CHAPTER - I

I. INTRODUCTION

Life Sketch of Akkamahadevi (brief):

Mahadeviyakka, or Akkamahadevi was born at Udutadi a village not far from Shimoga, which was then the capital of king Kausika. Her parents were named Sumati and Nirmala. Akkamahadevi herself seems to have had her initiation in early childhood and the impress of the seal of Grace must have been strong on her, for she was from that moment a dedicated child.

Beautiful as she was in person (traditional biographers, in their charming old way, describe her as a Rudrakannike). She was more beautiful in mind and heart. So firm was her conviction of being already wedded to her lord Mallikarjuna, that at the age of eighteen, in a country, at a time noted for early marriages, she was still single. The turning-point in her life came when king Kausika, returning from a hunt, saw her among the crowd that had been drawn by the din and splendour of the cavalcade, and on the instant fell captive to her beauty.

Another attractive feature of Akkamahadevi’s personality is her sense of community, of a very lithe communion of saints.

It was none other than Ballegavi, the most hinterland of the western ghats and rightly sung of as “My mother’s place and God’s own abode” by Mahadevi herself. In the vicinity of Ballegavi was a village called Udutadi nestled amid the scenic surroundings. When Akka was born here, it was ruled by a king called Kausika. There is also a temple known as Paradesi Mallappa’s.
The life of Akkamahādevi as written by various biographers was true to a pattern whether it is Harihara or Camarasa or Chennabasavanna or Virupaksapandita. She is considered as the very incarnation of Parvati.

At a very young age she achieved mastery over the Kannada language.

*Like the strayed elephant
That recollects the vindhyas her home;
Like the parrot which in its cage
Recalls his free brother of the airy kingdom,
I remember and remember thee
Call thou me to thee. Oh! Lord Cennamallikarjuna,
As a mother does her babe.*

Imagination of an alienated soul affords us a glimpse into the state of her mind while she was still at Udutadi itself. At what age, precisely, remains an unanswerable question, perhaps at the threshold of a dawning of consciousness. At Kalyāna, she actually feels nearer to her God; the courtyards of the Siva saints are Varānasi; Srisailam is round the corner... The God on her palm is too quit for her too remote. Her mother instinct is to serve food; but liṅga will not eat when fed, she complains; Jangama is a more human, more sociable, more amenable, god! The karanas of Śiva collectively are Pranaliṅga; she wants no more auspicious bath than the water dropped from Guru’s feet.

For the research purpose the original works of Akkamahādevi between Kannada are considered alongwith English translation and transliteration.

T1. Akkamahādevi original vacanas.
T2. Śruisti vacanas.
T3. Yogāṅga trividi.
"Udayaleddu Nimm Nenevanaya
Kasadegedu chaleykottu
Nimm Barav Harutirdenaya
Hase Handaravanikki
Nimmadigaligede Madikondirdenaya
Cennamallikarjunaya
Ninavag bandeya Ennadeva"

(V.N. 272, p. 115)

Akkagal Yogāṅga Trividi

"Jaya Nity rupane Jaya satysadguruve
Jayabjaktaras Aghaharane
Madguruve Jaya Enna Manad Tavanidhiye

Glory to thee eternal without peer,
True Guru king of bhaktas, bane of sin
Glory my spirits treasure without end!

(V.N. 59, p. 159)

Akkagal Sruistivacanā

"Adiyanali Nityanityava
Tiliyalariyade
Vayakke parabrahmav nudiv
Vayupranigalvaretta ballaro
A para brahmada nijad nilava?"

Adentendade :
"Adiye deh Anadiya nirdeh
Adiye sakal Anadiya niskhal
"Adiye Jad Anadiye Ajad
Adiye Kay Anadiye Pran"

"How can the creatures breathing air
Who talk of parabrahma all in vain
Nor understand.
What has beginning what has not
What is eternal what ephemeral Know?
If I should tell the full extend
Of parabrahma's essential truth
What has begun is body, what has not
Is disembodied state:
The one is form,
The other formless; one is grass
The other subtle; one
Has body, the other has it not:
The one is senses, the other breath"

"At dawn arising I recall thy name
Awaiting thy arrival lord;
I place the seat, put up the canopy,
Where thou may'st set thy feet,
And wonder what time thou should'st come
O Cennamallikarjuna !"
The day and the night that adore her divine lover are seen in their luscious amplitude in one of her vacanag as the expanse of heaven, the winds stirring and the shoots and flowers; so are the moonlight, the stars and the lightning.

