisms.

(vii) Sri. Kanthi feels that in India there was more need to educate and train the people in the principles and spirit of democracy. He wanted to establish roots of democracy in the soil.²⁷

The United Kingdom was a pioneer in parliamentary democracy. Here there is an independent judiciary and an impartial civil service. Absolute integrity of character in the members of parliament and the civil service is the basis for the good functioning of democracy. People should have full confidence in the parliament, its members

and the machinery of the Government.

Sri. Kanthi quoted the example of the impartiality of the civil service. That is, the staff which was attached to Mr Winston Churchill as Prime Minister, was not changed at all when Mr Attlee became Prime Minister.

The prime basis of democracy is free and fair elections. Two party system is necessary for democracy. One to take up the Government and another to work as opposition. The opposition must grow both qualitatively and quantitatively for the proper functioning of democracy. Multiplicity of parties is not conducive to the proper development of democracy. He said that an attempt should be made to have unified opposition. Attempts should be made so that there will be two main parties for the sake of smooth functioning of parliamentary democracy.²⁸

He was a firm believer in democracy and the functioning of the parliamentary organs. He wanted to uphold them. He called the people and party to be watchful over Government and functioning. This should be done in the right manner, otherwise the whole thing would end in trouble and the course of democracy would not be served.

He attached greater importance to the experiment of democratic decentralization, which is ushered in the country now. It was the basis of true democracy. The programme of decentralization of power had also a vital bearing on the success of Five Year Plans in the sense that the common people would come to be associated with

Plans.²⁹

Sri Kanthi had a deep love and sympathy for the poor, ignorant and downtrodden people. He had a desire to do some concrete things to alleviate their misery and ignorance. That is why he dedicated his whole life for that. He sacrificed all pleasures of worldly life to bring pleasure and happiness in the life of poor masses and downtroddens.³⁰

The leaders of Indian freedom movement before the Independence promised the people to establish democratic government after Independence. India as a democratic Republic constitution pledged to manage the public affairs.³¹

A true democracy will create an infrastructure through decentralization of powers at the appropriate levels. The experience of people as a true democracy through effective participation in the social and political life is significant. As education creates political consciousness in the people and provokes them to demand more and more civil and political rights, Sri Kanthi wanted to provide the masses and the downtroddens an opportunity of receiving education either in their own villages or in the neighbouring villages. Such an experiment of education was carried throughout Karnataka.³²

The democratisation of education created political consciousness in the masses of rural areas. He devoted his whole life to make the masses politically articulate and ready for effecting social change.

He honestly believed that unless the poor, downtrodden and masses were educated, democracy in India would not succeed.³³

Political democracy requires a social system based on democratic principles and the people who accepted democracy as a way of life. It means that democratic political system requires the support of democratic political culture. Through education Sri. Kanthi created a favourable environment for democratic political culture.³⁴

Because of education rural people become politically conscious about their rights and duties in social and political life. They became articulated, organized themselves to put pressure on Government to get their demands fulfilled. They began to take active part in the political affairs of the region.³⁵

Sri. Kanthi emphasized upon self-respect, self-reliance, liberty, dignity of labour, self-confidence and self-reliance on matters of education.³⁶

Sri Kanthi preached the people to abandon the practice of untouchability, accept secular attitudes in public life to take education, to improve their social and economic condition.³⁷

Democracy needs a homogenous and politically integrated society. Sri. Kanthi believed in democracy, equality, equal opportunities and social justice. He opposed the caste system and practice of untouchability.³⁸ He respectfully treated the untouchables and indicated

the right approach of eradicating the untouchability. Unless the so called high caste people reject the practice of untouchability and give respectful treatment to the untouchables on the basis of social equality, the practice of untouchability cannot be eradicated.³⁹

REFERENCES

- 1) Launday Philip: The office of Speaker Cassell, London, 1964, p. 5.
- 2) Ibid., p. 137.
- 3) Ibid., 220.
- 4) Ibid., p. 280.
- 5) Compiled and computed by the author.
- 6) S. Nijalingappa, Interview at Chitradurga on 30.7.1989.
- 7) Samyukta Karnataka - 18.3.1961, p. 4.
- 8) S. Nijalingappa, Op.cit.
- 9) The Mysore Assembly Debates: Official report of proceedings of the 34th day of the session: 13.4.1961, Vol. XI No. 35, Bangalore: Govt. Printing Press, 11967.
- 10) Ibid., p. 1551.
- 11) Sri. S.S. Kavishetti: Interview at Belgaum on 11.3.1989.
- 12) Samyukta Karnataka - 25.3.1961, p. 3.

- 13) The Mysore Assembly Debates: Official report of proceedings of the 36th day of the session, Vol.-XII, No. 36, Bangalore, Govt. Printing Press, 1967.
- 14) Samyukta Karnataka - 28.3.1961, p. 5.
- 15) Ibid., 7.9.1962, p. 4.
- 16) Ibid., 1.8.1961, p. 2.
- 17) Ibid., 2.8.1961, p. 5.
- 18) Ibid., 23.8.1961, p. 3.
- 19) Ibid., 10.9.1961, p. 4.
- 20) Ibid., 16.9.1961, p. 1.
- 21) Ibid., 9.12.1961, p. 4.
- 22) Sri. B.A. Bijjal: Interview held at Ilkal on 5.3.1989.
- 23) The Hindu, Madras, Edn. 10.4.1959, p. 7.
- 24) Compiled and computed after referring Sri. Kanthi's "Note on Parliamentary Course" conducted by Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Government Press 1960.
- 25) Ibid., p. 80.
- 26) Samyukta Karnataka 1.6.1969, p. 5.
- 27) The Hindu, Madras, Edn. 18.3.1958 p. 7.
- 28) Ibid., p. 8.

- 29) Compiled and computed by the author after reading materials on democracy.
- 30) Sri. S. Nijalingappa, Op.cit.
- 31) Sri. Kavishetti, Op.cit.
- 32) Ibid.
- 33) Barrister P.G. Patil: Karmaveeropnishad: Rayat Shikshan Sanstha, 1865, p. 101.
- 34) Ibid., p. 492.
- 35) Ibid., p. 493.
- 36) Sri. S. Nijalingappa, Op.cit.
- 37) Ibid., p. 494.
- 38) Ibid., p. 498.
- 39) Ibid., p. 495.

Sri. S.R. Kanthi as Chief Minister:
(9.3.1962 to 20.6.1962)

A surprise choice, Sri. S.R. Kanthi who was a common villager, had become the Chief Minister of Mysore State. He was a very popular personality in the ruling Congress Party. Before becoming the Chief Minister he served as Deputy Speaker and Parliamentary Secretary in Bombay Legislative Assembly, then as Speaker of Mysore State Legislative Assembly. In a way it was not a surprise, that such an able efficient man had been chosen as the Chief Minister of Mysore.¹

Sri. Kanthi gradually reached the highest rung in the State politics. He was a man of integrity and never compromised on issues involving principles. He was very soft spoken and a frank-speaking person.

Sri. Kanthi was a very successful Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. He had not at all dreamt of becoming the Chief Minister. He was never after power. But the 1962 General Elections brought a great change in the political scene of Mysore. There was a lot of oscillation, and ultimately he was elected as the Chief Minister. There was groupism within the Congress party, because of which the party suffered a great loss in the General Elections. The path on which Sri. Kanthi walked was not a rosy path, it was a very difficult path, a thorny path. Ultimately, Sri. Kanthi decided to lead

the State.²

Sri. Kanthi entered the politics due to pursuation and rose to become the President of Bijapur District Congress Committee.³ Likewise he had become the Chief Minister, and ruled the State for about one hundred and two days, very successfully, the offer which walked its way to Sri. Kanthi, which he had never dreamt.

His election to the post of Chief Minister was very much appreciated and liked by the Delhi Circle. When he was elected there was a sense of surprise and pleasure.⁴

The sayings of Sajjalagudda Sharanamma had also become true like that of the sayings of Sri. Mahant Swamiji of Chittaragi and Ilkal.⁵ Throughout his life Sri. Kanthi had a great respect and reverence towards these great personalities. He was a man of religion and he had deep respect for all religions.⁶

The General Elections in 1962 gave surprising results, the Congress party in the State had the majority to form the Government. There were two major groups in the party. One was headed by Sri. Nijalingappa, who was the President of Mysore Pradesh Congress Committee and the other headed by Sri. B.D. Jatti, who was the Chief Minister of Mysore, before 1962 General Elections. In the General Elections many cabinet and Deputy Ministers of the Jatti group were defeated, besides the group lost many of the important seats. Likewise, S. Nijalingappa's group also secured majority,

but unfortunately Sri. S. Nijalingappa was defeated. He was taken as granted to be the next Chief Minister of the State after 1962 General Elections. But he had lost election from Hosdurga constituency, in his home district of Chitradurga. The defeat of Mr Nijalingappa created utter confusion in the group. Even then his followers canvassed for his leadership and for a time, they were hopeful of getting the Congress High Command's blessings. At one stage it was believed that there was a way out of this particular difficulty. That is, one of Mr Nijalingappa's followers would have been willing to create a vacancy in the Assembly, to enable him to enter the House by a bye-election. But the Congress High Command did not approve this. The Congress High Command showed disinclination to allow a defeated candidate to contest the party leadership election. So, Mr. Nijalingappa's election was put aside. Later rumours were that Sri. B.D. Jatti's chances were bright against any candidate, other than Mr. Nijalingappa.

