

Sampradaya Bhajans and Their Potential Influence on Human Values

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Abstract: A super busy family where a teenage child is seeking refuge on the internet, an elderly couple at an old aged home pining to meet their children for years, and a couple separating after years of marriage, with their children now sure that marriage is an evil !

Such situations are not uncommon nowadays and one of the prime reasons for these is the deterioration of Human Values. This calls for an immediate attention to all humans to tap into effective tools successfully used in the past for the mitigation of this situation. Music is one such tool for reinforcing Human Values. This study analyzes Sampradaya Bhajans to highlight the Human Values they encapsulate .

The analysis of various compositions show that all the parameters like Raga, Laya, Sahitya and Bhava contribute to Human Values that range from surrender, satisfaction, and gratitude to celebration, passion , science and research

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I. Introduction

Value can be defined in a layman's language as something which is worthy or important. The worthiness can be because of its utility, beauty or power to help us lead a good life. Human values are defined as those values which help man to live in happiness, peace and harmony with the world. Human Values are universal in nature and grounded in rationalism and acceptance.

“Human Value is an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence. A value-system is an enduring organization of beliefs concerning preferable modes of conduct or end-state of existence along a continuum of relative importance” (Rokeach 1973:5). “The *Sruti* and *Smriti* provide a general understanding of *Dharma* and *Adharma* which most of us have heard from childhood” (Tejomayananda 1994: 93). The essence of Humanism is handed down to us through various epics and in the epic Ramayana, the qualities of Rama stand out as a personification of Humanism (Rajagopalachari 2001).

“The characters from the *Puranas* show us the goal. The way to reach it is through the actual practice of prescribed *Karmas*” (Saraswathi 2014: 247).

We are shaped by life experiences and learnings from the day we are born . The behaviour of our parents, the examples set by our siblings and teachers, the kind of friends we make in school and the values they influence, all the above contribute to shaping our value system and thereby our behaviour . Good and bitter experiences can both shape our value system.

Depending on our life experiences and what we observe, read, and are taught, our value systems can diverge from those needed for peaceful coexistence

For humankind to coexist , sustain and progress, these human values need to be imbibed and practised by everyone. Such values are independent of time and space . When these universal values deteriorate, there is degradation of the quality of life. Hence Human Values need to be reinforced time and again

Music has the necessary attraction and the right vibrations for the mind, heart and soul to receive the human value reinforcement easily. Even without any explicit message, the vibrations of music can put us at peace. Music creates an instant environment of receptivity to Human Value Reinforcement

“Art experience is well adapted to arouse our interest in the ideal state by giving us foretaste of it, and thus to serve as a powerful incentive to the pursuit of that state. By provisionally fulfilling the need felt by man for restful joy, art experience may impel him to do his utmost to secure such joy finally” (Hirianna 1997: 32).

This study will help musicologists, practitioners , teachers, students, and rasikas alike in enjoying, communicating, and benefiting from the compositions, with increased awareness of the Human Values they can potentially influence. This will in turn help mitigate the Human Value crisis we face time and again

Sampradaya Bhajans started as chanting of names of God as a community in chorus. The members of the audience used to repeat the songs rendered by the lead singer after him.

Nearly three hundred years back a great saint called Bhodendra Saraswathi who later adorned the Kama Koti Peetam of Kanchi was born. He was asked by his Guru to collect the great book on Bhajans by Saint Lakshmi Dhara of Puri. Bhodendra Saraswathi visited Puri and found that this form of community worship of God was very attractive. He decided that the system of Bhajans(Bhajana Sampradayam) should be introduced in the south and worked for the same.

Another great sage called Sridhara Ayyaval who was a contemporary of Bodhendral also liked this form of giving fillip to the Bhakti movement and contributed a lot to this new vehicle of Bhakthi.

This great tradition was further carried forward by Marudanallur sadguru Swamigal who introduced the present day Sampradaya Bhajan paddhati

The various parts of the ideal Dakshina Bharatha Sampradaya Bhajanai are :

Pundareekam and Prathivachanam :

Here, either a God is asked to be remembered or his victory is sung. The audience responds by remembering his name or singing victory to that God.

