

**RABINDRA BHARATI UNIVERSITY**  
**VOCAL MUSIC DEPARTMENT**

COURSE - M.A. ( Compulsory Course ) (CBCS) 2020  
Semester - 4.1; Group - B.(English Version)  
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**Different forms of Karnatik Music.**

1) **Prabandham** :- These songs comprises of swaras and sollukattus. Sollukattu is a combination of meaningless bols of Tillana and the patakshara (bols of mridangam). There are four types of prabandham sangeet in Karnatik music and they are as follows –

- 1) **Sadharan Prabandham** – These songs are composed with swaras and sollukattus. Swaras means Raga-swaras, in which the songs are composed.
- 2) **Grahaswara Prabandham** – These songs are totally Sargam-Geet where the Graha swara of the related rage becomes predominant.
- 3) **Sriranga Prabandham** – These songs are composed with the help of raga swaras and patakshara only.
- 4) **Kaibad Prabandham** – This is the one and only prabandham in which Sahitya is used with raga swara and patakshara. This is the encomium of God.

All kinds of Prabandhas are enriched with various Talas.

2) **Varnam** :- Varnam is one of the important Abhyas sangeet as well as Sabha sangeet. In these songs Raga-swara and Sahitya both are employed. There are four types of Varnam as follows –

- 1) **Chauka Varnam** – In these songs, there are three parts – Pallavi, Anupallavi and Charanam. Vilambit laya is employed and this is because, the performer can create a sahitya – vistar, in these songs. The songs are generally of devotional or loving category. After every part, mridangam is played with various laykari. Swati Thirunal is one of the eminent composer of this type of song.
- 2) **Padavarnam** – These songs also allow the vistar, but in these songs the performer has to expand the raga- swaroopa. Beside this, the other characteristics are same as of Chauka Varnam. Eminent composers are Swati Thirunal and Ramaswami Dikshitar.
- 3) **Tana varnam** – These songs are composed in Madhyalaya. Sahitya is enriched by devotional or loving category. These songs do not allow any liberty to the performers. As a result these songs do not have any type of vistar. The other characteristics are same as of Chauka Varnam. Eminent composers are Shyama Sashtri, Swati Thirunal and Srinivasa Ayengara.
- 4) **Daru Varnam** – These songs are generally composed for drama. Compositions are enriched by raga and tala of various types. The other characteristics are same as of Chauka Varnam. Eminent composer is Srihari Keshanallur Mrittaira Bhagabatar.

3) **Tillana** – Being inspired by the Hindustani Tarana, Tillana was composed by eminent composers like Swati thirunal, Srinivas Ayengar etc. during the second half of eighteenth century. These songs are basically sung with dance due to its drut laya.

Now-a-days, Tillana is also sung as vocal musical form. Pallavi, Anupallavi and charanam, these three parts are present in Tillana. In Pallavi and Anupallavi Sollukettu is performed and the Charanam is fulfilled with sahitya of sringar rasa. Tillana is composed in ragas and talas of various types.

4) **Swarajati** – These songs are included in Abbhyas-sangeet. Pallavi, Anupallavi and charanam, these three parts are present. Generally these songs are sung to accompany Bharatnattiyam dance performances. But nowadays these songs are sung as vocal solo performances.

Swara , patakshara and sahitya of devotional or loving category all are applied in Swarajati. Sometimes Anupallavi and Charanam both are applied jointly together in this style. Eminent composers are Swati Thirunal, Shyama Sastri and Chinna Krishnadasa.

5) **Jatiswaram** – These songs are generally sung to to accompany Bharatnattiyam dance performances. It is a combination of rhythm and melody. There is no sahitya. Only Raga-swaras are used Pallavi, Anupallavi and charanam, these three parts are present in it. Swati Thirunal is the eminent composer of this song.

6) **Padam** – Padam is a type of Sabha sangeet. Songs are generally performed in vilambit laya. Sahitya is generally of loving

sentiment. Pallavi, Anupallavi and charanam, these three parts are present in it. More than one Charanam are also found in it.

In the medieval period Padam was devotional songs. Later on it was applied in Darama. Today it is transformed into love songs.

Padam is composed in ragas and talas of various types. Raga-alapanam is performed in Charanam. Due to the presence of more than one Charanam, the raga-alapa is performed in the early charanams. Later charanams are sahitya compositions sung in tala. Eminent Padam composers are Arunachal Kavi and Kunjar Bharati.

