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Sahitya Akademi

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meet the author

Siddalingaiah





In childhood

organizations, during his college days, which protested against socio economic inequalities. He organized a strong protest against "All Karnataka Brahmins, Conference", joining hands with Prof. M.D. Nanjunda Swamy, a peasant Leader in 1972. He took an active part in organizing thousands of Dalit Students in 1973. Dr. Siddalingaiah is well known as a social activist right since his student days to the present day. He was a founding Member of 'Karnataka Dalita Sangharsha Samiti' and 'Bandaya Sahitya Sanghatane'.

Dr. Siddalingaiah obtained his M.A. degree in Kannada from Bangalore University in 1976. He was a Research Assistant in the Centre of Kannada Studies between 1976 and 1981. He was appointed as a Lecturer in Kannada in 1981. He was awarded Ph. D. for his thesis 'Gramadevathegalu' (Village Deities) in 1989 under the guidance of Dr.G.S. Shivarudrappa, now a Rashtrakavi (National Poet). He was appointed as a Professor in 1992. Subsequently, he rose to be the Director, Centre of Kannada Studies of Bangalore University from 2001 to 2006. He also became Dean, Faculty of Arts, Bangalore University from 2001 to 2003. In addition to these, Dr. Siddalingaiah had the distinction of being a member of the Academic Council (2002-2003) of Bangalore University.

Hailed as a significant modern era poet, Dr. Siddalingaiah shot into fame in Kannada literary world with the publication of his collected poems 'Holemadigara Hadu'(1975). His poem 'Ikrala, Odeerla' (Hit them, Kick them) was a trend-setter for the generation next in the 1970's.

Born in 1954 to Dalit parents Smt. Venkatamma and Sri Devaiah in Magadi, then Bangalore Rural District, Dr. Siddalingaiah had to face a lot of hardships at the hands of the upper castes.

Dr. Siddalingaiah had his early education in different villages of the district before he came to Bangalore. He was a voracious reader, and, especially during his college days, could be seen immersed in the world of books in different libraries of Bangalore. Interestingly, he founded



With wife Smt. C.Ramakumari, daughter S.Manasa and son S.Goutham



With D.R.Nagaraj, N.R.Shetty, Former Vice-Chancellor, Bangalore University; Ramakrishna Hegde, Former Chief Minister of Karnataka

Dr. Siddalingaiah was immensely influenced by the thoughts of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar, Mahatma Gandhi and Dr.Ram Manohar Lohia. He was also greatly influenced by the writings of Dr. U.R. Anantha Murthy and P. Lankesh. Known for his creative thinking, coupled with wit and wisdom, he has penned several works in different genres of Kannada Literature Viz., Poetry, Plays, Short Stories and Criticism. However, poetry is his passion and forte. Three collections of his poetry and an anthology have been published so far: Holemaadigara Haadu (Untouchables' Song); Saaviraru Nadigalu (Thousands of Rivers); Kappu Kadina Hadu (Dark Wood's Song) and an anthology Hosa Kavithegalalu (New Poems).

Holemaadigara Haadu (1975)

Contains 20 songs. Nanna Janagalu (My People), Kranthipada (Song of Revolution), Naavu (We), Ambedkar and Haavugale Kacchi (Snakes' Bite) have been popular and sung during the seminars and conferences organised by Dalits, Rebel writers' Forum and other progressive movements. The poet himself has said that his intentions become clear when the songs in this collection are set to music and sung. Historically, this is a path-breaking collection that stirred the imagination of serious students of literature all over the state. It also

explored new approaches to Kannada poetry. Caste forms the basis of the songs in this collection. According to the poet, only dalits are holemaadigas and untouchables. Struggle is synonymous with caste struggle. That the root cause of exploitation is caste becomes clear from this collection.