Dhyana Slokam :

These stanzas give a description of the Gods who are going to be addressed by the Bhajan.

Thodaya Mangalam :

These are set of songs composed by saints like Bhadrachala Ramdas , Annamacharya and Vijayagopala Swamigal which were compiled by Maruthanallur Sadguru Swamigal

Guru Dhyanam :

These are songs praising the God Dakshinamurthy followed by great Gurus Adhi Shankara ,Bhodendral, Sridhara Ayyaval , Marudanallur Sadguru Swamigal etc. followed by meditation of these Gurus.

Guru Abhangs :

Abhangs are Marathi devotional songs steeped in lilting rhythm and bhakti.

Sadhu Keertanas :

These are hymns of Sadhus and saints. These can be abhangs also

Jayadeva's Ashtapadi (Geeta Govindam) :

Narayana Teertha's Tarangas (Krishna leela Tharangini) :

Panchapati :

Five songs in Telugu (Bhadrachala Ramadas), Kannada (Sri Purandara dasa), Sanskrit (Sri Sadasiva Brahmendral), Tamil (Sri Gopalakrishna Bharathi) and compositions of Sri Tyagaraja and if time permits, one can sing the North Indian Bhajan Compositions of Kabir Das, Meera Bai, Tulsidas or Surdas, Marathi Abhangs on Lord Panduranga

Dhyana Keerthanas or Namavalis :

Then comes the turn of Dyana keertanas (hymns on Gods, stuti, Abhangs, or Guru Keertanai). In the Dyana Keertana, it starts from Lord Ganesha Saraswati Muruga (Karthikeyan) Shiv Durga Narasimhan Ram Krishna Venkateshwar Vittal Ranganathan Dashavatara stuti Vittal (Marathi Abhangs on Lord Panduranga) Lakshmi Sita / Radha Hanuman Garuda Aiyappan Chandeeswaran Nandikeshwaran Chaitanya deva (Gauranga) Guru Keertana

Pradakshina :

With a lighted lamp in the middle and considering the lamp as God, the Bhagavatas perform sankirtan by doing pradakshinas. This equals going around the earth.

Dolotsavam (making God sleep), Anjaneya songs and Mangalam

II. Methods and Materials

The scope of the paper is limited to the South Indian Sampradaya Bhajans Tradition. This is a *qualitative* study using *purposive sampling* for the compositions. It is *exploratory* in nature.

The parameters used for the analysis of the compositions are Raga (melody), Laya(Rhythm), Sahitya(Lyrics), and Bhava(Expression). For Sahitya, due importance is given to the *prosody* and *inner meanings*. Bhava is an amalgamation of all the above parameters and also includes the *composer's impulse* while creating the composition.

Analysis of Compositions and their Potential Influence On Human Values

The author looks at some of the compositions from this tradition and how they hold the potential to reinforce Human Values.

Dhyana Slokas

Sahitya

Shuklambaradaram Vishnum, Sasi varnam chathur bujam, Prasanna Vadanam dhyayeth, Sarva Vigna upasanthaye

Prahlada , Narada , Parasara , Pundareeka, Vyasa, Ambareesha , Sukha, Sounaka, Bheeshma, Dhalbyaan, Rukmangadha, Arjuna, Vasishta, Vibheeshanaadheen, Punyanimaan Parama Bhagwathan smarami Yethan nirvidhyamanam, Icha thama kuthobhayam, Yoginaam nrupa nirneetham, Harer namanu keerthanam Vishnor ganam cha Nrutham cha, Natanam cha viseshatha , Brahman Brahmana jatheenaam, Karthavyam nithya karma vath Kalakshebho na karthavya, Ksheenam aayu kshane kshane , Yamasya karuna nasthi, Karthvyam Hari Keerthanam. Smruthi sakala kalyana, Bajanam yathra jayathe, Purushastha majam nithyam, Vrujami saranam harim. Aalodya sarva sasthrani, Vicharya cha puna puna, Itham yekam sunishpannam, Dhyaye yo narayana ssada. Budhir balam yaso dairyam, Nirbhasyathwam aroghadhaa, Ajadyam vak paduthwam cha, Hanumath smaranath bhaveth.

