The Concept of 'Music' in Bhāratīya Thought

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Introduction:

It might appear a bit strange to have such a common term like 'music', within inverted commas in the title itself! The difficulty arises here because, when we are writing in English, a language that has come from a different culture, the language brings along with it, for each technical term, an understanding that it holds in the region and culture of its origin, which we tend to impose on our own 'art', that we have been trained in. Research ultimately, is an endeavour to understand the music one has been trained in, just as the physical sciences strive to understand nature. While 'nature' is God-made, music is man-made, just as mathematics is.

In the last several centuries of writings on music and related arts, we come across a number terms in the various languages in Bhārata, which denote the primary sense of a 'tonal structure' that perhaps 'music' also stands for. These may also connote the sense of a 'Musical Form', as well as, 'Music based Performance Format' too. Every term has its own meaning, definition and context of application. Some of the terms we across in usage are – Music, Saṅgīta, Percussion, Vādya, Tāla-vādya, Laya-vādya Rhythmology, Khyāla, Rāga, Gata-aṅga, Pallavī, Gīta, Gāndharva, Gāna, Gīti, Nirgīta, Icai, Dēśī, Dhvani, Śabda, Prabandha, Caturdaṇḍī and Vādanakrama.

Further, apart from the terms symbolising the art in general, there are quite a number of other terms which are elements of music, namely, Svara and Tāla. In the case of each of these terms, an equivalent term like 'Note/Tone' or 'Time-measure/Rhythm' from English, is seen to be used, whose connotation in that culture might have been different. This has been a subject of debate with respect to writings in English on areas like Vēda, Darśana (Philosophy?), Kāvya (Poetics?) and Nāṭya (Drama?) too.

Opinons among scholars on whether the original terms used in the texts written in the various regions and in the various languages should be retained or whether equivalent words from English be adopted, and even a word like 'Saṁskṛtam' be anglicized to 'Sanskrit'? Krishna Chaitanya (1965:vii) has criticised a few writers in English from Bhārata-dēśa for retaining the Saṁskṛta terms untranslated. He gives a specimen, "*The realisation of Rasa, therefore, is a process of logical inference, and the nishpatti of Bharata's sutra is explained as anumiti, the vibhavas standing to Rasa in the relation of anumapaka or gamaka to anumapya or gamya.*", and adds that the exposition is unintelligible except to the Sanskrit scholar.

However, this question could be raised even if the same sentence were to be written in Hindi, Bengali, Malayalam, Marathi and even Saṁskrta. The issue pertains here, not to language but to the subject itself, for even a scholar in Saṁskrta, not conversant with texts relating to 'Music', will not be able to understand terms like, Jāti, Rāga, Gītaka, Prabandha, Mēla, Varṇa, Laya and Ālāpa and the discourse on them. This is quite discernible where we see an editor knowledgeable in the language but

not in the subject, taking an erroneous decision when selecting a word among two and more 'pātha' (reading) available.

Thus, this paper is only an attempt to present some terms that have been used in Bhārata, from early to modern times, relating to 'music', and is trying to understand their denotation and connotation. The name **Bhārata** has been preferred as it is not clear to the author, whether the other name **India** should be pronounced 'Inḍyā / इण्ड्या' as being done now, or as 'Indhya / इन्ध्य' (derived from Sindha?)!

Music

The Forum for Research in Indian Music (FRIM) (https://frim.co.in/) is perhaps the most recently founded "*body of academics and music practitioners dedicated to advancing critical scholarship in Indian music and musicology*". The focus is on study of music, with an in-depth and broad-based approach but it remains to be seen what academic area would **'Music'** be covering. This is the forum to which this paper is also being submitted. This forum has kept the name only in English language, with no alternate title in any language of Bhārata, quite reasonable, as there is a common understanding of the term 'Music' prevailing in the academic community. This is precisely the reason why this study of the concept of 'Music' has taken **FRIM** as the starting point and we proceed to the next instance.

Music and Saṅgīta

'**The Music Academy, Madras**' was founded in the 1920s, and the name in the Tamiz language is '**Saṅgīta Vidvat Sabhai**', with the term 'Saṅgīta', obviously, corresponding to 'Music'. However, since its inception, the performances organised by the institution, included **Bharatanāṭyam** and **Kathākālakṣēpam** (the art of story-telling) too. Besides, since 1929, the organisation has been annually conferring an award '**Saṅgītakalānidhi**', to selected musician-artists and musician-scholars. In the year 1966, an artist proficient in Mrdaṅgam was conferred this title, and in 1973, a Bharatanāṭyam dancer. However, in the year 2012, a separate title of '**Nāṭyakalācārya**' was instituted for dancers.

This suggests that the institution, in course of time, must have felt uncomfortable with the art of 'dance' being included in Saṅgita, especially since the latter term was being used as an equivalent for 'Music'. Soon a separate 'Dance Festival' too began to be organized. However, the art of drumming continues to be included under 'Music'.

(https://musicacademymadras.in/catalogue/souv.php Souvenir 2023:39-40)

Saṅgīta

"Sangeet Natak Akademi, the apex body in the field of performing arts in the country, was set up in 1953 for the preservation and promotion of the vast intangible heritage of India's diverse culture expressed in forms of music, dance and drama. **Sangeet Natak Akademi** is an autonomous body of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India." https://www.sangeetnatak.gov.in/about-us

Now, we find the term '**Saṅgīta**' (also spelt **Sangeet**) comprising Music and Dance, while **Nāṭaka** (drama) being kept separate. Here, the term 'Music' includes the art of 'Melodic structures' (**svarātmaka**) and the one of 'Syllabic structures' (**akṣarātmaka/varṇātmaka**) created by instruments like Mṛdaṅgam and Tabalā. (Although early scholars like Abhinavagupta describe the nature of the content of Avanddha-vādya playing

as 'varṇātmaka', we have preferred the term 'akṣarātmaka' as sometimes the term 'varṇa' denotes also 'melody' as in 'varṇāṅga', in the context of Saptarūpa / Gītaka of Gāndharva as we shall be seeing later.) This distinction between 'svarātmaka' and 'akṣarātmaka' will be elaborated as we continue.

In this context, it will be pertinent to note here that almost 800 years ago, the book Saṅgītaratnākara of Śārṅgadēva had defined the term **Saṅgīta** as the presentation format of an art form with the arts of music (gīta), drumming (vādya) and dance (nṛtta) as its components. It, then speaks of two traditions **'Mārga-saṅgīta'** and **'Dēśī-saṅgīta'**, (Śārṅgadēva 1943:13-14:1,1,21cd-23cd;) the former standing for **'Nāṭya',** the term used also in the title of the work Nāṭyaśāstra of Bharata, devoted to the presentation format of Nāṭaka (drama) which incorporated three more art forms Gīta, Vādya and Nṛtta as additional limbs. (Kāṭayavēma (1924:2) endorses this equation of Mārga-saṅgīta with Nāṭya, by Śārṅgadēva.) The term 'Nāṭaka', in one sense, is the written drama text, as seen in the title of Bhāsa's 'Pratimānāṭaka' and 'Abhijñāna-śākuntalam' and 'Vikramōrvaśīyam' of Kālidāsa also coming under that form.

