



## FOOT PRINTS OF THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES IN TUMKUR DISTRICT – KARNATAKA

**Lingaraju. P**

Asst. Professor of History

Govt. First Grade College, Gubbi, Tumkur District, Karnataka State

Mobile No. 9964739232/8867479232, e-mail: lingarajugubbi@gmail.com

### Abstract

In this article, the research information about, how Gubbi was selected by Missionaries, Thomas Hudson and family arrived at Gubbi in 1837 A D, In 1837 A D chikka got converted to the Christianity, he was the first kannadiga do so, Later on these Footprints spreads all over several taluq's of Tumkur district like Madhugiri, Sira, Tiptur and also Tumkur city, and opened Churches in and around of the District and how Catholic Missionaries started activities in Sira and their villages.

Tumkur District was a part of Mysore Province. Here both Roman Catholic and Protestants started spreading the Christianity by converting the people into the new religion. Catholic came to Tumkur by about 1700 A.D. They converted many natives into the Christianity through preaching. Later on an important missions of Protestant, Wesleyan Methodist Mission actively engaged itself in the Tumkur District.

Gubbi which is 18 Km away from Tumkur became the centre the activity of the Wesleyan Missionaries. Hence Gubbi has historic significance in this regard. It became their centre of activities in 1837 A.D. A missionary called Elijah Hule was appointed in 1821 at Madras to work in Karnataka. But he stayed in Bangalore contacted with the Tamil Missionaries and preached the Christianity in Srirangapattana and Mysore. It was of no avail they retreated.\*1

It was decided in Synodo Committee of Madras that a Missionaries should be appointed to work in the midst of Kannadigas. As a result Thomas Hudson came to Mysore in 1829 AD. After visiting Coorg and Western Ghats, he came to Bangalore via Gubbi and Tumkur. Then the military General Dabas introduced Gubbi and Tumkur to Hudson. After the studying the condition he wrote to Synod committee approved his proposal and appointed Thomas Hudson to develop Gubbi as a centre of the Christian Missionaries. Hudson has started above reason for choosing Gubbi.\*2

Hudson family and assistant missionary Charles Franklin arrived at Gubbi in 1837 AD. They used to address one thousand Kannada people. They tried to enlighten the people about the Christ's preachings and his service to mankind. They developed cordial relationship with the people of surrounding villages and preached the Christianity. As a result in 1837 AD itself singonahalli's Chikka got converted to the Christianity and changed his name as Daniel. He was the first Kannadiga do so. Then his family members accepted the Christianity.\*3

In 1838 AD Thomas Hudson, Mathew Male, John Jackin and other served the carouse of the Christianity. In 1837 AD Thomas Hudson established a permanent missionaries centre at Gubbi. It was completed in 1839 AD at the cost 10 pounds. Later on they continued their activity in Kunigal 18 miles toward south of Gubbi.\*4

Kunigal was another taluk of the place in the Tumkur District. The Christian Missionaries spread their religion in Kunigal and the neighboring villages. The retired teacher Puttahamaiah and his wife Puttalingamma of Adi Karnataka treat near Chikkannakeri became the followers of the Christianity.

Leelamma of Mylar Pattana, Kunigal taluk and her husband Chikkanna lured by the new religion. Leelamma's father Malliah and Lingamesthri were prominent among Adhikarnatakas. They were sympathetic towards the Christianity. Many times they tried to get converted into the Christianity. Adhikarnatakas people of Kunigal and near by villages became acquainted with the Christian ideas through them. Uccahappa of Upparahalli became their another acquaintancy. Adhikarnataka the people of Upparahalli met Uchchappa and through him nearly 20 to 22 villages of Nelamangala taluk tried to accept the Christianity. It can be called that 1918. One by name Siddalinga went to Gubbi and accepted the Christianity and his new name Daniel. The above informs us how the Christianity has its influence on the people of Kunigal.\*5

The Christianity attached on another taluk in Tumkur District that was Madhugiri. In Madhugiri taluk, Badachoudanahalli is a small village on the river bank of Jayamangali. Wesleyans of Protestant Mission had made it their centre of activity much before 1865 AD. Its quite interesting to note how the Christianity grew in the village. There was a man by name Narasappa in the village who was interested in learning.

But in those days the poor did not have access to their education. Therefore Narasappa became herdsman. But did not give up his interest. After the day's work he used to learn from the boys of the temple. When he found it impossible he trusted his work to others and sat in the temple. When the cattle did not come back his mother Bandhakka searched for him and finally found him in the temple. In the beginning she opposed him. Later to go on his way. Delighted Narasappa went to the Christian School and was fascinated by the Christianity. This led to the growth of the Christianity in that village in 1876 AD. J.C.W. Gostic converted many into the Christianity and admitted them to a boarding school in Tumkur.