To straighten out the tangle of party leadership in the Mysore State, the Congress High Command deputed Sri. Lal Bahadur Shastri, the then Home Minister of Government of India. Sri. Shastri was sent to Bangalore to assist in finding out solution to the leadership tangle. Sri. Shastri's desire was to hold an unanimous election. He met Sri. S. Nijalingappa, and Sri. B.D. Jatti, separately and acquainted himself with the situation. He convinced Sri. S. Nijalingappa and made him to be away from the contest for leadership. He made a specific appeal to the members of Congress to make a unanimous

choice, which would be good for the State and it will open a new chapter in the working of the party as well as the Congress organization.⁷

Mr Shastri wanted to conduct an informal election for that. Before the election, at last minute, appeal was made by Sri. S. Nijalingappa to his supporters to back his nominee and to transfer to him all their loyalty, since he was not in a position to take up the leadership. The choice of his nominee was announced by Sri. S.Nijalingappa at the gathering of his supporters at the General Hostel. The supporters whole-heartedly pledged their support to him. So, his supporters fully stood by his nominee Sri. S.R. Kanthi.⁸

Shri Shastri showed his shrewdness in getting the right candidate. What Sri. Shastri did was, he got the members to vote for the choice of their candidate for the post of Chief Minister, and found out that Sri. Kanthi had the greatest support. So, Mr Shastri requested Mr Jatti to propose Sri. Kanthi's name and Mr Devaraj Urs, the Secretary of the Legislative Party seconded it. This is how Sri. Kanthi was declared elected unanimously,⁹ in the midst of a crisis in the organization.

After the unanimous election as the Leader of the House or as Chief Minister, Mr Kanthi was mobbed by well-wishers and admirers, who stampeded into the Residency Dance Hall, where the party meeting was held and smothered him with garlands. He was very happy for the love and faith shown by the party colleagues.¹⁰



The Governor of Mysore, Mr. Jayachamaraja Wadiyar, administering the oath of office to Mr. S. R. Kanthi, the new Chief Minister of Mysore in Mysore on Friday.

On that memorable occasion in his speech he compared himself to 'Bharata' and Mr Nijalingappa to 'Rama'. He had told that as Bharata ruled the 'Ayodhya' for 14 years in the name of Rama, he also would rule the State temporarily, until Mr S. Nijalingappa's taking over the charge.¹¹ He was not a man who would talk to suit the occasion, and forget it later. He said and behaved accordingly. It is very difficult to find leaders like Sri Kanthi in the life, but it is still more difficult to find them in politics. Mr Nijalingappa was elected to the Assembly from Bagalkot constituency in a bye-election, Mr Kanthi willingly transferred power to Mr Nijalingappa. The latter was declared elected to the Assembly, un-opposed. Sri. Kanthi's efforts are significant in this direction. He was very happy at the victory of Mr Nijalingappa. Mr Kanthi was of a firm conviction that Mr Nijalingappa's leadership was very much essential for the welfare of Mysore State. Sri. Kanthi transferred the power without any regret. That is why he was very easily and aptly compared to 'Bharata of Ramayana'.¹² Because of his such sayings and behaviour he was very often criticised by the opposition. But Sri. Kanthi was not prepared to pay heed to such a criticism. On the contrary he told people that, "the criticism was a testimonial given to him by the opposition".¹³

Sri. Kanthi, the leader of the Mysore Legislative Party, was sworn in as the Chief Minister in the morning. The oath of the office and secrecy was administered by the Governor Sri. Jaychamaraj

Wadeyar at the palace in Mysore on 11.3.1962 at 9.20 a.m. Before coming over to palace, he went to the 'Sri Shivarathreeshwar Math' and sought the blessings of 'Suttur Swamiji' and he also offered prayers at the 'Chamundi temple' at Mysore.¹⁴

One of his first acts after assuming the office was, he resigned the office of the Speaker of the State Legislative Assembly, the post he held at the time of his election. He appointed Sri. Mariyappa V. as the 'acting Speaker' of the House.¹⁵

He gave a Press statement that he would announce his cabinet within three or four days. Even in that Press statement he expressed his gratitude to the Congress Legislature partymen, to Mr Jatti and also thanked Sri Devaraj Urs. On this occasion he also stated that he would do nothing which would be betrayal of the confidence and faith which Mr Nijalingappa had reposed in him. He clearly stated that his appointment as the Chief Minister of Mysore was only a stop-gap arrangement.¹⁶

He appealed to his party-men to sink their differences and pool together as a team, to enable them to implement the Third Five Year Plan successfully. He told his intention of making the Ministry broad-based. According to him as a Speaker he was above politics and as a Chief Minister he was above groups.¹⁷ As a Chief Minister he was generous to bring the divided house together so as to be able to hand over charge to S.Nijalingappa, no sooner than he got

MYSORE CABINET



Eight members of the new Mysore Cabinet whose names have been announced. Top (L to R) Mr. S. R. Kanthi, Chief Minister, Mrs. Yesodara Dasappa, Mr. M. V. Krishnappa and R. M. Patil. Bottom (L to R): Mr. Veerendra Patil, Dr. Nagappa Alva, Mr. B. Rachiah and Mr. K. Mallappa.

elected.

To him 'Groupism' had been a bane of the politics. Ceaseless efforts were essential to put an end to groupism in Mysore. He told that he would make such an effort. He appealed for the help and co-operation of all. He said that "Permit me to add that partyless, factionless, guileless and impartial speaker in me". He said that "whatever place or position I occupy, I will try to put an end to group politics in the Congress party",¹⁸ which he did. Throughout his life he practised value-based politics, which is a rare commodity in present-day Congressional politics.

Press reporters asked some questions to the newly elected Chief Minister Sri. Kanthi regarding some of the important issues like Mysore-Maharashtra border dispute, changing the name of the State to Karnataka, Krishna-Godavari water issue etc.¹⁹. The Chief Minister observed that, there would not be any change in the State government's policy in regard to the Mysore-Maharashtra dispute. He just suggested that, peaceful negotiations would be made to get Kannada-speaking border areas which had been lying outside the State of Mysore. Regarding the change in the name of the State from Mysore to Karnataka, the matter was to be decided by the State legislature. About the Krishna-Godavari water issue he said that the government had already taken a firm stand. On this occasion, he informed the reporters that in March 1962 he would announce his cabinet, which would be composed of more younger elements.²⁰

After assuming the office of the Chief Minister he addressed the Secretaries of Government and other top officers in the Secretariat. He asked for their co-operation and the administrative machinery for the successful functioning of the government and even asked the officers to be free and frank, in giving advice to him and his cabinet. He told that the government orders should be flawless.²¹

The background against which Sri. Kanthi was elected leader of the party had no doubt created a number of problems regarding the choice of cabinet. It was a very difficult problem. Mr Kanthi went to Delhi to consult the party High command. He met Mr Shastri and Sri Jawaharlal Nehru and finalized the list²² in forming his cabinet.

On 13 March 1962, Sri. Kanthi announced to the pressmen at his residence 'Crescent House' that the strength of his new ministry would be 14 Cabinet Ministers and 10 Deputy Ministers. He took nearly a week to come out with a balanced list of Cabinet Ministers. He announced those 8 Cabinet Ministers' names along with their portfolios.²³ They were -

- 1 Sri S.R. Kanthi: Chief Minister (Finance & Education)
- 2 Sri. M.V. Krishnappa: Law & Labour Minister
- 3 Sri. R.M. Patil: Home Minister
- 4 Smt. Yashoda Dasappa: Minister for Social Welfare
- 5 Sri. K. Mallappa: Minister for Industries & Commerce
- 6 Dr. Nagappa Alva: Health Minister

7 Sri. B. Rachayya: Minister for Agriculture, Forest, & Cooperation

8 Sri Veerendra Patil: Minister for P.W.D. & Transport.

Though in the beginning Sri. Kanthi had promised to formulate a broad-based Ministry, he failed in materializing his dream.²⁴ Because he was not free, and had to adhere to Sri. S.N. Nijalingappa and his supporters. That is why all the 8 Ministers included in his cabinet were loyal to Sri. Nijalingappa. No supporter from Mr Jatti's group was included in the ministry. Had Sri. Kanthi included the loyalists of Mr Jatti, it would have led to a friction in the group. So, it was very difficult for Sri. Kanthi to overcome this hurdle.

These 8 Cabinet Ministers were sworn in at the palace of the Governor Sri. Jayachamaraj Wodeyar, in the morning. He administered the oath of office and Secretary to the Ministers. The Chief Minister Sri Kanthi was also present at the ceremony. On 16 March 1962 Sri. Kanthi announced the names of 2 Deputy Ministers. They were Mr Maqsood Alikhan and Mr Abdul Gaffar.²⁵

During his regime as the Chief Minister of Mysore State, the other officers were:

- a) Sri. Vaikuntha Baliga, Speaker of Vidhan Sabha
OR
Speaker of Legislative Assembly.
- b) Sri. Panchagavi, A.R. - Deputy Speaker of Legislative Assembly
- c) Sri. Narasappa, K.V. - Chairman of Legislative Council.

- d) Sri. M.V. Krishnappa - Leader of Legislative Council.
- e) Sri. Nittur Sri Nivas Rao - Chief Justice of the Mysore High Court.
- f) Sri. R.J. Rebello - The Chief Secretary.

This is all about his ministers, Secretaries and other officials during his regime. He was there as the Chief Minister of Mysore, for about 102 days. Along with the administration of the State, he shouldered the responsibility of Finance Department and Education Department.

Important contributions that Sri Kanthi made during his tenure as the Chief Minister of Mysore could be analysed in a brief manner as follows.