Saaviraru Nadigalu (1979)

Consists of sixteen songs. Saaviraru Nadigalu (Thousands of Rivers), Belchiya Hadu (Belchi Song), Kempu Surya (Red Sun), Dalitaru Baruvuru (Dalits will come), Karaala Raniya Kathe (The Tale of the Ghastly Queen), Katthe matthu Dharma (Donkey and Religion), E Deshada Sremane (This Country's Prison), Chomana Makkalu (Choma's Children), Ninna Magana Kondaru (They Killed Your Son) etc., are highly provocative and awaken the readers and listeners from stupor.

Struggle assumes a different dimension for the poet unlike in the first collection. It is akin to an ocean. The poet wishes that the victims of all castes and classes should unite like the thousands of rivers that flow towards and join an ocean. The poet exhibits a broad vision by hoping that peasants and workers should support the dalits in the caste and class struggles. The songs of struggle here go beyond the struggles of the untouchables.

Kappu Kaadina Haadu (1982)

In this third collection of poems a discerning reader feels the pathos, silence and irony of the poet towards life rather than anger. The early angry young rebel has mellowed down. The maturity in expression is explicit.

Hosa Kavithegalu (New Poems)

This collection contains eighty one poems that appeared in the previous three collections. The poet acknowledges the inspiration he derived from the processions of dalits, peasants and workers. He humbly feels that he may be a poet because his poems were sung in these processions.

Considering the literary achievements and immense popularity as a poet, Mr. Ramakrishna Hegde, Former Chief Minister of Karnataka, evinced keen interest in Dr. Siddalingaiah becoming a Member of the Legislative Council of Karnataka in 1988. Dr. Siddalingaiah successfully completed two terms as a Legislator.

Dr. Siddalingaiah delivered numerous speeches in the Legislative Council mostly concerning socio-economic issues that afflicted Karnataka in particular and India in general. The wide canvass of his speeches covered hotly debated and discussed contemporary issues. The issues ranged from inter-caste marriage, the tragic Life of the Tribals, the

Destruction of Babri Masjid, Problems of Anganwadi Workers, Class System in the Department of Kannada and Culture, the Attack on Dalits of Haralalu Village, SCs/STs, about Kannada, the conditions of Workers of Private Factories, the Tragedy of Civic Servants, the Problems of the Public and the Budgets of 1990-91 and 1991-92, reaction to the Governors' address speech that ignored Kannada, on the treatment of Mathematician Dr. Vasishta Narayana Singh at NIMHANS and many others. The private resolution that he introduced in the Legislative Council (30th March, 1990) on "Reservation for inter-caste Couples" had a such a salutary effect that it was not only discussed all over the state but also resulted in several progressive movements in support of this issue.

Dr. Siddalingaiah is known for his excellent work as a Chairman of Kannada Development Authority from 2006 to 2008. Since 2008, he has been the Chairman of Kannada Book Authority.

He played a significant role in the statewide 'Samudaya Theatre Movement'. His play 'Panchama' staged by 'Samudaya' has seen over a hundred performances all over Karnataka.

Dr. Siddalingaiah continues to write and speak, though at a reduced pace. He still enjoys a large readership which eagerly looks forward to his writing and speeches.



With stalwarts of Kannada literature and activists D.R.Nagaraj, T.N.Sitaram, P.Lankesh, U.R.Ananthamurthy, H.S.Biligiri, Shudra Srinivas, Srinivas G Kappanna



With renowned theatre personality B.V.Karant

PUBLISHED WORKS

I. Poetry

1. Holemaadigara Haadu - 1975
2. Saaviraru Nadigalu - 1979
3. Kappu Kaadina Haadu - 1982
4. Aayda Kavithegalu - 1997
5. Meravanige - 2000
6. Nanna Janagalu matthu ithara Kavithegalu - 2005

II. Plays

1. Panchama matthu Nelasama - 1980
2. Ekalavya - 1986

III. Essays

1. Avataaragalu - 1981

IV. Criticism

1. Hakki Nota - 1991
2. Janasamskrithi - 2007

V. Autobiography

1. Oorukeri - 1997
2. Oorukeri - Part-2 - 2006

VI. Ph.D. Thesis

1. Gramadevathegalu (Village Dieties), 1997

VII. Edited Works

1. Samakaalina Kannada Kavite: Part-I (with others) - 2003
2. Sahitya Sampada - 2001
3. Vichara Vaahini - 2001
4. Adhunika Kannada Kavya Sanchaya - 2001 (Chief Editor)

