
THAALLAPAACA ANNAMACHARYA – THE IMPECCABLE ICON OF INDIAN MUSIC

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Abstract: The musical genius of Annamacharya is indeed incredibly marvelous. His devotional ecstasy coupled with profound philosophy inspired innumerable musicians and even composers like Tyagaraja. The prolific Vaggeyakara (one who writes and composes the songs) is quite unique when compared with all others, for, his simplistic and colloquial lingual renderings if at one end chiseled the splendor of *Sringara* (eroticism), on the other carved the bliss of *Adhyathma* (spiritualism) that aesthetically appealed to the common man as well as the connoisseur placing him unparalleled to any other in the world. The preceptor has to his credit more than 12,000 compositions ranging from caste system, status of women, family system, marriage and so on which made him as an impeccable icon of Indian Music.

Keywords: Padakavitas, Sankirthanas, Vaggeyakara, Venkateswara.

Introduction: *As Plato is famous for Philosophy and Adishankara is known for Advaita, Annamacharya is esteemed for his Sankirthanas.* Annamacharya pioneered in ushering a novel and luscious movement in the annals of Indian music through his lucid literary leanings and musical compositions that are easily implicit to the minds of even common folk. A mystifying musician, down to earth devotee, serene saint, pulsating poet, prudent philosopher – what not? If anybody pursues to find out all these traits in an individual, the probe will lead anybody and everybody towards Thaallapaaka Annamacharya, the glittering gem in the crown of Indian music in general and Padakavitas in particular. Thaallapaka Annamacharya, who pioneered in popularizing Padakavitas or Sankirthanas, occupied a place for pride amongst the galaxy of immortal Vaggeyakaras. Annamacharya affirmed Lord Sri Venkateswara as the ground and granite of the very existence of this Universe and substantiated the same in his Andhraveda i.e., a collection of his 32 thousand Samkirthanas in the form of ethics, morals as well as philosophy, which in turn undoubtedly unveils the social, cultural and spiritual base of Indian ethos. Attempts to deep delve into the inherent ethos of Annamacharya's music brings to foray his attitude and aptitude in formulating the divinity with the sociality of music. Besides, his music that was oriented towards articulating the thoughts, feelings and lifestyles pertaining to the societal concerns, assumed the distinction as country music because it was in the reach of the common man.



Annamacharya's Andhra Veda, whether composed in *Sringara* (erotic) or *Adhyathma* (philosophical) style, exhibited his exemplary talents in the form of lyrical, musical and poetical talents like Brahmamokkate Parabrahmamokkate which clearly confutes the custom of caste discrimination imposed an ordinary man. His Padakavitas brought to lime light, the distinction between ancient and modern style of education. According to Annamacharya, the former acted as a pathway to reach Almighty, whereas the latter revolved entirely around temporal things. His equal emphasis on ethics like expressing matters veraciously in pleasing words, performing only positive social service, repressing the ever-springing desires, apart from opening an insight into the profundity of the Indian lifestyle, characterizes the multi-dimensionality of his compositions. What made his Padakavitas more approachable, adoptable and popular amongst the public is the usage of colloquial language, specifically intended for the explicable, widespread and frequent usage of the common man. As such, Annamacharya can be placed on par with the venerable poet Vemana for incorporating appropriately aphorisms within the songs that incurred him the name Bhava Yogi.

The available 9,791 scintillating *Sringara* Samkirthanas like Javvadi mettinadi which outnumbered the 2,209 *Adhyathma* Padakavitas, while peacefully passing from sensuality to spirituality, forcefully sketches his earnestness to inculcate love and spiritual fervor, the exemplified underlying sub-currents of Indian entity and identity.

Annamacharya's musical expression to invariable emotions in the form of *sobhana*, *tandana* and *laali* compositions like *Jo Achyuthananda jo jo Mukunda*, *Chandamaama Raave Jaabilli Raave* along with the Bhajans such as *Suprabhatham* (Ceremony of waking up the Lord), *Shodashaparacharam* (Sixteen-fold worship), *Sayanotsavam* (Customary cradling of Bhoga-Srinivasa in the nights) etc., besides invariably divulging in disclosing the inbuilt intrinsic values of

the Indian social, cultural and philosophical ethos directly strikes the chords of the human hearts due to their divine nature. In fact, the aesthetic appeal, novelty and subtlety stuffed in these Padas plausibly earned the epithet Padakavita Pitamaha (the grandsire of Indian poetry) to Annamacharya, for, his lyrical marvels delves deep into the depth of spiritual realms and establishes his sway over Sahitya. The existence of all the four essential elements of Indian Classical Music i.e., 1. Raga (construction of musical notes through a selected Melodic Mode), 2. Mood (Emotion or State of feelings), 3. Expression (the action of presenting or communicating in words that contains sentiment) 4. Similar and Identical Note Patterns (Same structural and same in constitution, properties and qualities as well as design) in all the Sankeerthanas earned Annamacharya an immortal place in the realm of music. In memory of his

contributions to the realm of Indian music, a college situated near the birth place of Annamacharya i.e., Thaallapaaka was named after him as Annamacharya Institute of Technology and Sciences.

As a matter of fact, in Annamacharya one can experience the synthesis of a moral expounder, social reformer, exquisite ethiologist, spiritual mentor, path-making poet and above all a melodious musician. Thus, a peep into the life and Sankirthanas of Annamacharya signifies that he adopted ...an effective medium not only for his spiritual betterment but also for bringing men face to face with the hard truths of life. What logic struggles to do through a mediate process of inference has been easily made understood to mankind by him through a medium having universal aesthetic appeal and also having its source in the divine.

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