On 22 March 1962 Sri Kanthi disclosed to the Pressmen that the government has decided to construct pick-ups, instead of big dam across the Cauvery near Kambadakada in Coorg, so that the submersion of about 600 acres fertile coffee and other land could be saved.²⁶

Sri. Kanthi wrote a letter of complaint to the Prime Minister Sri Jawaharlal Nehru about the behaviour of Marathi speaking people, regarding Goa. He brought to the notice of Sri. Nehru that, in Goa attempts were being made to merge Goa with Maharashtra and their officers were making an effort to merge Goa with Maharashtra. The Kannada-speaking officers and officials were mentally harassed and attempts were also made to see that Kannada-speaking officers

go out of Goa.²⁷

On 27 May 1962 he announced that Kannada, as the regional language of Mysore, was to be made an official language of the State. It was a significant act of far-reaching consequence initiated during the two-and-a-half months tenure of Kanthi Ministr.²⁸

Regarding the outlay on the Third Five Year Plan which exceeded the combined outlays of the first two plans, he gave a call to all by saying that, "if the targets were to be attained all should sink their differences and pool together as a team. Petty differences and personal ambitions should not be allowed to jeopardise the interests of the State and the country. Let us all march together hand-in-hand to the cherished goal of a welfare state."²⁹ His nationalistic spirit and his sincere efforts for the development of the State are exhibited here.

About the formation of ministry he gave the universal truth, which will hold good forever. That is, Ministry making was an exceedingly difficult and complicated task, especially where there were so many eligible and competent candidates. Vacancies were few and the eligible candidates were large in number, and it was obviously impossible to satisfy all.

Sri Kanthi, as Chief Minister, was also incharge of the Education Department. He expressed his great interest for the spread of education in the rural areas. He announced that the District Board

High Schools were to be managed by the Taluka Boards or by any local or private institution. He announced his policy of giving 80% grant to such schools. He also announced that, if such schools were in the rural areas, the grant would be 90%. He announced to the pressmen that the Government had already agreed for such an arrangement. During this period there were nearly 85 High Schools run by the District Boards. He encouraged the private managements to open the High Schools in the rural areas, where he announced that the government would give 85 per cent or 90 per cent grant.³⁰ It shows that he was all the while interested in the sphere of education, whether he was in the chair of Chief Minister or Speaker or just a member of Legislative Assembly or in the chair of Education Minister.

Sri Kanthi stressed also the need to strengthen the co-operative movement. India is a land of villages, majority of our population lives in villages. He told that it was essential to see that the rural masses were not put to losses. In the Third Five Year Plan, there was an arrangement to extend loans to small and marginal farmers.³¹ He told that if this system was to be successful, the primary and central co-operative banks had to play a very important role. He also told that there should be increase in the share capital. He further told that the small scale savings also should be increased. Further, he told that there should be relation between loan and selling of the agricultural procedure. He also believed that the co-operative movement should be a governmental

movement.³²

As a Chief Minister he visited his native district, Bijapur, which was hit by drought. In his visit he announced 'Two Crore Plan' of constructing 18 large scale irrigation tanks. He also ordered for starting of scarcity works in the district,³³ to solve the problems of the drought-affected agriculturists.

Sri. Kanthi had an opportunity of inaugurating the 'Vasant Sahityotsava' at Chamaraj Peth, organized by the Kannada Sahitya Parishad. There he announced that Kannada would be made administrative language and Kannada typists and stenographers will get additional remuneration of 10 and 20 rupees, respectively³⁴ to encourage the development of Kannada language.

As a Chief Minister Sri. Kanthi turned down the demand of 'Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti' members for a plebiscite to decide the future of the Marathi-speaking areas in Mysore. Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti advocated that the Marathi-speaking areas are to be transferred to Maharashtra, and Kannada speaking areas are to be transferred to Mysore. But Sri. Kanthi opposed it and told that a committee was appointed for deciding that matter and he was awaiting the report.³⁵

Sri. Kanthi announced that government was thinking of implementing old-age pension and even to extend the pension to the handicapped children.³⁶ The government was also thinking of starting a Rural



Sri Jayachamaraja Wadiyar, Governor of Mysore, who left for Delhi *en route* to Russia, on Sunday, at the Bangalore airport with Mr. Mangaldas Patil, acting Governor (left) and Mr. S. R. Kanthi, Chief Minister.

Agricultural University at Hebbal near Bangalore.³⁷ This points towards his understanding of rural problems.

Sri. Kanthi, who was also an Education Minister said that the government was seriously thinking of extending the fee concession to all children studying in secondary schools, whose parents' annual income was less than Rs. 2,400. Before this announcement, the fee concession was only up to Rs. 1,200.³⁸ He gave much importance to women's education. He was of the firm conviction that for alround progress of the country, women are also to be educated. In the Third Five Year Plan 34 lakhs of Rupees were spared for it and 261 residential homes for women were to be constructed. He announced some incentives to the women, who were willing to work in rural areas.³⁹ For improving the service conditions of the teachers he announced 'Triple Benefit Scheme' to the teachers. He also made it clear that the government was sympathetic towards the teaching community.⁴⁰ Sri Kanthi also stressed the need for cordial relations between the government and the Press. He invited the fair and fearless criticism by the Press. The Press is an indispensable factor in democracy. The democracy will be strengthened, if a fearless and frank criticism by Press is allowed.⁴¹

Budget:

Mysore's Budget for 1962-63 was presented in the State Assembly on 21.3.1962 by Sri. Kanthi, who was also holding the

Finance Portfolio. The Budget showed a deficit of Rs. 322.63 lakhs. No new taxes were proposed to meet the deficit.

The Budget estimated the revenues at Rs. 9,970.60 lakhs and expenditure at Rs. 10,293.49 lakhs. The estimates took into account the enhanced grants available as a result of the award of the Third Finance Commission.⁴²

After presenting the budget in the State Assembly, Sri. Kanthi read his 18-page speech. He reminded the House that Third Plan included Rs. 110 crores to be met from the State's own resources, of which Rs. 42 crores was to be raised by way of additional taxation.⁴³

The main ideas in the speech were, he announced the government's decision to introduce the Triple Benefit Scheme, providing pension for school teachers in aided schools, including those managed by the local bodies and school Boards.⁴⁴ He also announced that the government had agreed to sanction Rs. 1.92 lakhs to the Mysore University scheme of instituting a chair in the name of Sri. M. Vishweshwarayya.⁴⁵

He also told that a notable scheme was under consideration. The establishment of Regional Teachers Training College in Mysore for the training of teachers in Higher Secondary Schools and Multi-purpose High Schools.⁴⁶

Thus Sri. Kanthi, in his budgetary speech, stated that, they were meeting there after Third General Elections. He said that he was proud of presenting the budget estimates of the Mysore State for the year 1962-63. He said that the Finance Minister's position was irksome. The economy of the State was depending mainly upon the seasonal conditions. If the conditions remained good, all the efforts to develop the economy of the State would bear results. It was rather unfortunate that the abnormally heavy rains during the year and the consequent heavy floods caused considerable damage to standing crops, lands and other properties. Thirteen out of nineteen districts were affected by the floods and in many cases people were rendered homeless. ... Just when the flood relief operations concluded, some parts of Bijapur, Dharwad, Belgaum, Kolar, Bellary and Chitradurga districts were affected by scarcity conditions. To prevent the leakage of revenue, and to increase the yield under the Mysore Sales Tax Act, 1957, a number of measures were adopted. The important among them were the creation of an intelligence section in Bangalore city and check-posts in suitable places etc.⁴⁷

The details of 1962-63 Budget were:

Revenue:	Rs. 9,378.31 lakhs
Expenditure:	Rs. 10,169.83 lakhs

He gave a table, which indicated the budgetary position as comparable to actuals of 1960-61 and revised 1961-62.

Title	Actuals 1960-61	Revised 1961-62	Budget 1962-63
Revenue	9207.35	9547.26	9870.86
Expenditure	8979.53	9958.34	10293.49
Surplus	227.82	-	-
Deficit	-	411.08	322.63

Note: Rupees in lakhs.

He had told that they had come to the end of the first year of the Third Plan. Based on the expenditure gained in the first two Plans, the Third Plan had been framed with a view to allowing a more intensified development.⁴⁸

Further he told that he had placed before the House, the financial position of the State as accurately as possible, and the salient features of the working of the departments. It was clear that they had to face difficult problems in the coming years. He also told that he had no doubt that with the guidance of the House they will be able to march ahead, inspite of all the difficulties for a better future.⁴⁹

Sri. Kanthi was the second person of Bijapur district to be the Chief Minister of Mysore State, the first person being Sri. B.D. Jatti. Though the Bijapur district is often held as a backward district, it has given to the State two prominent personalities. That is, in fact, the privilege of the district. Later, Sri. Jatti rose

to the highest level; he was elected as the Vice-President of India and for some time he also worked as the acting President of India.

Nothing extraordinary happened during the 102 days' regime of Sri. Kanthi as Chief Minister. As he was elected as leader of the House under so many pressures and conflicts, he was bound by many considerations. He was not free to act on his own accord. The surprise that he could not form the ministry completely. The main reason for that was the groupism in the party. The Congress High Command was advising the Chief Minister to form the broad-based ministry, but Sri. S. Nijalingappa's group was not allowing Sri. B.D. Jatti's faction into the Cabinet. Sri. Kanthi was not free, his hands were tied tightly. For that reason he was described and criticized as 'powerless', 'coward' and 'inefficient' Chief Minister.

He ruled the State only with the assistance of a few ministers for about three months. With the responsibility of Chief Minister, he also shouldered the responsibilities of the Ministries of Finance and Education. He completed his task with utmost care and determined will.

To assess the achievements of a man, at least he should be allowed to be there in the office for a full term of five years. But Sri. Kanthi was there in the chair for a very short period, and it is unjust to assess the achievements of Sri Kanthi in so short a period. His stay in the office of Chief Minister for a period

of 102 days itself was an achievement for an humble and religious-minded personality like Sri. S.R. Kanthi.