Human Values

Prasannavadanam dhyayeth -> **Smiling** is an important value. The more we smile , the more we can be at peace and the more happiness we can spread.\

Prahlada , Narada, Ambareesha, Arjuna, Vibhishana -> Prahlada stands for **Perseverance**, Ambareesha stands for **Endurance**, Narada for **Self Control**, Arjuna for **Courage**, Vibhishana for **Dutifulness** .

Yethan nirvidhyamanam, Icha thama kuthobhayam -> **Education** as a value loses its place if it is not complemented by **Sharing** and **Humility**

Karthvyam Hari Keerthanam -> **Dutifulness** is a prime value to be cultivated by all. It is not merely the touttind daily duties. It is also a duty to remember the Lord in whichever way possible

Itham yekam sunishpannam, Dhyaye yo narayana ssada -> **Science** and **Research** are values that go hand in hand with the awareness of the creator

Budhir balam yaso dairyam, Nirbhasyathwam aroghadhaa -> **Intelligence, Strength, Fame Bravery, Fearlessness, Good Health, Good Speech** are all universal values which are attributed to Hanuman , and which one should yearn for and practise in daily life

Thus, the Dhyana slokas create the aura of receptivity to the music and its message that is to follow. Through references to the Gods, and the Sampradaya Bhajan trinity, they churn out an important and **Universal Value System**.

Thodaya Mangalam

The song analysed here for human values is in Nattai Raga - "Jaya Janaki Ramana" by Bhadrachala Ramdas. In this, Lord Rama is described and praised for his virtues.

Sahitya

Jaya janaki Ramana , Jaya Vibheeshanasarana,
Jaya saroruhacharana , Jaya dheenakarunajaya, jaya
Jaya lokasaranya , Jaya Bhakthakarunya,
Jaya divyalavanya , Jaya jagatpunyajaya, jaya
.Sakala loka vasa, Saketha pure vasa,
Akalanka nijadasa , abhjamukha haasa jaya, jaya
Shukha muni Sthuthipathra , Subhathanija charithra,
Makara Kundalakarna, Mekasaama varna jaya, jaya
Kamaneeya koteera , Kousthubaalankara,
Kamalaksha Raghu veera, kamalaa vihara jaya , jaya
Samara ripujayadheera , Sakala guna gambheera,
Amalaa hruth sanchara , akhilarthi hara jaya , jaya
Roopa nindithamaara, ruchira sadgunasoora,
Bhoopa dasaratha kumara, Bhoo bara hara jaya, jaya
Papa sangavidhara, pankthimukha samhara ,
Sripathesukumara , Sitaviharajaya, Radha Vihara, jaya Jaya
Mandhara mole madanabhiramam, Binhadara pooritha venunadham,
Go gopa, Gopijana Madhya samstham, Gopambhaje Gokula poornachandram

Human Values :

The example of Vibhishana where Rama does not doubt his faith, is given here. The Nattai prayoga of SRSNP is used in this part and the blend of music and lyrics to signify the faith of Vibhishana can be felt. **Faith** when cultivated as a value eliminates all doubts, thereby leading to peace.

Lokasharanya - **Approachability**, Bhaktakarunya - **Compassion**, Divyalavanya - **Beauty**, and Jagatpunya - **Purity**, are emphasised as key values.

Sakalagunagambhira , and Sadgunashooru signify **Strength** and **Courage** to exemplify and practise all values. Shukamuni Stuthipatra signifies **Respect** and **Praise** as important values to be imbibed and practised.

Guru Keertanas -> Bodhendra Swamigal Sahitya :

Raagam : Kanada **Taalam :** Triputa

*bodhendragurum bhajeham yogeendravararam
sreedhara venkateswara saacharam
ramakadhArasajnam ramanAmathathvajnam boomijApathiprajnam namasAsthragunajnam
paramathavibedakam paramabakthibOdakam parama sugadAyakam parijanEshtadesikam
bavathApa bayaharam sivarAmasrameeswaram kavi hruthpadmamihiram vivida gunanikaram*

Human Values :

The name Bodhendra stands for **Awareness** of the senses , and the word Yogeendra stands for **Control** of the senses. Awareness and Control are values that are needed to ensure lasting happiness.

