



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

## THE GANA ALANKARAS IN KARNATIC MUSIC COMPOSITIONS

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**Abstract:** As the name implies Alankaras are the factors of Kritis (classical songs) or ganas, which adorn the musical compositions. So, these are known as ‘Ganalankaras’. There are different types of Ganalankaras. The great composers of Karnatic music used varieties of the alankaras regularly as their signature in the compositions. The alankaras enhance the beauty of a kriti to a large extent. This article deals with the major Ganalankaras used by the great composers of Karnatic music.

**Index words:** - Gana-alankaras, Sangathis, Chittaswaras, Madhyamakala sahitya, Swarakshara, Swarasahitya, Cholkkettu swara, Cholkkettu swara sahitya, Yathi.

### INTRODUCTION

Alankaras are parts of musical compositions which provide attractive musical variations in the structure of the compositions. They produce a refreshing effect on singers or musicians and to the listeners alike when it is heard or rendered. The main types of ganalankaras found in the kritis of eminent Vaggeyakaras are Sangathis, Chittaswaras, Madhyamakala sahitya, Swarakshara, Swarasahitya, Cholkkettu swara, Cholkkettu swara sahitya and Yathi. Many great vaggeyakaras – [the composers who create both ‘vag’ and ‘geya’ or sahitya and swara or lyrics and tunes of classical compositions] - have their own special area of expertise in the realm of alankaras. We can see the types of the above ganalankaras in detail.

### Various types of Gana Alankaras

#### 1. Sangathis

Sangathis are the variations given to the tune of lines of a kriti or these are the step by step musical changes given to the dhatu of a song when repeating the same line. Dhathu means the swaras of the line composed. The sahitya or lyrics is called ‘mathu’.

All of us have heard the popular kriti “Vathapi Ganapathim bhajeham” of Muthuswami Deekhitar, set in Hamsadhvani raga, Aditala. Let us start with this much popular kriti of Lord Ganesha.

When we write the first line of the kriti in its various sangathis; in notation, it goes like this: -

1. // g ;;, r,, s, s, n, / p, r,; s, / r ;, s n s r//  
Va tha pi ga na pa thim bha je.. ham.....
2. //g, s r g p g r g r s, g r s n/ p, r,; s, / r ;, s n s r//  
Va tha pi ga na pa thim bha je.. ham...
- 3.. //g , p ;, r, g, r, g r s n/ p, r,; s, / r ;, s n s r//  
Va tha pi ga na pa thim bha je.. ham.....
4. //g, p, ggrr r, g, rrsn, g r s n/ p, , , r, , s, / r, s n s r//  
Va tha pi ga na pa thim bha je.. ham.....

The above are the four variations given to the tune. We can notice the swara changes occurred for the words ‘Vathapi Ganapathim’. These are called the sangathis. More sangathis are sung by the expert musicians for this beautiful kriti for this line itself.

As we all know, the sangathis are so charming, attractive and so melodious to hear. Through the variations of tunes in the different sangathis, the composer reveals the beauty of the raga more and more. They portray different raga sancharas through these sangathis. Learners of music get the opportunity to understand the sancharas of a raga very well. Listeners can enjoy the ganarasa through these sangathis. It is said that one of the musical trinity of South Indian music, Saint Tyagaraja was the first person who popularized the use of sangathis in Karnatic music.

## 2. Chittaswaras

These are the composed set of a few avarthas of swaras, which is to be sung usually after the anupallavi or charanam of a kriti. It is different from the manodharma swara sung by the musicians extempore.

These are of two types, madhyama kaala and samakala. Madhyamakala chittaswaras are set to sing in speed tempo and samakala chittaswaras are meant for singing in the same speed of the kriti.

The singing or playing of these chittaswaras refreshes the musicians and the listeners alike. They increase the liveliness of the concerts. There are so many kritis with chittaswaras. Many of the composers have incorporated this feature in their compositions.

E.g:- 1.

In the Anandabhairavi raga kriti “Anandamruthakarshini” (Adi tala) composed by Muthuswami Deekshitar, there is a chittaswara at the end of the charanam:-

```
// s,, g,,mpns nn pp mg//s,,p,,n,, sgmppmg //
//sg,mp, gm,pn, pnsg// s,,n pmmgs,, snpmg//
```

E.g:- 2.