REFERENCES

- 1) Interview with Sri. S.S. Kavishetti at Belgaum on 10.3.1989.
- 2) Interview with Sri. B.A. Bijjal at Ilkal on 5.3.1989.
- 3) Ibid.
- 4) S.V. Baligar - Sri. S.R. Kanthiyavaru - Veershaiva Adhyayan Sansthe, 1987, p. 24.
- 5) Ibid., p. 21.
- 6) Interview with Sri. S.B. Bandargal at Ilkal on 6.11.1988.
- 7) Hindu - Madras Edn., 10.3.1962, p. 1.
- 8) Ibid.
- 9) Ibid.
- 10) Ibid., p. 8.
- 11) Ibid.
- 12) Interview with Sri. S.Nijalingappa at Chitradurga on 30.7.1989.
- 13) Samyukta Karnataka - Hubli Edition, 2.5.1962, p.1.
- 14) Ibid., 10.3.1962, p. 5.
- 15) Ibid.



- 16) Hindu - Madras Edn., 10.3.1962, p. 10.
- 17) Hindu - Madras Edn., 11.3.1962, p. 1.
- 18) Ibid., 12.3.1962, p.1.
- 19) Ibid., 13.3.1962, p. 10.
- 20) Ibid.
- 21) Ibid., 12.3.1962, p. 1.
- 22) Ibid., 13.3.1962, p. 10.
- 23) Ibid., 16.3.1962, p. 7.
- 24) Ibid., 17.3.1962, Editorial.
- 25) Ibid., 17.3.1962, p. 5.
- 26) Ibid., 23.3.1962, p. 1.
- 27) Patil Puttappa, Prapancha Hubli Edition, 20.5.1962, p. 5.
- 28) Hindu - Madras Edition, 28.5.1962, p. 1.
- 29) Ibid., 16.3.1962, p. 10.
- 30) Samyukta Karnatak, Hubli Edition, 10.4.1962, p. 1.
- 31) Ibid., 15.4.1962, p. 5.
- 32) Hindu - Madras Edn., 19.4.1962, p. 7.
- 33) Samyukta Karnatak, Hubli Edition, 3.5.1962, p. 5.
- 34) Ibid., 12.5.1962, p. 1.
- 35) Patil Puttappa: Prapancha 3.4.1962, p. 10.

- 36) Hindu - Madras Edn., 3.4.1962, p. 1.
- 37) Ibid., 22.4.1962, p. 7.
- 38) Ibid., p. 7.,
- 39) Samyukta Karnataka - Hubli Edn., 25.5.1962, p. 5.
- 40) Hindu - Madras Edn., 12.3.1962, p. 1.
- 41) Ibid., 3.4.1962, p. 1.
- 42) Ibid., 22.3.1962, p. 1.
- 43) Ibid.
- 44) Ibid.
- 45) Ibid.
- 46) Ibid.
- 47) Ibid., 23.3.1962, p. 7.
- 48) Ibid.
- 49) Ibid.

**S.R. Kanthi As an Education Minister:
(21.7.1962 to March 1967)**

Introduction:

For the exemplary service rendered by Sri. S.R. Kanthi to the field of education, his name has become almost synonymous to the word, education. He has served this field with utmost dedication. He brought about revolution in the sphere of education. The people of Karnataka today, are very much thankful to him for his services in this field. He was an able administrator, dedicated social reformer, in addition to being a lover of education.¹

His services as an Education Minister of Mysore State and his contributions have left a great impact on the development of education in Mysore State. He introduced various radical changes and reforms in the sphere of education. His services as an Education Minister are more valuable and impressive. With many dimensional educational reforms he brought the State of Mysore to the forefront in India; he made it as a model State in India.²

After Sri. S. Nijalingappa assumed the office of Chief Minister of Mysore, Mr Kanthi was given the portfolio of Education. No body was aspiring to become the Minister of this portfolio, because it was not an important portfolio, like that of Finance, Home, Revenue, Public Works, etc. Unlike others, he never demanded any particular portfolio. He accepted the position which was offered to him by

the Chief Minister. He did a marvellous job in the Department. He served as Education Minister from 21.7.1962 to March 1967. During his tenure he tried to introduce various improvements in the field of education, wherein he faced many problems boldly and came out with success. He whole-heartedly fought for the cause of improving the conditions of teachers and he provided a number of new programmes to help the students. So, the teacher community and student community of that period, and even today, are indebted to Sri Kanthi.³

Sri. Kanthi was of the firm opinion that education plays a very dominant and important role in the alround development of the State. Sri. Kanthi's radical approaches like opening of governmental schools in all the rural areas of the State, giving sanctions on the spot for emerging new private schools and colleges, and raising of fees suddenly etc., were though beneficial, were not free from criticisms and he had to tread a thorny path in advocating a viable educational system. The torrent episode known as 'S.R. Kanthi 420', 'Down, Down, Kanthi', etc., unnecessarily involved Sri. S.R. Kanthi, and he was blamed by the student-community, for no fault of his.⁴ Even this had not led him astray. He was always led by his principles. He was not bogged down by any such incidents, ultimately he came out blotlessly. In 1965, when he was an Education Minister, he suffered a great health hazard, but luckily survived. He survived only to work for the cause of education. His health had parity with the health of education field in Mysore.

Sri. Kanthi realised the importance of education as a means of alround development of individuals and also its importance in political integration in our society. Such integration is essential in nation-building and development. According to him education also plays a crucial role in bringing about social, economic and political transformation. Education is one of the most important ideological forces for radical transformation. He had a sincere faith in efficacy of education as, 'a master key to all the developments'.⁵

The history of freedom movement in India aimed at creating a democratic political system in the post-Independence period. The leaders of the Congress party have always valued the democratic principles in the freedom struggle.⁶ Sri. Kanthi realised the intimate connection of education and political development and he enriched the democratic political culture, making change in the attitudes, habits and beliefs of masses, inculcating in them consciousness of liberty, equality and fraternity. For all these developments education was the means.

He felt that education brings changes in the attitudes, beliefs and habits of the people and it motivates them to discard old attitudes, beliefs and habits, and to adopt new ones.⁷ So, to Sri. Kanthi, education was a key to bring about change in the beliefs and habits of the masses of Mysore in general and Bijapur district in particular.

The remarkable achievement of Sri. Kanthi was the spread of education in almost all parts of Mysore. Being a true disciple

of Mahatma Gandhi, it was the aim of Sri. Kanthi to spread education in all the rural corners of the Mysore State. He believed that spread of education strengthens the secular forces in the society. Education creates political consciousness amongst the people, who, in turn, demand increased participation in the process of decision-making. Education enables man to improve his social status and seek an opportunity in the society, for which he is best fitted.⁸

Sri. Kanthi seems to be influenced by great scholars, for example, according to Myron Weiner, "Education is a liberal instrument, in creating modern man". "Education helps the people to participate in local community affairs".⁹ B. Kuppaswamy says, "the ultimate and absolute objective of education is the harmonious development of the personality of the individual, building up of his character, and helping him to prepare himself to face the tasks of life".¹⁰ James C. Coleman says that, "Education and political developments are inter-related".¹¹ Dean Rusk says, "Without education democracy cannot be successful. Democracy functions only when people are informed and aware, and they are exchanging their ideas".¹²

Thus, Sri. Kanthi realized the significance of education, both in the life of nation as well as in the life of individuals. He was a reformer with practical vision. With this vision and a set of determined ideas he started his efforts to spread education. He devoted his life to the education of rural masses and downtroddens. He was convinced that it was only the trained primary teachers, who would

be able to persuade the illiterate masses to send their children to schools. He had deep love and affection for the poor, illiterate masses and downtrodden people.¹³ He knew that rural people were suffering from poverty, ignorance and exploitation by the upper classes. He was getting himself acquainted with all these things. Like all other social reformers, he visualized the significance of education.

To him, unless the masses of rural areas were educated, there was no end to their exploitation, and that education in the rural areas can bring true emancipation of the masses. He wanted to create a sense of political consciousness in those people, who were suppressed. He taught them to revolt against all forms of exploitation and injustice, through education.

Sri. Kanthi has provided ample opportunities for providing primary, secondary and collegiate education to the rural people. By doing so, he helped the younger generation to increase their merits and to improve their standard of living. He helped in strengthening the democratic forces in the rural areas of Mysore. Without the spread of education in the rural areas, the experiment of democracy and political system envisaged by the national leaders of pre-Independence period, would fail. So, he decided to undertake the responsibility of educating the rural masses and cultivate in them the spirit of democratic values and norms.¹⁴

The leaders of the pre-Independence period stressed to the importance of the democratic rule and representative institutions. Leaders through their speeches and writings demanded the civil and political rights. The whole Indian Freedom Movement or struggle was directed to achieve political freedom to make India politically and economically developed.¹⁵ Sri. Kanthi believed that, unless people of India (both men and women) were educated, the nation would never be free, united and strong.