Nāṭyaśāstra (Bharata 1934) too devotes its eighteenth chapter for delineating the different **Rūpaka** or **Nāṭaka** forms (nāṭaka, prakaraṇa, aṅka etc.) based on which the **Nāṭya** format incorporating the subordinate limbs, **nṛtta, abhinaya**, **gāna** and **vādya'.** The written Nāṭaka must have been the nucleus for it, although the names of authors, Bhāsa Kālidāsa and others do not find mention in Nāṭyaśāstra. The 'Nāṭya' tradition of Bharata must have belonged to a different era or region. Some of the Saṁskṛta nāṭaka-s have formed the nucleus to the **Kūḍiyāṭṭam** presentation format still alive in Kerala, where the combined role of abhinaya, singing and drumming is quite substantial. (Kunjunni Raja 1964:6-7)

However, gradually due to the influence of the English language drama from the western world, the **Nāṭāka** form here too, came to be made of up of the delivery of a written dialogue and the acting. It is this perhaps this form that is being implied by **Nāṭaka** inthe name **Sangeet Natak Akademi.**

At the State level, **Government of Karnataka** founded a **Karnataka Sangeetha Nrithya Academy.** We observe here, that this organisation has separated the art of Nṛtya (also spelt Nrithya / Dance) from the ambit of Saṅgīta. Among the arts it supports and promotes, Kathā-kīrtana (the art of story-telling), is also one. Of course, this State Academy has not included 'Drama / Nāṭaka' among the arts it is promoting and supporting, as compared to the Akademi of the Central Government. Thus 'Saṅgīta' covers just Svarātmaka art and the Akṣarātmaka art.

https://sangeetanrityaacademy.karnataka.gov.in/en

In the **Sri Venkateswara College for Music and Dance**, at Tirupati, Diploma Courses titled 'Visharada' (viśada – expert) were conducted, when this author studied there between the years 1966 and 1969. The **Saṅgītaviśārāda** diploma was awarded to the students of Vocal and of Melodic instruments like the Vīṇā and Violin. The diploma **Vādyaviśārada** was intended for students of Mṛdaṅgam, Ghaṭam etc. Thus, **Saṅgīta** here, denotes the melodic (svarātmaka) art while **Vādya** denotes the 'syllabic' (akṣarātmaka). Of course, there was another course **'Nāṭya-viśārada'** for the art of dance.

Thus, we see that the term **Saṅgīta** is being used in the sense of **Gīta**, namely, the melodic art. At the same time, the name of the Institution is **'College for Music and Dance'**, where **'Music'** is obviously combining **Gīta** and **Vādya**.

The term **Nāṭya**, used by Bharata in the sense of 'Drama', in his Nāṭyaśāstra, as seen above, has also been used in the sense of 'dance'. For instance, in Kālidāsa's Mālavikāgnimitram nāṭaka (1924:4), the two dance teachers of Mālavikā, are referred to as **Nāṭyācārya** and the building where dance is being taught, is **Saṅgītaśālā**. Actually, the difference underlying **Nāṭya** denoting 'drama' and that denoting 'dance' in Bhāratīya culture is one of aesthetics. Otherwise, the performance formats of both include, gīta, vādya, nṛtta and abhinaya. So does the art of Film / Movie in our culture. The well-known performing art **Kathakaḷi** incorporates all the components mentioned above and has been recognized as one of 'Classical dances' of our country, although it could as well be called a Drama form.

This indeterminate nature of these forms, from a modern perspective, might have prompted the institution **Kalakshetra Foundation** to coin a hybrid name **Dance-drama**. (https://archive.org/details/dni.ncaa.KF-K0230-MDV) The reason obviously is due to the term 'Drama' from the Western Culture being used to denote the Nāṭya/ Nāṭaka, and later on finding our own art not measuring upto the definition of 'Drama', renaming it as a hybrid art.

Even some Film Directors, after watching the films in other countries, made movies sans songs and dances, 'Anda Nāḷ' (1954) in Tamiz, by S Balachander (later Vīṇā Bālachander) and 'Kānoon' in (1960) in Hindi, by BR Chopra, to name a few. It appears as though there was a lack of discrimination between 'Film' as a 'Medium' and 'Film' as an 'Art' in the non-Bhāratīya perspective.

Percussive Art

In the mid-20-C, a **Percussive Arts Centre** was founded in Bengaluru, devoted to the art of **Percussion** Instruments, namely, Mṛdaṅga, Ghaṭa, Ḍōlu, Khañjari etc. In the Kannada language **Percussive Art** has been translated as **Tāḷavādya Kaḷe**, as seen in the newsletter brought out by the institution. http://musicresearchlibrary.net/omeka/items/show/2176

Percussion instrument, in simple terms, denotes an instrument in which sound is generated by hitting / striking with a stick, as for instance, in the case of a Drum. But in an extended way it may technically include melodic instruments Celesta, Xylophone, Jalataraṅga and even Piano too. Coincidentally, the Nāṭyaśāstra of Bharata (1964:1:28,1), uses the term **Ātōdya** (beating), which also conveys the sense of generating sound through striking, to refer to all instruments in general.

Tāḷa-vādya

The use of the title 'Tāḷa-vādya' is understandable, as from the early 20-C, the term has been used in the public presentation format **'Tāḷavādya Kaccēri'**, (Kaccēri being just a slight modification of the Hindi/Urdu word 'kacahari' meaning in general a court of law or an administrative office), made up of instruments

that create syllabic (akṣarātmaka) structures, namely, Mṛdaṅgam, Tavil/Ḍōlu, Ghaṭa, Khañjīrā/Khañjari, Muharsiṅga etc. https://youtu.be/ZNjj4X7n2_g?list=RDZNjj4X7n2_g

On the other hand, the **Akashvani (Ākāśavāṇī/ All India Radio)** stations in the Southern States, of Bhārata, have been conducting a programme of this nature, which used to be announced as **Laya vinyāsam**. This might, initially, have been intended for just a solo instrument, but is also used for an Ensemble, in other Venues too. https://youtu.be/VRRETsJZd9U

Laya Vādya

In this context we also come across a term **'Laya Vādya'** in the title of a book **'Laya Vadyas' by P Sāmbamūrti** (1959) where the author uses the name **'Percussion Instruments'** also synonymous with Laya-vādya. Strangely, the opening sentence of the book (p.1) reads - "*Laya Vadyas are instruments used for keeping time.*" However, a few sentences later the author adds "*They are used for providing rhythmic accompaniment in concerts of art music, sacred music, folk music and dance.*" Now, the two sentences do not seem to be conveying the same artistic purpose.

'Tāḷa-vādya', at a technical level, would be explained as an instrument which manifests Tāla (time), and would apply to,

a)   a metallic instrument like a pair of Bronze Cymbals, used in a recital on the Nāgasvaram.

b)   a skin covered instrument like Tabalā, in a performance based on vocal **Khyāla** and instrumental Gata genre performances,

which manifest 'Tāla', a time (kāla) framework.

