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### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EXTENSION OF *ANNA* IN DIFFERENT CONTEXT, PREVAILING IN THE VEDAS, BOTH FROM THE ANCIENT PERSPECTIVE AND THE MODERN OUTLOOK: A STUDY

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#### Abstract-

The term *Anna* bears a broader meaning in the Vedic scriptures. It is not confined only in the food but also extended to the evolution of the physical world as well as to the cosmology. The visible world is based on the *Anna* or Aliment as one of the basic needs for survival.

The rituals of the Vedas are the indispensable part of the ancient social tradition. In the Karma Kāṇḍa, *Anna* is explained as the food which includes the form of grains, herbs (*Oṣadhi*), nutrition and illumination of prosperities (Social health). In different sacrifices, *Anna* plays different roles according to the sequences, needs and the merits of the sacrifices, when then it (*Anna*) is flourishing through different names and forms. It is praised as the elements of the wellbeing of the society. *Anna* leads to the degree of social upliftment too. The Upanishads have dealt with the *Anna* in the dimension of Cosmology. The *Anna* is one of the major components of cosmological world and its evolution. Here, the term *Anna* is established in various directions like Flora, Nutrition and the Solid State.

The longevity with good health among the human race is the ultimate goal of the world human society. This whole concept is lying on “*Anna*”. The latest trending terminology “Millets” is not a newly added concept being discussed throughout the world; but, is relatively the ancient term *Anna*, which incorporates all kinds of ‘Coarse Cereals’ with other grains too in itself. Now, the Millet is considered as the ‘Smart-food’ or ‘Super-food’ in respect of both health and economy. Focusing on the revival of using raw form of millets has been recognised by the world, declaring 2023 as the World Millet Year.

**Keywords-** Anna, Millets, Nutrition, Food.

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## Introduction:

The Veda itself is a resource of wisdom. The evidence of practicing of the knowledge of the sages is none other than the Vedas. Hence, the Veda comprises several topics in terms of hymns is declaring the ultimate human cultivation of knowledge. That has appeared here, in the name of the praising for complimenting the needs of the sages in their day today life. The several issues are reflecting in the form of praise, gratulation for the generous offerings for the deities from the perspective of blessings. There have some theories, elements, concepts, rituals, philosophy, social customs, science, cosmology, environmental issues, fulfilment of mental desires, and attainment of absolute goal etc. thriving in the Vedas. These elements are depicting as deity, in the other ways it has been described as the earthly materials. Seemingly, these tiny differences have kept these into several dimensional way of placing. As per example- Agni is mentioned as a form of having corporeal body of earthly based deity (*Prithvishthanīya- devatā*), the same Agni is referred to the physical matter appeared in the earth in the ritual- fire. Again, the Agni is considered as one the elements out of five conglomerated gross elements (*Pañca-Mahūbhuta*). Likewise, Yajña, Anna, Āpa, Megha etc. are appeared alike many more.

The discussion would be made here to the extension of the term *Anna* and its significance to the different contexts according to the different states and features. The *Anna* will be derived from the perspective of Vedic expanse and in the modern concept *Anna* is not confined in the simple paddy-grains but to be extended to some other cereals like Ragi, Jowar, Bajra, Kakum etc. which are highlighted as the Millet in present perspective.

## Need and Justification:

The spontaneous growth of the living being is a natural phenomenon. Behind his phenomenon the food is a supplementary one which deals with both growth and survival. Without *Anna* neither the physical world nor the spiritual world is in vain in discussion, because *Anna* is playing different roles in its own splendid state in different contexts, where it comes to its priority. So, a wide discussion on *Anna* has to enlighten here.

In the Vedic rituals *Anna* is derived as the element of oblation, which is most adorable good for the deities, next to the Ghee. To continue the ritualistic works for the entertainment of the deities *Anna* has to keep growing ever for the sustaining of the sacrifice. Nevertheless, without the involvement of *Anna*, there have no speculation of the horizontal study of the world and the universe. The study will confine the *Anna* not only in the sphere of sacrifice,

but also appearing in the cosmological and philosophical world as well as the growing of food grains like Millets that is much closer to the present world's needs, which has taken place into the wide discussion in the world platform, with a high tense priority to compensate the world food security.

