

Glory of Telugu -
a slice of its literature

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EMESCO

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HIGHLY READABLE

SRI Sri (Srirangam Srinivasa Rao) was a pioneer of modern Telugu poetry with progressive trait. He adapted and translated several plays and even wrote some in Telugu. But in the glare of his unparalleled poetic excellence, his plays could not gain their due popularity.

Amma contains two of his adaptations. The first *Sampenga Thota* is an adaptation of the great Russian writer Anton Pavlovich Chekhov's last play. The Cherry Orchard (1904). It depicts the plight of the people under the regime of Czar rulers. Characters like Ranevskaya, owner of the Cherry Orchard, Gayev, her brother, Lopokhin, a merchant and others speak of Chekhov's mastery over the craft of playwriting. This play of four acts was adapted by Sri Sri and Varadarajeshwara Rao the first two acts by Sri Sri and the remaining two by his collaborator. Quite surprisingly, the Telugu version lacks the verve of the original. Evidently Sri Sri had not bestowed his full attention towards the assignment given to him by 'Natali' of Abburi. Added to this, the inclusion of the protracted correspondence on Narayanababu's allegation of plagiarism of his translation of 'The Cherry Orchard' by Sri Sri confounds the readers.

However, Sri Sri proves his mettle as a playwright and translator in handling the play *Amma*, a dexterous adaptation of the celebrated Czechoslovakian writer Karel Capek's 3-act play *The Mother* (1938) on the atrocious conditions created by Adolf Hitler. The Mother is a seamless blend of patriotism and sacrifice. Capek weaves it into a glorious tapestry. The main character of *Mother* personifies the Motherland. The technique of deceased persons coming on to the stage alive signifies that martyrs have no death.