Laya (lit. merging) on the other hand technically, denotes the duration of inaction, that immediately follows an action of the hand manifesting 'tāḷa', and can be explained simply as the duration between,

a)   two successive actions of hand,

b)   two successive melodic stresses / two syllables of a word in a song

c)   two successive syllables (pāṭākṣara-s / bōla) representative of the strokes on Mṛdaṅga, Tabalā, Tavil etc.

d)   two successive foot-thumps of a dancer

We, thus see that **Laya** transpires in all the three arts, music, drumming and dancing and is also the primary characteristic of the external 'time keeper', namely, Tāla. So, the art of akṣarātmaka-vādya (Percussion instruments) certainly does not have a prerogative over Laya and Tāḷa, since these two form the basis of all the three arts. However, while both music and dance have other dominating aspects, as for instance, melody in the case of music and the gestures of hand and other limbs of the body (aṅga-vikṣēpa) creating beautiful structures, in the case of dance, the akṣarātma-vādya is characterised only by two components, tāḷa and laya, for creating beautiful syllabic structures. This could be the reason why the instruments creating this art are popularly referred to as **Tāḷa-vādya** and

Laya-vādya. Thus, these denotations, although, technically not precise, seem to have come down as conventional (rūḍhī) usages.

Rhythmology

The **Department of Indian Music of the University of Madras**, runs three courses, at the Postgraduate level – a) M A Indian Music   b)   M A Bharatanatyam   c)   M A Rhythmology

https://www.unom.ac.in/index.php?route=department/department/deptpage&deptid=38

So, in addition to Tāla, Laya and Percussion, we have another term 'Rhythm' being used in the same sense of an 'akṣarātmaka art'. Now, there is no need to go into the question "Is Rhythm not integral to Music and Dance too?", which has already been examined above, in the context of 'Tāla' and 'Laya'.

But, the suffix 'ology' to **Rhythm**, is an addition here, which would imply a **study of the Rhythmic art**, as different from a **training in the Rhythmic art**, as we observe in similar terms like 'music-ology' and 'biology'. In this case, going by the course content, we see that the component of instruction **'in the art'** has greater weightage than instruction **'about the art'**.

Again, here too, we see that all the three branches, namely, **Indian Music**, **Bharatanāṭyam** and **Rhythmology,** are being brought under the main discipline – Music. However, this is explained under the 'Mission' of the Department thus - "*To nurture and develop creative, analytical and performing skills in the three aspects of 'Sangita' - Gita (voice), Vadya (instrumental and percussion) and Nritya (dance)*." Thus, the term 'Music' figuring in 'Indian Music' is being used in the broader sense of the term **Saṅgīta**.

Hindustani Saṅgīta & Karṇāṭaka Saṅgīta:

From around 19-C, we hear these terms 'Hindustani Saṅgīta' and 'Karṇāṭaka Saṅgīta' denoting music for public entertainment. In the context of Hindustani Saṅgīta, there have been two formats.

Hindustani:

a) **Dhrupada**:

Ālāpa, Nōmtōm, Dhrupada composition and relatively lighter compositions like Dhamāra, Hōrī etc. A performance of Ālāpa followed by a Dhrupada composition and Dhamāra would be referred to as just **'Dhrupada Kāryakrama'** (dhrupada performance) or a **'Saṅgīta Kāryakrama'** (music programme), based on Dhrupada. Thus, 'Dhrupada' becomes also a 'group name'.

b) **Khyāla**:

In simple terms, **Khyāla** is the rendering of three compositions, each one in a different tempo, vilamba, madhya and druta, with melodic variations in each, primarily referred to as Ālāpa / Upaja, Tāna etc. It may conclude with a Ṭhumarī, Bhajana, Ṭappā, Tarāna or a song in some other form. Although **Khyāla** by itself may denote only a short **Bandiśa** (composition), it becomes a group/suite name combining different stages and compositions from related forms.

'Instrumental' format / Gata-aṅga:

In the same melodic genre of Khyāla, would come the melodic instrumental solo, as for instance, on Śahanāyī, Bāṁsuri and Sitāra. If the performance is going to be in **instrumental** style, it will commence with a Tāla-unbounded Ālāpa, Jōḍa and Jhāla, followed by a tāla-based **'Gata'** theme, forming the basis for melodic elaboration.

The term **'Instrumental'** can be understood in two ways.

a) It can refer to music played on instruments, which is otherwise presented through voice, such as a song.
b) It also denotes a form of music that has been created particularly for an instrument, based on its technique of playing, range, timbre etc. This is seen in the Western art music, and in many other music cultures too.

In Hindustani music, we have both the styles, the **Gāyakī** and the **Gata**. Even in the Dhrupada style, there is an 'Instrumental Format' rendered on the Rudra-vīṇā.

Rāga and Khyāla / Gata format

Incidentally, a programme in Khyāla format is also announced as the presentation of a **'Rāga'**, as for instance, "*Paṇḍita Bhimsena Joshi will now present Rāga Bhīmpalsī*". 'Rāga' here becomes a synonym for the Khyāla presentation format. As we shall be seeing later, in the second stage of Prabandha genre development, **Rāga-ālāpti**, not bound by tāla, came to be called simply 'Rāga'. (Śārṅgadēva 1959:194:3.196). However, in the context of **Khyāla**, an **Ālāpa** is structured within the framework of a tāla.

Thus, the term **Rāga** is being used here, not in the primary sense of an abstract 'Melodic Source', as seen when Rāga-s Sahānā-kānaḍā, Nāyakī-kānaḍā are being discussed, but in the secondary sense of a performance format.

A Dhrupada performance is accompanied by drum-playing, namely, by a Mṛdaṅga / Pakhāvaja providing rhythmic syllabic patterns and not a Tāla platform as such, while a Khyāla paddhati is accompanied by a drum instrument, namely, a Tabalā, providing the Tāla (temporal platform/ framework).

However, the presentation for public entertainment goes under the general title of **Saṅgīta Kāryakrama** or **Saṅgīta Sammēlana**. Within this, there would be a Khyāla format, Dhrupada format and also performance of solo Tabalā or solo Pakhāvaja. **Saṅgīta**, thus, is a broad term combining both melodic and syllabic forms.

Karṇāṭaka Saṅgīta:
Pallavi – Rāgam-Tānam-Pallavi

In the Karṇāṭaka system, initially, in 18th and early 19thC, the **Pallavī** format dominated performance, combining the stages, **Ālāpana**, **Tānam** and **Pallavī**. As already mentioned, Ālāpana has also been referred to as 'Rāgam' and hence the format has come to be called **Rāgam-Tānam-Pallavi**. Artists proficient in this format were held as **Pallavī vidvān** and some artist held this as a title, as for instance, Pallavī Gōpālayyar and Pallavī Dorasāmi Ayyar. Around this time, instead of **Tānam**, the term **Ghanam** was in vogue. However, **Ghanam** seems to have required more vigorous singing, and seems to have been similar to the druta-laya **Nōm-tōm** of Dhrupada. (Sāminathayyar 1936:6-7). All the same, there have been artists sporting the title **Ghanam**, as for instance, Ghanam Kṛṣṇayyar and Ghanam Sīnayya.

