

WestCoastNewsline

SEPTEMBER 7, 2007

Dr Sunkari to be the first Telugu lecturer at UC Berkeley

SAM RAO

Berkeley, Calif.

NOW, Telugu will be taught at the University of California Berkeley. The new post of a Telugu lecturer was instituted at the university after a campaign by the Telugu community of SF Bay Area, spearheaded by Dr Rao Vemuri of University of California.

Dr Hephzibah (Hepsi) Sunkari will be the first Telugu lecturer at the university.

Dr Vemuri and community members rallied to raise over \$200,000, which was the threshold amount required to initiate the Telugu language program at the university. Some Indian languages programs like Tamil Chair and Indian Studies Chair already exist at the university.

Professor Raka Ray of UC Berkeley said it is a long haul to initiate a full-fledged endowed chair in Telugu studies. It requires a viable student enrollment along with a sizeable amount of corpus fund, which will help endow a Chair in Telugu Studies and the eventual hiring of a professor under the aegis of one of the recognized departments at the University of California Berkeley, he added.

Mritunjaya Thatipamalla, who conducts Telugu language classes at the India Community Center (ICC) in Milpitas, expressed happiness that the grass roots campaign roped in enough donors



Dr Hephzibah Sunkari

across the State of California to make "the idea of a Telugu lectureship a reality".

Dr Vemuri said, "What we now need is (more) enrollment of students in the Telugu language studies so that everyone will be convinced of the need to keep

The lecturer's post was introduced at the university as a result of a campaign by SF Bay Area's Telugu community

such a program alive and lead to the establishment of a full Chair in Telugu language studies at the university."

Dr Sunkari has taught Telugu to graduate students in the University of Madras, India and translated books and articles from English to Telugu. She has presented several research papers on top-

ics like Buddhism, religious tolerance and living translations in national conferences in India.

Recently, Dr Sunkari worked as editor of the Telugu newsletter of Telugu Christian Fellowship of Bay Area and contributed several articles to Telugu magazines. Her special interests are Onomastics (science of names), cultural and linguistic problems of translations and south Indian music.

She did her Ph.D from the University of Madras in Telugu language (1995) following an M.Phil (1991) and M.A (1990). Besides English, Dr Sunkari is proficiency in Hindi, Sanskrit, Hebrew and Greek (read and write).

She did her research on "Translations of Biblical names, with special reference to Onomastics", which comes under comparative linguistics. She has compiled a dictionary to the Holy Bible, which is yet to be published and served as a translator at Family Stations Inc., Oakland, California.

Originally from Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, Dr Sunkari lives with her husband, Paul Sudhakar, in Folsom, California, about 90 miles East from SF Bay Area, with their two sons Daniel (11) and Jonathan (5). She has also authored a book titled Telugu Bible Anuvaadaalu-Oka Pariseelana (Telugu Bible Translations-An Observation).