### **Focus of the Study:**

The study will focus on the different states of *Anna*, mentioned in different anthologies, special reference to the Vedas with multiple directions of interpretations according to the circumstances. In the hymns and the sacrificial works of the Vedas *Anna* is a prime sacrificial element in several contexts. On the other hand, the last part of the Vedas i.e., Upanishad is illuminating the *Anna* in a philosophical way of interpretation, leading to the cosmological concepts. Behind that *Anna* has been playing a role of food. In the modern concept, Millet is highly discussed in the mid of *Anna* worldwide at present. To compensate the scarcity food is an urgent agenda of the world, where Millet has taken place as an alternative food grain with a minimum investment of coast. Moreover, it grows in a barren land, so it is indeed not a new concept but the ancient people exercised to grow millets along with the other food grains.

### **Review of the Literature:**

The endeavour on the focusing of the *Anna* is not merely a new matter of discussion. Already several works are highlighting the *Anna* in different way. Such works have been discussed which are more closely attached to the subject concern. The book, named ***Food and Drinks in Ancient India*** (1961), written by Om Prakash is basically a monographic research work on the food and drinking habits of Indian people from the earliest times to 1200 Century A.D. Another work on ancient food has found in a chapter belongs to the book '***India of Vedic Kalpasutras***' written by Dr. Ram Gopal, which clearly confirms the use of various food grains like – rice, barley, wheat, millets etc. in Vedas along with the Vedangas as well. In the journal article entitled as ***Food in the Vedic Tradition*** by Dina Simoes Guha, published in Vol-12, No-2, Food Culture (June 1985), here food is described as the divine substance as mentioned in the Vedas. From the point of Ayurvedic approach the article ***Traditional Methods of Food Habits and Dietary Preparations in Ayurveda- the Indian System of Medicine*** by Dhanya S., published in Journal of Ethnic Foods (2019) has emphasized on the Ahara Kalpa in the form of Anna Kalpa that are mentioned in the Vedas.

### **Result and Discussion:**

*Anna* or Aliment is one of the major components among the different subjects, mentioned in the Vedas. *Anna* is not only a matter of phenomenal world, but also deals with the metaphysical state, mentioned in the various genres of the Vedas. The growing of *Anna* in different state is emphasizing on its role towards the growth in some extent, resulting which it takes place for wide discussion. The study will comprise each extension in all genres denoting with earthly and ritual and above the all. Hence, the Vedas are discussing *Anna* as the basic needs of human being as well as the bearing with metaphysical approach in different contexts. *Anna* bears a state of degree in the food linear, as in the nutritional values and in metaphysical world. It carries several meanings in accordance with the sphere of utility. The different terminologies were set in different contexts to indicate *Anna* by *Vāja*, *Dhānya*<sup>1</sup>, *Yava*, *Rayi*<sup>2</sup> etc. Nighantu comprises eighteen other names of *Anna*, disclosed in the Nirukta<sup>3</sup>.

From the etymological perspective the *anna* is derived from the root √Ad, which simply denotes- to eat, to devour, to destroy, and to feed with. It is fallen under the Adādi gaṇīya dhātu. According to the Nirukta, the term *Anna* comprises 2 derivative explications. One is *Ānatam Bhutebhyah*, the meaning is ‘to bow down for all creatures.’ The root √Nam is preceded by prefix आ and followed by suffix क्विप्, bearing with both the roots (Dhātu) and suffix have produced the word, *Anna*<sup>4</sup>. Again, another derivative exegesis is attributed from the ‘*Attervā*’, that means ‘to be consumed by the creatures’<sup>5</sup>. The root √Ad is meant to eat (Uṇādi gaṇīya dhātu) and there has been added suffix ऋ. It connotes that, it is eatable goods or *Anna*. In addition to the meaning of *Anna*, is derived from the Uṇādi ganiya √An - meaning is ‘to live’ and ‘Na’ suffix is added here. The meaning altogether with is, “it helps to keep the creatures alive”.