The growth of the Christianity in Badachoudanahalli was slow. In 1876 October Narasappa preached his closed friends for Baptism. On October 22 1896, J.C.W. Gostic visited Badachoudanahalli and baptized Devadasappa, Gurubakthaiah, Devadattappa, Sathyaveeraiah, Gurusiddappa, Jnanamithraiah. This was an important day. Because the Christian prayer started there on that day. On the same day these devotees were subjected to violence and torture. Even then others who belonged to well known family of the village wanted to have Baptism. That's how the Christian influence pervaded on Badachoudanahalli.\*6

In those in the midst of a lot of opposition and obstacle the Christianity succeeded having its foot hold in Badachoudanahalli.

The Christian congregation started in Tumkur in 1948. Probably it reached Tumkur from near by Gubbi. Rev. Sykes was instrumental in spreading the Christianity in Tumkur. After he returned to England Rev. Skarvis Bodhak who was in Gubbi came to Tumkur. By this time there was already a Girl's Boarding School was founded in Tumkur. Since there were no teachers in Gubbi. Boys Boarding School was shifted to Tumkur.

In 1879 AD. Rev. Robert continued the Service. As a result the Christian activities increased in Tumkur. When there was severe draught hit in Tumkur. He looked after hundreds of children and the Church grew in popularity. When Synod Society came to know the Tumkur Church was very small. They decided to extend the present Church that was built in 1848 AD. This Church was renowned and opened on 28 September 1899. At this time the native Priest Rev. Andre Philip was the Father of the Tumkur Church.\*7

There were followers,

- 1) Shri Dodda Amruthappa (Blacksmith)
- 2) Cheluvaiha Haralappa
- 3) Dodda Haralappa
- 4) Chikka Haralappa
- 5) Shri Nethany Helaiah

So all these families came from the Roman Catholic origin. All these five families were the members of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. There were here much before 1870 AD. There were the Christians of the Tumkur Christianity. Thus settled in Tumkur, they were spread in four deferent parts in the city.

Christian Street – In those days it was widely in the midst of the town of Tumkur.

- 1) Sadepur – It is named after Rev. Saday and it is in the northern part of Tumkur.
- 2) Devanur – This is in another the part of Tumkur.
- 3) Bethlur – It is in some three miles to west of Tumkur.

Some of the Christian families that lived in these parts are,

- 1) Christian Street – Sodaiah, Abisza, Thomaiah, Yohanappa, Prasadappa, Abraham, Alexander, Bennjamin etc.
- 2) Sadeypur – Madhuvelaiha, Kshemaiah, Isaakaiah, Amose, Dhonakaiah and Joseph.
- 3) Devanur – Gurudasappa, Vishvappa, Mananaiah, Christhadasappa, Barakaiah, John, Robert etc.,
- 4) Bethlur - Lazarappa, Gurudattappa, Arthur Joseph, Bathaiah, Henry Nambikaiah, etc.,

These families were the forefathers of the Tumkur Church. But they belonged to second generation. There were more than 60 families in this four parts of Tumkur. Now the number might have reached more than 600 hundred families. The Christianity is so deeply routed in Tumkur. Tumkur became an important centre of the Protestant Christians. The Christians who settled in this four parts of Tumkur, engaged in different social services.\*8

Catholic religion also found its place in Tumkur District. They too shared their religion in different parts of the District. This is an evident in Jesuit letter of 1730 AD. There is also a reference to Amalagundhi of Sira Taluk, Chelur fort of Gubbi and its rulers in the letter. This throws considerable light on the growth of Catholicism in Tumkur District.

Father Municci became active in October 1735 in Mughal occupied Sira. Usually the Christians did not have access to Mughal territories but some thing strange happened in Sira and it vicinity. Father Anthony Mariya Plate who was in Sira at the time he baptized a washer man called Chennappa and he named him Paul. He in turn introduced the Christianity to seventeen of his relatives and brought them to Goudana Hally and Baptized them. Hence, the number increased. A priest was sent to preach them. Another seven persons were ready to baptize. But there was no room for them. F Jokium Dayas endower to built a Church proved futile. Father Municci succeeded him. He got the permission from representative of Mysore kings and constructed the Church in that territory. Chelur fort belonged to Mysore province also.