We have a disturbing little picture of mortal man as a prey to passion:

'Desire dogs you, even as a frog
Between a serpent's jaws,
Craves for a butterfly...'

She imbided the decent culture and was educated in Sanskrit and Kannada. Even as a child she was going to the temple of Mallikarjuna to offer him her devotion. Gurulingdeva was her family Guru. Once it so happened that Kaushika, the king of the place, happened to pass by her house in the evening. He saw Mahadevi at a glace and fell in love with her. Thereupon he sent a word to her parents expressing his desire to marry Mahadevi Akka.

But when he failed to keep his word, Mahadevi left the place declaring that she was already married to god Mallikarjuna. Her Guru Gurulingadeva advised her to go to Kalyar where Basava and other saints were practicing Veerashaivism. Mahadevi Akka passed many a hill and dale. She was calling birds, beasts, trees and mountains to show her lord Mallikarjuna. Fearless of the beasts of the jungle, careless of the deep valleys and caves she went ahead.

Listen, sister dear, Oh! Listen
I dreamt a dream in which I saw
The auspicious rice, areca,
Palm-leaf and coconut
He came to me in the habit of a beggar
He with pretty locks and gleaming teeth
And as he passed by heedlessly.
I followed and took him by the hand
He was none but my Cennamallikarjuna,
And the moment I faced him I woke up.

In the life of every maiden there comes a time when fantasy begins to picture the likeness of the 'man' she would like him to come along, take her by the hand and lead her to the alter. But in Akka’s case, it wasn’t an earthly paramour who came along to take her passionately and lead her to the alter.

She was already wedded to the lord in her heart of hearts. He filled her being, every pore of her flesh and bone, mind and heart. It was she who went seeking him through the wide world, with a yearning that was not of this earth.

It is possible to attribute beauty and ravishing power to Akka’s spiritual growth before her advent at the Anubhava Manjapa (Kalyana). But then, Akka’s fancy flew unfettered to conceptualize Śiva as the absolute without attributes.

Tell me, friends, doth the peacock ever frolic in barren land, leaving aside the mountain valley? Doth the cuckoo haunt anywhere but a mango-grove? Doth the bee make towards a flower that is without fragrance? Would my soul ever long except for Cennamallikarjuna?" The irreconcilability of her love for the lord and lusting for anything here below are brought out in yet another verse of hers:

Doth one who want to see ever enter darkness?
Doth he that would scale the mountains
Descend into the valleys?
Longing as I do for the peace
That comes of union with thee
How do I hanker for anything else?

Maññadevi was not one born to be mated with anything lowly and eartly.
Hers was the desire of the moth for the star, devotion to something afar, from
the sphere of our sorrow."

According to poet Camarasa, Akka went to the palace on condition that
Kauśika would respect her wishes. When Kauśika in the eagerness of his lust,
forced himself on her, Akka said to Kauśika: “If you become a devotee of
Śiva, a union is possible between you and me or else not. And Kauśika replaying
that he had no time for it, Akka is supposed to have said, “Then marriage is not
possible between you and me,” and then she went away renouncing everything.

Akka went to Kalyāna first after leaving Udatadi. The fact that has been
commonly recorded by Harihara and Camarasa is that she setout from Udatadi
in a nearly unclothed manner. She had no clothes on her body—she must have
discarded them as the last vestiges of the worldings! Or Kauśika must have
tried to grab her, and during this process her garments might have slipped off,
as some biographers have claimed.

Mahādeviyakkā has written about 23 heart touching vacanas describing
her reverence and respect for Basava. The following vacana serves as an
illustration:

Basava is the one,
Who imbued in me my character;
Basava is the one,
Who divulged that character is the linga itself;
Basava is the one,
Who instilled awareness in my life;
Basava is the one,
Who impressed upon me that knowledge is
Jangama himself
Oh! Cennamallikarjuna,
It is my father Basava
Who explained to me the above truth.

It seems that she spent some time at Kalyāna. During this sojourn, she
endeared herself to others as "the most loved child," The darling daughter of
Nilamma and Basava," "The beloved daughter -in-law of Allama" and "the
spitely bride of Cennamallikarjuna." Akka, who was wandering in search of
Cennamallikarjuna. Thus she came to comprehend the fact that he is in her
own istalinga. He was so close and yet far away.

