

Mrs. Sarada Akunuri – A Passionate Torchbearer of Music, Literature, and Telugu Culture

Renowned singer **Mrs. Sarada Akunuri** is admired for her deep passion for songs enriched with noble literary values. Born in **Kakinada, East Godavari District**, to **Mr. Mrutyunjaya Rao** and **Mrs. Ramadevi**, she pursued her education in **Bapatla (Guntur District)** and **Tirupati (Chittoor District)**.

Sarada began learning music at the tender age of three. From childhood, she won numerous state-level awards in devotional, light music, and film song competitions. She also earned recognition in essay writing and dance competitions, receiving appreciation from several eminent personalities.

She started her singing career through the **Yuvavani** program of **All India Radio, Vijayawada**, rendering light classical and light music compositions. Within a short period, she successfully cleared the All India Radio audition and became an approved radio artist, performing numerous light music programs. In addition, she played lead roles in several Yuvavani radio dramas centered on themes such as friendship and literacy. Her melodious voice captivated radio listeners as well as television audiences through programs such as **ETV's Sarigamalu**, where she won first prize in film song and movie quiz competitions, and **Gemini TV's Navaragam**.

As a television presenter, she hosted **Tele School** educational programs and women's programs for **Doordarshan Hyderabad**. She interviewed many distinguished personalities, including film actors **Jagapathi Babu**, music directors **K. M. Radha Krishnan, Raja, Koti**, and several leading industrialists, bringing out their personal insights through her thoughtful interviews. She also earned immense popularity as a City Cable News reader, game show host, and television anchor.

After her marriage, Sarada moved to the United States and won first place in the **Houston Talent Star Search** competition. Driven by her love for the Telugu language and culture, she actively worked to preserve and promote them among the Telugu diaspora. She served as the **Cultural Secretary** of the **Telugu Cultural Association (TCA), Houston**, and later as its **President** for two consecutive years.

During her leadership, she organized numerous landmark cultural programs reflecting the richness of Indian heritage, including **Sankranti** and **Ugadi** celebrations, **Vaggeyakarotsavam, Siddhendra Yogi Jayanthi**, family picnics, immigration seminars, and the memorable cultural extravaganza **"Taralu Digi Vachina Vela"**, featuring legendary personalities such as **K. Viswanath, Murali Mohan, Gollapudi Maruthi Rao, Jonnavithula Ramalingeswara Rao**, and comedian **AVS**.

She also organized a grand concert by the legendary **Dr. M. Balamuralikrishna**, invited and felicitated **Dadasaheb Phalke Award** recipient **Akkineni Nageswara Rao**, conducted music workshops with **Guru Ramachary**, helped develop the Telugu language curriculum for Telugu Badi, and published the **35th Anniversary Souvenir "Madhuravani"** for TCA.

Mrs. Akunuri also served as a teacher at the **Vedic Heritage School** of the **Meenakshi Temple**, teaching the **Ramayana**, **Mahabharata**, and **Bhagavatam**. As a Radio Jockey on **Houston Telugu Radio**, she entertains listeners every Saturday with classic Telugu melodies, riddles, quizzes, and interactive games. She was the first to introduce singing competitions on American Telugu radio.

Her organizational leadership extends to serving as **Cultural Chair** for the **19th TANA Convention**, **Cultural Secretary** for **NATA Conferences**, **Cultural Secretary** for **TANA Chaitanya Sravanthi**, organizing language and cultural service activities across Andhra Pradesh, Advisor for music competitions at the **20th TANA Convention**, and **Cultural Chair** for the **2019 American Telangana Association Convention**.

Despite living in the United States, Sarada has continued her musical journey with unwavering dedication. She has performed in hundreds of concerts across the United States, Canada, and India in **Telugu**, **Hindi**, **Tamil**, **Kannada**, and **Malayalam**. She has shared the stage with legendary playback singers including **P. Susheela**, **Koka Jamuna Rani**, **Ramakrishna**, **SP Sailaja**, **Mano**, **Ghantasala Ratna Kumar**, **Mallikarjun**, **Srikrishna**, and **Hemachandra**, earning immense admiration from music lovers.

In recognition of her contributions, **Telugu Times**, one of America's most popular Telugu publications, featured her among the **Nine Most Prominent Telugu Personalities in America** during its 9th Anniversary celebrations.

She received the "**Commitment and Contribution to the Empowerment of Women**" **Award** at the International Women's Celebrations in Dallas, presented alongside the legendary **P. Susheela**. On the occasion of **Akkineni Nageswara Rao's 89th birthday**, she received the **TANA Community Service Award** from the hands of **Akkineni Nageswara Rao** himself.