From early 20-C, the performance format has changed and it contains a variety of items among which the rendering of Rāgam-Tānam-Pallavi is an optional one.

In the Karṇāṭaka Saṅgīta, solo drumming recitals are not held separately, but interposed between melodic based items. Again, Saṅgīta is the standard term used, combining both **svarātmaka** and **akṣarātmaka** forms.

Indian, Oriental, Hindustani, Karṇāṭaka, Draviḍian, Dakṣiṇa, Tamiz - Music

The term 'Hindustani Music', also written as 'Hindoos/ Hindoos / Hindostan' is heard of from late 18-C. (William Jones, 1784). It has also generally referred to the same style of music and the musical system as prevalent today. The term Karṇāṭaka, is seen to be used only from late 19-C although the music sampradāya seems to have arrived in the Tamiz country, from some region of the Vijayanagara kingdom, and a region different from where the 'Caturdaṇḍī' had arrived into the Tamiz region. This musical tradition might have been the common source for the Hindustani tradition too, going by the similarities in Rāga-s and Tāla-s. The melodic texture, musical forms and the verbal organisation however are seen to be different.

However, **Hindustāna**, in Hindi-Urdu, primarily refers to the country, India, along with the other name **Bhārata**. Many musician-authors, when writing in Hindi, prefer to use the name Bhārata instead of India, as for instance, the book, 'Bhāratīya Saṅgīta Vādya' by Lāla Maṇi Miśra. But many musicians and scholars use the name 'Indian Music' synonymously with 'Hindustani Saṅgīta' in conversations. On the same issue, the name, **Department of Indian Music** at the University of Madras, had raised eyebrows among many of my Hindustani musician friends.

This point, however has to be examined on the background of the recent history when in the early 20-C, under the British Crown, two streams were instituted at the University of Madra, namely, Western Music and Indian Music. Thus here, 'Indian', contrasts Western or European. Of course, scholars like P Sāmbamūrti, as seen above, have coined the term **South Indian Music** to narrow the area to Karṇāṭaka Music. Sāmbamūrti has published a six-volume series **South Indian Book** on theory. Of course, around the same time, Sambamūrti himself had brought out a five-volume series titled **Indian Songs** containing texts of songs belonging to the Karṇāṭaka Music samprdāya, and also a three-volume series **Practical Course in Karnatic Music** containing notation of songs at the primary level.

Prior to Sāmbamūrti, we come across **Oriental Music in European Notation** of **A M Chinnaswami Mudaliar**, being a compilation of monthly periodicals containing an account about and notation of

musical compositions. It was brought out in the last decade of 19-C. **'Oriental'** and **'Occident'** were a pair of terms, popular at that point in time, to denote the Eastern and the Western world. Cinnasvāmi Mudaliyār divides **Oriental Music** into two parts.

I   **Draviḍian** or **Karṇāṭa** Music – Works of Tyāgarāja and Others.

II   Music of other parts of India –

a) Hindustani Music as known in Southern, Central and Western India.

(b) The Music of Northern Inida and Bengal. [!!]

He had planned other volumes, namely, Music of other parts of the East (of Europe) etc. but they have remained unpublished. (Chinnaswami Mudaliyar 1893:5:pdf-p.12)

What is new here, is the title **Dravidian**, normally associated with the Southern region, being carved out to denote the Tamiz region alone. In second half of 19-C, 'Manōnmaṇīyam' Sundaram Piḷḷai in a Tamiz drama 'Manōnmaṇīyam' had included a song in which **Drāviḍa** Land was placed within the **Tekkaṇa,** a Tamiz-aised form of Saṁskṛta **Dakṣiṇa** and close to the anglicised form **Deccan.** (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manonmaniam_Sundaram_Pillai)

In the same time period, 1891, a book **'The Music and Musical Instruments of Southern India and the Deccan'** by **C R Day** was published and which seems to have the earliest documented mention of the two schools or systems of music, HIndustani and Karnātik music. In fact, Cinnasvāmi Mudaliyār (p.6) makes a mention of this book of C R Day. We also have a book **Dākṣinātya Gānam** by **C R Śrinivāsa Ayyaṅgār** published in early 20-C, containing commentary and notation of compositions of Tyāgarāja.

Thus, as inferred above, this **Karṇāṭaka** sampradāya of music seems to have been brought to the Tamiz region, around the 17-C, by Telugu speaking immigrants from Andhra country. Initially, the compositions in the Karṇāṭaka sampradāya. seem to have been mainly in Telugu language. Composers like Muttuttāṇḍavar and Gōpālakṛṣṇa Bhārati who composed in Tamiz, come much later in time, and perhaps the compositions in Saṁskṛta language too came later.

In fact, early 20-C witnesses a **Tamiz-icai** movement, where there is a push to have songs in Tamiz language, although the name could preferably have been 'Tamiz-pāṭṭu', as there is nothing Tamiz about the 'Icai' (music) and only about the language in which the songs were set. Sāmbamurti (1982) published a compilation of songs set in Tamiz alone and titled it **Songs – Tamizppāṭṭukkaḷ**.

But **Drāviḍa** has also referred to the Tamiz language, as we learn from the title of the book 'Saṁskrta-āndhra-drāviḍa-kīrtanalu'. Thus, **Drāviḍa** seems to denote the Southern region in a large sense and also the language and the smaller region of Tamiz country.

Music and Saṅgītam: Academic Writings

P Sāmbamūrti, in his book 'South Indian Music Book 1' (Sāmbamūrti 1966:1-28), has a fifteen-page chapter introducing **Music**. In the course of it, he cites a number of verses in Saṁskṛta, incorporating

the term **Saṅgīta**, which in English, is rendered as **Music**. Another term **Gīta** (1966:10) too occurs, and that too is translated as **music**, thus treating them as synonyms. Again, while writing a paragraph on **Saṅgīta** (1966:19), he quotes the well-known verse,

"गीतं वाद्यं तथा नृत्यं त्रयं संगीतमुच्यते।" (gītaṁ vādyaṁ tathā nṛtyaṁ trayaṁ saṁgītamucyatē)

and translates it thus – "*Vocal music, Instrumental music and Dance, together constituted Sangita.*" He adds further, "*But with the rapid advance made in the realm of pure music, the art of dance was separated and the first two alone were held to constitute Sangita by later writers.*"

"गीतवाद्योभयं यत्र संगीतमिति केचन।" (gītavādyōbhayaṁ yatra saṁgītamiti kēcana) cf. Saṅgīta-nārāyaṇa (Nārāyaṇadēva 1966:2:1,8)

What is however not clear in this introduction, is the term 'Instrumental Music'. Is the author referring to the 'svarātmaka' art or to the 'akṣarātmaka' art of drum instruments, or else, is he combining the two together?