The Christian of that region met the ruler of Chelur fort and appealed. Then Hagalwadi Palegar Mudiappa Nayaka (1700-1740) not only concentrated, but also provided required land to build a Church and house for the priest. Besides he attended some stone laying ceremony and the inaugural ceremony on the Easter Eve of 1736 AD. The Church was named after Saint Francis Borsia. In Jesuit letter written on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1740 AD, it is stated that the Ester was celebrated for Christians and non-Christians along with the ruler of Chelur took part in it. It was a glorious action. Fourteen adults and forty three children were baptized on this occasion. In this way the Catholicism laid roots in Chelur, Amalagundi and other places of Tumkur District.\*9

This event reflects the political and administrative system of the day. It was indeed difficult to built in Mughal occupied Sira. But still Father Municci with the permission of the representatives of Mysore kings and Nayaka of Chelur built the Church and preached the Christianity.\*10

The Sacred Heart Church in Tiptur was established as a small Church in 1895 AD. The couple J.P.Anthoniswamy Pillai and Mariam were the first Christians to have settled here. The members of this family who had ardent devotion and absolute faith had to go either Arasikere or Tumkur to visit Church. In those days travelling was highly trouble. So they requested the authorities of Bangalore missionary to build a Church in Tiptur. Having understood the passion and devotion of this Christian family and realized the possibilities of growth of Christians, Father D'souza, then the Father of Arasikere Church executed the plan of building of a Church at Tiptur. When Sri Shivabasappa was requested to donate a land, he generously donated the land where the Church stands today.

In 1937 Vam R.P. Gracian, the Father of Tumkur Church endeavoured to build a prayer hall in Tiptur. His successor Vam. Swami Stan W. Naronha built a small temple in Tiptur. This temple was inauguraqted by his Holiness Thomas Pothakumar. In his time this Church got the place for the tomb. In 1960 Vam Swami Marisosai was appointed the first Father of this Church.

Today, the number of Christian families who came to Tiptur form other villages for the purpose of business is increased. For the development of this town the nuns of SMMI were brought here.

The successors of Father Nelapathi are,

- 1) Vam. Jokim D'souza
- 2) Sir Stani Saplist
- 3) Vam. Santhan
- 4) J.Decasta
- 5) Vam. Sir Arogyaswami
- 6) Vam Sir Afonso Naronha
- 7) Vam. Swami Fathiray
- 8) Vam. Swami Joseph Minges
- 9) Vam. Swami Sandyago etc.,

During the tenure of Vam. J Sandyago, 3.3 acre of land was brought for the Missionaries. The compound for the Church was built and the Cross on the pedestal and statue of Sacred Heart in front of the temple were built in his time. This Church which has got the history of Fifty years has been rendering social and spiritual service to the people of the surrounding villages. Today this Church which has developed gradually captivates us with its immense beauty, with its new built towers remaining one of its grand history of 50 years.



The sisters of SMMI who came to Tiptur with a view to give education to children of the surrounding villages are running the best educational institution. Today on the occasion of Christmas and the new year the sisters engaged themselves in arranging the cultural activities and propagating the message of the Christ.\*11

### **THE SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH OF SANNENAHALLI**

The Saint Joseph Church of Sannenahalli was established in 1913. In the beginning days the Father used to come to this village which was subject to the Tumkur Missionaries to perform worship. Later when the Church in Tiptur became independent, the Sannenahalli Church was subject to Tiptur Church.

The Fathers who were incharged the Church in Tiptur,

- 1) Father D'souza
- 2) Father Maria Suri Nelapathi
- 3) Father Joseph Nelapathi
- 4) Father Alfenso Noramana
- 5) Father Fashiraj
- 6) Father Joseph Minage
- 7) Father Sandiago

Alfenso Mathews considered the demand of the people that Sannenahalli Church be made an independent. Later having realized that it has got all the qualities to be an independent Church. The first Father of independent Church is Father Augustine. Father Augustine gave importance not only to the spiritual development, but also to social, economic and educational developments. He implemented many a programme aimed at such development and was able to draw the youth to the congregations.

He succeeded in an enhancing the income of the Church by planting the coconut trees in the garden which belonged to the Church. He set up a project to build a new Church. This project was completed during the Father Balraj's tenure.\*12

### **THE HISTORY OF THE KUNIGAL CHURCH**

Kunigal is a famous historical town. The legend prevalent in this area says that the God shiva danced on the rock of the stone hence name 'Kunikal', gradually Kunikal became a Kunigal. In the same way in literature of folklore also this town was secure a special place. The folk song mudal kunigal kere nokak bandhoy bogha, moodibarthan chandhi rama thanandhano (It is a pleasure to watch moon rising over the Kunigal pond) is familiar to Kannadiga. This pond refer to in this song is in Kunigal. This pond having the circumference of fourteen miles look like a big lake if filled completely.

The record says that the Kunigal Church had been sub-centre to the Solur Church since 1952. Markonahalli, Huliurdurga, Magadi, Thavarekere, Nelamangala were also sub-centres to Solur. All this centers were administrated by a single Father. Kunigal being one of the main centers was offered their an every Sunday.