Her journey's end was in sight. Her arduous quest was coming to an
end. Her eyes were delighted at the sight of the spires of Śrīsālā. The mountain
side was full of 'wish-granting trees.' The sacred soil, smell of refreshing breeze,
water looking like nectar, stone like the crystal ball, the haunting place of
Cennamallikarjuna, the Kadalivana, the plantain grove-were all in front of her
eyes. That certainly was her journey's end. Breathing in all she could, seeing
all her eyes could behold and filling her soul with all the bliss she could, she
exclaims:

Kadali is the body;
Kadali is the mind;
Kadali is the passion;
Kadali is the worldly life,
Having conquered the kadali
And renewed life
I saw the saviour
He embraced his daughter
With love’s pity swelling her suffering
I became enfolded within his lotus heart.

What a glorious end to Akka’s story of striving and suffering, her spiritual agony and ecstasy, her yearning for unity with the lord and her brief sojourn on this planet! Though she was born an emancipated soul, one of the ‘chosen’ and endowed with a vision of her destiny, she had to tread and travel on the toughest roads to achieve her life’s goal when she was only in her teens.

Akkamahadevi thereby chatters the entire framework of so-called legitimacies. This is in tune with her earlier action of throwing off her clothes and rejecting outright all notions of modesty as a virtue.

It would be too small a compliment to Akkamahadevi to say that by harnessing poetry she has set theology to its best advantage. One should rather say that she, in the fervour of her passion, has succeeded in mixing and mingling abstruse truth, worldly wisdom and poetry. There she remains unchallenged. Chennabasavanna, another contemporary of hers, has praised her vacana thus:

*The ancients ’sixty vacana are worth
Twenty of Basavana’s :*

*The great leader’s twenty, are worth Prabhudeva’s ten;*

*Prabhudeva’ ten are worth Ajaganna’s five :*
Akkamahādevi was one of the foremost spiritual philosophers of this country. She has not only written about spiritual philosophy but also practiced religion in its true spirit. She has worked for the ultimate man like Cennamallikarjuna through his various devotional ways.

Akkamahādevi made the many effort in religious and spiritual line. Akkamahādevi’s vacanas are a branch of sharana’s literature which mainly deals with doctrinal problems. The foremost aim of vacanas philosophy is the realization of God, bliss and Moksha through the ideas of Shivasharan as’ vacana.

The present thesis is necessary for the ideas of Akkamahādevi’s expressed in vacana’s need to be spread in society. Various Women saints are influenced by Akkamahādevi’s. So many women are converted to moral life through the light of Akkamahādevi.

Problem of the study (statement of the problem):

Study of philosophical theories raises some fundamental problems:

1) What is the role of Cennamallikarjuna in the concept of Akkamahādevi?

2) What is the spiritual and philosophical contribution of Akkamahādevi to the society?

3) How are women saints are influenced by Akkamahādevi?
Research is equally important for social scientists in studying philosophical relation and in seeking answers to various philosophical problems. Morality is very much needed in contemporary society. Akkamahadevi’s concept of world, soul, bhakti, God how can one get the divine grace and reach the moksha etc. Need to be studied. Soul is transmigration from body to body. In Akkamahadevi’s concept, sātvik soul is transmigrada from to sharan to sharan. Akkamahadevi’s ideas are not similar to Rāmānuja’s variety of moksha’s like śamipya, sāyujya, sālokhy and sārupya. Akkamahadevi accepted only one moksha, that is, is only one integrated in Cennamallikarjuna’s soul.

Objectives of the Research Study:

The purpose of research is to discover answers to questions through the application of scientific procedures. The main aim of research is to find out the truth which is hidden and which has not been discovered as yet.

Though each research study has its own specific purpose, one may think of research objectives as falling into a number of following broad groupings:

1) To gain familiarity with a phenomenon or to achieve new insights into it (studies with this object in view are termed as exploratory or formulative research studies). To examine the concept of world in view of Akkamahadevi.

2) To portray accurately the characteristics of a particular individual situation or a group (studies with this object in view are known as descriptive research studies). To study the Akkamahadevi’s concept of Devotion.

3) To determine the frequency with which something occurs or with which it is associated with something else (studies with this object in view are
knows as diagnostic research studies). The present thesis is meant to analyse and interpret Akkamahādevi's concept of God enshrined in vacana.

4) To make suitable new formality regarding Akkamahādevi's vacanas.

**Research Methodology**

**Methods adopted in the Research:**

Research is an art of scientific investigation. Research in common parlance refers to a search for knowledge. The advanced learner's dictionary narrates research as: A careful investigation or inquiry, specially through search for new facts in any branch of knowledge. Redman and Mory define research as a “systematized effort to gain new knowledge”.