Sridhara Venkatesam saacharam , means one was followed by Sridhara ventkatesa . **Leadership** is when others automatically follow you.

The next paragraph is exemplified with his enjoyment of Rama nama, Besides, he was a symbol of **Wisdom**, and was an exemplifier of all values

He believed in “**Unity in Variety**” . He had the supreme understanding of bhakti . **Devotion** itself is a value encompassing other values

He had mastery over his knowledge and could easily impart this to others. **Mastery** of a subject is also a key human value.

He was **Fearless** and in his presence, others were too

Ashrama - a place of natural vibrations , a spiritual dwelling . Ramayana is complete with descriptions of ashrams. **Nature** as a critical value comes out here

The raga Kanada is beautifully blended to indicate the values. . The characteristic phrase MPNPG is used for saacharam to emphasize **Good Company**.

Sridhara Ayyaval

Sahitya

Raagam : Sankarabharanam **Taalam :** Triputa

*sreedhara venkatesam smaraamyaham sreedhara venkatesam
saadhujana hitopadeshakam saddesikam (sreedhara)
varabhasmankita gatram haranama japasutram
haravinihitanetram harakruparasapatram (sreedhara)
kalitanamasiddhantam dalitaduritadhvantam
jwalat adityavat bhantam phalita vijnana svantam (sreedhara)
sivachintana vololam sivakathodadhi khelam
sivaramasrami palam sivakaivalyanukulam (sreedhara)*

Human Values :

Varabhasmankita gatram -> He has a body covered with ash. Holy ash signifies the realization of truth, the truth that we are mortals and should live our life in **Humility** and **Gratitude**

Harinama Japasutram - The all encompassing knowledge and wisdom of the saints like Sridhara Ayyaval which translates into a single ideal to follow, is indicated here. He is the Sutram or the truth which if we seek, we shall be free from the worldly ailments. **Wisdom** as a value over mere knowledge is emphasized here.

hara kriparasa patram -> Sridhara Ayyaval once allowed a hungry peasant to eat food that was supposed to be offered to the Brahmins. He got ostracised for this, but Siva himself came to his rescue. **Faith** as an exemplary value is highlighted here.

Sivakaivalyanukulam -> Kaivalya means solitude, detachment, or isolation. **Solitude** here refers to the ego getting dissolved and the mind and heart filled with knowledge, wisdom and purity. This kind of solitude where there is **Satisfaction** and no expectation is paramount to leading a good life

Marudanallur Sadguru Swamigal Sahitya

Ragam – Sahana Talam – Adi

*Bhaje Sadgurum, Anisham, Bhaje Sadgurum, Gururaja Anisham,
TejasAbhja hitha kara thulyam, Divya bavvyva guna paripoornam
Rajasekaramivasthitham-akhiloth, dharana nimitham bhuvamava theernam (bhaje)
KandarAksha thulasi mAlam, kandalambitha akshaya pAtram
karaveenam suvisAla vakshasam, kanaka nibandam mrdhu dara gAtram (Bhaje)
prushtalambina mAmshuka, aveshtitha sirasam bahu sarasham
pundrAlika vara nAshaka polam, pundarika nayanam mruduhAsam (Bhaje)
indu bimba sama suchartram, nandaniya madhdhala ganam
sundara chamara kethana kanchana dandadhari sannutha damanam (bhaje)
vishnu vidhisha swaroopinam, vijnAnatha pAdhuka charanam
krishna padhAmbuja pambara radha, krishna dAsa vara mAnasa sadhanam (bhaje)*

Human Values :

Bhaje Sadgurum, Anisham -> Anisham means continuously . **Continuity** is a value. Movement is life and movements create happy moments in life. This is possibly only when interruptions are ignored or won over, and continuity is ensured

TejasAbhja hitha kara thulyam -> **Purity** is a key value goal was to be as pure as the lotus and as bright as the sun