VIII. Speeches.

1. Sadanada Bhashanagalu - 1988 - Ed. Doddahulluru Rukkoji
2. Sadanadalli Siddalingaiah - 1997 - Ed. Doddahulluru Rukkoji

IX. Works translated into other languages

1. Ooru Keri (An autobiography)-English, Tamil and Malayalam (English Translation published by Sahitya Akademi - 2003; Reprint 2006)
2. Poetry-English, Hindi, Tamil, Bengali, Telugu and Malayalam

X. Successfully guided 8 candidates for Ph.D. Degree and 11 for M. Phil. degree.

XI. Works about Dr. Siddalingaiah

1. Dalitha Kaavya Kuthuhala - 2009 - Prof. L. Rajashekharaiiah
2. Badavara Naguvina Shakthi - 2007 - Dr. Appagere Somashekhar
3. Battada Beladingalu - 2006 - Ed. Lakshminarayana Nagavara

AWARDS AND HONOURS

1. Babu Jagajivan Ram Award, 2005 - Government of Karnataka
2. Sathyakama Foundation Award, 2002- Sathyakama Foundation
3. Dr. Ambedkar Award, 2002- Bharatiya Dalit Sahitya Academy
4. Sandesh Prashasti, 2001- Sandesh Samsthe, Mangalore
5. Janapada Thajna Award, 2001- Karnataka Janapada and Yakshagana Academy, Government of Karnataka
6. Best Lyricist Award, 1984, 1989- Government of Karnataka
7. Dr. Ambedkar Centenary Special Award, 1992- Government of Karnataka
8. Karnataka Sahitya Academy - Honorary Award, 1996- Government of Karnataka
9. Rajyotsava Award, 1986- Government of Karnataka
10. Nadachetana Award, 1999 - Rangachetana Balaga, Bangalore
11. Nadoja-2007 - Kannada University, Hampi.

A CHRONOLOGY

1954 - Birth (03-02-1954)

1976 - M.A. in Kannada, Bangalore University

1976-1981 - Research Assistant, Centre of Kannada Studies, Bangalore University

1981-1992 - Lecturer in Kannada, Bangalore University

1984-1990 - Member, Karnataka Sahitya Academy, Bangalore

1985-1987 - Member, Advisory Board, Prasaraanga, Bangalore University

1988-1994 - Member of the Legislative Council, Government of Karnataka

1989 - Ph. D. (Kannada) for his thesis 'Gramadevathegalu' (Village Deities) under the guidance of Dr. G.S. Shivarudrappa

1989-1992 - Member of the Academic Council, Kuvempu University, Shivamogga

1989-1994 - Member, General Council, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi

1990-1993 - Member, Karnataka Janapada and Yakshagana Academy

From 1992 - Professor in Kannada, Bangalore University

1992-1995 - Member, Executive Committee, Kannada Sahitya Parishat, Bangalore

1992-1995 - Member, Syndicate, Kannada University, Hampi

1992-1997 - Member, Kannada Advisory Board, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi

1993-1998 - Member, Kannada Advisory Board, NBT, New Delhi.

1995-2001 - Member of the Legislative Council, Government of Karnataka.

2001-2003 - Dean, Arts Faculty, Bangalore University.

2001-2004 - Member of Academic Council, Bangalore University.

2001-2006 - Director, Centre of Kannada Studies, Bangalore University; 30 years of teaching experience

2002-2003 - Member, Syndicate, Bangalore University.

2006-2008 - Chairman, Kannada Development Authority- Government of Karnataka

2008 - Chairman, Kannada Book Authority



'Naadoja' award of Kannada University, Hampi presented by M.Veerappa Moily, Former Chief Minister of Karnataka