

A Study in Hindu Matha Dharma Paripalana Sabha and Venkitagiri Sasthrikal of Central Kerala

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During the last phase of 19th Century a socio-religious reformer from Andhra came to Central Kerala. He was Shri. Ashta Vadani parishudha Vishishta Paramatha Khaduna Venkitagiri Sasthrikal.¹ He became popular among the then so called untouchables community the Ezhavas of Muthakunnam in Vadakkakara of Ernakulam district in Central Kerala. Venkitagiri Sasthrikal established an organisation from the Ezhavas, and the Hindu organisation came to be known as Hindu Matha Dharma Paripalana Sabha on 1057 M.E. Edavam 27 (A.D 8-06-1882)².

The establishment of this organisation among the lower sections of Ezhavas was one of the pioneer organisations in Kerala. Venkitagiri Sasthrikal first established a temple with bamboo reeds and thatched coconut leaves.³

The deities worshiped here were Subramaniya, Siva and Sreekrishna⁴. There are some assumptions with regard to the identity of Venkitagiri Sasthrikal. First assumption is that Venkitagiri Sasthrikal had his origin in Venkitagiri and in 1800s he became a Hindu Religions Reformer. The second assumption is that Venkitagiri had relationship with the great social reformer Viresalingam panthalu, who founded the prathana samaj in 1878 at Rajamundry⁵. The organisation started by Venkitagiri was inaugurated in 1882 at Muthakunnam. In 1887 a peasant protest and strike was organised under the aegis of Hindu Matha Dharma Paripalana Sabha. The Ezhava peasants under the able leadership of Venkitagiri Sasthrikal and six prominent Ezhava youths Madathil Ittiyathi Unnikoral, pumalil Raman Raman, Taikuttathil Raman, Ikkannam, Tharayil Kandam Raman and H.M.D.P Sabha Secretary Erezhath Untaman Krishnan and the poor peasants majority of them being the Ezhavas of Vadakkakara participated in the protest called the Kuthakapadam peasant protest against the unequal land tax instituted by Travancore Government⁶. "Finally the government had to accept the demands of the peasants and taxes were equalised in Muthakunnam and Vadakkakara."⁷ During 1885, a temple construction was started under H.M.D.P. Sabha and in 1899 the temple work was completed at Muthakunnam.⁸ The year 1897 witnessed the establishment of a school and Kalari (martial training centre)⁹ Later Sree Narayana Guru reinstalled the Sivalinga conceptualized as Sankaranarayana in 1903 A.D. twenty years after its first idol installation by Venkitagiri Sasthrikal.¹⁰

In one of the old office registers of H.M.D.P Sabha, Venkitagiri Sasthrikal signed as sabhanathan (President) of Sabha. Calligraphic style is identified. It is assumed that Venkitagiri Sasthrikal knew Malayalam language and Script¹¹

H.M.D.P Sabha is now one of the progressive Ezhava organisation, which runs schools and colleges. More over this organization is also maintains a big temple dedicated to Lord Sankaranarayana Swami.¹² At present this organisation is one of the prominent organisation of Ezhavas of Muthakunnam.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES.

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- [6]. *Hindu Matha Dharma Paripalana Sabha Shadabdi Smaranika* 1982, opt. cit, pp.1-2
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- [8]. *Sthalavastharam* 1982 opt. cit, PP.1-2

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[10]. *Hindu Matha Dharma Paripalana Sabha Smaranika*,1982,op.cit,P-3
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