During 1959-60 Father Vam. Danila Brucer strated a school in a Kunigal and appointed a teacher for some years the temple was also a school. At that time many Christian families were there in Kunigal. The population might have been around 40 to 50. The Christian children were not there.

According to the elders Arasikere was the main centre for all these centres. The history also says that the same thing. From there a French Father used to visit Tiptur, Tumkur, Kunigal, Kakanahalli (Kanakapur),

Dharmapura, Salem to offer Sacrifice and Pooja. If he set out from a place it took him nearly 6 months to return. The record says that during this time the Father Brian brought 3.3 acres of land for the present Kunigal Church. Probably at this time the Father might have built the house and the old temple. In the rest of the land he used to grow ragi. The 3 acres of land of the municipal park which is situated towards the north of the Church once belonged to the Church according to the same record. Later it has been acquired to build the park.

Father Vam Daniel Bruser realized that Kunigal being a taluk is suitable place for development and started a primary school. Francis served as a teacher in the school for the three months. Later Shri Bernard served both as a teacher and preacher for 37 years. Mr. Bernard used to take class for first to third standards. Then he went to Mysore to join teachers' training course. Later he was sent to Pondicherry Mission, Dindubanam to study for the religious diploma. During the training period the convert was started in 1963 at the request of the Father Dr. Bruce.

The wise president Father Loordhu gave half of the 3.3 acres for the Missionary to the sisters of the convert. In this land the school, hospital and quarters for the sisters and orphans are situated. When Father Vam Albert Salina was the head of the mission, the prayers were held in the assembly hall of the Church. As the old Temple was demolished at that time.

The present Church was the main Church during the 1969-70 Father Vam. Bruce made Kunigal the main centre. The remaining Churches were sub-centers to this Church. In order to develop the mission Father Bruser started a labour contract co-operative society and provided the jobs for the poor. For all round development of the children, the children's club was established.

Father VM Breer brought two acres of the land from the CSI assembly to build a Christian colony. In order to have income for the Church, 100 X 150 square feet land was given to run the petrol bunk. In the remaining land 41 sites were made and distributed to the Christian at the rate of Rs. 100 for site, every one who got the right had built a house there.

One of the significant religious activities held at the Kunigal Church during the 1960s and 1970s was carrying the Picture of Christ in a procession at the time of Christmas and the preaching the message of Christmas. On the same day a test was held from morning to after noon. Varieties of games and air gun shooting took place in the evening. A drama related to the Christmas was played. One more important activity was conducting annual religious preaching camp. For ten to twelve days the message of Christ was preached to hundreds of the children. The credit of the organizing the camp for the first time goes to the Kunigal Church. Inspired by this, such camps were organized at other Churches, like in Mariyanna Playa at Solur. So, the Kunigal Church plays a significant role in helping us have a picture of religious life of the Christians around Tumkur district.\*13

## **AMALAGONDI AND JOGAYYANA PALYA**

It is said that the Christian religion has been existence in Sira taluk since the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The origin of the Christianity can be traced back to three Christian families who migrated from Ganjam of Mysore. Today the same families grown into a community. In the beginning days of their settlement in this province Father at Mysore used to take care their spiritual life and was building them. The Father used to visit this place once in a six months and stayed for one week to perform worship.

The first Temple of Amalagondi was built in 1914. This is the first Church built in Sira taluk. In 1962 a Temple was built at Jogayyana Palya. Gradually Amalagondi was made a sub-centre to the Tumkur

Church. The Sira Church an independent Church, was a centre for Amalagandi and Jogayyana Palya. Father Mariyapp Gregory was appointed as a first Guru. After him Father Arulappa was appointed. During their time the Church was built in this taluk. In June 2002 Don Bosco assembly took charge of this missionary. At present many Catholic families are residing here.

### THE TOMB OF HORY MUTTAPPA

The Sira Church is a small one comprised only 55 families. The important activity is to emerged the faith of the people. After every Worship of the Sacred Bell family prayer, preaching class, annual camp etc, are being held. Special tuition classes are organized for the rural students. Many students are attended this tuitions. The only problem is that immediate help can not be provided to the Missionaries at Amalagandi and Jogayyana Palya by the Father of the Church. The main reason is that this places are far away from Sira.

The two important organizations of this missionary which have been rendered service for the welfare of the people are Franciscan missionaries and Saint Aneece Assembly of Bangalore. The nuns of this two organizations are working here. In 1982 the Nuns of Franciscan Missionary started the service of their organization in Amalagandi. \*14

Consequently in the midst of many problems and debacles the Christianity succeeded in laying its routes in Tumkur district. This was due to patience, confidence, determination, discipline and perseverance of the Christian missionaries. Today the Christians has become the integral part of the Society. Consequently the Christianity, along with the Hindu, the Muslim and the Jaina religions has emerged as an important religion in the Tumkur district.\*15

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