

LANGUAGE IN INDIA

Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow

Volume 10 : 8 August 2010

ISSN 1930-2940

Managing Editor: M. S. Thirumalai, Ph.D.

Editors: B. Mallikarjun, Ph.D.

Sam Mohanlal, Ph.D.

B. A. Sharada, Ph.D.

A. R. Fatihi, Ph.D.

Lakhan Gusain, Ph.D.

K. Karunakaran, Ph.D.

Jennifer Marie Bayer, Ph.D.

S. M. Ravichandran, Ph.D.

Contributions of Anna to Tamil Culture and Literature

A. Boologa Rambai, Ph.D.



Anna

Introduction

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

10 : 8 August 2010

A. Boologa Rambai, Ph.D.

Contributions of Anna to Tamil Culture and Literature

Anna is a household name among the Tamils. Anna changed the course of history for the Tamil speaking people, and his contributions continue to influence the thinking of millions of Tamils around the world.

C. N. Annadurai, (Conjeevaram Natarajan Annadurai, 15 September 1909 – 3 February 1969) is a gifted scholar-leader, popularly known by all and most endearingly called as Anna (Elder Brother). He was called as *iirōTTu naayakattin talaimai viirar Anna* (The Foremost Warrior of the Captain from Erode) by *kalaigñar* Karunanidhi. He was a “disciple” of Periyar E.V.

Ramasamy, a great Congress leader turned into the founder, organizer and leader of the powerful Rationalist Movement among the Tamils. Anna was Periyar’s lieutenant and he surpassed all, including Periyar, in his oratory and in organizing millions of Tamils around the world into a dedicated community who would love and cherish their Tamil identity wherever they are. There is no other leader like Anna among the Tamils for the last 2000 years of recorded history who would become such an undisputed leader of Tamils.

Anna’s contributions cover a whole range of disciplines such as literature, oratory, rationalism, social reformation, journalism, movies, etc. In him we find a harmonious combination of so many rare qualities. He was a mass leader, original thinker, able editor of magazines, and distinguished scholar, lover of books, famous journalist, attractive orator of par excellence, efficient organizer, able administrator, cultural ambassador, friend of all, popular Chief Minister and a perfect gentle man.

Public Speaker

Annadurai was a multidimensional personality. Anna created an era in the field of platform speech as far as Tamilnadu was concerned. Himself being a powerful orator of his times he produced a number of good speakers of his kind who imitate his style, diction, alliteration, allusion and such other aspects. Among those who inherited this trait from Anna is *Kalaigñar* Karunanidhi, the present Chief Minister of Tamilnadu.

Apart from other characteristics, Anna’s speeches were predominantly emotional. Through his orations, he was able to influence millions of his followers and spur them into political action.

Be it is an ordinary public meeting or fund-raising special meetings conducted mostly in halls or enclosures, or be it the often organized conferences of the DMK, Anna was able to create an indelible impression in the minds of the audiences. Though he was great in many ways, his oratorical skill occupied the predominant place in his political career. Normally he spoke for 40-45 minutes. But, from the very first second to the last he always held the people spell bound, charging them with rationalism and love for Tamil, concern for the poor and needy, and an agitational mode against the imposition of Hindi. He was also sarcastic and delicately critical of his opponents holding different and contrasting ideologies.

Anna's Tamil at the platform speech originally was a sort of mixed Tamil, with a penchant for alliteration, allusion, sarcasm, and description of events and characters in a style that would draw pictures in our minds. As he became more popular and as his involvement in Tamil loyalty and adoration became an equal part of his rationalist ideology, his choice of vocabulary became more and more sort of pure Tamil words, and his sentences were a bit longer. His audience was ready for these changes or new additions because they were mostly school-going or college-going students and youngsters. His sentences also became longer. However, the original spirit of alliteration, allusion, sarcasm, vivid description of events and characters, and deeper thoughts were never lost. Anna's speech slowly avoided the use of Tamil colloquial language, and introduced a standard that would become closer to ordinary written Tamil. Anna's influence in making Tamil a modern idiom is great; where great Tamil scholars wrote in pure and difficult to comprehend Tamil style, Anna used ordinary pure Tamil words and made his language easy to follow.