Though the political leaders and social reformers of the pre-Independence period accepted the idea of importance of education for social and political development, there was a need for some person to undertake the task of spreading education in the ignorant and illiterate masses of rural areas.¹⁶ In Mysore Sri. Kanthi and others come forward to shoulder this responsibility. He decided to spread the educational roots to each and every corner of the State. He tried to provide to one and all, an opportunity of receiving education either in their own villages or in the neighbouring villages. He devoted his whole life for that mission. He constantly visited all the rural parts of the State and contacted innumerable villagers and he honestly did all this work. He did a pioneering work by starting thousands of primary schools and secondary schools in the rural areas of Mysore. It all shows that he was responsible to start the 'Mass Education Movement' in the State.¹⁷ He did it, not only to educate the rural masses, but also to increase their skills and

make them to compete with the high caste people. He was particularly concerned of the majority people of rural areas, engaged in agriculture and manual labour, as they were not in a position to understand and follow the socio-political changes.¹⁸ Sri. Kanthi did this by spreading education. Thus for Sri. Kanthi education occupied an important place in the social and political changes in the modern state. He created political consciousness and awareness amongst the people, by spreading education, conducive for the successful working of democratic political system. He dedicated his life to the upliftment of the people, by sacrificing all the pleasures of worldly life to bring pleasure and happiness in the life of poor and downtrodden masses of rural parts of the State.¹⁹

As an Education Minister, the contribution of Sri. Kanthi to the cause of students, teachers and educational sphere can be mentioned as follows. As far as the students are concerned, he provided innumerable facilities and opportunities to the student-community. In his tenure as Education Minister, he adopted certain decisions or legislative measures like the one according to which the students whose parental income was less than Rs. 3,600, were to be given fee concessions. Earlier this limit was upto Rs. 2,400.²⁰

Sri. Kanthi made Secondary education free. He made High School education free, which brought pleasure to lakhs of students and parents. At that time nearly 87 per cent of students were getting free education.²¹ He also initiated the scheme of equal distribution

of the scholarship. Eligibility, conduct, economic status, and attendance were to be taken into consideration for the grant of scholarships. The caste was not a bar. In his period itself for the year 1962-63, Rs. 15 lakhs were granted for the scheme. For the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tride students there was an additional grant of Rs. 3 lakhs. The students were getting the scholarship at the following rates:

High School students:	Rs. 6 for 10 months.
P.U.C. students:	Rs. 10 for 8 months.
Degree students:	Rs. 15 for 8 months. ²²

Sri. Kanthi's outstanding contribution was the starting of government primary schools and secondary schools in the nooks and corners of Mysore State. As a student Mr Kanthi had suffered a lot to get educated. To get his degree he studied at Ilkal, Hungund, Gadag, Bagalkot, Dharwad and even at Kolhapur. So, Sr. Kanthi as an Education Minister, thought that the younger generation should not experience such hardships. In addition, in his student days, education was very costly. Education was a dream for the poor, backward castes and classes. He felt that the poor and backward castes should get education without much difficulty. He utilized his position for the cause of education. Now, if one wills and wishes to get educated, it would be so easy and for this, the credit should go to Sri. Kanthi.

As primary education was made compulsory, the government

came forward to open innumerable new schools in the rural areas. During his regime he opened a number of primary schools, high schools, colleges, training colleges, Junior Colleges, school of Art, Medical Colleges, Degree colleges, Sainik Schools and even a University also. He opened new schools, High Schools and colleges not only at Bijapur district alone, but in all the districts of the State. He gave more and more stress for Bijapur district. Thus, he was responsible for the spread of education in most of the rural parts of Karnataka in general and Bijapur district in particular.²³

He was responsible for starting Government schools and High Schools at villages like, Dhannur, Sangam, Sajjalgadda, Sirur, Basavan Bagewadi, Badami, Chittaragi, Muddebihal etc. He was also responsible for the starting of school of Art and painting at Davangeri, Regional College at Mysore, Degree Colleges at Ilkal, Hungund and Bailhongal. Teachers Training Institutes at Hungund and Ilkal, Medical College at Belgaum and Davangeri. Establishment of Bangalore University is also the contribution of Sri. Kanthi. Apart from these he was also responsible for the establishment of Sainik School at Bijapur and Kittur, Kittur being a Residential School for girls.

Though Sri. Kanthi was a broad-minded man, as a human being he was also having some sort corners towards his native place, native taluka and native district, and above all his division. When the question of establishment of Sainik Schools in the State arose in the Legislature, he showed his inclination of starting Sainik

School at Bijapur and Kittur. Sri. S. Nijalingappa was having an idea of giving Sainik School to Mysore. But Sri. Kanthi told that, Bijapur is a backward district, it is full of rural areas and apart from that it is a historic city, a capital city of Adilshahi and it has a military background. It is because of his persuasion that the decision to bring up a Sainik School at Bijapur was taken on 18 November 1962. The Government of Mysore decided to start the Sainik School at Bijapur. Sri. R.M. Patil, the Home Minister of Mysore also supported the approach of Sri. Kanthi.²⁴

He was also responsible for the emergence of Sainik School for Ladies at Kittur in Belgaum district. Kittur is also a historically famous city belonging to brave woman of Karnatak 'Rani Chennamma'*. Sri. Kanthi was having deep respect and regard for her. On 20 February 1962 he ordered to Hubli-Dharwad Corporation that "root out the tomb of 'Thyakhare' and build a statue of Veer Rani Kittur Chennamma on that".²⁵ It shows his patriotic attitude. Later he also thought of starting Residential/Sainik School for Women at Kittur. As an Education Minister, he ordered for that also. Sri. Kanthi has shown a prophetic vision in each step which he took in expanding the activities of education. The idea of starting Sainik Schools for Girls came in his mind because, in 1965, during the India-Pakistan war, Sri. Kanthi visited many boundary areas. There he found that Indian soldiers were too much helped and benefitted by the ladies of Punjab. The Punjabi ladies were too brave and they were ready

* Rani Chennamma was the first lady to repel against the Adoption Act of the British because of which she fought a war against the British.

to participate directly in the warfield. Seeing all this, Sri. Kanthi felt that, women of our land are lagging behind. So, to uplift them, to cultivate bravery in them he felt the necessity of Sainik Schools. With this purpose only he was determined to establish Sainik School at Kittur, which was an ideal place for such a school. Kittur is the only suitable place for the establishment of Sainik School for ladies.²⁷ (19.9.1962 Smt. Sundaram Ramachandran, M.P.). Accordingly, he made efforts for that. But his efforts bore fruits in 1969, when he was not holding any portfolio or ministership, but he inaugurated the school on 24.10.1969.²⁸ Today this school has contributed much to the development of female education. It shows the practical vision of Sri. Kanthi.

Sri. Kanthi showed a deep concern towards women education in Bijapur district. If we look in the history of Bijapur district, it can be found that -

*There were no girls schools in Bijapur district prior to 1854. The first Girls School was started in Guledgudda in 1854 by the Christian missionary. In 1869, two more girls schools started, one in Bagalkot and another in Bijapur. In 1873 the number of Girls schools rose to 10. But later their number enhanced rapidly. Especially during the year 1964-65, when Sri. Kanthi was Education Minister, there were 207 institutions with a strength of 39,809 girls.*²⁹

This credit should go to Sri. Kanthi, who sincerely used efforts

to enhance the women's education.

Ilkal, the hometown of Sri Kanthi was unable to provide educational facilities even up to second standard, but later on transformed into an educational centre by Sri. Kanthi. He himself inaugurated many primary schools there; he was responsible for starting a Boys High School, a Girls High School, and a Urdu High School. He also established a Teachers Training Institute for women and Shri Vijaya-mahantesh College of Arts, Science and Commerce at Ilkal. As a dweller of Ilkal Sri Kanthi had to move about to get his education, but today his native city attracts many persons towards it, as it has all the educational facilities. Apart from this an institution has been also established and named after him as 'Sri. S.R. Kanthi College of Education' and 'Sri. S.R. Kanthi Girls High School'. Likewise today Ilkal has become one the educational centres in the Bijapur district. The whole credit for all the educational transformations should go to Sri. Kanthi, which was a dream come true for him by sheer experience which he had had as a son of a poor family.

Sri Kanthi appealed to the rich people and private managements to construct the modern temples like schools and colleges.³⁰ While speaking in public function at Davangere, he appreciated the role of private colleges in bringing about good results, and said that Government was thinking of transferring the governmental colleges to noted private institutions for maintaining them. In this context he appreciated the K.L.E. Society of Belgaum, B.L.D. Society of Bijapur, H.K.E. Society

of Gulburga etc.. Especially he appreciated the Bapuji Education Society of Davangeri for running a good institution like D.R.M. College.³¹

As a popular Education Minister, he wanted to spread education in nooks and corners of the State. He declared that the Government's decision is to open a school in a place with a population of even 250.³² This meant larger number of schools were made available to the people. For example, in 1960-61 in the State there were 778 Secondary Schools, but it increased to 890 in 1961-62 and to 991 in 1962-63. In 1960-61 there were 1,69,173 students in High Schools, but in 1961-62 it was 1,83,562 and in 1962-63 it rose to two lakhs. Through such efforts he tried to increase the literacy rate. It is told that before he became the Education Minister the literacy rate 18 per cent, but in 1968 it rose to 39 per cent³³ which naturally indicates his approach and his contribution to the educational development of Mysore State.

Sri. Kanthi not only proved beneficial to students alone, he provided innumerable facilities and projects for teachers as well. The teaching community today are really indebted to Sri. Kanthi, because of his great service to them.

Before Sri. Kanthi became the Education Minister of Mysore, the conditions of teachers, especially their living standards, had been miserably low. There was no proper payment made and the pension system was not in existence. In private schools teachers used to get salary twice or thrice in a year, and they suffered

a lot because of this. As Sri. Kanthi was having close contacts with many teachers, he knew the plight of the teachers, especially the bad conditions of the primary school teachers, who were working for a meagre salary and were rarely paid. As an Education Minister he decided that - "I want these teachers to be the ideal servants of the village. They should possess ideals of simple living and high thinking. He should lead an exemplary life and gain the confidence and love of the people of the whole village".³⁴ He tried his best to improve their conditions by giving a variety of opportunities to them. He enhanced their salaries, and was responsible for their improved living conditions. He established 'Student Welfare Fund', which helped both the students and teachers in times of need. It is an example of his foresightedness. He introduced the 'cheque system' to disburse the salary of the teachers, to avoid the middlemen getting the money.³⁵ He was the one who took the decision of treating teachers as government employees. On Teachers Day, the Government of Mysore also donated Rs. 25,000 to the 'Teachers Welfare Fund'.³⁶

In a meeting Sri. Kanthi had announced that the college teachers would get provident fund benefit. He had also spoken of extending the facility to the Primary School and High School teachers also.³⁷ He also announced the application of 'Triple Benefit Scheme' to all the teaching community. By hearing this the teaching community as a whole was very much thankful to him for implementing the scheme. He was highly honoured by the teaching community for his action.