The *Anna* is found as the वाज in the Vedas. It carries the meaning of *Anna* itself<sup>6 7</sup>, Havi etc. for example- वाजगन्ध<sup>8</sup>, वाजजहर<sup>9</sup>, वाजदा<sup>10</sup>, वाजदावत्<sup>11</sup>, वाजिनीवती<sup>12</sup> etc.

<sup>1</sup> श० ब्रा० १३.५.४.२

<sup>2</sup> रथिरन्म । (शा. भा.) प्र. उ.- १.९

<sup>3</sup> अन्ननामानि उत्तराणि अष्टाविंशतिः। निरु. ३.२.९

<sup>4</sup> आनतं भूतेभ्यः । निरु. ३.२.९

<sup>5</sup> अत्तेर्वा । निरु. ३.२.९

<sup>6</sup> तव प्रणीत्यश्याम वाजान् ऋ. ४.४.१४; तै.सं. १.२.१४.६; मै.सं. ४.११.५

<sup>7</sup> हिरण्यस्तूपः सवितर्यथा त्वा आङ्गिरसो जुह्वे वाजे अस्मिन् ऋ. १०.१४९.५

<sup>8</sup> अश्याम वाजगन्धं सनेम वाजपस्त्यम्- ऋ. ९.९८.१२; साम. २.१०३०

<sup>9</sup> घर्मो न वाजजठरः। ऋ. ५.१९.४

<sup>10</sup> मदाय वाजदा युवम् ऋ. १.१३५.५

### **Anna as a material Substance (Food):**

The prime substance for living being is food. Here found a famous portion of a poetry in Hindi literature, stating- अन्न देवता देह ई.<sup>13</sup> Above all meanings of *Anna* i.e., food is the universally well-known to all. From the perspectives of hymns and sacrificial documents of the Vedas, *Anna* is used in several times in several contexts in the name of food. The ritualistic part of the Vedas esteems *Anna* as an element in physical and material form. As to make all understood, the term *Anna* is directly specified the form of food grains as material substance in the Vedic literature. The food grains include itself the rice, barley, wheat, millet, sesame pulses etc. In the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, *Anna* is used as boiled rice, paddy, barley is used as a common noun. *Yava* (barley) is used in two meanings- one is barley itself and another is *Anna*. To establish the fact of the word *Yava*, there has been depicted a narrative, found in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa<sup>14</sup>, that once all the *Annas* had left the deities except the *Yava*, which had remained only with them. In absence of *Anna*, the deities had been surviving by consuming *Yava*. Therefore, they put all the nutritious substances into *Yava*. That is why *Yava* was said to be a common noun for *Anna*. Besides *Yava*, secondly comes the widely used *Anna*, i.e., *Vrihi*. The synonyms of *Vrihi* are *Tandula*, *Hayana*, *Plasuka* etc. found in Shatapatha Brahmana. There has been mentioned that the deities consume the food through *Prāṇa* and the *Prāṇa* is nothing else but the *Agni*<sup>15</sup>. The wheat (*Godhuma*) is also considered as the best among grains, hence at one place it is depicted that wheat is the *Anna*<sup>16</sup>. It is clearly described as a different entity from rice and barley, where there is mention of Sattu prepared from wheat<sup>17</sup>. Sesame also had special significance among the agricultural grains of that time. Apart from offering in sacrifices for Vedic rituals, oil was also extracted from the plant were called Sesame (*Tila*). The use of the term *Anna* as paddy also can be seen in the above- mentioned text, implies- ‘when the grain was ripe, it was threshed with a sickle<sup>18</sup>.