Harold S Powers, in the New Grove: Dictionary of Music and Musicians (1980) Volume IX, 69-141, has written two long essays relating to the Music of India.

India.   I. The region, its music and music history pp. 69-91

II. Theory and Practice of classical music pp. 91-141

In page 77 col.1, in the context of history, he refers to Saṅgītaratnākara as a treatise on **music** composed . . . by Śārṅgadēva.

The second essay 'Theory and Practice of classical music' is divided into six sections.

1. Tonal Systems 2. Raga . Performing Practice 4. Compositions, genres   5. Tala 6. Instruments

To any one conversant with the book Saṅgītaratnākara and the organisation of the chapters, the resemblance between that work and this essay will be quite apparent. However, what Harold Powers has chosen not to include is a section on Dance, which is the seventh chapter of Saṅgītaratnākara on 'Nartana' (dance in general). But in these two essays, we do come across the integrating of the **akṣarātmaka** art with the **svarātmaka** art, namely, **Music**.

The entire confusion seems to have arisen because, the term **Music** as inherited from the Western (Classical) Music does not have any art of drumming, unlike the Popular music, Jazz etc. For instance, in the opening bars of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony we do observe sounds emanating from stokes on a drum (https://youtu.be/n3EiRynr1Us), but they seem to be used for the sound-colour and not for any drum based rhythmic structures.

Saṅgīta and Gīta:

A very strange instance of the usage of terms is met with in the world of movies, especially of the Hindi Films. With songs being an important and indispensable component of a movie, the composing work is bifurcated into **Music Director** and **Lyrics writer**. The terms used respectively are **Saṅgīta-**

nirdēśaka and **Gīta-kāra**, examples being S D Burman and Madanmohan for the former and Shailendra and Gulzar for the latter. Thus, we find the term **Gīta**, once denoting a non-representational tonal structure, coming to signify meaningful syllables, once denoted by the term 'Pada'. On the other hand, here **Saṅgita**, has taken over the place of **Gīta**.

Even in the Tamiz films, the music director is referred to as **Icai-amaippāḷar** (lit. melody organizer), and the lyrics writer as **Pāḍal-āciriyar** (lit. song writer). Here, the **Pāḍal / Song** is being used in the sense of meaningful words, as seen in the case of **Gīta** in the HIndi Films.

We shall take up this usage of **Gīta,** in the course of this essay.

Interim Conclusion

At the end of the above survey, what we perceive is that the definition of **Saṅgīta** seen in the Saṅgītaratnākara's of Śārṅgadēva seems to have had a very powerful impact and influence on the thinking of the subsequent generation of scholars and which continues to this day. Gradually scholars also realised that, if **saṅgīta** were to be taken in the sense of **music**, then dance as a component would need to be omitted from the form of Saṅgīta, although the 'gītam-vādya-nṛttam' phrase continued to echoed. However, it must have been difficult for them to make discriminate between **Vādya** denoting **melodic instruments** and **Vādya** denoting **syllabic/ rhythmic instruments**.

For instance, from early 20-C onwards, when music performances (Kaccēri) became common events of entertainment, Mṛdaṅgam and other instruments like Ghaṭa and Kañjīrā' became a part of the presentation ensemble. In the recital, a time-slot was set apart for **Tani āvartanam** (lit. solo exposition), during which, the melodic part would be suspended and the 'rhythmic' instruments would start creating syllable-based rhythmic structures. However, in kaccēri-s it so happened that during the 'tani', the audience would start making an exodus to the 'Exit' gate to take a 'break'. This became a point of great concern for the organisers and this practice was heatedly discussed and condemned in newspapers and magazines. The audience was requested to avoid taking this 'break'. However, what went unquestioned and unmentioned was, that the audience which came to listen to the melodic art was not knowledgeable enough to comprehend or appreciate the 'rhythmic art'. This was primarily because of the misconception that all '**vādya**'-s' generated '**music**', not understanding that the latter term combined two disparate arts. This could have been because the textual tradition in Bhārata had always brought the 'melodic' and 'syllabic' instruments under one umbrella / category, namely, 'Vādya'. However, the earlier scholars had perceptively made a distinction between the nature of the various kinds of **vādya**, which the modern academic community, by and large, has failed to do so. Thus, it would be pertinent and useful to understand **Saṅgīta** as delineated in the Saṅgītaratnākara.

Saṅgīta in Saṅgītaratnākara

Saṅgītaratnākara of Śārṅgadēva, written around mid-13-C, was primarily a work describing the art of **Saṅgīta**, which denoted a presentation format for singing the Prabandha compositions for public entertainment. The work describes two formats. (Ramanathan 2021:27-32)

a) **Śuddha-paddhati**: In this format the **Śuddha-prabandha**-s were sung, preceded by the rendering of **Vādya-prabandha** composed for **Avanaddha-vādya** (membranophone). This also included a lady dancer performing dance (Nṛtta – non-representational) in between

.

b) **Gauṇḍalī-vidhi / Dēśī-paddhati**: Although this format, by and large was similar to the above paddhati, instead of Śuddha-sūḍa prabandha-s, the **Sālaga-sūda prabandha**-s were sung. Further, the rendering of Prabandha was preceded by the singing of **Rāgālapti**. The Prabandha song was then sung, and it was followed by **'Rūpakālapti'**, melodic variations on a selected theme from the song.

This **gīta-vādya-nṛtta** performance, might not have been very different from the sequences that we see in the films in our country, as for instance, the example from the Hindi movie 'Pakeeza'.

https://youtu.be/6BjeGGtTe2s?list=RD6BjeGGtTe2s

After all, the venue where this Saṅgīta-paddhati is to be presented is mentioned by Śārṅgadēva as a **Sabhā** (assembly), where the Nētā (Leader) witnesses the **Saṅgīta**.

The Sālagasūḍa-prabandha-s might have evolved chronologically at a period later to the Śuddhasūḍa-prabandha or they might have already existed in a different region, with the textual documentation having taken place at a later date. Although, a few other texts like Bhāvaprakāśanam of Śāradātanaya, Nṛttaratnāvalī of Jāyasēnāpati and Saṅgītasamayasāra of Pārśvadēva have mentioned these formats, a very clear and systematic account is found only in Saṅgītaratnākara. Again, Bhāvaprakāśanam and some other works speak of many other presentation formats combining **Gīta**, **Vādya** and **Nṛtta**, yet Saṅgīta's identity is in the 'Gīta' being the dominant limb. (Ramanathan 2021:27-32)

Again, Saṅgīta was not the only performance format for Prabandha presentation. The songs had been used in Nāṭaka (drama) also, as Mataṅga (1994:212:392) and Sōmēśvara (1961:32:4,16,298) have mentioned.