Anna was a fluent orator of a high caliber, capable of speaking on any topic extempore and holding the audience spell bound. Millions of people, particularly the youngsters, were attracted by the wonderful eloquence of Dr. Annadurai. Statistical evidence shows that Dr. Annadurai stood first among the Indian leaders in attracting the largest audience. He was not only well versed in Tamil speeches but equally proficient and well versed in eloquence in English. His speeches were very attractive, interesting, inspiring and, above all, thought-provoking.

Vocabulary

Anna created and used many correct and apt words for some of the Sanskrit words:

Akkraacanaathipathi > avaittalaivar	“The leader of the Council”
Piracangam > coRpozhivu	“Public speech”
Namashkaaram > vaNakkam	“Wishes”
TuvajarookaNam > koTiyeeRRu vizhaa	“Flag hoisting function”
Sathiyameevajeyathee > vaayimaiyee vellum	“The truth will win”

By this he enriches the vocabulary of Tamil language.

Poetry

Anna had an excellent knowledge of Tamil poetry. He also wrote in poetic language on many occasions. Anna's special articles during Pongal season were poetic in their conception, and presented cameos of Tamil valour, gems of the ideal scenes of the days of Karikala and Rajaraja.

Writer

Anna had a very powerful mighty pen, which produced a number of good books in Tamil. His writings identified him as an intellectual, rationalist and humanist. He was an excellent writer of essays, short stories, plays, novels, film scripts and tit-bits. His journalistic writings moulded public opinion in support of the Dravidian renaissance. His writing originally attracted young person, but soon he came to influence people of all ages, both men and women.

Both his speeches and writings were characterized by the beauty of expression, clarity of thought, brevity in diction, simplicity of style, intelligibility of language. Euphonic alliteration and rhymes, appropriate and arresting similes, humorous anecdotes and, above all, revolutionary thoughts with a Marxist angle were the special features of his speeches and writings. His early writings were anti-religious and pro-atheistic. At this age, brahmanical thought and practice were severely attacked by him through speech and writing with facts and figures and citations from Hindu Sanskrit religious texts and from Tamil puranas and mythologies. However, there was switch to other and more common issues of poverty, freedom from Hindi imposition, state autonomy and so on.

As editor of *ViDuthalai* and *KuDiYarasu* Anna wrote reviews, editorials, articles satires and short stories. In 1942 Anna started his own weekly *Dravida Nadu* and developed a distinct style of his own. Later he started another weekly *Kanchi*. This weekly had as its main attraction his letters to the younger brothers titled as *en anbu tambikku*, (My beloved Younger Brothers). Those were his clarion call, observations on current affairs, pen pictures of the leading personalities of the day, and responses to attacks of Periyar, Kamaraj and other political parties. In 1949 he assumed the editorship of Tamil Daily *Maalai MaNi* and started to propagate the cause of the Dravidian Progressive Federation (DMK). Bound volumes of his weekly are trend setters, and provide inspiration to Tamils of all ages in their efforts to see state autonomy, preservation of their mother tongue and the social and economic uplift of all communities.