### **Anna in the form of Nutrition:**

<sup>11</sup> भूयाम वाजदावन्म् । ऋ. १.१७.४

<sup>12</sup> अस्मभ्यं वाजिनीवति । ऋ. १.९२.१३; साम. २.१०८१; वाज.सं. ३४.३३; नि. १२.६

<sup>13</sup> Vide. Pancholi. Dr. Badriprasad, *Satasaii-2*, Archana Publication, Ajmer, 2020.

<sup>14</sup> श० ब्रा०- ३.६.१.७

<sup>15</sup> प्राणेन वै देवा अन्नमदन्ति । अग्निरु देवानां प्राणः । शत० ब्रा० १०.१.४.१२

<sup>16</sup> ‘अन्नं वै गोधूमाः । श० ब्रा०- ५.२.१.१३

<sup>17</sup> श० ब्रा०- १२.७.१.२

<sup>18</sup> यदा वाऽअन्नं पच्यते अथ तत् सृण्योपचरन्ति । ibid. ७.२.२.५)

*Anna*, after focusing on its materialistic aspect, literary conveys the other eminent meanings such as nutrition. Nutrition is the process by which organisms obtain and utilize the substances necessary for proper growth, maintenance and functioning of their bodies. Besides, carrying the meaning of the food or edible substance, *Anna* embraces its nutritional validation too. *Anna* plays a crucial role in supporting overall well-being and is a fundamental aspect of a healthy lifestyle. The Vedas abundantly revolves around the nutritional perspective of *Anna*, which has been vividly discussed. In the first Mandala of Rigveda Samhita, a hymn is dedicated to *Anna* itself as a deity. Sage *Agastya* invokes him saying “Oh God of food! who is delicious, nurturer etc. we hold the nutrients, present in you; you are our protector”<sup>19</sup>. Again, in the *Punarābhiśeka* of *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, the word *Annādyā*, has been mentioned its meaning multiple times with the explanation given by *Sayaṇācārya*, as- ‘extract of the plants’<sup>20</sup>. Another terminology of nutrition, indicating *Anna* is given by sage *Sayaṇa* in the same text saying *Anna* as prosperity of food<sup>21</sup>. Creating efficiency is called *Vipaśyanā*. It is said in the Ṛgveda that one who does *Vipaśyanā*, who listens to this fire, receives food from the Supreme Self<sup>22</sup>.

### ***Anna* in the Cosmic Theory of Upanishads:**

*Anna* has a philosophical interpretation too. The meaning of *Anna* has amplified, where *Anna* has turned into a philosophical array. So, philosophical standpoint of *Anna* has to keep in the purview of discussion.

While answering the question, raised by *Kavandhi*, regarding the one who created the subjects (*Prajā*); sage *Pippalada* had moderately explained it systematically in *Prāśnopaniṣad*. He spoke that it was none other than *Prajapati*, who created all by his divine seed, also had been signified as *Anna*<sup>23</sup>. *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* has delineated *Anna* as one of the prominent outcomes of the creation. Sage *Angirasa* has mentioned the sequence of the cosmic creation of the universe and has given *Anna* an important place along with *Prana*, *Mana* and so on<sup>24</sup>. The narrative from *Cāndogya Upanishad*, where the father *Āruni* tells his son *Śvetaketu* about the one and only reality of the universe and how it was created. He elucidates

<sup>19</sup> स्वादो पितो मधो पितो वयं त्वा ववृमहे । अस्माकमविता भव । ऋ. स.- १.१८७.२

<sup>20</sup> ओषधीनां रसः अन्नाद्यम् । ऐ. ब्रा.- ८.३७.३.७

<sup>21</sup> इरापुष्टिः अन्नसमृद्धिः । ऐ. ब्रा.- ८.३७.३.७

<sup>22</sup> मया सो अन्नमन्ति यो विपश्यति यः प्राणिति य ई शृणोत्युक्तम् । ऋ. स.-१०.१२५.४

<sup>23</sup> अन्नं वै प्रजापतिस्ततो ह वै तद्रेतस्तस्मादिमाः प्रजाः प्रजायन्त इति ॥ प्र. उ.- १.१४