Research is thus an original contribution to the existing stock of knowledge making for its advancement.

**Motivation in Research:**

What makes people undertake research?

This is a question of fundamental importance. The possible motives for doing research may be either one or more of the following:

1) Desire to get a research degree along with its consequential benefits.
2) Desire to face the challenge in solving the unsolved problems. i.e., concern over practical problems initiates research.
3) Desire to get intellectual joy of doing some creative work.
4) Desire to be of some service to society.
5) Desire to get respectability.
Types of Research:

The following are the basic types of research:

1) Descriptive vs. Analytical.

2) Applied vs. Fundamental.

3) Quantitative vs. Qualitative.

4) Conceptual vs. Empirical.

5) Some other type of research.

I used the research method that comprises defining and redefining problems, formulating hypothesis or suggested solution, collecting books and evaluation of subject matter, making framework and reaching conclusion to determine whether they fit the formulating hypothesis. I used analytical explanatory and descriptive method etc.

The significance of research can also be understood by keeping in view the following points:

a) To those students who are to write a master’s or Ph.D., thesis, research may mean careerism or a way to attain a high position in social structure.

b) To professionals in research methodology, research may mean a source of livelihood.

c) To philosopher and thinkers, research may mean the outlet for new ideas and insights.

d) To literary men research may mean the development of new styles and creative work.

e) To intellectuals research may mean the generalization of new theories.

Concepts used in the study:

❖ World
❖ Soul
❖ Devotion/Bhakti
❖ God/Linga
❖ Divine grace/Guru grace
❖ Moksha
❖ Comparison / Conclusion
Criteria of good Research:

One expects a scientific research to satisfy the following criteria:

1) The purpose of the research should be clearly defined and common concepts be used.

2) The procedural design of the research should be carefully planned to yield results that are as objective as possible.

In other words we can state the qualities of a good research as under:

1) Good research is systematic.

2) Good research is logical.

3) Good research is empirical.

4) Good research is replicable.

Scope of the thesis

Research design

Presentation of the thesis

Out lay of the thesis - The plan of the present thesis is arranged in Eight chapters briefly.

I Introduction:

The first chapter of my thesis contains a brief life sketch of Akkamahādevi, objectives, hypothesis, problem, concepts used, and research methodology.

Chapter Second: Concept of World:

This chapter, deals with Akkamahādevi's views of world as reflected in her vacanās. Cennamallikarjuna is the only husband to Akkamahādevi. All
other worldly husbands are like thorns in the hearts of Akkamahādevi. She
tells her mother that she can neither touch nor go near to them. An idea of
living it we are born on this earth we have to walk according to the steps of the
world.

One cannot live the life meaningfully by leaving the world aside. Even by
living in this world, we should live as if we are not living. Whatever is done, it
shouldn’t be to show this temporal world. Akkamahādevi stressed that she is
the eleventh in the midst of ten. It means the common among the other beings
on the earth, but she is like a lotus in a water-pool which appears as if it doesn’t
touch the water.

It is the only source of inspiration to her. Liṅga is nothing but Śiva who is
everything to Akkamahādevi. She has sunk into the devotion of him, leaving
worldly husbands. Akkamahādevi offer a description of her husband Shri.
Cennamallikarjuna to whom she in wedded Guru Parabrahma was a kinsman
to officiate the marriage ceremony in which the Liṅga was to become the
bridegroom. The innumerable saints, i.e., people of the whole world have
become her parents and made her a bride by giving her in marriage to Shri
Cennamallikarjuna.

Chapter Third: The Concept of Soul

In this chapter, Akkamahādevi challenges how the lord fails to come after
surrendering body, mind and soul to him. She urges Cennamallikarjuna that
without him and his presence, she cannot live on the earth. The lord dwells in
her mind and soul. So it is impossible for her to live without him. A little
disintegration is found between Chennamallikarjuna and Akkamahādevi. So, she
strongly protests that being an omnipresent being, he should be found in everyone’s mind and soul, but here Akka feels as if she is deserted by him.

However, she is sure that she cannot be left for long like that. So she says, I am not under the obligation of anybody else. I know that my Cennamallikarjuna is by my side, and no real harm can fall upon me as I am surrounded by his protective arms. By chance, if he also fails to protect me and tries to literally burn me, then also I won’t care! I am gladly prepared to place my body and soul at the feet of my lord Cennamallikarjuna”. Cennamallikarjuna dwells in the soul of Akkamahādevi. She wants to see him always.