Kandalambitha akshaya pAtram -> he was like the akshaya patram which is a ever filled vessel - This refers to the Human Value of **Abundance** which is a desirable quality in a human being

Indu bimba sama suchartram -> Indu Bimba - image of moon - being a shadow of brilliance is important. **Reflection** as a human value is emphasized here

VijnAnatha pAdhuka charanam -> Love for science - Science itself is a value because **Research** and **Creativity** as a human Value ensures the progress of Humanity

Abhangs -> Guru Abhangs Sahitya

*Guru dhyaayi Guru dhyaayi, Guru parathe sadhana nahin
Kele Sath Guru poojana, hechi maje anushtana
Guru seva cha sangalpa, chehi maje poorna thapa
Shantheeswara sange varma, Guruthopi Parabhrahma*

Human Values

Discipline is a value. In this , he says service to Guru is discipline . Having a firm resolve or Sankalpa for action is a value. **Determination** follows from a firm resolve, and doing something selfless for a Guru, sharpens the value of determination. Here **Selflessness** is also a universal value to cultivate, which helps all to have a good life

Sadhu Abhangs Sahitya

*Santha Padaachi Jod Derehari, Sadhu Padhachi JOd
SanthSamagamey Aaathmasukhache, Sundar Ugave Mod
Sufalit Karuni PoornaManorath, Purvisi Jivinche Kod
Amrut Mhane Re Haribhakhthanche, SheVat Karisi Gohd*

Human Values

Sadhu Abhangs emphasize the fact that to correct our value system, one should seek the company of people who indulge in a simple life doing good deeds for other people. The composer asks God to give herself the company of such people , of saints and sadhus. These are not spiritual gurus, but very ordinary people who set examples of true living in their day to day household life. He says this is the company that will lead to self satisfaction. This will pave a beautiful way forward. The values of **Satisfaction, Simplicity and Discernment** are indicated here for a better life. The composer says such company will lead to disappearance of unwanted expectations. **Self-Realization** is also a value which is highlighted in the last line. It says that we mere mortals have to face the end someday and such good company in life will make that end sweet and without regrets

Ashtapadis

In the following 19th Ashtapadhi , Krishna finally meets Radha. It's easy to be angry with a loved one when they're not in sight, but when they suddenly appear in front of us, we don't know what to think. Radha was similarly confused. Krishna begins to plead with her to forgive him — “Hand me any punishment, say anything, do anything, but please don't be angry at me any more, I'm being tormented by love!”

Sahitya

*atrāntare masṛṇa-roṣa-vaśām apāra-niḥśvāsa-niḥsaha-mukhīm sumukhīm upetya |
savrīḍam iḁṣita-sakhī-vadanām dinānte sānanda-gadgada-padam harirityuvāca ||
vadasi yadi kiñcidapi danta-ruci-kaumudī harati dara-timiram atighoram /
sphurad adhara-sīdhave tava vadana-candramā rocayatu locana-cakoram ||1||
priye cāruśīle muñca mayi mānam anidānam |
sapadi madanānalo dahati mama mānasam dehi mukha-kamala-madhupānam || dhruvapadam ||
satyam evāsi yadi sudati mayi kopinī dehi khara-nakhara-śaraghātam |
ghaṭaya bhujā-bandhanam janaya rada-khaṇḍanam yena vā bhavati sukha-jātam ||2||
tvamasi mama bhūṣaṇam tvamasi mama jīvanam tvamasi mama bhava-jaladhi-ratnam /
bhavatu bhavatīha mayi satatam anurodhinī tatra mama hṛdayam atiyatnam ||3||
nīla-nalinābham api tanvi tava locanam dhārayati koka-nada-rūpam |
kusumaśara-bāṇa-bhāvena yadi rañjayasi kṛṣṇam idam etad anurūpam ||4||
sphuratu kuca-kumbhayorupari maṇi-mañjarī rañjayatu tava hṛdaya-deśam |
rasatu raśanāpi tava ghana-jaghana-maṇḍale ghoṣayatu manmatha-nideśam ||5||
sthala-kamala-gaṇjanam mama hṛdaya-rañjanam janita-ratiraṅga-para-bhāgam |
bhāna masṛṇavāṇi karavāṇi caranadvayam sarasa-lasad-alaktaka-rāgam ||6||
smara-garala-khaṇḍanam mama śirasi maṇḍanam dehi pada-pallavam udāram |
jvalati mayi dāruṇo madana-kadanāruṇo haratu tad upāhita-vikāram ||7||
iti caṭula-cāṭupaṭu-cāru muravairiṇo rādhikām adhi vacana-jātam |
jayatu jayadeva-kavi-bhāratī-bhūṣitam māninī-janajanita-śātam ||8||*