Moreover, the Sālagasūḍa prabandha-s had a different format of presentation that comprised four forms, **Ālāpa, Thāya, Gīta and Prabandha,** as mentioned in the works of Rāmāmātya (1932:29:5,6ab) and Vēṅkaṭamakhī ((2002:256:9,2-5). Vēṅkaṭamakhī's calls the format **Caturdaṇḍī**, the name which also figures in the title of his book, **Caturdaṇḍīprakāśikā**.

Having seen the import of 'Saṅgīta', it will be necessary to see the significance of the other two terms **Gīta** and **Vādya**, which also seem to be problematic.

Gīta

Saṅgītaratnākara defines Saṅgīta as a collection of **Gīta**, **Vādya** and **Nṛtta**.

गीतं वाद्यं तथा नृत्तं त्रयं संगीतमुच्यते gītaṁ vādyaṁ tathā nṛttaṁ trayaṁ saṁgītamucyatē

(Śārṅgadēva 1943:13: 1,1,21cd)

Gīta, within the context of the Saṅgīta performance, would denote the **Gīta-Prabandha** compositions and the **Ālapti** structures which are part of the rendering of the Sālagasūḍa prabandha compositions. The Ālapti forms have been classed under the **Anibaddha** (organised during the performance) class, while the Śuddha and Sālaga prabandha-s come under **Nibaddha** (pre-organised before presentation) class. Anibaddha, which may roughly be equated to the term **Manōdharma** used today, is historically seen first only in the context of this Dēśī-Paddhati.

In another presentation format of the Sālaga-sūḍa, namely, the **Caturdaṇḍī**, mentioned above, a different form of **Rāga-ālāpa** is seen, which seems to come under **Nibaddha** class since the Anibaddha-Nibaddha classification does not figure in the work of Veṅkaṭamakhī.

Again **Vādya,** in general would denote any instrument, but within the performance of Saṅgīta it stands for the **Vādya-prabandha-s** which are syllabic structures and not melodic (Śārṅgadēva 1986:562-294:645cd-1018). Finally, **Nṛtta** technically refers to the movements of the limbs of the human body (aṅga-vikṣēapa) creating visual structures, but within the context of saṅgīta, this would be the dance performed during the singing of the Prabandha songs. This dance is non-representational, in other words, not depicting the meaning of the words. It is devoid of **Abhinaya.** (Śārṅgadēva 1953:11:27cd-28ab) However, this is not clearly evident in the Śuddhapaddhati and the Dēśī-paddhati description of the performances by Śārṅgadēva. Further earlier to him, Śōmēśvara (1961), whose work is confined only to the **Vinōda** (entertainment) presentation, devotes three chapters to **Gīta**, **Vādya** and **Nṛtya** (not **Nṛtta**).

Now, although in the context of Saṅgita, **Gīta** denotes the Sālagasūḍa Prabandha and the Ālapti, when defining the term Gīta, Saṅgītaratnākara defines it as 'an organisation of Svara (tones) that is pleasing'.

रञ्जकः स्वरसंदर्भो गीतमित्यभिधीयते । rañjakaḥ svarasandarbhō gītamityabhidhīyatē.

(Śārṅgadēva 1959:203:4,1ab)

This definition could be understood in two ways. "*Pleasing organisation of svara-s*" (svara-sandarbha) would refer to the core nature / characteristic of music namely a melodic structure incorporating words, having a noticeable rhythmic movement in melody and perhaps also bound by a time framework, namely tāla.

For instance, the Sāmagāna, is primarily a melodic structure, with meaningful and some meaningless syllables and also a melodic metre. But scholar Jaimini had stressed melody as the primary characteristic of Sāma, when he stated 'gītiṣu sāmākhyā – गीतिषु सामाख्या' (Abhinavagupta 1956:15:1,17b). **Gīti** here is a synonym of 'gīta'.

However, our śāstra-s also speak about a stage prior to the emergence of **svara** underlying **gīta**. **Śabda**, **Dhvani** and **Nāda** are the terms used in different śāstra sampradaya-s. (Ramanathan A-054:2) (Ramanathan 2021:454:455)

The other way the definition of Gīta in Saṅgītaratnākara could be understood is by placing it on the background of the Form of the Music. Despite **'Pada'** (words) and **'Laya/Tāla'** also being components /limbs of Prabandha, the reason for Śārṅgadēva to restrict 'Gīta' to just to the 'svara' component alone, seems to be because of Rāga-ālapti being a part of the 'Saṅgīta' performance, and which has no Tāla component.

This argument is being initiated here since the Nātyaśāstra of Bharata, while commencing the description of 'Music' mentions the word, **'Gāndharva'** and defines it, as we see next.

Gāndharva

According to Bharata (28,8) 'Gāndharva' emerges from stringed instruments, comprises various instruments and is an embodiment of 'Svara', 'Tāla and 'Pada'.]

यत्तु तन्त्रीकृतं प्रोक्तं नानातोद्यसमाश्रयम् । गान्धर्वमिति तज्ज्ञेयं स्वरतालपदात्मकम् ।।

yattu tantrīkṛtaṁ prōktaṁ nānātōdyasamāśrayam I gāndharvamiti tajjñēyaṁ svaratālapadātmakam II

(Bharata 1964:5:28,8)

Abhinavagupta (1964:5:ll.7-14), in his commentary on the Nātyaśāstra, explains, "*stringed and various instruments as only symbolising the creation of a melodic structure which includes the voice too.*" Thus, the term 'Gāndharva' denotes a song form performed then, which had three components, **Svara** (melodic), **Tāla** (Time span) and **Pada** (words).

Tāla

As a component, the place of Tāla is problematic since it is not an aspect, the way svara, laya and pada are in the homogeneous Gāndharva composition or in a song in general. Actually, the temporal aspect of a composition is **Laya**, the duration between the syllables / melodic stresses. Bharata could as well have framed the definition **svaralayapadātmakam** instead of **svaratālapadātmakam**. Tāla too is **layātmaka.** But **Tāla** is an external component, the way Tambūrā is today. However, if Tāla is mentioned, then the presence of **Laya** in the composition is assumed, So the mention of **Tāla** in the definition of Gāndharva and not **Laya** is understandable.

The most important point to be observed about that era is that, only Gāndharva compositional types seem to have had 'Tāla' as a component. Sāmagāna was not bound by Tāla. The music tradition mentioned by Iḷaṅgō in Cilappadikāram does not mention Tāla. (Ramanathan A-053:15-20) Although Tāla is mentioned in the context of Prabandha songs, it seems to have been linked mainly to the metre of the song text. The Tāla system of Gāndharva is seen to be highly sophisticated.

Pada

Now, **Pada**, in the context of Gāndharva songs refers primarily to the meaningful text in praise of Śiva (śiva-stuti), met with in the form 'Saptarūpa / Prakaraṇa-gīta / Gītaka'.