In the Sankarabharana raga kriti “Baagumeera ganu naado” (Rupaka tala) by Veena Kuppayyar we can see a chitta swara at the end of the song:-

```
//gmp gmr gmgrsn // rsndpm dnsrgm//
//srgmp r,gmpdn //srgmg sgrsndp//rs,ndpdp,mgr//
```

Eg. 3.

In the Sahana raga kriti “Ee Vasudha nee vandi” (Adi tala) by Tyagaraja, we can see a chittaswara at the end of the song:-

```
//r,,, rgmp rgmpd./dpmg,mr./grsn.rsr//
//n,,,dnsrsn,rsn/s,,,,pp/,mgmgrs//
//ss,spp,ppmdd,ddn/sn,snsdn/dpmd,dns//
//rr,gmgrsrnsdp/dnsrss,sp,/pmgmrgs//
```

## 3. Madhyamakala sahitya

This is one of the most impressive features of the kritis. It is used by Muthuswami Deekshitar abundantly in his kritis. This madhyamakala prayogas (use) give an unmatched individuality to his kritis. As mentioned already, the singer and the listeners will feel refreshed by singing or hearing this. Deekshitar teaches us so many brilliant prosodical usages in this part, like prasa, anuparasa, antyaparasa, yati, etc.

Eg. 1.

In the Hamsadhwani raga kriti “Vathapi Ganapathim” (Adi tala), Deekshitar composed the following lines in madhyamakala.

```
//Veethraginam vinuthayoginam/
Viswakaranam vighnavaranam//
```

Eg. 2.

In the kriti “Pamarajanapalini”, in the raga Simhendramadhyamam (Rupaka tala) by Muthuswami Deekshitar, after the samashticharanam we can see these lines in Madhyamakala sahitya:-

```
//Komala hrudayanivasini //
//Guruguhamatiprakasini //
//Seemanthini natamathrini //
//Sreemahadevaranjani//
```

Eg. 3.

In the Nata raga Kriti “Swaminathaparipalaya...” (Adi tala) of Muthuswami Deekshitar, we can see the madhyamakala sahitya in the charanam.

```
//Kamitharthavitharana nipunacharana Kavyanarthakalankarabharana //
//Bhoomijalgnivayugaganakirana bodharoopa nithyanankarana//
```

#### 4. Yathi

Yathi is a style of composing employed by Vaggeyakaras in such a way that, the words of a particular part of a composition to be sung in a step by step increasing or decreasing word pattern in order to give the song a peculiar rhythmic beauty. There are two types of Yathis. One is Gopucchayathi and the other is Srothovahayathi. We can see those in the examples below.

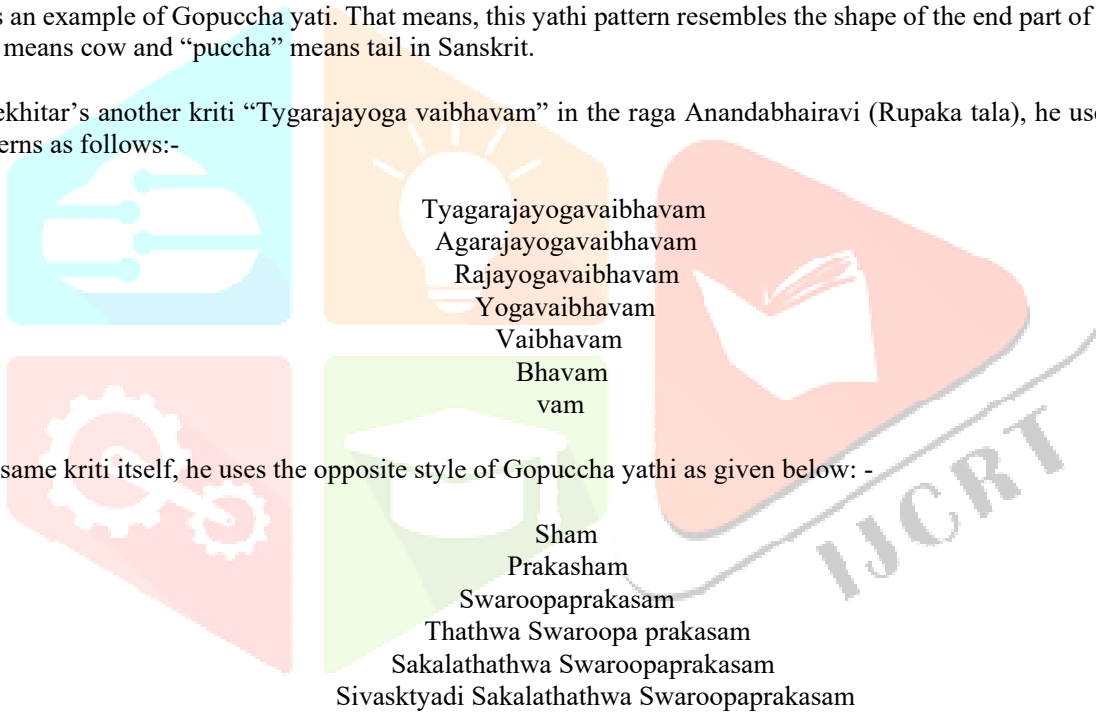
In the Sriraga kriti “Sreevaralakshmi Namasthubhyam” (Rupaka tala) by Muthuswami Deekshitar, we see this feature in the last part of the pallavi like this,

```
//sree sarasapade
rasapade
sapade
pade
pade//
```

This is an example of Gopuccha yati. That means, this yathi pattern resembles the shape of the end part of the tail of a cow. “Go(w)” means cow and “puccha” means tail in Sanskrit.

Eg.2.

In Deekshitar’s another kriti “Tygarajayoga vaibhavam” in the raga Anandabhairavi (Rupaka tala), he uses very beautiful yathi patterns as follows:-



In the same kriti itself, he uses the opposite style of Gopuccha yathi as given below: -

```
Sham
Prakasham
Swaropaprakasam
Thathwa Swaropaprakasam
Sakalathathwa Swaropaprakasam
Sivasktyadi Sakalathathwa Swaropaprakasam
```

This style of Yathi is called “Shrotovahayathi”. That is, the number of words increases towards the end and form an expanded pattern like the flowing of a river.

#### 5. Swarakshara

Here the sahitya letters used will be the same as that of the swara used for the tune. That is, if the swara used is “sa” the sahitya will also be “sa”, or if the swara is “ga”, the sahitya letter will be “ga”. In the technical terms of music, here; the “dhatu” and “mathu” will be same. “Dhatu” means the swara part and the “mathu” means the sahitya part. This technique, we can notice in many compositions.

We can see the examples:-

1. In the kriti “Pamarajana Palini”, in the raga Simhendra madhyamam (Rupaka tala) composed by Muthuswami Deekshitar, the first line of the pallavi starts like this: -

```
// P, , , p, m, d.d, // snd,n,s,,//
Paa..mara jana pa...lini...
```

Here the starting swara used and the sahityakshara or lyrical word used are the same. Likewise,

2. In the Kalyani raga kriti “Kamalambam Bhajare” (Adi tala) of Deekshitar, the Pallavi starts like: -

//G , , m , , p , , ,  
//Ka.ma.lam.....bam bha... ja.. re

Here the second swara and the second sahyakshara used are the same.

There are “sudha swaraksharas” and “soochitha swaraksharas”. In the sudha swarakshara prayogas the swara and the sahyakshara will be the same. But in the second type the sahyakshara it is slightly different but it will be a similar sounding letter. In the above line itself, we can see the first letter “Ka” for the swara “Ga”. Here “Ga” is almost similar sounding to “Ka” of the sahyakshara. Or in other words, the sahyakshara “Ka” gives a clue to the swara “Ga” in its sounding or vice versa. So it is called as “Soochitha swarakshara”.

## 6. Swara sahyakshara

These are the appendages of kriti in addition to the normal parts of a kriti- pallavi, anupallavi and charanam. In these, there will be a swara passage part and a sahyakshara part composed for these swaras. Syamasastri was an adept in that. We can see a good example in his kriti “Mariveregati” in Anandabhairavi raga (Misra chappu tala). In this kriti, swara part will be sung after anupallavi and the sahyakshara part, after the charanam.

### Swara

//p ; / , d p m // g - p m / g - m g r //  
//g , m / p - g m d // p - m g / r - s g m //  
//p m g / m - g , r // g r - n / s n g r //  
//n n - s / s - g g - m // m - p m / g g m , //  
//p s - n / d p - n d // p m - d / p d m p //  
//g r - p / m - g r - n // s g - r / g m p , //  
//d p s / n - s g r // m g - g / r - n s n //  
//r s , / n d - d p // , m g / r - g g m //

### Sahyakshara

pada yugamu madilo dalachi koriti vinamu madagaja gamana  
parulu nutimpagane varamosagu satatamu ninumati maruvakane  
madana ripu sati ninu hrudayamulo gatiyani dalachi stuti salipite  
mudamoto phalamosagu taku dharalo natavana kutuhala nivega

## 7. Cholkettu swara

These are the part of a kriti, like chittaswara. But in this, jatis also are incorporated in addition to the swaras. The jathis are rhythmic syllables that are used to denote thala patterns. The jathis and swaras together produce a special charm.

E.g.1.

Begada raga kriti “Vallabha Nayakasya” (Rupaka tala) of Deekshitar has Cholkettu swara after the samashticharanam.

//Dheem thakitajham g m r g taka dhina jam d p d,  
n, n, dpd, t,a thinginata n, n, dpd tadhin ginatom//

E.g.2

In the Kedara raga kriti “Anandanatanaprakasam” of Dekshitar, there is a beautiful Cholkettu swara passage. (Misrachappu thala).

//p ; n n s tha ka // ja nu tha s n //n ; // jam tha ri tha s m //g - m p ; n m g //  
//tha ja nu tha ka m g // m m p s n n ; // tha jam tha ri p ; //m g tha thi gi nathom//

## 8. Cholkettu swarasahitya

These also are the passages like chittaswaram, included in some of the kriti. In which, in addition to the swaras and jathis, sahyakshara also is included by the composer. But these type of kriti are not much in number.

E.g. The Daruvarna “Mathe malayadhwaaja” composed by Muthayya Bhagavathar set in the raga Kamas (Adi tala) is having this Cholkettu swarasahitya. This is a majestic composition of the composer.

### Swara

//d,d, nddn ddnd dnpm / d,d, nrsn sdns dpmm //  
//d,d, ngrn rsnd pndm / d,d, mgmp mpdd nndm //

//d,d rsndn d,d, mdnmn / d,d, sspdn d,d, mgrsn //  
 //d,dp d,dn d,ds d,rd, / mgr snd, nsnm ddpn //

### **Jathi**

//thamtham thakajonu dadanida dimithika// thamtham kukuthari thajanutha dapamama //  
 //dhadha nigarini risadhimi tharikita //jamjam thakitatha kukuthari namthari //  
 //dathathi ginathari jekumada nithaka // namthasa sathimitha thomthadi mithakita //  
 //dadapa dadatha rekusa darijam // magari sanida nisanini dadapama //

### **Sahitya**

//d,d, sakala kala nipuna chatura  
 /dada vividha matha samaya samarasa//  
 //dada sulabha hrdaya madhura vachana/  
 /dada sarasa ruchiratarasvara laya//  
 //gita sukhada nija bhava rasika vara/  
 /dada mahishura nada nalvati shri krishna rajendrara taye//  
 //sada pore mahite harikesha manohare sadaye

### **Conclusion:**

We are gifted with so many stocks of musical compositions by a number of great Vaggeyakaras. They were leading spiritual lives with the immense power of sadhana. Apart from being musicians, they were poets, sahyakaras, philosophers who knew the secret of eternal life, and they were great devotees of the real God. So, they tried to teach us all these values through their brilliant compositions. They tried different methods for beautifying their compositions through many possibilities, along with the aim of the depiction of Raga bhavas. The alankaras are only a few among them. The alankaras add beauty as well as they give a dynamic flow to the musical compositions. And with the use of alankaras, the raga bhava, the ideas or messages of the kritis, and the science of composing poetic verses, etc. can be conveyed more effectively to the listeners.

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