Human Values

In this ashtapadi, Lord Krishna cajoles Radha who is angry with him. This song brings to light that passionate longing for our beloved is also a value in life. This is also clearly mentioned in the four Purusharthas from the Vedas - Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha. Kama does not refer to lust. It refers to true passion which is an emotion or value that is verily a part of life and not something to be disrespected or shunned. In fact the *Sustenance* of humanity lies in the roots of passionate love. Jayadeva, in the 12th century itself could weave this in beautiful poetry itself in the most beautiful of languages. The Ashtapadhis including the above one, highlight *Passion, Love and Separation* as Human Values among several others

Krishna Leela Taranginis Sahitya

*gOvinda miha gOpika nanda kandam sAnanda mava lOkayAmO mukundam
gOpika gaNa nayana kumuda poorNEndum
gOpAla tilaka makhila jana bandhum
Sree pati manindya hari chandana sugandhim
SrEyO vidhAyi karuNarasa sindhum
sangeeta rasa rasika sarasa sallapam
saraLa muraLee gaLita sAdhu santApam
SrungAra rasa poora Sree madana gOpAlam
Srita janA nanda makhilA nanda roopam
sphurada dhara kalita muraLee nAda sudhaya
sura sundaree gaNam karshayati krupayA
guru karuNayA rachita mEta dati lalitam
nArAyANAnanda teertha samuditam*

Human Values

Sanandam Avaloka -> *Celebration* is a key human value expressed here. The gopis are always in a state of celebration because they have chosen Krishna as their idol and ideal. Their love for him is pure, sincere and innocent. *Purity, Sincerity* and *Innocence* are important values for a good, happy world.

SrEyO vidhAyi karuNarasa sindhum -> *Compassion* is the value highlighted here

saraLa muraLee gaLita sAdhu santApam-> *Music* itself is expressed as a value here. Good music even destroys the sorrow of saints.

SrungAra rasa poorna -> *Beauty* and pure love is a value leading to happiness

guru karuNayA rachita mEta dati lalitam -> *Grace* as a value is highlighted here

Namavalis

Many hymns of different Gods are sung by one person and repeated by others in increasing speeds. These are very simple words in a simple tune and all clap and sing together, sometimes even dancing.

Human Values

Group Values of *Collaboration, Alignment* and *Celebration* are key values that come across in this process. The ego gets dissolved. All can sing independent of musical abilities. *Inclusion* and *Humility* as key human values shine here

III. Conclusion

From the above compositions we see that through various symbolisms, the Sampradaya Bhajans try to bring out the essence and importance of the core Human Values. The Dhyana slokas highlight the values of *Smiling, Perseverance, Courage, Dutifulness, Science, Research, Intelligence, Strength, Fame Bravery, Fearlessness, Good Health, Good Speech*. The Thodaya Mangalam suggests *Faith, Approachability, Compassion, Beauty and Purity* as Human Values. The Guru keerthanans depict *Surrender, Discipline,*

Determination and Selflessness as core Human Values. Human Values can be materialistic or spiritual. The Ashtapadhis exemplify **Passion, Love, Separation and Sustenance** as Human Values. The Tarangas bring out **Celebration, Sincerity, Innocence** and **Grace** as key Human Values. Namavalis instill group values of **Collaboration, Alignment, Inclusion, and Humility** Thus we see that Values go much beyond those that are used in common parlance. Melody, rhythm and meaningful words can help take these Human Values beyond the senses, into the core of the human being, thereby potentially reinforcing them to help all lead a good life.

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