Sri. Kanthi also informed at a conference that the government

had decided to implement this scheme, based on a scheme which is practised in Madras State. According to the scheme nearly 50,000 teachers were going to be benefitted. The teachers were going to get 'Triple Benefits'. Those are:

- a) Provident Fund or Gratuity,
- b) Life Insurance,
- c) Pension.

Gratuity or Provident Fund: The government ordered the payment of gratuity, at the rate of half a month's pay for every completed year of service to a maximum extent of 15 months' pay. According to this scheme the employees were to contribute 6% of their salary to Provident Fund and the equal amount was to be added to the corpus by the employer. This amount will be later given to the employee when he retires.

Life Insurance: According to this scheme, L.I.C. was made compulsory for the teachers and other employees, working in the private institutions. Here total premium amount will be paid by the employee himself. It was just like a compulsory savings scheme, which will be helpful to the employee, later.

Pension: According to this arrangement, government was to pay 25 per cent of the last pay drawn by the official, in the form of pension.³⁸ Today in 1990's, it is raised to 50 per cent. This idea of 'Pension' is really a boon from the Government; it was like a life saving herb for teachers. The pension scheme has given a

new birth to the teachers.

Sri. Kanthi had also informed that, the Government had accepted the special officer appointed by the Government, Sri. T.K. Gurubasappa's report, and a Government order was to be issued, shortly. This Triple Benefit Scheme was applicable to all the employees working either in local bodies, or in private institutions. When the Government ordered that District Board High Schools were to be managed by the Taluka Boards or by private institutions, the employees of such Boards also got this benefit, i.e., Triple Benefit.

By adopting such a bold step of Triple Benefit Scheme, the Government was to spend 5 lakhs for the first year, 10 lakhs for the second year and 15 lakhs for the third year, and 50 lakhs for the tenth year. An employee who has put in at least 10 years of service was eligible for pension.³⁹

As an Education Minister, once when he spoke at 'The Karnataka Hindi Prachar Sabha', Dharwad, when Dr. D.C. Pavate was the President, he said that there should be literature for developing national integrity and unity. Such stories and poems should be written. He also told that the best of the works from the other languages should be translated into Kannada and vice versa. He had also told that the government would give grant for such projects. He was very sorry for evolving third grade literature.⁴⁰

In Bangalore Sri. Kanthi arranged to release the book,

The History of National Movement in Karnataka, written by Prof. G.S. Halappa. That book was released by Sri. Kamaraj Nadar, and Sri. Lal Bahadur Shastri was in the chair. Sri. Kanthi had asked Mr G.S. Halappa to write books on Sri. Hardekar Manjappa by issuing government grants.⁴¹ He also felt that both Kannada and Hindi should come closer and the Kannada literature should be translated into Hindi. It shows that on the whole, he was after the translation and propagation of best available literature as a course of national integration and unity.⁴²

S.R. Kanthi and Patriotism:

When China attacked India, Sri. Kanthi was of the view that the Chinese should be answered in the same vein. He gave a call to the people to spare their all wealth for the cause of the security of the country. Speaking at Hungund he once again gave a call for united effort to fight for the cause of the country.⁴³ (The Hungund taluka is backward and is known for drought.) On that occasion, he appealed that the Indians have to answer the Chinese in the same coin. He stressed the need for strengthening the military.

In response to his appeal, contribution to 'Defence Fund' in Ilkal town within three hours was 52 tolas of gold and Rs. 8,000 were collected. However, the final collection was 100 tolas of gold and Rs. 80,000 in cash.⁴⁴

'Kanthi Auction':

On 28.11.1962 a new type of auction was started and that was called 'Kanthi Auction'. The money collected by way of such auctions was sent to the Government of India towards the Defence Fund.⁴⁵ It is interesting to understand what this 'Kanthi Auction' is. As usual Sri. S.R. Kanthi was garlanded and that garland was auctioned and it fetched 7.5 tolas of gold and Rs. 13.⁴⁶ The Kanthi Auction was altogether of a different type. What usually happens in the auctions is that, the participants go on increasing the amount according to the worth of thing under auction, and the highest bidder gets the thing against the payment of amount. But in the case of the 'Kanthi Auction', all the persons who were raising the auction amount were also to pay the amount for having participated in it. However, the highest bidder was getting the thing auctioned.

At Bagalkot, the auction was most interesting and very much competitive. The auction of the garland fetched Rs. 1,925 and 1 tola of gold. But Sri. Chillal, a lawyer, who was present on that occasion told that the auction had not got the sufficient returns to fight the Chinese. So, he voluntarily gave 1 tola of gold on that day.⁴⁷

On 30.11.1962, Sri. Kanthi visited Golasangi, a village in Basavan Bagewadi taluka of Bijapur district. While raising the amount towards the Defence Fund on that day, Sri. Yamanappa Dalawai,

the Walikar of the village donated his ox towards the fund, and that ox was purchased by Sri. Gouda of Bommanhalli in the 'Kanthi Auction' for Rs. 1,001, and the total amount of the auction was Rs. 1,801.⁴⁸

In a village called Managooli, a shield was presented towards the fund by a woman and that was auctioned in Kanthi Auction. Bilagi and Mudhol talukas also contributed liberally to the Fund. Smt. Satteva Yallagutti of Kandagal in Bilagi taluka surprised the public and Sri. Kanthi by her munificent contribution of 200 grams of gold.⁴⁹

On all the above mentioned occasions Sri. Kanthi told that, the country will never forget the patriots and the people, who had sacrificed for the cause of the country. They will be duly honoured by the citizens. The Government would take care of the families of such people.⁵⁰

On many occasions he said that, the Bijapur district is a drought-hit area, but the people of the district are generous and patriots to the core. Keeping in mind the Chinese aggression Sri. Kanthi stressed the need for the physical and military education. He spoke more about A.C.C., N.C.C. etc.⁵¹ The Bijapur district had become the first district in collection of funds. He had appreciated the people of the district in general and of Ilkal in particular, for their liberal donations. Mr. Kanthi, who was incharge of the Fund collection of the District, had thanked the people. A special mention in this regard was made of Sri. Hosamani, the Assistant Commissioner.⁵²

Sri Kanthi intended to contribute gold in proportion to Sri. Nijalingappa's weight. The gold so collected was to be given to the National Defence Fund. So, he appealed to the people to contribute liberally to the Fund.⁵³ Accordingly people contributed generously to the national cause thanks to the efforts made by Sri. Kanthi.

Increase in Fees and Students' Strike:

Despite his valuable contribution to the field of education, Sri. Kanthi was criticised by opposition parties as well as the student community, when he announced an increase in the fees. He had increased the fees in the old Mysore Government Colleges.

He requested the student community, parents and others that it should be viewed broadly. He gave detailed explanation in justification of the increase in the fees.⁵⁴ He had told that the Government was spending 1.75 crores towards education. If the fees were not increased the State was to spend another 50 lakhs. He had told that because of compulsory primary education scheme, the Government was to open new schools in the rural areas and again that was also another burden on the State. In addition to that the government was thinking of opening new high schools in the rural areas.⁵⁵ When the government was to do all this, it was inevitable to increase the fees. He thus stressed the need to increase the fees as an effort to develop education.

Apart from that, fee concession was given to the children

of the parents whose annual income was Rs. 2,400. But earlier, the limit was only Rs. 1,200. And this condition had made the government to spend 15 lakhs of rupees more annually. Above all, the teachers were given the benefit of Triple Benefit and that was also a burden on the State exchequer. Because, on that account the government had to spend Rs. 80 lakhs more. Another financial burden on the government was on account of the opening of many new colleges by the government.

Sri. Kanthi also explained that the rise in the fee was not an abrupt decision, and the government was contemplating it from 1957. The implementation of the decision was made only after getting the report from a committee appointed for this purpose.

He also drew attention of the people on strike in Maharashtra, where the fee hike was accepted without any opposition. But, he pointed out, that except in Gulbarga, in all the Districts of the State the strike was going on. He had expressed his surprise for the strike in old Mysore, which was covering only 14 colleges.

Mr Kanthi had told that by the fee hike only a few would be affected. At that time there were 29,809 students in the Mysore University, of which only 11,559 students were affected by it. Even among those 50 per cent of the students would get freeship and other concessions. Barely 5 to 6 thousand students were going to be affected by it, which number is very meagre.⁵⁶

Inspite of the detailed explanation and facts and figures given above, the opposition was not ready to change their view. Sri. Kanthi expressed his sense of surprise when the strike continued. Though the students in the other areas of the State accepted the fee hike, the Old Mysore students were not ready to pay the fees.

His elder son, Sri. Chandrashekhar's marriage in Mysore was disturbed by the strikers. Even the students threatened to kill the guests. There were also harsh slogans against Sri. Kanthi and there was also the character assassination of Sri. Kanthi.⁵⁷

The students of the Old Mysore area colleges were on strike for 5 days. Mr Kanthi justified his action in the Assembly. Earlier the fee in the Old Mysore area was very low or less. The students in Madras, Bombay and Hyderabad Karnataka area students were already paying the increased fees. Then, there cannot be any kind of discrimination amongst the students in the State itself. He had told that under these circumstances the fee-hike was inevitable. The figures that he had produced on the table justified his action. He held an opinion that of the increasing expenditure on education, some part was required to be borne by the students and parents.