देवं देवैः संस्तुतनमितम् । दैत्यैर्यक्षैर्नागैः पितृभिः प्रणमितचरणम् । त्रैलोक्यहेतुमीशं रुद्रं शरणमहमुपगतः ।

dēvaṁ dēvaiḥ saṁstutanamitam l daityairyakṣairnāgaiḥ pitṛbhiḥ praṇamitacaraṇam l

trailōkyahētumīśaṁ rudraṁ śaraṇamahamupagataḥ l (Bharata 1964:207:31,107)

However, these Gītaka songs, also incorporate short passages of meaningless syllables, as for instance, 'jhaṇ ṭum', and 'di gi ni gi'. More importantly, another form of of Gāndharva, namely, the **Nirgīta / Bahirgīta** has two melodic lines with one being meaningless syllables rendered by the voice.

Nirgīta, Bahirgīta and Agīta

A **Nirgīta** composition has two independent melodic lines rendered simultaneously (dia-phonic?). Primary melody is rendered by a stringed instrument, **Vīṇā**, made of **'Dhātu'** (melodic units) and manifested through an arrangement of long and short strokes. The other line consists of the singing of **'Śuṣkākṣara / Apada'**, (meaningless syllables) phrases, conforming to a metrical construction. There is also the element of Tāla (time framework) which seems to be bind only the singing of the meaningless syllables. (Ramanathan 2021:393)

We observe here use of some terms which are very striking.

a) **Dhātu** denotes the melody played on the vīṇā and not sung. So, the term **svara** is not being used. although Dhātu is explained as the svara expressed on the vīṇā, using some prescribed methods of playing.

b) **Śuṣkākṣara** literally denotes syllables which are 'dry'. A group syllables is considered to be 'dry' when it devoid of linguistic meaning. e.g., 'jhaṇ ṭum' 'ja ga ti ya'.

    Apada is an antonym for **Pada**. Pada, as Bharata says is the base on which svara (melody) and tāla (time duration) rest. At a fundamental level, Pada, in general, would stand for any grouping of syllables. Those which do not convey meaning are called **Apada**. And in a particular and restricted sense **Pada** would denote grouping of syllables that convey meaning.

In the context of Dēśī-saṅgīta, Śārṅgadēva describes **'Vāggēyakāra'** (composer) as one who composes both **Mātu**, standing for **Vāk** (lit. speech, language) and **Dhātu**, standing for **Gēya** (melody). While describing the "Prabandha' compositions, the term **Dhātu** is used in the sense of 'Sectional organisation', while the term **Aṅga** denotes the content, namely the melodic, syllabic, and temporal aspects of a prabandha. Among the six **Aṅga**-s, **Pada** stands for meaningful words. **Birudu** specifies words in praise of a patron. **Tēnaka**, **Svara** (sa, ri, ga, ma) and **Pāṭa** are specific kind of meaningless words. Finally, **Svara** has another denotation for melody, and **Tāḷa** is the time framework.

In Karṇāṭaka music, the term **Sāhityam** (lit. poetry, literature) denotes meaningful words. Sāmbamūrti (1968:43-44) while describing the musical form **Jatisvaram**, states ". . . has no **sāhitya** and the piece is sung with the **solfa** [sargam] syllables."

So, the thinkers in the Gāndharva tradition seem to have made an aesthetic distinction between,

a) the text underlying a song and that underlying 'instrumental' music. e.g., pada and apada,

b) music expressed through singing and that through melodic instruments.

Gitaka was sung and dominated by meaningful words. Meaningless syllables did figure but were proportionally very less. It is quite likely that the Gītaka-s were not played on instruments. On the other hand, Nirgīta had Vīṇā rendering 'music' built up of dhātu (counterpart of svara phrases) conforming to a method mentioned as **Vādya-vidhi**.

It also had a voice rendering a melodic line but clothed in meaningless syllables. This was **apada** set to metrical structure called **Dhruvā-vidhi** (Dhruvā denoting the metrical base underlying the apada).

Thus, although the term Nirgīta is explained as being 'devoid of gīta', it is still not strictly 'devoid of **music / melody**'. It is just 'devoid of meaningful text' which is sung, and 'melodic structure' created using playing technique, characteristic of an instrument. It could be called 'Instrumental music', only in a symbolic way, since there is a 'vocal' component too. It certainly cannot be compared to the **Vādya-aṅga** of Sitāra playing in Hindustāni music nor to the **'Yantra-daṇḍī'** oḍ Ālāpa or Ṭhāya in the Caturdaṇḍī format of presentation.

Thus, although the term **Gīta**, denotes **Music**, the usage is still occurring in a general sense, since when seen as a 'suffix' in **Nirgīta** (devoid of meaning), **Bahirgīta** (devoid of meaning) and **Agīta** (without meaning), it gets narrowed to a 'non-instrumental' character of 'music'.

This may be the reason for Śārṅgadēva to have not included 'Pada' in his definition of Gīta. In fact, the term 'Vādya' itself, used in the Gāndharva sampradāya, denotes the melody played on an instrument using 'Dhātu', the counterpart part of 'Svara' (melody) used in the context of 'singing'. That Śāstra-sampradāya seems have made a very fine distinction between melodic expression created through the voice and that through instruments, namely, **'Vādya'**, as we shall presently see.

Vādya

Although **Avanaddha-vādya** (membranophone), expression-wise and artistically, is different from **Tata** (chordophone) and the **Suṣira** (aerophone), the syllabic structures it creates are viewed and heard as meaningless spoken syllables. That seems to be the reason why all instruments are called **Vādya**, without discriminating between **svarātmaka** and **akṣarātmaka** nature of the expression.

Vādya is derived from the root 'vad' used in the sense of expression and speech. Ultimately, expressions of all instruments result from the urge and will of the human soul (ātmā) to 'speak'. Hence in the Saṅgītaratnākara, all the instruments, Tāta, Suṣira, Avanaddha and Ghana, and also their artistic structures are brought under one chapter called **'Vādyādhyāya'**. Earlier, even Sōmēśvara had a **Vādya-vinōda** chapter in his Mānasōllāsa, wherein he described all **Vādya**-s. This practice could have unintentionally created the mistaken impression among the later generation of scholars that **Vādya** represented a unified art.

Earlier, even in the Nāṭyaśāstra, Bharata (1964:410-411:34,30-33) lists spoken-syllables **'Vākkaraṇa'**, representative of strokes on a skin-covered instrument **Puṣkara vādya**. Some of the vākkaraṇa mentioned are, 'ka, kha, ga, jhaṇ and ṭum'. All the same, Bharata does not bring all the instruments and their creations under one chapter. His 34th Chapter, Puṣkarādhyāya / Vādyādhyāya delineates only the membranophones. Further, his Tata and Suṣira vādyā-s do not seem to have had a **vākkaraṇa** base, like the Sitāra has today.

In present times, the musical (svarātmaka) expression has a common vākkaraṇa for singing and melodic instrumental playing, namely, the syllables, **sa, ri, ga, ma, pa, dha and ni,** popularly called **Sargam** today. These could be technically termed, 'svara-akṣara', although this term has a different and imprecise connotation in the Karṇāṭaka music academics, namely, that of organising sargam syllables to convey linguistic meaning.