Dramas

Anna wrote 20 plays. His first drama “Chandrodayam” (1943) was a thematic one. He formed a drama troupe in Kanchi in his *Dravida Nadu* office and enacted the play with the help and participation of his comrades C.V. Rajagopal, K. Subramaniam and Ezhathu AdikaL. He took the leading role of Dorairaj himself in this drama. His “Nallathmbai” and “Veelaikkaari” were filmed and became great hits. Veelaikkaari and Oor iravu with K.R.Ramasawmi in the lead were staged in Thanjavur for many months. Anna’s dialogues were so superb and effective that Kalki, a great Tamil novelist and essayist from the opposite camp, compared Anna to Bernard Shaw and Ibsen. Anna’s great drama Shivaji’s Hindu Raj was sensational. It pinpointed the dominance of kakabhaTTa, the Varanasi priest Shivaji the great ruler. Anna as kakabhaTTa and M.V.C

Ganesan as Shivaji held the audiences spell bound. His dialogues in “Sorgavaasal” exposed the machinations of the Hindu Rasputins. In “Needhi Deevan mayakkam,” Anna’s cross-examination of mythological heroes is breath-taking. Anna’s camp was full of movie actors like MGR, Sivaji Ganesan, SSR, K.R.Ramasamy and D.V.Narayanasamy. Anna’s Tamil writings and speeches and his espousal of the cause of all downtrodden people completely captivated the younger generation. In addition to plays, Anna also wrote several novels. His prose works number around 85.

Short Stories

Anna’s writings on a variety of themes that appeared in the paper “ViDutalai” are certainly a meaningful and constructive contribution from the social and the literary points of view. In 1934, when he was a student of Patchaiyppa’s College in Chennai, Anna started to write a short story “Kokkarakkoo” in the monthly magazine “Anandha vikaTan” and got Rs.20/- as a reward. His last short story was “Kathaiyin uLLam’. In total, he wrote 89 short stories. Anna’s style of narrating a short story was distinct from others and his is one of the three major traditions in Tamil short story. Kasturi Rangan mentioned in his journal Deepam, the short story tradition is divided in to three namely i) MaNikkoDi Tradition, ii) Kalki Tradition and iii) Annadurai Tradition. That much he was well known in short story writings and achieved a special place in the history of short story in Tamil. So many people followed his style in due course. Anna encouraged young writers like Vanan, Dasarathan, Kalaignar, Arangannal, Thillaivallavan, Radhamanalan, Ezhathuadikal and Kanchi KalyanaSundaram.

Anna’s main aim in writing short stories was to portray the injustice meted out to the socially and economically down trodden people and to work for the creation of a harmonious and well developed casteless society. Some of his short stories are “Tanjai viizhcci”, varavu selavu”, aariya maayai etc. He raised his voice against the suppression of women. He strongly supported the cause of women and wanted women to come out of the submissive jail they were placed in and take part in all of the social activities and work in all the departments of life. He whole heartedly supported women’s right to property and freedom of expression, education, etc. He used his short stories as a tool for the liberation of women.

Movies

Anna was an extraordinary intellectual, well-versed in writing movie scripts. His contributions to Tamil movies as film script writer are substantial. His dialogues in the cinema “Oor iravu” “Veelaikkaari” are very famous and thought-provoking. These two cinemas made a turning point in the Tamil movie field. For the picture oor iravu, Anna was asked to write the dialogue and it was given to him in the midnight. The whole night without sleeping he wrote the dialogues fir that movie.

To propagate the DMK principles and ideology, both Anna and Kalaingar utilized movie media very effectively. This ultimately paved the way for two leading movie actors from the South, MGR and NTR, to become chief ministers in Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh respectively.

Linda Sekar writes that a movie script usually has the following parts.

- i) Gathering ideas
- ii) The three act structure
- iii) Why you need it
- iv) What to do with it?
- v) What do subplots do?
- vi) How to keep the movie moving?
- vii) Create the scene, create the script, and make it commercially successful.

All these are easily identified in Anna's film Oor iravu. However, what is most significant is that the movie carries a social and rationalistic message, even though carrying such messages could have resulted in the financial failure of the movie. The following Anna had among the Tamils was guarantee enough for the film to succeed at the box office. There was no need for him to device ways artificially to make his films commercially successful. People went to see emotional scenes that portrayed the fight between tradition and modernity, superstition and rationalism, dull language delivery and powerful and full-throated language delivery by leading roles. Rationalism, fight for social and economic justice, and struggle against superstitious beliefs were in great demand at that time.