The details of fee-increases can be mentioned as follows:

P.U.C.	:	90 Rupees to 144
Degree Students	:	126 Rupees to 180
Post Graduates	:	144 Rupees to 256

Some people argued and agreed that, the sudden rise of the fees was considered as a burden to the parents and students. The fee should have been increased step by step.⁵⁸

Sri. G.S. Halappa expressed his reactions against students' strike in the State. He stated that the strike was not the strike of students, but on the other hand the strike was politically motivated. He asked the people to show where there was no hike in the prices. He asked, why it is that the hike of fees was reacted in such a wild manner?

Sri. Halappa told that the teachers in the Old Mysore area were exploited and they were leading a life of misery. The teachers were paid Rs. 75 only, before Independence and it was increased to Rs. 100 in 1947. In 1956 it was raised to Rs. 200. Many were benefitted by this. In the year 1957, the salary of the teachers was increased by Rs. 100. Under such conditions the increase in the fee was inevitable.

The colleges get the grant from the government, fee was also a source of income to the colleges. In old Mysore Colleges were on the verge of closure on account of financial crisis. The government alone cannot shoulder the responsibility and the old fee rates cannot be continued.

In Old Mysore the students were allowed to pay the fees in ten instalments, but in the other parts of the State the students

were paying the term fee in advance. When we consider all these things, according to Sri. G.S. Halappa, the strike was not justifiable.⁵⁹

Mr S.R. Kanthi had told that the students should not be carried away by the sentiments but be rational and considerate. He stated that the government had taken 6 years to increase the fees. He had requested the teachers and private managements to guide the students properly in this direction. He requested legislators to forget their party alliance and to look at the issue objectively.

Despite the ups and downs, one cannot ignore the notable and outstanding contributions of Sri. Kanthi to the field of education. He was solely responsible for the progressive development in education in Mysore State, especially in the rural areas. He made education easily available to rural poor and backward classes and to the downtrodden masses of the society. He saw also that teaching community's position was made respectable.

At the end of his tenure as an Education Minister he disclosed that he was satisfied with the discharge of his duty towards the educational field. People of Mysore appraised his commendable work. He was also complimented by the opposition members. In one of the public meetings Mr Shivappa of P.S.P. (Praja Samajvadi Party) eulogised him a lot. He was described as peerless.⁶⁰ In the absence of Sri.Kanthi's tenure as Education Minister, it is doubtful whether the teaching community would have received the sympathies from the government. Every decision made by him had an impact on the treasury, because of which he

had to raise money by way of fee-hike, though, unfortunately this action of his was not received well; but an assessment of his contribution in totality will justify the decisions made by him. Sri. Kanthi, hence, has been a revered figure amongst educationists in the present Karnataka State.

REFERENCES

- 1) Interview with Sri. S.Nijalingappa at Chitradurg on 30.7.89.
- 2) Interview with Sri. S.B. Bandargal at Ilkal on 25.10.1988.
- 3) Interview with Sri. B.A. Bijjal at Ilkal on 5.3.1989.
- 4) Ibid.
- 5) Samyukta Karnataka, Hubli Edn. 15.9.1962, p. 4.
- 6) Myron Weiner: Modernization: The Dynamics of Growth, V.O.A. Lecture Series, p. 32.
- 7) Ibid., p. 5.
- 8) V.P. Luthera: The Concept of Secular State and India, p. 19.
- 9) Myron Weiner: Op.cit., p. 55.
- 10) B. Kuppaswamy: Social Change in India: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 1975, p. 301.
- 11) James C. Coleman: Education and Political Development: Princeton University Press, 1964, p. 5.
- 12) J.W. Hanson & Brembek: Education and Development of Nation:

Times of India Press, 1971, p. 32.

- 13) Compiled by the author.
- 14) Interview with Sri. S.S. Kavishetti at Belgaum on 10.3.1989.
- 15) J.W. Hanson & Brembek, Op.cit., p. 38.
- 16) B. Kuppaswamy, Op.cit., p. 290.
- 17) Samyukta Karnataka, Hubli Edn. 25.10.1969, p. 4.
- 18) Ibid., 18.10.1966, p. 7.
- 19) Interview with Sri. S.S. Kavishetti at Belgaum on 10.3.1989.
- 20) Hindu - Madras Edn., 7.10.1962, p. 5.
- 21) Ibid.
- 22) Samyukta Karnataka, Hubli Edn. 25.10.1962, p.1.
- 23) Ibid., 26.10.1962, p. 7.
- 24) Ibid., 18.11.1962, p. 5.
- 25) Ibid., 20.2.1962, p. 5.
- 26) Mahantesh Kodagali - "Shashvat Kelas Maadid Kannadada Kattalu Innilla" - Samyukta Karnataka, 9.11.1969, p. 4.
- 27) Smt. Sundaram Ramachandran, M.P. - Statement in Samyukta Karnataka on 19.9.1962, p. 7.
- 28) Samyukta Karnataka, Hubli Edn. 25.10.1969, p. 5.
- 29) Gazetteer of India: Mysore State: Belgaum District, 1966, pp. 400-401.

- 30) Hindu - Madras Edn., 2.11.1962, p. 7.
- 31) Ibid., 28.11.1962, p. 7.
- 32) Samyukta Karnataka Hubli Edn., 9.9.1962, p. 5.
- 33) Ibid., 15.5.1967, p. 5.
- 34) Hindu - Madras Edn. 30.7.1962, p. 7.
- 35) Samyukta Karnataka - Hubli Edn. 15.4.1964, p. 5.
- 36) Hindu - Madras Edn. 6.9.1962, p.5.
- 37) Samyukta Karnataka - Hubli Edn., 22.12.1962, p.5.
- 38) Ibid., 10.10.1962, p. 1.
- 39) Ibid., p. 5.
- 40) Ibid., 3.10.1962, p. 5.
- 41) Ibid., 21.5.1964, p. 5.
- 42) Ibid., 14.11.1962, p. 5.
- 43) Ibid., 2.11.1962, p. 5.
- 44) Ibid., 14.11.1962, p.1.
- 45) Prapancha - Patil Puttappa, 7.7.1963, p. 6.
- 46) Samyukta Karnataka - Hubli Edn. 29.11.1962, p. 1.
- 47) Ibid., 30.11.1962, p. 5.
- 48) Ibid.
- 49) Ibid.

- 50) Hindu - Madras Edn. 3.12.1962, p. 7.
- 51) Samyukta Karnataka - Hubli Edn. 23.12.1962.
- 52) Ibid., 24.12.1962.
- 53) Ibid., 31.12.1962, p. 1.
- 54) Ibid., 28.9.1962, p. 5.
- 55) Ibid., 30.10.1962, p. 1
- 56) Ibid., p. 7.
- 57) Interview with Sri. S.S. Kavishetti at Belgaum on 10.3.1989.
- 58) Samyukta Karnataka - 31.12.1962, p. 4 (Editorial)
- 59) G.S. Halappa: 'Hale Mysorina Vidyarthi Chaluvali (Kannada)
an article in Samyukta Karnataka on 2.1.1963, p. 4.
- 60) Interview with Sri. B.A. Bijjal at Ilkal on 5.3.1989.

**S.R. Kanthi as Law & Parliamentary
Affairs Minister
(From 14.3. 1967 to 24.4.1968)**

Sri. S.R. Kanthi was a dignified Parliamentarian, who served as the member of Legislative Assembly for 24 years. He was elected from Hungund constituency, continuously from 1964 to 1967, i.e., for 5 times. He had a deep experience and knowledge of the Parliamentary system. He was having a firm belief in Parliamentary democracy. He expressed his positive reactions towards Parliamentary system while he had been to England to attend the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

In 1967 General Elections he got elected, having a lot of experience in serving as Minister; he was included in the Ministry. By virtue of his monumental work in the Education Department, it was decided that he should be given the portfolio of Law and Parliamentary Affairs, with the intention that he may make the Department prosperous and efficient. On 14 March 1967 he was appointed as Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister. But due to dirty politics he worked here for a very short period, i.e., upto 24 April 1968.

Though he had not done any monumental work as the period itself was too short, he did his best in this portfolio. He gave satisfactory answers to all the questions raised in the Legislative Assembly. The facts and figures of his department were there on his tongue-tip.