She has been the principal singer in several prestigious musical tributes, including celebrations honoring **ANR's 90th Birthday**, **SP Balasubrahmanyam's Pendyala Award**, **Jamuna's Adurthi Award**, **Kota Srinivasa Rao's Allu Ramalingaiah Award**, **Ali's Lifetime Achievement Award**, **Pride of Indian Cinema Award** presented to **Director Singeetam Srinivasa Rao**, **Veturi Geethanjali**, **Dasari Swarabhishekam**, **Rajan-Nagendra Musical Tribute**, and full-length musical tributes dedicated to legendary music directors **Satyam**, **Ramesh Naidu**, **K. V. Mahadevan**, and lyricists **Daasarathi**, **C. Narayana Reddy (Cinaare)**, and **Veturi**.

In **2014**, she received the prestigious **Vamsi Ugadi Award** alongside music directors **Mani Sharma** and **Koti**.

She also performed in Chennai before the legendary music director **M. S. Viswanathan**, receiving an award from him at a musical program organized by the **Andhra Cultural Club**.

Her performances have graced the presence of distinguished dignitaries including former Vice President of India **M. Venkaiah Naidu**, former Telangana Chief Minister **K. Chandrashekar Rao**, former Maharashtra Governor **C. H. Vidyasagar Rao**, former Tamil

Nadu Governor **K. Rosaiah**, and former Andhra Pradesh Governor **Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan**.

In **2023**, she conceptualized and presented the **NTR Centenary Musical Tribute**, during which actress **Jayasudha** was honored with the **NTR Award**. She also presented a grand musical tribute during actor **Murali Mohan's** 50-year film career celebrations.

In **2024**, she organized the **Golden Jubilee Celebrations** of renowned director **A. Kodandarami Reddy**, and in **2025**, she organized and presented a full-fledged musical tribute honoring acclaimed filmmaker **Pasalapudi Vamsy**. She also served as both principal singer and master of ceremonies at the **Guntur Medical College Reunion** held in Visakhapatnam. She appeared as a featured singer in special episodes of **ETV Swarabhishekam**.

Beyond music, Sarada Akunuri has a profound love for literature. She has actively supported the publication of several important literary works. She received the first copy of **Dr. C. Narayana Reddy's** poetry collection "**Kshetra Bandham**" directly from the poet himself. She played a key role in publishing **Malladi Ramakrishna's** *Madi Sarada Devi Mandirame*, *Madilo Veenalu Mroge*, and books on **Daasarathi**.

She published "**Nelameedi Jaabili Ningiloni Sirimalle – Akkineni Shata Geetha Lahari**," dedicating its proceeds to the welfare of elderly artists. During the centenary celebrations of music director **K. V. Mahadevan**, she published "**Sarileru Neekevvaru... Mahadevan Animutyalu**," donating its proceeds to support people with disabilities. This book was later selected for libraries across the Telugu states.

As the principal singer for the **Ghantasala Aradhanotsavams** and **Balu Sangeethotsavams**, organized by the **Vegesna Foundation** across twenty-five American cities to support people with disabilities, she was honored with the "**Gana Ratna**" Award.

She was conferred the title "**America Gana Kokila**" by **Mr. Upendra Chivukula**, Commissioner of the **New Jersey Board of Public Utilities**, on a public stage. The **Pragnika Foundation, Hyderabad**, honored her with the title "**Gandharva Rasa Varshini**." In **January 2026**, she received an award during the centenary celebrations of **Mandali Krishna Rao**, the "Gandhi of Diviseema."

As a **Board Director** of the **Akkineni Foundation of America**, she has played a vital leadership role. Serving as its **President in 2019**, she initiated numerous philanthropic and commemorative programs celebrating the legacy of **Akkineni Nageswara Rao**, while honoring distinguished personalities from various fields with prestigious awards.

Mrs. Sarada Akunuri has rendered several memorable film songs on the highly acclaimed television program **ETV Swarabhishekam**. She also serves in a key creative capacity for **ETV's "Ragam Tanam Pallavi"**, contributing significantly to its creative development.

Mrs. Sarada Akunuri successfully organized the first-ever U.S. edition of **Paaduta Teeyaga**, for the last nine consecutive episodes, earning widespread appreciation for her dedication

to music and cultural promotion. Beyond the stage, she has consistently used her musical talent to support meaningful social causes, performing at numerous fundraising events for organizations including **Sankara Nethralaya**, **Ekal Vidyalaya**, **Vegesna Foundation**, **Sankara Eye Foundation**, and the **Meenakshi Temple**, where the efforts were directed toward temple development and the reconstruction of certain structures. She has also actively participated in fundraising initiatives supporting relief efforts for the **HUDHUD Cyclone impact**, contributing to humanitarian aid and rehabilitation efforts. Her performances have helped raise awareness and support for initiatives benefiting differently abled individuals, eye care and vision restoration, education for underprivileged children, disaster relief, and broader community welfare programs. Through her music, she has seamlessly combined artistic excellence with a deep commitment to humanitarian and cultural service.

Through her extraordinary journey as a singer, cultural ambassador, organizer, broadcaster, author, and philanthropist, Sarada Akunuri has become a distinguished representative of Telugu music, literature, and culture across the world.