<sup>24</sup> मु० उ०- १.१.८-९

the three states of matter as follows- “The ‘*Sat*’ willed to be multiple. It created heat. That heat (*Tejas*) willed to be multiple and created Water. Again, the water (*Āpah*) willed to be multiple and created Aliment (*Anna*).”<sup>25</sup> Here the *Anna* is denoted as the representator of the Solid state of a matter. Again, the whole theory evolves around the other scientific doctrines supported by modern science as well, such as- “the physical body is also the combination of these 3 states. It is described that the Aliment (*Anna*) turns into poops in the Material (*Sthula*) form of body, in moderate form it turns into muscles (*Mansa*), in subtle form it turns into Mind or *Mana*”<sup>26</sup>. This theory can be summarised as in *Anna* or Aliment that the 60-65% of food turns into poops and the rests are turns into Nutrients. That is the reason of calling the Mind is primarily ‘*Annamaya*’<sup>27</sup>. The Aitareya Upanishad throws light on an account of *Anna*, unravelling the action of the Supreme one i.e., *Īśvara* in his will to create the universe. The first ten mantras of the third khanda of the same Upanishad has elaborated how the *Anna* got formed from water and wanted to consume it but *Anna* tried to escape from the Supreme one, the creator. Eventually, he successfully acquired the *Anna* through the *Apāna Vāyu*<sup>28</sup>, because of this reason *Apāna vāyu* is the capable one or related to the *Anna*. The Taittiriya Upanishad illustrates *Anna* in an extensive way with the variety of implications. According to the cosmological order of the creation, *Anna* is formed from *Oṣadhi* and from *Anna* the human being got created<sup>29</sup>. *Anna* has been validated as an effect, caused from something and the cause itself due to which some effects were taken place. Here the *Anna* has been magnificently elaborated that the body made of *Anna* which is known as *Annamaya Koṣa*, which is the *Brahma* himself<sup>30</sup>.

Apart from Upanishads, other Vedic texts also had established the *Anna* in terms of philosophy. In the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, the three elements i.e., agriculture, rain and seeds have been explained as triple forms of food or *Anna*<sup>31</sup>. It also incorporates *Anna* as the *Brahma* by saying- one should plow oneself; this provides food or nourishment to the soul<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> तदध्यन्नाद्यं जायते। छा. उप. ६.२.३-४

<sup>26</sup> छा० उ०- ६.५.१

<sup>27</sup> अन्नमयं हि सोम्य मनः। छा० उ०- ६.५.४

<sup>28</sup> ऐ० उ०- ३.१-१०

<sup>29</sup> ओषधीभ्योऽन्नम्। अन्नात्पुरुषः। तै० उ०- २.१.१

<sup>30</sup> अन्नं ब्रह्मेति व्यजानात्। तै० उ०- ३.२.१

<sup>31</sup> श० ब्रा० ८.६.२.२

<sup>32</sup> ibid ७.२.२.७

The body is made of *Anna* or nutrition; hence, *Anna* is like bricks<sup>33</sup>. Some other statement on *Anna* has been made to fulfil its broad sphere such as- *Anna* is Cow<sup>34</sup>.