7) **Kriti** – In Karnatik music Kriti is a vocal composition with sahitya in telegu or sanskrit. It is composed in classical raga and tala. A Kriti is embellished with pre-composed variations and during performance it may be preceded by an extended alapan. Pallavi, Anupallavi and charanam, these three parts are present in it. Alapanam is performed in vilambit laya and the song is sung in Madhya laya. There is no freedom of the performer during singing. Eminent composers are Tyagaraja, Mutthuswami Dixitar and Shyama Sastri.

8) **Kirtanam** – All devotional songs are generally called Kirtanam. Pallavi, Anupallavi and charanam, these three parts are present in it. There are more than one charanam found in Kirtanam. Songs are composed in ragas and talas of various types. There is no special difference between Kriti and Kirtanam from the structural point of view. In the performance area Kriti is a pre-composed variation where as Kirtanam gives the performer to apply his

talent to vivify the sahitya part of the song. The songs are composed in Tamil, Telegu and Sanskrit language. Eminent composers of middle age are Shyama Sastri, Mutthuswami Dixiter and Swati Thirunal. Modern composers are Bhadrachal Ramadasa and Bijoygopal swami.

9) **Javali** – The word Javali, applies to a short lyrical music piece, based on an erotic theme. Normally these songs are performed as light classical item. These songs are compared with the Thumri style of north Indian music. Being composed of erotic sahitya, javali is always accompanied with dance. The listeners get swayed with the melodious tune of this style. Pallavi, Anupallavi and charanam, these three parts are present in it. More than one Charanam is found in many javali songs. Eminent composers are Swati thirunalm Srinivas Iyanger and Karur Daksinamurti.

10) **Tayam** – The full name of this style is Tayampakka or Tayambakka. It is not a vocal musical form. It is an orchestra of Chenda Drums in Kerala. The tyampakka team consists of five chenda players. One of them plays the leading piece. The others follows him. The chenda team is accompanied by two metal cymbals (mandira/Kartal) called Elattalam. The performance begins with Adi talam in madhyalaya and ends up in a very high tempo. No blowing instruments are played with Tayam. Being a temple music traditionally only male players are allowed to play Tayam. But in modern days female players are also getting chances. Savita Krishnadas and Rohit Krishnadas both combinedly established their names in Tayam orchestra with aesthetic beauty. Eminent Chenda

players are Muttunur Shankarankutty, Kallur Ramankutty, Perur Unnikrishnan etc.

## **Comparative Study of Hindustani and Karnatik Ragas**

### **Merits :**

- 1) Ragas of both musical system have minimum five notes, ie. Aurava , and maximum of seven notes , ie. Sampurna.
- 2) All the ragas are catagorised in any one of the Thata or mela.
- 3) Ragas of both musical systems have fixed ascending and descending notal progression.
- 4) All ragas of both musical systems have come from the folk musical traditions.
- 5) Aalap is applicable for all ragas of both musical systems.

### **Demerits :**

- 1) Each and every Hindustani raga has a fixed clock time schedule where as Karnatik ragas has no such time fixation.
- 2) Each and every Hindustani raga has Pakad, but Karnatik Ragas has no such identification note group.
- 3) Hindustani Ragas are combination of ragangas, where as Karnatik ragas are not made up of ragangas.
- 4) Hindustani ragas are established through the inter-relation between the Vadi swara and samvadi swara.Karnatik system do not have Vadi Samvadi swaras.

- 5) Maximum 12 swaras can be used in Hindustani music. Whereas 16 swaras can be used in Karnatik music.

## **Comparative Study of Hindustani and Karnatik Talas**

### **Merits :**

- 1) Talas of both the systems have fixed number of matras.
- 2) Talas of both the systems have fixed vibhag divisions.
- 3) Both the tala systems originated from Gandharva tala system.
- 4) In both the systems Guru and Laghu varnas are used to construct the bols.
- 5) Talas of both the systems can be played as solo and also as accompaniment.

### **Demerits:**

- 1) Generally the bols of Hindustani talas are fixed. But the bols of Karnatik talas are created by the performer.
- 2) In Hindustani tala, the weakest matra is termed as Khali. It is termed as Visarjitam in Karnatik music.
- 3) In Hindustani tal system Guru and Laghu varnas are countless. i.e. Dha, Dhin, Na, Tin, Dhe, Te, Kat etc. In Karnatik system there are only six varnas – Ta, Ka, Di, Mi, Ki, Ta.
- 4) There are many types of Hindustani talas. In Karnatik system there are only seven basic talas.

5) The figurative structure of Hindustani tala is fixed. Variation comes through the variation of laya only ,ie, vilamvit, madhya and drut laya. Karnatik talas have five different figures (3,4,5,7, and 9) according to the changeable value of Laghu Akshara.