

Reflection of Indian Spiritual Heritage through Sanskrit Devotional Lyrics of South India

Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, Regional Centre, Puducherry is organising a three day National Seminar on August 28-30, 2018 in collaboration with Department of Sanskrit, Pondicherry University at the auditorium of UMISARC building.

Introduction- It is praiseworthy to place on record that South India, once upon a time, was fortunate to be the abode of many saints, philosophers, visionaries like twelve Vaishnavite Alvars and 63 Saivite Nayanmars on one hand and Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhva , Vedanta Desika, AppayaDikshita, Vyasa Tirtha, NilakanthaDikshita, Raghavendra Swamy, Annamacharya, Narayana Bhattatiri, Lilasuka and Narayana Guru on the other.

The Alvars are venerated especially in Vaishnavism. Their devotional outpourings helped to revive the bhakti movement through their hymns of worship to Vishnu as the Supreme Being and his avatars. The collection of devotional lyrics of Alvars is known as *DivyaPrabandha*.

Nayanmars (6th to 8th Century) were saints devoted to the Hindu god Shiva in Tamil Nadu. Their devotional poems were differently compiled and were known as Thirumurai, Thiruvacakam and the like. These poems are full of visionary experience, divine love, urgent striving for truth, discourses, emotional devotion to Shiva and objections to Vaishnavism, Jainism and Buddhism. Both Alvars and Nayanmars have chosen Tamil as a medium of expression to propagate their vision among locals.

Whereas the later thinkers starting from Sankaracharya have opted Sanskrit as the best medium for establishing their revelation among locals and beyond. Their judicious argument, power of reasoning, style of defeating opponent's views by using Sanskrit language are marvelous.

Significance-Devotional lyrics specially of South India composed by different poets, saints and philosophers occupy a distinct status among entire Sanskrit literature. Devotion means love towards desired Gods or Goddesses. These lyrics are created along with their philosophic-religious discourse. Many south Indian saivite and vaishnavite saints have profusely compiled a good number of prayers (stotras) eulogizing the nature and exploit of their loving Gods and Goddesses in Sanskrit language. In this context, devotional lyrics were initially understood as an integral part of philosophical discipline. But later on it was established as a separate cult. The practice of devotion is very simple and easy for the common man to attain the ultimate goal in life. According to the nature, desire or ambition of human beings, the devotion and devotees have also been categorized.

Bhakti is the intense love, devotion and surrendering at the feet of God. The devotion brings solace to the grief smitten hearts and upholds inner strength. The underlying idea of all saints preaching the path of devotion may be categorized as (i) to unite all section of the people without any distinction of different castes, and by travelling from place to place; (ii) condemning rituals, ceremonies and blind faith; (iii) following the path of a Guru for guidance. The Bhakti saints believed in equality of man and woman. According to them there was no distinction and consideration of high and low on the basis of birth. Their doors were open to all classes. The Bhakti saints tried to generate an environment of good will between the Hindus and the Muslims and prepared a harmonic atmosphere for social reformation.

Further Bhakti movement clutches and influences philosophic-religious, socio-political, spirituous-material and moral impact on individuals and society. It encourages religious toleration and bestows the qualities like compassion, forgiveness, sympathy, fraternity, non-violence, truthfulness and honesty etc.

Three days National seminar on the topic “**Reflection of Indian Spiritual Heritage through Sanskrit Devotional Lyrics of South India**” is sought to highlight the contribution of following authors who composed variety of stotras and preached them in the society.

Devotional Lyrics to be illustrated

S.No	Authors	Date	Place	Devotional Lyrics
1	Adi Sankara	778-820	Kerala	GaneshaPancharatnam, Annapurnashtakam, Kalabhairavashtakam, DakshinamurthyStotram, Krishnashtakam, BhajaGovindam,, Śivānandalahari, Saundaryalahari, ŚrīLakṣmīnṛsimha, ŚāradāBhujangam, KanakadhāraStotram, BhavāniAṣṭakam, Śiva MānasaPūja, Pandurangashtakam, Subramanya Bhujangam, Kashi PanchakamSuvarnamala
2	Ramanuja	1077-1157	Tamilnadu	Nyasa Tilakam, Nyasa Vimsati, Nyasa Dasakam
3.	Madhvacharya	1238–1317	Karnataka	Composed 12 Stotras
4	Vedanta Desika	1268–1370	Tamilnadu	Hayagriva Stotram, Garuda Panchasa, DevanayakaPanchasat, AchyutaSatakam, RaghuveeraGadyam, Gopala Vimsati, DehaleesaStuti, VaradarajaPanchasat, AshtabhujaAshtakam, VegasetuStotram, KamasikaAshtakam, Saranagati Deepika, ParamarthaStuti, SudarsanaAshtakam, ShodasaayudhaStotra, DayaSatakam, Sri Stuti, BhuStuti, GodaStuti, DasavataraStotram, YatirajaSaptati, AbhitiStava,
5	AppayaDikshita	16 th century	Andhra	Varadarajastava, Atmarpanastuti, UnmattaPanchasati, Apitakuchambastava, Nigrahastaka, Hari Hara stut, Durga Chandra kala stuti, Aditya Stotraratna, Sri Margabandhupancharatna, Gangadharastaka, Manasollasastuti
6	Vyasa Thirtha	1447–1548	Karnataka	
7	Raghavendra Swamy	1595–1671	Karnataka	
8	NilakanthaDikshita		Tamilnadu	Sivalilarnava
9	Lilasuka	9 th century	Kerala	Krishna Karnamrta
10	Kulasekhara		Tamilnadu	Mukundamala
11	Mukakavi		Tamilnadu	Mukapanchasati
12	Narayana Bhatta		Kerala	Narayaniya
13	Annamacharya		Andhra	

14	Narayana Guru		Kerala	
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