The presence of Shri Cennamallikarjuna makes her feel happy. Therefore, she always sings of him. Akka’s soul so comprehensive as to include God, the supreme soul.

Chapter Four: Concept of God:

In this chapter the Linga of Akkamahadevi is a medium to see God Cennamallikarjuna. When the Linga is placed on the palm of Akka, her eyes have been turned into her own soul. The continuous gaze of her eyes has brought lord of Linga to her sense. Her thirsty mouth gets water when she visualizes the existence of lord Cennamallikarjuna, Akkamahadevi has established unity in the place of “Trinity” of the finite and the infinite. She has totally extinguished all awareness of the body and the impulses there on the very senses and consciousness formed a door thrown open to the presence of God. Her whole being breathed that presence of the absolute.

Akka deals with philosophical aspect of man in order to visualize God in himself. She calls him Hara, which means god the supreme. That is why she wants to be a part of that super power, because she doesn’t like this worldly life.
When my feelings are totally full of Linga, and when it pervades through the cells of my body my whole physical entity becomes Linga. When the mind is full of the thoughts of Linga, the mind naturally becomes part of Linga. "O Lord Cennamallikarjuna, I cannot live without seeing you! I cannot see you without your kindness and grace, O lord Cennamallikarjuna! Kindly tell me and give me directions regarding the secret place in which you are," so does Akka appeal to Lord Channamallikarjuna.

Chapter Five: Concept of Divine Grace

In this chapter, Akka hopes to be blessed by Cennamallikarjuna. Akkamahādevi searches many ways by imagination by telling beads, or singing hymns and through the knowledge of heart but finally she comes to the reality that she cannot be blessed until He showers the bless of solitude. Akka has wooed and pined for Cennamallikarjuna, but her lord has not yet bestowed his grace upon her. Every devotee is inspired by this truth. When truly comprehended that there is god’s grace available to him or her and that is, what will carry him or her onward in life. Thereafter there is a beautiful and natural blending of self-effort and divine grace until the flood of divine grace engulfs the devotee. Here the Guru of Akkamahādevi has made it easy for her to come out of this bounded life. He liberated Akka from all worldly bonds. By erasing them He shower on her the supreme bliss.

Chapter Six: Concept of Devotion (Bhakti)

In this chapter, Akkamahādevi says that she has willed to the will of the god for that Lord Cennamallikarjuna has secured a permanent place in her. In this way we can find the unbroken relation between her and Cennamallikarjuna.
Akkamahadevi questions when neither Nada, nor bindu can touch and reach him, then how can she and her song follow Him?

Here we can find that, according to Akka, only a complete bhakti can mingle into the great soul through industrious effort. Regular bhajana of him can fill one with delight and make one lose one self in the lord Bhakti is that love which over flows in a confluence. Her vacana are like the mighty river bearing the tide of her love and devotion into the divine ocean. Such divine madness, as is hers finds, its aptest expression through metaphor and symbol. Muse over her vacana. Characters of a devotee have been penned down by the godly person Akkamahadevi.

She said that an aspirant of the almighty ought to be good, calm, and have the highest ecstasy of love, mercy, love, kindness, and humbleness will take him/her to the right path of the omnipotent. While worshipping the linga a man should possess all the above qualities. A devotee has to have the qualities of God for communion with Him. Here Akka has become such a person who delights to worship Him forever.

Chapter Seven: Concept of Moksha

In this chapter, Akkamahadevi remembers the natural wealth and culture of India. Without any permanent asset, a devotee of the Linga can live with content in this kind motherland. Therefore one shouldn’t worry for worldly things, if one wants to attain moksha. There are indications that she was unaware of physical body. She didn’t care what happened to this temporary body, but her devotion has assembled both for ever. The soul of Akka merged into the great soul of Cennamallikarjuna.
Her vision of Linga reached and mingled with the light and brightness of Lord Cennamallikarjuna. "Oh Cennamallikarjuna, the aim of my entire life is to see you face to face and become one with you, that is, the sole aim of my life is to attain "Mukti" or realization of the ultimate Truth.

Chapter Eight: Comparison/Conclusion:

In this chapter, a comparison of man and soul, moksha etc., is attempted, and in conclusion, Akkamahadevi's massage for the woman kind as reflect in her vacana is spelt out.

A useful Bibliography given in a research report which helps those interested in further research, and intend/studying the problem from another angle.

References:
