



# Ata-Tala Varna: Structure And Performance In Karnataka Music

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## Guide

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## **Abstract**

Varṇa as a musical form is known to be composed from the late seventeenth century. Musical notations of varṇa-s are available from early publications until recent ones. Varṇa-s also have a strong practicing tradition in vocal and dance recitals. Varṇa-s in practice and textual sources are primarily set in two tāla-s - Ādi and Ata. This article is a study of the structure and performance of Ata-tāla varṇa-s in the music repertoire, with special reference to varṇa-s from textual sources. Structure refers to the arrangement of the melodic sections of a varṇa i.e., pallavi, anupallavi etc. and the performance refers to the practical rendition of the varṇa after taking the structure and its musical implications into account. While only some varṇa-s are seen to have a strong oral tradition in practicing music, others can be conceptualized from the notations in textual sources, with a background of the oral tradition. The objective of this paper is to understand the structure suggested in the varṇa-s of the textual tradition, understand the melodic implications underlying it, and thus arrive at the understanding of the performance of the form.

**Keywords:** Varna, sangita sampradaya pradarsini, anubandha, Ata tala, tana varna, cauka varna, early composers of varna, structure, ganakrama.

Karṇāṭaka<sup>1</sup> music comprises of musical forms like kīrtana, varṇa, svarajati, padam and so on. Some are performed in the music repertoire, and some in dance. The structure of the musical form refers to the successive arrangement of the melodic sections that it is composed of. With reference to Karṇāṭaka musical forms, the melodic sections comprise of pallavi, anupallavi, caraṇa, and further ancillary sections like mukṭayi-svara, cīṭṭa-svara, svara-sāhitya and so on. The melodic sections are further organized into text which is set to a melody and generally set to a temporal framework. The text in Karṇāṭaka music is referred to as *sāhitya*, the melody is composed in a melodic framework of *rāga* and the temporal framework in which the text and melody is organized is called the *tāla*. The duration of music in a melodic section is presented in a repetitive cycle of tāla, called the āvarta. Thus, a musical composition is made of melodic sections with specific āvarta-s of music, rendered in a particular sequence which is characteristic to the form. The *performance* of the form implies its rendition after taking into account all the nuances of the structure of the form and its relevance with that in other forms in the realm of music

<sup>1</sup> Term used to denote music practiced by linguistic groups of southern states of India, also referred to as South-Indian music (Ramanathan, 2010, p. 1)

system. The performance of a composition would thus include the sequence of singing the melodic sections, the refrain lines, the commencement and conclusion of the composition are some components of performance of the composition.

This paper is a study of the structure and performance of Aṭa-tāla varṇa-s in the music repertoire, with specific reference to varṇa-s from textual sources with inadequate oral tradition. Varṇa as a musical form in Karnāṭaka music has been composed from the late seventeenth century. It is known to be performed in music and dance repertoires. More than 70 Aṭa-tāla varṇa-s composed from the late seventeenth century up to mid-twentieth century, have been studied. The objective of the study is to understand the structure and the performance of the varṇa-s in different periods, with the help of notations from various early texts in the background of the available oral tradition of Aṭa-tāla varṇa-s. In the event of a lack of oral tradition, early books with notations are considered as the source of the varṇa-s. Notation of varṇa-s are seen ever since the earliest known available publication giving notations to South-Indian musical forms, Saṅgīta-sarvārtha-sāra-saṅgrahamu (Vīṇā Rāmānuja, 1859). Since 1959, there have been several books, mostly in South-Indian regional scripts like Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam and Kannada, and later in Roman script with musical notations to varṇa and other musical forms. Of the early publications, Saṅgīta-sampradāya-pradarśini (Subbarāma Dīkṣita, 1904) is acknowledged to document descriptive notations for several musical forms including varṇa-s. Varṇa-s for which notations available in SSP, the same are referred for study. For varṇa-s not in SSP, the earliest available notation for the same is considered. Varṇa composers include the following in chronological order - Kūvaṇasāmaya, Rāmasvāmi Dīkṣita, Ādippayya, Śyāmā Śāstrī, Sōṇti Veṅkaṭasubhayya, Pallavi Gōpālayya, Tirunelvēli Vēṅgu Bhāgavata, Bālasvāmi Dīkṣita, Vīṇa Kuppayya, Ayyāsvāmi Naṭṭuvāṇar, Tañjai Nālvar, Svāti Tirunāl, Annāsvāmi Śāstri, Subbarāma Dīkṣita, Paṭṭanam Subramania Ayyar, Tiruvōrriyūr/Tiruvattūr Tyāgayya, Muttayya Bhāgavata, and Vīṇa Kṛṣṇamacārī. Aṭa-tāla varṇa-s of the Tiruvārūr temple tradition and those in the books of descendants of Tañjai Nālvar are also studied. The following section gives the observations of the chronological study of Aṭa-tāla varṇa-s in a period of roughly two and a half centuries.

### Structure and performance of Aṭa-tāla varṇa-s

The observations in varṇa-s are noted with reference to the melodic sections, number of lines (khaṇḍika) of sāhitya in each section, components of text (sāhitya, colkaṭu, sargam<sup>2</sup>), sequence of rendition of melodic sections, refrain line, the point of commencement of music in the tāla āvarta (eḍuppu), the point of placement of the concluding sāhitya akṣara of a khaṇḍika in the āvarta, the type of eḍuppu – sama (where the commencement of tāla and music coincide), anāgata (where the music commences after a lapse in tāla), atīta (where the music commences before the tāla). In general, it is observed that Aṭa-tāla tāna varṇa-s have two sāhitya khaṇḍika-s in each of pallavi and anupallavi. A sargam-passage of two āvarta duration, commonly referred to as muktāyi-svara, is appended to the anupallavi. The caraṇa comprises of sāhitya khaṇḍika/s appended by multiple svara-passages, commonly referred to as ciṭṭa-svara. The number of sāhitya khaṇḍika-s and svara-passages in the caraṇa may vary in different varṇa-s. Further, the eḍuppu in Aṭa-tāla varṇa-s is generally observed to be an anāgata eḍuppu of two mātrā-s. Where the aspects in individual varṇa-s are seen to differ from those mentioned above, it is specified in context. With reference to the performance of Aṭa-tāla varṇa, this article highlights only those observations which are observed to be different from present-day practice. Additionally, the structure of the cauka and tāna varṇa as discussed by Subbarāma Dīkṣita, and the performance of some other varṇa-s in SSP is discussed by this scholar elsewhere (Anuthama Murali, 2022, pp. 32-35)

<sup>2</sup> Ramanathan, N. "Sargam and Musical Conception in Karnataka System." Sargam as a Musical Material, N Ramanathan, 2004, <https://www.musicresearchlibrary.net/omeka/items/show/2364>, p. 1

## 1. Kūvaṇasāmayya (1680-1710)<sup>3</sup>

Gōvindasāmayya and Kūvaṇasāmayya, together known as the Kārvētinagaram brothers, are known to be the earliest composers of varṇa-s. Kūvaṇasāmayya has composed one Aṭa-tāla tāna varṇa ‘intaluka jēsitē’ in Nāṭakurañji rāga, notation for which is given in SSP (anubandha (B), 112). The observations are stated below.

- The eḍuppu of the varṇa (pallavi and anupallavi) is one mātrā anāgata as compared to 2 mātrā-s in most Aṭa-tāla tāna varṇa-s. The muktāyi-svara passage displays the same eḍuppu as the anupallavi sāhitya khaṇḍika. It is composed with corresponding sāhitya and colkaṭṭu. The passage is hence named as ‘muktāyi-svara-sāhitya-jati’.
- The pallavi concludes with a rest on the second khaṇḍika, with the sāhitya syllables being placed within the āvarta it commences.
- The title of the melodic section “anupallavi” is not seen in the notation. It has probably been missed out, however the anupallavi can be demarcated from prāsa on letter ‘da’ in the first khaṇḍika of the pallavi and anupallavi. The symbols indicating the anāgata eḍuppu ‘r’ at the commencement of the anupallavi also complements this.
- The varṇa has one caraṇa khaṇḍika (ettugada) with appended svara passages.
- The ettugada has an anāgata eḍuppu of two mātrā-s as seen in most Aṭa-tāla varṇa-s. The sāhitya of the ettugada concludes with a rest on mātrā 14, before proceeding to the caraṇa-svara-s, its sāhitya being placed within the āvarta it commences.
- The caraṇa-svara passages have a sama eḍuppu, each with the ettugada as the refrain. After rendering all caraṇa-svara-s, the varṇa concludes with the ettugada.
- The first two caraṇa-svara passages are composed with corresponding sāhitya and colkaṭṭu and the concluding passage is a svara-sāhitya passage. Thus, the varṇa incorporates three māṭu components - sargam, sāhitya and colkaṭṭu.

## 2. Rāmasvāmi Dīkṣita (1735-1817)<sup>4</sup>

Rāmasvāmi Dīkṣita has composed one Aṭa-tāla tāna varṇa in Dhīraśāṅkarābharaṇa rāga ‘rārapusēyaka’ (SSP, p. 908) and one cauka varṇa in Hindōla rāga ‘Rammanavē’ (SSP, p. 406). The observations pertaining to the structure and performance are given below.

- The structure of the varṇa is identical to most Aṭa-tāla varṇa-s, except for two aspects. The muktāyi-svara in ‘Rārapusēyaka’ is a passage of 14 mātrā duration, commencing on the 2 mātrā anāgata eḍuppu and leading into the pallavi as the refrain. Secondly, ‘rārapusēyaka’ has a caraṇa of 4 sāhitya khaṇḍika-s. Unlike most Aṭa-tāla tāna varṇa-s of oral tradition, this varṇa concludes with the pallavi and not on the ettugada.
- The cauka varṇa in Aṭa-tāla in Hindōla rāga is different in certain aspects from the composer’s tāna varṇa. Firstly, the eḍuppu of the varṇa is 1 mātrā anāgata in the pallavi and anupallavi as compared to 2 mātrā anāgata in most tāna varṇa-s. The muktāyi-svara, ettugada and the caraṇa-svara-s have a sama eḍuppu. These are understood to be aspects related to tāla, and not discussed in this article.
- A melodic rest is observed at the conclusion of the pallavi in both varṇa-s, the sāhitya of the second khaṇḍika not being placed on the mātrā-s of the subsequent āvarta.
- The sāhitya of the ettugada is placed only within the āvarta it commences.
- There are no colkaṭṭu passages in both varṇa-s.

<sup>3</sup> Nixon, Michael J. “The Varṇam-s of Govindasamayya.” Journal of Music Academy, vol. LIII, 1982, pp. 152.

Jayasitalakshmi, SR. “The Varnas of the Dikshithar Family.” The Journal of the Music Academy, vol. LXIII, 1992, pp. 109.

<sup>4</sup> SSP, Vāggēyakāra Caritramu, pp.16-18

### 3. Ādippayya (in between 1739-87)<sup>5</sup>

An Aṭa-tāla varṇa composed by Ādippayya ‘madavati’ in rāga Pantuvarāḷi is obtained from the Journal of Music Academy (Cennakesavayya, 1961, p. 160). ‘Viribōṇi’ is another Aṭa-tāla tāna varṇa in Bhairavi, composed by the same composer which has an oral tradition, hence not included in this study.

- The structure in ‘madavati’ is similar to most varṇa-s in oral tradition. However, two versions of ‘viribōṇi’ is known, one in which the caraṇa has one caraṇa khaṇḍika or ettugāḍa, wherein the varṇa concludes on the ettugāḍa. The other version is seen in some early books like SSP, where ‘viribōṇi’ has more than one caraṇa khaṇḍika and the varṇa concludes on the pallavi. However, ‘madavati’ has 1 caraṇa khandka. Consequently, the varṇa concludes with the ettugāḍa.
- The pallavi seems to conclude with a melodic rest at the end of the second khaṇḍika. The notation of the varṇa does not explicitly show this, neither there are any symbols to indicate this as in SSP. However, the melody of the anupallavi is evidently disjoint from the culminating melody of pallavi khaṇḍika 2. Hence the pallavi is understood to rest on gāndhāra before proceeding to the anupallavi.
- The varṇa does not have sāhitya for muktāyi-svara and caraṇa-svara passages. There are no colkaṭṭu passages in the varṇa.
- The sāhitya of the ettugāḍa is placed on the māṭrā-s of the subsequent āvarta while repeating the ettugāḍa, but accommodated in the same āvarta while proceeding to the caraṇa svara-s.

### 4. Śyāmā Śāstrī (1762-1827)<sup>6</sup>

There is one varṇa composed by Śyāmā Śāstri’s Aṭa-tāla tāna varṇa ‘sāmī nī rammanavē’ in Ānandabhairavi rāga (SSP, anubandham (B), p. 118). The observations are as follows.

- The varṇa has a caraṇa of four khaṇḍika-s; the varṇa concludes on the pallavi.
- The eḍuppu of pallavi, anupallavi and caraṇa is two māṭrā anāgata eḍuppu.
- Although a melodic rest on gāndhāra is seen at the end of the pallavi second khaṇḍika in SSP, there is no explicit indication of a rest after the second khaṇḍika. The  $\text{^\circ}$  symbol is placed on the first khaṇḍika after the sāhitya ‘sāmini’, indicating a conclusion at the point. A rest on the pallavi first khaṇḍika looks probable in this varṇa.
- The muktāyi-svara passage has corresponding sāhitya, a feature observed in a few tāna varṇa-s earlier. However, the muktāyi-svara sāhitya is not seen in the family notebook<sup>7</sup> (pdf p, 114) of Śyāmā Śāstri’s descendants.
- The varṇa also has sāhitya for three out of five caraṇa-svara passages in all books. Since the pages of the family notebook following the muktāyi-svara section is missing, more details on the caraṇa-svara-s could not be obtained.
- The ettugāḍa is sung in its entirety when sung for the first time; the sāhitya syllable ‘vē’ is placed on the māṭrā-s of anāgata eḍuppu of the subsequent āvarta. However, this syllable is truncated while proceeding to the caraṇa-svara-s.
- There are no colkaṭṭu passages in the varṇa.

<sup>5</sup> SSP, Vāggēyakāra Caritramu, p. 15.

<sup>6</sup> SSP (vaggeya kara caritramu, p. 18)

<sup>7</sup> Descendants of Syama Sastri. Family Book with Notations of Compositions of Śyāmā Śāstrī and Annasvami Śāstrī. <http://www.musicresearchlibrary.net/omeka/items/show/1828>. PDF p. 114.

## 5. Sonṭi Veṅkaṭasubhayya (in between 1798-32)<sup>8</sup>

Two tāna varṇa-s of Sonṭi Veṅkaṭasubhayya have been studied, one in Bilahari (SSP, 956) and another in Gamakakriya rāga (SSP, p. 1131). The observations are as follows.

- The eduppu of all melodic sections in both varṇa-s is 2 mātrā anāgata.
- Both varṇa-s indicate a rest after the Pallavi in SSP, but not always in other books.
- The number of khaṇḍika-s in the pallavi and anupallavi are the same as in most Aṭa-tāla varṇa-s. However, Bilahari rāga varṇa has caraṇa sāhitya of 4 khaṇḍika-s and that in Gamakakriya has one khaṇḍika. Consequently, the former concludes on the pallavi and latter on the ettugaḍa.
- The sāhitya in the ettugaḍa of Bilahari rāga varṇa spreads to the mātrā-s of anāgata eduppu of the subsequent āvarta. This is accommodated in one āvarta, while proceeding to each caraṇa-svara. On the other hand, the sāhitya of ettugaḍa in Bilahari rāga varṇa is placed only on the āvarta in which it commences.
- Gamakakriya rāga varṇa has sāhitya for all sections while Bilahari varṇa has muktāyi-svara and caraṇa-svara-s, no corresponding sāhitya. There is no colkaṭṭu passage in both varṇa-s

## 6. Pallavi Gōpālayya (in between 1787-1832)<sup>9</sup>

Three Aṭa-tāla tāna varṇa-s composed by Pallavi Gōpālayya are obtained from SSP. They are 'intacālamu' in Kāmbhōji rāga (SSP, p. 776), 'vanajākṣi' in Śāntakalyāṇi (SSP, p. 1182) and 'kanakāṅgi' (SSP, anubandha (B), 17). The observations pertaining to the varṇa-s are given below.

- The eduppu of the melodic sections is the same as that in most Aṭa-tāla tāna varṇa-s i.e., 2 mātrā-s anāgata.
- The three varṇa-s composed by Pallavi Gōpālayya indicate a rest at the conclusion of the pallavi. This may however not be indicated in other books. The sāhitya akṣara-s of the pallavi second khaṇḍika are placed in the mātrā-s of the subsequent āvarta in Kalyani and Tōḍi rāga varṇa-s, while they are not in Kāmbhōji.
- All books prior to SSP have a melodic ākāra occupying the mātrā-s of anāgata eduppu of the pallavi in Kalyāṇi and Kāmbhōji varṇa, which is not seen in SSP version. Ākāra is not seen in any book in Tōḍi rāga Aṭa-tāla tāna varṇa.
- All three varṇa-s have caraṇa with one khaṇḍika, consequently the varṇa concludes on the ettugaḍa.
- Sāhitya akṣara-s in the ettugaḍa-s of all three varṇa-s are placed within the āvarta in which it commences, thus not appearing on the mātrā-s of the anāgata eduppu of the subsequent āvarta.
- Muktāyi-svara and caraṇa-svara passages do not have corresponding sāhitya. There are no colkaṭṭu passages in the varṇa-s

## 7. Tirunelvēli Vēṅgu Bhāgavata (ca. 1804 - ca. 1874)<sup>10</sup>

The observations in Sāvēri rāga Aṭa-tāla varṇa 'nīvē dikkani' (SSP, anubandha (B), p. 116) composed by Tirunelvēli Vēṅgu Bhāgavata are given below.

- The eduppu of melodic sections is the same as in most Aṭa-tāla varṇa-s, excepting that the muktāyi-svara passage commences on the sama. This aspect was earlier seen in Rāmasvāmi Dīkṣita's Hindōla rāga varṇa 'rammanavē'.
- The pallavi rests on the second khaṇḍika.
- The varṇa has a caraṇa of four khaṇḍika-s, thus the varṇa concluding on the pallavi.
- The sāhitya 'nannu' is truncated from the ettugaḍa while proceeding to the caraṇa-svara-s.

<sup>8</sup> (SSP, vaggeyakara caritramu, p. 16)

<sup>9</sup> (SSP, Vāggēyakāra caritramu, p. 26)

<sup>10</sup> (SSP, Vāggēyakāra caritramu, p. 32)

- The varṇa does not have colkaṭṭu passages. Muktāyi-svara and caraṇa-svara-s do not have corresponding sāhitya.

## 8. Bālasvāmi Dīkṣita (1786-1859)<sup>11</sup>

The observations in Bālasvāmi Dīkṣita's Aṭa-tāla varṇa 'śrī rājādhirāja' in Calanāṭa rāga (SSP, p. 1053) are given below.

- The structure in pallavi and anupallavi is similar to most Aṭa-tāla tāna varṇa-s. The pallavi concludes with a rest on the second khaṇḍika.
- The caraṇa has four khaṇḍika-s, the varṇa thus concluding on pallavi.
- The sāhitya of the ettugāḍa concludes within the āvarta it commences, not extending into the anāgata mātrā-s of the subsequent āvarta.
- There are no colkaṭṭu passages. The varṇa consists of only muktāyi-svara and caraṇa-svara passages, without corresponding sāhitya.

## 9. Vālājāpeṭ Veṅkatramaṇa Bhāgavata (1781 - 1874)<sup>12</sup> p. 43

There are two Aṭa-tāla tāna varṇa-s composed by Vālājāpeṭ Veṅkatramaṇa Bhāgavata obtained by this scholar – 'ninnu kōri' in Pūrikalyāṇi rāga (Gāna-vidyā-vinōdini, 1915, p. 34) and 'karuka payō nidhi' in Mukhāri rāga (Varṇamulu, GOML, 1954, p. 102). The observations of the varṇa-s are given below.

- The varṇa in Pūrikalyāṇi rāga has eḍuppu and a structure in pallavi and anupallavi similar to most Aṭa-tāla tāna varṇa-s, except that, the muktāyi-svara passage comprises of 4 āvarta-s then leading into the pallavi of anāgata eḍuppu of 2 mātrā-s.
- The caraṇa is composed of one khaṇḍika. Consequently, the varṇa concludes with the ettugāḍa.
- The muktāyi-svara and caraṇa-svara-s have corresponding sāhitya passages. There is no colkaṭṭu.
- The pallavi rests on the second khaṇḍika before proceeding to the anupallavi, with the sāhitya placed within the āvarta it commences.
- The sāhitya of the ettugāḍa is also placed within the āvarta it commences, thus not extending into the mātrā-s of anāgata eḍuppu of the subsequent āvarta.
- The notation of Mukhāri rāga varṇa in the GOML manuscript is not set to tāla āvarta. The tāla and eḍuppu markings cannot be ascertained. Hence the type of pallavi and caraṇa could not be determined. The pallavi type seems to rest on the second khaṇḍika. The sāhitya akṣara-s of the ettugāḍa appear to extend into the subsequent āvarta, such that the akṣara-s might have to be accommodated inside one āvarta while proceeding to the caraṇa-svara-s.

## 10. Vīṇa Kuppayya (1798-1860)<sup>13</sup>

Aṭa-tāla tāna varṇa-s composed by Vīṇa Kuppayya's are studied from Pallavi-svara-kalpavalli (ed. Tiruvōṭṭriyūr Tyāgayya, 1900). Notation of three varṇa-s from the book in Rītigauḍa, Nārāyaṇagauḍa and Mōhana rāga (SSP, p. 1210) are also seen in SSP. Rītigauḍa and Nārāyaṇagauḍa rāga varṇa-s are varṇa-s available in oral tradition. About seven varṇa-s not available in oral tradition are studied in this section. They are 'śrī nāthā ninnu' in Nāṭa rāga (PSK, 1900, p. 8), 'palu mārū nātō' in Gauḍa rāga (PSK, 1900, p. 9), 'janani nannu' in Bhauḍi rāga (PSK, 1900, p. 10), 'sarasijākṣi' in Mōhana rāga (PSK, 1900, p. 15), 'sāmi nīpai' in Ānandabhairavi rāga (PSK, 1900, p. 16), 'nenaruñci' in Dhanyāsi rāga (PSK, 1900, p. 18), 'vanajākṣi' in Tōḍi rāga (PSK, 1900, p. 19). The observations in the varṇa-s are given below.

- All varṇa-s composed by Vīṇa Kuppayya have a melodic ākāra in the mātrā-s of the anāgata eḍuppu in the pallavi in Pallavi-svara-kalpavalli. The same has been retained in Vīṇa Kuppayya's varṇa-s in SSP.

<sup>11</sup> (SSP, Vāggēyakāra caritramu, p. 29-30)

<sup>12</sup> Vedavalli, M. D., editor. *A Dictionary of South Indian Music and Musicians Volume V of Prof. P Sambamurthy*. The Indian Music Publishing House, 2007., p. 169

<sup>13</sup> Foreword by V Raghavan in *Pallavi-Svara-Kalpavalli in Tamil*. Editor Publisher V Ranganathan, 1971.

- The number of khaṇḍika-s in the pallavi and anupallavi are seen to be the same as in most Aṭa-tāla tāna varṇa-s.
- The caraṇa in his varṇa-s is composed of one khaṇḍika, appended with caraṇa-svara-s. The varṇa-s thus conclude with the ettugada.
- The notation in Pallavi-svara-kalpavalli display a tāla format in which the melody of the pallavi seems to merge with first khaṇḍika of the anupallavi without any rest, which is unlike the notation of his varṇa-s in Rītigauṇa, Nārāyaṇagauṇa and Mōhana rāga as seen in SSP. However, on closer observation, it is noticed that most of the pallavi second khaṇḍika-s culminate on a melodic rest of 2-3 madhyamakāla units, and are subsequently appended with a melodic phrase merging with the anupallavi on the anāgata eḍuppu. A rest with an appended melody is viewed as an arrangement to facilitate the repetition of the second khaṇḍika. Eventually, the pallavi is likely to rest on the second khaṇḍika at the point of the short melodic rest. Alternatively, it is also probable that the pallavi concludes on the first khaṇḍika, as the second khaṇḍika of the pallavi also appears to have a melodic connect with the first khaṇḍika, for example, Nāṭa and Gauṇa rāga varṇa-s. A similar aspect is seen in the notation of Śaṅkarābhaṇa rāga varṇa ‘sāmi ninnē’ in Pratham-abhyāsa-pustakamu (Subbarāma Dīkṣita, 1905, p. 86). Other than Mōhana (PSK, p. 15), this feature is observed in Nāṭa (p. 8), Gauṇa (p. 9), Dhanyāsi (p. 18) rāga varṇa-s. The last sāhitya syllable of the second khaṇḍika of the pallavi in these varṇa-s is placed within the āvarta in which the second khaṇḍika commences.
- In some other varṇa-s, the second khaṇḍika of the pallavi has a melodic rest of two or three madhyamakāla units on the sama of the consequent āvarta, is characterised by a syllable placement, then appended with a melodic phrase which appears to merge with the anāgata eḍuppu of the anupallavi. This is seen in Tōḍi rāga varṇa (PSK, p. 19). The pallavi-s of such varṇa-s may seem to merge directly to the anupallavi first khaṇḍika. However, it is more likely that the second khaṇḍika as given in the notations, served as a connecting phrase facilitating the repetition of the second khaṇḍika, and the pallavi rested on the melodic rest when sung for the second time, as seen earlier in Rītigauṇa and Nārāyaṇagauṇa rāga Aṭa-tāla varṇa-s in SSP. Same can be said about the varṇa-s in Bhaulī (p. 10) and Ānandabhairavi (p. 16) rāga-s. Moreover, the melody of second khaṇḍika in most varṇa-s are often observed to be disjoint from that of the first khaṇḍika of the anupallavi, for example, Dhanyāsi rāga varṇa (p. 18). However, they are seen to have a melodic connect with the first khaṇḍika.
- Varṇa-s composed by Vīṇa Kuppayya do not have colkaṭṭu passages; muktāyi-svara and caraṇa-svara passages do not have corresponding sāhitya.
- The practice of concluding the pallavi with a melodic rest appears in the varṇa-s of Vīṇa Kuppayya, though notations in all books might not explicitly indicate details of the same. However, there are some varṇa-s in which the second khaṇḍika of the pallavi merge with the anupallavi without sounding disjoint. A few examples of the same are Bhaulī, Nārāyaṇagauṇa and Mōhana rāga varṇa-s.

## 11. Ayyāsvāmi Naṭṭuvanār (early 19<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>14</sup>

There is one Aṭa-tāla varṇa “intapriyamuga” obtained from SSP composed by Ayyāsvāmi Naṭṭuvanār in Bēgaḍa rāga (SSP, anubandha (B), p. 128), observations of which are given below.

- The eḍuppu and the structure in the varṇa is similar to most Aṭa-tāla varṇa-s in oral tradition.
- The pallavi appears to conclude on the first syllable of the first khaṇḍika of the pallavi, and not on the second khaṇḍika as seen in other varṇa-s.
- The caraṇa has one sāhitya khaṇḍika appended with 4 svara passages and one svara interspersed with colkaṭṭu passage (SSP, anubandha (B), p. 131), with an aṭīta eḍuppu of  $\frac{1}{2}$  māṭrā. However, it is not clear as to if both svara and the corresponding svara interspersed colkaṭṭu are to be sung. Moreover, the svara interspersed colkaṭṭu passage is not numbered in SSP. Tāna-varṇa-taraṅgini (BM Sundaram, 2009, p. 115) and Varṇa-sāgaram (2006, p. 191) refer to this passage as the anubandha. SSP seems to

<sup>14</sup> SSP, Vāggēyakāra caritramu, p. 29

be the only early source of the varṇa. However, this scholar has not come across svara interspersed colkaṭṭu khaṇḍika as a part of the caraṇa khaṇḍika-s. There are svara interspersed colkaṭṭu passages are seen appended to the caraṇa in some early varṇa-s, for e.g., 'Nīsarimannē' in Kēdāragauḷa composed by Govindasamayya (SSP, anubandha (B), p. 107). Thus, the svara-interspersed colkaṭṭu passage is interpreted by this scholar to be a caraṇa-svara passage and not a part of the caraṇa-khaṇḍika.

## 12. Aṭa-tāla varṇa-s from books edited by the descendants of Tañjai Nālvar<sup>15</sup>

About 15 Aṭa-tāla tāna varṇa-s have been obtained from 3 books edited by the descendants of Tañjai Nālvar – Tañjai Peruvudaiyān Pērisai (TPP), 1940 and Raja Annamalai Tamizisai Karuvulam, Vol XVIII (RajaAn), 1949 edited by K Ponnayya Piḷlai, and Tañjai Nālvar – Nāṭṭiya isai Karuvulam – Ponnayya Maṇimālai (PMM), 1961, edited by KP Kittappa and KP Sivanandam.

While some varṇa-s in these books have been attributed to one of Tañjai Nālvar, there are some others for which composer details are neither provided nor could be established. However, these varṇa-s, many of which are in Tamil, have been studied to gather an understanding of their structure and performance. Some of them are practiced in oral tradition in present-day music. Varṇa-s referred to as those of Svāti Tirunāl in earlier books are studied under Svāti Tirunāl varṇa-s, for example, Sāvēri rāga varṇa 'vanajākṣa'. More than 10 varṇa-s studied in this section. They are 'sāmikāne' in Nāṭakurañji rāga (TPP, 1940, p.6), 'nāmita' in Tōdi rāga (TPP, 1940, p. 10), 'sūdadi' in Kalyāṇi rāga (TPP, 1940, p. 13), 'valacivacci' in Sauraṣṭra rāga (TPP, 1940, p. 15), 'sāmināpai' in Kēdāragauḷam rāga (TPP, 1940, p. 18), 'calamūjēsē' in Pantuvarālī rāga (TPP, 1940, p. 20), 'calamēla' in Śaṅkarābharaṇa rāga (TPP, 1940, p. 22), 'sarasijanābha' in Kāmbhōji rāga (TPP, 1940, 24), 'samugamu' in Nāṭa rāga (TPP, 1940, p. 29), 'tōgaimāmayil' in Bhairavi rāga (RajaAn, 1949, p. 150), 'endanēramum'<sup>16</sup> in Śaṅkarābharaṇa rāga (RajaAn, 1949, p.156), varuvārō in Kalyāṇi (RajaAn, 1949, p. 163), 'sāmiyiḍam' in Kāmbhōji (RajaAn, (1949, p.168). The observations in these varṇa-s are given below.

- There are two common aspects observed in these varṇa-s. One, all varṇa-s commence on 2 māṭrā anāgata eḍuppu, without any ākāra-based melody in the māṭrā-s of anāgata eḍuppu, and another, all varṇa-s are composed with one caraṇa khaṇḍika, consequently concluding with the ettugada.
- The eḍuppu of the melodic sections and the number of āvarta-s and khaṇḍika-s in the pallavi and anupallavi is observed to be the same as in most Aṭa-tāla varṇa-s.
- The muktāyi-svara and caraṇa-svara-s do not have corresponding sāhitya. Colkaṭṭu is not seen in these varṇa-s.
- The pallavi of most varṇa-s display a perpetual melody of the pallavi second khaṇḍika, occupying the 2 māṭrā-s of anāgata eḍuppu of the anupallavi. No rest is indicated at the end of the pallavi in any varṇa. However, the second khaṇḍika of the pallavi in Kalyāṇi, Sauraṣṭra, Kēdāragauḷa, Pantuvarālī, Śaṅkarābharaṇam, Kāmbhōji, Nāṭa rāga varṇa-s have a melodic connect to the pallavi first khaṇḍika, not the anupallavi. Thus, the rendition of the anupallavi immediately after the pallavi is less likely.
- Some other varṇa-s like 'nāmita' in Tōdi, 'calamēla' in Śaṅkarābharaṇam and 'sarasijanabha' in Kāmbhōji rāga-s, the second khaṇḍika of the pallavi has a melodic connect with both anupallavi and the pallavi khaṇḍika 1. This is probably because the eḍuppu svara in both the pallavi and anupallavi in these varṇa-s is the same.
- There are no colkaṭṭu passages in these varṇa-s. Muktāyi-svara and caraṇa-svara passages do not have corresponding sāhitya.

<sup>15</sup> The musician and composer brothers Ponnayya, Cinnayya, Sivānandam and Vaḍivēlu from Tanjāvūr are referred to as Tanjai Nalvar in Tamil, and often has the Tanjore Quartet in English.

<sup>16</sup> Attributed to Tañjāvūr K. Ponnaiah Piḷlai in Tāna-varṇa-taraṅgini (Vol IV, p.85)

### 13. Svāti Tirunāl (1813-46)<sup>17</sup>

About six Aṭa-tāla varṇa-s composed by Svāti Tirunāl are studied from Malayalam and Tamil sources. They are Svāti Tirunāl Saṅgīta Kritigāl (SvaTiCV) (Cidambara Vādyār, 1916), Bālāmṛtam: Svāti Tirunāl kṛtigāl (B) (S Renganatha Ayyar, 1917), Saṅgīta rājaraṅgom (Sraj) (A S Renganatha Ayyar, 1922), Svāti Tirunāl Krtigal (STK\_MB) (Muttayya Bhāgavata, 1943) and Varṇasāgaram (T K Govindarao, 2006). Besides these, sāhitya for some Svāti Tirunāl compositions can also be seen in the Journal of Music Academy (1963, p. 135-138). Cidambara Vadhyar's book gives only text for the varṇa-s, not notations. In such instances, and when notations are also not obtained from other sources, the notations are considered from the book Varṇasāgaram. Three pada varṇa-s 'jagadīśa śrījane' in Shuddha-sāvēri (VS, p. 382), 'rāmavakhila' in Vēgaṭa rāga (VS, p. 369), 'Indumukhi' in Śaṅkarābharaṇam rāga (STK\_MB/1943, p. 7), one tāna varṇa 'vanajākṣa' in Sāvēri rāga (STK\_MB/1943, p. 11) and one stava varṇa 'saridiśāvāsa' in Tōdi rāga (VS, p. 247) are studied and observations are given below.

- The Bhairavi rāga varṇa 'capala sampadaniha' (SvaTiCV, 1916, p. 178) is mentioned as set to Ādi tāla in VS (p. 272). This aspect is related to the tāla component and not discussed in this article.
- Similarly, the tāla for varṇa-s in Tōdi and Vēgaṭa is given to be Adanta in Cidambara Vadhyar's book. Owing to the structural similarities and the references of Aḍanda/ Adarnda tāla with Aṭa-tāla structure as pointed elsewhere (Anuthama Murali, 2025, Sangītikā, p. 62-63) they are studied in this section with respect to structure and performance.
- The pallavi of the varṇa 'jagadīśa' (VS, p. 382) is indicated to conclude on the first khaṇḍika of the pallavi. A similar instance was seen in the varṇa-s documented in the books edited by Tañjai Nālvar, where varṇa-s had a melodic disjoint with the anupallavi but merged with the pallavi first khaṇḍika.
- The pallavi in Tōdi, Vēgaṭa and Sāvēri varṇa-s appear to end on the second khaṇḍika. The difference noticed is that, while the sāhitya in the khaṇḍika-s of the former two varṇa-s are spread only in the āvarta in which the khaṇḍika commences, and that of the latter is placed on the mātrā-s of the anāgata eduppu of the subsequent āvarta. The melody of the second khaṇḍika of the pallavi in Śaṅkarābharaṇa seems to merge into first khaṇḍika of both pallavi and anupallavi. This was earlier seen in varṇa-s from books by descendants of Tañjai Nālvar. Thus, the organisation in the pallavi in Svāti Tirunāl's varṇa-s resembles that in some varṇa-s documented by Tañjai Nālvar and their descendants.
- Cidambara Vadhyār's book has five varṇa-s which have more than one caraṇa khaṇḍika. The refrain in these varṇa-s is not explicitly indicated in SvaTiCV. However, the notations in VS indicate the conclusion of the varṇa-s on the pallavi, but without the singing of muktāyi-svara after the caraṇa khaṇḍika-s.
- The Sāvēri rāga varṇa 'vanajākṣa' seen in Muttayya Bhāgavata's book is an Aṭa-tāla varṇa composed with one caraṇa khaṇḍika. It is also given in the Bālāmṛtam (1917, Part II, p. 40). In a separate instance (SvaTiCV/ 1916, p.201), the varṇa 'calamēla' in Śaṅkarābharaṇa rāga, also attributed to Svāti Tirunāl in Cidambara Vadhyar's book has one caraṇa-khaṇḍika. Both varṇa-s are later mentioned in books of descendants of Tañjai Nālvar. However, it is peculiar that all other varṇa-s of Svāti Tirunāl are seen with four caraṇa-khaṇḍika-s and all varṇa-s of Tañjai Nālvar's consist of one caraṇa-khaṇḍika, not four. It is also peculiar that the tāla for varṇa-s other than Calamēla (Śaṅkarābharaṇa) is mentioned as Aḍanta, while that for 'calamēla' is mentioned as Aṭa in Vādhyār's book. Also, 'calamēla' is the only varṇa in Cidambara Vādhyār's book given without corresponding sāhitya for muktāyi and ciṭṭa-svara passages. The varṇa is not seen to have sāhitya in muktāyi-svara and ciṭṭa-svara passages elsewhere too.
- The second khaṇḍika of the pallavi in Sāvēri rāga varṇa has a better melodic connect to the anupallavi, than the pallavi first khaṇḍika. There also seems to be a rest on the ṣabha. The structure in Sāvēri rāga varṇa seems to be more similar to varṇa-s by Tañjai Nālvar and their descendants.

<sup>17</sup> Ayyar, Semmangudi, *Maharaja Svāti Tirunāl*, Kuppuswamy, Gowri, M. Hariharan, editors. Great Composers. CBH Publications, 2005. pp.208-212

- The Vēgāta (Bēgaḍa) rāga varṇa, has one khaṇḍika caraṇa in VS. This varṇa has four caraṇa khaṇḍika-s in SvaTiCV.
- Not all books give details of the varṇa classification in varṇa-s of Svāti Tirunāl. VS is one book which gives some details.

#### 14. Annāsvāmi Śāstri (1827-1900)<sup>18</sup>

There is one Aṭa-tāla tāna varṇa ‘ninnēkōri’ in Kāmbhōji rāga obtained from the family book (pdf. 111) of Śyāmā Śāstrī and his descendants. The observations from the varṇa are given below.

- The eḍuppu of various primary melodic sections is similar to that seen in most Aṭa-tāla varṇa-s, 2 māṭrā anāgata.
- The structure is also same with respect to the number of āvarta-s in pallavi, anupallavi. The varṇa has four caraṇa khaṇḍika-s, consequently the varṇa concludes on the pallavi.
- The pallavi of this varṇa in the family notebook seems to merge with the pallavi khaṇḍika 1. However, the placement of the last sāhitya syllable in the second khaṇḍika is within the āvarta in which the second khaṇḍika commences. This could suggest that the notation of the second khaṇḍika indicates one facilitating a repetition, after which the pallavi rests on the second khaṇḍika.
- The muktāyi-svara does not have corresponding sāhitya passage. But the title of the section in the family notebook of Śyāmā Śāstrī and his descendants is mentioned as muktāyi-svara-sāhitya. However, this scholar has not been able to find sāhitya in the muktāyi-svara section for this varṇa in this or any other book.
- As mentioned, there are four caraṇa khaṇḍika-s. The notation of the caraṇa section given in the family book is distinct from any other published notation seen during this study. The notations of the four caraṇa khaṇḍika-s are given together, succeeding the muktāyi-svara passage, then followed by the caraṇa-svara-sāhitya. At the conclusion of the last caraṇa-svara sāhitya, a note mentions that the caraṇa in its entirety and the muktāyi-svara are to be rendered at that point, after which the varṇa is to be concluded with the pallavi. This supplements the description of caraṇa consisting of four khaṇḍika-s in varṇa by Subbarāma Dīkṣita in SSP, and also advocates that the four khaṇḍika-s are an integral part of the caraṇa and of the varṇa form, and not an appended section as the term ‘anubandha’ suggests.
- The notation of the ettugāḍa (14 māṭrā duration) as a refrain (12 māṭrā-s) for the caraṇa-svara-s is not given in the family notebook. Hence it has not been possible to ascertain from these notations if the sāhitya syllables placed on the māṭrā-s of anāgata eḍuppu are accommodated in the preceding āvarta or truncated. However, T K Govindarao in his book (Govindarao, 2003, p. 125) gives the notation for this portion of ettugāḍa where the tail end sāhitya is truncated.
- The caraṇa-svara-s do not have corresponding sāhitya or colkaṭṭu.

#### 15. Subbarāma Dīkṣita (1839-1906)<sup>19</sup>

Subbarāma Dīkṣita’s varṇa-s are obtained from Oriental Manuscripts in European Notation (OMEN) (Cinnasvāmi Mudaliyār, 1893) and SSP. OMEN gives notations for two of his Aṭa-tāla tāna varṇa-s (Balahamsa and Yadukulakāmbhōji rāga). SSP gives notations for eight Aṭa-tāla tāna varṇa-s including those in OMEN. Hence all varṇa-s are studied from SSP. The varṇa-s studied are ‘inta mōdi’ in Darubāru rāga (SSP, p. 677), ‘vārijākṣi’ in Sahānā rāga (SSP, p. 689), ‘śrī rājādhirāja’ in Balahamsa rāga (SSP, p. 735), ‘śrī rājīvākṣa’ in Erukalakāmbhōji rāga (SSP, p. 821), ‘śrīmaharājāśrita’ in Aṭhaṇā rāga (SSP, p. 839), ‘śrī rājarāja’ in Aṭhaṇā rāga (SSP, p. 847), ‘śrī rājarājā’ in Pūrṇacandrika rāga (SSP, p. 976), ‘śrī kāñci kāmakōṭi’ in Kāśirāmakriyā rāga (SSP, p. 1119). The observations from the study are given below.

<sup>18</sup> SSP, Vāggēyakāra caritram, p. 20

<sup>19</sup> Raghavan, V., Śrī Subbarāma Dīkṣita, Kuppuswamy, Gowri, M. Hariharan, eds. Great Composers. CBH Publications, 2005, pp. 198-200.

- All varṇa-s have an anāgata eduppu of 2 mātrā-s. The mātrā-s of anāgata eduppu are not composed with any ākāra based melody, except in the Aṭhāṇā rāga varṇa ‘śrīmahārāja’. In this varṇa, the syllable ‘śrī’ is placed on the sama and its corresponding melody represented by svara syllables, extends for the duration of the anāgata eduppu, after which the pallavi khaṇḍika ‘śrīmahārāja’ commences.
- The pallavi of the varṇa-s composed by Subbarāma Dīkṣita are mainly seen to rest on the second khaṇḍika of the pallavi before proceeding to the anupallavi. The second khaṇḍika of the pallavi in Sahāna rāga varṇa seems to have a melodic connect with both pallavi first khaṇḍika and anupallavi. This was earlier seen in some varṇa-s in Tañjai Nālvar books and varṇa-s composed by Svāti Tirunāl.
- Elsewhere (Sumithra Vasudev, 2017, p. 134) the organisation of the caraṇa khaṇḍika-s has been discussed. While all varṇa-s composed by Subbarāma Dīkṣita have caraṇa-s with more than one khaṇḍika, and ending on the pallavi, the caraṇa in the varṇa ‘śrīmaharājāśrita’ in Aṭhāṇā rāga is composed with 8 khaṇḍika-s. The repetition of the anupallavi melody and part of anupallavi sāhitya at the end of the caraṇa khaṇḍika, is also seen in this Aṭa-tāla varṇa by Subbarāma Dīkṣita.
- The sāhitya akṣara-s in all ettugāda-s are placed within the āvarta the ettugāda commences. Earlier, varṇa-s composed by Vīṇa Kuppayya were also seen to consistently have this format of ettugāda.
- Five out of eight varṇa-s are composed with sāhitya for all sections of the varṇa-s. They are varṇa-s in Balahāṁsa, Erukulakāṁbhōdi, Pūrṇacandrika and two varṇa-s in Aṭhāṇā rāga.
- There are no varṇa-s incorporating colkaṭṭu.

## 16. Paṭṭanam Subramania Ayyar (1845-1902)<sup>20</sup>

About 6 Aṭa-tāla varṇa-s composed by Paṭṭanam Subramania Ayyar have been studied. They are ‘inta calamēla’ in Cakravākam rāga (GK-Tell/ 1920, p. 75), ‘nenarulēni’ in Balahāṁsa rāga (GkB/ 1995, p. 541), ‘evarēmi’ in Sahāna rāga (JMA, 1961, pp. 168), ‘patarēti’ in Yadukulakāṁbhōji rāga (JMA, 1961, p. 172), ‘sarivārilō’ in Pūrvakalyāṇi rāga (JMA, 1964, p. 184), ‘dharalō’ in Suddhatōdi rāga (JMA, 1964, p.192). The observations pertaining to structure and performance of these varṇa-s are given below

- All varṇa-s have anāgata eduppu of 2 mātrā-s. These two mātrā-s are not occupied by any ākāra based melody.
- The second khaṇḍika of the pallavi in all varṇa-s seems to conclude with a continuous melody leading into the mātrā-s of anāgata eduppu of first khaṇḍika of the anupallavi. However, it is noticed that in all cases the melody of the pallavi second khaṇḍika is disjoint from the anupallavi khaṇḍika. In fact, the culminating melody of the pallavi second khaṇḍika has a melodic connect with the first khaṇḍika of the pallavi, which probably suggests a rest on the first khaṇḍika of the pallavi before proceeding to the anupallavi.
- Sāhitya for all sections including the muktāyi-svara and caraṇa-svara-s is seen in the varṇa “inta calamēlanaiyya” in Cakravāka rāga.
- All varṇa-s have caraṇa of one khaṇḍika-s appended with svara or svara-sāhitya passages. Thus, all varṇa-s conclude with the ettugāda.
- The ettugāda of Sahāna and Yadukulakāṁbhōji rāga varṇa-s is truncated partially towards the end in order to facilitate the eduppu of the caraṇa-svara-s on the sama.

## 17. Tiruvōrriyūr/Tiruvattūr Tyāgayya (1845-1917)<sup>21</sup>

About five Aṭa-tāla tāna varṇa-s composed by Tiruvattūr Tyāgayya are studied from Pallavi- svara- kalpavalli (Tiruvōrriyūr Tyāgayya, 1900). They are ‘celiyapai’ in Pantuvarālī rāga, (PSK, p. 28), ‘inta parākēla’ in Nāṭakurañji rāga (PSK, p. 29), ‘kaliki ninnē kōri’ in Sāvēri rāga (PSK, p. 30), ‘madirākṣa nī pai’ in Mukhāri rāga (PSK, p. 31), ‘kamalākṣi ninnē kōri’ in Yadukulakāṁbhōji rāga (PSK, p. 34). The observations are given below.

<sup>20</sup> Seetha S, Tanjore as a seat of music, 2001, p.249

<sup>21</sup> Foreword by V Raghavan in Pallavi-Svara-Kalpavalli in Tamil. Editor Publisher V Ranganathan, 1971

- All Ata-tāla tāna varṇa-s of Tiruvattūr Tyāgayya commence with an ākāra placed on the mātrā of anāgata eḍuppu in the pallavi. This was also seen in Kuppayya's varṇa-s.
- The number of khaṇḍika-s in pallavi and anupallavi are similar to those in most Ata-tāla varṇa-s. However, all caraṇa-s are composed with one khaṇḍika, thus concluding with the ettugāḍa.
- Muktāyi-svara and caraṇa-svara passages do not have corresponding sāhitya. There are also no colkatṭu passages.
- The pallavi in varṇa-s in rāga Mukhāri and Yadukulakāmbhōji is seen to rest on the second khaṇḍika before proceeding to the anupallavi. Further, the sāhitya akṣara-s are placed within the āvarta in which the khaṇḍika commences.
- The pallavi of varṇa-s in rāga Pantuvarāli and Nāṭakurañji is more likely to rest on the first khaṇḍika before proceeding to the anupallavi. This is again on the basis of the placement of the last one or more syllables of the khaṇḍika placed in the mātrā-s of anāgata eḍuppu of the next āvarta. Thus, a possibility of rest on the second khaṇḍika seems less likely. Further, there is no melodic connect between the pallavi second khaṇḍika and the anupallavi.
- Sāvēri rāga varṇa 'kaliki ninnē kōri' has a pallavi with melody merging both into the pallavi first khaṇḍika or anupallavi. However, considering the style of the composer observed so far, it is more likely to be of the former type.

## 18. Muttayya Bhāgavata (1877-1945)<sup>22</sup>

About five tāna varṇa-s set to Ata-tāla composed by Muttayya Bhāgavata are studied from two books - Muttayya Bhāgavata Kīrtanaigal (MB) (Fiddle Appāvaiyar, 1934) and Śrī Muttayya Bhāgavata avargalīn Apūrvarāga Kīrttanaigal, Part II (Mbhag\_V) (M Vaidyalingam, 1999). The compositions are 'śrī Mahāgaṇapatē' in Kāmbhōji rāga (MB, 1934, p. 5), 'śrī Subahamsaka' in Hanumatōdi rāga (MB, 1934, p. 6), 'manamōhanā' in Mōhana rāga (MB, 1934, p. 8), 'manci paṇadirā' in Hindōla rāga (Mbhag\_V/1999, p. 4), 'sārasākṣi' in Kalyāṇi rāga (Mbhag\_V, 1999, p. 5). The observations are given below.

- All varṇa-s commence on anāgata eḍuppu of 2 mātrā-s.
- The mātrā-s of anāgata eḍuppu are not occupied by any sāhitya or melodic syllables, except one varṇa in Hanumatōdi rāga 'subahamsaka'. The sāhitya syllable 'śrī' and its corresponding melody is placed on the mātrā-s of the anāgata eḍuppu of the pallavi. This feature is seen earlier in Subbarāma Dīkṣita's Aṭhāṇā rāga varṇa 'śrīmahārāja'. Elsewhere (SAK Durga, 1981, p. 216) both these varṇa are mentioned to have a sama eḍuppu taking into consideration the placement of the sāhitya syllable 'śrī'. However, the anāgata eḍuppu of 2 mātrā-s can be ascertained by observing the point of refrain after singing the muktāyi-svara, which in both varṇa-s is the first khaṇḍika of the pallavi i.e., 'śrīmahārāja' in Aṭhāṇā rāga varṇa and 'subahamsaka' in Hanumatōdi rāga. Thus, the eḍuppu of both varṇa-s is on the third mātrā.
- The pallavi-s of all varṇa-s seem to conclude on the first khaṇḍika before proceeding to the anupallavi. The culminating melody of the pallavi of Kāmbhōji and Hindōla rāga varṇa seems to merge into both pallavi and anupallavi.
- All varṇa-s composed by Muttayya Bhāgavata have a caraṇa of one khaṇḍika appended by caraṇa-svara-s, the varṇa thus concluding with the ettugāḍa.
- The sāhitya of the ettugāḍa of four out of five varṇa-s is truncated in the tail end to facilitate the singing of the caraṇa-svara-s from sama. The ettugāḍa of Kāmbhōji rāga varṇa is truncated such that all the caraṇa-svara-s commence on an atīta eḍuppu of  $\frac{1}{2}$  mātrā (MB, p. 6). Feature of atīta eḍuppu in caraṇa-svara-s was earlier seen in 'viribōṇi'. The ettugāḍa of Mōhana rāga varṇa alone differs from the rest, in the sense that the sāhitya akṣara-s are placed within the āvarta the ettugāḍa commences.

<sup>22</sup> Ayyar, Veṅkaṭrāma TL., Muthiah Bhagavathar, Kuppuswamy, Gowri, M. Hariharan, eds. Great Composers. CBH Publications, 2005, pp 100-104

- Muttayya Bhāgavata does not seem to have composed sāhitya for the muktāyi-svara and cittasvara passages in varṇa-s. However, the Hindōla rāga varṇa has a muktāyi-svara-sāhitya passage in M Vaidyalingam's book (1999). The handwritten notations of Muttayya Bhāgavata compositions by A Subramanian (A Subramanian, 1946, p. 241) do not document this sāhitya for the muktāyi-svara passage.
- Colkaṭṭu passages are also not seen in his tāna varṇa-s.

## 19. Vīṇa Kṛṣṇamacārī (birth ca. 1896)<sup>23</sup>

Varṇa-s composed by Vīṇa Kṛṣṇamacārī are obtained from two books Karnāṭaka Gānavidyā Pradīpika (KGVP), 1973 edited by G Chennamma and Gāna-Mañjari (1966), edited by Alamelu Govindarajan. The varṇa-s are 'kalikinīpai' in Sahāna rāga (KGVP, 1973, p. 56), 'pagalu rēyi' in Bēgaḍa rāga (KGVP, 1973, p. 59).

- Both varṇa-s have an anāgata eḍuppu of 2 māṭrā-s. The pallavi, anupallavi structure is similar to most Aṭa-tāla varṇa-s with reference to number of khaṇḍika-s. Caraṇa is composed with only one khaṇḍika. Thus, the varṇa concludes with the ettugaḍa. Vīṇa Kṛṣṇamacārī has composed several Adi varṇa-s with more than one caraṇa khaṇḍika. However, his Aṭa-tāla varṇa-s are seen to have only one caraṇa khaṇḍika.
- The melody and syllable placement in the second khaṇḍika of the pallavi suggests a pallavi which rests on the second khaṇḍika before proceeding to the anupallavi.
- The sāhitya of the ettugaḍa is placed within the āvarta it commences.
- The varṇa does not include sāhitya for muktāyi-svara and caraṇa-svara-s. Colkaṭṭu passages are also not seen.

## 20. Varṇa-s of the Tiruvārūr temple tradition

There is one varṇa 'mamatā rēṭicānē' obtained in the Journal of Music Academy, 1962, p. 183 in Suddha Sāvēri rāga. The observations in this varṇa are discussed

- The varṇa has a sama eḍuppu for its pallavi, one māṭrā anāgata for anupallavi and two māṭrā anāgata for the caraṇa khaṇḍika.
- The pallavi rests on the second khaṇḍika before proceeding to the anupallavi.
- The caraṇa has one khaṇḍika, thus the varṇa concludes with the ettugaḍa.
- The sāhitya of the ettugaḍa is placed within the āvarta it commences.
- There is no sāhitya for the muktāyi-svara and ciṭṭa-svara passages.

## Inferences

The study of Aṭa-tāla varṇa-s from textual sources has given an understanding of the types of structure and performance of Aṭa-tāla varṇa-s, specifically those with not a very strong oral tradition. The study has been successful in identifying Aṭa-tāla varṇa-s with structure and performance both similar to and different from those seen in present-day practice. With reference to structure, one of the main aspects noticed is with reference to the number of khaṇḍika-s in different melodic sections of the varṇa. While varṇa-s in oral tradition are seen to have two āvarta-s in the muktāyi-svara passage, Aṭa-tāla varṇa-s in textual sources are also seen with one and four āvarta-s of muktāyi-svara. Similarly, varṇa-s with four or eight caraṇa khaṇḍika-s are seen as compared to those with one caraṇa khaṇḍika in oral tradition. The varṇa-s with more than one caraṇa-khaṇḍika are seen to conclude with the pallavi. Thus, a performance of Aṭa-tāla tāna varṇa resembling that in most other musical forms of Karnāṭaka music is seen. On the other hand, varṇa-s with one caraṇa khaṇḍika, conclude with the ettugaḍa. A study of other musical forms

<sup>23</sup> Krishnamachari, Vīṇa. Gāna Mañjari. Edited by Alamelu Govindarajan, Kalakshetra, 1966., Introduction, p. ix

of Karnāṭaka music like kīrtana, pada, svarajati, early svarajati, jatisvara is essential to understand the performance of the two formats of tāna varṇa.

The performance of the pallavi and anupallavi is yet another important aspect observed in this study. While the present-day performance of Aṭa-tāla varṇa-s involve a practice of singing the anupallavi in immediate succession to the pallavi, there are three different presentations of the pallavi gathered from the notations. The first one is a performance of which the pallavi concludes with a rest on its second khaṇḍika before proceeding to the anupallavi. The second is a rendition in which the pallavi concludes with a rest on the first khaṇḍika before proceeding to the anupallavi and third performance of one in which the pallavi merges into the anupallavi without any melodic rest, as seen in present-day practice. Most varṇa-s seem to fit into the first two types of presentation of the pallavi. The melodic disconnect in between the second khaṇḍika of the pallavi and the first khaṇḍika of the anupallavi is a core observation in this study.

A similar aspect is also observed in the ettugaḍa. Ettugaḍa in some varṇa-s suggest a melodic rest on the ettugaḍa sāhitya before proceeding to the caraṇa-svara passages. In some others, the tail-end sāhitya is either truncated or constricted within the āvarta while proceeding to the caraṇa-svara passages.

Although the anāgata eduppu of 2 māṭrā-s is commonly acknowledged to be the conventional eduppu in Aṭa-tāla varṇa-s, this study has been able to identify a few Aṭa-tāla varṇa-s with eduppu different from 2 māṭrā anāgata. For example, pada varṇa-s with sama eduppu, tāna varṇa-s with one māṭrā anāgata eduppu and varṇa-s with different eduppu for different melodic sections. This observation is related to the tāla aspect in tāna-varṇa-s. The placement of sāhitya akṣara-s in the tāla āvarta also seem to influence the performance of the khaṇḍika-s, thus extending to the melodic sections.

This study has been able to elucidate the performance of Aṭa-tāla tāna-varṇa-s from textual sources. Some of them are different from what is seen in present-day practice. Aspects with reference to eduppu, duration of khaṇḍika-s, placement of akṣara-s on a tāla āvarta are some potential areas of research related to the study in Aṭa-tāla varṇa-s. A detailed study of these aspects would elucidate the characteristics of the Aṭa-tāla varṇa as a musical form in Karnāṭaka music.

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