Motto

The motto of C.N. Annadurai was KaTamai (Duty), kaNNiyam (Dignity) and kaTTuppaaDu (Discipline). Another motto was Ethaiyum taankum idhayam "We have the heart that will withstand anything". His thoughts are MaatRaana tooTTattu mallikaikkum maNamunTu "The jasmine in the opponent's garden also has sweet fragrance". He is a powerful and popular prose writer. He possessed an imitable and exclusive style of his own. His advice to the emerging educated class among the Tamils was Kattiyait tiiTTaatee; putthiyait tiiTTu "Don't sharpen the knife; but sharpen the Mind", EeDaa tambi, eDuDaa peenaa "Hay, brother, Take your pen to write (to fight)", kooTu uyaranthadu; kunRam taazhntatu "The mountain comes down but the line (small one) goes up", maRappoom; mannippoom "Forget and forgive", Venta puNNil veelaip paayccaatee "Don't hurt me, already I have a wound", teeDic celvathillai; naaDi vantatai viTuvathillai "I won't go voluntarily to seek pleasures; but I don't miss that which is

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

206

10 : 8 August 2010

A. Boologa Rambai, Ph.D.

Contributions of Anna to Tamil Culture and Literature

given” OnRee kulam; Oruvanee teyvam “There is only one caste and one God”, OLimayamaana etirkaalam enkaNkaLil terikiRathu “Bright and prosperous feature was seen in my eyes”.

It should be necessarily mentioned that some of his thoughts have become proverbs of Tamil language. 1) Duty, Dignity and Discipline which explains the code of conduct to be followed by one and all. 2) The second proverb that the heart that will withstand anything clearly emphasises the importance of courage for every human being. 3) The third proverb that the jasmine in the opponent’s garden smells as sweet as our own, highlights the need to appreciate the good even in our opponents. Though Anna is no more his sayings have become immortal proverbs of universal applicability.

Administrator

Initially, Anna was considered to be one among the top five leaders of the DMK. This was a democratic arrangement to recognize and honor the team. Soon, Anna was accepted as the leader of all, willingly. Anna was a lieutenant of Periyar, but for some reasons (not discussed in this article), Anna had to leave him and he founded DMK. And yet Anna always took Periyar to be his mentor and leader, and the ideology of Periyar was assumed to be the basis of DMK as well.

Anna’s erudition, eloquence, self-discipline, integrity and simplicity became the sheet-anchor of his public life. Anna also proved himself to be an able administrator and a respected statesman.

Anna’s crowning act was the change of the name “Madras State” into Tamilnadu. It is one of his memorable achievements. As the Chief Minister of Tamilnadu, Anna convened the World Tamil Conference in 1968. Anna’s address to the delegates was very moving. Anna’s versatile genius enthroned Tamil in the hearts of the Tamil people all over the world. He had the felicity to form close friendship with people of diverse opinions and tastes. These bundles of laudable qualities had earned Anna a place of permanent reputation in the history of Tamilnadu. While in power, Anna encouraged intercaste marriages and framed a law in support of such marriages.

M.V. Somasundaram in his article “An inspired icon of a Renaissance Period” mentions that, “Among the three outstanding reformers who have become part and parcel of the social progress, that Tamilnadu has been witnessing, Arignar Anna was one among them. The other two are Thanthai Periyar and Dr. Kalaignar Karunanidhi. They can be aptly called the DRAVIDIAN TRINITY and they can be appropriately equated to Socrates, Plato and Aristotle of Greece”.

A. Boologarambai, Ph.D.
Department of Tamil and Translation Studies
Dravidian University
Kuppam 517 425

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

10 : 8 August 2010

A. Boologa Rambai, Ph.D.
Contributions of Anna to Tamil Culture and Literature

Andhra Pradesh
India
arpudharambai@gmail.com