### **The Modern outlook of *Anna* and the significance of Millet:**

In the modern context, the Vedic *Anna* has rendered into the *millets* that is much closer not only in the ancient even to the present compensating food grains i.e., the growing of *Millets*. There has been a close relation with the *Anna* in the wider sense and on the other hand, the usual food grains concern with the cultural life of the people. The sages performing in the ritualistic deed usage of *Anna* as a prime and indispensable ingredient used in different sacrifices. The study will incorporate the food grains *Anna*, denoting in different state of rituals and the philosophical phenomena as well as *Millet*. Relating with the modern perspective, *Anna* definitely covers the general meanings as food. At the same point *Anna* has turned into a conservative meaning indicating only the grains, millets or other forms of seedy grains. Though grains are certainly counted as *Anna* and it is thoroughly discussed matter, but the newly highlighted Millets are considered as a trending one nowadays. Millet is basically a group of small-seeded grasses widely cultivated as grains for human and animal consumption. It's important for several reasons: it's a nutritious grain, resilient in diverse climates, and plays a crucial role in the diet of many people worldwide, especially in regions with challenging growing conditions. Millets are rich in nutrients, gluten-free, and environmentally sustainable, making them an essential food source for global food security. Along with the other grains such as – rice, wheat, barley etc., Millets also have been contemplated since the Vedic period. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa is one of the texts, which has introduced the grains along with the millets too. *Hayana* was red colored rice which was ripe throughout the year<sup>35</sup>. This is closely related to a kind of cereal grain; a flattered version of this rice is the red rice millet flakes. Similarly, *Plāśuka* was a variety of quick-germinating rice, which, according to *Sāyaṇa* ripened in around forty- five days<sup>36</sup>. The reason for it being called *Plāśuka* is also based in the process of uprooting the plant and planting it elsewhere<sup>37</sup> etc. Those are some examples of Millets, which is considered as the ‘Smart-food’ or ‘Super-

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<sup>33</sup> अन्नं वा इष्टकाः । तै० सं० ५.६.२.५

<sup>34</sup> अन्नं वै गौः । तै० ब्रा० ३.९८.३

<sup>35</sup> संवत्सर पववानां रक्तशालीनां हायनाः (सायण – शतपथ, 5, 3, 3, 6)

<sup>36</sup> प्लाशु/ आशु । तै० सं०- १.८.१

<sup>37</sup> ततोऽप्यधिककाले पक्षत्रये पच्यमानाः षष्टिका ब्रीहयः आशवः - श० ब्रा०, 5, 3, 3, 2 (सायण टीका)



food' in respect of both health and economy. Focusing on the revival of using unpolished form of millets has been recognised by the world, declaring 2023 as the World Millet Year.

### **Conclusion:**

*Anna* has multidimensional perspective towards the meaning and extension the core meaning. In the light of Food, *Anna* carries indispensable part of human being. Without food one cannot exist. So, the *Anna* has a significant meaning. It denotes first of all in the usual livelihood, only food. Therefore, it is uttered *Annamayī Prāṇah*. Life of the all-creatures rest upon the food. Here the *Anna* itself is a food pattern, where the several items have been included, according to the classification of the creatures. It means *Anna* is closely attached to the growth of all beings. An ideal *Anna* means a sufficient collaboration of nutritional food, that, means without nutrition the study of *Anna* or the food is in vain. Consumption of food is leading to the all-round growth with nutritional values. So, the *Anna* is found in the form of nutrition.

The extensional meaning of *Anna* conveys in an upright to the cosmic sphere, which is enshrined in the Upanishadic lore. In the philosophical dimension, *Anna* is beyond the physical matters, but to highlight a principal thing of all universes i.e., *Brahma*. Therefore, that *Brahma* designates as the *Anna* and *Anna* denotes the *Brahma*. The reciprocal relation has no difference in between the two. *Anna* in the cosmic state is rendering as an essential element, which is inherited both cause and effect (*Kārya and Kāraṇa*) of the creation of the universe. Food security is the prime agenda of the modern world. The plentiful supply of food is to ensure as nobody will stay under starvation. The balance of the production of food and distribution has no parity, which leads to the imbalance of supply and consumption, hence, *Anna* has turned into a trending topic. Few years ago, growing of millets was not kept in equal status to the grains in modern era. Nowadays, growing of millet has been emphasized to compensate the urgent food security, resulting which the Year **2023** has declared as **International Millet Year** by the *United Nations General Assembly*. These circumstances had pushed us back to the ancient Indian thoughts where *Anna* had included Millets too. The Vedic people had accentuated the production of *Anna*, simultaneously stressed upon the growing of millets which is much closer references to the present year. It means the people of ancient Vedic era were most advanced than the present people regarding the growing of all kinds of grains i.e., most contextual of the present phenomenon.

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