The **Sargam** syllables are seen from the time of Prabandha tradition, where sargam passages formed a part of singing. They have not been part of Sāmgāna or of Gāndharva of Bharata, Dattila and Viśākhila. They are also not met in the music tradition seen in the poetry-drama 'Cilappadikāram' of Iḷaṅgō. Outside the śāstra sampradaya, it is in the Kuḍumiyāmalai music inscription that we find instrument playing basing its expression on a sargam text. (Richard Widdess 1979)

Ālāpti, Vādankarama and Vādana

In the Saṅgīta performance, the rendering of Rāga-ālāpti and Rūpaka-ālapti were mentioned above. However, in the Vādyādhyāya of Saṅgītaratnākara, we come across a form similar to Rāgālapti, to be played on the Tata-vādya and Suṣira-vādya, with instructions on how to structure it, based on a rāga. Strangely, in the context of Tata-vādya and Suṣira, the form is not referred to as **Ālāpti** but as **Vādanakrama.**

What is extremely discerning about this nomenclature is, that the scholars in that tradition did not seem to want to refer to the **svarātmaka** expression as **ālāpa**. **Ālāpa** has the etymological connotation of 'speaking', 'conversation' etc. which the scholars were perhaps not keen on imposing on a non-linguistic structure. So, they seem to have named it **Vādana-krama**, something emerging from a **Vādya** and not from a voice. Describing this, Paṇḍarīka Viṭṭhala in his Sadrāgacandrōdaya (1912:26) uses the term **Vādana**. One cannot help admiring the aesthetic perception of that intellectual tradition in wanting to keep the vādanakrama distinct from ālāpti.

Vādanakrama and Nirgīta

Vādanakrama is distinct from **Nirgīta**, in the sense that it does not have the component of 'singing'. However, in the case of both, it is not clear what was the mental / abstract musical base which got expressed as the melody. In the case of Vādanakrama there is no mention whether the performer conceived the structure in terms of 'sargam' and then translated it into a concrete melodic structure. In the case of Rāgālapti too, the description in Saṅgītaratnākara is confined purely to the form without giving any clue regarding whether it had a sargam base or not. We also do not know whether it had any syllables that clothed the melody.

In the Saṅgītaratnākara, in the context of **Ālāpa** and other music passages illustrative of the lakṣaṇa of a Rāga, we do come sargam phrases notated. However, the sargam syllable or even the svara names, ṣaḍja, ṛṣabha etc., have not been used while describing the **Rāgālapti** form. It is possible Rāgālapti might have been sung with 'a-kāra' ('a' syllable).

in the **Ālāpa** and **Ṭhāya,** belonging to the Caturdaṇḍī tradition, in which they were composed pieces, the syllables like 'ta', 'na' and 'nam' were used. (Vāsudēva Śāstrī 1958), it is possible that the same syllables 'ta', 'na' and 'nam' were also used in the Anibaddha Rāgālāpti described by Śārṅgadēva.

In the case of Nīrgita compositions, the problem is more acute. That musical tradition did not have a sargam base at all. But the stringed instrument was also not like the fretted Ēkatantrī-vīṇā we come across in the case of Vādanakrama. The vīṇā-s used in Nirgīta were Citrā and Vipañcī, in which each string seems to have generated only one 'tone'.

In the case of both, Nirgīta and Caturdaṇḍī, it does not appear that 'a music' on the Vīṇā, was first learnt through singing and then expressed through the vīṇā, as it happens in Karṇāṭaka music today. Again, in the Caturdaṇḍī format, although we have notations for Ālāpa and Ṭhāya for playing on the Gātradaṇḍī (Vīṇā), it is not certain if the Prabandha songs were played on the Vīṇā. Seetha in her book 'Tanjore as a Seat of Music' (1981:41-42) writes "*In his Telugu work Śṛṅgāra Sāvitrī, he [Raghunātha Nāyaka] has depicted Sāvitrī as . . . . played rāga before the gīta and prabandha and sang simultaneously . . . .*" and later (p.42) adds, "*. . ., It is reasonable to suggest that the vīṇā . . . came to be utilized as a concert instrument . . . in which rāga ālāpa, ṭhāya, gīta and prabandha were rendered . . .*". It is not very clear if the songs of Gīta and Prabandha genre were actually played in the Vīṇā or if it is being assumed.

Rudra Vīṇā artist Asad Ali Khan, once mentioned at a chamber recital where this author was present, that the composition he played after the completion of the Ālāpa was not a Dhrupada composition but a smaller piece not set to meaningful text, but something similar to but larger than the 'Gata' of Sitāra. It is also known that Asad Ali Khan taught Sitāra at the Faculty of Music, Delhi University.

Vīṇā artist, Maisūru R Viśvēśvaran, at a private conversation, mentioned that, at one stage in his music career he developed a different playing style. After some months, when he played Vīṇā at a family gathering, his Uncles looked quite disappointed and burst out, "*Your vīṇā playing sounds like 'singing', what has happened to you?*".

The reason for recounting these anecdotes towards the end of this paper, is just to raise the question if in the Bhāratīya art /classical music presentation format, the melodic instruments ever played songs. This practice seems to have come only in the Karṇāṭaka music tradition in the last 150 years or so. Even the Nāgasvaram, has chosen to adopt the playing of kīrtana-s, something it did not lean on 150 years ago.

Conclusion:

Śabda , Dhvani and Nāda are the terms that we come across to refer to **sound** at the nascent stage. It is this sound that emerges as **Svara** to create a tonal structure, **Gīta.** And it is this **Gīta**, in which three aspects namely, **Svara /Dhātu** (tonal line), **Pada / Mātu** (syllable) and **Laya / Kāla** (time pulses) are perceived and mentioned as attributes. We then see, a distinction made between **Gīta** as made of the syllables conveying a meaning (**abhidhāna**) and being meaningless (**nirgīta /agīta**). Again, despite originating due to human will, a distinction is made between that expressed through voice (**gēya /gāna**) and that through an instrument (**vādya**).

However, at a particular stage in history, the term **Saṅgīta** comes into usage denoting a theatrical presentation of **gīta,** with **vādya** and **nṛtta /nṛtya** as its supporting arts, despite the term **saṅgitam** having also been used in the sense of just **gīta** (music) (Sōmēśvara 1961:69:4,16,438) (Śārṅgadēva 1943:16:1,1,29). This paper has tried to point out how the usage of this term **saṅgīta** in the sense of a theatre, had an impact on the thinking of the subsequent generation of scholars.

We also see how the term **vādya** too, derived from the basic sense of 'speaking', is applied to the instruments that do not create a **svarātmaka** (tonal) structure but an **akṣarātmaka** (syllabic) one, as seen when used as a suffix in **avanaddha vādya**. Here again, the artistic structure has its base in the spoken syllables **vākkaraṇa**. But the common suffix **vādya,** has also influenced the later scholars into treating all the instruments under the **vādya** component of **saṅgīta**, as representing the same artistic character.

Actually, the present situation is quite complex, perhaps projected in a complicated manner the above discussion! And this 'misunderstanding' seems to be still prevailing in the music world, and in particular in the Karṇāṭaka music academic community.

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