On 5th July 1967 Sri. Kanthi gave detailed answer about the posts and positions in the secretariat, particularly the vacancies and mode of promotions in the secretariat.¹ While inaugurating 46th Kannada Sahitya Sammelan at Shravanbelgol, Sri. Kanthi urged for the implementation of Kannada language in all the levels of administration.²

On 20 July 1967 he said in the Legislative Assembly that Government has not neglected the criticism made by the judiciary. The criticism made by the judiciary about the working of the government would be taken into consideration and attempts will be made to improve the working of the government. As a Law Minister he praised the frank criticism made by the judiciary and also thanked the lawyers, who extended their hearty co-operation for the working of the judiciary.³

In December 1967, there was a serious discussion on the floor of the Legislature on the Mahajan Commission Report. To put an end to the long-standing border dispute between Mysore, Maharashtra and Kerala States, a one-man-committee was appointed by the Central Government under the chairmanship of Sri. Mahajan, the former chief justice of Supreme Court. All the three States welcomed the step of Delhi government. Mr Mahajan travelled throughout the States concerned, and tried his best to study the problem in depth. Later in 1967 he gave his report to the government. During that time Sri. Y.B. Chavan of Maharashtra, who was the Home Minister, expressed his great dissatisfaction regarding the contents of the Mahajan Report. He openly pressed for 'national consensus' on the Mahajan Commission Report,

in the Parliament. This created havoc on the floor of the Mysore Legislative Assembly and Council. Almost all the members opposed it. Both ruling and opposition parties condemned Sri. Chavan's idea of national consensus. Sri. J.B. Mallaradhya, an opposition party member moved a resolution that, the Government of India be urged to accept the Mahajan Commission Report and pressed for immediate implementation of the Report of the Mahajan Commission. The Chief Minister Sri. S. Nijalingappa also said that, "it would be wise for all the concerned states to accept the report of the Mahajan Commission, without any unnecessary agitation". He opposed the argument of Maharashtra Ekdikaran Samiti members that "Mahajan Commission is favourable to Mysore". He said, "the Commission report is neither favourable to Mysore nor to Maharashtra. Because each State gains some new areas by losing some of their old areas. For Ex-Mysore State will have to lose the areas of Khanapur and Nipani, if the Commission's report will be implemented." So he said that, "Report should be treated as an award and that should be implemented".⁴

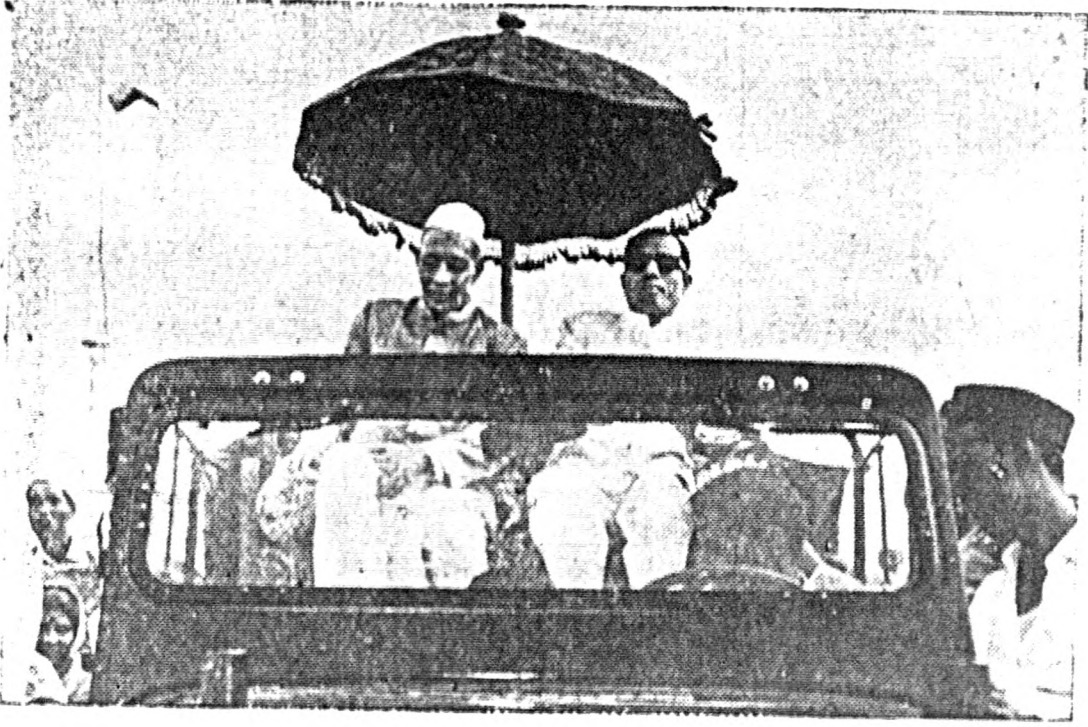
Sri. S.R. Kanthi as a Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister told that, the Mahajan Commission Report should be implemented immediately, in toto.⁵ There should not be any delay in executing the recommendations of the commission. While answering to the objections raised by M.E.S. members he said that, when the Central Government appointed the Commission under the leadership of Sri. Mahajan that was heartily welcomed by the Maharashtra Government and public, but in Mysore there were protests in which two persons lost their lives in the

prolonged agitation. But inspite of all this the Mysore government lastly accepted the Mahajan Commission. When the report of this Committee came, the Maharashtra government thought of agitating against it, which Sri. S.R. Kanthi felt was an act of foolishness. He also pressed for the immediate implementation of the Mahajan Commission's Report and opposed Sri. Y.B. Chavan's idea of 'national consensus'.⁶

In the House Sri. Kanthi rejected the objections raised by the Maharashtra Ekdikaran Samiti against the Mahajan Commission's Report. The members of the M.E.S. argued that, Mahajan Commission's Report is a black report. But their idea was opposed by Sri. Kanthi. He felt that those members had not studied the report. Even Sri. B.D. Jatti, Home Minister of Mysore, upheld the idea of Sri. Kanthi.⁷

But it is very surprising that the Government of India is not in a position to implement the recommendations of the Mahajan Commission even to this day. Modern politicians are misusing this issue. The politicians of Mysore and Maharashtra have made it a prestigious issue as well.

Another important contribution of Sri. Kanthi, while serving as Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister, was that, he organized a grand programme at 'Kudal Sangam', and propagated the philosophy of 'Basavanna' to the nation. He arranged Basavanna's 'Ashta Shatamanotsava' and published a masterpiece about 'Basavanna' and

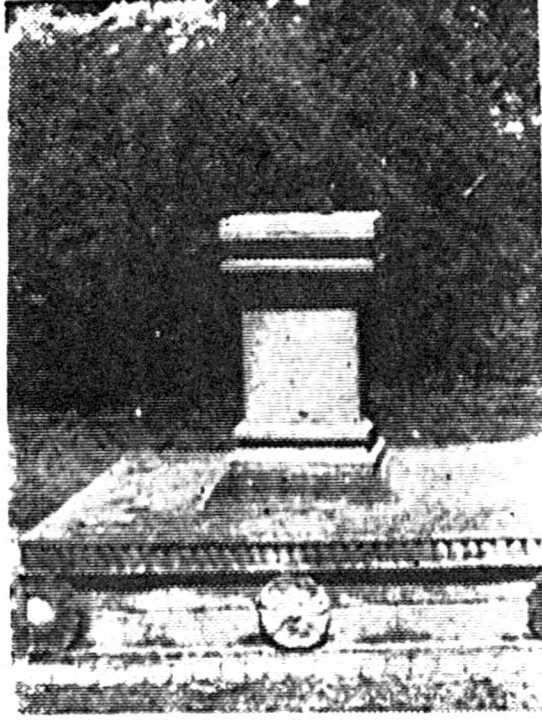


ಮುಖ್ಯ ಅತಿಥಿಗಳ ಶೋಭಾಯಾತ್ರೆ.

(Sri. Kanthi with Sri. Virendra Patil, the then Chief Minister)

his 'Vachanas'. He expressed his deep respect and reverence towards Basavanna, which can be found in his foreword to the book published during that occasion. Though Sri. B.D. Jatti was the Chairman of this programme, actually the successful working of this programme or function goes to Sri. Kanthi. He worked day and night, took the assistance and co-operation of many great literary persons and educated dignitaries of Mysore for this.⁸

Thus Sri. Kanthi worked efficiently as Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister for a very short period. Due to 'Kamaraj Plan' Sri. Kanthi was not allowed to continue in the Ministry.⁹ Apart from that, a revolutionary change took place in the Mysore politics in the later parts of 1968. Sri. S.Nijalingappa, the Chief Minister of Mysore, was chosen as the President of All India Congress Committee (A.I.C.C.), so, he had to leave the Chief Ministership. At that time also again the problem rose as to who will succeed? Sri. B.D. Jatti was there, who was more aspiring for that. Sri. Kanthi was also there, who earlier served as a Chief Minister in a critical condition and proved worthy, faithful to Sri. Nijalingappa. Really, majority of Mysore State people felt that Sri. S. Nijalingappa will ask Mr Kanthi to shoulder the responsibility, as he had helped and cooperated earlier. Apart from that he was sincere, faithful, devoted and efficient. But the wonder was that neither Sri. B.D. Jatti, nor Sri. S.R. Kanthi became the Chief Minister. Sri. Veerendra Patil was chosen as the Chief Minister of Mysore, who surprised Sri. Kanthi by not including him in his Ministry.¹⁰ This is how Sri. Kanthi had to remain again as



ಎಸ್. ಆರ್. ಕಂಠಿಯವರ ಸಮಾಧಿ.
ಇಲಕಲ್ಲ

(Samadhi of Sri. S.R. Kanthi)

a Congress worker, which he did until his last. He possessed rare qualities of patience and compromise. He never revolted or criticised anyone. He accepted the positions which walked to him, as per their merits. He was a rare type of politician, who could have been more popular than B.D. Jatti or S. Nijalingappa, but for his qualities of honesty, integrity, and straight-forwardedness he has been less known. But he quite well-known among his beneficiaries who gained various benefits especially in the field of education. His Gandhian qualities were not given up by him to gain popularity as usually is the trend among the politicians. In brief, he respected value-based politics in all his ventures.

REFERENCES

- 1) Samyukta Karnataka - 6.7.1967, p. 5.
- 2) Ibid., 25.5.1967, p. 4.
- 3) Ibid., 21.7.1967, p. 5.
- 4) Hindu - Madras Edn. 25.12.1967, p. 3.
- 5) Sri. S.S. Kavishetti - Interview held at Belgaum on 11.3.1989.
- 6) Hindu - Madras Edn., 25.12.1967, p. 5.
- 7) Samyukta Karnataka - 28.12.1967, p. 5.
- 8) Prapancha Ed. by Patil Puttappa, 1967, p. 12.
- 9) Sri. B.A. Bijjal - interview held at Ilkal on 5.3.1989.
- 10) Sri S.S. Kavishetti - interview held at Belgaum on 11.3.1989.